

Item: 12

Development and Infrastructure Committee: 30 March 2021.

Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, following publication of National Planning Framework 4, the Council is required by statute to prepare a Regional Spatial Strategy either on its own or with other Planning Authorities.

2.2.

That a Regional Spatial Strategy should identify, in relation to the region, the need for strategic development, the outcomes to which that strategic development will contribute, the priorities for delivery of strategic development and the proposed locations of strategic development.

2.3.

That the Scottish Government has requested Planning Authorities to produce draft Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies to inform drafting of National Planning Framework 4 and Scottish Government secondary legislation on Regional Spatial Strategies.

2.4.

That seminars have been held and questionnaires issued to stakeholders in early 2020, which informed an early draft of Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy, which was provided to the Scottish Government in October 2020 for comment and feedback, as detailed in section 4 of this report.

2.5.

Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, which takes consideration of comments made, as noted at paragraph 4.4 of this report.

It is recommended:

2.6.

That Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Background

3.1.

The requirement for a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. It states that a Planning Authority, or two or more, can act jointly in preparing and adopting an RSS.

3.2.

The statutory requirement to complete this work will only come into force once secondary legislation is in place in respect of RSS and after the Scottish Government has published National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which is anticipated to be in Autumn 2022. The Scottish Government has requested Planning Authorities to produce draft RSS to inform drafting of secondary legislation and NPF4.

3.3.

RSS should identify, in relation to the region, the need for strategic development, the outcomes to which the Authority consider that strategic development will contribute, priorities for delivery of strategic development and the proposed locations of strategic development, which must be shown in the form of a map or diagram.

3.4.

Strategic Development is noted in the legislation as development that is likely to have a significant impact on future development within the area of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

4. Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy

4.1.

In February 2020, Development and Marine Planning held two seminars: one with Elected Members and officers, and the other with stakeholders, including local industry representatives from the renewable sector, the aquaculture sector and construction sectors. Both seminars were attended by senior members of the Scottish Government's Planning and Architect Team.

4.2.

In addition, Development and Marine Planning sent out an electronic questionnaire to relevant officers and stakeholders asking them to complete questions that ranged

from: what Orkney's long term development aspiration should be, to what parts of Orkney are vulnerable to Climate Change.

4.3.

The seminars, responses to the questionnaire and works completed in relation to ReFLEX Orkney, Islands Growth Deal and Orkney Harbours Masterplan informed early drafting works of OIRSS, together with virtual workshops with the Scottish Government and other planning authorities.

4.4.

In October 2020, an early draft of OIRSS was provided to the Scottish Government, relevant officers and partners. Development and Marine Planning received a number of comments and gained feedback from the Scottish Government on all Regional Spatial Strategies that had been submitted.

4.5.

On 18 March 2021, the Senior Management Team considered the draft OIRSS and requested that all the Strategic Developments referenced in section 3 of the draft OIRSS be considered as National Developments.

4.6.

The OIRSS, attached at Appendix 1 to this report, takes consideration of relevant comments made. Once approved, this version of OIRSS will be submitted to the Scottish Government to inform its drafting works in respect of secondary RSS legislation and NPF4.

4.7.

Once the secondary legislation on RSS and NPF4 have been published, the OIRSS will require to be reviewed with regard to those publications and the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. This will involve further consultation with key agencies, relevant officers, planning stakeholders and members of the public. It is anticipated that this will commence after Autumn 2022.

5. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Quality of Life.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority 5.19 – Establish and implement terrestrial and marine planning policy and environmental monitoring systems, of the Council Delivery Plan.

7. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of A Vibrant Community.

8. Financial Implications

The costs associated with the drafting of the Orkney Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy are estimated to be less than £1,000 and will be met from the existing Development and Marine Planning Service Revenue Budget. This does not include the significant amount of staff resource that the in-house Development and Marine Planning Team have provided, both to develop the Strategy itself, and support various stakeholder consultation exercises.

9. Legal Aspects

The requirement for an RSS is set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Whilst the statutory requirements to complete this work will only come into force once it is implemented by secondary legislation, the Scottish Government has requested each planning authority to produce a draft RSS to inform the Government's drafting of such secondary legislation and the National Planning Framework 4. Compliance with this request gives the Council the opportunity to raise matters of strategic development which are of importance to the Council.

10. Contact Officers

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Orkney's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.



March 2021
INDICATIVE DRAFT



Orkney's Regional Spatial Strategy



1 - Introduction

This indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) identifies the strategic priorities for development planning in Orkney over the next 25 years and looks beyond to 2050. The key strategic developments necessary to deliver these priorities are presented alongside the outcomes to which they will contribute.

Following on from the national review of the planning system, the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 was introduced. The Act aims to deliver a streamlined planning system that is more accessible and efficient; and works for all. One of the new requirements of the Act is that a planning authority, or planning authorities acting jointly, should prepare and adopt a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

The National Planning Framework is a long-term spatial plan for Scotland that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. Before the publication of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) in 2022, the Scottish Government has requested that planning authorities draft an iRSS. These indicative strategies are intended to be high level and broadly reflect the statutory requirements set out in legislation, identifying strategic development which includes regionally significant developments and potential national development for inclusion in NPF4. One of the key aspects of the iRSS is to present the region's strategic developments within an indicative strategic spatial diagram.

After the publication of NPF4, the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires that planning authorities adopt an RSS in line with the requirements of the Act. This will include stakeholder engagement and public consultation.

Given the magnitude of recent events, it is important to set this indicative strategy within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had a major impact upon the immediate outlook for the economy. We will enter a sharp economic downturn, though the long-term economic impacts and the effect across many aspects of life, are currently unclear.

It is likely that the pandemic will affect the way we work for the long-term, for example, with technology enabling more flexible and home working. There is also growing recognition that traditional models of economic growth may need to be replaced with a greater focus upon wellbeing, inclusive growth and sustainability. It is envisaged that global drivers including the pandemic and transition to zero carbon will make Orkney a more attractive place to live and do business in the future.

The Council is working with members of Orkney's business community through an Economic Recovery Steering Group to look at recovery. Through ASPIRE Orkney, the premise is that recovery from the pandemic will build a better future for Orkney through a Team Orkney approach as no single agency and business can make this happen. As Orkney's Regional Spatial Strategy moves forward our strategic priorities and developments will align and support ASPIRE Orkney.

The uncertainties of Brexit present a number of challenges to the economy, to trade and to the legal context within which we plan for the future. Agriculture and the fishing industry face significant change whether that be to markets, subsidy or regulation. It is critically important that the planning system supports these sectors and communities to secure a sustainable future.

1.1 - Orkney's Approach - The Regional Context

Orkney is an exceptional place. Our natural environment, economy and community provide an outstanding quality of life that has been enjoyed for generations. Orkney as a community embraces new economic opportunities that can enable us to sustainably benefit from our assets and resources. There is a longstanding tradition of innovation and ingenuity spanning thousands of years. From the Neolithic to the present day, our communities have been resilient; embracing new opportunities and adapting to change.

Innovation, research and development in renewable energy, zero-carbon fuels and local energy networks have established Orkney as a global centre of excellence. These emerging sectors thrive alongside a buoyant agricultural, marine and tourism economy.

We are an outward looking community, globally connected via our visitor economy and knowledge networks. And whilst Orkney may be considered on the geographic periphery, our islands are located at the heart of Scotland's renewable energy, oil and gas and marine resources. In a globally changing world, Orkney is ideally placed to support the forecasted rapid growth in shipping around the North West and North East Passages as arctic ice cover recedes. Due to many contributing factors, the future places Orkney at the centre not on the periphery, and as such, future investment will need to support sustainable economic growth to unlock the potential of our islands.

Orkney is geographically, culturally and economically distinct from the Scottish mainland. These unique characteristics present specific opportunities and challenges for strategic planning and development. Such special circumstances necessitate a bespoke approach that will help bring forward sustainable economic development, continued innovation and respect for our environment, communities and way of life.

Year on year, Orkney is considered to be one of the best places to live in the UK, with low crime rates, good schools, high employment and internationally acclaimed historic and natural environments.

In Orkney, land and sea are inextricably linked and are integral to our everyday life. It is critical that land and marine development is planned in a joined up and integrated way; ensuring nationally and regionally important infrastructure can effectively support our communities and the economy. Strategic planning across land and sea presents an opportunity to deliver a seamless framework for development working to deliver a common set of outcomes. Orkney's RSS therefore sets a high-level framework for development across the terrestrial and marine areas of Orkney. The strategy will inform the preparation of the future Orkney Local Development Plan and Orkney Regional Marine Plan to help deliver the identified outcomes.



