



**Item: 3**

**Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee: 3 February 2026.**

**Orkney Local Development Plan – Updated Evidence Report.**

**Report by Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.**

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## **1. Overview**

- 1.1. On 19 June 2025, the Evidence Report for the Orkney Local Development Plan review was considered by the Development and Infrastructure Committee and approved for submission to the Scottish Government for the Gate Check Process. The June report highlighted the potential risk that the Gate Check process could result in delay, with particular risk associated with the housing target numbers should the Scottish Government not agree with the Council's rationale with regard to establishing a number below the National Planning Framework 4 number.
- 1.2. On 30 September 2025, the Council received notification of the Gate Check decision which advised that the Evidence Report had insufficient evidence. The Reporter highlighted the Evidence Report was a thoughtful and considered document that generally collates the information available to the Council at this time in an accessible and well-structured format. However, in the view of the Reporter, their assessment concluded that further information was required, particularly in relation to having a Local Housing Land Requirement in excess of the National Planning Framework 4 Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement figure of 1,600 units.
- 1.3. Therefore, attached at Appendix 1 of this report is an updated Evidence Report, which focusses solely on the matters outlined in the Reporter's recommendations, primarily preparing evidence in relation to housing numbers which the Reporter required to exceed 1,600 units. The revised housing target for the Local Development Plan is therefore proposed to be 1,650 units and has largely used the evidence within the high growth scenario in the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA).

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that members of the Committee:

- i. Note the Evidence Report attached as Appendix 1 supports setting a housing delivery target of 1,650 units for 10 years based on the high growth scenario of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
- ii. Approve the updated Evidence Report for the Local Development Plan, attached as Appendix 1, and thereafter submit the Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers.
- iii. Delegate powers to the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee, to make minor changes to the updated Evidence Report, if deemed necessary in order to respond to any further feedback from the Scottish Government.

## **3. Evidence Report**

- 3.1. Orkney Islands Council has a statutory obligation to draft a Local Development Plan (LDP). The Evidence Report is the first official stage of the review process and sets out the baseline data and information to inform the drafting of the LDP. The Evidence Report is required to gain approval by the Council before it is formally submitted to the Scottish Ministers for the Gate Check to recommence. At the Gate Check, the Scottish Ministers will again appoint a Reporter to carry out an independent assessment of the resubmitted Evidence Report to consider if the Council has sufficient evidence to prepare a new LDP but will focus on how their recommendations from the first Gate Check have been addressed.
- 3.2. The initial Evidence Report submitted to the Gate Check recommended that the Local Housing Land Requirement should be based on the principal scenario in the HNDA which was 1,345 units. However, the Scottish Government Reporter concluded that there was insufficient evidence to not exceed the housing delivery target contained in National Planning Framework 4 of 1,600 units.
- 3.3. When the initial Evidence Report was presented to the Development and Infrastructure Committee in June 2025, the report highlighted that there was risk in the Council seeking to update the Housing Delivery target numbers downwards from the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) housing delivery numbers. The risk was that the Reporter would challenge the revised number, meaning further time would be required before the Council could move to the next stage of the review process.

- 3.4. The Committee decided to accept the risk based on the opportunity to update the housing target figures to align with the recently approved Housing Needs and Demand Assessment principal target numbers and Housing Supply Target.
- 3.5. Unfortunately, this risk has been realised, and the Reporter challenged the approach as set out in the Evidence Report and recommended that the updated Evidence Report gives further consideration of the factors that could point to an increase in the indicative Housing Land Requirement that will exceed the figure of 1,600 in NPF4.
- 3.6. Whilst the Council is of the view that the original approach to adopting the principal HNDA scenario was sound, a review of the position has been undertaken to follow the Reporter's guidance and take account of recent evidence. The updated Evidence Report includes additional evidence to highlight the potential benefits having a generous and flexible supply of housing land available over the next 10 years could have. This includes having sufficient land to accommodate housing development across all scenarios identified in the HNDA including if there should there be significant economic growth and consequential inward migration.
- 3.7. The Evidence Report is topic based and grouped into policy headings that reflect and align with those in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The information is presented in a 'Schedule' format in line with Scottish Government Local Development Planning Guidance. The focus of the main amendments has been to the Housing Schedule, with an additional reading guide and table included at the front of the updated Evidence Report to summarise the Reporter's recommendations and how they have been addressed.

## **4. Engagement**

- 4.1. Following receipt of the Gate Check decision report a meeting was arranged with the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) to discuss the next steps. They advised that it was acceptable for the subsequent resubmission to only relate to the Reporter's recommendations. As a result, the resubmission has focused on addressing the recommendations outlined in the report. The remainder of the schedules which the Reporter did not comment on have not been updated except for minor amendments, such as improved cross-referencing between different schedules and ensuring core documents have been correctly referenced.
- 4.2. Focussed additional engagement has been undertaken to support the preparation of the updated Evidence Report. In particular, engagement has been sought with members of the Housing Market Partnership and housing colleagues. Representatives of the development industry who sit on the Housing Market

Partnership were advised of the need to prepare evidence on a higher housing land requirement and were supportive of this approach.

## 5. Next Steps

- 5.1. If the Council approves the updated Evidence Report, final checks will be made to ensure that the Evidence Base is formatted appropriately, and it will be given a final proofread prior to submission.
- 5.2. Following the assessment of the Evidence Report, the Reporter will either prepare a letter setting out that the Evidence Report contains sufficient evidence to prepare the new LDP, and the reasoning for this, or prepare an 'Assessment Report' setting out the reasons of why they are not satisfied that the Evidence Report contains sufficient evidence, together with recommendations for improving the evidence. A copy of the letter or Assessment Report will be sent to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers.
- 5.3. Assuming return of a positive response from the Scottish Government within the three month period, work can then focus on preparing the Proposed Plan. An updated timetable will be prepared which will be set out in the next Development Plan Scheme.

### **For Further Information please contact:**

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### **Implications of Report**

1. **Financial:** The main resource associated with preparation of the Local Development Plan is in the form of staff time and is covered within the existing Development Planning budget.

There are two statutory stages that require independent assessment by a Scottish Government Reporter which are invoiced to the Council. These stages are the Gate Check and then the examination.

The Gate Check is a new stage in the process and is estimated to cost in the region of £30,000 to £35,000, based on a daily rate of £400 for a Reporter and £160 for administrative support staff.

An unavoidable service pressure bid was submitted for consideration as part of the budget setting process for financial year 2025/26, which included £35,000 for the Gate Check stage, however, this bid was unsuccessful. This means the costs will require to be paid for from existing service revenue budgets.

2. **Legal:** The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 provide for the drafting of a new Local Development Plan. Approving the recommendations in this report will assist the Council in discharging its statutory duty to review the Local Development Plan.
3. **Corporate Governance:** In terms of the Scheme of Administration, the preparation, monitoring and review of statutory Local Development Plans, including supplementary guidance and related non-statutory planning policy and guidance, is a referred function of the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee. The Scheme of Administration also notes that, in relation to the preparation, monitoring and review of the Local Development Plan, in order to emphasise the corporate nature of the document, although the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee will lead on this process, Members not on the Committee will be invited to participate in the process. This may require scheduling special meetings of the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee and the Council, particularly when the Local Development Plan is being submitted for adoption. Preparation of the Evidence Report is a new requirement in relation to the review of the Local Development Plan.
4. **Human Resources:** None.
5. **Equalities:** At this stage, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required but will be undertaken in respect of the proposed Local Development Plan.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** At this stage, an Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required but will be undertaken in respect of the proposed Local Development Plan.
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 proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:

  - Cost of Living.
  - Sustainable Development.
  - Local Equality.
  - Improving Population Health.

- 9. Environmental and Climate Risk:** None.
- 10. Risk:** None.
- 11. Procurement:** None.
- 12. Health and Safety:** None.
- 13. Property and Assets:** None.
- 14. Information Technology:** None.
- 15. Cost of Living:** None.

#### **List of Background Papers**

- [Development Plan Scheme 2025/26 including Participation Statement](#)
- [Orkney Local Development Plan 2017](#)
- [National Planning Framework 4](#)
- [Scottish Government Local Development Planning Guidance](#)
- [Scottish Government Reporters Recommendations](#)

#### **Appendix**

Appendix 1 – Local Development Plan Updated Evidence Report.



# Evidence Base Report for Review of Orkney Local Development Plan

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## Reading Guide/Resubmission Background

Orkney Islands Council (OIC) submitted its Evidence Report to the Scottish Ministers on the 4 July 2025 for Gate Check. The Gate Check decision, issued on the 30 September 2025, concluded that the Evidence Report did not contain sufficient information to enable preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). The Reporter's assessment identified key areas requiring improvement, particularly in relation to having a Local Housing Land Requirement in excess of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) MATHLR of 1,600 with supporting evidence.

This resubmission has focused solely on the matters outlined in the Reporter's recommendations. It has not been possible to update the entire Evidence Base within the available timeframe without causing significant delay to the preparation of the Proposed Plan. The DPEA has advised that it is acceptable for the resubmission to focus only on the areas of clear insufficiency identified in the Gate Check report. As a result, only the schedules referenced in the Reporter's recommendations have been substantially updated. Other schedules remain unchanged, except for minor adjustments such as cross-referencing or the addition of links to relevant plans and strategies.

The following table outlines the schedules that have been updated, the nature of the changes made, and how the reporter's recommendations have been addressed.

## Resubmission of the Evidence Report

The table below sets out the specific recommendations made by the reporter and explains how each has been addressed in the updated schedules. The focus of the resubmission has been on strengthening the Evidence Base in the areas identified as insufficient, with updates made to clarify reasoning, improve transparency, and ensure alignment with national policies and guidance. Where relevant, links to supporting plans and strategies have been included, and summary text has been added to reflect the Reporters' recommendations.

