

Minute

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

Wednesday, 8 September 2021, 10:30.

Microsoft Teams.



Present

Councillors Gwenda M Shearer, Alexander G Cowie, Stephen G Clackson, Steven B Heddle, J Harvey Johnston, W Leslie Manson, John T Richards, John A R Scott, James W Stockan, Magnus Thomson and Owen Tierney.

Councillor Heather N Woodbridge (who had been invited for Items 2 and 3 and 8 to 12).

Clerk

- Hazel Flett, Senior Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- James Wylie, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Hayley Green, Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services (for Items 1 to 3).
- Peter Diamond, Head of Education (for Items 1 to 4).
- Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Paul Kemp, Strategic Finance Manager.
- Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation).
- Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability) (for Items 1 to 7).
- Peter Trodden, Solicitor.
- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

Observing

- Joanne Wallace, Acting Principal, Orkney College.
- Graham Little, Head of Finance, Orkney College (for Items 2 and 3).
- Ian Rushbrook, Capital Programme Manager (for Items 2 to 4).
- Lorraine Stout, Press Officer.

Apologies

- Councillor Barbara Foulkes.
- Jo Hill, Teacher Representative
- Mary Maley, Teacher Representative.

Declarations of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

1. Church Representative

The Chair thanked Hugh Halcro-Johnston, who had recently stepped down from the position of Church Representative, for his many years of service and confirmed that a report regarding the Church of Scotland nomination for religious representative on the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee would be submitted to the General Meeting of the Council to be held on 5 October 2021.

2. Revenue Expenditure Outturn

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Strategic Finance Manager, the Committee:

Noted:

2.1. The revenue expenditure outturn statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for financial year 2020/21, attached as Annex 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, which indicated the following:

- A net General Fund underspend of £903,100.
- A net Non-General Fund underspend of £170,000.

The Committee scrutinised:

2.2. The explanations given and actions proposed in respect of significant budget variances, as outlined in the Budget Action Plan, attached as Annex 2 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that appropriate action had been taken with regard to significant budget variances.

3. Revenue Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Strategic Finance Manager, the Committee:

Noted:

3.1. The revenue financial summary statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021, attached as Annex 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, which indicated the following:

- A net General Fund underspend of £79,200.
- A net Non-General Fund underspend of £714,500.

3.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement in respect of Education, Leisure and Housing for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021, attached as Annex 2 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

3.3. The explanations given and actions proposed in respect of significant budget variances, as outlined in the Budget Action Plan, attached as Annex 3 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the Interim Executive Director of Environmental, Property and IT Services and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

4. School Counselling Service

After consideration of report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Education, the Committee:

Noted:

4.1. That, in March 2020, the Scottish Government published guidance for education authorities on counselling in schools.

4.2. That, supported by specific funding, the aim of the Scottish Government was to establish a universal service for all children and young people aged 10 and over.

4.3. That Scottish Government funding, amounting to £166,000, had been allocated towards in-school counselling in Orkney for 2021/22.

4.4. That a part-time in-school counselling service had been available within Orkney's senior secondary schools for some time, which was originally established in line with Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools published by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

4.5. Options for securing future delivery of an in-school counselling service, as detailed in section 5 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, with the preferred option being to provide an in-house service, comprising full-time permanent posts of school counsellor, together with part-time support staff.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

4.6. That an in-school counselling service be established as part of the Education Service's pupil support team.

4.7. That the following permanent posts be established in order to provide the in-school counselling service:

- 3 full time equivalent (FTE) posts of In-school Counsellor, G8.
- 1.2 FTE posts of Support for Learning staff, G3.

5. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme – Expenditure Outturn

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

5.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred against the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account for financial year 2020/21, as detailed in section 4.2 of the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, which indicated an underspend of £126,100 as at 31 March 2021, against an approved budget totalling £1,383,100.

The Committee scrutinised:

5.2. The explanations given in respect of significant budget variances, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance with regard to delivery of the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

6. Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Repairs and Maintenance Programme – Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

6.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 30 June 2021, against the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, as detailed in section 4.2 of the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance.

The Committee scrutinised:

6.2. The explanations given in respect of significant budget variances, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing and the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance on progress being made with delivery of the approved revenue repairs and maintenance programme in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

7. Community Learning and Development Partners Plan

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability), the Committee:

Noted:

7.1. That the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, placed a statutory duty on councils to produce a plan no later than 1 September 2015 and then every three years outlining how Community Learning and Development would be delivered in the local authority area.

7.2. That, on 12 September 2018, the Council adopted the Community Learning and Development Plan for Orkney 2018 to 2021, in so far as it related to the Council.

7.3. The Review of the Orkney Community Learning and Development Partners Plan 2018 to 2021, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which summarised progress with, and evaluation of, the three-year plan.

7.4. The Orkney Community Learning and Development Partners Plan 2021 to 2024, attached as Appendix 2 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which had been co-developed by the partners of the Orkney Strategic Community Learning Group.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

7.5. That the Orkney Community Learning and Development Partners Plan 2021 to 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved, in so far as it related to the remit of Council.

8. Housing Service – Annual Assurance Statement

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

8.1. The requirement to submit an Annual Assurance Statement, in relation to the performance of housing services, to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 October.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

8.2. That the Annual Assurance Statement, together with supporting Annexes, in relation to the performance of housing services, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

9. Profile of Homelessness

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

9.1. The importance of producing a Profile of Homelessness to underpin the Homelessness Strategy.

9.2. The revised Profile of Homelessness for 2021 to 2026, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which took account of a range of factors affecting homelessness and provided a robust assessment of key issues relating to homelessness in the Orkney area.

9.3. That the Profile of Homelessness for 2021 to 2026 had assisted in producing a revised Homelessness Strategy.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

9.4. That the Profile of Homelessness 2021 to 2026, referred to at paragraph 9.2 above, be approved for consultation.

9.5. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the meeting of the Committee to be held in March 2022, regarding the outcome of the consultation exercise, referred to at paragraph 9.4 above, together with a revised Profile of Homelessness for adoption.

10. Homelessness Strategy

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

10.1. That the Council had a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

10.2. That the national policy area surrounding homelessness had been subject to significant change in recent years.

10.3. The draft Homelessness Strategy for the period 2021 to 2026, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, which was underpinned by a detailed Profile of Homelessness.

10.4. That the Local Housing Strategy and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan also included local information in respect of homelessness.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

10.5. That the draft Homelessness Strategy, referred to at paragraph 10.3 above, be approved for consultation.

10.6. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the meeting of the Committee to be held in March 2022, regarding the outcome of the consultation exercise, referred to at paragraph 10.5 above, together with a revised Homelessness Strategy for adoption.

11. Housing Loans

After consideration of a joint report by the Interim Executive Director of Finance, Regulatory, Marine and Transportation Services and the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Committee:

Noted:

11.1. That, on 6 June 2018, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended that, with effect from July 2018, the ceiling for any single housing loan be set at a maximum of £130,000, and thereafter increased annually in line with the Retail Prices Index, or £30,000 in the case of an interest-only loan.

11.2. That since 1 July 2018, 17 loans, amounting to £1,470,740, had been approved, with one application unable to meet the criteria and one application pending.

11.3. That the Registers of Scotland report, which reported average house prices by local authority area, indicated that average house prices in Orkney had increased from £147,125 in 2017/18 to £170,498 in 2020/21.

11.4. That a review of the parameters of the Housing Loan Scheme had been undertaken, as detailed in section 4 of the joint report by the Interim Executive Director of Finance, Regulatory, Marine and Transportation Services and the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, the outcome of which proposed the following:

- The maximum loan amount be increased.
- The income earnings multiplier be amended.
- The overall available funding in any financial year be increased.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

11.5. That the Housing Loan Scheme should be amended as follows, to take effect from 1 November 2021:

- The ceiling for any single loan being set at a maximum of £160,000 and thereafter increased annually in line with the Retail Prices Index.
- The Council lending up to 90% of the valuation of the property or three times earned income, whichever was the lesser, up to a maximum of £160,000 for any single loan or £30,000 in the case of an interest only loan.
- The funding available in any financial year to be increased to £585,000 and underwritten by the General Fund capital programme.

12. Gateway Housing – The Grind, Eday

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Service Manager (Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation), the Committee:

Noted:

12.1. That, in 2009, the Council developed a house in Eday, now known as The Grind, which was intended for use as gateway housing.

12.2. That the Council entered into a management agreement with the Eday Partnership in respect of The Grind, including a lease arrangement at a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum for a period of 25 years.

12.3. That the management agreement allowed for The Grind, Eday, to be let by the Eday Partnership to households trialling life in Eday on the basis of a short assured tenancy.

12.4. That, following introduction of the Private Residential Tenancies (Scotland) Act 2016, a short assured tenancy could no longer be created.

12.5. The options appraisal in respect of future arrangements for use of The Grind, Eday, as detailed in section 5 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, with the preferred option being Option 1, namely that the Eday Partnership develop a mid-market rent policy, in consultation with the Council, and thereafter let the property as mid-market rent accordingly.

Councillor W Leslie Manson, seconded by Councillor J Harvey Johnston, moved that (1) the Eday Partnership should develop a mid-market rent policy, in consultation with the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, to enable The Grind, Eday, to be let as a mid-market rental property and (2) powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, to amend the management agreement in respect of The Grind, Eday, to reflect the amended letting arrangement of a mid-market retail property.

Councillor Stephen G Clackson, seconded by Councillor John T Richards, moved an amendment that (1) the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should consult Eday Community Council regarding the two options in respect of future arrangements for use of The Grind, Eday, namely Mid-Market Rent or Social Rented Housing and (2) the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Committee, on the outcome of the consultation with Eday Community Council.

The result of a recorded vote was as follows:

For the Amendment:

Councillors Stephen G Clackson, Steven B Heddle, John T Richards, John A R Scott, James W Stockan, Magnus O Thomson and Owen Tierney (7).

For the Motion:

Councillors Alexander G Cowie, J Harvey Johnston, W Leslie Manson and Gwenda M Shearer (4).

The Amendment was therefore carried, and the Committee:

Resolved to **recommend to the Council:**

12.6. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should consult Eday Community Council regarding the two options in respect of future arrangements for use of The Grind, Eday, namely Mid-Market Rent or Social Rented Housing.

12.7. That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the next available meeting of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, on the outcome of the consultation with Eday Community Council, referred to at paragraph 12.6 above.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

At 13:12 the Chair declared meeting the concluded.

Signed: Gwenda M Shearer.

Orkney

Community Learning & Development Partners Plan 2021 - 2024



Working
and
learning
together for
a better
Orkney

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Appendix 1.

Executive Summary

The requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 place a duty on all Local Authorities to prepare, consult on and publish a three-year CLD plan for the provision of community learning and development in the local area.

Orkney's 3-year Partners Plan for Community Learning and Development (CLD) is produced by Orkney's Strategic Community Learning Group (SCLG), which is a partnership of both public and third sector organisations who are delivering Community Learning & Development support and activities across Orkney.