Kirkwall Harbour

1.2 - Orkney's Approach - Strategic Initiatives

As a Council, we draft and develop policies and strategies that are required by statute; as well as other documents that support the Council's aspirations, ambitions and priorities as detailed in the Council Plan 2018 – 2023. The ORSS has also taken into full consideration the 13 Strategic Objectives of the National Islands Plan 2019.

Of strategic importance and relevant to the ORSS is the Council's current work with Shetland Islands Council and the Western Isles through the Islands Growth Deal that will be attracting major funding from both the UK and the Scottish Governments. This funding will be targeted at the development of world class visitor attractions, infrastructure to support our low carbon future, low carbon and green energy and innovation to ensure growth in existing and emerging sectors continues to provide employment and economic benefits for our communities.

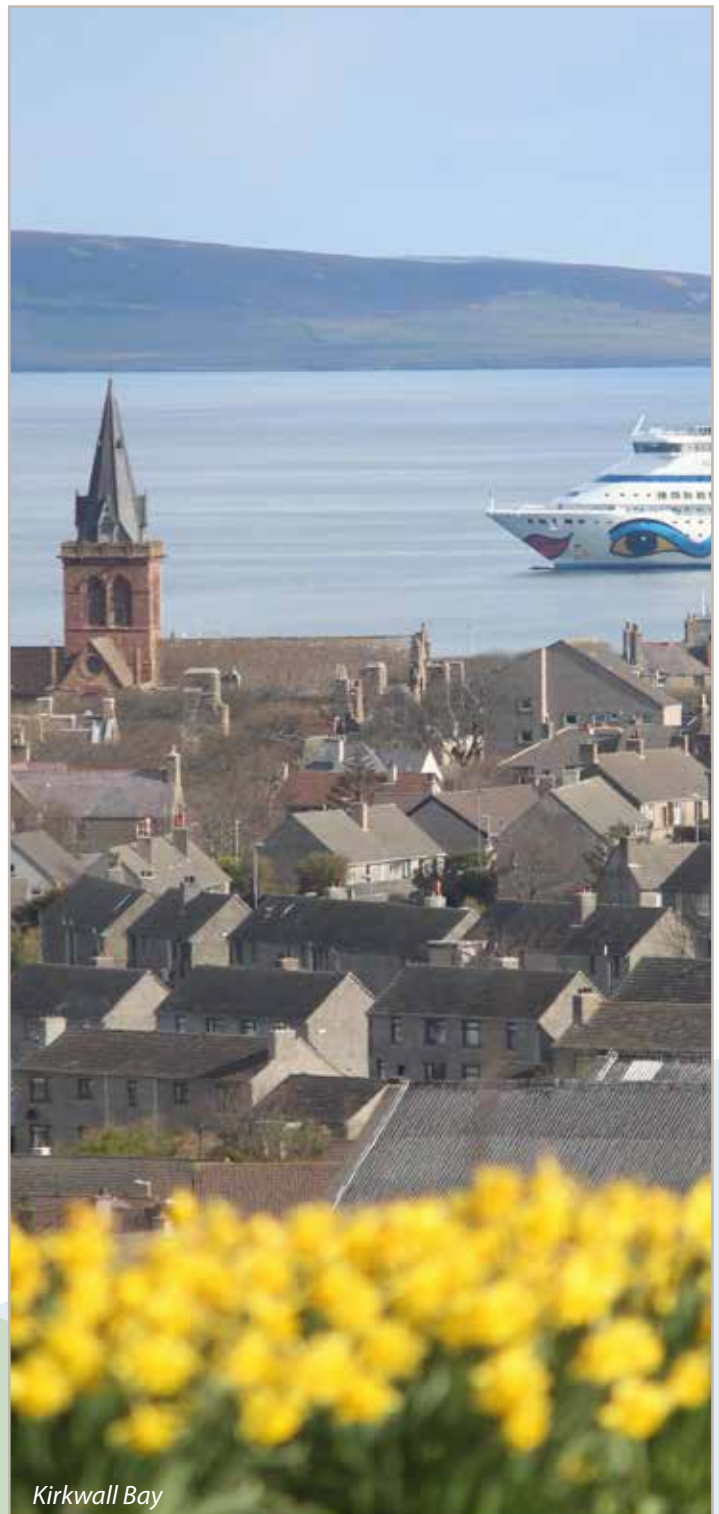
The Council as the Harbour Authority has developed and launched an ambitious Infrastructure Plan known as the Orkney Harbours Masterplan that aims to develop the Council's marine infrastructure and make the most of the unique geographical advantage of Scapa Flow as the largest natural harbour in the northern hemisphere to create opportunities for innovation, decarbonization, employment and economic growth.

The Council is one of the partners in the development of a multi partner project that looks to maximise the potential for renewable energy in Orkney and eliminate the need for fossil fuels. ReFLEX Orkney (Responsive Flexibility) aims to improve the supply demand balance of renewable energy with the use of electric vehicles, battery storage, hydrogen cells and smart heating systems.

These key strategic projects are embodied within the ORSS.



Kirkwall Harbour



Kirkwall Bay

1.3 Orkney's Approach - Early Engagement

To inform the development of the ORSS, early stakeholder engagement has been completed. This included a stakeholder questionnaire and workshops that sorted the views on the future priorities for development and planning in Orkney. Participants included Elected Members, Council Officers, Community Stakeholders and Business Representatives.

This engagement captured key themes that have helped to shape the ORSS.



KEY THEMES FROM STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

ASPIRATIONS – environmental and economic sustainability; and maintenance of our high quality of life. A broad range of infrastructure is required from digital connectivity for all to flood defences; but not one is a single fix.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY – A move towards carbon neutral, circular economy which is an exemplar for island life.

HOUSING – there is a desire to see existing stock brought up to standard and for new homes to be flexible and energy efficient. Living in settlements to be close to facilities and work is a theme that would reduce carbon emissions.

ECONOMY – to retain and grow Orkney's highly skilled workforce that is internationally recognised within maritime and renewable energy sectors. Traditional industries such as agriculture are a strong part of our community. Growth in tourism needs to be sustainable and an asset for all.

SPECIAL CHARACTER – Orkney is a unique place to live and visit, with internationally acclaimed cultural and natural heritage assets. Residents want to make sure it stays this way.



Stakeholder Engagement

1.4 Vision And Strategic Outcomes

Vision:

