

# Orkney Local Transport Strategy 2024-2044

**Orkney Islands Council**

November 2023

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This summary presents an overview for the governance arrangements in respect to the LTS, and the funding context to deliver on the ambitious vision for transport.



# Foreword by Chair of Development & Infrastructure Committee

Transport touches all our lives. It affects our life chances, livelihoods, our health and wellbeing, our climate and our communities.

Social inclusion cannot be achieved without transport that enables all communities, geographical or those with shared characteristic across Orkney, to participate fully in the opportunities Orkney offers.

We must now change the way people and goods move in response to the climate emergency. Transport emissions reduction will be crucial if we are to meet commitments to net zero.

This strategy sets out the policy direction that supports tackling inequality alongside climate action; that embeds accessibility and equality; that acknowledges the significant shift we must make in several areas of transport if we are to collectively prosper.

**David Dawson,**  
Chair of Development and  
Infrastructure Committee



# Foreword by Corporate Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration

Orkney is a dynamic, diverse, enterprising and resilient place. Throughout our history, we have responded to challenges and opportunities with innovation and determination.

Transport provides a key role within a small island community to connect people for work, education, key services and social and leisure activities. It is also essential for the timely shipment of goods and services to and from the islands, where a fit for purpose transportation network is required to promote and sustain economic growth.

We continue to focus on the future needs of our communities and how we can work towards a low emission transportation network in the medium to long term.

**Gareth Waterson**  
**Corporate Director,**  
**Enterprise and**  
**Sustainable Regeneration**



# Summary of this document

## The Local Transport Strategy

- Orkney's updated Local Transport Strategy sets a policy framework to help guide decision-making on transport over the next period, with the goal of working towards four overarching outcomes:
  1. Transport contributes to a successful and just transition to a net-zero carbon and sustainable community.
  2. Transport plays a positive role in tackling the dispersed pattern of poverty across Orkney, and in improving health, reducing inequalities and isolation.
  3. Transport supports continued and inclusive economic development and innovation across all sectors.
  4. Our communities are places where people can thrive, regardless of mobility or income; with livable and inclusive communities.

## What we want to achieve

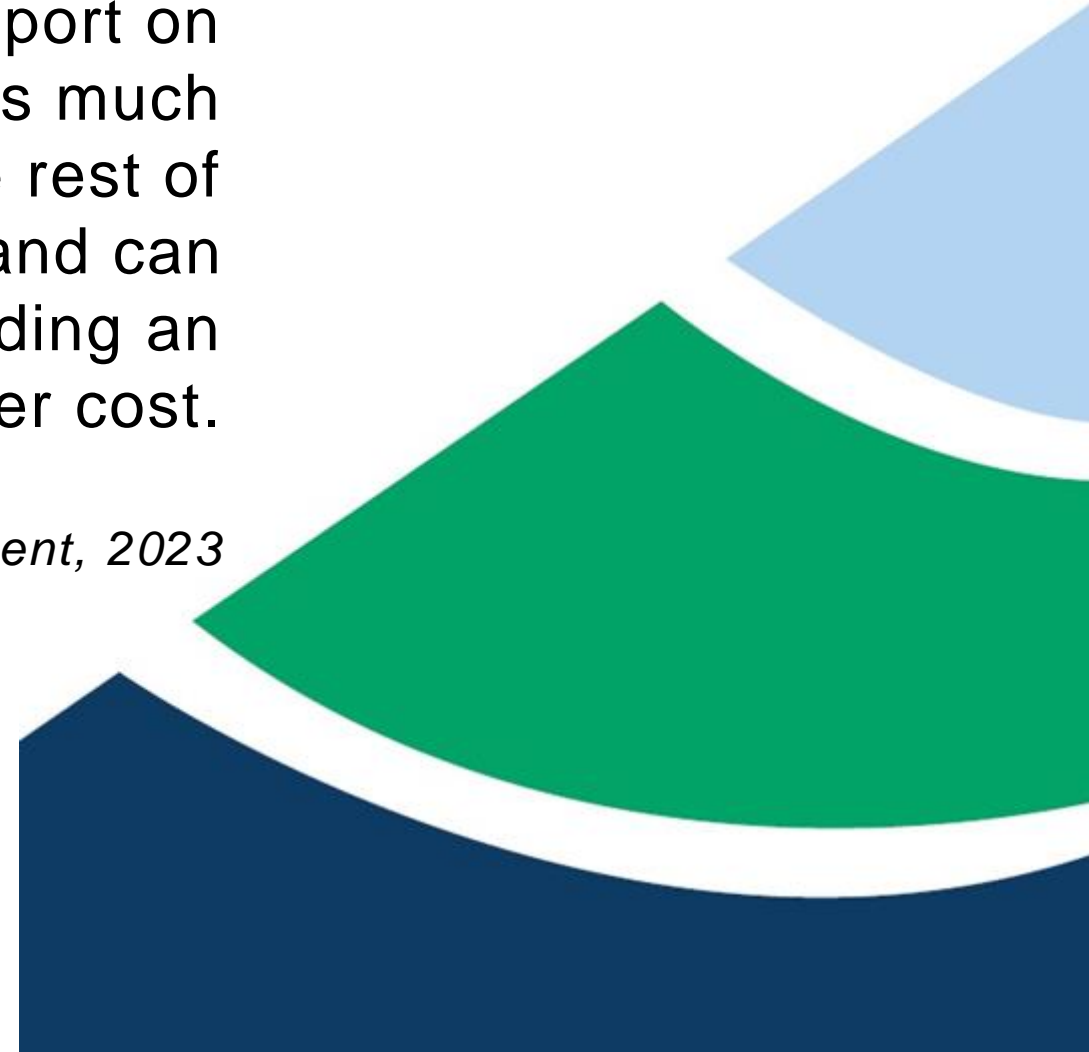
- The strategy supports Orkney's net zero aspirations, as well as our intentions to reduce car vehicle kilometres where possible in the context of a dispersed population.
- The strategy builds upon the evidence that has been gathered on the problems and opportunities that face Orkney, our communities and economy.
- Technical appraisal work, including the Island Community Impact Assessment, has been used to shape the detail of the LTS, and will inform the delivery of actions within the policy areas described.
- The LTS will be subject to ongoing monitoring and future reviews as progress is made across the policy areas, and periodically in conjunction with substantive changes and development in wider national policy, in respect to funding availability, technological advancements, and as we progress towards net zero ambitions.
- The success of the LTS going forward will be supported and enhanced through maintaining and maturing the dialogue that was developed through the LTS development and through other ongoing community and stakeholder dialogues in a wider range of contexts.

