

Item: 8

Policy and Resources Committee: 24 September 2024.

The Orkney Partnership – Annual Report.

Report by Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Orkney Partnership is required to produce a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which sets out the improvements that the community planning partners want to achieve, and report against progress every year. The LOIP must include indicators to measure the extent that these objectives are met. In most cases, these are indicators statistics or surveys that are conducted nationally. Some of these indicators have been published but a number have not. However, The Orkney Partnership is required to produce the Annual Report within six months of the end of the financial year that the Report covers. Several of these indicators, including the National Islands Survey, are expected to be published in the next few weeks. If that is the case, they will be included in the Annual Report before it is published, and the revised Report will be circulated to members.
- 1.2. The 2023/24 LOIP sets out three priorities for the community planning partnership:
 - i. Supporting sustainable development.
 - ii. Addressing the cost of living crisis and the underlying causes of poverty.
 - iii. Addressing local inequalities.
- 1.3. Highlights of the work on sustainable development includes:
 - i. A draft Orkney [‘Vision for a climate-resilient and net zero future’](#) has been produced and then published for consultation in April 2024.
 - ii. A Community Wealth Building working group was established with public sector agencies, representatives of local businesses and Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO, the voluntary sector’s representative organisation in Orkney). The group has focused on identifying the good practice that already exists, looking to see how that work can be supported and expanded, and will

recommend to partners how Community Wealth Building principles could be advanced in Orkney.

- iii. A Skills Group was established, which will identify labour and skills gaps in Orkney to ensure training and education is available to Orcadians to fill the vacancies that will arise, supporting the growth of the local economy and ensuring that local people benefit.
- iv. A Business Forum has been established and led by HIE and the Council, which will advise The Partnership on the needs of private businesses.

1.4. Highlights of the work on the cost of living crisis include:

- i. Orkney Money Matters was established as a partnership project, led by Voluntary Action Orkney, to implement recommendations from the Orkney Child Poverty Strategy and the Orkney Food Dignity Report and create an ‘advice-and-cash-first’ referral pathway so that people got the financial advice they need.
- ii. The Cost of Living Task Force decided how the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund of £218,000 should best be used to address poverty in Orkney.

1.5. Highlights of the work on local equality include:

- i. Writing the [Locality plan for the ferry linked isles, 2024/26](#), which has now been approved by the Partnership’s Board.
- ii. Community planning partners worked with the Council to develop a risk assessment, setting out the implications for their own services if the ferries could not run.

1.6. The draft Annual Report will be submitted to The Orkney Partnership’s Board on 25 September 2024 for approval.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:

- i. Approve The Orkney Partnership’s draft Annual Report 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, insofar as it applies to the Council.

3. Background

3.1. Community planning is about how public bodies work together, and with local communities, to design and deliver better services that make a real difference to people's lives. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the 'Act') places a duty on Orkney Islands Council and four other public authorities (NHS Orkney, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) to facilitate community planning. Other public authorities, specified in the Act, have a statutory duty to participate in community planning, and four additional partner bodies have been co-opted locally. These partners comprise Orkney Partnership Board, which leads The Orkney Partnership.

Community Plan and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

3.2. The Act places a duty on community planning partnerships to prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (the 'LOIP') setting out the local outcomes that a partnership has prioritised for improvement. The Orkney Partnership chooses to publish a Community Plan, which incorporates its statutory LOIP. The current Orkney Community Plan is for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2030 and can be accessed [here](#).

3.3. The Act requires The Orkney Partnership to prepare and publish a local outcomes improvement plan progress report for each reporting year and this is attached as Appendix 1.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

- 1. Financial:** there are no financial implications for the Council contained in this report.
- 2. Legal:** there are no legal implications for the Council arising directly from the recommendation contained in this report.
- 3. Corporate Governance:** the facilitating partners of a community planning partnership in Scotland have a joint duty to publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and to report annually on progress against the outcomes contained in that plan.
- 4. Human Resources:** there are no human resources implications for the Council contained in this report.
- 5. Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.