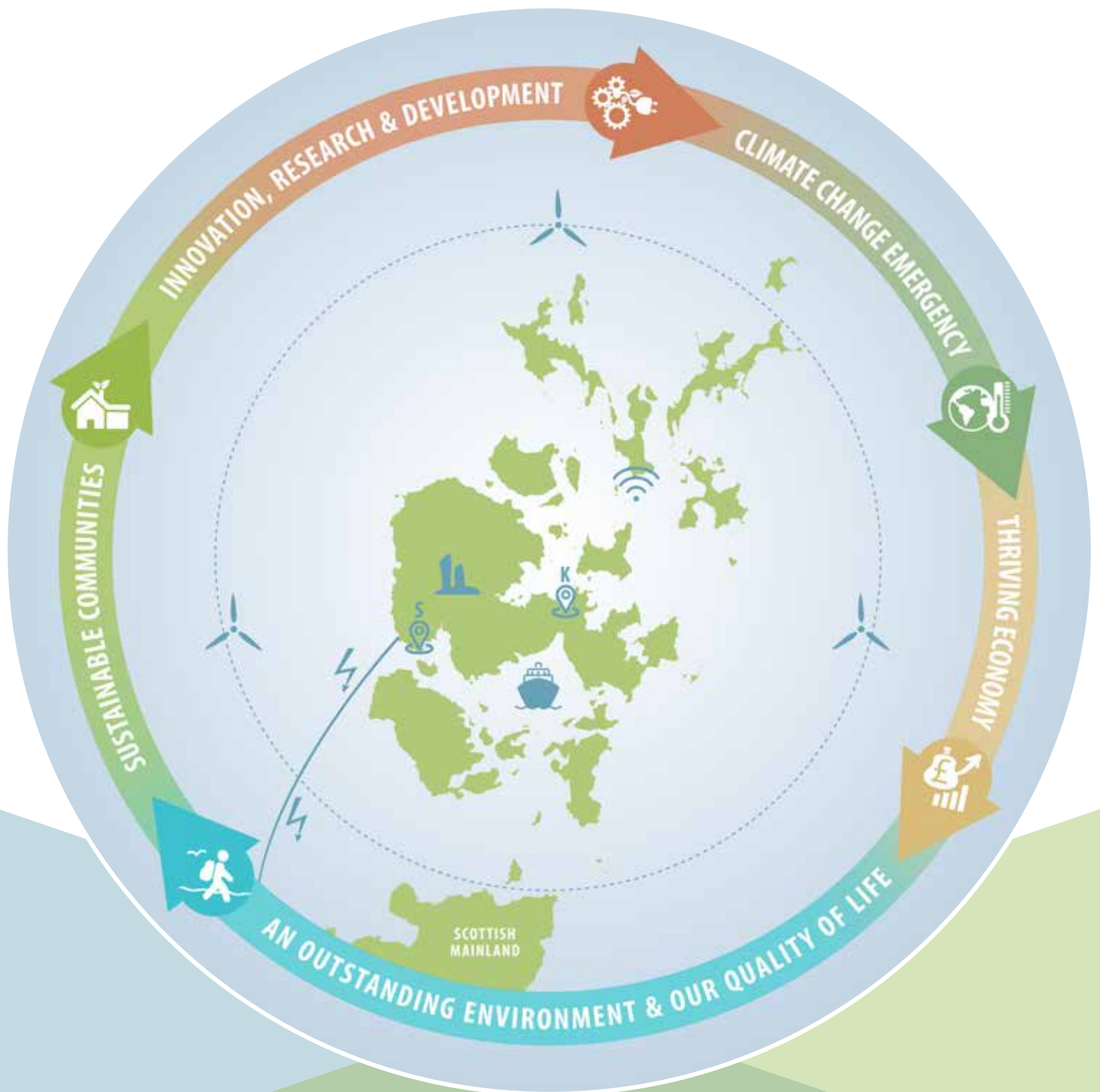
Orkney will have a clean, healthy and attractive environment with a productive and inclusive circular economy that is managed sustainably to support thriving and resilient island communities.

Effective community empowerment and strategic planning will help to unlock Orkney's potential through an integrated approach to sustainable development across land and sea.

INNOVATIVE

PROSPEROUS

AMBITIOUS



2 - Strategic Priorities

Five strategic priorities have emerged to inform the identification of the requirements for strategic development in Orkney. Each of these priorities are inter-related and collectively inform Orkney's Strategic Developments and Outcomes.

Sustainable Communities



Context

Orkney has a strong sense of community whether it is within our towns, villages, rural parishes or remote islands. Our resourceful communities are safe places to live and work with a sense of place that is rooted in our culture, society and environment. We need to ensure future growth is sustainable, making the most of infrastructure and services, reducing the need for fossil fuels and ensuring our places are ready for the challenges ahead.

A place-based approach

Orkney has a strong sense of place and identity with many factors contributing to what makes Orkney special and to our quality of life. Every place has different strengths on which to build and aspects that can be improved. When planning for the future, it is important to take a joined-up and collaborative approach when deciding how land should be used, developed and what infrastructure is required such as active travel connections. There are many assets, services and resources that need to come together to create successful places. It is therefore a key strategic priority to take forward a holistic approach to planning in Orkney informed by community aspirations.



Stromness



Kirkwall

Orkney's towns and service hubs

Kirkwall and Stromness are the largest settlements which form the main centres of population, employment, housing, facilities and services. Kirkwall is Orkney's capital; a centrally located service hub serving Orkney and the non-linked islands. Kirkwall's facilities include the Council headquarters, Kirkwall Airport, the Pickaquoy Centre, Orkney College UHI, Hatston Ferry Terminal, town centre businesses and the town's many other facilities. Kirkwall's population is growing faster than any other part of Orkney and has a high level of housing demand.

Stromness is a service centre predominantly for the West Mainland and is a key gateway to Orkney via the Scrabster to Stromness lifeline ferry service. Stromness is also the hub for research and innovation with the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus (ORIC) hosting the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), International Centre for Island Technology Heriot Watt University and Robert Gordon University.

The Plan below locates Kirkwall and Stromness in the context of Orkney.



Kirkwall

Rural development

Orkney is characterised by a relatively dispersed development pattern of towns, villages, rural settlements and countryside with scattered rural housing and farm steadings. The Orkney Mainland and linked islands are within easy commuting distances of Kirkwall, Stromness and other service centres. Therefore, development pressure for new housing and business development in the countryside is a significant planning and sustainability issue.

Our core spatial strategy is to direct development in the first instance to places with sufficient infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable social and economic development; the towns, villages and rural settlements. These are the places where services, facilities, retail, infrastructure, employment and centres of population are primarily located. This approach seeks to maximise the use of existing infrastructure, reduce the need to travel and looks to safeguard agricultural land and rural landscapes.

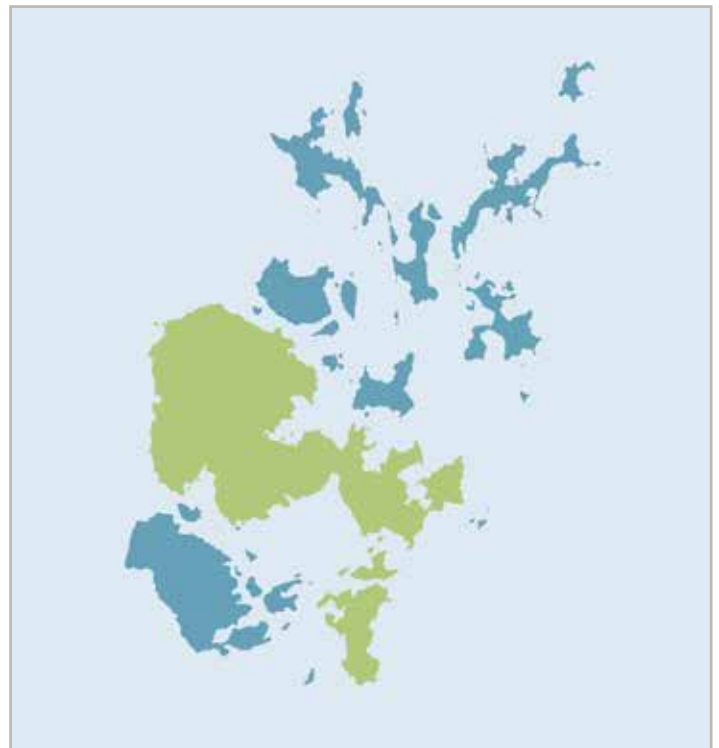
It is also a strategic priority to support the economic and social aspirations of our rural communities by supporting traditional business and creating new rural businesses, whilst seeking to protect Orkney's landscape and natural environment for future generations. The next local development plan provides an opportunity to consider future development scenarios to inform policies for sustainable rural development.



Fragile island communities

The north and south islands (non-linked) of Orkney are affected by a number of socio-economic issues that result in significant challenges and economic disadvantage. These more peripheral and fragile island communities can be affected by declining populations, under-representation of young people within the population, a lack of economic opportunities, below average income levels and problems with transport and digital connectivity. It is important to ensure that economic growth in Orkney is inclusive of these island communities and that planning policies support the development of housing, businesses and community services to enable these islands to thrive. A bespoke 'Isles Approach' to planning policy should continue to enable sustainable development whilst not placing an unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services.

The Plan below locates our fragile island communities.



The Plan left locates Orkney's main centres of population and highlights ferry routes.

Coastal and marine development

To support the growth of the Blue Economy, there is a need for integration and joined up working between the land use and marine planning regimes. This is particularly important for the sectors including offshore renewable energy, ports and harbours and aquaculture, and for addressing the challenges of climate change. In the Orkney context, the regional spatial strategy provides an important opportunity to establish a spatial development framework across land and sea to enable an integrated approach to the local development plan, regional marine plan and associated development projects.

In 2021, the Council will take the opportunity to pilot the local management of marine seabed assets on behalf of Crown Estates Scotland. This is the Marine Asset Management Scheme and it will provide enhanced accountability and transparency, particularly to the local community. It will better integrate the management of all local marine assets, shorelines, sea surface area, water column and seabed for the best use of these assets in pursuit of economic, social and environmental benefits.