**Table: Recommendations for improving the Evidence Report**

*Section 1 – Mandatory Recommendations (Section 16B(10))*

Topic Area	Reporter Recommendation	How Addressed
<i>Housing Land Requirement</i>	Identify an iLHLR in excess of the MATHLR	An updated iLHLR of 1,650 units has been set based on the high migration scenario in the HNDA, exceeding the MATHLR in NPF4. Evidence and calculations are detailed in <a href="#">Schedule 7</a> .
<i>Migration Scenario</i>	Clarify infrastructure constraints and how they may be overcome	<a href="#">Schedule 7</a> focuses on the high migration scenario as the basis for setting the iLHLR.
<i>Infrastructure Constraints</i>	Clarify infrastructure constraints and how they may be overcome	<a href="#">Schedules 7</a> and <a href="#">8</a> have been updated to further consider infrastructure and capacity issues. The main constraints relating to the delivery of housing in Orkney are the capacity of the construction sector and issues related to widespread flood risk from coastal,

Topic Area	Reporter Recommendation	How Addressed
		pluvial and fluvial sources. In terms over overcoming the two key constraints the construction sector has signalled that if it has a strong pipeline of development sites, it can increase its capacity to deliver. In addition, a new housing provider has just committed to developing 500 homes over the next 10 years in Orkney therefore increasing capacity for delivery. Several flood studies are underway that will improve the evidence for the LDP spatial strategy and inform site specific mitigation requirements set out through settlement statements and development briefs.
<i>Windfall &amp; Existing Supply</i>	Assess windfall development and existing supply	Windfall figures included in <a href="#">Schedule 7</a> ; HLA confirms sufficient supply to meet iLHLR without significant additional land release.
<i>Population &amp; Affordability</i>	Explain links between housing provision and population retention/affordability	<a href="#">Schedule 7</a> highlights the extensive research and findings of the housing needs of temporary/rotational staff and actions to support this sector which are set out in the Essential Workers Strategy.
<i>HNDA Scenario Choice</i>	Clarify rational for choosing principal HNDA scenario	<a href="#">Schedule 7</a> now promotes the high growth scenario; principal scenario is no longer used. This ensures a generous and flexible housing land supply.
<i>Commercial Engagement</i>	Engage further with commercial interests on housing land	<a href="#">Schedule 7</a> highlights that further engagement undertaken through housing market partnership with the larger developers in Orkney all of whom have supported the revised figure and supported the reasoning for including iLHLR based on high growth scenario.
<i>Narrative &amp; Transparency</i>	Provide a clear narrative (preferably in tabular form) showing how each recommendation has been addressed	A new reading guide and summary table inserted to clearly show how recommendations have been addressed.

Section 2 – Advisory Recommendations (Annex B)

Topic Area	Advisory Comment	How it has been addressed
<i>Engagement</i>	Lack of engagement from NHS Scotland, HITRANS, Marine Scotland, etc.	Further engagement being undertaken following the Evidence Base stage of the process to inform the proposed plan policies and site requirements. Will engage with Development Sector on Housing number and describe role of HMP.  Appropriate schedules including <a href="#">Schedule 8</a> been updated to commit to further engagement
<i>Overall Narrative</i>	Lack of overarching spatial narrative across schedules	Each Schedule now contains a 'Current Context' section, which outlines the spatial context in Orkney.
<i>Evidence Gaps</i>	Gaps not systematically identified	The document now addresses previously identified evidence gaps by detailing completed work, commissioned studies, and scheduled updates.  Schedules have been revised to explicitly highlight outstanding gaps that require to be investigated further
<i>Conservation Area Appraisals</i>	Absent	<a href="#">Schedule 3</a> now reflects where there are existing conservation appraisals such as Kirkwall and notes an evidence gap where appraisals now required for other conservation areas. Discussions are underway with the Planning Hub to bring extra capacity in to support this.
<i>Local Biodiversity Action Plan</i>	Possibly expired	Expired and no longer in place, <a href="#">Schedule 2</a> has been updated to reflect this.
<i>Protected Species</i>	Not covered directly	<a href="#">Schedule 2</a> includes additional context on biodiversity in Orkney including information on protected species.
<i>Vacant and Derelict Land</i>	Stated as minimal, but not evidenced	Evidence added from Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Statistics 2024, confirming one recorded site in Orkney. See <a href="#">Schedule 7</a> .
<i>Short-Term Lets</i>	No spatial analysis of pressured areas	Spatial analysis included ( <a href="#">Schedule 15</a> ) and further research underway to investigate second homes and short-term lets to inform future policy approach as identified as a key issue which needs further evidence
<i>Waste Strategy</i>	No timetable or commitment	The newly prepared Waste Strategy has been inserted as an Evidence Source in <a href="#">Schedule 8</a> .

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Advisory Comment</b>	<b>How it has been addressed</b>
<i>Water fill locations</i>	Unclear coverage	Now addressed in <a href="#">Schedule 8</a> .
<i>Health Infrastructure</i>	No spatial implications or link to housing	Now addressed in Schedule 8. To date, NHS engagement has not identified any direct spatial implications. Further engagement will be undertaken prior to the preparation of the Proposed Plan, and any implications arising will inform the LDP.
<i>Open Space Strategy</i>	Commitment to update, but gaps remain	Further text inserted on Open Space Strategy in <a href="#">Schedule 8</a> .
<i>Tree Preservation Order</i>	Not mentioned	TPOs are now addressed in <a href="#">Schedule 2</a> with supporting information referenced and an identified gap that a review of TPO's needs to be undertaken.
<i>Sports Pitch Strategy</i>	Absent	Now added in <a href="#">Schedule 8</a> .
<i>Food Growing Strategy</i>	Absent	Preparation underway and will be prepared in time for the LDP.
<i>Town Centre Network</i>	Not fully described	Addressed in context section in <a href="#">Schedule 13</a> .
<i>Retail Provision</i>	Not addressed	Town centre audit shows good variety of retail with no obvious gaps. <a href="#">Schedule 13</a> sets out more details on this
<i>Clustering of Non-Retail Uses</i>	No evidence provided	Town centre audit conforms this (See OIC345), and <a href="#">Schedule 13</a> explains current situation.

## 1. Introduction

Orkney Islands Council has started reviewing its Local Development Plan (LDP) which will guide future land use and development across Orkney. The review of the Local Development Plan began in June 2023, and the aim is to have an adopted Local Development Plan in early 2027. The planning system in Scotland is undergoing a substantial transformation with the twin global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss at the centre of the planning system and an increased focus on the role planning can play to support and facilitate the delivery of more homes. The new LDP for Orkney is being prepared under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which has introduced a new statutory process for local authorities in preparing local development plans together with enhanced status for the National Planning Framework and revised procedures for assessing planning applications. It will build on and replace the existing adopted Local Development Plan (OLDP2017) and will take into account other Council Strategies and Plans including the Council Plan 2023-2028, the Orkney Community Plan, incorporating the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, the Local Housing Strategy, the Local Transport Strategy, the Regional Marine Plan, the National Islands Plan amongst others.

This review and its environmental assessment will also take due consideration of the relevant planning policy requirements contained in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

The new LDP will establish a new long-term vision and strategy for Orkney, looking 20 years ahead, based upon the principle of the infrastructure first approach promoted through NPF4. The LDP will be place based, people centred, and delivery focused and will place infrastructure considerations at the heart of place making. National policies included in NPF4 are not expected to be repeated in the LDP as these have status as a matter of course, but the Plan will include policies that reflect local issues and context. The LDP is being developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders.

Orkney is facing challenging pressures to deliver new development, particularly affordable homes, and to ensure there is support for rural development across the Isles. There are also several significant infrastructure projects that will contribute to the transition to net zero which require to be embedded in the spatial strategy. The LDP will address these challenges. The LDP will be required to set out a spatial strategy and policy framework to help guide and shape future development and change, whilst also enabling greater climate, environmental and community resilience, whilst protecting and enhancing Orkney's high quality natural, built and historic environments.

The LDP aims to have an emphasis on maps, incorporating key requirements and aspirations into settlement statements or site level development briefs, with minimal policy wording and will be supported by a delivery programme. Sites specifically identified for new development will have to be confirmed as being free from constraints as far as possible.

Preparation of a new-style LDP will include the following three key stages:

1. Evidence Gathering and Gate Check – gathering of data and information to inform the production of the new LDP before submission to Scottish Ministers for Gate Check. **The Council is currently at this stage of the LDP process.**
2. Preparation of the new LDP, consultation, examination and adoption - in preparing the Proposed Plan we will have regard to the Evidence Report that will have successfully completed the Gate Check stage. Key agencies have a duty to cooperate with the planning authority in the preparation of the Proposed Plan. A site appraisal will be undertaken to inform the Proposed Plan.
3. Delivery of the adopted LDP

Evidence Report and Gate Check are two key changes that have been introduced through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, as amended, to the Local Development Plan (LDP) process.

This Evidence Report sets out the baseline information that will inform the new Orkney LDP. The Report contains a summary of what the evidence means for the new LDP rather than the detail. A necessary and proportionate approach has been taken when considering the evidence as the Report is not expected to be a compendium of all available information. The Report is considered to provide a sufficient evidence base on which to prepare the new Orkney LDP. The Evidence Report was presented at a Special Meeting of the Development and Infrastructure Committee on 19 June 2025. The recommendations from that Meeting were then be considered for approval by Orkney Islands Council at its Meeting on the 1 July 2025. The resubmission of the Evidence Report was presented for approval to the Development and Infrastructure Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.

The Evidence Report contains a statement on the appropriateness of the adopted Orkney LDP spatial strategy, policies and allocations; the main issues arising from the evidence; compliance with legislative requirements; a Position Statement; an Engagement Statement; and a series of 'Schedules'. Most of the evidence is set out in the 'Schedules', which are topic based and grouped into policy headings that largely reflect the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) policies.

The Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which is a statutory requirement for the new LDP, has been submitted to the SEA Gateway and a summary of feedback from the consultation authorities has been obtained and included alongside an anticipated site assessment framework. The SEA process will also be used to help undertake a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) of the Proposed Local Development Plan, but the HRA will be reported on separately with a finalised HRA submitted to NatureScot for comment.

The new LDP is not being prepared in isolation. It supports and will help implement other national and local plans and strategies. There are a number of wider plans, programmes and strategies which will be taken into account in preparing the Local Development Plan and as part of its assessment. Annex 1 of the SEA Scoping Report and each Topic Paper sets out the framework of national, regional and local plans, programmes and strategies relevant to the Local Development Plan and provide a summary of each.

There are no outstanding areas of dispute over the sufficiency of the evidence with stakeholders. Extensive engagement has informed the evidence base for the new Orkney LDP. The Engagement Statement sets out in detail how the views of the groups specified in the Act (children and young people, disabled people, gypsy's and travellers, Community Councils, the public at large and key agencies) have been sought and taken into account in preparing this Evidence Statement.

The Council considers that this Evidence Report provides a sufficient evidence base on which to prepare the new Orkney Islands Council LDP.

## **2. Appropriateness of the adopted Orkney LDP Spatial Strategy, Policies and Allocations**

As part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, the Planning Authority is required to evaluate whether the previous adopted plan (OLDP 2017) has delivered on its outcomes, and allocations, identify any lessons learnt for the preparation of the new plan and consider the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

The following section highlights some of the most important factors that have been identified through monitoring the performance of the current LDP2 and what were used as Key Issues in the Main Issues Report for the currently adopted Local Development Plan.

### **Key Issues in the last Main Issues Report**

The Orkney Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 18 April 2017. The LDP 2017 was informed by four main land use issues identified as part of the Main Issues Report (MIR) in 2015 and within each there are sub-issues. A summary of how the adopted LDP is currently addressing the four main issues and associated sub-issues that were within the Main Issues Report is set out below. The text below also provides some thoughts on where a possible change in approach could be required, based on the monitoring of the existing Local Development Plan and evidence gathered. Many of the issues stated below have again been raised in the community engagement exercises that have been undertaken as part of the evidence report.

#### **Issue 1 – The Spatial Strategy – Orkney’s Sustainable Settlements**

To accomplish this, the approach in the Local Development Plan continues to promote a sustainable pattern of development, which considers the following principles:

- Siting housing and business developments where infrastructure investment is strongest; including transport, education facilities, water, drainage and digital infrastructure.
- Using land within settlements for a mix of uses to create accessible and vibrant communities.
- Prioritising the redevelopment of brownfield land before new development takes place on greenfield sites.
- Guiding developments to locations where investment in growth or improvement will have the most benefit for the amenity of local people and the vitality of the local economy.
- To support essential infrastructure upgrades.

#### Comment on appropriateness

The approach above is considered to meet many of the aims of NPF4 and is largely still considered an appropriate approach however there are some areas where evidence is indicating some level of change in approach is required. The principles above apply to the more development pressures on the Mainland and linked isles. On the non-linked isles (as defined in current LDP), the current Spatial Strategy promotes a more flexible isles approach, which provides a supportive framework to development, subject to being supported by policies in the LDP. This more flexible approach was to help support the more fragile areas in Orkney. This tailored approach, which provides a different spatial strategy for Mainland and for the non-linked isles is successful and a good basis to roll forward into the next LDP.

#### **Issue 2 – Housing in Orkney**

##### **Orkney Settlements**

The current approach to housing allocations in Orkney is to promote the majority of housing development within the towns, villages and rural settlements of Orkney with short-term and long-term allocations included. The classification of towns, villages and rural settlements was based on an assessment of the current provision of services and infrastructure with the plan supporting growth in the first instance to places with sufficient infrastructure and services.

Support and protection of settlements have been assessed against the existence of levels of economic activity, community facilities, amenities and public transport links to the County's main towns. Orkney's sustainable settlements also have an important social value and act as community hubs which facilitate social interaction and have the potential to have a positive impact on the health and well-being of residents.

#### Comment on appropriateness

The approach of guiding new housing to locations within such settlements is strongly supported by NPF4 and it is recommended that this continues in the main in the next Local Development Plan. Supporting development within existing settlements also aims to promote more sustainable travel choices by reducing the need to travel to access services and employment. The Housing Land Audits for 2024 shows that there are currently 1,678 units (short and long-term supply) in the current Local Development Plan. This does not count windfall housing, which based on monitoring of windfall development over the years, would significantly boost anticipated supply levels with an average of 53 units delivered each year over the last 10 years. This exceeds the total demand in the Housing Needs and Demand of the chosen high growth scenario that has been used to inform the indicative Housing Land Requirement.

The Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATLR) in NPF4 is 1,600 units for a 10-year period. Since the MATLR figure was prepared significant additional evidence has been prepared for example there is now an up to date and robust and credible HNDA been developed, the housing market partnership has been set up, and a new Local Housing Strategy containing a Housing Supply Target been prepared. All of which have been developed with new additional evidence and partnership working since the MATLR figure was prepared. Therefore, the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement for Orkney has been informed by the new evidence and is set at 1,650 units over 10 years which is in line with a high growth scenario in the HNDA to ensure there is always a generous supply and choice of land available. (Further information on the evidence for setting the MATLR is set out in Schedule 7.

The current plan contains largely text-based settlement statements for each settlement, which gives advice on appropriate levels of development and any current known considerations for each land allocation. Whilst the principle of this is still relevant, the lack of spatial mapping and limited information on expected outcomes from development of sites has seen several approved planning applications considered to have resulted in missed opportunities such as footpaths and poor connectivity across sites, as well as poor integration of blue/green infrastructure and lack of mix of size and tenures. The next Local Development Plan anticipates continuing to direct the majority of development in our existing towns and villages. As part of the review work will be undertaking considering the level of service provision and infrastructure that exists in each of our existing identified settlements. Using the baseline information, we anticipate preparing more spatial based settlement statements, which will make expectations clearer on infrastructure requirements and ensure local place characteristics and services are mapped along with key principles shown on maps rather than described in text. This will provide strong direction and clarity to developers which will ensure new site development contributes and delivers well connected, diverse and quality outcomes.

#### **Housing in the Parishes**

Orkney has a distinctive scattered settlement pattern which has evolved over centuries, in conjunction with a strong rural community and parish-based identity. It is important to support rural housing opportunities, especially where this contributes to the viability of Orkney's rural communities. The current policy approach supports, where appropriate, new dwellings out with the settlements in a variety of locations, including infill development and the sub-division of existing sites; new dwellings located as extensions to existing clusters and groups; replacement housing and the redevelopment of brownfield land; conversions; and new build homes required by rural businesses and agriculture.

### Comment on appropriateness

During the Evidence Base engagement, there have been a variety of views expressed around what an appropriate policy would be for housing in the countryside. Some responders support a more open approach to providing new housing in the countryside with a presumption in favour of single-house developments and clusters of houses subject to siting and design issues.

Most of Orkney is identified as Remote Rural in NPF4 which has quite a supportive approach to housing subject to certain criteria. However, the remote rural definition has been highlighted as a questionable approach for Orkney Mainland - on the basis of Orkney's compact geography – with all parts of Mainland Orkney rarely more than 10 minutes from a village/service and 20-30 minutes from Kirkwall. Therefore, rather than use the Remote Rural definition consideration will be given to a tailored approach to better reflect the Orkney geography and pattern of development.

Whilst a more open approach could facilitate more development of housing in the rural communities of Orkney there would be a need for strong consideration to be given to siting and design when assessing planning applications owing to the potential for serious harm to be caused to landscape character and the residential amenity of existing householders by poorly sited or inappropriately scaled developments. The sub-urbanisation of the Orkney countryside would also be a possibility if the alternative option were to be pursued, owing to the fact that the main towns are within comfortable commuting distance of all potential Mainland sites, and a presumption in favour of single houses or clusters of houses in the countryside could have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the County and encouraging further unsustainable travel patterns arising from dispersed households. It could also potentially result in extra costs in terms of delivering Council services such as potential for extra school bus transport, further waste collections and people with care needs being further away from services. Further work and engagement with stakeholders will be required to consider the most suitable approach to housing in parishes. Monitoring of windfall development has shown the existing approach is delivering a proficient level of housing. However, issues have been raised in the engagement on the design quality and siting on several approved developments with massing and scale being out of character with the local area which could require stronger policy guidance to set out expectations.

Notwithstanding, the Evidence Report establishes the need for the LDP to continue to make provision for new housing in parishes/countryside. The challenge will be to ensure a proportionate and manageable policy approach which can deliver this without harming the overall character of the landscape and as far as possible to minimise impact and cost of provision of services to dispersed households and help support local services.

### **Issue 3 – Marine and Terrestrial Planning Interface**

The Plan supports an integrated approach to terrestrial and marine planning. The settlements identified in the Proposals Map represent the areas of developed coast that are the main focus of economic and recreational activity likely to be suitable for further coastal development. The Plan promotes the settlements as the focus of development requiring a coastal location and specific industrial and business allocations have been designated close to Orkney's three key harbour infrastructure facilities (Hatston, Copland's Dock and Lyness). In line with other policies in the Plan, there must be a specific locational requirement for any proposal outwith the settlements, and it must be demonstrated that any environmental impacts can be satisfactorily addressed.

### Comment on appropriateness

The approach in the current LDP is still considered broadly appropriate. Since the LDP was developed there is now a draft Regional Marine Plan covering Orkney's coastal fringe and waters out to 12 nautical miles; as part of the LDP review this will be reviewed to ensure there is appropriate alignment with it. As part of the next Local Development Plan further work will be undertaken to enhance the evidence of the potential implications of sea level rise and where it will limit coastal development and affect particular coastal communities. It will also be important for the next Local Development Plan to ensure that it supports the strategic context for new marine facilities and infrastructure arising from development such as offshore wind development and any associated infrastructure facilities. The next LDP will seek to take account of priorities identified in the Orkney Harbours Masterplans and reflect the implications of the national development in NPF4 relating to supporting proposals relating to Scapa Flow and Hatston (Kirkwall) and also ensure it take account relevant updates included in the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy and the outputs from the National Marine Plan.