The plan, which is based on local needs and meets the requirements of the Scottish Government Regulations for CLD, builds on previous CLD Partners Plans and sets out how we will deliver CLD across Orkney over the next 3 years, ensuring services are planned for and delivered in a strategic and collaborative way.

Our partnership vision is to work together to improve the lives and outcomes for people and communities in Orkney through community learning and development opportunities and approaches.

This plan supports and develops the shared mission set out in the Orkney Community Plan and incorporated Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2018-21 of **'Working Together for a better Orkney'**.

Many developments have been made since the inception of statutory CLD Partnership Plans, including improved governance and strengthened connections with stakeholders and increased alignment with other partnerships and plans including Orkney's Community Planning Partnership.

At the time of publication, the Orkney Partnership is renewing the Orkney Community Plan for 2021-23, (our statutory Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) focusing on Orkney's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure strategic alignment, three of the four priorities in the CLD Partners Plan are taken from the agreed priorities for the Community Plan. They are: Connectivity, Community Wellbeing and Sustainable Recovery.

What is the CLD Partners Plan?

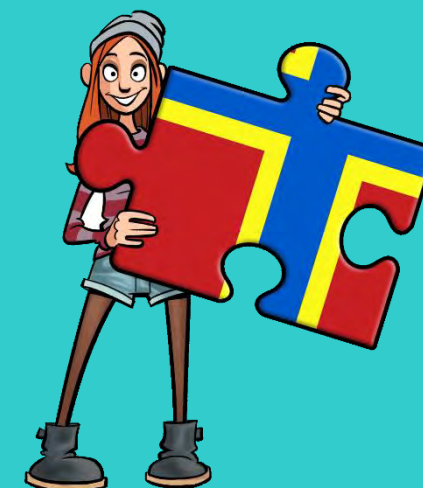
Orkney CLD Partners Plan is published by the SCLG to help partners plan together to avoid duplication, strengthen co-ordination and improve understanding of the needs of the community.



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What is Community Learning and Development?

The role of CLD is to support individuals, groups, and communities to make a positive change in their lives or in their community by using a range of different approaches. Community Learning and Development (CLD) covers a broad range of practice including youth work, community-based adult learning, family learning, volunteer development and community development.

The Revised Guidance Note on Community Learning & Development Planning 2018-21 states that “CLD supports primarily disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages to engage in learning, personal development, and active citizenship with a focus on bringing about change in their lives and communities.”

The Community Learning and Development Strategic Guidance emphasizes the important role CLD must play in the future delivery of public services, its contribution to early intervention and prevention and its ability to empower people both individually and collectively to make positive changes to their lives through learning.

The CLD Standards Council developed the code of ethics for Community Learning and Development which helps define what CLD is. Together with agreed values and principles and a Competence Framework, it provides the foundation for improving standards in CLD and for strengthening the identity of CLD as a profession.

The CLD Standards Council identified the values which are key to CLD practice across all its settings as:

- **Self-determination** – respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.
- **Inclusion & equity** – valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice.
- **Empowerment** – increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/or collective action.
- **Working collaboratively** – maximizing collaborative working relationships in partnerships between the many agencies which contribute to CLD, including collaborative work with participants, learners, and communities.
- **Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity** – ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.



What is Community Learning and Development (CLD)?

CLD is a way of working with individuals and communities which helps empower individuals and groups to address issues of importance to them and promotes learning and social development.



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Why do we need a CLD Partners Plan?

Orkney Islands Council has a statutory duty (Community Learning & Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013) to produce a plan with partners every 3 years to secure “adequate and sufficient provision of Community Learning & Development (CLD) in our area”.

The CLD Regulations (Scotland) 2013 aim to: -

- Ensure communities across Scotland particularly those which are disadvantaged have access to the CLD support they need.
- Strengthen the coordination between the full range of CLD providers.
- Reinforce the role of communities and learners in assessment, planning, and evaluation processes.
- Make Community Learning & Development’s role and contribution more visible.

The plan provides a clearly defined framework for coordinating, planning, and delivering CLD with partners.

The requirement affects all public, voluntary, third sector, private sector agencies and community partners who contribute to work supporting:

- **Improved life chances for people of all ages, through learning, personal development, and active citizenship; and**
- **Stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential, and inclusive communities**

The development of the revised joint CLD Partners Plan 2021-24 will facilitate how community learning and development will be taken forward by partners in Orkney. By aligning our CLD Partners Plan to the priorities identified by the Orkney Partnership Board, the work of the SCLG will complement that of the Orkney Partnership and strong communication links will provide a conduit for the dissemination of information and for alerting community planning to emerging priority issues.

Year 1 of the plan will be focused on the recovery phase from the covid pandemic. As with previous versions, the plan will be reviewed, evaluated, and updated annually to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to new and emerging needs. This annual update will provide a clear review with partners, learners, and the community to ensure that the plan is appropriate and reactive to developing needs.

“We also recognise that the Covid-19 crisis is likely to continue to present significant practical challenges to CLD planning between now and September 2021 and that this could have an influence on future CLD planning priorities throughout 2021- 2024” (CLD Plans Guidance Note 2021-24).

Why do we need a CLD Partners Plan?

The plan will enable all partners to integrate and improve planning, delivery and evaluation of community learning and development and therefore improve opportunities and outcomes for learners.



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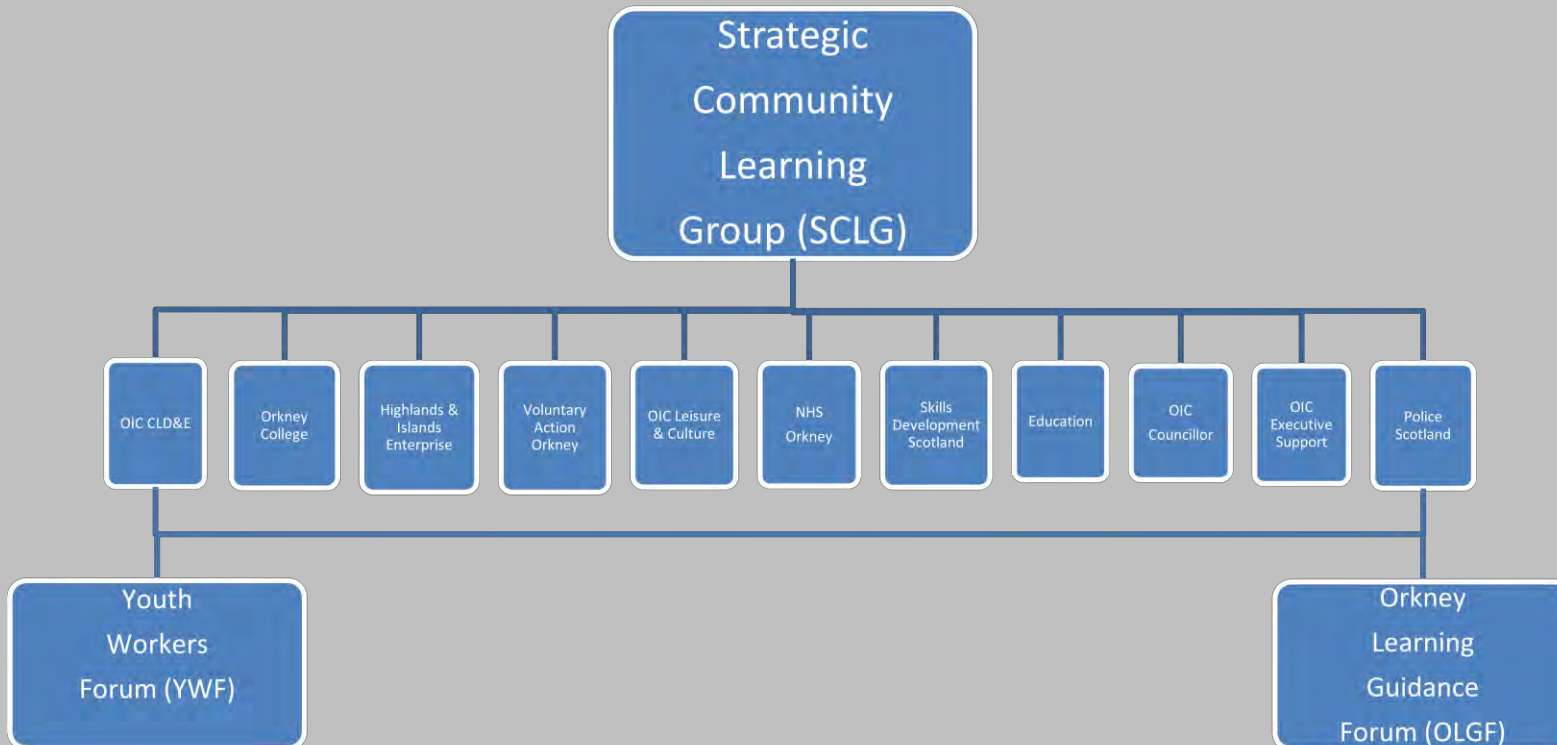
The Strategic Community Learning Group (SCLG)

The SCLG, currently led by the Council's Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, is a partnership of public and third sector organisations all working with a CLD focus.

Current partners include Orkney Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Orkney College, Voluntary Action Orkney, NHS Orkney, Police Scotland, and Skills Development Scotland.

As an inclusive and effective partnership, the work of the SCLG is guided by 4 overarching principles:

- Working collaboratively to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities
- Sharing ownership, resources, and data to improve the identification of needs, planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Developing self-evaluation and quality assurance to ensure continuous improvement
- Ensuring CLD staff and volunteers have the skills, confidence and training required to respond to local needs through appropriate workforce development.



What does the SCLG do?

It is the task of the SCLG and this plan to ensure that people in Orkney, especially those that are disadvantaged, have appropriate access to the CLD support they need.