In Orkney, the character of the coast and wider landscape are inseparable; there is an inherent relationship between the coast and the entire land area. This presents a significant challenge to defining a specific coastal zone that is distinct from other land areas, and as indicated in Scottish Planning Policy (Paragraphs 89 and 90), the subsequent identification of coastal areas that are subject to significant constraint and areas that are unsuitable for development. If applied in Orkney, this national policy approach would place an unreasonable blanket restriction on development across the islands. Orkney therefore needs to develop a bespoke approach to coastal development policy that takes account of our distinct landscape and coastal characteristics, and the needs of the Blue Economy.

Digital connectivity

Whilst Orkney is a site for one of the UK's 5G testbeds set up to promote and co-ordinate research into 5G technologies and use cases, the whole community still experiences some of the poorest digital outcomes in the UK with many areas of the

county not having access to superfast broadband whilst many urban areas of Scotland now have ultrafast broadband and 5G. Improving digital connectivity and investment in digital infrastructure is a key strategic priority to support growth and sustainability.

Sustainable travel and transport

Providing active travel networks for walking and cycling will enable people to safely travel and stay healthy and active. Creating sustainable transport options and active travel provision will also help our communities make zero carbon choices. Well designed and connected places will reduce the need for carbon based travel, whether this is by locating homes near places of work or through the use of fast and reliable digital connectivity.

Orkney currently has a high level of electric vehicles for a rural community. It is a strategic priority to enable greater electric vehicle use and enhance the capacity of the electric vehicle charging network by supporting development of charge points with new and existing developments. This will include supporting the infrastructure required for other low/zero carbon transportation including hydrogen fuelled cars, buses and ferries.

For our communities the ferry connections to and around Orkney provide a lifeline service; socially and economically. For Orkney, inter-island ferry and air links are the only means of travel for these communities to access facilities such as healthcare and certain types of education. They are considered to be public transport services and are lifelines for our most fragile communities. The present infrastructure is far from carbon neutral. National investment is required to ensure these services have longevity and have lower carbon emissions.

Later this year, Kirkwall airport will become the UK's first operationally based low carbon aviation centre reflecting Orkney's status as a world leader in renewable research and development. Aircraft powered by electricity, hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) will be trialled. This work will help decarbonise regional air travel and create employment opportunities. As a partner, the Council supports Highland and Islands Airport Limited in their future sustainable business growth.

Fuel poverty

Orkney is the worst affected area by fuel poverty in the UK resulting in local impacts on prosperity and quality of life. Future housing and business development will need to incorporate affordable renewable and low carbon heat; and energy efficiency measures. This needs to be delivered through both new development and investment in retro-fitting existing housing stock and business premises.

Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1 – To allow for our communities to flourish socially and economically; the whole of Orkney needs fast and reliable digital connectivity in the home, places of education, places of work and places that provide services. A reliable connectivity will reduce the need to travel and support our move to cut carbon emissions.

Outcome 2 – To identify Orkney Sustainable Communities as locations for future growth where people live, work, exercise, socialise, shop and use services. These will be locations that service our rural communities.

Outcome 3 – Investigate the future of housing in Orkney; especially in our rural and remote locations, considering the adaption of existing housing stock to address fuel poverty and climate change, low carbon housing, live/work unit options and co-living.

Outcome 4 - Consider future rural development scenarios and how they may affect our landscape, countryside and agriculture; whilst seeking to maximise development in locations where there is appropriate infrastructure and services.

Outcome 5 – Continue to investigate and invest in sustainable travel networks in our communities that link homes to places of work, education and services. These networks will provide links within settlements and between our settlements; including Green Infrastructure Networks that facilitate sustainable surface water management, active travel and biodiversity corridors. Infrastructure is required to continue Orkney's move to low carbon travel.

A Thriving Economy



Context

Orkney is a resilient and enterprising community with a diverse economy. Our vision is to establish Orkney as a vibrant carbon neutral place which supports the growth of existing and new businesses; and stimulates inclusive investment in all our communities. To realise this vision and the establishment of our circular economy, we require continued investment in our core industries, strategic infrastructure, people and skills.

Economic and community hubs

Kirkwall and Stromness are the main urban centres in Orkney performing vital economic roles as centres for business and administration. They are hubs for community and sports activities, provide healthcare services such as the new hospital, 'The Balfour', in Kirkwall, education facilities at all levels and are gateways for internal and external ferry links. As such, they have been identified as Strategic Hubs.

Economic challenges

Orkney has many economic strengths with a diverse economy that has both established and emerging sectors, including agriculture, marine, food and drink, renewable energy and tourism. Though we are a relatively prosperous place, we also face a number of economic challenges. Remoteness from traditional economic, population and government centres results in relatively expensive transport connectivity and associated challenges to developing businesses. We have an aging population and therefore wish to encourage more young people to live and work in Orkney.

It is therefore critical that we invest in the essential strategic development and infrastructure, services, people and skills to help build on our economic successes, securing a sustainable future. But for all our challenges, Orcadians face them head on having a global reach through organisations such as EMEC.

The Blue Economy

Surrounded by a major marine estate and coastline Orkney has significant 'Blue Economy' opportunities, including the sustainable expansion of fishing and aquaculture, and new high growth areas such as renewable energy, biotechnology and low/zero carbon fuels. Orkney is ideally placed to support the forecasted rapid growth in shipping around the North West and North East Passages as ice cover recedes in the Northern Arctic waters due to global warming. Scapa Flow, being the largest natural harbour in the northern hemisphere, has a significant locational advantage.

As brought forward within the Islands Growth Deal, there is the opportunity to support marine low carbon fuel transition through Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) refuelling in Scapa Flow, and future hydrogen technology. The Orkney Harbours Masterplan will also establish world class facilities to support the offshore wind industry and wider marine sectors. With these developments, Orkney will play a central role in delivering upon the Scottish Government's Arctic Strategy and National Islands Plan.

Supporting our established economic sectors

As well as supporting the development of emerging sectors, agriculture, aquaculture and fishing are established industries that require support to enable a sustainable future. This support should include investment in infrastructure, enabling planning policies, sustainable management and environmental protection measures. It is also important to acknowledge the cultural and community value of traditional industries including agriculture and fishing, and the contribution they make to island life.



Sustainable tourism

Tourism is an important source of jobs and income in Orkney with an estimated annual value of £67 million to the Orkney economy. It contributes to many sectors including accommodation, food and drink, hospitality, transport and manufacturing. As a growth sector, the sustainable management of tourism is a key strategic issue. Investment is required to address adverse impacts from high-volume tourism, maximise socio-economic benefits, seasonal nature and the protection of the special character and qualities of Orkney's cultural and natural assets. As the ice cover recedes in the Northern Arctic waters this could open up future tourism markets for Orkney.

Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1 - A vibrant and diverse economy that is inclusive of all our communities in the provision of well-paid economic opportunities for all.

Outcome 2 - A carbon neutral Orkney economy.

Outcome 3 - A thriving and sustainable marine economy supported by world class infrastructure, supply chain and a highly skilled work force.

Outcome 4 - A thriving and sustainable tourism destination with well managed infrastructure, cultural and natural heritage.





Context

Climate change is a global issue requiring immediate international, regional and local action. Rising sea levels and changing weather patterns will increasingly affect our environment in Orkney and, in turn, our society and economy in significant ways. Increased flooding and coastal erosion are impacting on our communities and homes, our historic, cultural and natural assets, and will increasingly affect agriculture, fisheries and the many other industries that our communities rely on. Mitigating and adapting to climate change is therefore a strategic priority of critical importance.

Transition to zero carbon

Orkney will take a leading role to support the global transition to low carbon. Orkney is at the cutting edge of innovation in renewable energy technologies, low carbon fuels and local energy networks. It is a key strategic priority to support the continued growth of these sectors and the transfer of this knowledge and technology to decarbonise the national economy, homes and transportation.

Maximising local socio-economic benefits from appropriate renewable energy development both on the land and at sea is a significant strategic priority for Orkney. This strategy identifies key harbour assets, development and grid infrastructure to help realise and grow these opportunities.

ReFLEX Orkney aims to maximise the potential for renewable energy in Orkney and eliminate the need for fossil fuels by improving the supply demand balance of renewable energy with the use of electric vehicles, battery storage, the use of hydrogen and smart heating systems.



Micro Generation

Adaptation to climate change impacts

Rising sea levels and changing weather patterns will increase adverse impacts from flooding, coastal erosion, coastal inundation and wider processes of coastal change. To effectively plan future development and infrastructure, greater understanding of these processes and associated impacts is required. Improving knowledge of the likely impacts of climate change, including flooding and coastal erosion will inform future local development plans and strategic funding. Further assessment and modelling are required to help predict and plan future development and infrastructure to adapt to climate change.