## 2. Introduction



Rural, remote and island communities have fewer public transport options and are particularly vulnerable to climate related disruptions to networks. The cost of transport on the islands and in remote rural areas is much higher, relative to income, than in the rest of Scotland. Journey times are often long and can require multiple interchanges, including an overnight stay, adding further cost.

*Just Transition Transport, Scottish Government, 2023*



# Introduction



## What is this Local Transport Strategy (LTS) Framework?

- The Orkney LTS aims to set a clear direction for transport policies, projects and investment up to 2043. It is the overarching transport strategy for Orkney by Orkney Islands Council.
- Replacing and updating the Council's existing LTS from 2007 it responds to several challenges and opportunities for Orkney, in particular, the role of transport in planning, economic development, social inclusion and addressing poverty, and the climate emergency.
- It draws on:
  - Evidence gathered from a range of other work and programmes.
  - Targeted stakeholder engagement with community-based groups and with people with shared characteristics.
  - Collaborative working with key contributors including elected members, Community Planning Partnership Delivery Groups, Orkney Renewable Energy Forum, community development officers, young people, older people and others.
- The Orkney LTS forms a material consideration in the planning process in Orkney and will feed into the ongoing update to the Orkney Local Development Plan. The later adoption of the Development Plan may necessitate an initial review of this LTS, together with any relevant changes to national policy.



# Structure of this Document

Section	Title	Summary
3.	Our vision for transport in Orkney	The Local Transport Strategy presents a coherent structure for transport decision making by the Council and its partners over the next period, through a transport vision for Orkney, outcomes (or goals) and a set of detailed objectives. These have been consulted on with stakeholders. They have guided the development of policies and actions in this document.
4.	The context for transport in Orkney	<p>Transport plays a role in helping to deliver wider outcomes and can also act as a barrier. The wider policy context for this set of transport policies and how they contribute to other goals is summarised in this section.</p> <p>This section also highlights some key issues to be tackled, opportunities to build upon, some successes so far and how we need to consider future uncertainty.</p> <p>Finally, the issues, challenges and opportunities drawn from the policy review are summarised in this section.</p>
5.	Local Transport Strategic Priorities	Through evidence gathering which has included stakeholder engagement, a series of technical policies supported by policy actions to guide decision-making over the lifetime of the strategy is presented in this section.
6.	Funding, Partnership and Governance	A consideration of delivery in terms of funding, partnerships and governance is presented in in Section 6. Finally, the progress of any Strategy must be continually reviewed, monitored and evaluated. The monitoring plan is also described in this section.



# 3. Our vision for transport in Orkney

The Scottish Government has made one of the most ambitious climate commitments in the world to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

We will have a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping to deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors.

*National Transport Strategy: Protecting our Climate and Improving Lives, Scottish Government, 2019*



# Our Vision for Transport

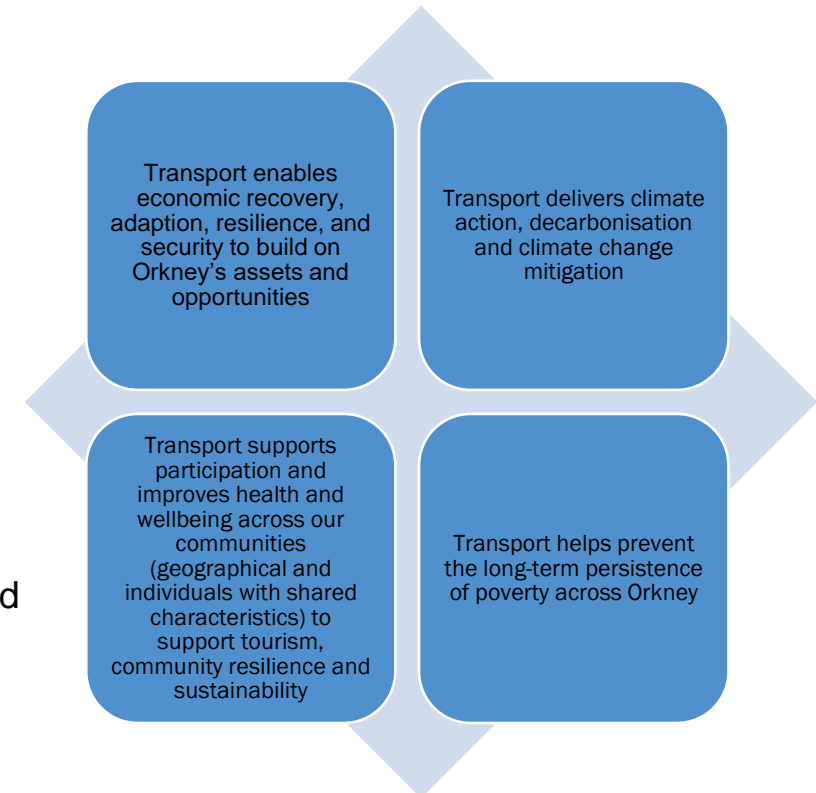


## A vision for transport in Orkney

- The purpose of any transport network is to allow people and goods to move around safely and efficiently whether by walking or cycling, passenger transport, lorry, van, car, tractor, or across or over the sea that binds our island community.
- The ambition for the Orkney transport network is that it allows **people and goods to get where they need to be safely and efficiently in ways that improve people's health and wellbeing and in a way that contributes to the journey to net zero.**

These objectives were developed for, and tested in the engagement with stakeholder groups, where they received strong support. They were further cross-referenced with Orkney Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, the National Islands Plan and the National Transport Strategy (NTS2).

## Outcomes and objectives



# What does our transport future look like in Orkney?



## In 10 years

- By 2030, Orkney will have made progress on using transport policies and projects to tackle poverty, improve health, reduce inequalities, addressing Climate Change and net zero target primarily through:
  - Policies and projects that support and deliver better walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport choices for residents and visitors to Orkney.
  - Policies and projects to support all to use affordable and sustainable transport to access work, education and training, and including projects to support those who feel differential impacts from transport.
  - Policies to continue to support communities to drive their own projects on affordable, accessible, low and zero carbon transport, with capacity building support.
  - Positioning of Orkney as a leading island community, innovating the route to an accessible, sustainable and resilient transport network.
  - Policies that support the Council's core principles of protecting our environment and combatting climate change.

## In 20 years

- By 2045, Scotland will be net zero with a 75% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030. Transport of people and goods will have played a key role in achieving this goal, primarily through:
  - A reduction in the need to travel unsustainably through the principles of using place planning to increase the attractiveness of active travel for short essential trips and removing the need to travel at all for some purposes.
  - Some households will feel less need to own a car or multiple cars because they can travel about in other ways or do not need to travel so frequently.
  - A larger proportion of goods moved locally will be by zero carbon methods such as cycles, zero or low carbon vehicles, vessels and aircraft.
  - Increased use of walking & wheeling, cycling and public transport, shared mobility for everyday journeys, particularly replacing shorter trips previously made by car.
  - A higher proportion of zero carbon vehicles and vessels in the Council fleet, in delivery vehicle fleets, taxis, bus and community transport fleets and amongst private vehicles.
  - Transport will directly benefit from renewable and clean energy transition and production.