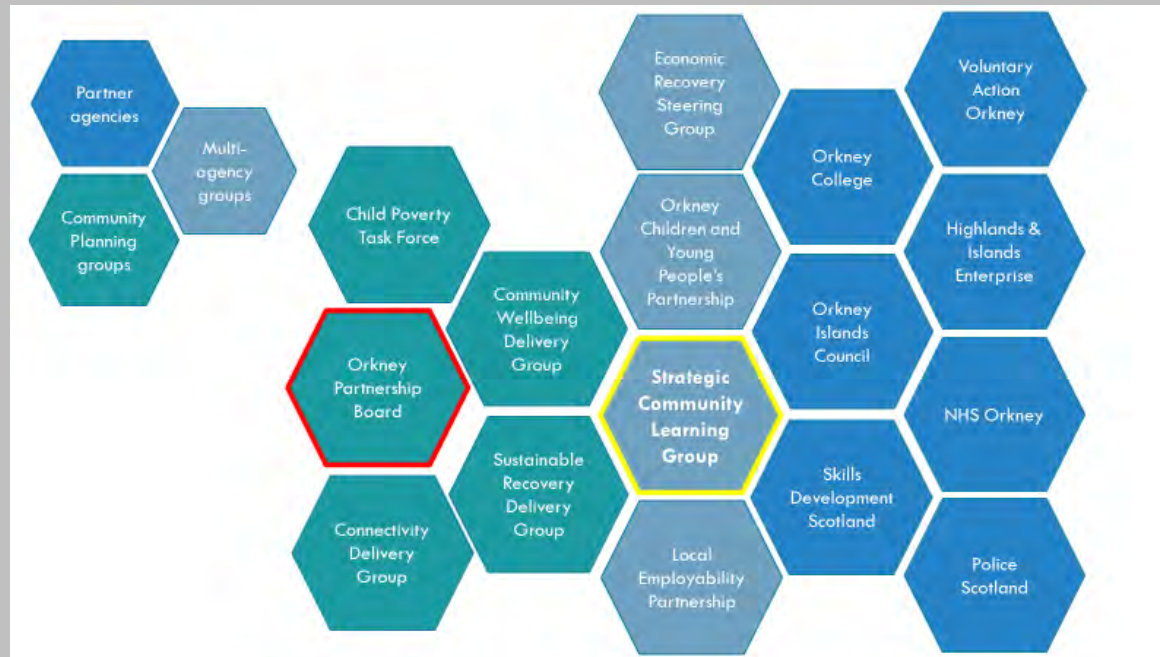
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Governance Arrangements:

During the last CLD Plan cycle, the Strategic Community Learning Group developed improved governance arrangements and strengthened connections with stakeholders, through regular summarised updates, more formal reporting procedures and better links with other partnerships including our community planning partnership, Orkney Partnership.

Rather than producing a static plan for the next 3 years this will be a live and dynamic plan which will adopt a more fluid and organic approach to reflect the challenges and opportunities that are presented throughout the three-year period to ensure it remains an effective and relevant planning document which is relevant and responsive to changing needs.

The SCLG partners assume overall responsibility for delivering on the outcomes and actions detailed in the plan. The plan will be reviewed quarterly by the SCLG and an annual report will be submitted to the Orkney Islands Council, Education, Leisure & Housing Committee. The plan will also be submitted to the Orkney Partnership Board for endorsement. The Orkney Partnership and Orkney Islands Council have both endorsed the approach and recognise the critical role of the CLD sector, especially as we move forward in COVID recovery.



How will the plan be monitored?

The strategic direction for the SCLG and the actions outlined in the partners plan have been developed and prioritised and will be delivered, monitored, and evaluated both internally and externally throughout the three-year period.



Community & Learner Engagement

The priorities agreed in the CLD Partner Plan 2021-24 sets out our shared vision, values and priorities over the next three years and are based on a full understanding of local need.

It is important to note that due to the pandemic, engagement with learners and communities was reduced as many of the key face to face methods of engagement were not possible due to the restrictions in place.

Despite this, a collective understanding of community and learner needs was developed and stakeholder input into the plan was assured through partner inputs and direct engagement with stakeholders through alignment with various community consultations including:

- Orkney Partnership Community Planning Priorities Consultation 2021
- Your Community Your Voice Place Standards Consultation 2021
- COVID-19 Community Listening Events
- Youth Employment Survey 2020
- Youth Forum Workshops
- Stromness Business Survey 2021
- Orkney Skills Think-Tank Review

Further to this community engagement partners also used several other methods to clearly identify need:

- A full appraisal and self-evaluation of the CLD Partners Plan 2018-21
- Wider partners workshop to identify and prioritise the actions for the plan
- Working group and full SCLG input into plan development to ensure collaborative approaches to CLD Planning
- Incorporating self-evaluation, monitoring, and shared ownership elements in response to previous HMI Inspection of CLD in Orkney
- An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure the plan, proposed actions and processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any groups from participation.
- An Island Communities Impact Assessment has also been completed to ensure consideration of impacts on the Isles.

Who had a say in the plan?

The priorities have been identified through direct engagement with learners and the local community, local research and analysis of relevant data and partner knowledge in their CLD related field of expertise.

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Review of last CLD Partners Plan 2018-21

The change in focus for CLD during the pandemic and the increased workloads and limited capacity of partners has impacted on the progression of the CLD Partners Plan. Despite this, over the 3 year cycle the SCLG worked on 18 key objectives overall, of which 12 were fully met, 5 were partially met and 1 action was not completed.

Key successes over the 2018-21 period included:

- A range of approaches being used to effectively raise the profile of volunteering in the community
- Increased opportunities to include and consider the marginal groups voice with specific progress in the youth voice agenda
- Family Learning Audit completed which reviewed existing provision, identified gaps, needs and opportunities
- Orkney Family Learning Plan created to maximise the scope and quality of Family Learning in Orkney
- Increased Family Learning activities and programmes including Family Learning activity packs distributed door to door and new online Family Learning opportunities developed
- Training needs surveys completed and an increase in staff and volunteers participating in training
- Orkney Learns resource developed and promoted through Orkney.com

An extensive self-evaluation and review of the 2018-21 CLD Plan identified key strengths and areas for development for future plans.

Areas of strength highlighted from the CLD Partners Plan 2018-21:

Partnership working saw progress on all 3 priority areas

Improved linkage with Community Planning

An achievable, coordinated, and focused plan with clear monitor and governance structures

An easier to read, accessible plan which was updated annually to ensure it remained relevant

Areas for improvement for the next CLD Partners Plan:

Improve data analysis, to better identify needs, monitor progress and evidence outcomes

Ensure more robust learner involvement

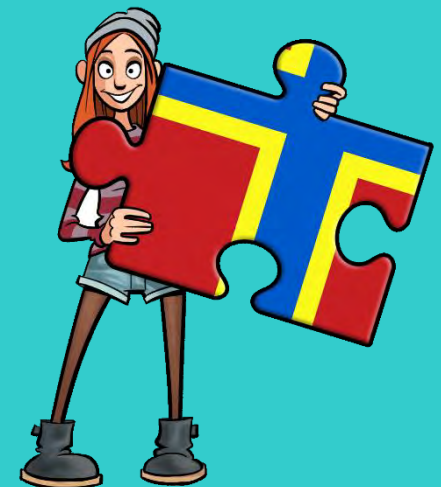
A more strategic and focused approach to supporting the most disadvantaged through targeted approaches

Further streamlining and linkage of plans/partnerships including coordinated reporting with Community Planning

What about the last CLD Plan 2018-21?

A self-evaluation and review of the CLD Plan 2018-21 was completed to ensure that valuable work is carried forward and that we learn and improve the planning process as we move to the 2021-24 CLD Partners Plan.

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Policy Context

Alongside local data, information and consultation, this plan also considers several strategic policies and plans, both local and national, listed at the end of this document and also referenced within the action plan, which relate to the needs of groups, individuals, and communities in Orkney. Although not an exhaustive list it illustrates the diverse range and depth of Community Learning & Development practice.

CLD planning guidance highlights five interrelated themes for CLD plans to be effective:

1. Involvement - Co-producing the plan with learners and communities
2. Shared CLD Priorities - Assessing need and setting priorities for CLD with partners
3. Planning - Integrating the CLD Plan within the current and evolving national policy context
4. Governance - Reviewing, monitoring, and reporting on progress and impact
5. Workforce Development - consideration of how partners will develop the CLD workforce in their area

Locally, the Orkney CLD Partners Plan has links to several other planning responsibilities and reports including the Community Plan, Council Plan, National Improvement Framework for Education Priorities, Integrated Children's Services Plan, Local Employability Partnership Plan, Local Child Poverty Action Reports and more. To ensure alignment and avoid duplication across plans, actions which are being progressed through other plans will not be detailed in the CLD Partners Plan, but focused work by the SCLG will ensure CLD representation on the other partnerships to further develop the understanding of the CLD Plan and importance of adopting CLD approaches.

The Strategic Community Learning Group is committed to supporting and fully contributing to collaborative CLD work regionally across the North, playing a full and active role in the Northern Alliance and the North Alliance.

The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative between the eight local authorities in the north with the aim of working together to improve wellbeing, attainment, and positive outcomes for stakeholders.

The North Alliance brings together CLD partners from both the public and third sector sectors to develop and share good practice, improve workforce development opportunities and increase CLD opportunities across the North. Further details are provided in Appendix 2.

Policies that affect CLD both nationally and locally continue to change and evolve. As we progress through the 3-year period, the plan will be reviewed and updated to reflect new and emerging policies. Amongst these the National Youth Work Strategy 2021-26, the Lifelong Learning Framework 2022-27 and the Adult Learning Strategy 2021-26 are significant strategies that will have a direct input into future years of this CLD Partners Plan.

How does this plan link with other plans and policies?

CLD works across several strategic plans and priorities. By aligning to the local Community Plan, it reflects the priority areas of need highlighted by the public and will assist in achieving the high-level outcomes agreed.



Orkney Context

The total population of Orkney in 2020 was approximately 22,400, an increase of 0.5% from 2019. Over the last 10 years, the population of Orkney Islands has increased by 13.7%. In Orkney, life expectancy is higher than across Scotland, but the demographic profile has aged significantly in recent years, with 23.8% of the Orkney population aged 65 or over - compared to the national figure of 19.1%. There is a trend of depopulation from the outer isles into the mainland of Orkney.

Orkney is often seen as a rural idyll, however alongside the positive statistics, there are challenges facing our remote, rural island communities in relation to housing, hidden poverty, and access to services. The rurality of Orkney can pose many challenges for service users in participating in activities or accessing the services they require, and also for providers in planning and delivering services.

Rural and island poverty has its own set of characteristics and presents its own set of unique challenges that may not be the uniform experience of poverty across Scotland. Rural households face an increased cost of living between 10% to 30% more than children and families living in urban Scotland, and for those living on islands the premium can exceed 40%.

More than 50% of households in Orkney live in fuel poverty. The number of residents stating they have access to good public transport facilities is approximately 55% compared with 91% in the rest of Scotland.

Looking at individual domains within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), no fewer than 14 of Orkney's 29 data zones are among the most deprived 10% in Scotland for 'Access' (to services). Orkney does not have any data zones in the most deprived 20% in Scotland but due to the scattered pattern of poverty in Orkney, there will be individuals and families in all areas experiencing multiple deprivation.

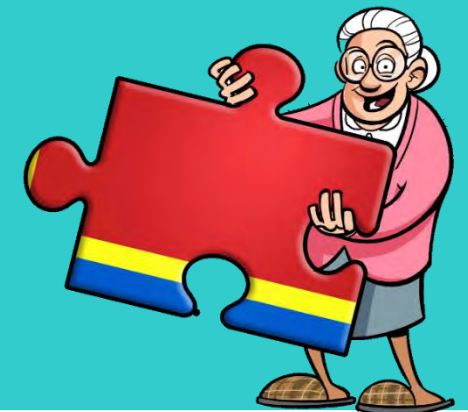
National attainment figures for 2018/2019 show that in Orkney the pre-pandemic attainment gap was low and there appeared to be no significant relationship between the SIMD and attainment.

The 2019-20 school leaver destination showed that 91.9% of 16–19-year-olds in Orkney were in education, employment or training and personal development and importantly there were no destinations that were unknown.