The Council through the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 completes flood risk management for Orkney. The Local Flood Risk Management Plan considers the County's priorities and actions to avoid and reduce the risk of flooding; prepare and protect communities from flood risk. Actions that consider physical infrastructure can be financially and technically difficult for the Council and partner agencies, such as the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, to deliver.

Safeguarding and enhancing natural assets

Safeguarding and enhancing the integrity of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and geomorphological features, will have significant benefits to mitigate and reduce the adverse impact of climate change. Natural habitats, and green infrastructure can improve surface water management and reduce flooding impacts in our settlements. Woodland, peat and carbon rich soils, saltmarsh and maerl beds, for example, provide significant carbon storage and sequestration benefits. Coastal and marine habitats including sand dunes, saltmarsh and kelp forests, provide essential coastal protection services. It is therefore important that these habitats are safeguarded and enhanced to help mitigate climate related impacts.



Electric car

Climate change related opportunities

Whilst climate change presents many potential threats and uncertainties, it also presents significant opportunities to create a greener, cleaner and more productive economy. Renewable energy and low/zero carbon fuels are a significant economic driver for Orkney that can benefit local jobs, supply chain, infrastructure and services.

Orkney is ideally placed to support the forecasted rapid growth in shipping around the North West and North East Passages as arctic ice cover recedes due to climate change. The opening up of new arctic shipping routes is enabling faster connections to China and the far east. Orkney has a locational advantage to create new low and zero carbon shipping and fuelling opportunities.

Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1 – Orkney’s infrastructure and assets will be resilient to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Outcome 2 - Orkney will realise significant socio-economic and community benefits from appropriate onshore wind, offshore wind, wave and tidal development; and associated non fossil fuel opportunities.

Outcome 3 – Orkney Harbours will be the preferred location for offshore wind, wave and tidal operations in North of Scotland with a skilled local workforce and supply chain.

An Outstanding Environment and Quality of Life

Context

Orkney consistently comes out near the top of national quality of life rankings. The factors that contribute to this include sense of community, trust, belonging, health, safety, high levels of employment, wellbeing and happiness. The quality of the environment is a significant factor. Each island and community has its own special character and it’s this diversity that makes Orkney a unique and interesting place to live and visit. Local communities value their environment and wish to see it safeguarded for current and future generations.



Our outstanding natural environment in Orkney is of international significance. In addition to its intrinsic value, the environment underpins many sectors of the economy - from agriculture, fishing and aquaculture to tourism and the food and drinks industry. The natural heritage of Orkney is reflected in its many designated sites, the wider biodiversity and geodiversity, as well as its inspiring landscapes and seascapes.

Natural features and processes also support communities in less obvious ways, for example through water storage and purification, carbon storage and flood mitigation. Orkney’s complex mosaic of habitats and biological features provide a wealth of natural capital and ecosystem services. These include dune systems, vegetated shingle and saltmarshes that provide valuable coastal defences against the erosive forces of strong tides and wave action. In our seas, the many kelp and seaweed communities on sublittoral sediment also provide protection against wave action. Marine habitats such as maerl beds, flame shell beds, kelp forests, horse mussel reefs and seagrass meadows have been found to be significant storage areas for carbon, commonly known as ‘Blue Carbon’.

The Plan below locates Orkney International Natural Heritage Designations.



The Plan below locates Orkney's Marine Protected Areas.



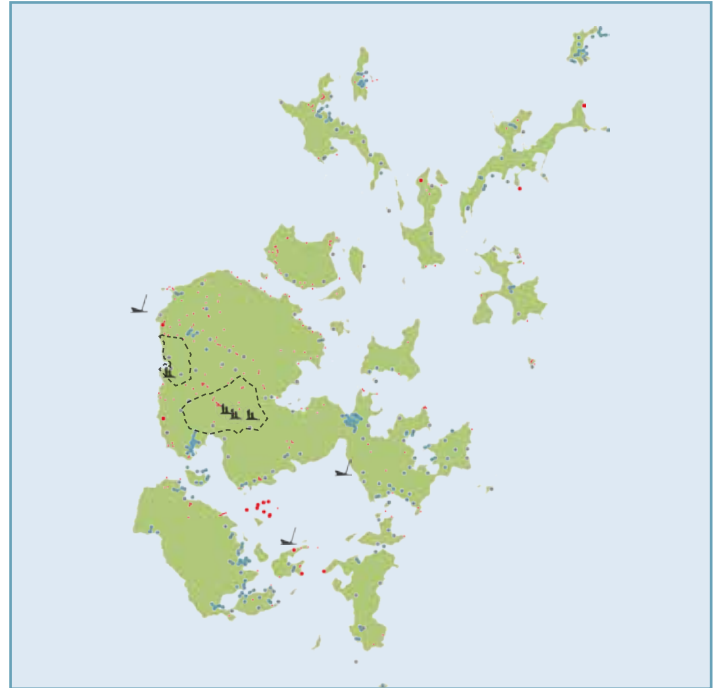
The Plan below locates Orkney's National Landscape Designations.



The historic environment

From the Neolithic village at Skara Brae to the wrecks of the German High Seas fleet in Scapa Flow, Orkney is internationally renowned for its historic buildings, archaeology and cultural heritage. These are not only central to Orkney's cultural identity, but also form the backdrop to everyday life. Orkney's rich and varied historic sites are valuable assets, comprising a significant proportion of the county's infrastructure, public realm and building stock. These assets need to be protected whilst recognising their place in the living landscape.

The Plan below locates Orkney's historic environment assets with listed buildings in red, Scheduled Ancient Monuments in blue, the Monuments of the World Heritage Site and their associated buffers in black and controlled sites noted with a black ship symbol.



Outdoor enjoyment and recreation

The natural and historic environment are valuable resources for recreation, outdoor access and enjoyment. Whether it be working outside, walking, cycling, sailing, outdoor swimming, wildlife watching or visiting our cultural heritage sites, people feel the benefit of being outdoors to their mental health and general wellbeing. And within our towns, open spaces, footpaths and cycleways create green networks, enabling communities to live healthier lives and reduce carbon emissions. Opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and develop better infrastructure for outdoor access and active travel need to be a priority.

A place-based approach

Understanding a place, and its influence on people and communities is essential for effective planning of development and services. It's important to understand what makes a place work well, what makes a place special, so these features can be protected and enhanced. Natural spaces, play and recreation, cultural connections and sense of identity all contribute to the values and benefits we associate with our environment. This place-based approach will form the basis for how the environment will be managed through the planning system in Orkney.

Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1 – Orkney’s natural environment will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of nature and people.

Outcome 2 - Orkney’s historic environment will be sustainably managed as part of a living landscape for the enjoyment of our community and visitors, now and in the future.

Outcome 3 – Through Local Place Plan, a Place Approach will be adopted that will involve the community to actively plan their places for the future.

Innovation, Research and Development



Context

Orkney has always been an outward looking community with a global reach that has embraced change and looked to new sectors and opportunities to provide for its economic future. Burgar Hill Wind Energy Development on the West Mainland of Orkney began as a research site in the early 1980s with experimental technology that demonstrated how large scale renewable energy production was viable. Today, Orkney is home to the European Marine Energy Centre Ltd (EMEC) which is a world class facility providing developers of both wave and tidal technologies with open sea testing facilities, associated infrastructure, and a range of consultancy and research services.



Washing the Microsoft data centre following retrieval from EMEC test site in Orkney © Microsoft

Stromness

An internationally renowned cluster of innovation, research and development has emerged in Stromness around EMEC, Heriot Watt’s International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT) and complementary businesses, services and research organisations. This cluster has now been consolidated in the newly completed Orkney Research and Innovation Campus (ORIC) that has redeveloped the town’s former primary and high schools. ORIC is home to Heriot Watt University’s Centre for Island Technology, Robert Gordon University and the European Marine Energy Centre; as well as a number of renewables and energy commercial enterprises. Students from all over the world are attracted to study here and often gain rewarding employment within Orkney after graduation, making the islands their home.



Kirkwall

Orkney College forms part of the University of the Highlands and Islands - a network of 13 campus and research facilities throughout Northern Scotland. A range of subjects can be studied, including construction, business, catering, agriculture, archaeology, maritime studies and childcare, with vocational qualifications, modern apprenticeships, and under-graduate and post-graduate qualifications available. Internationally, Orkney College is a recognised centre for archaeology, agronomy and northern studies.

Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1 - A strengthened position for Orkney as a world leader in research, development and innovation. This is of key importance to Orkney Islands Council.

Outcome 2 - Research, development and innovation will act as a catalyst for economic and community development securing significant socio-economic benefits.

Outcome 3 – Research, development and innovation will attract young and talented people to make Orkney their preferred location to live and work.

3 – Orkney's Strategic Developments

Achieving Orkney's strategic priorities is dependent on smart investment in strategic development and infrastructure. Whether it be achieving our ambitions to lead at the cutting edge of the transition to net zero carbon or establishing Orkney as a world class destination for sustainable tourism, the necessary development and infrastructure needs to be identified and prioritised within Orkney's Regional Spatial Strategy and supported within NPF4.

Successful places are created through many contributing factors, not through stand alone developments or infrastructure investments. From clusters of innovation, research and development such as Stromness, to distinctive high-quality environments like the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site or Scapa Flow as a nationally significant natural harbour asset, building on the success of these places requires a coordinated approach. The Strategic Developments have been identified as places that require key infrastructure and development over the next 25 years and beyond to 2050.

Since the publication of National Planning Framework 3 in June 2013, there have been significant developments in Orkney particularly within the marine and renewable energy sectors.

Opportunities have evolved with a renewed strategic focus galvanised by Scotland's target of net zero emissions by 2045. New opportunities have come to the fore including wind energy developments and new facilities have been delivered such as the ORIC. The ORSS provides the ideal opportunity to focus and coordinate Orkney's Strategic Developments to assist in the delivery of national and local outcomes both onshore and offshore.



Marine shipping

3.1 - Building on NPF3 aspirations

Orkney featured prominently within NPF3 and many of these key development aspirations remain a priority and should continue to be supported in NPF4. The Orkney related aspects of NPF3 are:

- Orkney and Pentland Firth identified as an area of co-ordinated action in respect of marine renewable energy development.
- Recognition made of plans for a transhipment container hub in Scapa Flow which could benefit the opening up of northern trade routes.
- The role of key coastal and islands hubs including Kirkwall.
- The identification of Scapa Flow as a key port.
- The need to capitalise on world-class environments such as the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site.
- The inclusion of the Orkney-Scottish Mainland electricity grid connection as a "national development."

3.2 - The ORSS Strategic Developments of National Importance

- Scapa Flow Strategic Asset Development including Scapa Flow Deep Water Quay
- Kirkwall Strategic Development Hub including Hatston Pier
- Electricity Transmission Network
- Orkney's Renewable Energy Opportunities
- Stromness Strategic Development Hub including Orkney's Research and Innovation Centre
- World Heritage Site Gateway for Orkney
- High Speed Digital Connectivity for All

3.2 – Scapa Flow Strategic Asset Development including Scapa Flow Deep Water Quay as a National Development

Our vision for Scapa Flow:

With its expansive natural sheltered harbour, Flotta Oil Terminal and ultra-deep-water quayside infrastructure and anchorages – Scapa Flow will be a first-class hub that supports maritime trade now and, in the future, fuel and energy production/supply, and the wider marine economy fostering growth, innovation and transition towards a decarbonised future. Achieving this ambition will generate considerable social, economic and environmental benefit and resilience for Orkney, for Scotland and the UK as a whole and for national and international shipping logistics.



Scapa Flow is recognised as a national strategic asset which has played significant roles in the past and will continue to do so into the future. There have already been significant periods of change, from its historic role as a strategic naval base to a vital trade route way point and the development of Flotta Terminal and Scapa Oil Port. The Scapa Flow Strategic Asset Development will continue this journey, realising new opportunities to support the offshore wind and marine renewable sectors to develop new facilities for a low and zero carbon fuel hub, and evolving the harbour's role within the energy sector.

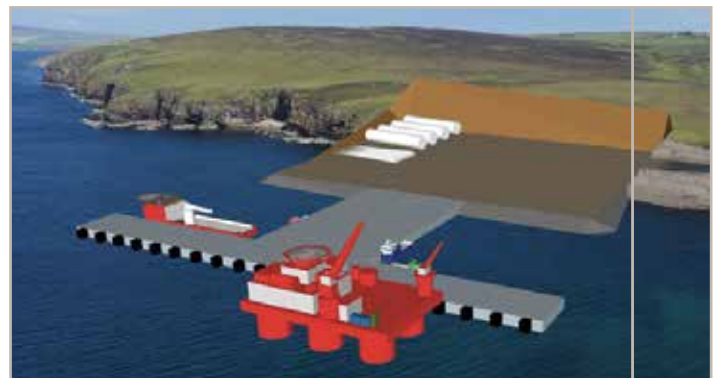
This ambition to develop Scapa Flow will require infrastructure to be constructed to enable the storage and delivery of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and, in time, hydrogen and ammonia to shipping and terrestrial users, as they shift to LNG as a stepping-stone to lower and then zero carbon fuel. A new deep-water harbour facility will service offshore platforms and support the construction, operations and maintenance of offshore wind developments in the north of Scotland. This development programme will repurpose Scapa Flow as it shifts from a dependency on oil and at the same time, the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) site at the Flotta Oil Terminal will transition to lower carbon energy use, contributing to the life extension of this strategic facility. This collective repurposing initiative will lead through innovation to transition from hydrocarbons to a zero-carbon future.

The infrastructure and facilities that form part of this Strategic Development include:

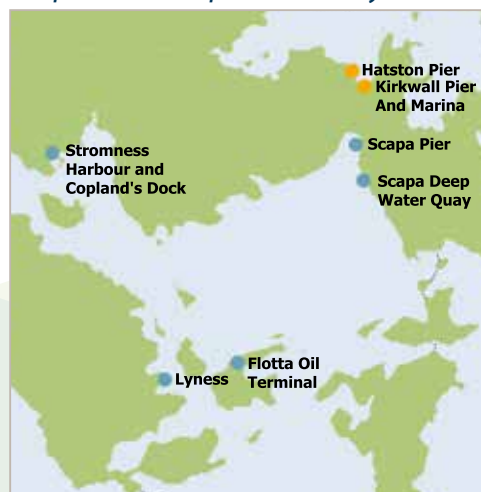
- the construction of new deep-water quayside facilities in Scapa Flow – the Scapa Deep Water Quay - a proposed National Development;
- the development of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage and distribution hub; and
- focused research, development and implementation of new technologies to enable the diversification of Flotta Terminal.

Other key aspects of Scapa Flow's infrastructure assets include:

- Scapa Pier as a key component of Orkney's critical infrastructure supporting Flotta Oil Terminal activities, Ship to Ship Transfer and rig stacking/maintenance. This pier also provides the single point of entry for Orkney's supply of domestic and commercial fuels.
- Lyness on Hoy which has potential future use in the renewable energy, oil or gas sectors.
- Stromness harbour including Copland's Dock and the marina.



The visualisation above shows the proposed Scapa Flow Deep Water Quay.



The Plan left indicates the location of the ports and harbours facilities and proposed developments noted.

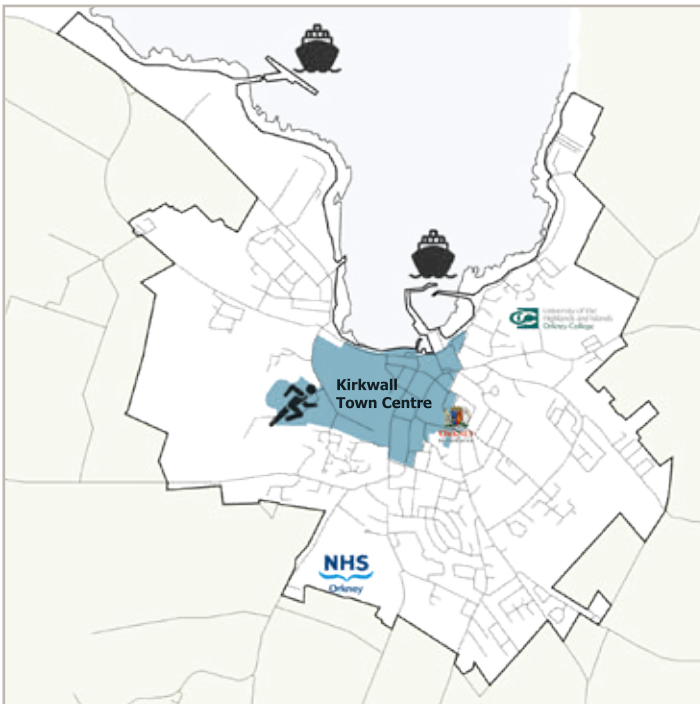
3.3 - Kirkwall Strategic Development Hub including Hatston Pier as a National Development



Our Vision for Kirkwall:

For Orkney's sustainable economic future, Kirkwall requires to remain as our hub for co-ordinated action to realise the ambitious plans for Scapa Flow and Hatston Pier; and for our renewable energy resource. Our ambitious plans will provide for social and economic benefits for the community and allow Orkney to transition to a zero-carbon economy. Kirkwall is the main hub for services, recreation and leisure, healthcare, education, administration, retail, transport and commercial activity.