### **Issue 4 – Energy and Infrastructure**

The rich natural resources of Orkney have been utilised to result in the County being at the forefront of renewables development globally, with abundant wind, wave and tidal resources present that could be further utilised in the future. It is essential that the Local Development Plan continues to ensure that policy provision is in place to allow the renewables industry to develop locally, whilst ensuring that an appropriate balance is struck that continues to conserve the rich cultural and natural heritage of the islands and the quality of life of Orkney's inhabitants.

### Comment on appropriateness

Since the LDP was drafted the policy context has shifted with NPF4 coming into place, and there is now a sharper policy focus on role for renewable energy development to addressing climate change and decarbonising the energy system. There will be a need to review the current approach and update the policy position including considering the role of developers can play to support socio-economic benefits for Orkney communities and appropriately address any significant impacts on the local environment, infrastructure, housing markets, community services and facilities.

### **Allocations**

LDP monitoring through the Housing Land Audit and Employment Land Audit looks at delivery progress on allocated housing, employment, and opportunity sites. This will be used to inform whether any allocated sites need to be removed and replaced with alternatives to ensure that there is a deliverable housing land supply for the Housing Land Requirement of the new LDP. There are currently no shortfalls in housing land or employment land based on the audits' data. As part of the evidence base there has been a robust and credible Housing Needs Demand Assessment prepared alongside an updated housing strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan. These will help inform where the different scales of housing development should be allocated relating to the different housing market areas. The housing market partnership has been meeting regularly to discuss housing issues including what is a realistic number of housing units to deliver to meet the housing need across a range of tenure types. This will include specific provision for facilitating the delivery of a range different affordable tenures.

### 3. Key Facts and Issues Arising from the Evidence

A summary of the demographic health and socio-economic facts and challenges are set out below together with a summary of some of the issues arising from the evidence that require to be addressed through the new LDP. The main issues arising from the evidence are then grouped in accordance with the NPF4 policies on Sustainable Places, Liveable Places and Productive Places.

#### Key Facts

**The following key facts provide an overview of the demographic, physical, economic and social context for Orkney.**

#### Demographic Challenges

Whilst population projections need to be treated with caution, data from the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and current census information shows that for Orkney:

- Orkney has had higher than average population growth - since 2001, the population in Orkney has increased by 17%, compared with 8% across Scotland, the second highest growth area in Scotland after Midlothian. This has been driven by high net migration.
- There has been almost double the rate of household growth in Orkney at 29.5% over the last 20 years compared to Scotland's 16%. Orkney's growth is the highest in Scotland over the same period.
- In 2021, there were 171 births registered in Orkney, a decrease of 4.5% from 179 births in 2020.
- In 2021, there were 254 deaths in Orkney, the same number as in 2020.
- Based on Population projections for Scottish Areas by 2043 33% of people in Orkney will be over 65 compared to 24% in 2018.
- Based on Population projections for Scottish Areas by 2043 54% of people in Orkney will be working age compared to 60% in 2018.
- Based on Population projections for Scottish Areas by 2043 the Orkney population will be 21,828 compared to 22,190 in 2018, therefore a projected fall in the population.
- Whilst there has been overall population growth in Orkney in recent years there are several areas projected to have a fall in population between 2018 and 2030 with the greatest loss predicted in the North Isles (-13%)
- 70% of the Orkney Population estimated to be living in very remote and rural setting in 2020
- In 2020, the total population was estimated at 22,400
- NRS estimate the Orkney population will decrease by 0.7% between 2020 and 2035
- People aged 65+ are set to increase by 30% by 2035

Demographic balance is an issue of concern: the first strategic priority in the National Islands Plan is "To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile".

Based on National Records of Scotland mid-year estimates, the trend for older age groups to increase is forecast to continue as people live longer. Trends also show more older people living on their own, which presents issues around caring for people at home.

As is shown above, the age profile in Orkney is changing, resulting in fewer younger people and more older people. National Records Scotland has estimated that there will be 618 fewer children and young people in 2035 than in 2020, a drop of 15%. The number of people aged between 18 and 64 is expected to fall by 1,255, a drop of 10%. However, there is expected to be an increase of 1,716 people aged 65+, which is a 30% increase in this age group overall. Within this population aged over 65, the biggest rate of increase will be in the numbers of people aged 85+, which are expected to double by 2035.

The Orkney Community Planning Partnership prepared a [briefing note](#) based on the 2022 census figures and population projections. The briefing note highlights that Orkney needs to

plan to address the increasing needs of an ageing population that results in a declining working age population, which will have a potential impact on the economy, housing and healthcare provision. The ferry and air linked isles are projected to have the greatest falls in population. The LDP will seek to address this in its policies and proposals to ensure a tailored place specific approach that supports appropriate development across the different demographic challenges. This would continue the model of the existing LDP which has different policy approaches for different parts of Orkney.

### **Population Health Issues**

According to the latest Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (**OIC218**) which provides an assessment of the current and future health and social care needs of the local community it highlights the following health summaries for the Orkney community

- 77% of people living in Orkney stated their health was either 'Good' or 'Very good' in response to the Health and Care Experience Survey in 2019.
- In the medium term to 2030-2031 male life expectancy in Orkney is projected to increase by 3%. In the same period, female life expectancy is expected to rise by 2%.
- In 2020, 2.3 female and 3.9 male deaths per 1,000 population were classified as premature.
- In the period 2017-2019, 2.5 deaths per 1,000 people in the Orkney population were classified as potentially avoidable.
- Neoplasms, or cancers were the leading cause of death in Orkney, followed by diseases of the circulatory system, together accounting for 57% of all deaths in 2020.
- Latest figures 2016-2020 show that on average, four people per year in Orkney were assessed as having taken their own life.
- Cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, musculoskeletal and mental health disorders were the leading disease burdens according to latest Burden of Disease estimates 2016.
- The Scottish Health Survey reported that 37% of Orkney residents surveyed between 2016 and 2019 were living with a limiting long-term illness.
- In 2018/19 hypertension was by far the most prevalent long-term condition recorded at 3,557 patients, representing 16.4 people per 100 population.
- Arthritis was the leading long-term condition in Orkney in terms of associated hospital bed days.
- Cancer incidence has incrementally risen over the past 20 years. There was a 28% increase between 2008 and 2019 for new cancer registrations in Orkney. There were 131 new diagnosis in 2019.
- There are an estimated 890 people living with sight loss across Orkney.
- There were 91 adults with a known learning disability in Orkney during 2019.
- Depression is by far the most prevalent mental health condition in Orkney.
- In 2018/19 there were 738 people suffering from depression registered at practices in Orkney.
- In the period between 2010/11 and 2019/20 the level of anti-depressant prescribing across Orkney increased every year resulting in a doubling of anti-depressant prescribing.
- Female healthy life expectancy is 75 Years. Male healthy life expectancy is lower at 69.
- The Orkney rate per head of population for falls was 16.9 per 1,000 in 2019/20 compared to 22.7 people per 1,000 population across Scotland.
- In 2019/20 people who passed away in Orkney spent 80% of their last six months of life living either at home or in the community.

### **Social and Economic Factors**

- 30.5% of people living in the Orkney were estimated to be living in fuel poverty between 2017-2019
- 75% of the Orkney population were estimated to be homeowners

- The top three employment sectors in Orkney are agriculture, forestry, and fishing (as defined in Section A of the Standard Industrial Classification) (19.2%), human health and social work (15.4%) and wholesale and retail (11.5%). Together they account for around 6,000 jobs across the area.
- In Orkney 86.7% of private sector registered businesses are micro (0-9 employees) compared to 86.4% regionally and 87.1% nationally.
- Of people aged 16 to 64 years living in Orkney Islands, 88.3% were employed in the year ending December 2023. Across the rest of Scotland 74.7% of people aged 16 to 64 years were employed.
- The unemployment rate in the year ending December 2023 was 1.7%.

**From the evidence presented in the Schedules information is set out below highlighting potential implications from the evidence and initial thinking on how the next Local Development Plan can address these implications. This is listed under the NPF4 three themes of Sustainable Places, Liveable Places and Productive Places and the broad policy themes within each of the themes. These are just a summary, and other implications are set out in each of the Schedules**

### **Sustainable Places**

#### **Climate mitigation and adaptation**

- Orkney faces the following risks from the effects of climate change: changes in rainfall patterns, increasing sea levels which will lead to coastal erosion and a higher frequency of extreme weather events, including potential heat stress. This may present itself as increased droughts and floods, changes to the timing of the growing season and upsurges in pests and diseases, further coastal flooding, erosion, and damage to infrastructure, impacts on cultural heritage assets and property and disruption to travel and service delivery. The LDP has a pivotal role to play in tackling the effects of climate change and associated risks. This includes identifying nature-based solutions such as tree planting around developments and nature networks, which can contribute to emissions mitigation and adaptation, and locating and adapting buildings to deal with flood risk. The evidence presented in the report, including ongoing studies such as a surface water management study for Kirkwall, will inform the LDP spatial strategy and how land allocations can mitigate the effects of climate change.
- A Regional Coastal Adaptation Plan is to be undertaken and inform the proposed plan. This will help to identify risk and consequences of changes to the coast and will inform the LDP approach in terms of coastal development or retreat. Work on the Plan is underway and is expected to take 18 months for completion.
- A tailored approach to the implementation and delivery of NPF4 policies on tackling the effects of climate change will be considered for the LDP. This will include how energy is supported and can be best accommodated in the Orkney landscape.

### **Natural Places**

- Climate Change can also cause and/or exacerbate biodiversity loss. The balance between the climate and biodiversity means that they have a symbiotic relationship where changes to one can affect the other. Therefore, policy relating to climate change is intricately linked to policies on biodiversity; climate change mitigation can be supported by biodiversity enhancements, which leads to more resilient and sustainable places.
- Development of a nature network, including the requirement to help protect 30% of Scotland's land (and coastal and freshwaters) by 2030 (30x30) for biodiversity improvement, is currently being undertaken and will be reflected in the LDP. The protection

of locally important sites for nature and improving biodiversity within the towns and villages of Orkney will all be considered through the development of the nature network. The unique landscape and habitat characteristics of Orkney and the way land is managed will be a key consideration in developing a locally appropriate nature network for Orkney.

- Biodiversity enhancement and improvements will be delivered through a variety of means including through identifying opportunities in settlement statements, the nature network and tailored local guidance on how to include biodiversity in development.
- A mechanism for offsetting biodiversity requirements may be necessary. Scottish Government guidance is awaited on this and will inform the LDP approach. The Trees and Woodland Strategy will inform the LDP proposals for how woodlands and trees can be delivered through developments in Orkney. A multi-benefit approach will be taken, for example, incorporating multiple benefits such as improved amenity, provision of shelter, surface water management, biodiversity enhancement, opportunities for recreation and so on. A draft Trees and Woodland Strategy has been prepared and is being consulted upon with a final strategy expected by Summer 2026.
- Several audits and strategies will inform the protection and expansion of blue and green infrastructure in the LDP, as well as spaces for play, recreation, and sport. This will include the Open Space Strategy, a Kirkwall Surface Water Plan, relevant NatureScot and SEPA datasets and Play Sufficiency Assessment.

### **Historic assets and places**

- The LDP will seek to ensure the protection and enhancement of historic environment assets and places, while facilitating the transition to net zero and helping assets become resilient to current and future impacts of climate change, where possible, while continuing to contribute to economic regeneration.
- Potential LDP tailored policies and guidance could be required for how historic environment assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site are applied in the local context. For example, NPF4 sets out National Developments which are linked to energy provision in Orkney. The Local Development Plan will ensure these are identified and supported alongside a tailored energy policy, ensuring appropriate guidance is set out for the specific local characteristics, such as the World Heritage Site and its setting.

### **Sustainable Transport and supporting Local Living**

#### **Liveable Places**

- The Scottish Government currently has a target of 20% reduction in car kilometres which is under review, achieving this reduction is challenging for a rural local authority like Orkney to achieve. Reducing the need to travel longer distances for daily needs and services will be considered through the LDP and the approach to Local Living.
- Local Living will take a variety of forms. In Orkney, a focus is likely to be placed on improving sustainable travel options between rural areas and within settlement hubs, such as improving active travel opportunities in and between settlements, ensuring ferry interchanges can become sustainable transport hubs; where there is a choice of sustainable travel opportunities like bus, electric bike hire or car club facilities to encourage the Isles passengers and arrivals from the Mainland to utilise these options rather than take their motor vehicle.

- There could also be a role of thinking about EV chargers and suitable locations for their future provision linking these with sustainable transport hubs. Research is underway in partnership with Sustrans to look at these issues more closely and identify opportunities with initial findings to be reported Summer 2025.

## **Quality Homes**

- The Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) which is set out in NPF4 is identified as 1,600 units over the next 10 years. Orkney inputted to that figure with an initial figure of 450 units identified in the draft MATHLR. Orkney sought it to be raised to 1,600 units highlighting that the NPF4 methodology did not take appropriate account of recent population increases through immigration.
- However, since that MATHLR figure was established, there has been considerable additional research and evidence gathered through the Orkney Housing Market Partnership, which is a multi-agency and organisation partnership, including representation from the local construction industry. The Orkney Housing Market Partnership has prepared several, evidence-based assessments and strategies including a robust and credible Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA).

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) identified three scenarios. A Principal scenario, High Migration scenario and a Low Migration scenario. The revised indicative Local Housing Land Requirement has been set at 1650 units over 10 years to deliver an ambitious housing supply to ensure there is a flexible supply option taking account of a potential high growth scenario with population growth and also address the existing housing need. The HNDA has received 'robust and credible' status from Scottish Government. The indicative Local Housing Land Requirement for 10 years is 1,650 units

- The current Local Development Plan according to the latest housing land audit shows there is an effective supply of 1,365 units with an additional 304 units identified in the OLDP 2017 Plan as long-term supply plus a strong history of windfall development boosting supply. As there are an existing generous effective housing land supply and an effective five year plus long-term supply plus a history of windfall development, there is no specific need to identify additional land in the new LDP. However, consideration will be given to retaining long term sites to ensure there is a pipeline of sites available. Also, as part of the approach to reviewing housing, a fresh assessment will consider if existing allocated sites need to be removed and replaced with alternatives in the LDP and if all the existing settlements support the local living agenda of linking housing with the location of services.
- As part of this review, we have asked landowners to resubmit sites for inclusion in the LDP and a review of these will be undertaken. We have also undertaken a call for sites process to ensure there is a generous amount of land allocated to sustain an available pipeline of sites. Based on the land that has been submitted and the existing LDP allocations, an assessment will be done to see whether any allocated sites need to be removed, if there is no landowner interest in developing these sites. They will then be replaced with alternatives in the LDP to ensure that the LDP land supply is an effective land supply.
- We will continue to engage with the development industry through the Housing Market Partnership and through the Developers Forum to understand barriers they face in bringing forward sites. This liaison will inform if new approaches are needed, such as looking at reducing the size of sites and the LDP setting out phasing details or other measures which the Council could help facilitate the delivery of housing. An assessment of sites will also be made

to consider them against the ability to live locally such as provision of public transport, safe active travel and proximity to key local services such as schools, shops and villages halls.

- There is a high level of affordable housing need in Orkney. NPF4 policy does not address the contribution that individual/private site developments can present to addressing affordable housing supply, and consideration will be given to addressing the role private sector housing can play in supporting increased affordable housing. Currently there is no specific affordable housing policy in the OLDP 2017 with NPF4 Policy 16 requiring 25% of homes to be affordable. Consideration will be given to this NPF4 requirement in relation to the Orkney context or if a tailored approach is required to reflect the local circumstances and issues around site viability and what level of housing provision the 25% requirement for affordable housing would apply too i.e... more than four or five units or all housing development no matter the unit number as is set out in NPF4 or whether there is an emphasis on securing a better mix of development and sizes with a greater focus on delivery of smaller one and two bedroom units.
- There has been no identified need of evidence base in the Housing Strategy for identifying specific provision for gypsy travellers, therefore no specific site will be required through the new LDP.
- It is not considered appropriate to allocate land for the purposes of resettlement. Therefore, the focus will continue to be on supporting the continued sustainability of our existing rural communities some of which are facing an aging and falling population. Encouraging development in these areas, such as the ferry and air linked isles, is considered a more sustainable way to support these communities and will further support the viability of existing services and infrastructure such as schools, shops and healthcare provision.
- The spatial implications of short-term lets and the need for control areas will be reviewed through the new LDP. For example, initial feedback from stakeholders has identified Stromness as having housing pressures and a higher level of short-term lets and second homes compared to other parts of Orkney. Data from the licenced businesses will be reviewed to see if there are particular areas in Orkney under pressure. Consideration will be given to the benefits any control area would deliver or if there are other policy tools that could be used. This could include a policy for occupants of new homes to be their primary residency preventing them to being used as short term lets.
- A sustainable hierarchical approach to rural housing that balances delivery with safeguarding and protecting Orkney's rural landscape character has been taken in the existing LDP, with an Isles approach addressing the more fragile areas which are the ferry and air linked isles. A similar tailored approach will be required that is based on detailed evidence rather than relying on the generic urban-rural classification used in NPF4, which is not considered to reflect local circumstances and pressures. This will also consider the NPF4 policy around live local, infrastructure and sustainable transport and ensuring development can sustain services provided in different hubs

### **Infrastructure First**

- Work has been done with the Education Department of the Council looking at school roll forecasts and their implications on future school provision. Forecasts for several smaller schools on the Isles show a continuing reduction in the number of children in these areas. Within Mainland Orkney schools it is projected that there could be potential pressure in Kirkwall schools with the continued growth of Kirkwall. The Education Authority are working with the Planning Authority to consider the spatial implications of housing allocations on the school estate, including transport to school and the need for future investment. Delivery and

timing of infrastructure is often dictated by the availability of funding and investment processes at both national and local levels.

- In recent years there have been a variety of programmes underway to support the delivery of improvements to the provision and quality of digital infrastructure. Understanding the current provision and where there are gaps in connectivity will help inform the spatial strategy such as where community hubs could be required and how the plan can facilitate support for addressing gaps in connectivity, for example, co-location of infrastructure like renewables and digital.
- An updated Open Space Strategy will be prepared, which will be informed by the existing Play Sufficiency Assessment. These will inform the approach to safeguarding open space and play areas and highlight any requirements for enhancements. The issue of play and improved level of provision is a key priority highlighted in the community engagement responses.
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is a key piece of evidence to identify all sources of existing and future flood risk within the Orkney LDP area; this will be used to inform the development of the spatial strategy. A stage 1 SFRA has been undertaken to support the evidence report with SEPA in agreement with the information it contains. It, notes the risks from different sources of flooding including coastal, which will be a key piece of information to inform the next spatial strategy. The surface water management study for Kirkwall, supported by policy in the next LDP, will ensure that all new development proposals in Kirkwall take a holistic approach to water management.
- Work has been undertaken to prepare a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) Framework and Delivery Plan, which is currently in draft form and recently been subject to public consultation. This should be completed in time for the LDP and will inform the LDP. If the LHEES process identifies potential heat networks, these will be appropriately reflected in the LDP, however, currently the draft Strategy has concluded not to identify heat network zones.