Prior to the pandemic, Orkney had a strong economy with very high employment levels however it had a relatively low wage economy with underemployment rather than unemployment tending to be a factor. In 2020 unemployment rate rose to 2.8% from 1.3% in 2019 compared to 4.5% across Scotland, with youth unemployment rising from 2.1% to 5.3% over the same period.

What other information was used when creating the plan?

Alongside partner, learner and community input, this Plan comes from a broad evidence base gathered from local and national information including data on population, health, crime, unemployment, income, living costs, education, the economy and much more. Understanding the challenges in Orkney allows us to build a CLD Plan relevant to need.



The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020-21

The way the CLD sector reacted, developed, and evolved to meet the needs of people most in need during the pandemic (and as we move into the recovery stage from COVID-19) has been immense. Partner organisations were hugely impacted by the pandemic, with many front-line staff focused on implementing national strategies for Covid-19 protection and support, and some taken from normal working to support the emergency response.

“The Scottish Government recognises the role of the CLD sector across the public and third sector in providing invaluable support to Scotland’s learners and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. CLD approaches will also be key to planning for a full recovery and renewal to active civil society across Scotland” (CLD Plans Guidance Note 2020-24).

The essential measures taken to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 meant that many individuals, families, and communities have experienced – and continue to experience – extensive challenges. As the pandemic continued, more families experienced hardship for the first time and needed information and help to access support networks and services.

At the start of the pandemic, the number of unemployment benefit claimants almost doubled. However, the impacts from the pandemic are not solely economic, there are also wider physical, social, mental, and emotional impacts that will take time to recover from. We know that these challenges will have a long-term impact on individuals, families, and communities in Orkney, especially for those facing disadvantage. For some, the impacts of COVID-19 will be generational.

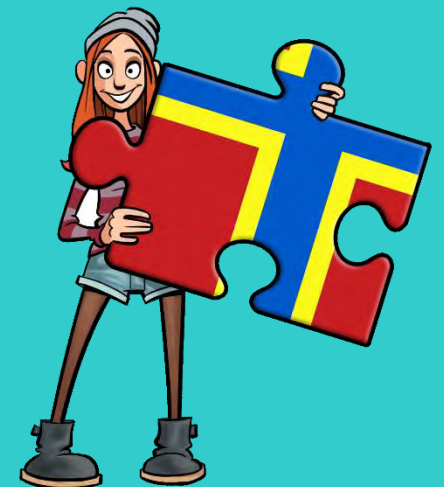
There have been some positives in all this. The pandemic enabled CLD providers and wider partners to deliver and work in different ways. The CLD Sector became more prominent, providing critical support and continuing to engage with young people, families, learners, and communities, especially those most in need of help and support. The increase in online learning, whilst not accessible to everyone, has opened opportunities to many in more rural localities that could not previously access certain learning opportunities and there has been an increase in collaborative efforts to ensure those most disadvantaged are supported.

CLD partners worked extraordinarily hard to meet the needs of people, communities, and those most disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic. This plan will have a fundamental focus on re-engagement and on providing the support to those most in need, whilst further developing new ways of working to ensure partners continue to contribute and support the recovery for all in our community.

How has COVID-19 affected the work of the CLD sector?

The CLD sector has played an invaluable part in supporting learners and communities during the Covid-19 crisis and will continue to do so as we move through the renewal and recovery phase.

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Plan principles, targets and identified barriers

Rather than looking at CLD in its entirety, our new plan focuses on 3 identified priorities aligned to the Community Plan priority areas, which the SCLG can work on together to maximize impact. This plan focusses on what the SCLG partnership is going to work on together to achieve over the three-year period. This plan has a strategic focus, designed to address areas of work that are not currently being achieved and that partners cannot do on their own. The objective is to strengthen collaborative working to coordinate and align the work of partners to achieve positive CLD outcomes in Orkney.

As an inclusive and effective partnership, the work of the SCLG, over the lifetime of this plan will be guided by some key overarching principles:

- Challenge inequalities and promote equity of access to services, support, and learning
- Provide wider achievement opportunities (to reduce the attainment gap) and improve life chances for all ages
- Contribute to health and wellbeing and poverty reduction improvement outcomes
- Ensure CLD principles and values are promoted and embedded in partnership plans and practice across the local authority

Targeted groups and individuals

Throughout the planning process we have sought to identify individuals, groups and communities that we must seek to support through CLD approaches. This is not an exhaustive list but will include:

- Those who are experiencing poverty or hardship (including digital poverty)
- Those that are socially / geographically isolated
- Those within vulnerable categories / including those with mental health conditions
- Community groups and organisations working to make a positive difference

Barriers to participation identified by partners and stakeholders include:

Transport
Digital accessibility
Time pressures
Childcare

Cost
Confidence
Disabilities
Capacity

Stigma
Awareness
Language / cultural barriers
Substance misuse/ addictions

What is the focus of this CLD plan?

By concentrating on areas of work that require collaboration and partnership approaches that individual organisations cannot achieve alone, the SCLG will be stronger than the sum of its parts.

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CLD Plan 2021-24 Priority Outcomes

Connectivity: During the pandemic, access to good connectivity and digital devices has been key to lessening the impact of Covid on individuals and communities. However, digital inequality, due to the inadequacy of Orkney's broadband and mobile infrastructure is putting individuals, communities, and businesses at a disadvantage. In addition, many people in our communities do not have access to digital devices or the skills to use them safely, increasing the risk of further isolation and reducing the ability to communicate with others or accessing services.

Sustainable Recovery: This priority builds on the work done over the past year by the Economic Recovery Steering Group with the ASPIRE Orkney blueprint: to build a better future, Orkney must aspire to be Ambitious, Sustainable, Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient and Enterprising. The priority also encompasses actions planned to help combat climate emergency. To achieve this, there will be a focus on partnership learning opportunities to build people's skills, confidence and strengthen individual and community capacity.

Community Wellbeing: Has a focus on both individual and community wellbeing and what we can do to help people recover from the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic. Covid-19 has resulted in unexpected poverty for many, due to loss of income and increased living costs. Many people's mental health has also been badly affected during this time. Partners will work to meet local needs through effective provision of community learning and development opportunities to enhance individual health and wellbeing and community resilience.

A fourth priority area is included in the plan to consider professional development.

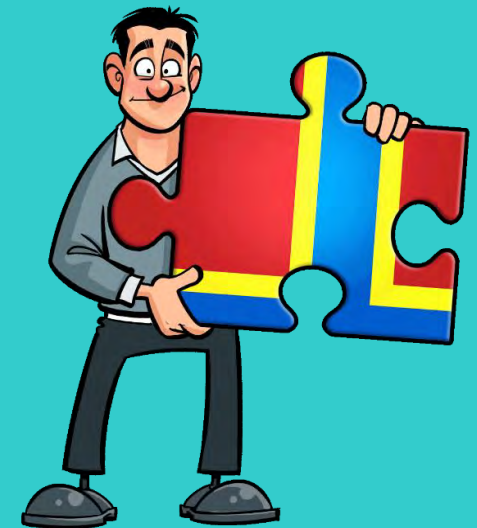
Partnership Workforce Development and Planning: It is vital that we raise awareness of CLD and strengthen learning opportunities for those working in the sector to ensure we have a skilled workforce to sustain and develop the integral work that CLD delivers. Through shared partnership approaches the SCLG will work to ensure staff and volunteers have the right skills to identify and engage people and communities who require support from CLD Services, and we will work to improve our use of data to better understand community needs and advance partnership working.

Further information on how the SCLG will progress these priority areas is available in the detailed Action Plan which can be viewed at the end of this document in Appendix 1. The actions are focused on providing realistic but challenging aims which can only be achieved by working in partnership using CLD values and approaches.

What are the key priorities for this CLD Partners Plan?

The 4 priority areas for the CLD Partners Plan 2021-24 are:

- Connectivity
- Sustainable Recovery
- Community Wellbeing
- Partnership Workforce and Planning



Monitoring & Evaluation

We are working in rapidly changing times, so it is imperative that the plan is updated regularly to ensure the CLD workforce continues to be responsive to emerging needs and also to ensure our plans and ambitions align with updated policies and frameworks, both local and national, to provide the CLD support and services needed. Although this is set out as a 3-year plan we will revisit this plan annually to reflect any changes in the planning and review process.

The Strategic Community Learning Group will continue to use regular monitoring, review, and self-evaluation to measure progress, inform future planning and to ensure support and challenge is embedded as part of the planning cycles of developing and improving CLD Planning. The CLD Partners Plan will be monitored and updated quarterly by the SCLG, and a report submitted to Orkney Islands Council's Education, Leisure & Housing Committee annually. A summary and progress update will also be disseminated widely to partners and stakeholders each year and will feed into other relevant partner plans.

CLD activity is also evaluated using 'How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development', a framework that includes a common set of quality and performance indicators for use in self-evaluation by partners and in Learning Community inspections by Education Scotland.

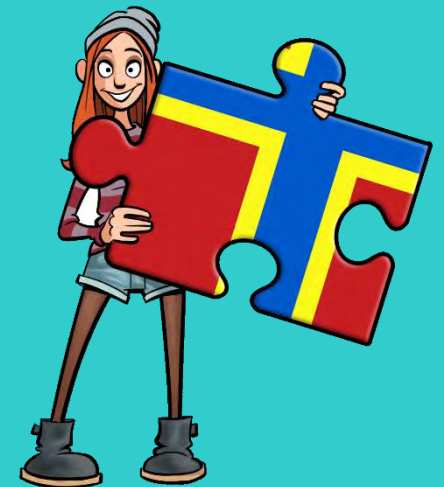
Conclusion

The information gathered by the Strategic Community Learning Group has been used to develop the CLD Partners Plan for the next 3 years, which is attached in Appendix 1. The Partners Plan contains outcomes we aspire to, actions we will take to make improvements to current provision and practice and it identifies unmet needs and gaps in provision which are important areas of work which cannot be met in the timescale of this plan.

The strategic direction for the SCLG and the actions outlined in the partners plan have been developed and prioritised and will be delivered and evaluated through this partnership over the next 3 years. Working together through the plan will ensure more coordinated delivery and support to improve life chances for people of all ages, through learning, personal development and active citizenship and help develop stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential, and inclusive communities.

How will the SCLG maintain quality assurance?

By working together and ensuring a high standard of practice, the SCLG will jointly progress the identified actions and participants will experience consistency based on shared values.



CLD Partners Plan

2021-2024



Connectivity

We will strive to remove barriers to digital poverty by working together to ensure that people have access to equipment and the skills, knowledge, and confidence to use them safely.