The Plan below shows Kirkwall.



The visualisation below shows the proposed extension and redevelopment of Hatston Pier.



As Orkney's capital, Kirkwall is a strategically important economic, cultural, recreational, residential, commercial, tourist and transport hub for Orkney. Centrally located on the Orkney Mainland, Kirkwall serves people who live in and visit Kirkwall, as well as those from the East and West Mainland, the linked isles and the outer isles. Key services include Council headquarters, the Pickaquooy Centre, the new Balfour Healthcare Facility, Orkney College UHI, Hatston Pier and Terminal, Hatston Industrial Estate and a range of wider retail and business services. A successful Kirkwall contributes to a successful Orkney and the town's ongoing development must be supported and coordinated for the islands as a whole to thrive.

Kirkwall is a key transportation hub with Kirkwall Airport and the Hatston Terminal which connects Orkney to the Scottish mainland and then internationally. Via Hatston Pier or Kirkwall Harbour, Kirkwall is the most visited cruise port in the UK, the hub for inter-isle ferry routes to the Outer North Isles and Shapinsay and home to the largest marina in Orkney.

Further significant infrastructure investment is required to ensure that Kirkwall continues to support sustainable communities and economic growth across Orkney. The Orkney Harbours Master Plan – Phase 1 has identified opportunities to develop new multipurpose quayside infrastructure and land reclamation at Hatston and Kirkwall Piers to support the oil and gas, renewables, aquaculture, fishing and cruise sectors. This will be supported by a mixed-use waterfront redevelopment in the heart of Kirkwall and a significant expansion to Kirkwall Marina.

Recently, considerable investment has been made in new coastal flood defences in Kirkwall that have protected the heart of Kirkwall from coastal flooding. The Council with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Water are investigating and establishing solutions that address the surface water flooding issues for Kirkwall as well as creating more capacity in the public foul drainage system. Investment is still required to allow for future sustainable growth of our main settlement.

In 2018, the Council completed the Your Kirkwall Project that fully engaged with the community on their plan for Kirkwall as a place to live, work, study and visit. Your Kirkwall identified active travel and outside space projects. The Council is presently working with partner agencies and the community on the delivery of these projects that will see greater active transport connectivity within and around Kirkwall; ensuring purposeful trips and trips for health and recreation can be made actively.

The infrastructure and facilities that form part of this Strategic Development include:

- Hatston Terminal and Pier: New multi-purpose deep water quayside infrastructure and reclamation of land for development.
- Kirkwall Pier: New multi-purpose quayside infrastructure, along with marina, mixed-use waterfront development area and improvements to traffic management and facilities on quay.
- Funding to allow for the sustainable upgrade of surface water management.
- Funding for the completion of the Your Kirkwall Active Travel and Places Projects allowing Kirkwall to be a sustainable travel location that has places for all.
- To consider the development and future educational requirements of Orkney College as part of the University of the Highlands and Islands that will support growth sectors within Orkney's and Scotland's economy such as Tourism, Food and Drink, Agriculture and Archaeology; including investment in vertical farming

3.4 – Electricity Transmission Network as a National Development



Our Vision for Electricity Transmission:

For Orkney's renewable energy opportunities, both on land and at sea to be sustainably realized and managed; with residual energy exported to markets both in Scotland and Internationally. Achieving this ambition will generate considerable social, economic and environmental benefits for Orkney as well as allowing for Orkney to transition to a zero-carbon economy and assisting in Scotland meeting its renewable energy targets.

The Orkney-Scottish Mainland high voltage electricity grid connection needs to be retained as a National Development in National Planning Framework 4. Since the publication of National Planning Framework 3 in June 2014, this grid connection has not been achieved. To facilitate renewable energy developments a new cable linking Orkney to Mainland Scotland is required.

This infrastructure will assist in achieving the Scottish Government's ambitious green energy targets. The Scottish Energy Strategy 2017 sets a 2030 target for the equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied by renewable sources. By 2045, the Scottish Government aims to have an almost completely decarbonised energy system.

The current poor grid connectivity to Mainland Orkney means that existing renewable energy developments are often curtailed, and new large-scale renewable energy projects are delayed. For Orkney to continue to be a global leader within this sector with research and development into new technologies both land and marine based, this connection is required.



At the end of 2019 and in early 2020, consents have been gained by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc for the installation of a 220kV AC Subsea Cable that proposes to land at Warebeth, Stromness and for the associated infrastructure throughout Orkney. The Orkney Transmission Project – Conditional decision on Final Needs Case for this development was published in September 2019 by the Office for Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem). The needs case for the cable is based on 135MW of installed capacity being gained by December 2021.

3.5 - Orkney's Renewable Energy Opportunities as a National Development



Our Vision for Orkney's Renewable Energy Opportunities:

For Orkney's renewable energy opportunities, both on land and at sea to be sustainably realised and managed; with residual energy exported to markets both in Scotland and internationally. Achieving this ambition will generate considerable social, economic and environmental benefits for Orkney as well as allowing for Orkney to transition to a zero-carbon economy and assisting in Scotland meeting its renewable energy targets.

Orkney is recognised as having a considerable renewable energy resource with the significant wave and tidal energy opportunities being recognised through the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters – Area of Coordinated Action that featured prominently within National Planning Framework 3. The Marine Scotland's Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy has identified two draft options off the north coast of Scotland and near Orkney for offshore wind energy.

On land, on Orkney's Mainland and isles, there is presently over 50 MW of consented large-scale wind energy developments with other large-scale projects currently in development. Orkney is also home to the largest number of small-scale wind energy developments in Great Britain.

With our existing electricity grid infrastructure being heavily constrained, the Council and partners have been investigating and bringing forward ways to manage constrained renewable energy.

The ReFLEX Orkney project is bringing forward ways to manage this through battery storage, hydrogen cells and electric vehicle use.

The Orkney Regional Spatial Strategy has also noted the major port and harbours infrastructure requirements that would facilitate the deployment, operation and maintenance of large scale renewable energy generation.

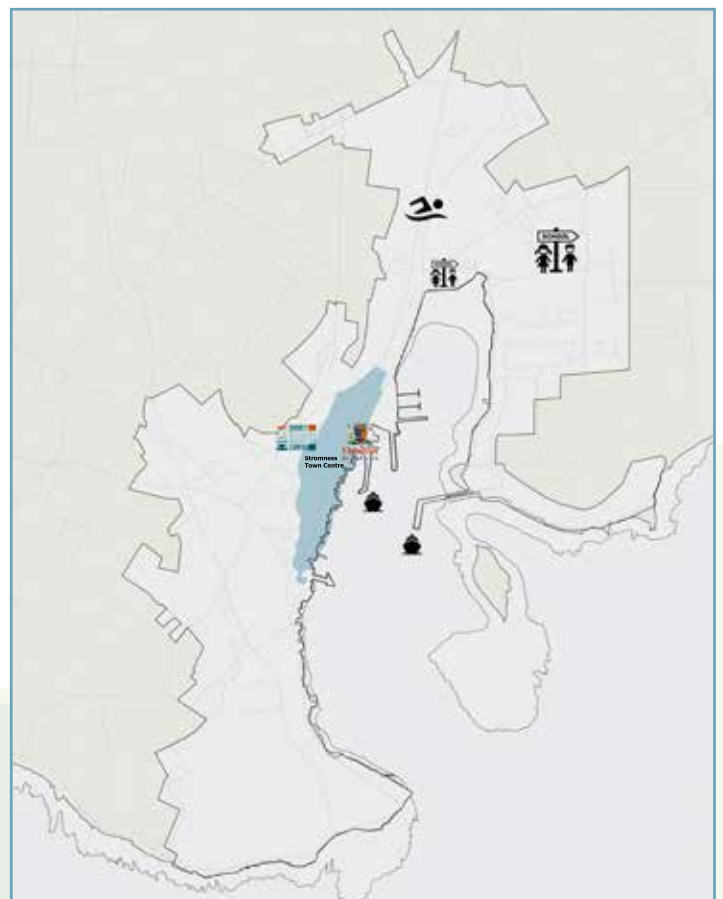
3.6 - Stromness Strategic Development Hub including Orkney's Research and Innovation Centre as a National Development



Our Vision for Stromness:

For Orkney's sustainable economic future, Stromness requires to remain as our global hub for Research and Innovation so that Orkney can realise the ambitious plans for the management of our renewable energy resource to allow Orkney to transition to a zero-carbon economy through the 2nd Phase of the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus and the Island Centre for Net Zero Carbon. Stromness is an important hub for services, recreation and leisure, healthcare, education, administration, retail, transport and commercial activity.