6. **Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** the Annual Report provides an update on the implementation of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** the Annual Report provides an update on the work of the Orkney Partnership to promote sustainable development and the just transition to a net zero economy.
10. **Risk:** there are no risk implications for the Council contained in this report.
11. **Procurement:** there are no procurement implications for the Council contained in this report.
12. **Health and Safety:** there are no health and safety implications for the Council contained in this report.
13. **Property and Assets:** there are no property and assets implications for the Council contained in this report.
14. **Information Technology:** there are no information technology implications for the Council contained in this report.
15. **Cost of Living:** the Annual Report sets out the work of The Orkney Partnership to address the cost of living crisis.

List of Background Papers

[The Orkney Community Plan/ Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(the 'LOIP'\)](#)

Appendix

Appendix 1: The Orkney Partnership DRAFT Annual Report 2023/24



The Orkney Partnership

Working together for a better Orkney

Annual Report 2023 to 2024

Incorporating a progress report on
Orkney's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2023 to 2030

Welcome to the Orkney Partnership's Annual Report 2023-24

Community Planning

Community planning brings together local providers of public services with communities and business, to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities, and especially to combat inequality and prevent disadvantage.

Orkney Community Plan 2023-30

Orkney's Community Plan describes what the members of the Orkney Partnership will do to achieve this. Our plan also serves as our statutory Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, or LOIP.

This Annual Report covers the first year of our seven year Community Plan 2023-30. The Plan set out three priorities:

Priority One: Sustainable Development

We want our future economic development to benefit everybody in our communities, with nobody left behind. Orkney has a unique opportunity to capitalise on the rapid expansion of the green and blue economies, to support our ambition for Net Zero emissions, to protect nature, and work for an economy that addresses the wellbeing of residents.

Priority Two: Cost of live crisis and eradicating poverty

Many of Orkney's residents are struggling because of the current cost of living crisis and it is essential to support all our people through this difficult time. The Partnership is committed to work towards the elimination of poverty throughout Orkney. A Cost of Living Task Force has been established and will continue to address both immediate need and longer-term initiatives to combat persistent poverty.

Priority Three: Local Equality

This priority addresses the continuing disadvantage experienced by some of our communities when trying to access services, facilities, and opportunities. Our ferry-linked isles have well-known challenges, but parts of Kirkwall have higher levels of socio-economic inequality and many localities on the Orkney Mainland and south linked isles have gaps in transport provision or digital connectivity. Partners will support the development of local community-led development plans and help them achieve the outcomes they want for their communities.

Cllr Heather Woodbridge, Chair, The Orkney Partnership Board
Morven Brooks, Vice-chair, The Orkney Partnership Board

Our structure during 2023-24



The Orkney Partnership Board is made up of all of the statutory partner organisations named in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, plus locally co-opted partners (see next page).

From June 2023, the Board was chaired by Councillor Heather Woodbridge (Depute Council Leader, until February 2024, Leader from February 2024), and the Vice Chair was Morven Brooks, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Orkney. From April to June 2023, the chair was Cllr James Stockan (Leader of the Council) and vice chair was Meghan McEwan (chair of the NHS Orkney Board).

Each of the Board's strategic priorities was assigned to a Delivery Group, whose chair sit on the Board. Delivery Groups include representatives of any organisation or group that can actively help to deliver the priority assigned to their group.

The Orkney Partnership Board is supported by an Executive Group comprising senior officers of the five partners with a duty to facilitate community planning, plus Voluntary Action Orkney and the Delivery Group chairs.

During 2023-24, the Partnership had two short life working groups, the Community Wealth Building Working Group and the First Responders (Isles) Group, focusing on the provision of emergency first responders on the ferry linked isles. Also, the Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise convene a Business Forum with local businesses, that advises the Partnership.

The Board regularly reviews and sometimes changes the Partnership's strategic priorities, to make sure they are still right for Orkney and to address any new challenges we need to tackle.