An aerial photograph showing a long, narrow stone causeway bridge extending from a large island on the right towards a smaller, greener island on the left. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, and a large, rusted metal structure, likely a shipwreck, is visible in the lower-left quadrant. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text '4. The context for transport in Orkney' is overlaid in white on the right side of the image, underlined.

## 4. The context for transport in Orkney

# The role of transport



- Transport is important to all our daily lives. We often travel to get to work, to education and learning, to healthcare services, to shop, to take part in sports and activities, and to visit friends and family. Businesses and industry, as well as individuals, also rely on transport for the movement of their goods and for access to their services. Transport can also be an activity in itself, such as running, walking and leisure cycling.
- It is recognised that there are different needs in transport terms for different types of areas (town, remote and rural areas and islands) and for different communities, both geographical and for people across our community with shared characteristics.
- The strategy therefore intends to mirror the National Transport Strategy in that it is a strategy for the whole transport system (people and freight) and considers why we travel and how those trips are made, including walking, wheeling, cycling, and travelling by bus, ferry, car, lorry, and aeroplane. It is intended to be a strategy for all communities and for all users: those travelling to, from and within Orkney.



*Photo credit: Robbie Thomson*

# The role of Orkney Islands Council



- The operation of lifeline inter-island air and ferry services, associated piers, harbours and inter-island airfields are the responsibility of Orkney Islands Council.
- The road network and associated infrastructure, subsidised public bus services and community transport funding is also the responsibility of the Council.
- These assets are of vital importance as the transport of people and goods is essential to the economic and social wellbeing of Orkney.
- The Council plays a significant role in delivering sustainable transport projects on the network, from bus infrastructure, active travel provisions, signals and signs and crossing facilities. The Council applies best practice guidance in delivering its duties, and must pay particular regard to future proofing the network, particularly in respect to technological change and climate change issues.
- The maintenance of our transport infrastructure and vessels is of the utmost importance, and is crucial in supporting safe and inclusive travel. Funding for maintenance is increasingly a challenge for any local authority – assets are getting older and need repair or replacement; while, the ongoing maintenance of new infrastructure, such as footpaths and cycleways, needs to be considered and planned upfront, and built into the whole life costing of a project.



Photo credit: Robbie Thomson



# Successes

- Notwithstanding the challenges that Orkney will face, now and in the coming years, there have been many examples of successful and positive policy and projects to recognise and build upon. These include:
  - In 2021 OIC welcomed a lower emission fleet of new buses with Euro 6 engines for public and school buses.
  - OIC runs the county's largest EV fleet and has made large strides in decarbonising, as have partner organisations such as NHS Orkney.
  - The Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) demonstration project trialling low carbon aviation solutions, based at Kirkwall Airport.
  - Introduction of evening bus services on Orkney Mainland (funded through the Sustainable and Green Transport Fund).
  - Expansion of Community Transport Schemes, including across the isles; for example, the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Dial-A-Ride services.
  - School Travel Plans progressing small-scale active travel-focussed initiatives.
  - Kirkwall Places and Spaces, Arcadia Park and Papdale Park projects.
  - Two electric hydrofoil vessels are set to be trialled in Orkney, after the council secured £15.5million of funding from the UK Government's Zero Emission Vessels and Infrastructure fund.



# Problems to be tackled



- There are differential impacts across Orkney. Those on lower incomes and in poverty generally are affected in a multitude of ways by transport barriers and are also more likely to suffer from other aspects such as health inequalities.
- Dispersed, rather than pockets, of deprivation right across the Orkney community, and which is often hidden.
- Cost of transport and public transport in particular, and the impact of this on people on low incomes and young people.
- The Scotland-wide National Concessionary Travel Scheme provides free unlimited bus travel across Scotland for older people, people with disabilities and young people (Under 22). Discussions are ongoing to extend the existing scheme to ferry services.
- Lack of accessible services and environments are still an issue across Orkney. From inaccessible ferry and air services, to lack of accessible taxis, and adequate provision of disabled parking spaces, to specific needs not being catered for, for example those with hidden disabilities.
- Concerns between cyclists, pedestrians and other road users, particularly in the context that much of the transport network is shared space with no footpaths or dedicated cycle ways.
- Lack of integration in some of the public transport network, with a confusing and complicated network for some.
- Challenges in terms of road safety including: active and sustainable transport, speed management with some road users not travelling at appropriate speeds, driving for work and workplace culture, enforcement and deterrence, and road users with unsafe road use by certain types of users, including with an ageing population, with a high proportion of visitors unfamiliar with Orkney's roads, and with the uptake of driving from a young age.
- Capacity constraints on services, particularly on ferry and internal air services, and on the availability of cabins on the ferry service to Aberdeen.
- Staffing constraints in a tight labour market and in the isles with a sometimes limited pool of available staff to, for example, run the island airfields and drive buses.
- Reliance on the private car for many in order to access all manner of trip purposes with a thin public transport network that does not reach all people in all places.
- Tourism is an important element of the Orkney economy, with approximately 394,000 visitors in 2019. This includes independent travellers, tours and cruise passengers, with people staying for a single day to much longer trips. Visitors are concentrated in the summer months and putting pressure on transport infrastructure and services.
- Transport accounts for a significant share of carbon emissions, which have not been reducing as much as in other sectors. Passenger cars are the largest source of CO2 in Scotland. The costs of progressing with the decarbonising programme of fleet and for private households can often be prohibitive. There are particularly high costs associated with the heavy vehicle fleet.

# Orkney's ambition and opportunities

There are a number of opportunities the Orkney LTS can build on. These may be existing initiatives, trends, targets, and funding streams:

Orkney has bucked national trends by seeing an increase in passenger numbers across public transport services, from a combination of local users and growing visitor numbers in the post-Covid period.

There is evidence of increases in active travel in recent years, and substantial investment in active travel infrastructure.

Evidence is suggesting that people are travelling less in recent years, and that Covid-19 has accelerated this trend, including enabling more people to base themselves and work from locations right across Orkney while working partially or entirely remotely.

Technological improvements, including with future fuels, are a significant opportunity to transform travel, the travel experience, and support more informed sustainable travel choices.

The National Transport Strategy, the National Islands Plan, and the Regional Transport Strategy (HITRANS), are opportunities to push forward the policy direction set out in the LTS and may release or align funding opportunities.