Outcome	Improvement Action	Lead	Implication (risk, cost, resources)	Target Date	Measures	Link to local policies & plans	Link to national policies & plans
Increased access to digital devices for those most in need	Work collaboratively with partners and funders to ensure those most in need have access to a digital device	CLD VAO	Cost of devices, staff time, not identifying the eligible people, raising expectations	Sept 2022	Number of devices issued Evaluation of recipients Impact statements and case studies	Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) / Connectivity Delivery Group	Digital Strategy: A changing nation: how Scotland will thrive in a digital world (SG) Digital Participation: A National Framework for Local Action (SG)
	Identify opportunities to co-produce community IT hubs through Community Development approaches	HIE VAO CLD	Cost, staff, resource, capacity, on-going revenue requirements, sustainability	Sept 2024	Number of opportunities identified Number of community spaces available	Orkney Digital Strategy (OIC, 2021) HIE Operating Plan 2021	
Increased access to sustainable support and training for life skills and work through youth work, adult learning and community development approaches	Co-ordinate service delivery to ensure basic IT support and training is available in the community	CLD	Lack of uptake, Staff capacity, costs, costs prohibitive to participation, limited trained and experienced, staff to deliver	Dec 2022	Training programme planned and delivered Number sessions offered Number attending Evaluations Participant feedback (formal / informal)	Local Employability Partnership Action Plan 2020 CLD Plan (OIC)	National Performance Framework
	Establish, expand and promote a local digital champions' network to share information, provide peer support and to enhance delivery of IT support and training in community settings	VAO OHAC	Failure to attract members, lack of engagement, time, capacity to deliver, costs.	March 2022	Number members Report of activities	Orkney Integration Joint Board annual audit plan 2020/21 VAO Work Plan 2021-23 Enhancing Wellbeing in Our Island Communities: Delivery Plan	Draft Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland 2021-2026

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<p>People have increased knowledge and understanding of internet safety</p>	<p>Collaborate with the local SCAM group to use CLD approaches to coordinate delivery of internet safety training across the community.</p>	<p>Police Scotland Orkney Scam Action Group</p>	<p>Resources including staff and funding, low uptake, lack of awareness.</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Internet safety messages promoted via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media posts - Media coverage - Training offered - Attendance - Participant feedback (formal / informal) 	<p>Orkney Local Police Plan 2020 - 23 Orkney Equalities Outcome Plan 2021-25</p>	<p>Cyber resilience: third sector action plan 2018-2020 Cyber Strategy (Police Scotland, 2020)</p>
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Sustainable Recovery

We will work to support sustainable recovery from the pandemic through developing partnership learning opportunities to build peoples skills, confidence and strengthen individual and community capacity and resilience.

Outcomes	Improvement Action	Lead	Implication (risk, cost, resources)	Target Date	Measures	Link to local policies & plans	Link to national policies & plans
New and existing third sector organisations receive the support they need to re-open, sustain and develop their organisations	Develop collaborative approaches in the delivery of voluntary sector support services to help enhance community development opportunities	CLD VAO HIE	Reduction in community groups, volunteers, and community participation, inability to attract funding	September 2022	Number of organisations supported. Number of signposting /referrals to partner agencies Organisation's feedback (formal / informal)	LOIP/Sustainable Recovery Delivery Group VAO Work Plan 2021-23 Orkney Islands Council Delivery Plan 2018-23 HIE Operating Plan 2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19): multi-purpose community facilities guidance (SG, 2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19): community learning and development sector (SG, 2020)
Increased re-engagement with learning to develop motivation, confidence and soft skills through youth work, informal learning and community development	Consult with stakeholders to identify their learning and development needs and preferences	OIC VAO SDS	Capacity, time, resource, experienced and trained staff, consistency of provision, lack of engagement from those who would most benefit from opportunities, lack of awareness	2022	Consultation findings reported Support programme developed	Local Employability Partnership (LEP) Plan 2020-21	CLD responses to the pandemic, lockdown and initial re-opening (CLDSC, 2020) No One Left Behind: delivery plan (SG, 2020)
	Develop and raise awareness of new and innovative informal learning opportunities that meet the needs of participants			2023	Number of information/learning sessions offered Publicity produced Numbers attending Case studies Participant feedback (formal / informal)	Orkney Islands Council Delivery Plan 2018-23 Orkney Equalities Outcome Plan 2021-25	

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	Develop resources and training to promote the benefits of informal learning, volunteering and associated awards and qualifications	CLD Education SDS	Staff, time, money, reach, lack of engagement	2022	<p>Youth Awards leaflet produced and distributed Number of people participating in training Social media campaign launched Wider achievement awards available for young people Number of young people achieving awards</p>	<p>Integrated Children Service Plan 2021-23</p> <p>Good Parenting Plan 2020-25</p> <p>Child Poverty Action Plan 2021</p> <p>Local Employability Action Plan 2020-21</p> <p>VAO Work Plan 2021-23</p>	<p>National Youthwork Strategy 2014-2019 National Improvement Framework</p> <p>Youthwork & Employability (Youthlink, 2020)</p> <p>Youth Work & CfE (Youthlink 2021)</p> <p>Youth Work's Contribution to Scottish Attainment Challenge (Youthlink, 2020)</p>
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Community Wellbeing

We will work to meet local needs through the effective provision of community learning and development opportunities to enhance individual and community capacity and resilience

Outcome	Improvement Action	Lead	Implication (risk, cost, resources)	Target Date	Measures	Link to local policies & plans	Link to national policies & plans
Improve community wellbeing through increased opportunities for social interaction and leisure	In collaboration with the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group, further develop partnership approach to coordinated early intervention, health and wellbeing programmes and activities	OIC VAO	Duplication of effort and missed areas of development if not done collaboratively, Reluctance to re-engage within the community, lack of resources	2024	Number and type of learning events / activities Number participants Participant feedback (formal / informal)	Community Wellbeing Delivery Group Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan 2021	Community Health and Wellbeing supports and services: framework Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) update: July 2017 (SG)
	Support the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy through coordinated delivery of learning programmes to improve life skills	NHSO VAO OIC	Lack of engagement, from the people most in need of support, people in need not identified, unrealistic expectations	2023	Number of life skills programmes offered Number of participants Participant feedback (formal / informal)	Orkney Equalities Outcome Plan 2021-25	Fairer Scotland Action Plan (SG, 2016)
Increase support for priority groups who are identified as needing additional support to access outdoor activities and volunteering opportunities	Investigate opportunities to work with green health partnerships and environmental projects and inform the next rendition of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	CLD VAO	Time, capacity, staff resource, funding	Sept 2022	Number of opportunities identified Number of people placed Participant feedback	North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme LOIP / Community Wellbeing Delivery Group Isles Development Plans	Volunteering for All National Framework (SG, 2019) Outdoor Learning (Policy Scotland, 2020) Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning (LTS 2010)
People have increased confidence and opportunities to express their views and influence decision making and service design.	Increase the continuous involvement of young people and other priority groups who are identified as needing support to ensure inclusion of representative voices	VAO HIE OIC	Lack of engagement, missing those within identified target groups, lose momentum to maintain regular contact	2024	Number of consultations that demonstrate engagement with those within identified priority groups Number of engagement methods utilised Number of people engaged	Community Wellbeing Delivery Group Communication & Engagement Strategy 2021 – 2024 Strategy for Communication &	National Standards for Community Engagement (SG, SCDC) Scottish Approach to Service Design (SG, 2019)

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						Community Engagement (OP 2018)	Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
						Integrated Children Services Plan 2021-23	Islands (Scotland) Act 2018
Increased access to information and support for individuals to promote and sustain health and wellbeing	Coordinate and contribute to the delivery of wellbeing activities and mental health awareness to upskill people in the community to promote mental wellbeing and reduce stigma.	NHSO OIC VAO	Staffing, resources, reaching the identified priority groups, information not accessible	2024	Number of information /awareness sessions offered Participant feedback (formal / informal)	Orkney Islands Mental Health Strategy 2020-2025 (OHAC 2020)	Volunteering for All: national framework (SG)
	Wider promotion of the values of volunteering to health, wellbeing and to the community.	VAO CLD	Lack of awareness, capacity - including time and resources,	2024	Number of newly registered volunteers Number placed Volunteer feedback (formal / informal)	Physical Activity Wellbeing & Sport Strategy Enhancing Wellbeing in Our Island Communities: Delivery Plan	Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 (SG) Mental health - transition and recovery plan (SG, 2020)
Re-engagement of people and communities through adult and family learning	Carry out a scoping exercise to identify current adult learning delivery and needs across Orkney which can be addressed through collaborative approaches	CLD Orkney College (OLGF)	Time, capacity, staff resource, funding, lack of engagement,	March 2022	Orkney Adult Learning Strategy and Plan developed Needs analysis	National Improvement Framework OIC Improvement Plan (2020)	Family Learning Framework (Ed Scot)
	Raise awareness of Adult Literacy / Numeracy support available and expand learning opportunities based on need.	CLD Orkney College	Time, capacity, staff resource, funding, inaccessible resources or opportunities	2023	Number of promotional activities/events Number of new learners Number of new learning opportunities	Local Employability Action Plan 20-21 Orkney Equalities Outcome Plan 2021-25	Welcoming our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015-2020 (SG, ES) Review of FL in Scotland (2021, ES)
	Secure funding to offer subsidised classes and group activities to help targeted groups and individuals to re-engage and reintegrate into society.	S&L CLD	Time, capacity, staff resource, funding, inaccessible resources or opportunities	2022	Funding secured Programme of learning events delivered Number of participants Participant feedback (formal / informal)	The Northern Alliance RIC CLD Improvement Plan	Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 (SG)
Re-engagement of young people		CLD VAO				CLD Youth Work Offer	

through coordinated Youth Work approaches	Establish resources and training to increase knowledge and understanding of youth work approaches	(Youth Workers Forum)	Staff, time, money, reach	Sept 2022	Youth Awards leaflet produced and distributed Number of wider achievement awards available for young people Number of young people achieving awards	Integrated Children Service Plan 2021-23 Good Parenting Plan 2020-25 Child Poverty Strategy 2021	National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 (SG, ES, YL) National Improvement Framework Youth Work & Employability (Youthlink, 2020)
	Expand youth work opportunities to engage those who would most benefit from youth work activity and support	CLD VAO (Youth Workers Forum)	Staff capacity, time, money, resources, venues for activities to take place, lack of engagement, stigma, not attracting those targeting	2023	Number of young people engaged in youth work activities Number of youth work activities arranged Participant feedback (formal / informal)	LEP Action Plan 2020-21 Orkney Equalities Outcome Plan 2021-25 The Northern Alliance RIC CLD Improvement Plan VAO Work Plan 2021-23	Youth Work & Curriculum for Excellence (Youthlink, 2021) Youth Work's Contribution to the Scottish Attainment Challenge (Youthlink,2020)
	Provide training and information sessions on UNCRC for the wider CLD sector	CLD Education	Trained, experienced staff, time, capacity, knowledge, lack of awareness, failure to attract interest/buy in	Sept 2022	Number of information /awareness sessions offered Participant feedback (formal / informal)	Integrated Children Services Plan 2021-23	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Partnership Workforce Development & Planning

We will work to ensure we have a skilled workforce by raising awareness of CLD and strengthening learning opportunities for those working and volunteering in the CLD sector.