Membership of Orkney Partnership Board during 2023-24

Five partners have a collective duty to **facilitate** community planning



Other partners have a duty to **participate** in community planning



The Board includes these local and co-opted partners



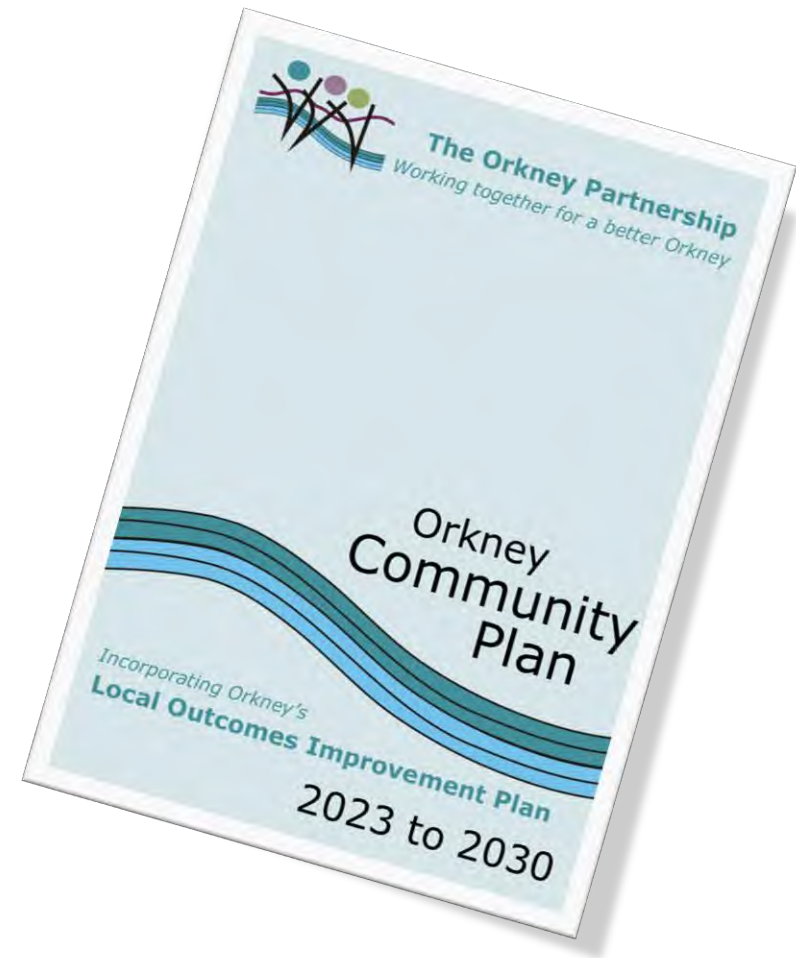
Orkney Community Plan 2023-30

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on community planning partnerships to prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (often called the LOIP). The LOIP sets out the local outcomes that a partnership has prioritised for improvement. The Orkney Partnership chooses to publish a Community Plan, incorporating our LOIP. Our LOIP can be found on the Partnership's website at www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CommunityPlanning.

The following pages describe the progress made by our delivery groups against their target outcomes, during the first year of the plan. The performance measures reported by each group are not necessarily measures we can control, but are indicators of how well Orkney is doing. For example, the roll out of digital connectivity (The R100 Programme) is the responsibility of the UK and Scottish Governments.

To measure progress against particular outcomes, we rely on various national surveys and data. The Partnership usually uses information that is collated nationally, to avoid disproportionate effort being put into researching data instead of implementing the plan. The data available nationally is generally reliable, although data collection following the Covid-related lockdowns has not been straightforward.

Some of the data we use is not collected annually, e.g. the Scottish Government's survey for the National Islands Plan, but is published regularly enough for our longer term outcomes which require long term strategies. Where possible, the same indicators are used over time making it possible to track progress over time. This report covers the first year of the 2023-24 plan.



Strategic priority: Sustainable Development

The Partnership aims to achieve sustainable economic development in Orkney where everyone benefits, and no one is left behind. We need to ensure that the growth meets the needs of our people without exceeding our planet's capacity, which is known as [Doughnut Economics](#).

The chair of the Sustainable Development Delivery Group is Cllr Kristopher Leask, and the Vice-chair is Neil Kermod, Managing Director of the European Marine Energy Centre.