More community empowerment; co-design and co-delivery; based on the *Place Principle*, whereby people, location and resources should combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and be at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities.

Many projects by the Council, by Development Trusts, Sustrans, and many other partners, with support from Scottish and UK Governments – through which Orkney is improving each year and there is much progress to build upon.

Hydrogen and battery technology are an opportunity being explored in Scotland and in the Highlands and Islands Region drawing on international expertise.

Despite a high share of longer journeys based on the dispersed pattern of population, many journeys are still less than 3km suggesting potential for modal shift to active travel for those who are able.

## Collaborative Working:

- The LTS stakeholder involvement plan was built on the foundation that there had been extensive and recent consultation and engagement through a number of other plans, policies and groups, with content substantively relevant also to the development of the LTS for Orkney.
- An early task during the development of the LTS and building on the evidence from earlier and ongoing work programmes was engagement with stakeholders, including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, HITRANS, NHS Orkney, Orkney Renewable Energy Forum, Destination Orkney, Voluntary Action Orkney and the Community Planning Partnership Delivery Groups.
- The final element of LTS development has focused around engagement with a variety of key contributors, this has been particularly valuable where other plans, strategies and workstreams are developing over a parallel period to the LTS development.
- This collaborative approach should be the foundation upon which to successfully deliver the optimum output from the foundation of the local transport strategy.
- Working with the Sustrans Embedded Officer through Sustrans Strategic Partnerships Programme to seek external grant funding and establish Active Travel projects across the county.



# Changes and risks we face

## Governance

- More localised decision making and community empowerment is expected, with also more funding streams linked to the low carbon economy, regulatory framework and wider governance changes.



Photo credit: Robbie Thomson

## Technology and energy

- There will be more automation and digital services, including in healthcare and education. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) may be considered to deliver multi-modal journey planning with real-time data to enhance individuals' mobility options.
- There will be new modes of mobility, complexities in the marketplace across all modes of transport, and we might expect to see the full advent of autonomous vehicles.
- There are energy targets for renewable energy and for the phasing out of petrol and diesel cars. There are challenges around the supply and price of electricity, and for the role and mix of future fuels across all transport means.

## People, population and jobs

- The future is never certain, and the LTS has considered some of these uncertainties in the appraisal of options to inform the policies that follow.
- Orkney has an ageing and growing population. Between 1998 and mid-2020 Orkney's population increased by 14%. The 75-and-over age group saw the largest percentage increase in Orkney (of +72.2%) during this period. An overall increase in Orkney's population is predicted going forward, but not necessarily across all areas, according to Government statistics, with a very variable picture across the isles forecast in particular.
- In the world of work more flexible working practices, more job uncertainty and new models of employment are expected; Orkney is set to see a number of major projects in the coming years, including the new interconnector project and onshore and offshore wind projects which will see changes to the jobs on offer, including expected increase in jobs in Orkney, expected to be taken up by a mix of resident and commuting (to Orkney) employees.

# Duties and Targets of relevance to the LTS

## Statutory Duties of Relevance

- Local roads authority with legal requirements in relation to managing and maintaining the road network and consideration of footways alongside roads for convenience and safety of pedestrians.
- Equality duty from the Equality Act 2010.
- Fairer Scotland Duty and human and child's rights duties.
- Local planning authority with requirement to produce a Development Plan and manage development. Work on the evidence base for the new Development Plan is being undertaken with an anticipated adoption of the Plan in 2027.
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on the Council, in the exercise of its functions, to act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets and any statutory climate change adaptation programme, and in a way that it considers is most sustainable.
- Duties relating to managing and reducing flood risk, and to further the conservation of biodiversity.
- Access authority under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act and requirement to identify core paths which have shared access rights.
- The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 intended to improve outcomes for islands communities.

## National Targets of Relevance

- Vision Zero, where no one is seriously injured or killed on our roads by 2050, with 50% reduction in people killed and people seriously injured to 2030 (Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030)
- Reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030 (update to the Climate Change Plan, Scottish Government, Dec 2020)
- By 2030, the equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied from renewable sources; an increase by 30% in the productivity of energy use across the Scottish economy (Scotland's Energy Strategy 2017 sets two new targets for the Scottish energy system by 2030)
- Phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035 and public bodies to lead the way by phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles by 2025 (Update to the Climate Change Plan, Scottish Government, Dec 2020)
- Net zero greenhouse gases (which includes carbon) by 2045; and 75% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019)
- Decarbonise scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040 (Update to the Climate Change Plan, Scottish Government, Dec 2020)
- Halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and substantially restoring it by 2045 (draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy)



# 5. Local Transport Strategic Policies

# The purpose of the LTS policies



## Purpose of the LTS policies

The Transport Strategy Policy Framework provides a clear direction and framework for decision-making and investment up to 2043 in Orkney through a set of policies. As well as giving the public and stakeholders a clear idea of how the Council will make decisions on transport, these policies will also be used by Council Officers. The Policy Framework will also support funding applications and investment decisions.

## A whole systems approach

Thinking from a “whole systems approach” to the development of this transport strategy has been applied. Specifically, this means:

- Transport is part of a wider system – a much wider range of individuals, organisations and policy areas are at play.
- We have engaged with community planning partners, and community organisations, and have drawn from earlier consultations, to establish the problems that need to be tackled, the kind of future we want for Orkney in terms of transport, and the solutions that folk would like to see.
- We have taken a long-term view, with many policy areas requiring a long-term effort relying on various aspects coming together.

## LTS Delivery principles

There are several overarching principles that guide the nature of the LTS Policies:

### The way we live and work

- Communities are the core of design, decision-making and delivery
- Decentralise services and jobs
- Community Hubs

### Funding for change

- Review Management and Governance Arrangements
- Make the case for funding for community-based capacity building