Outcomes	Improvement Action	Lead	Implication (risk, cost, resources)	Target Date	Measures	Link to local policies & plans	Link to national policies & plans
CLD is recognised and promoted as a profession	Explore and expand opportunities and pathways into and within the CLD profession through collaborative work with the North and Northern Alliances	CLD VAO SDS	Time, staff resource, capacity, lack of uptake and awareness	2024	Programme developed and delivered Feedback/evaluation CLD Pathway publication developed Qualifications gained	OIC Council Delivery Plan 2018-23 OHAC Workforce Plan 2020 – 2022 The Northern Alliance RIC CLD Improvement Plan	Working with Scotland's Communities 2018 (ES & CLDSC) Growing the Learning Culture in CLD (CLDSC 2015)
Orkney has a skilled, trained, and confident CLD workforce with a shared understanding of relevant national occupational standards, CLD values and competences	Support the wider CLD workforce to benefit from CLD Standards Council registration	CLD	Time, staff resource, capacity, lack of uptake and awareness	2023	Number of new registrations CLD Standard Council sessions arranged Numbers attending sessions	OIC CLD Team Plan 2021-24 The Northern Alliance RIC CLD Improvement Plan North Alliance	Working with Scotland's Communities 2018 (ES & CLDSC) CLD Statement of Values (CLDSC) Code of Ethics for CLD (CLDSC) CLD Competence framework (CLDSC) Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan Phase 3
	Undertake a needs assessment to identify professional learning needs of our CLD Sector (including H&W, digital access, and training in new learning methods)	CLD VAO	Lack of uptake, staff time and capacity,	July 2022	TNA completed Training needs identified Participant feedback (formal / informal)		
	Work with partners including The North and Northern Alliance to create a suite of training for CLD workforce to meet the assessment of need	CLD VAO	Lack of uptake, staff time, resources, accessibility	2023	Training opportunities developed to meet identified needs Learning events delivered Numbers taking part Participant feedback (formal / informal)		
	Deliver information sessions to wider partners / partnerships to promote the use of CLD competencies and code of ethics	CLD	Lack of uptake, staff time, resources, accessibility	2022	Information sessions delivered Number of participants Participant feedback (formal / informal)		

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Planning and progress is informed by more effective collection, analysis and reporting of data	Develop Key Priority Indicators (KPIs) relevant to partnership outcomes	CLD	Lack of partner input, staff capacity, buy in	2022	KPIs approved and incorporated into plan	OIC CLD Team Plan 2021-24	CLDMS KPI Data Gathering Guidance Document (CLDS, 2020)
	Improve methods for collaborative data collection in response to the chosen KPI's	CLD VAO SDS		2023	Data relevant to planned activities collected, analysed and reported six-monthly Evaluation report Data sharing agreements developed	The Northern Alliance RIC CLD Improvement Plan North Alliance	

Unmet needs over this time (2021-24)

At a time of changing national policy, realignment of priorities and ever decreasing resources, it is clearly evident that not all CLD needs can be met during the lifetime of this plan. This recognition that there will be unmet need over the life of the plan is highlighted in the CLD legislation which requires CLD partners to identify unmet need. Priority areas that may not be met during the life of this plan includes:

- Development of wider accreditation opportunities for adults
- Widening STEM opportunities through CLD activity
- Undertake a Third Sector Skills Survey
- While we have been unable to include specific actions in the plan around climate challenge engagement work to raise awareness and support within the community, we will seek opportunities to weave this into actions where possible/appropriate
- Expanding partnership work with housing partners to explore preventative work around homelessness with young people
- Develop closer links with partners leading on transport and broadband improvements to ensure barriers to participation in learning are reduced
- Extend collaborative informal ESOL provision in the community
- Identifying resources to fund individual professional qualifications and wider course opportunities for staff within the CLD sector

Appendix 2 – Our Regional Approach in the North



The Northern Alliance

Orkney Islands Council is one of eight regional local authority partner members in the Regional Improvement Collaborative for the North – **The Northern Alliance**. Other members are Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Highland, Argyll and Bute, Shetland and the Western Isles (Eilean Siar).

The **Northern Alliance** Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) aims to develop a culture of collaboration, sharing of expertise and creating local and regional networks to improve the educational and life chances of children and young people.

For further general information - [The Northern Alliance – A Regional Improvement Collaborative](#)

There are 9 workstreams delivering against the above agenda including a specific **CLD Work-stream** which is managed and delivered through the local authority Lead Officers for CLD. Some support for this is provided by Education Scotland through their Education Officers. This has been particularly evident in their involvement in CLD Planning and in aspects of continuous improvement.

The current operational improvement priorities of the CLD Leads group are to...

- Capture approaches to wider achievement for young people and adult learners and share practice
- Capture and analyse youth participation and youth voice
- Further develop approaches to Family Learning
- Increase access to professional learning, including online

Read about our **collective** achievements here [Northern Alliance CLD Sway](#)

Building on these priorities going forward we will be establishing and supporting a Youth Advisory Group for the region, planning and delivering professional learning in STEM (Science, technology, engineering and maths) using a funding award from Education Scotland, strengthening networking around equalities and young people through a new forum, extending practice sharing in relation to Family Learning and contributing to the wider collaborations created through the Regional Improvement Collaborative.

Professional Learning for practitioners and the North Alliance

Access to professional learning and development for practitioners in CLD in the North is enhanced through a regional network of partners, including from the third sector, known as the **North Alliance**. In turn, this network is a member of the national grouping of CLD Training Consortia. The North Alliance is awarded a small amount of annual funding from the CLD Standards Council in Scotland to deliver professional learning activities for practitioners across the geography.



Appendix 3 - Links / bibliography

CLD Drivers & Strategies

CLD Plans Guidance Note (2021-24) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cld-plans-guidance-note/pages/5/>

CLD Revised Guidance Note (2018-21) <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/cld/revised-cld-guidance-note/> CLD

Managers Scotland reference sheet/checklist CLD Planning <https://cldmanagersscotland.wordpress.com/>

Planning for Change – review of CLD Plans [Planning for Change, A Review of CLD Plans 2018 – 21](#)

Improving life chances and empowering communities (Education Scotland)

<https://education.gov.scot/media/ryklpn1i/improving-life-chances-and-empowering-communities.pdf>

How good is the learning and development in our community [How good is the learning and development in our community?](#) (Education.gov.scot) The

Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/175/contents/made>

CLD [statement of values](#) (CLDSC)

The [Code of Ethics](#) (CLDSC)

The [CLD Competence framework](#) (CLDSC)

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Orkney NIF Return 2020 (OIC) [I08 National_Improvement_Framework.pdf](#)

Orkney Integration Joint Board annual audit plan 2020/21(IJB) <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/orkney-integration-joint-board-annual-audit-plan-202021>

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Wider policy context significant for CLD

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- Getting It Right For Every Child (Education Scotland) <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/getting-it-right-for-every-child-girfec>
- Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland - National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 (SG, ES, YL) <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/youth-work-strategy-181214.pdf>
- Welcoming our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015-2020 (SG, ES) https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/22892/2/ESOLStrategy2015to2020_tcm4-855848_Redacted.pdf
- Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 (SG) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/adult-literacies-scotland-2020-strategic-guidance/pages/3/>
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- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Summary (SG) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>
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- Review of FL in Scotland (2021, ES) <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/family-learning-report-full-document.pdf>
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Orkney Islands Council's Housing Service
 School Place
 Kirkwall
 Orkney
 KW15 1NY

Annual Assurance Statement

We achieve all of the following standards and outcomes for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services:

- All relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.
- All relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- All relevant legislative duties.

Where additional explanatory information is required, this is included in annex 1 of the attached report and will be reproduced in the contextual information provided with the Annual Return against the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

I confirm that the Council's Education, Leisure and Housing Committee have seen and considered appropriate evidence to support the level of assurance we have at the meeting held on 8 September 2021.

Signed

(Chair of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee)

Annex 1 – Key points relating to the Council’s performance

Explanatory information has been provided to explain either a change in performance or areas where Orkney’s context is particularly important.

Annual Return Against the Charter

The Annual Return against the Charter for financial year 2020/21 has been completed for Orkney Islands Council and was submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 May 2021. Areas of performance which required additional explanation are as follows (the indicators referred to are nationally required):

Satisfaction Survey

The Council undertook a wholesale tenant survey in 2020 in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Council does this every 2 years as opposed to every 3 to ensure closer alignment with the current tenant base. This recorded high levels of tenant satisfaction with the majority of indicators relating to satisfaction recording improvements from the previous survey.

The tenant survey was undertaken by an independent body to ensure tenants felt able to openly express their views. This exercise has been undertaken jointly with Orkney Housing Association Limited to share costs.

In addition to the wholesale survey, the Council undertakes a range of satisfaction surveys covering different parts of the service and these generally show good levels of satisfaction, though the response rate is low (with the exception of repairs customer satisfaction).

This information is used to inform the Housing Service’s relevant Service Delivery Plan accordingly.

Given that the repairs customer satisfaction survey is run as a rolling programme, this data has been used for the Annual Return against the Charter rather than the wholesale tenant survey.

Indicators 3 and 4 (Complaints)

During financial year 2020/21 there were some notable differences to data surrounding complaints. This included that 39% fewer stage 1 complaints were received than was the case the year before.

Under normal circumstances, 80% of stage 1 complaints come in via repairs monitoring forms. During financial year 2020/21, due to COVID-19 restrictions there was a period when non-emergency repairs were unable to be undertaken due to Scottish Government guidance. Therefore, repairs monitoring forms were not being issued. This has led to fewer stage 1 complaints.

Conversely stage 2 complaints rose by 80% over the same period. These are a mix of repairs timescales, condition of property, process and policy, and one each of neighbour nuisance and attitude of a staff member.

One of the stage 2 complaints, was received in mid-March and therefore not responded fully by year end. Instead, it was completed inside timescale by mid-April. However, this led to 8 of the 9 stage two complaints being recorded as responded to fully during the year, giving a total of 88.89%.

Indicators 8 and 9 (Repairs)

The installation and development of the new computer system, Concerto has been completed. The handheld app was shared with contractors to further enhance the current functionality. The launch began in financial year 2021/22 and a trial involving the Council's measured term contractor is currently underway with a view to involving sub-contractors in the near future.

The time to complete emergency repairs, decreased from 6.28 hours for financial year 2019/20 to 6.18 hours for 2020/21. New processes were implemented involving in-house Building Inspectors/Clerk of Works undertaking some of the emergency repairs themselves where they are able to do so. This has been a key factor in reducing the time taken to undertake emergency repairs. It is anticipated the handheld app will allow further efficiencies in relation to time recording, allowing recording to the exact minute rather than to within 15 minutes.

The Council continues to work closely with its contractors to ensure the performance management culture remains central to service provision despite significant pressures on services and Orkney's remote and rural context.

The time to complete non-emergency repairs increased from 11.53 days for financial year 2019/20 to 17.14 days in 2020/21. For the first quarter of 2020/21, the lockdown due to COVID-19 meant that it was not possible to undertake non-emergency repairs under Scottish Government guidance. This amounts to 2,100 days. If this period were removed the figure would be 14.92 days. However, COVID-19 restrictions continue to impact on timescales. A backlog of non-emergency repairs remained once lockdown was lifted in late June 2021. Some tenants remained uncomfortable with workmen accessing their home despite having all COVID-19 mitigations in place and attempts to reassure tenants accordingly. Supplies have also been affected by COVID-19. Access to isles properties to undertake repairs were restricted with reduced numbers able to travel on ferries, bookings required a day in advance and segregation in transport to and from the ferry etc. Contractors also experienced a range of issues as a result of working and travelling in a manner required to reduce COVID-19 risks and endeavouring to catch up with a backlog of general construction works.

Joint working continues with contractors and improvements in performance are sought wherever possible. Despite the COVID-19 situation, contractors remain very busy and there are difficulties in obtaining sub-contractors with availability. Some of the contractors have been successful in expanding their staff teams and tried to restructure their processes which is positive. Recruitment remains challenging.

Indicator 12 (Repairs Satisfaction)

Repairs customer satisfaction remains high at 91.15% being slightly higher than 91.04% for the year before, which is very positive. The number of completed surveys reduced in financial year 2019/20 for this indicator as an area identified for improvement in our last audit by an independent assessor, included ensuring that the data used definitely only related to the last repair which had been undertaken.

Indicator 14 (Tenancy Offers Refused)

The percentage of offers of housing refused has declined from 36.61% for financial year 2019/20 to 25.00% for 2020/21 which is positive. Previously only offers which had a refusal or acceptance were counted, rather than those which remained open. Feedback from an independent audit undertaken last year was that open offers should still be included. Therefore, this process has been adjusted accordingly.

The introduction of a new lettings policy, based on the principles of choice, was planned for April 2021, but is currently delayed, as a result of COVID-19.

Indicator 15 (Anti-Social Behaviour)

The Council has neighbourhoods which are clean and attractive. The level of anti-social behaviour in Orkney remains very low. Along with Orkney Housing Association Limited, joint work is undertaken closely with the Council's corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Co-Ordinator and the Police in order to take a multi-agency approach to any issues which arise.

Orkney has a very low level of anti-social behaviour with few cases of serious anti-social behaviour. The Council's anti-social behaviour policy, was significantly reviewed in 2019 with the addition of realistic and proportionate targets.

Indicator 16 (Tenancy Sustainment)

Statistics relating to the Council's overall tenancy sustainment (indicator 16) shows sustained performance.

An assessment of cases where a tenancy had not been sustained indicated reasons such as death, hospitalisation and leaving Orkney as well as those who had sought housing in another sector.

As regards tenancy sustainment generally, the Council is keen to assist tenants to sustain their tenancies and employs a qualified Social Worker within Housing Services. This allows specialist Social Work skills to be used to assist those with a range of issues including addiction. In addition, the Council employs a Housing Support Worker who works directly with tenants in this respect. The Housing Support and Homelessness aspects of its service are registered with the Care Inspectorate and these obtain good inspection grades and staff are registered with the Scottish Social Services Committee.

Indicators 18 and 30 (Empty Property Rental Loss and Time taken to Relet Properties)

Void (empty property) loss increased from £23,480 in 2019/20 to £48,924 in 2020/21, which represents an increase in the percentage of rent loss due to properties being empty from 0.64% to 1.32%. Various factors contribute to this increase. In 2020/21, there were fewer relets, 68 in 2020/21 as opposed to 72 in 2019/20 and no new builds were completed during the year. In addition, national guidance on COVID-19 meant that void properties were held for 72 hours following keys being returned, before staff went in to deal with the void and significantly increased cleaning was implemented. Together these increased the timescales for turning around void properties. In addition, a proportion of voids were on the isles. Following the initial lockdown, there was a period of time where travel to the isles was prohibited. Following that there were operational difficulties with access to public conveniences for staff welfare purposes. There have also been general supply issues affecting a range of items including internal doors.

As regards the average length of time taken to relet properties (indicator 30), a total of 68 properties were relet during financial year 2020/21. The time taken to relet properties is also affected by COVID-19 as outlined above in relation to voids. The total number of calendar days the properties were empty was 4,247 giving a relet time of 62.46 days which is significantly higher than financial year 2019/20 which recorded 35.79 days. This figure is affected by a small number of properties which are subject to low demand and consequently were vacant for an extended period of time. During 2020/21 this applied to three properties with 392, 210 and 182 days void respectively without which the average would be reduced to 50.91 days. In addition, there were 14 isles voids during the financial year. Given additional complexities around travel to the isles, mainland properties were prioritised.

Indicator 27 (Rents)

The customer satisfaction survey shows that 81% of Council tenants stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the value for money of their rents.

Indicator 27 covers gross rent arrears as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.

Gross arrears were challenging as a result of the COVID-19 impact, throughout financial year 2020/21. The figures at year end show a rise to 14.64% for financial year 2020/21 from 11.22% for financial year 2019/20. A further analysis of this figure shows that current tenant arrears have risen to 8.92% for financial year 2020/21 from 7.03% in 2019/20.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, a strong focus was placed on the recovery of arrears. This included undertaking welfare checks for all Council tenants throughout the initial lockdown, working with tenants to ensure that those who needed assistance to claim Universal Credit Housing Costs/Housing Benefit, were assisted to do so. Throughout there was also close joint working with Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau in relation to income maximisation and money advice/debt assistance. Every attempt was made, and continues to be made, to recover outstanding arrears where

this is possible. This has included senior management prioritising the pursuit of arrears and significant levels of staffing resource being focused on this aspect.

Although the overall level of arrears increased, the rent collected as a percentage of rent due in the year increased to 96.59% during 2020, having fallen to 94.66% in 2019. This is a positive indication that the sustained focus on reducing rent arrears is starting to net results.

The level of housing costs received directly from Universal Credit/Housing Benefit have risen significantly from £1.45m in 2019/20 to £1.52m in 2020/21 and a system of inputting payments manually has impacted on a small staffing resource adding complexities for a small Housing Revenue Account.

Investigations are underway surrounding the potential to automate Universal Credit payments. While this project was on hold due to the COVID-19 situation, it is anticipated that there will be the potential to move this forward shortly. Progression will depend on affordability.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) have been publicised more widely through the Council's website, social media etc in an attempt to reach more tenants who are struggling.

It is anticipated there will continue to be significant impacts from restrictions affecting employers and therefore a likelihood of ongoing economic impacts on jobs etc.

The percentage of former tenant arrears in 2020 increased to 5.53% from 4.2% in 2019.

The Council continues to actively and prudently pursue former tenant arrears rather than write-off, although this continues to be detrimental to the overall rent arrears performance. Write-offs for financial year 2020/21 were progressed again following the COVID-19 lockdown but remained low at £14,210, or 6.85% of the former tenant arrears outstanding.

Recruitment difficulties impacted on a specialist post in rent arrears recovery. The post was restructured during financial year 2020/21 and a new postholder took up employment in early June 2021.

Indicator C9 (Scottish Housing Quality Standard Compliance)

The Council has assessed 37.75% of our stock over the last 5 years as a result of surveys undertaken relative to energy performance and new build completion. In addition, we will undertake a rolling programme of stock condition / assessment of compliance on 10% of our stock annually.

Data has been compiled on the renewal cycle for core property elements such as windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms. This provides us with accurate data based on historic renewal data and update surveys done while Building Inspectors are in the properties. The data is then reviewed and prioritised to ensure the properties are maintained to a good standard, both affordable and planned. This process will be further automated over the next period subject to issues gaining access due to

COVID-19 guidance and tenant concerns. Undertaking works on core property elements should also assist with improving tenant satisfaction with the quality of tenant homes (indicator 7) in older stock, and satisfaction has risen from 75.99% in 2018/19 to 87.76% for 2019/20.

The Council's in-house resource incorporates accredited Energy Assessors (Scotland) staff and has resulted in a significant survey programme and modern EPCs are held for the majority of the housing stock. The Council also complies with statutory testing procedures – for example, periodic electrical inspection reporting, legionella, radon etc – that ensures that we are reviewing and inspecting properties at regular intervals.

The Council has focused on ensuring it delivers the Scottish Housing Quality Standard as far as is practicably possible. The Council has a strong knowledge of its stock and data held on properties is at an individual level. A process of cloning is not used as a general rule, though recently there has been a movement to having a small number of cloned properties.

A specific module has been developed in the asset management system Concerto, which now facilitates recording of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. While the module was being developed, the opportunity was taken to undertake a refresh of data and an initial stock review with a view to minimising the level of abeyances and exemptions and ensuring data held was appropriately robust. The depth of information held on Concerto has been enhanced. There has been a process of seeking to reduce the number of properties failing the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. While most of these are marginal fails and the intention would have been to have progressed most to a Scottish Housing Quality Standard pass in 2020/21, this has been delayed due to COVID-19. These are now being progressed.

The properties which currently fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard have been reappraised and a detailed plan agreed regarding relevant measures. There is some overlap with properties which currently fail the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing and these will be addressed as one process to ensure whichever is the higher of the standards, is the priority to allow a pass. Regular reporting and review is undertaken. Properties which are classified as hard to treat properties are being looked at on the basis of fitting positive pressure heat pump systems. However, difficulties with sourcing contractors with availability is an issue. In addition, a number of properties require a new Energy Performance Certificate which was difficult to arrange, partially due to tenant concerns around access, while Orkney was in a higher tier under COVID-19 restrictions.

There is a recognition that there may be challenges in an island context due to issues such as a backlog of works, and challenges involving staffing and supplies. However, discussions with contractors will be ongoing.

Annual Report for Tenants

The annual report for tenants will be produced by 31 October 2021 as required by the Scottish Housing Regulator. This will include key information which is of interest to tenants.

The Council has a joint Residents' Panel with Orkney Housing Association Limited which consists of tenants / residents of both organisations. They will be asked for their views on the Annual Report ahead of publication and their views will be taken into account in producing the final document. The Council includes a section in the Annual Report which encourages feedback from tenants more generally on how they feel about the report and the information on it.

The Residents' Panel will also be involved in discussions around the Annual Assurance Statement prior to submission.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Council is required to undertake a wholesale tenants' satisfaction survey every three years. The Council does this in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Limited in order to reduce costs and produces the customer satisfaction survey biennially. This is undertaken by an independent body in order to ensure impartiality and was most recently done during 2020.

A range of customer satisfaction surveys are in place across the Service in order to assess the quality of the service on an ongoing basis. These include:

- New tenants' survey re quality of home and service.
- Repairs Satisfaction survey.
- Improvements satisfaction survey.
- Exit questionnaires for tenants leaving the Council's accommodation.
- Homelessness service, new tenants' questionnaire.
- Homelessness service, exit questionnaire.
- Housing Advice service, exit questionnaire.

In addition, information is used from complaints and general feedback as encouraged by footnotes on all correspondence etc. The information is used to inform the Service Delivery Plan for the relevant part of the Service to inform any service improvements.

This links to standard 3.12 in the National Standards for Information and Advice Providers which is part of the Council's accreditation.

While the Council collects data from its wholesale tenant satisfaction survey, this can lead to some distortion in figures. For example, when questions are raised regarding repairs it should be the most recent repair. It is therefore more effective to collect this data immediately following completion of the repair.

The Council intends to use its ongoing customer satisfaction information so it can evidence that the information collected relates to the present day.

Scottish Housing Regulator's Engagement Plan

The Scottish Housing Regulator's engagement plan highlights key indicators, relating to service quality, where they have indicated they wish to engage with the Council. The Scottish Housing Regulator's engagement plan relates to financial year 2021/22 and indicates it wishes to engage with the Council in relation to:

- The Council's services for people who are homeless.

Specifically, this relates to COVID-19 having significantly impacted the services provided by social landlords since 2020. The Scottish Housing Regulator have advised they will continue to monitor, assess and report upon how each landlord is responding and they will keep their regulatory engagement under review so that they can continue to respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

They have stated that they have reviewed the information on homelessness in the COVID-19 monthly returns. They will discuss with the Council the impact of the pandemic on outcomes for people who are threatened with, or are experiencing, homelessness, how it is working with its Registered Social Landlord partners to provide accommodation and review their engagement.

Data on homelessness is not included within the Annual Return against the Charter generally. Instead, this information is provided through returns outlined at section 4.2 of the committee report and is reported to the Council's Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, specifically a report is presented to the June cycle of meetings.

Impact of COVID-19

The information above relates to the position surrounding performance predominantly in relation to service delivery in a "normal" operating context.

While Housing Services have endeavoured to operate as normally as possible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there has still been significant disruption. Face to face provision of services have been removed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. During the initial lockdown period the focus was on the delivery of essential services including homelessness, housing support and emergency repairs. From August 2021, small numbers of home visits have resumed in essential situations.

COVID-19 is likely to continue to cause disruption for the foreseeable future and consequently the likelihood is that there will also be an impact on performance figures for financial year 2021/22. The precise extent of this cannot be pre-judged given that further limitations by guidance may well impact over the coming months.

The impact on the economy and outcomes for people currently on furlough or potentially facing unemployment is likely to impact negatively on rent arrears. The suspension on evictions has now been lifted and therefore legal action will be progressed in cases where all other alternatives have been exhausted. In addition, demand for Council housing is also anticipated to rise.

It is anticipated that homelessness will rise predominantly as a result of family breakdown including domestic abuse, as restrictions are eased. It is further anticipated there will be ongoing difficulties with permanently rehousing homeless households due to supply issues. There is also the potential for tenancy sustainment to be affected.

It is anticipated that supply issues and recruitment issues for contractors will impact on work requiring to be progressed including non-emergency repairs, the turnover of void (empty) properties, works required to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (2). In addition, delivery of the Council's house build projects will also be subject to delay.

While every attempt will be made to ensure that performance remains as high as possible, there is a need to recognise that the precise impact on financial year 2021/22 cannot yet be determined and will remain under close scrutiny.

In common with all other social housing providers across Scotland, the Council is currently providing additional performance information to the Scottish Housing Regulator, Scottish Government and COSLA so that the impact of COVID-19 can be appropriately quantified on key indicators including homelessness, repairs, allocations and re-lets.

Annex 2: Assurance Action Plan

Assurance and Notification

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Prepare an Annual Assurance Statement in accordance with guidance.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Data Analysts.	October 2021.	Green.	Committee report and appendices to be presented to Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 8 September 2021.
Submit Annual Assurance Statement to Scottish Housing Regulator between April and October each year.	Data Analysts.	October 2021.	Green.	On target to be submitted by October 2021.
Make Annual Assurance Statement available to tenants and other service users.	Data Analysts and Tenant Participation Officer.	October 2021.	Green.	To be included in Housing Services' area of website.
Notify Scottish Housing Regulator during the year of any material changes to the assurance in the Annual Assurance Statement.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Data Analysts.	As required.	Green.	
Have assurance and evidence that we are meeting all our legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Works and Inspection Manager.	Ongoing.	Green.	<p>This links to Standard 1.5 of National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. We are undergoing the re-accreditation process during 2021.</p> <p>Evidence includes a broad range of Council corporate policies including the Health and Safety Policy; Challenging Behaviour by Members of the Public: The Role of Customer Service Advisers and All Staff Using the Customer Services Facility; Housing Services' Staff Training and Development Policy;</p>

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
				<p>Library Procedure for Housing Services; staff training logs and internal portal which includes a broad range of information on corporate policy areas. Staff management processes are in place across Housing Services including induction, regular one to ones in line with the Line Management Policy and all staff are required to complete the Personal Development Award for Advisors with Shelter at the next intake after taking up post. In addition, structures such as qualified housing officer are in place to encourage housing staff to complete a housing qualification.</p> <p>During 2021 we are undertaking a review of our equalities policy and the processes relating to equalities data collection and human rights. Our revised Equalities Policy and Action Plan was approved by our Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in June 2021 and this outlines how we will progress with expanding our data collection relating to equalities and human rights accordingly</p>
Notify Scottish Housing Regulator of safety matters which have been reported to or investigated by the	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and	In place.	Green.	The Council's Health and Safety Advisor provides guidance on all aspects of health and safety as

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or reports from other regulatory or statutory authorities or insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.	Housing / Works and Inspection Manager.			<p>required. If a report were received from the Health and Safety Executive, immediate steps would be taken to address the issue and the Scottish Housing Regulator would be advised accordingly.</p> <p>We have policies covering issues such as Asbestos and procedures in place regarding Radon / Legionella etc. Our Development and Infrastructure Services undertake property inspections and ensure properties are fitted with smoke alarms etc.</p> <p>Recently we have introduced risk assessments and procedural documentation to ensure staff and tenants / service users are appropriately protected and supported throughout the COVID-19 crisis.</p>
Make Engagement Plan easily available and accessible to tenants and service users, including online.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Data Analysts.	May 2021.	Green.	To be included by link to the Scottish Housing Regulator's website from Housing Services' area of the Council's website.
Register all requirements for providing data to Scottish Housing Regulator and Information Commissioners Office.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Head of Legal Services.	In place.	Green.	Housing Services will hold a register of any matters reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator and Legal Services will record all matters reported to the Information Commissioners Office.

Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance

Requirement	Who	When	RAG	Comments
Submit Annual Return against the Charter to Scottish Housing Regulator in accordance with published guidance.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Data Analysts.	May 2021.	Green.	Submitted by 31 May 2020.
<p>Involve tenants, and where relevant service users, in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree an effective and meaningful approach with tenants. • Publicise approach to tenants. • Verify approach and evidence involving tenants has happened. • Involve other service users in an appropriate way. 	Tenant Participation Officer.	In place.	Green.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents' Panel involved in development of annual report as standard. • Section in the annual report to encourage feedback. • Residents' Panel are invited to an annual presentation on performance from Scotland's Housing; Network (from 2019) and discussion at Residents' Panel meeting thereafter.
<p>Report performance to tenants and other service users no later than October each year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree format of performance reporting with tenants and ensure accessible with plain and jargon free language. • Provide assessment of performance in delivering Charter outcomes. 	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Data Analysts and Tenant Participation Officer.		Green.	The Council has a joint Residents' Panel with Orkney Housing Association which consists of tenants / residents of both organisations. They are asked for their views on the Annual Report ahead of publication and their views will continue to be taken into account in producing the final document. The Council includes a section in the Annual Report which encourages feedback from tenants more generally

Requirement	Who	When	RAG	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include relevant comparison including previous years, other landlords and with national performance. • Set out how we intend to address areas for improvement. • Give tenants and service users a way to feedback views on style and form of reporting 				on how they feel about the report and the information on it.
Make Scottish Housing Regulator report on our performance easily available to tenants including online.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Data Analysts.	When produced by SHR.	Green.	To be included as a link to the Scottish Housing Regulator's website from Housing Services' area of the Council's website.

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Whistleblowing

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Ensure effective arrangements and a policy for whistleblowing for staff and elected Members.	Head of HR and Performance.	In place from October 2015.	Green.	Policy on Whistleblowing is available on internal portal or in either electronic or hard copy from HR on request. Trade Unions are also aware of this. There is a monthly meeting with Trade Unions which is corporate and each individual service holds regular meetings with the Trade Unions as well.

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Make Whistleblowing policy easily available and promote its existence.	As above.	In place. As above.	Green.	As above.

Tenants and Service Users Redress

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Make information on reporting any significant performance failures, including the Scottish Housing Regulator's leaflet, available to our tenants.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Tenant Participation Officer.	In place from June 2019.	Green.	A link will be provided to the Scottish Housing Regulator's leaflet from the Council's website.
Provide tenants and service users with the information they need to exercise right to complain and seek redress.	Team Leader (Infrastructure and Information).	In place.	Green.	The Council's corporate complaints process is used and corporate policy in line with the guidance from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Information is available through our website and in hard copy on request.
Respond to tenant complaints within our service standards timescales and in accordance with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman guidance.	Team Leader (Infrastructure and Information).	In place.	Green.	Reporting against timescales is included in the Annual Return against the Charter.
Ensure we have effective arrangements to learn from complaints and other tenant and service user feedback, in accordance with SPSO guidance.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and Head of Legal Services.	In place.	Green.	This links with standard 3.12 of the National Standards for Information and Advice Providers which covers using feedback to inform service provision. Information collected through complaints, comments and customer satisfaction surveys is used to inform

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
				the update of the Service Delivery Plan for the relevant service area.

Equality and Human Rights

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Have assurance and evidence we consider equality and human rights issues properly when making decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in our day to day service delivery.	Senior Management Team of the Council.	In place.	Green.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies within Housing Services contain a section on equalities. The Housing Service has a specific Equalities Policy and one on Accessibility, has reviewed its Equalities Policy during 2021 and has work ongoing around the area of expanding equalities and human rights monitoring in line with anticipated national guidance. Committee reports on policy matters contain a section on equality. Completion of equality impact assessments is standard. The Council monitors its website and ensures it meets website accessibility requirements. The Council employs a specialist equalities officer to ensure compliance.

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
Collect data relating to protected characteristics for existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists and elected Members and staff.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing	In place.	Green.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities criteria does not apply to elected Members given that they are democratically elected. • Equalities monitoring information is collected for new tenants along with information relating to requirements for information in a range of formats. Information collected includes age, disability, race and sex. We don't collect this for all protected characteristics on the basis of data protection. We have to be clear on the reason why we need the information. • As mentioned above we have work ongoing around the area of expanding equalities and human rights monitoring in line with anticipated national guidance
Collect data on protected characteristics of people who apply as homeless.	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.	In place.	Green.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities monitoring information is collected for people who apply as homeless as follows: • Age, disability, marriage, race, sex, pregnancy and maternity. We don't collect this for all protected characteristics on the basis of data protection. We have to be clear on the reason why we need the information.

Requirement.	Who.	When.	RAG.	Comments.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1503 240 2024 416">As mentioned above we have work ongoing around the area of expanding equalities and human rights monitoring in line with anticipated national guidance
Collect data on protected characteristics of people who use our Gypsy / Traveler services.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.