Our aim is to exploit the synergy between two linked priorities: developing an economy that serves the needs of Orkney's population and combatting the climate emergency.

Our target outcomes are:

- Community Wealth Building to achieve an upturn in Orkney's economy, to ensure wealth is retained in Orkney and that this wealth is shared fairly. [Community Wealth Building](#) is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.
- A '[Just Transition](#)' towards a Net Zero well-being economy with a focus on climate change, fair work, and diversity. Making sure that the costs do not burden those least able to pay and the benefits of our transition are felt regardless of where you live, who you are and what you do. Seeking job security for those in industries that will play the biggest part in the transition.
- An adaptation strategy to protect our citizens, businesses, habitats and wildlife from the effects of climate change.

2023/24 highlights included:

- A draft Orkney [‘Vision for a climate-resilient and net zero future’](#) has been produced and subsequently published for consultation in 2024-25.
- A Community Wealth Building working group was established with public sector agencies, representatives of local businesses and Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO, the voluntary sector’s representative organisation in Orkney). The group has focused on identifying the good practice that already exists, looking to see how that work can be supported and expanded, and will recommend to partners how Community Wealth Building principles could be advanced in Orkney.
- A Skills Group was established, which will identify labour and skills gaps in Orkney to ensure training and education is available to Orcadians to fill the vacancies that will arise, supporting the growth of the local economy and ensuring that local people benefit.
- A Business Forum has been established and led by HIE and the Council, which will advise The Partnership on the needs of private businesses.

Measuring progress in Sustainable Development

Local Authority territorial area – Climate change emissions estimates 2019 and 2021 (kilo tonnes CO2 or equivalent) (Sources – UK Government local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2005-2021 ¹)				
	2019 Baseline*	2020*	2021* (latest figures)	Annual Milestone
Commercial	3.6 kt	2.5 kt	3.1 kt	Reduction commensurate with achieving NetZero by 2030
Public Sector	2.2 kt	2.2 kt	2.7 kt	
Domestic	38.6 kt	36.9 kt	38.3 kt	
Transport	33.9 kt	25.9 kt	28.6 kt	
LULUCF**	45.6 kt	43.3 kt	42.8 kt	
Agriculture	236.8 kt	232.3 kt	239.4 kt	
Total for Orkney	375.4 kt	360.1 kt	372.7 kt	
Per capita	16.8 (tCO ₂ e)	16.0 (tCO ₂ e)	16.5 (tCO ₂ e)	
<p>*Note that in these statistics the entire time series going back to 2005 is revised each year to take account of methodological improvements, so the estimates presented here supersede previous ones. Therefore, these figures differ from those published in previous Annual Reports and Local Outcome Improvement Plans published by The Orkney Partnership. In addition, the figures published in these reports were for carbon dioxide emissions only, and this table also captures methane and nitrous oxide emissions, which together amount to 97% of climate change emissions.</p> <p>Figures are for the whole of a local authority's territorial area, not the local authority itself.</p>				

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

House build completions in Orkney, all sectors (source: OIC Building Standards)				
2020-21 Baseline	Annual milestone	2030 target	Five-year target 2026-27	2023-24 Outcome
92	Increase	125 per year	225	68

% of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment and other training and development activities (source: Skills Development Scotland, Annual Participation Measure²)			
Baseline (2022)	Annual milestone	2030 target	Actual 2023 figure
93.9%	Increase	Recover to previous high 95.4% (2018-19 figure)	Not published yet.
Orkney's participation rate dropped 2% in 2021 but partially recovered in 2022, giving a net 1.5% decline over the two years. National participation rates have increased by 0.8% over the same period but at 92.4% remain marginally lower than Orkney.			

Average mean wages in Orkney (Source: ONS website ³ table 7.7a)				
Baseline (2021)	Annual milestones	2022	2030 target	2023
£26,582* (Scottish average is £29,752**) Gap = £3,170	Gap closing	£29,021* (£31,374**) Gap = £2,353	Average wages for Orkney match those for Scotland	£29,201* (£33,385**) Gap = £4,184
* Estimates are considered acceptable, CV > 10% and <= 20%				
** Estimates are considered precise, CV <= 5%				

² <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/statistics/annual-participation-measure/>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofworkbylocalauthorityshetable7>

Closing the Gender pay gap* (source: ONS Website ⁴ , Table 8.12)				
Baseline (2021 revised)	Annual milestone	2022 (revised)	2030 target	2023 (provisional)
19.8%** (Scottish average is 10%***)	Close the gap	24.4%** (10.2%***)	The gap is no larger than the Scottish average	24.1%** (6.5%***)
<p>*Gender pay gap defined as the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings</p> <p>**Estimates are considered lower quality</p> <p>***Estimates are considered good quality</p>				

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/annualsurveyofhoursandearningsashegenderpaygaptables>

Strategic priority: Cost of Living

The Cost of Living Task Force is a Delivery Group that is addressing both the immediate crisis and the underlying causes of poverty in Orkney. That crisis is showing no indication that it is receding, as is demonstrated by the 2023 figures from [The Orkney Foodbank](#).

The Chair is Stephen Brown, Chief Officer of the Integration Joint Board, and the Vice-chairs are Craig Spence, Chief Executive of Orkney Housing Association Ltd and Gillian Skuse, Chief Executive Officer of Age Scotland Orkney.

The actions from Orkney's Child Poverty Strategy, and the Orkney Food Dignity Report have been drawn into a single action plan. When the Orkney Fuel Poverty Strategy is finalised, any additional actions will be incorporated into this plan.

- [Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2026](#)
- [Orkney Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022-23](#)
- [Food Dignity Recommendations Report](#)

Highlights of 2023/24 included:

- Orkney Money Matters (OMM) was established as a partnership project, led by Voluntary Action Orkney, to implement recommendations from the Orkney Child Poverty Strategy and the Orkney Food Dignity Report and create an 'advice-and-cash-first' referral pathway so that people got the financial advice they need. In 2023/24, the OMM partnership was successfully funded (Scottish Government, Trussel Trust and OIC), the staff recruited, the project initiated with many people receiving financial advice who would not otherwise have received it. The OMM partnership raised awareness of the help that is out there through leaflets and work with the media.

- The Council asked the Task Force to put forward recommendations on how the Scottish Government's Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund of £218,000 would be best used to support people in need. The money enabled partners to take forward many of the Task Force's priorities:
 - School participation funds: each school in Orkney was provided with a ringfenced fund to cover the full expense of outdoor residential trips, outdoor education activities and general trips, for children whose families could not otherwise afford them. The fund was also used to provide equipment for children and young people in hardship to attend activities. The fund allowed schools to run events or to help the children and families access activities.
 - Children in the ferry-linked-isles get free bus travel like all children but they cannot get to facilities on the Mainland because of the cost of ferries and planes. The funding allowed every child entitled to a Young Scot Card (children aged 11+) who lived on the isles to have sixteen single ferry trips paid for them, or for children on Papay and North Ronaldsay, free plane trips because they do not have a daily ferry service.
 - The fund was used to help children on a low income stay in school. £30 per week was paid to children in low-income households to bridge the gap between when they stopped being entitled to the Scottish Child Payment and before they could claim Education Maintenance Allowance.
 - £7,500 was used by THAW Orkney to provide Cosy Home packs which will help people stay warm in their homes and £5,000 was used to assist households in fuel poverty with small repairs to improve their homes, e.g., draughtproofing.
 - When the demand on the Orkney Food Bank outstripped donations, the money funded extra food parcels and vouchers for electricity– so families could afford to cook meals and keep their homes warm.
 - This funding allowed Age Scotland Orkney to offer help to people over the age of 65 years in the form of cash or food vouchers to use in local businesses because some people find vouchers more acceptable than a cash alternative.

Measuring progress in Cost of Living

How households are managing financially in Orkney (Source: Scottish Household Survey 2019⁵ , Data Explorer⁶ and Scottish Household Survey 2022 Key Findings⁷).				
	2019 Baseline	2023-24 Milestone	2030 Target	2022 Outcome (latest)
Managing very well or quite well	66%	67%	70%	60%
Get by all right	31%	31%	30%	35%
Don't manage very well and have some financial difficulties	3%	2%	0%	5%

2022 is the first year since before the Covid Pandemic that the figures have been published, and there is already a significant deterioration shown by the figures. Since 2022, it is likely that the position of households in Orkney has continued deteriorate:

- Rising fuel prices are still much higher than before the crisis began when households in Orkney already pay a significantly higher than average proportion of their income on fuel.
- Cost of living, especially food, has gone up and average wages in Orkney remain less than the average for Scotland.

Consequently, it is likely that the number of people who are managing very well or well has further decreased.

The number of children in Orkney who are in Relative Poverty (Source: Scottish Government, not published)			
Baseline (2022)	Annual Target	2030 Target	2023 Outcome
15.8% (21.0% across Scotland overall)	Reduce	Less than 10% (Scottish Government target for 2030-31 is 10%)	15.1% (21% across Scotland overall)

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/>

⁶ <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey-data-explorer/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2022-key-findings/documents/>

Percentage of dwellings in Orkney in Fuel Poverty (Source: Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analysis 2019⁸) https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-2022-key-findings/documents/ ⁹			
2020-21 Baseline	2021-22 Milestone	2030 Target	Progress in 2023-24
30.5% (Scottish average 24.4%)	Reduce	Same as Scottish average	The figures by council area have not been updated by the Scottish Government. (Scottish average 31% in 2022)
The latest 2022 figures for Orkney have not yet been published but it is inevitable that recent high price rises will have exacerbated extreme fuel poverty, with the national average jumping from 24.4% to 31%.			

Percentage of dwellings in Orkney in Extreme Fuel Poverty 2017-19 (Source: Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analysis 2019¹⁰)				
2020-21 Baseline	2021-22 Milestone	2022-23 Target	Progress in 2021-22	Progress in 2022-23
21.8% (Scottish average 11.9%)	Reduce	Same as Scottish average	National figures have not been updated.	The figures by council area have not been updated by the Scottish Government. (Scottish average 18.5% in 2022)
The latest 2022 figures for Orkney have not yet been published but it is inevitable that recent high energy price rises will have exacerbated extreme fuel poverty, with the national average jumping more than 50% from 11.9% to 18.5%.				

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-local-authority-analysis-2017-2019/pages/6/>

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-2022-key-findings/documents/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-local-authority-analysis-2017-2019/pages/6/>

The percentage of crisis payment applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) that are successful (Source: SWF)			
Baseline (2021-22)	Annual milestone	2030 target	2023-24 outcome
40% (Scottish average is 66%)	Increase	Equal to the Scottish average	68% (Scottish average not yet published)
<p>The number of successful applications in Orkney is now higher than for the average for the whole of Scotland based on the Scottish figure for 2021-22 which is unlikely to have changed much. This reflects the work down by the Orkney SWF Team and Orkney Money Matters to work with organisations to improve the quality of applications.</p>			

Value of financial gains achieved by those who access Orkney Money Matters advice services (Source: the Orkney Money Matters project and Orkney CAB)				
Baseline (2021-22)	2023-24 target	2024-25 target	2025-26 target	2023-24 outcome
N/A – Project in set up	£0.5m	£0.6m	£0.7m	£1,693,127 (Orkney CAB figure for client financial gain)

Improved wellbeing of individuals engaged with the Orkney Money Matters referral pathway (Source: the Orkney Money Matters project)			
Baseline (2022-23)	Annual milestone	2025 target	2023-24 outcome
Score on Warwick-Edinburgh scale at initial contact with OMM referral pathway (TBC)	Improvement in score on Warwick-Edinburgh scale between initial and final point of contact with referral pathway (TBC)	Improvement in score on Warwick-Edinburgh scale between initial and final point of contact with referral pathway (TBC)	Requested.

Strategic priority: Local Equality

A key principle of The Orkney Partnership is to address the inequalities which persist between communities in different parts of Orkney. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires community planning partnerships to identify areas within their boundaries that experience disproportionate levels of socio-economic disadvantage and develop one or more locality plans to reduce inequality.

The Partnership therefore decided to set up a new Delivery Group to focus on Local Equality. In June 2023, Meghan McEwan, Chair of the NHS Orkney Board, was elected as chair.

The Local Equality Delivery Group's first task was to develop and lead in the delivery of a new Locality Plan for the ferry-linked isles. Most of these communities already have their own local development plans developed by the community and this Locality Plan does not duplicate these. Instead, The Partnership lends support to these existing plans wherever it can add value.

During 2023/24:

- The Delivery Group wrote the [Locality plan for the ferry linked isles, 2024/26](#), which has now been approved by the Partnership's Board. The issues it addresses include:
 - Transport
 - Digital connectivity
 - Access to health and social care services
 - Housing
 - Development and support workers
 - Employment and the labour market

- Ensuring that the internal ferry fleet is replaced is a key priority for Orkney. Because so many of the key ferries are so old, they do not comply with the current regulations and only operate with the permission of the regulators. There is a real risk that these ‘grandfather’ permissions will be withdrawn, which would mean the loss of most of the fleet. Community planning partners worked in 2023/24 with the Council to develop a risk assessment, setting out the implications for their own services if the ferries could not run. This forms part of the work the Council is now doing with the Scottish Government to find an affordable solution that meets the needs of islanders and all of Orkney.

Measuring progress in Local Equality

Population of the ferry-linked isles (Source: Scotland's Census¹¹)		
2020-21 Baseline	2030 Target	Outcome 2023-24
2,862 (Census 2011)	Maintain or increase NRS mid-year estimates	2,713 (Census 2022)
There has been a 5% decline in the total populations of the Ferry Linked Isles between the 2011 and 2022 censuses. More detailed breakdowns will be available from the National Records of Scotland in 2025.		

Percentage of adult residents (18-75) planning to stay on the island for the next 5 years (Source: National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020¹² and online results explorer tool¹³)					
		2020-21 Baseline	Annual milestone	2030 target	Progress in 2023-24
Orkney Mainland	Yes	87.2	Increase	Increase	The full results of this survey will be available later in 2024.
	No	4.4	Decrease	Decrease	
	Don't know	8.4	Decrease	Decrease	
Orkney Outer Isles	Yes	79.0	Increase	Increase	
	No	8.7	Decrease	Decrease	
	Don't know	12.3	Decrease	Decrease	
Net migration to Orkney has been positive for the last few decades i.e. the number moving to Orkney is greater than those leaving. National. However, there has been a 5% decrease in the population of the Ferry Linked Isles since 2011 census.					

¹¹ <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/>

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2021/07/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/documents/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/govscot%3Adocument/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report.pdf?forceDownload=true>

¹³ https://mappingrd342.shinyapps.io/online_tool/

% of Orkney residents who agree “When I make journeys to or from my home, it is easy connecting between different forms of transport”
 (Source: [National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020](#),¹⁴ [National Islands Plan Survey Report 2024](#)¹⁵ and [online results explorer tool](#)¹⁶)

	Baseline (2020)	Annual milestones	2023-24 outcome	2030 target
Ferry-linked isles	29%	Increase	18%	50%
Orkney Mainland	46%		35%	60%

There has been a very significant decline in the number of people who say that it is easy to make connections.

% Orkney premises unable to access 30Mbps/s Broadband (Sources: [Ofcom Connected Nations 2022](#)¹⁷, and [Ofcom Connected Nations 2024](#)¹⁸)

Baseline (2022)	Annual milestone	2030 target	2023-24 Outcome (as of January 2024)
31.5%	Decrease	0%	26.3%

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2021/07/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/documents/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/govscot%3Adocument/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report.pdf?forceDownload=true>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2024/09/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/documents/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report.pdf>

¹⁶ https://mappingrd342.shinyapps.io/online_tool/

¹⁷ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-update-spring-2022>

¹⁸ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/coverage-and-speeds/connected-nations-update-spring-2024/>

% Orkney residents whose internet connection at home is fast enough to do what they want online (Source: National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020 , ¹⁹ National Islands Plan Survey Report 2024 ²⁰ and online results explorer tool ²¹)				
	2020 Baseline	Annual milestone	2023-24 Outcome	2030 target
Orkney Mainland	70%	Increase	69%	100%
Ferry-linked isles	45%	Increase	55%	100%

While the figure for the mainland is almost static (minus 1%), there has been improvement on the isles, but the figure is still low.

The Scottish Government launched the Reaching 100% programme (R100) in 2017 with the aim of having full coverage in Scotland for all premises with a minimum speed for 30 Mb by 2021. There were delays during the tendering progress and consequently these targets have not been met. In summer 2022, further investment was announced that will extend R100 to an additional 1,000 properties in Orkney and the Council is working with the Scottish Government to improve on that. The R100 Programme is currently providing gigabit capable connections across Scotland including providing sub-sea cables and connecting communities in Orkney.

Project Gigabit is a UK Government initiative intended to give hard-to-reach areas access to gigabit-capable connectivity and the Scottish Government has committed to supporting this project. The UK Government’s target is to achieve at least 85% overall gigabit-capable coverage across the UK by 2025 - through a combination of commercial and subsidised build. UK Government further aims to accelerate roll-out to get to UK wide (~99%) coverage by 2030.

Working with BDUK, the Scottish Government has conducted market consultation.

- Consultation indicates that **7,400** premises on Orkney either **have**, or are **planned to have**, a gigabit capable connection.
- Of the remaining premises that **do not** have a gigabit capable connection **4,935** have been identified as **eligible for inclusion** in Project Gigabit.

The Scottish Government is working with BDUK to launch a Project Gigabit procurement in Orkney later this year. It is anticipated that the remaining **1,248** premise which **do not** have a gigabit capable connection will be served by a commercial provider.

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2021/07/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/documents/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/govscot%3Adocument/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report.pdf?forceDownload=true>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2024/09/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/documents/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report.pdf>

²¹ https://mappingrd342.shinyapps.io/online_tool/

% Orkney residents who have a good mobile phone signal at home (Source: [National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020](#),²² [National Islands Plan Survey Report 2024](#)²³ and [online results explorer tool](#)²⁴)

	2020-21 Baseline	Annual milestone	2023-24 outcome	2030 target
Ferry-linked isles	27%	Increase	49%	100%
Orkney Mainland	78%	Increase	68%	100%

There has been very good progress in the ferry linked isles, but it appears the position is getting worse on the mainland.

For the improvements in mobile signal, the UK Government is leading on this, and the Shared Rural Network (SRN) is an agreement involving the four largest mobile network operators: EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. Government has provided subsidies to build masts but even with these subsidies, the companies consider there is little commercial case for many developments. Four EE sites have been built which include two (September 2022) waiting to go live. Orkney Islands Council continues to lobby on behalf of the county mobile network operators to improve mobile network coverage across all of Orkney, working in partnership with government and other agencies as required.

Fewer areas of Orkney suffer from higher levels of deprivation as determined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation website²⁵) (Note: lower scores measure higher deprivation)

Baseline (2020 figures)	Annual target	2030 target	2023-24 outcome
1 in the lowest 25-30% 1 in the lowest 30-35% 4 in the lowest 35-40%	Improve	No areas in the lowest 0-35% Fewer areas in the lowest 40%	2024 figures to be published later

²² <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2021/07/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/documents/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/govscot%3Adocument/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report.pdf?forceDownload=true>

²³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2024/09/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/documents/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-islands-survey-2023-main-findings-report.pdf>

²⁴ https://mappingrd342.shinyapps.io/online_tool/

²⁵ https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/?utm_source=redirect&utm_medium=shorturl&utm_campaign=simd

The Orkney Partnership

Our shared mission is: *Working together for a better Orkney*

Our shared values are:

Resilience
Enterprise
Equality
Fairness
Innovation
Leadership
Sustainability

All the information in this report, and much more, can be found at:
www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CommunityPlanning

If you would like this report in a different language or format, or just
require more information, please contact us at:

community.planning@orkney.gov.uk