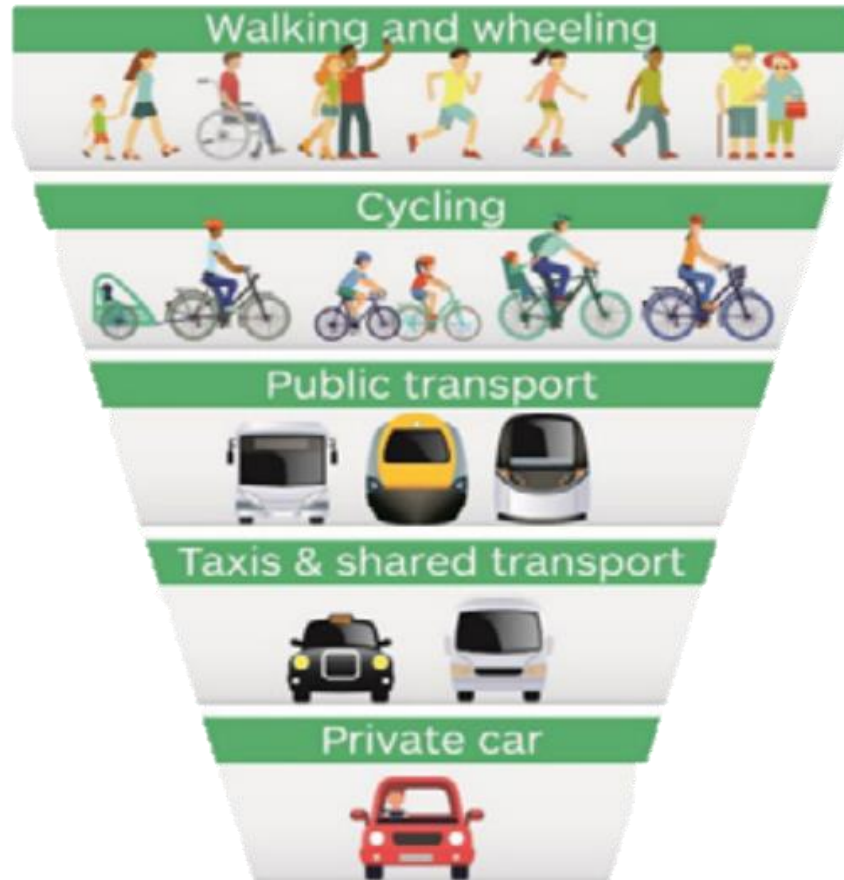
### Tailored approaches

- Innovative and creative thinking about future of transport
- Focus on community wealth-building

### Guiding principles

- Transport is accessible for all
- Transitioning to Net Zero
- Locality-based planning approach
- Cross-sectoral working: transport is an enabler

# Sustainable transport hierarchy



Built on the principle of 'place' Transport Scotland's *Sustainable Travel Hierarchy* for personal travel which is enshrined in planning policy, roads development and the National Transport Strategy, puts people walking, wheeling and cycling at the top, then public transport, shared transport and taxis, ahead of private vehicles at the bottom.

Clearly in Orkney both ferry and air services require to be added into this hierarchy and are lifeline services for our island communities. Further, due to the dispersed nature of our population walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport (for those residing in areas without a bus route) is regularly unsuitable for everyday journeys.

The LTS embraces this context, looking for opportunities to advance the hierarchy, while also ensuring the provision to safeguard the whole communities' ability to participate fully in Orkney life.



# Decarbonisation

## Rethink, reduce and refuel

- Orkney is well known as a trailblazer in innovation around decarbonisation and the green economy. There are several initiatives underway in this area and in the uptake of zero tailpipe carbon fuels.
- Orkney is playing a pivotal role in the development of green hydrogen technologies through a variety of projects covering ferries, planes, vehicles, and for the movement of people and goods.
- Hoy is one of six islands in Scotland that is being supported by the Scottish Government to be carbon neutral by 2040.
- An Energy Strategy Action Plan for Orkney is in production.
- The SATE (Sustainable Aviation Test Environment) Project is focused on new sustainable aviation solutions providing greater optionality for enhanced connectivity. This should see the introduction of technology that can be incorporated into the Orkney transport system in the next 3-6 years. With a blueprint of a net zero aviation region by 2040 and making an increased contribution to economic and social development.
- Two electric hydrofoil vessels are set to be trialled in Orkney, after the council secured £15.5million of funding from the UK Government's Zero Emission Vessels and Infrastructure fund. A twelve-passenger version is set to arrive in spring 2024, and will travel between Kirkwall, Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre, while a larger vessel, capable of carrying 50 passengers plus some light cargo will be delivered in 2025. It will be on a route between Kirkwall, Westray, Eday, Sanday and Stronsay.



## Decarbonisation Policies

- **Policy 1:**
  - Enhancing the quality of local places and environments for active travel; working to secure a fit-for-purpose design guide approach for our historic town environment and rural and island communities.
  - Supporting long term delivery of active travel infrastructure through Place Planning and School Travel Plans, and in collaboration with Development Trusts and other community partners; focus on improved active travel networks and connections at a community level; with inclusive and accessible design.
  
- **Policy 2:**
  - Decarbonise the OIC and public sector transport fleet with re-fuelling to greener fuels (as is possible) and new fleet:
    - Land-based vehicles; ferry services (hull form / type of vessel / fuelling), air services, bus services, community transport and e-bikes/bikes, associated infrastructure to support decarbonisation of vehicles and fleets.
  - Continue to work with, support and encourage bus and community transport operators and the wider private sector to move towards a low carbon fleet.
  
- **Policy 3:**
  - Support *Just Transition*: targeted support through transport-related projects / services to enable all members of society to participate in social and economic health and wellbeing. *Just Transition* plan co-designed and co-delivered by communities, businesses and all in society.
  - Explore opportunities for developing / growing an Orkney pool of EV vehicles / e-bikes – available either as a library or through car club scheme – the aim to target low-income households and / or those that do not have access to conventional public transport, and where the availability could support access to employment or linking households with health / leisure / caring needs etc.



# Active Travel

## Walking, cycling & wheeling to a healthier, fairer, accessible Orkney

- Walking, wheeling and cycling are well recognised for their wider benefits, especially when integrated into people's daily lives, for leisure, to get about to where folk need to travel to, and as part of visitor experiences. The Orkney Travel matters survey tells us that 1 in 6 Orcadians are making short journeys by car 15 or more times per week. This shows significant potential for shifting people's habits to more sustainable modes.
- We want our communities, green spaces and towns, villages and settlements to be connected and easily accessed by active travel, with a focus on people rather than private vehicles. Active travel options offer safe, affordable and enjoyable choices for residents, employees and visitors alike, regardless of location, income level, or stage in life.
- Orkney Islands Council has an Embedded Sustrans Senior Project Officer in place. The role of the officer is to facilitate a strategic approach to active travel infrastructure, to increase walking, cycling and wheeling in Orkney communities as a preferred mode of travel, working with the Council and partner organisations to further understand the local barriers to active travel, and to deliver a strategic approach to overcome them.
- The Council has an Active Travel Strategy to assist in gaining external grant funding for infrastructure upgrades such as walk and cycle paths as well as funding for softer measures such as promotion and education, working towards a more active and sustainable community.
- The Council is collaborating with and supporting schools across Orkney in developing School Travel Plans to promote health and active travel choices for the journey to school, and for travel within the school day.
- The Council is delivering a number of active travel-focused projects, such as the recently opened Papdale Park project, and before that the Arcadia Park in Kirkwall. The Council's Sustainable Travel Group, with officers from transport, engineering, development planning, outdoor access, roads, education, leisure and economic development progress active travel projects and other works to promote active travel.
- The national Place Principle recognises that:
  - *“Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them.*
  - *A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enabled better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.”*

## Active Travel Policies

### Policy 4:

- Enhancing the quality of local places and environments for active travel; working to secure a fit-for-purpose design guide approach for our historic town environment and rural and island communities.
- Supporting long term delivery of active travel infrastructure through Place Planning and School Travel Plans, and collaboration with Development Trusts and other community partners.
- Focus on improved active travel networks and connections at a community level; with inclusive and accessible design.
- Review and update the Active Travel Strategy for Orkney.

### Policy 5:

- To ensure Orkney remains attractive and vibrant and supports sustainable travel choices, the Council will redesign roads, parking and vehicle space in the towns to support sustainable transport where possible.
- Including, specifically, public realm enhancements and additional restrictions to vehicular access.
- Explore opportunities to create St Margaret's Hope – Kirkwall – Stromness segregated active travel route.

### Policy 6:

- Consider and promote shared mobility options, particularly in terms of active travel, access to bike hire or a bike scheme for Orkney (as per Policy 3).



Arcadia Park is a community-designed green space and active travel network in Kirkwall. Credit: Sustrans 2022.

# Public & Community Transport

## Innovative partnership to tackle rural isolation

### Supporting more people to travel by public transport

- Orkney has seen steady growth in bus passenger figures over the past decade compared with significant decline across the rest of Scotland. The Council remains committed to providing a fit for purpose bus network across the county to enable people to travel to/from work, education, medical appointments, shopping, social and leisure purposes and to reduce the number of car journeys.
- Significant investment was made by the Council during the award of the School and Public Bus Contract in 2021 where quality of service was emphasised as priority. This resulted in the main operator investing in a brand new fleet of low emission accessible vehicles. As a result, the services across Orkney are reliable, efficient and comfortable, encouraging a step change from car use to bus.
- Evidence shows that a greater proportion of people in remote rural and accessible rural areas find accessing services less convenient. Further consideration will be given to community transport services and on-demand transport for people without access to existing services.
- OIC retains the passenger revenue from Orkney mainland subsidised public bus services – this revenue has been secured as a *Sustainable & Green Transport Fund* delivering measures such as:
  - Establishing **evening bus services** targeted at young people being able to access leisure and other opportunities in Kirkwall, which was trialled with Smarter Choices, Smarter Places funding.
  - Development and enhancement of **Community Transport** services across Orkney.
  - Improvements and enhancements to existing infrastructure such as bus shelters, bus timetable displays, timetables and promotion.
- Travel by coach, particularly for visitors, is a dominant means of travel, particularly in the summer months. The Council Shuttle Bus Contract, provides connectivity for visiting cruise liners which berth at Hatston pier, providing a drop off at Kirkwall Travel Centre in the centre of town and for connecting onwards travel.

## Public and Community Transport Policies

- **Policy 7:**
  - Ensure that public bus services and community transport are developed to facilitate people to access opportunities, get around, and live their lives well, supporting health and wellbeing, community cohesion, resilience and sustainable economic development by:
    - promoting inclusive and affordable travel for all;
    - retaining and enhancing existing scheduled services where possible;
    - improving accessibility to jobs, services and facilities;
    - working with communities to identify the best means of linking communities, people, places of business and employment and essential services.
    - Continue to explore the possibility of filling timetable gaps where possible and practicable.
    - reducing the need to travel by car.
- **Policy 8:**
  - Continue to recognise the important role of community transport in Orkney, particularly the opportunity to fill gaps in local transport provision. Focus on developing solutions to make use of underutilised local authority and other fleet vehicles to complement existing services.
  - Continue to work collaboratively to explore and develop new demand responsive transport where there are no existing services, as demand may change and to plug gaps in provision, with services which are open to all.
- **Policy 9:**
  - Ensure compliance of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 in respect of Vehicle Operators Licencing and Schedule of Conditions for Taxi and Private Hire Car Operators. Work with providers to raise standards of provision where required and support the offering of services where appropriate.
- **Policy 10:**
  - Work with communities, bus operators and regional transport partnership HITRANS in providing a fit for purpose bus network, infrastructure and timetable information which meets the needs of communities across Orkney.

# Inter-Island Connectivity

## Supporting economies, enabling participation

### Inter-Island Air and Ferry Services

- The need to replace the ageing ferry fleet and address the multitude of built-in problems and constraints, coupled with the probable need to increase inter-island air connectivity has led to a considerable amount of work over the last 20 years.
  - Lack of parity with other ferry services in Scotland with regard to connectivity, costs and quality.
  - Lack of capacity on specific routes / sailings, particularly for vehicles and in terms of available tonnage.
  - Limited capacity on inter island air services – need for third aircraft outlined in business case work.
  - Timetables do not fully meet community needs – longer operating day and more frequency required.
- The vision taken from the Orkney Partnership Connectivity Delivery Group is simply put: *integrated, sustainable and affordable inter island transport services which meet the needs of isles residents, businesses and visitors.*
- The Orkney Inter-Island Transport Study (OIITS) work is progressing to Final Business Case stage, following earlier STAG Appraisals. In February 2023 OIC and the Scottish Government established a Ferry Replacement Task Force to work jointly on proposals to support OIC's consideration of options for the long-term renewal of the Orkney internal ferry fleet – considering potential funding models and sources available, considering the businesses cases for replacement to inform the 2024-25 budget discussions within Scottish Government.
- New terminal buildings, which meet CAA requirements, have already been built at the airfields in North Ronaldsay and Sanday, and there are now plans to build new airfield terminal buildings at the four remaining airfields in the North Isles.

## Ferry and Air Service Policies

### ▪ Policy 11:

- Collaborate and co-design with communities to identify improvement opportunities to the existing provision and services within the inter-island network of ferry and air services, while looking to future needs on an island-by-island basis:
  - Place-based approach to future planning for service provision, short, medium and long term.
  - Improve user interface with services – online booking, payments etc.
  - Provide additional capacity within the inter-island air service with a third aircraft in the network.
  - Consider yield management to address capacity constraints, e.g. early-bird or lunchtime discounts for morning or mid-day services to move traffic from the more capacity constrained sailings.

### ▪ Policy 12:

- Progress with design work for the inter-island ferry network vessels and associated harbour infrastructure; subsequent roll out of the Ferry Replacement Programme across the network as expediently as possible; being mindful to decarbonisation (including hull form and fuelling) (Policy 2) and accessibility (Policy 28).
- Complete the upgrade to airfield terminal buildings and facilities across the outer north isles network.

### ▪ Policy 13:

- Recognises that the inter-island air and ferry services are the equivalent to the bus network for island communities in terms of accessing key goods and services.
- Continue to lobby Scottish Government that eligible people should be able to access free travel under national concessionary travel schemes on these services in keeping with their peers that live in urban and mainland areas.





# Roads and Parking

- The county's roads enable people and businesses to undertake their daily activities in a manner which does not hinder the ability of communities served by the network to prosper or lead to undue environmental degradation.
- While the overarching policy objective is to reduce carbon-based travel, it is imperative that the existing road network is maintained and developed to meet the future social and economic needs of Orkney. Indeed, the Scotland Route Map to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 does not aim to eliminate all car use, it recognises that would not be realistic or fair, especially for journeys undertaken by disabled people or in rural areas where sustainable travel options may not always be available or practical. Instead, the Route Map encourages all of us to reduce our overreliance on cars wherever possible and identifies four key behaviours:
  - making use of sustainable online options to reduce your need to travel;
  - choosing local destinations to reduce the distance you travel;
  - switching to walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport where possible; and
  - combining a trip or sharing a journey to reduce the number of individual car trips made, if car remains the only feasible option.
- A Roads and Paths Repairs and Renewals Fund of £2.1m (during 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial year) was established from the Strategic Reserve Fund to progress with road and footpath maintenance and improvements to address particular issues of poor condition and degradation. Additional funding is required to maintain existing assets and minimise degradation of infrastructure.

## Roads and Parking Policies

- **Policy 14:**
  - Continue to review the Roads Asset Management Plan and Roads Management and Maintenance Plan including attention to verges and offlets, for example, where condition is considered to be deteriorating. Including the work to ascertain the current condition of the Churchill Barriers and any remedial works required.
- **Policy 15:**
  - Undertake a Traffic Management Review for Kirkwall and other towns.
    - Kirkwall experiences high volumes of pedestrians; there is growth in housing and other development, which generates additional traffic; and there is a need to consider capacity at a number of junctions.
    - Your Kirkwall Place Plan identified a number of traffic-related issues and sets out several potential solutions, which could be taken into consideration.
- **Policy 16:**
  - Provide cycle parking through minimum cycle parking standards for new development and roll out secure and appropriate shelters across Orkney in collaboration with communities through Place Planning.
- **Policy 17:**
  - Orkney-wide parking strategy to take into account new sites for parking, including visitor sites, Park & Ride / Stride, campervan parking and ducting for EV transition.
  - Charge for designated parking: Set parking charges to meet costs of administering, maintaining and enforcing provisions; review charges with a view to managing demand to use a car and ensuring car parking is not cheaper on average than public transport fares.
- **Policy 18:**
  - Consideration of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, in respect of national pavement parking prohibitions as appropriate.

# Harbour Infrastructure

## Positioning Orkney as a world leading maritime hub

### Orkney Harbours Masterplan

- The masterplan is a blueprint that provides a framework for the long-term maritime future in Orkney. The first phase details the vision for the physical transformation of Orkney's harbours across five locations on the Orkney Mainland and Hoy. The second phase will consider the development of smaller harbours and piers across the entire archipelago.
- Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1 was approved in April 2020 with proposals to enhance several piers and harbours— a new deep water quay in Scapa as well as quayside extensions at Hatston, and enhancements at Lyness.
- The Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1 proposals are as follows:
  - Scapa Deep Water Quay is a new deep water port for the offshore wind sector; construction could commence in 2024 subject the necessary approvals and funding package.
  - Hatston Pier (Orkney Logistics Base) will be extended by 300m and reclamation will provide laydown area to play a key role in accommodating offshore wind activities.
  - Creation of hard standing at Lyness to support offshore wind deployment.
  - The marina in Stromness is to be expanded and there will be new pontoons for cruise use.
- Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) (adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 13th February 2023) includes the new quay in Scapa Flow and recognises the national importance of Scapa Flow.

## Harbour Infrastructure Policies



### Policy 19:

- Proceed with Harbours Masterplan Phase 1 projects – a new deep water quay and terminal in Scapa Flow, and associated wet storage offer in Scapa Flow to service the offshore wind sector; extension of the Hatston Pier and creation of quayside laydown area to support commercial activities and enhance interchange with the lifeline ferry services; works at Lyness to secure its role in offshore wind; and the Stromness marina extension with new pontoons and dedicated space for cruise tenders.

### Policy 20:

- The Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 2 will consider all the smaller piers and harbours across the islands and on the Orkney Mainland. The work will be aligned with OIITS work (Policy 12) to determine what infrastructures will be required to accommodate new inter-island vessels.
  - The initial outcome will be a Masterplan for each of the harbours and piers identified during the process, which will also align with Place Plans.



# External Ferry Services

## Safeguarding and enhancing connectivity for Orkney

- The current Northern Isles Ferry Service (NIFS) contract is due to be renewed in 2028. It is essential that OIC collate and prepare their own evidence to inform how future contracts are designed and determined; what is the optimal service configuration for Orkney; and how proposed new services align with Orkney's harbour infrastructure, existing or proposed.
- OIC along with the External Transport Forum should work together to build an evidence base and case for enhancing external ferry services for the benefit of Orkney. While this Group has worked together for some time now, there is a need to replicate what is being done in Shetland with regards to capacity analysis, demand forecasting and evidenced lobbying for service enhancements.
- The NIFS Hamnavoe service out of Stromness has provided additional sailings to fill gaps created by the non-running of other services, and while one of the private operators' vessels is deployed out of Orkney providing additional capacity on the west coast network.



Photo credit: Robbie Thomson

## External Ferry Service Policies

### ▪ Policy 21:

- Make the case to ensure adequate capacity on external ferry services to support economic growth and travel needs: a study commissioned by Transport Scotland in 2018 reported that deck and cabin capacity were the largest concerns cited by resident and stakeholders.
  - There are reportedly capacity issues for residents and for businesses all year round, though the issue is severe during the summer months and the backend when livestock are being shipped to the Scottish Mainland from Shetland and Orkney. Capacity issues for freight are mostly centred around demand from aquaculture and fishing sectors in Shetland.
  - A review of the NIFS contract specification is required in advance of the next contract, and to make the case for any enhancement to Orkney's external ferry service.
    - Increased capacity for freight.
    - Increase in services between Orkney and Aberdeen – to provide additional capacity and flexibility, and to provide better integration between Orkney and mainland public transport services.

### ▪ Policy 22:

- Make the case to better utilise the NIFS vessels – vessels in Aberdeen and Shetland are alongside between AM arrival and PM departure, and there is no longer a sailing throughout the year in the middle of the day on the Stromness – Scrabster route.
- This policy would consider more services running out of Aberdeen to Orkney / Shetland and the reinstatement of the middle sailing on the Pentland Firth route.



# External Aviation Services

## Securing the core network of external air services

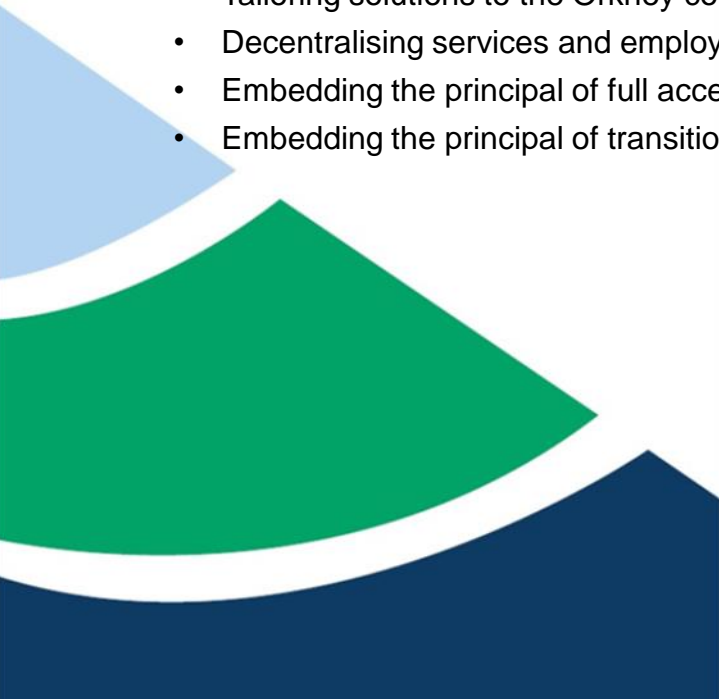
- While the level of air travel has not returned to pre Covid-19 levels it is important to recognise that air travel will remain an important enabler for Orkney in terms of trade, tourism, health and leisure opportunities – even within the paradigm of reducing the need to travel and climate change action.
- The vision for the external air services is to secure lifeline services to meet the fundamental needs of Orkney to connect with other areas across Scotland, the rest of the UK, and globally. The network out of Kirkwall Airport is operated on a commercial basis, providing a frequent service to Aberdeen and Edinburgh, and *thinner* routes to Inverness, Sumburgh, Glasgow and the addition of a twice weekly connection to London Heathrow via Dundee.
- A reliable and fit for purpose service is key, particularly for health, to Aberdeen but also to Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness.
- A number of projects are in progress to drive the shift to low carbon aviation, including the Orkney Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) project.
- The cost of air travel continues to be a concern for the travelling public, and for business. The Air Discount Scheme is available for leisure travel only, offering a 50% discount on the core air fare on eligible services. The aim of the scheme is to tackle the problem of high air fares in the most peripheral parts of the Highlands and Islands region to improve social inclusion in the areas it covers. It does not cover any visitor travel, NHS-funded trips or people travelling for the purposes of business.

## External Air Services Policies

- **Policy 23:**
  - Secure and extend Air Discount Scheme to include business / all travel.
- **Policy 24:**
  - Explore development of Public Service Obligation (PSO) Kirkwall – Inverness / across Orkney / Highland and Islands routes.
- **Policy 25:**
  - Secure appropriate airport infrastructure at Kirkwall Airport, including supporting Highlands and Islands Airports masterplan in respect to the extension of the runway and the design of the passenger facilities at Kirkwall Airport.

# Cross Cutting Themes, Policies and Partner Projects

- This Local Transport Strategy recognises the importance of connectivity to support sustainable communities and wider planning to consider transport, barriers and connectivity in planning for the delivery of services, community and economic outcomes.
- The basic principles are to develop a network to co-design and co-implement transport (and wider solutions) tailored to community needs, aspirations and opportunities.
- Through this theme the intention is to focus on:
  - Capturing and building upon community unique perspectives through collaboration and to include user and stakeholder opinions in key design and decision making.
  - Tailoring solutions to the Orkney context, including flexing and fitting to different community needs around Orkney.
  - Decentralising services and employment to island and community hubs outside of the main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness.
  - Embedding the principal of full accessibility into any design throughout the LTS, and championing through allied transport initiatives.
  - Embedding the principal of transition to net zero through the design of future transport provision as expediently as possible.





## Cross Cutting Policies

- **Policy 26:**
  - Transport is a material consideration in the planning process, and the sustainable travel hierarchy (in an Orkney context) should be a core principle in development management decision-making.
- **Policy 27:**
  - Continue to make the case to secure the funding that rural / remote / island places need to address transport challenges.
    - Including additional funding for community-based solutions; in the context of reviewing the management and governance arrangements for transport development and service delivery.
- **Policy 28:**
  - Ensure that accessibility is an integral feature of the design of our places, and the design for future ferries, aircraft, buses, community transport, taxis and other transport and travel infrastructure.
- **Policy 29:**
  - To reduce the environmental impact of travel around and to Orkney, organisations, employers and service providers across Orkney should seek to increasingly provide an option to access work, services and facilities remotely where possible, where this is not detrimental to service provision or detrimental to staff or users. Organisations should be supported to consider sustainable transport accessibility in their decision-making around the location of goods and services, including providing increased services closer to where people live / work, and the Council will work to support this in collaboration with communities. This could be at home, or closer to home in Community Hubs.
  - Decision-making around the location of goods and services, including providing increased services closer to where people live / work, and the Council will work to support this in collaboration with communities.

# 6. Funding, Partnership and Governance

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# Monitoring and Evaluation of the LTS

## Monitoring LTS Objectives

Focused on enhancing the economic, social and environmental fabric of Orkney, the LTS will be monitored and evaluated using available national, regional and local datasets.

## Governance, Monitoring & Appraisal Framework

Monitoring progress is extremely important. It is proposed to annually report on a number of core indicators. It should be noted that there is also ongoing or planned monitoring processes related to other transport and associated areas, such as the work of the Community Planning Partnership Connectivity Delivery Group and anticipated through the Climate Change Strategy and Energy Strategy Action Plan for example.

## Monitoring Policy Progress

A set of indicators for each theme has been prepared to monitor overall progress via a series of proxies. This should be supplemented with the development of bespoke monitoring and evaluation of individual projects commensurate with the nature of the projects, and would often relate to, where necessary, any requirements from particular funders.

## Funding Policy Commitments

The Council will continue to explore innovative sources of funding and financing for transport projects in Orkney, working in partnership with HITRANS, Scottish and UK Governments, Transport Scotland, Sustrans, Community Planning partners and local community and community organisations to identify better and sustainable ways to fund transport in Orkney.





# Orkney Local Transport Strategy

Transport transformation to improve life chances, livelihoods, our health and wellbeing, our climate and our communities.

**Orkney Islands Council**

[transport@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:transport@orkney.gov.uk)