Below is a Plan locating the main facilities within Stromness.



Globally Orkney has a key strategic ambition to further establish itself as an International Centre of Excellence for collaborative, world-leading research and learning, and the commercial application of new renewable energy technologies. Orkney Research and Innovation Campus hosts the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), Heriot Watt's International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT) and Robert Gordon University, which have helped establish Orkney as a global leader in marine renewable energy, zero carbon energy systems and environmental research. A cluster of successful renewable energy businesses has grown up in Orkney as a result.

Completed in 2020, the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus Phase 1 has been a successful venture. Such is the demand for research and collaboration facilities, the space created is now full and the ORIC Board now plans to expand the campus with a Phase 2 development. The organisations on campus have continued to grow and there is a strong interest from existing and new academic partners to locate research and teaching activity in Orkney.

While there is a substantial opportunity for development of the campus, future development and activities of ORIC are not limited to Stromness but are a hub for activities throughout Orkney and other cross-island group low carbon activities.

The ORIC Phase 2 development is looking to create additional office, student accommodation and facilities to support the establishment of an Island Centre for Net Zero Carbon. This will support a significant expansion in the number of high-quality island-based commercial, academic and research and development jobs, undergraduate and postgraduate places and create space for new start companies.

The Islands Centre for Net Zero Carbon will aim is to accelerate the islands' transition to net zero carbon and ability to act as UK demonstrators for the associated technologies and provide low carbon expertise. The ambition is to deliver an Integrated Energy System interlinking electricity, heat and transport networks into one overarching digitally connected low carbon ecosystem. This will capitalise on the islands' huge renewable energy potential and the current £28million UK Research and Innovation sponsored ReFLEX Orkney project to deliver a decarbonised energy system of the future. A key component of this will be a Hydrogen Hub, which establishes green hydrogen infrastructure allowing for the first demonstration of this clean fuel of the future in ambitious projects such as hydrogen ferries and hydrogen gas networks.



Electric Bus

3.7 - World Heritage Site Gateway for Orkney as a National Development



Our Vision for the World Heritage Site Gateway:

Orkney's World Heritage Site Gateway will re-enforce Orkney's position as a tourism centre of excellence. A strategic and integrated approach will ensure effective management and a welcoming visit for all. The Gateway Project involves investment in new and existing facilities and the application of digital technologies and addressing sustainability and climate challenges

Orkney is renowned for its rich natural and cultural heritage assets. The world-class quality of these assets is illustrated by the UNESCO World Heritage status of the sites which form The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site (WHS). A cornerstone of the Orkney visitor experience, the component parts of the WHS are situated in the West Mainland of Orkney, comprising the domestic settlement at Skara Brae, Maeshowe Chambered Cairn, the Stones of Stenness circle and henge, the Ring of Brodgar stone circle and associated standing stones and funerary monuments.

For more than a decade, Orkney has been experiencing exponential growth in visitor numbers (with cruise passenger numbers alone increasing by 369% during the period). Although this has been driven largely by the cruise market, the coach tour and independent markets have also been growing.

The essential need for changes in ferry fare structures (introduction of Road Equivalent Tariffs) and successful developments in neighbouring areas such as the North Coast 500 route, for example, are also likely to drive up visitor numbers over the coming years. Continuing and rapidly expanding tourism growth is delivering social and economic benefits, but it is now beginning to impact on the fabric and character of the assets and landscape that attracts the tourists and provides a much-loved backdrop to the lives of communities in Orkney.

The Orkney World Heritage Site Gateway is a Strategic Development which will enable a sustainable and viable tourism economy to develop and thrive, alongside other established sectors such as agriculture, energy and creative industries. Focused investment will seek to address the negative impacts of high-volume tourism, increase the economic return and cultural benefits that can be achieved for island communities, and do so in a way that protects and enhances the very special character and value of Orkney and the WHS.

The infrastructure and facilities that form part of this Strategic Development include an Orientation Centre that will be a dedicated year-round tourism facility providing information, interpretation and orientation, vehicle parking (including electric vehicle charge points), bicycle facilities (including e-bike hire and charge points), a zero carbon shuttle service powered by locally produced hydrogen from renewable resources that will transfer visitors between the centre, the monuments and our main settlements of Kirkwall and Stromness, and an Active Travel Network that will link the centre and monuments.



Standing Stones of Stenness



Barnhouse Village

3.8 - High Speed Digital Connectivity for All as a National Development



Vision for High Speed Digital Connectivity:

For all homes, places of work and service locations such as schools and healthcare facilities to have access to reliable and ultra-fast digital connectivity to enhance our way of life, our ability to work either from our places of work or remotely; and for all residents to have access to services through digital connectivity .

Digital connectivity considers both mobile and Broadband connectivity. Poor connectivity effects how we live, work and stay connected with our friends and family. For some in cities and towns it is taken for granted but rural communities like Orkney regularly face challenges associated with poor digital connectivity. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic for our remote and rural populations, working from home and accessing healthcare and educational facilities has been problematic.

In the Ofcom Connected Nations Reports (September 2019) Orkney was considered to have the worst connected local authority area in the UK. 66.69% of properties achieve the Scottish Government's definition of super-fast broadband with 30Mb/s download speeds. For our outer islands this figure drops to only 39.32%.

In May 2020, the 5G New Thinking project commenced, following on from previous work completed in Orkney on the 5G RuralFirst projects. The project aims to deliver a practical tool kit that industry, local authorities and rural communities can replicate. Part of the project will deploy this technology in Orkney. The project also aims to deliver a BenCom (Community Benefit Society) in Orkney that aims to develop commercially viable and sustainable connectivity.

Improving digital connectivity and ensuring fair investment in digital infrastructure is a key strategic priority of ORSS and Orkney Islands Council. This will support sustainable economic growth and the retention of population levels in our rural and remote locations.



Churchill Barrier



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Orkney Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy
Service / service area responsible.	Development and Marine Planning
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Susan Shearer, susan.shearer@orkney.gov.uk Tel: 01856 873535 Ext. 2533
Date of assessment.	15 February 2021
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	This is a new function that has been brought in with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Presently the function is non-statutory but is anticipated to be statutory in Autumn 2022.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	The outcome is to provide a strategic spatial strategy for Orkney in the context of development that feeds into the national drafting of National Planning Framework 4.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	Yes.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Planning Stakeholders such as the general public, agencies such as Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage, Orkney Businesses and other interest groups such as Voluntary Action Orkney.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of	Stakeholders have been in consultation seminars in February 2020 and there has been a further

this function / policy / plan?	period of consultation in Dec 2020 and Jan 2021. Stakeholders – internal OIC and external partners such as EMEC.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).	Not directly. Note that the Equality Act 2010 requires that no-one be disadvantaged in receiving services from public agencies as a result of the undernoted equality strands.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	Not directly.
Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No impact.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No impact.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No impact.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No impact.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No impact.
6. Age: people of different ages.	No impact.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No impact.

8. Caring responsibilities.	No impact.
9. Care experienced.	No impact.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No impact.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	(Includes physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, mental health) No impact.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	No impact.
13. Isles-proofing.	No impact.

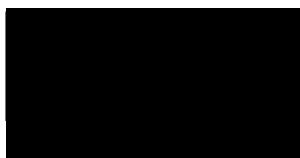
3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	No differential impacts to be addressed.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	No negative impact identified.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes.

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	Yes, as noted above – when the requirement for this document becomes statutory.
What action is to be taken?	The document will be reviewed and redrafted; and consultation will be completed. A further draft will take into consideration relevant comments made.
Who will undertake it?	Development and Marine Planning.
When will it be done?	2022 and 2023.
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Through the monitoring processes of the Orkney Local Development Plan.

Signature:



Date: 15 February 2021

Name: SUSAN SHEARER

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk