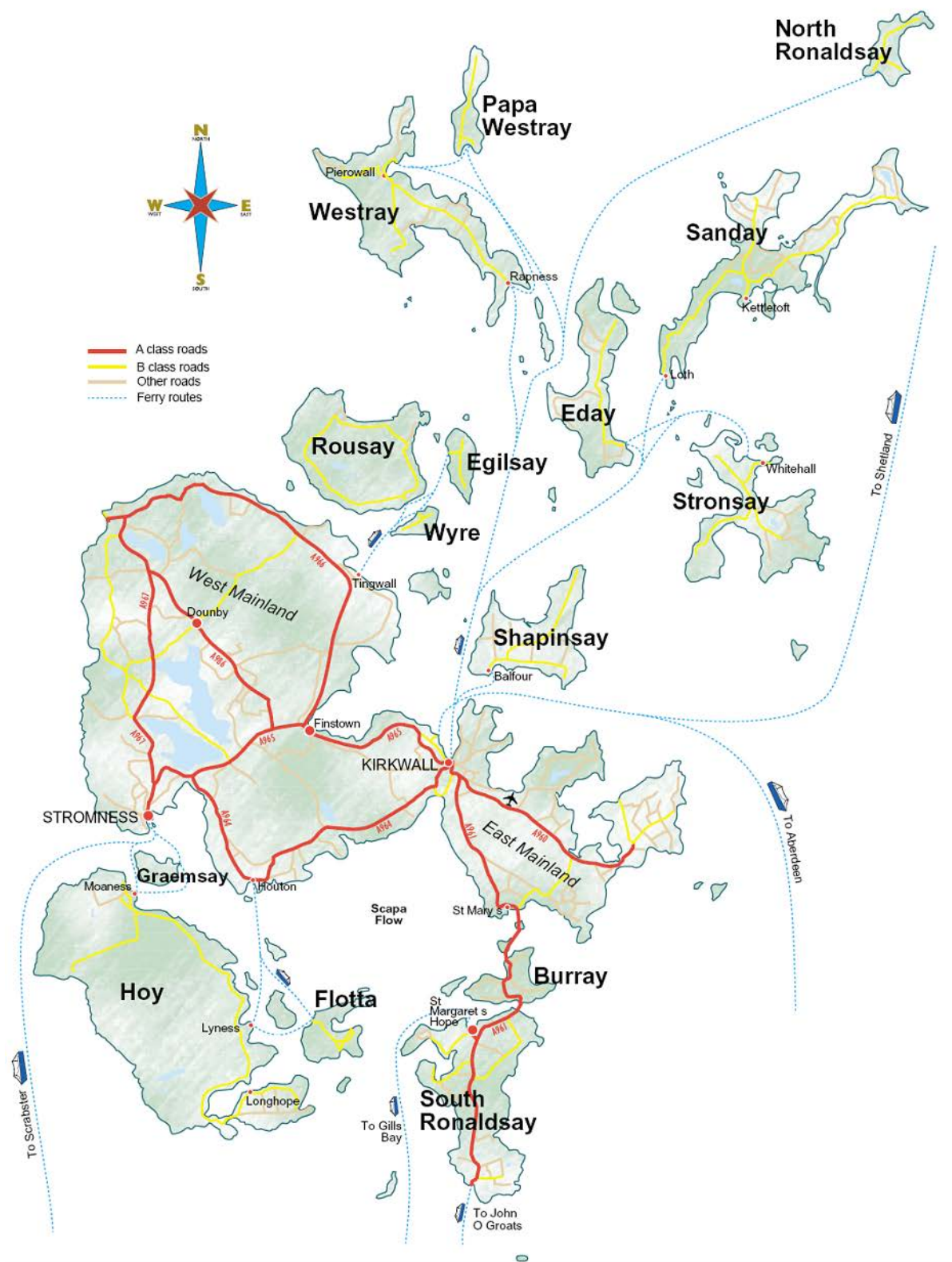


The Council Plan 2018-23

Working together for a better Orkney



If you would like this plan in a different language or format, please contact the Chief Executive's Service, Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall KW15 1NY. Telephone: 01856 873535 extension 2101. Email: corporateservices@orkney.gov.uk

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Foreword

On behalf of Orkney Islands Council, we are delighted to introduce your Council Plan for the years 2018-23.

This plan is firmly rooted in the community. It has grown from Councillors' conversations with Orkney residents on doorsteps, in meetings and down the street in the run-up to the local government elections of May 2017. So our Plan genuinely represents the views of our constituents, and their priorities.

The Council Plan does not exist in isolation. The Council is a leading member of The Orkney Partnership, and the Council Plan is our branch of Orkney's Community Plan. We share our values with the Partnership, and our five priorities complement the Partnership's three strategic priorities. The priorities and associated actions contained in this Plan will contribute to the Partnership's long-term ambitions for Orkney. All members of the Partnership are committed to our shared mission: working together for a better Orkney, and equality is at the heart of everything we do. For every priority we will ensure equal opportunity and fairness are truly considered.

The Council will have many challenges over the next five years, but also many opportunities. Top of the challenges is the shrinking public sector budget, which means that every council in Scotland must operate with less money for the foreseeable future. We will be looking for new ways to provide Council services, and empowering communities to do more for themselves. Despite the Council's recent success in securing funding for the internal ferry service for one year, we urgently need to secure longer term fairer funding with the Scottish Government, including the replacement of the ferry fleet to bring the service levels up to equal those enjoyed elsewhere in Scotland. New opportunities include the Islands (Scotland) Bill, which offers more autonomy for island communities and a commitment to "island-proof" Scottish legislation. In the longer term, the Islands Deal presents a unique opportunity to achieve a transformational scale of investment in Scotland's island communities.

To meet these challenges, the Council will take an enterprising stance and increase the pace of change. We will need to adopt an approach to managing risk which minimises bureaucracy and fosters an innovative culture. Whatever lies ahead, your Council will work tirelessly to safeguard our cherished islands, and achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Orkney.



James Stockan
Council Leader



Alistair Buchan
Chief Executive



Harvey Johnston
Council Convener

Mission, values and strategic priorities

Orkney Islands Council shares its mission and values with The Orkney Partnership, which maintains Orkney’s Community Plan. The Council is a leading member of The Orkney Partnership, and the Council Plan supports the strategic priorities of the Community Plan. Further information on how these are linked is detailed in Appendix 1 of this document.

Our shared mission is: Working together for a better Orkney

Our shared values are:

- Resilience
- Enterprise
- Equality
- Fairness
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Sustainability

The Council’s new set of priorities was inspired by the public engagement exercise which meant the most – the local government elections of 2017. Every day in the weeks leading up to 4 May, candidates knocked on doors and listened to residents’ views on the issues which meant the most to them. Once elected, the Councillors lost no time in getting together to share all the information they had gathered. It is clear that residents want their communities to be well connected, both digitally and by public transport, and to be thriving and entrepreneurial, but also to be compassionate and caring communities. The priority termed ‘quality of life’ captures those things that are hard to define but which can be the deciding factors for people in choosing to stay in Orkney and build a life here.

The Council’s strategic priorities, developed together with the Orkney community, are:



Context, challenge and change

Orkney is a truly wonderful place to live, learn and work. The natural environment is outstanding with clean air, breath-taking scenery, diverse wildlife and a unique cultural heritage. Our residents enjoy friendly and busy communities, low unemployment, low crime rates, top class health care and education, superb sports and leisure facilities and a thriving arts and culture scene.

The Council does not, however, underestimate the challenges that exist. Our remote and rural communities face difficulties such as an ageing population, under-employment, low wages, a high cost of living, limited affordable housing, low digital access, fuel poverty and challenges for some in accessing essential services.

The Council is committed to the protection of Orkney's industries, landscape, natural environment, heritage and culture, for future generations. At the same time, we will ensure that our services and facilities are modern and fit for purpose.

In formulating this plan, the Council's Elected Members had to take many factors into account. As well as the public's strategic priorities, the plan reflects national priorities set by both the Scottish and UK Governments and the core services which the Council provides day to day. It must take account of new duties arising from recent legislation, and improvements recommended by audit and inspection teams.

A delivery plan will be developed which will list the key actions and projects that will deliver the target outcome under each strategic priority theme. The delivery plan will indicate which actions and projects are wholly in the control of the Council, and which rely on external factors. In addition, the delivery plan will contain some actions which are carried over from the previous Council plan and the Council's response to the recommendations of the Accounts Commission contained in the Best Value Assurance Report of December 2017.

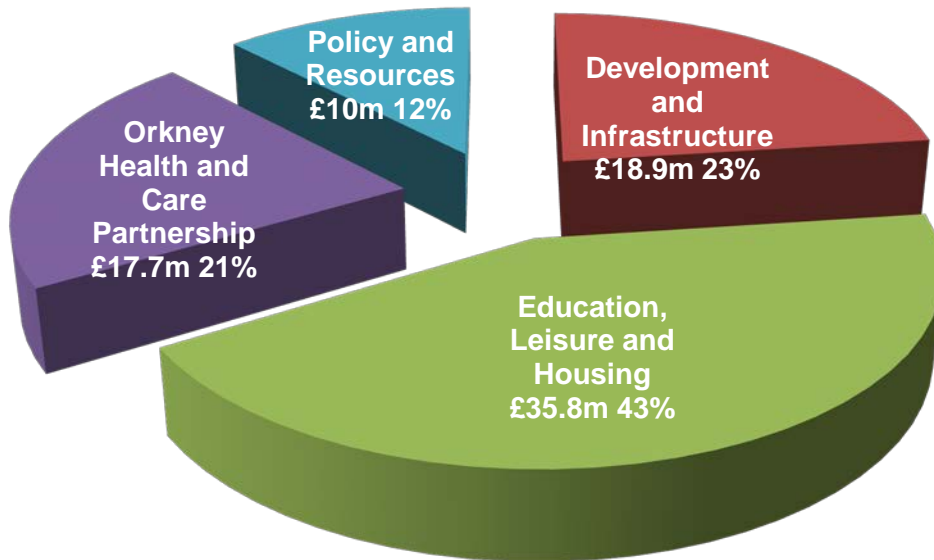
The biggest challenge for the Council is finding the money to pay for everything it wants to do. Demand for public services is going up everywhere, as people are living longer and needing more health and care services. Orkney has the fastest growing population of older people in Scotland, and we all want to enjoy a long retirement if we can. This means that we must develop our workforce and create opportunities which will encourage our younger generation to stay and attract new young people to our community. In the current climate of austerity, public spending is being cut back and the cuts are likely to continue for years to come. So every budget setting round is a matter of juggling priorities and trying to balance the books.

The Council Budget

Despite the Council's recent success in obtaining Scottish Government funding for the cost of running the internal ferry service, budgeting for the next five years will present a major challenge. Most of the Council's funding comes from the Scottish Government, and only a small proportion is raised through local council tax. Consequently, the Council cannot raise much money by putting up council tax, and will have to consider other measures in addition. These might include providing less of some services, increasing current charges, introducing new charges, or looking for new and more efficient ways to do things.

The Council provides a wide range of services, some of which are very visible, like schools, roads and waste collection. Others are less noticeable but are there in case of need, such as

social work services, emergency planning and trading standards. These are all things which the Council must provide by law, and most of the Council's budget is spent on them. The pie chart below shows how our budget for 2017/18 was divided up: **This will be updated for 2018-19 once agreed.**



There is very little money left over after our essential services have been paid for, but we make savings where we can, and sometimes additional resources can be raised from external sources. Councillors are committed to spending any extra money on projects and activities which will make the most difference to local communities, in line with the five strategic priorities they have chosen.

If necessary, the Council can draw on its reserve funds. The Council holds various reserves, earmarked for specific commitments, purposes or for Council priorities. Balancing the budget by drawing on reserves is a short-term option, but it is not prudent for reserves to be used every year to replace cuts in funding as the reserves will be used up over time.

The Council is looking at its assets – things like buildings and facilities – to see if any could be used more effectively by services within the Council, be sold or perhaps shared with other organisations to reduce costs. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives community organisations a new power to ask for assets to be transferred to them, at an appropriate price, and we expect a number of community bodies in Orkney to be interested in this opportunity.

The Change Programme is a small team of staff dedicated to supporting innovation across the Council and helping to find new ways to improve efficiency and ultimately save money. They have already reduced the cost of staff travel, increased recycling and enabled more internal processes be undertaken electronically. Ongoing projects include how best to meet the Council's future IT requirements, reviewing the Learning Landscape and making more Council services accessible online for those who wish to use them.

Partnership working

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 made several changes to help progress partnership working in Scotland. In response, we have reconfigured Orkney's community planning partnership and created a new Orkney Partnership Board. The Orkney Partnership has published a Community Plan and is working on a Locality Plan for the linked isles. The Partnership has piloted participatory budgeting as a way of empowering communities to make their own funding decisions, and the Council aims to mainstream this initiative within the Council budget by 2021. The Council has adopted a new policy on the management of Participation Requests, designed to make it easier for community bodies to work in partnership with the Council to improve services in which they have an interest.



The Empowering Communities initiative has been exploring new ways of working with community councils to give communities more control of how some services are provided in their area. The Council plans to build on Empowering Communities over the lifetime of this plan, further developing the autonomy of local communities and rolling out the scheme to more community councils across Orkney.

Scotland gained new legislation on the integration of health and social care services with the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, leading to the formal establishment of Orkney Health and Care and a new Integration Joint Board. And we have a new Orkney Community Justice Partnership, in response to the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.

Brexit

Change goes hand in hand with uncertainty, and never more so than with the implementation of Brexit. As with any big change, Brexit presents both threats and opportunities. Some of the powers to be repatriated to the UK involve matters of crucial importance to Orkney, like agriculture and fisheries. The Council is campaigning for decision-making to be devolved to the level of government closest to the communities concerned, which in some cases might be local councils. There may also be scope to access new funding streams and the Council will work closely with the Scottish and UK Government in their development of new schemes, in order to maximise opportunities which might benefit Orkney.



The Islands Deal

Orkney's biggest challenges arise in those areas which no one agency can solve on its own, notably digital connectivity, transport, housing and fuel poverty. The main initiative addressing these challenges is the Islands Deal, which has grown out of the "Our Islands, Our Future" campaign.



The Islands Deal is a joint proposal from the three islands councils (Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles) to the Scottish and UK Governments. Its purpose is to achieve long term sustainability for all our islands, by ensuring that every island has a strong enough economy to support a balanced population of all ages.

The first part of the Deal, 'Enhancing Local Democracy', proposes a number of measures to increase the local independence of the islands. This will build on the Islands (Scotland) Bill, soon to be enacted, which offers more autonomy for island communities and a commitment to "island-proof" Scottish legislation, to ensure it has no unintended consequences for islanders. In addition, a long-term ambition of the Council is to explore new ways to deliver public services within Orkney. This could see multiple public agencies formally joined together, referred to as a single authority model, merging their governing bodies and senior management in order to free up more resources for local front line services. The Scottish Government is supportive of this concept and we will explore it further during the lifetime of this plan.

The second part of the Deal, 'Achieving our Economic Potential', proposes a transformational programme of strategic development projects in each island area, with a 10-year horizon to achieve our population and employment targets and a 20-year horizon to ensure that the changes we achieve are embedded and sustainable.

The Islands Deal has attracted support from both governments, and the three islands councils, together with local partners, will work with the Scottish and UK Governments to progress the Deal throughout the lifetime of this plan.

Performance management and reporting

The Council is committed to best practice and continuous improvement. We take self-assessment, audit and inspection very seriously, and welcome recommendations for improvement, as this helps us to deliver better services and improve outcomes for our public. During 2017 the Council underwent a Best Value Audit which looked at every aspect of its governance: strategic direction, resource management, partnership working, community engagement, equalities, performance and improvement. Some of the recommendations of the audit report will be found in this plan.



Against each of the strategic priorities in this plan, we have included some key commitments and performance indicators to help us measure how much progress we are making in achieving the outcomes we want for Orkney. Of course, we are doing many other things as well, details of which can be found in our various Service and partnership plans.

Every year, the Council issues a formal Annual Performance Report on the Council Plan. You can also find day-to-day news and updates on the Council's website, www.orkney.gov.uk, our Facebook page OIC Updates and our Twitter feed @OrkneyCouncil.

Part 1 Strategic Priorities – Themes

In setting the strategic priorities, careful consideration has been given to the intended outcome and impact on the community. Some of these priorities will be wholly within the control of the Council and some will require decisions, resources or influence from other organisations. The priorities have been colour coded to indicate this: **Black** to indicate that a priority is within the Council's control and **Amber** to indicate a reliance on external influences or factors.

A delivery plan will be developed which will list the key actions and projects that will deliver the target outcome under each strategic priority theme. The delivery plan will commit resources to those actions and projects which are wholly in the control of the Council, and will specify the additional inputs required for those which depend on external factors.

In addition, the delivery plan will contain some actions which are carried over from the previous Council plan and the Council's response to the recommendations of the Accounts Commission contained in the Best Value Assurance Report of December 2017.

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Strategic Priority Theme - Connected Communities

Our target outcome

- Orkney's communities enjoy modern and well-integrated transport services and the best national standards of digital connectivity, accessible and affordable to all.

Top priorities

- Complete the ongoing review of the provision of all of Orkney's ferry services.
- Review timetables to integrate public transport wherever possible.
- Continue to invest in improvements to the transport infrastructure and improve its reliability e.g. by exploring further solutions for the barriers.
- Improve cycle and walking paths across Orkney.
- Explore improvements arising from 'Your Kirkwall' engagement.
- Continue to lobby for access for all to superfast broadband.
- Working with the Scottish Government, explore and plan for the replacement of Orkney's internal ferry fleet.

Future aspirations

- Encourage renewable and carbon-neutral transport.
- Invest in marine infrastructure and business development.
- Improve electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Enhance air services for Orkney.

Connectivity is essential to everyday life, whether we are travelling in person, moving freight or logging on to social media. Flight and ferry connections should fit in with what we need to do, and isles residents should be able to plan onward travel without prohibitive time and cost constraints. We will pursue opportunities to upgrade our ferry fleet and infrastructure, and work with partners to achieve better integration of transport connections.

Digital connectivity is equally crucial to 21st century living. The rollout of superfast broadband is being led by national government but we will continue to lobby for equitable access for all to the best achievable standards of broadband and mobile connectivity.

Strategic Priority Theme -Caring Communities

Our target outcome

- People in Orkney enjoy long, healthy and independent lives, with care and support available to those who need it.

Top priorities

- Ensure Mental Health services continue to meet local need for people of all ages.
- Review the services provided for Looked After Children.
- Address workforce development to make sure we have the right people in the right place at the right time.
- In response to demographic change, redesign health and social care services to provide the best care we can for those who need it in the appropriate place.
- Explore how care and/or support can be provided at home, work or in education, while making the best use of resources.

Future Aspirations

- Raise awareness of the respective roles of Orkney Health & Care and the Integration Joint Board.

Orkney is a compassionate and caring community in which to live, but there are always things we can do better. Access to services can be variable at present, depending on where people live. We want to ensure home care services are available to people who need them. For those in need of a higher level of support, we want to redesign health and social care services, considering where services are delivered, and who is included in delivering them, with consideration of supported core/cluster housing for people of all ages.

Our population is living longer and demand is increasing, so workforce planning and development is crucial to ensure that we have enough staff to deliver care services in future. Now that Orkney Health & Care is well established, we will fine-tune its governance procedures and establish baseline staffing levels to improve performance and reduce staff turnover.

Strategic Priority Theme -Thriving Communities

Our target outcome

- The Orkney Community is able to access work, learning and leisure through a modern, robust infrastructure which supports all our communities and meets the requirements of 21st-century life.

Top priorities

- Review Orkney's Learning Landscape.
- Work with partners to develop strategies for improving housing conditions and reducing fuel poverty.
- Continue to influence the Islands Bill and ensure that it meets the needs of our community.
- Explore how communities can further be empowered to take decisions on services throughout Orkney.
- Work with partners to explore options for shared public service delivery through the review of Local Governance.

Future Aspirations

- Continue working with partners to refresh housing and development strategies.

This priority is about making sure our remote communities are equipped with the infrastructure they need to participate fully in 21st-century life. This means supporting economic development on the isles and finding ways to support the elimination of fuel poverty, through such initiatives as the Warm Homes (Scotland) Bill. We will continue the Council's programme to devolve more local autonomy to community councils, explore new ways to deliver services and develop a plan to implement the single authority model, which aims to merge public sector bodies to enhance outcomes, improve efficiency and release more funding for service delivery.

For learners, we will review Orkney's Learning Landscape and deliver the "Orkney Offer", broadening the range of opportunities offered to young people in school years S4, S5 and S6. Using new infrastructure and creative solutions to enhance learning, we will aim to raise attainment and optimise outcomes for all.

Strategic Priority Theme - Enterprising Communities

Our target outcome

- A vibrant economy which supports local businesses and stimulates investment in all our communities.

Top priorities

- Continue to develop strategic projects, particularly to capitalise on the renewable sector.
- Explore ways to reduce the volume, and cost of handling, of the county's waste.
- Work with partners to develop and manage high volume tourism and associated infrastructure.
- Explore options for revenue generation via the tourism sector to support associated infrastructure.
- Progress the Islands Deal to deliver innovative, enterprising and transformational projects.

Future Aspirations

- Achieve a carbon neutral economy within Orkney.
- Continue to encourage and support economic development particularly for Orkney's core industries.
- Promote and support post-Brexit economic opportunities which maximise islands' opportunity and influence.
- Increase in use of renewable fuels for Council transport and buildings.

Orkney is a resilient and enterprising community, with a talent for innovation. We want to foster an economic environment which is vibrant and supportive of local enterprise. Much of this activity will involve working with partners who share this ambition. With community planning partners, the Council will find innovative ways to manage high volume tourism for the benefit of all Orkney residents, for example, we will explore options for revenue generation to support tourist infrastructure. Investment in communications and energy ventures will be reinforced by direct involvement where this will benefit the local community.

In partnership with Shetland, the Western Isles, and the Scottish and UK Governments, Orkney will see the Islands Deal deliver a transformational programme of strategic development projects, with the long-term aim of achieving sustainable working populations on every one of our islands.

Strategic Priority Theme -Quality of Life

Our target outcome

- Orkney has a flourishing population, with people of all ages choosing to stay, return or relocate here for a better quality of life.

Top priorities

- Promote good practice and social responsibility in areas such as driving, parking, waste disposal and dog walking.
- Protect Orkney's landscape and wildlife heritage.
- Protect and promote Orkney's unique culture and community events.
- Eliminate single use/disposable plastic items within the Council where possible, and support others to do likewise.
- Work with partners to provide opportunities to make Orkney an attractive location for young people to live, work and study.

Future Aspirations

- Look after the historic buildings in the Council's care.
- Encourage developers to incorporate community benefits which will improve the quality of local life.
- Facilitate enhancements to our town centres.
- Work with partners to improve the visitor experience.
- Promote community safety.
- Work with partners and communities to support improvements to recreational facilities.

Orkney's environment, safety and community spirit all feature in the county's regular ranking as the best place to live in the UK. First and foremost, we want to retain and attract younger people to live, work or study in Orkney. The Council is committed to its responsibility to safeguard Orkney's iconic landscape, environment and cultural heritage for future generations.

In addition, this priority concerns the everyday matters which contribute to our exceptional quality of life. Facilities like playparks and public toilets are at risk in a climate of austerity, but are highly valued by both residents and visitors. Seemingly minor issues such as on-street parking, littering and dog fouling are top priorities for many in our community. Where there are cost-effective alternatives, we will eliminate single use/ disposable plastic items within the Council and support partners and the public to do likewise. We will prioritise good citizenship, promote community benefit and continue to enhance our town centres.

Appendix 1 - The Orkney Partnership



The Orkney Partnership's strategic priorities for Orkney are:



The Council is a leading member of The Orkney Partnership, and the Council Plan supports and links with the strategic priorities and outcomes of the Community Plan as shown below.

The Orkney Partnership's Priorities PENDING REVIEW	Orkney Islands Council's Priorities
<p>Strong Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in Orkney are encouraged and supported to adopt healthy lifestyles • People in Orkney participate in community activities that improve access, build inclusiveness and reduce inequalities. • Orkney has a sustainable health and care workforce which supports service delivery in ways that underpin sustainable communities. <p>Living Well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People live independently in their own homes or a homely setting where possible. • People are participating in their communities and the economy and are valued for their contribution, • People are enabled to take responsibility for their long term health and wellbeing. <p>A Vibrant Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orkney is an attractive location for young people to live, work and study • Orkney is widely recognised as a location for innovation and the application of experimental thinking in sustainable development in an island context. • Orkney's economy offers a broad range of community-based employment opportunities. 	<p>Connected communities Orkney's communities enjoy modern and well-integrated transport services and the best national standards of digital connectivity, accessible and affordable to all.</p> <p>Caring Communities People in Orkney enjoy long, healthy and independent lives, with care and support available to those who need it.</p> <p>Thriving Communities The Orkney Community is able to access work, learning and leisure through a modern, robust infrastructure which supports all our communities and meets the requirements of 21st-century life.</p> <p>Enterprising Communities A vibrant economy which supports local businesses and stimulates investment in all our communities.</p> <p>Quality of Life Orkney has a flourishing population, with people of all ages choosing to stay, return or relocate here for a better quality of life.</p>