### **Design, quality and place**

- Consideration will be given to how design standards can be improved through using graphical design tools that are supported by a detailed placemaking and design policy in the next LDP. There is a need to review how the quality of proposals in submitted planning applications can be improved and if a tailored Orkney approach is needed to develop appropriate guidance on design to influence future planning proposals at the earliest state highlighting principles such as site layout, scale and materials.

### **Productive Places**

#### **Community Wealth Building**

- Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a new policy opportunity area for the new LDP, it presents opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality, and the benefits it can provide to local communities. This ties in with NPF4 Policy 11 Energy, which sets out that “Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities”.

#### **Business and Industry**

- To ensure that there is sufficient land for business and industry, and a suitable range of sites across Orkney, engagement with industry and the Council’s Economic Development team has been undertaken. The LDP team has also met with the Orkney Business Forum. Further research may be commissioned ahead of the Local Development Plan to understand if further land requires to be identified in the new LDP with a potential growth in certain sectors such as

renewables, and to examine policy options to support rural development opportunities in the countryside or smaller villages, such as small scale businesses, but ensuring there is no detrimental impact on the health and viability of towns.

### **Town Centres**

- Identification and the role of centres will be considered through the LDP informed by relevant evidence such as Orkney business engagement focus groups and town centre health check data. Currently Kirkwall and Stromness act as the two main centres and this is likely to continue, however, other settlements can act as locality hubs where they can provide key services locally and reduce the need to travel.
- Supporting the evolving role of town centres, particularly Stromness, is a key priority for the LDP. This includes promoting town centre living and considering the impact of short-term lets and second homes on Stromness and other centres.

### **Tourism**

- Tourism is a major industry in Orkney. Consideration will be given to identifying opportunities for sustainable tourism development including identifying locations for better management of pressured sites. Some sites have witnessed a significant rise in visitor numbers, meaning relevant long-term management solutions are needed to address infrastructure and capacity issues at and accessing the visitor sites. Consultation feedback from some stakeholders and communities on the evidence report has sought the LDP to examine policy controls that could be used to prevent some areas of Orkney becoming over dominated by short-term holiday rentals and second homes. Using the data on existing short-term lets licences will be used to inform where and what a suitable policy approach is.

### **Culture and creativity**

- Orkney has a strong creative sector across culture, heritage and the arts. The LDP will support opportunities to promote and facilitate development that appropriately supports cultural and creative industries and protects existing facilities.

### **Aquaculture**

- Aquaculture is a major employer in Orkney, creating a strong interface with marine planning and terrestrial planning. Work will be undertaken to ensure the proposed Local Development Plan has strong alignment with the Regional Marine Plan and forthcoming National Marine Plan.

### **Minerals**

- NPF4 requires a constant landbank of at least 10 years in construction aggregates. There is ongoing dialogue with local operators to identify the existing landbank and secure a sufficient landbank for the next 10 years and beyond. A baseline review has been undertaken as part of the evidence base.

#### 4. Position Statement

The summary below provides an overview of the structure of the Schedules and how they relate to policy areas within NPF4. It provides an overview of the evidence discussed in each Schedule and identifies if there are statements of agreement or any disputes for each Schedule.

##### Overview

The Orkney Local Development Plan Evidence Report has been split into 18 themed Schedules that provide a summary of the evidence base for each topic. The Schedules are grouped to broadly reflect the policy areas within NPF4. Each Schedule provides a summary of evidence relating to the policy areas within NPF4 as set out below.

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>NPF4 Theme Area</b>	<b>NPF4 Policy Areas</b>
1 Climate Change.	Sustainable Places, Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis and Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation, Policy 3 Biodiversity, Policy 4 Natural places, Policy 7 Historic Assets and places, Policy 10 Coastal Development, and Policy 19 Heat and Cooling, Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure.
2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodland and Trees and Green and Blue Infrastructure.	Sustainable Places.	NPF4 Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis, Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaption, Policy 3 Biodiversity, Policy 4 Natural places, Policy 5 Soils, Policy 6 Forestry, woodlands and trees, Policy 8 Greenbelts, Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure, Policy 22 Flood risk and water management.
3 Historic Assets and Places.	Sustainable Places.	NPF4 Policy 7 Historic Assets and places, Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation, Policy 5 Soils, Policy 6 Forestry woodland and trees, Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty properties, Policy 10 Coastal development, Policy 30 Tourism.
4 Energy.	Sustainable Places.	NPF4 Policy 11 Energy.
5 Design, quality and place.	Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 14 Design, quality and place and Policy 23 Health and Safety.
6 Local Living	Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 15 Local Living and 20-minute

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>NPF4 Theme Area</b>	<b>NPF4 Policy Areas</b>
		neighbourhoods and Policy 23 Health and Safety.
7 Housing.	Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 16 Quality homes and Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty properties and Policy 17 Rural homes.
8 Infrastructure First.	Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis, Policy 2 Climate change mitigation and adaptation, Policy 18 Infrastructure first, Policy 15 Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, Policy 21 Play, recreation and sport, Policy 23 Health and Safety, Policy 24 Digital infrastructure, Policy 11 Energy, and Policy 12 Zero waste.
9 Sustainable Transport.	Sustainable Places, Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 13 Sustainable transport and Policy 18 Infrastructure first, Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis, Policy 2 Climate change mitigation and adaptation.
10 Flood Risk.	Liveable Places.	NPF4 Policy 22 Flood risk and water management, Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure, Policy 10 Coastal development, and Policy 2 Climate change mitigation and adaptation.
11 Community Wealth Building.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 25 Community wealth building.
12 Business and Industry.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 26 Business and Industry.
13 Town Centre and Retail.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 27 City, town, local and commercial centres and Policy 28 Retail.
14 Rural Development.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 29 Rural Development.
15 Tourism.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 30 Tourism
16 Culture and Creativity.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 31 Culture and Creativity.

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>NPF4 Theme Area</b>	<b>NPF4 Policy Areas</b>
17 Minerals.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 33 Minerals.
18 Aquaculture.	Productive Places.	NPF4 Policy 32 Aquaculture.

### Schedule 1 Climate Change

The summary of evidence outlines the sources and scale of greenhouse gas emissions in Orkney, the expected climate risks and who is likely to be most affected. The summary sets out opportunities to reduce costs of adapting to climate change including nature-based solutions and adaptation of buildings. Orkney's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy will set out a framework for improving the energy efficiency of buildings and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from heating buildings. Work is also underway on an Orkney Energy Action Plan and ambitious targets for achievement of net zero in Orkney exist within the Council's five-year plan and in the Local Outcomes Improvement plan. The summary of evidence notes that work has begun on Regional Coastal Adaptation Plans that identify the risk and consequences of change to the coast. These are due to be reported to Council before the end of 2026. Land use planning has a holistic role to play because land acts as a carbon sink and, therefore, if planned and managed in an appropriate manner can regulate carbon emissions.

**Internal colleagues and some external agencies had suggested additional data sets and additional evidence sources these have all been incorporated into the Schedule. The Schedule now also notes the extensive cross topic nature which climate change has highlighting key topics that are impacted by climate change.**

**There are no outstanding areas of dispute on the Schedule.**

### Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure

The summary of evidence provides information on areas protected, or locally important for nature conservation in Orkney, agricultural land, peatland, and carbon rich soils. The summary of evidence also references to the Orkney Open Space Strategy 2014 and notes that an updated Strategy is currently being prepared in time for the proposed Plan. The summary of evidence also identifies the data and information within the Orkney Core Paths Plan and Orkney Play Sufficiency Assessment. The summary also references the draft Trees and Woodland Strategy, which will include information on the woodland resource in Orkney, the environmental and recreational benefits, and opportunities that trees and woodland provide. Nature Networks, as promoted by NatureScot and NPF4, are also referenced as important policy to ensure connectivity between habitats.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

### Schedule 3 Historic Assets and Places

Key data sets providing the location of conservation areas, listed buildings, gardens and designed landscapes, world heritage sites, Scheduled Monuments and non-designated historic environment assets are held by the Council and regularly updated. The Historic Environment Record contains known sites of archaeological and historic importance. The summary of evidence also references the Buildings at Risk Register and conservation areas.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

### Schedule 4 Energy

Details of operational, consented, and proposed wind turbine and wind farms are set out. The summary of evidence also references the location of key electrical grid projects and other energy related work which is underway within Orkney including proposals for investment in creating a hydrogen hub and other hydrogen initiatives. There is also work looking at how Orkney can develop a whole systems approach to future energy use which is referenced.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

### Schedule 5 Design, quality, and place

The summary of evidence sets out the approach to placemaking taken in the current and previous Local Development Plans. It sets out the role of key design principles and existing development briefs and masterplans. Links are made to the Council's Open Space Strategy and biodiversity duty report.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

### Schedule 6 Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

The Schedule describes the different settlement patterns and hierarchy of the spatial strategy across Orkney in the current LDP and considers its relevance as a potential approach to supporting local living. An initial suggested approach to how local living for Orkney can be applied is set out within the Schedule with the cross over between other Schedules and policy areas identified and links with information contained within Local Place Plans.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

### Schedule 7 Housing

The Evidence Report's summary sets out the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement for Orkney and how it has been arrived at. This includes an explanation as to how the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement within NPF4 was developed and the consequence of the recent evidence.

A summary is provided on the outcomes of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2023 including HNDA all tenure housing estimates based on three scenarios and sets out the reasoning for the high growth scenario to be selected as a preferred approach to inform the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement.

Details on existing supply from the current Housing Land Audit is also summarised. A summary of the tenure requirements across Orkney from the HNDA are included within the Schedule. Information from the HNDA relating to accessible and wheelchair accessible housing is summarised in the Schedule as are requirements for student accommodation and key worker housing. Reference to the Local Housing Strategy and its priorities are also highlighted. Consideration given to Gypsy/Travellers and the Orkney Self Build Register, as part of the HNDA, is also referenced. Consideration is also given to rural homes explaining the background and policy analysis that has been completed to inform evidence led approaches to rural housing in Orkney. The potential implications from NPF4's definition of remote rural is discussed and how NPF4 Policy 17 Rural homes is likely to require a tailored approach to better address local circumstances rather than using the Urban/Rural Classification system in NPF4.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence following the recommendations from the Reporter there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

### Schedule 8 Infrastructure First

The evidence summary includes the Council's education investment priorities, school roll forecasts. The potential spatial implications for education are set out. Further education and childcare are also discussed within the Schedule.

The evidence summary also links to current and future healthcare infrastructure and references and discussed the NHS Orkney Asset Management Plan and NHS Orkney Corporate Strategy 2024 as are current health requirements.

To ensure the LDP identifies appropriate development areas where there are sufficient water supplies and waste-water infrastructure there has been data considered on the existing

capacity of water supplies and waste-water treatment works which are presented in the Schedule. This also looks at planned investments to water infrastructure by Scottish Water.

Currently there is large investment underway on the national grid infrastructure in Orkney. The implications of the expansion and upgrade of the national electricity grid is discussed and associated pressures are also discussed within the Schedule.

Ensuring that development can support and link in with good and reliable digital connectivity is important. The Schedule looks at current digital provision and also highlights programmes that are underway to monitor and improve the current situation.

Ensuring there are suitable arrangements in place to reduce and appropriately consider waste management is an important consideration in an infrastructure first approach to development. The Schedule sets out the current approach to waste management including current recycling facilities.

Ensuring new development has access to appropriate open space and play provision will be an important consideration as part of an infrastructure first approach. To support this a Play Sufficiency Assessment has been undertaken. The key findings of the Play Sufficiency Assessment as well as planned future work on updating the Open Space Strategy to inform what open space provision exists and will be required from development are discussed in the Schedule.

Baseline information has been developed considering links to data on the location of hazardous substances and their associated safety zones. It is anticipated that the proposed plan will spatially identify these and identify an appropriate buffer, and this will be supported by a policy ensuring development within the area has appropriate engagement with the Health and Safety Executive.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

#### Schedule 9 Sustainable Transport

The Schedule provides a summary of strategies, studies and key data including car ownership information, public transport accessibility and provision, the local and regional transport strategies, information about projects and work programmes aimed at encouraging active travel, 20% reduction in car kilometres and road safety.

The Schedule also highlights current transport options within Orkney and identifies opportunities to move towards more sustainable transport options, for example, new electric hydrofoil passenger ferries and improved active travel infrastructure.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

#### Schedule 10 Flood Risk and Water Management

The Schedule summarises the flood risk plans and assessments the Council has in place in respect of flood risk including the Orkney Local Flood Risk Management Plan and highlights the initial high level strategic flood risk assessment. The summary of evidence notes the Council is working towards developing Surface Water Management Plans for Kirkwall, which will be a key piece of evidence to inform development requirements. The Schedule also highlights work about to be commenced to prepare a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan which aims to provide a strategic level assessment aimed at supporting the development of coastal management policies for Orkney's coastal zone, taking account of natural processes and the risks to people, property, transport and service infrastructure and how these factors will change over time due to climate change. The outputs from this report will inform the spatial strategy and policy approach in the Local Development Plan.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 11 Community Wealth Building

The Schedule discusses the community planning partnership in Orkney and how it seeks to embed community wealth building across partners. It also highlights the Council's aspirations to support community wealth building principles; it also includes reference to a draft Community Wealth Building delivery plan which has been developed by the Community Planning Partnership.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 12 – Business and Industry

Employment Land Audit and outcomes from the engagement with the business sector is summarised within the Schedule. The Schedule also provides a summary of evidence related to data we have on the employment of different sectors in Orkney and the challenges that have been highlighted by the business sector. The Schedule also highlights the aspirations of the Islands Growth Deal.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 13 Town Centre and Retail

The Schedule summarises the Town Centre Health Check for Kirkwall and Stromness. This summary includes information about vacancy levels. The Schedule also summarises key elements in the Stromness and Kirkwall Place Plans relating to priorities in supporting the town centres.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 14 Rural Development

The Schedule sets out the economic characteristics including highlighting recent research undertaken by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) looking at the potential impacts of the Agriculture Bill and future rural development support which could have on the economies and communities of Orkney. The Schedule also reflects on the existing local development plan spatial strategy, which has a tailored approach to address the different patterns of development and pressure across different parts of Orkney. Some areas in Orkney are considered fragile, but Mainland and linked Isles are not considered to have fragile characteristics and, therefore, the continuation of a tailored approach is considered to be the most relevant one.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 15 Tourism

Information from Visit Orkney, the Council Economic Development Department and the Orkney Tourism Strategy is summarised. The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and projects identified in Council studies on tourism infrastructure are also discussed. Links are also made to the Islands Growth Deal and several tourism related proposals. It contains data on licensed accommodation providers and the potential implications if there are areas with a high level of tourism accommodation provision.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

#### Schedule 16 Culture and Creativity

The Schedule discusses several strategies including the Orkney Arts Development Strategy and Arts Strategy Action Plan it also sets out various cultural resources that are located around Orkney including the current arts and cultural venues.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

#### Schedule 17 Minerals

The Schedule includes setting out a summary of evidence from the 2020-2023 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland and further information that has been gathered on existing mineral consents. The Cursiter Quarry Management Plan and current consented applications offer the most useful information for the evidence report.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

#### Schedule 18 Aquaculture

The Schedule sets out a summary of evidence for aquaculture and current approach in Orkney. It considers the approach in the National Marine Plan and how the draft Orkney Regional Marine Plan has approached aquaculture, including developing spatial guidance showing the different sensitivities.

**Following the insertion of additional datasets and evidence there are no areas of dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

## **5. Legislative Requirements**

The matters identified in Section 15(5) of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, which the Council must set out its view on in the Evidence Report and which must be taken into account in preparing the new LDP's Spatial Strategy and the corresponding Schedules or Sections of the Evidence Report are set out below:

<b>Section 15(5) of the 1997 Act, as amended</b>	<b>Schedule or Section of Evidence Report</b>
The principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district	Schedules 1-18
The principal purposes for which the land is used	Schedules 1-18 + Appropriateness of the LDP2017 Spatial Strategy, Policies and Proposals
The size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district	5 Design, Quality and Place 7 Housing 9 Infrastructure
The housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people	7 Housing
The desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement	7 Housing
The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and the use of land on those health needs	5 Design, Quality and Place 6 Local Living 8 Infrastructure
The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs	6 Local Living 8 Infrastructure
The extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population	7 Housing
The capacity of education services in the district	8 Infrastructure
The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including, in particular, but not limited to live music venues) in the district	16 Culture and Creativity
The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education systems)	8 Infrastructure 9 Sustainable Transport

<b>Section 15(5) of the 1997 Act, as amended</b>	<b>Schedule or Section of Evidence Report</b>
How that infrastructure is used	8 Infrastructure 9 Sustainable Transport
Any change which the Planning Authority thinks may occur in relation to any of the matters mentioned above.	Schedules 1-18 + Main Issues Arising from the Evidence

## **6. Engagement Statement**

### **Introduction**

The Council supports an inclusive and proactive approach to engagement and collaborative working, providing the opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in the plan-making process in a creative way. The development of this Evidence Report has been aided by a collaborative approach to data, spatial analysis and consultation and engagement with a wide range of organisations, internal teams and the Orkney community.

The development plan webpages <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building/development-and-marine-planning-policy/development-planning-land/review-of-local-development-plan/> were used as the central location for engaging and displaying information on the various engagement activities and will continue to be used throughout the process of developing the new Local Development Plan.

A contact spreadsheet detailing groups and individuals who have engaged in the evidence gathering process and provided relevant evidence or comments has been prepared to support this Evidence Report.

Extensive engagement was undertaken to support the preparation of the Evidence Report. This statement sets out how the Council has sought stakeholder views in the preparation of the Evidence Report and how these views have been taken account of.

The Participation Statement in the [Development Plan Scheme](#) sets out the approach that is being used to engage with key stakeholders and target audiences.

The table below sets out the key stakeholders and target audience for engagement as set out in the section 16B of the 1997 Act and LDP guidance paragraphs 96 to 105 and the various methods used that were tailored to specific stakeholders.

Target audience	Methods Used
Children and Young People	Play Sufficiency questionnaire.
	Engagement with schools.
	Orkney Matters youth engagement strand.
	Engagement with the Orkney Youth Local Action Group.
Key Agencies, External and Internal Stakeholders	Regular liaison meetings such as through housing market partnership and notification of various consultations.
	Comments sought of draft Schedules.
Community Councils	Invite to LDP engagement events.
	Formal notification of Call for Ideas, Call for Sites and Play Sufficiency questionnaires.
	Presentation to bi-annual chairs and vice chairs of community councils meeting.
	Where community council have sought additional advice and engagement officers

Target audience	Methods Used
	have attended individual community council meetings.
Elected Members	Member seminars including on housing, National Planning Framework 4 policies, local transport strategy and rural development.
Parents and Carers	Play sufficiency assessment questionnaire.
People with disabilities	Play sufficiency assessment questionnaire.
	Engagement with "access Orkney".
General Public	Call for sites and call for ideas' questionnaires.
	Local Place Plan invite, and bespoke website created.
	Drop in exhibitions hosted across Orkneys towns and villages promoting Call for ideas.
	Orkney Matters – part of the engagement team discussing community issues and priorities across each community council area in Orkney through a series of in person parish meetings. Discussion covered many topics relevant to the Local Development Plan.

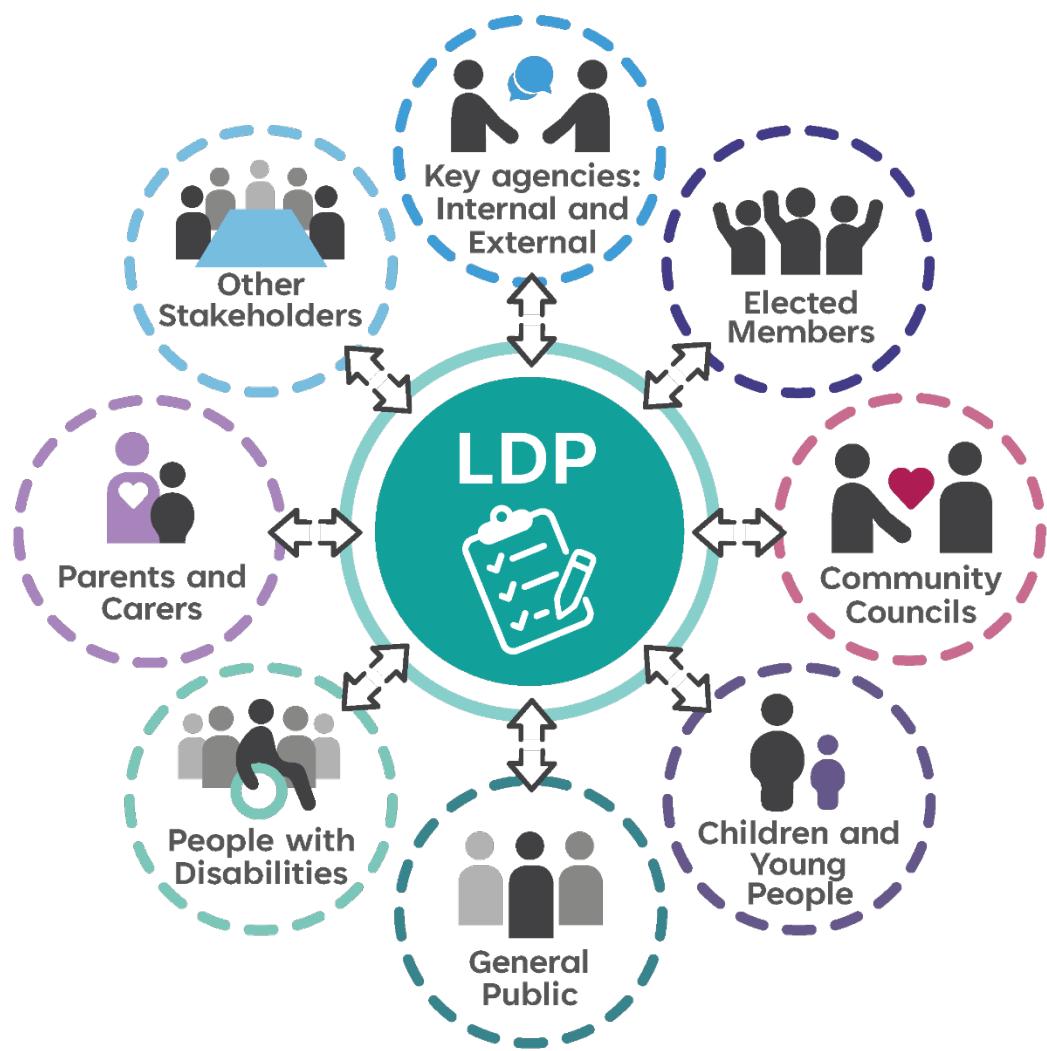


Figure 1 - Diagram of Engagement

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, requires the Council to seek the views of identified groups including the public at large, children and young people, disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers, Community Councils and Key Agencies. The following sections of this statement detail engagement undertaken for each group and how this has been taken account of in the Evidence Report.

### Children and Young People

Extensive youth engagement was undertaken reaching over 350 children and young people across Orkney with the young person place standard tool used and a specific play and hang out spaces survey undertaken to inform the Play Sufficiency Assessment. In addition to promoting the consultations to schools there was also engagement with the Orkney Youth Local Action Group who highlighted their priorities and issues they would like to see addressed such as better pedestrian links, safer hang out spaces and improved designed public realm that is accessible for all. As part of Orkney Matters project, which was a whole council community engagement exercise, there was a specific youth engagement element with artwork created which was exhibited in the Pier Arts Centre.

## **Schools**

Engagement focused predominantly on play spaces and hang out areas; however, an exercise was undertaken with several schools participating in completing a young person version of the place standard tool.

### **Evidence Report**

The information gathered directly influenced the approach to identifying informal play areas for the Play Sufficiency Assessment and other priorities highlighted including safe routes to school through better paths.

## **Disabled People**

Work was undertaken attending the “Access Orkney” forum to highlight the consultations and to hear directly from the organisation on their priorities. As part of the youth engagement, we had feedback from young people highlighting poor provision for children with disabilities with a lack of inclusive play equipment in the existing play parks and issues with the public realm generally with lots of barriers within the street environment.

### **Evidence Report**

Within the design topic paper creating a more accessible street environment has been considered and options include highlighting the settlement statement where there are gaps in infrastructure such as footpaths and the need for more dropped kerbs. In addition, it has been acknowledged that some of the current approved developments could have a higher quality of design encouraging easier wayfinding, which the next LDP will seek to improve by way of design tools setting out design principles and requirements. The outcome should be higher designed developments that are welcoming and safe for all abilities and ages. The Play Sufficiency Assessment has a specific section on accessibility and has been noted that there are improvements that could be made to play facilities across Orkney to make them more accessible

## **Gypsies and Travellers**

During the development of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment no gypsy/travellers were identified therefore there was no specific engagement undertaken with this group. This will continue to be reviewed during the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

## **Community Councils**

Community Councils were all formally invited to attend engagement events and to make submissions to the Call for Ideas to highlight the key issues and concerns of their communities. A meeting was held with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of all the Orkney Community Councils in June 2024 on the new LDP process and on the Evidence Report. In addition, where Community Councils have expressed an interest in preparing a local place plan officers have attended meetings to provide information on the process and what support would be available and have also used it as an opportunity to undertake a place-based assessment of the key issues currently facing the community.

### **Evidence Report**

There was representation from many of Community Council's at the LDP drop in exhibitions and comments/issues raised have been embedded within this statement and have been used to inform the Evidence Report and will shape the place-based plan.

## **Local Place Plans**

In January 2024, the Council wrote out to all Community Council's and issued a press release, including social media posts, highlighting the opportunity for constituted community bodies to formally express an interest in preparing a Local Place Plan (LPP).

To date there have been four expressions of interest from communities to prepare an LPP, but no new Local Place Plans have yet been submitted as a result of this invite. However, there are already Place Plans covering Stromness, Kirkwall, and Dounby, which had Council involvement in their preparation. These all meet the requirements to become registered place plans. There are also numerous community led plans covering the different ferry and air linked Isles in Orkney, whilst not Local Place Plans in status they do provide valuable local information and priorities, which will be used as a valuable source of evidence to inform the Local Development Plan strategy for that respective area.

The support offered by the Council to assist communities to prepare their LPP includes the creation of a dedicated webpage [Local Place Plans \(orkney.gov.uk\)](https://orkney.gov.uk/local-place-plans). In addition, a £5,000 funding pot for each plan was available for communities and this has been administered by the Council's Economic Development Team.

The webpage includes a FAQ's section and linkages to Local Place Plan (LPP) Scottish Government draft guidance; a resource section has also been developed to signpost communities to information including up to date community led plans. It was important to manage expectations, in terms of support, being subject to resource availability, therefore, the Development Planning Team has been working closely with colleagues in the Community Led Development Team to maximise opportunities to support the process. A pilot place plan was done in Dounby, which acted as an example template for other communities to follow.

#### Evidence Report

Discussions have been held with the communities that have expressed an interest in preparing a place plan and any early views and thoughts on local issues have been considered within the Evidence Report. Analysis has also been undertaken on the existing Place Plans, and these have informed several topic papers as a key source of evidence, as well as helping to inform potential implications for the next LDP.

#### Key Agencies

Key agencies have been consulted on the relevant Schedules of the Evidence Report and involved in the preparation of a number of the studies cited in the Schedules that will become evidence to inform the new LDP. Key Agencies that have responded to the Evidence Report consultation have all, subject to insertion of their additional evidence, confirmed they are in agreement with the evidence presented. Several key agency meetings have been held during the preparation of the evidence base, and all key agencies were invited to attend these. The evidence base has been informed by the support packs on evidence gathering, which key agencies have developed for their topic specialisms.

#### Evidence Report

Key agencies' views and how these have been considered are recorded in the statements of agreement or dispute within the Schedules. All the Key Agencies have been formally sent the Schedules asking if they agree with the content and given the opportunity to comment on the evidence and if there are other sources that should be included. Key agencies have also been sent the Scoping Report for the SEA with each key agency responding that they are content with the scope and approach that is proposed.

#### Public Engagement

##### Drop in Events

Four specific LDP drop in exhibitions were hosted across Orkney from April to September 2024. There was also a specific engagement session with the business sector in Orkney at a business forum event organised by the Council's Economic Development colleagues. In addition, Council Officers also attended whole Council engagement events across each community council area in Orkney called Orkney Matters 2. This was an opportunity for communities to have an open forum to highlight issues and make suggestions to the different

community planning partners. The drop in events and Orkney Matters engagement were widely promoted through press releases, social media posts and local advertising. Overall, the events were well attended, and officers engaged with over 160 individuals at the specific LDP drop in exhibitions alone.

The exhibition materials at the LDP drop in events provided information on Orkney wide issues, alongside more local issues and explained the positive role that the Local Development Plan can have in supporting appropriate development.

The responses from the LDP exhibitions were collated and summarised to provide a snapshot of community views on an area and topic basis. The Orkney Matters 2 feedback has also been collated and analysed. Common themes and issues were raised through both these engagement processes.

### **Call for Ideas**

In May 2024, a Call for Ideas was launched which sought ideas on how to shape the future of Orkney and included the option to submit sites for development. The Call for Ideas was promoted through several press releases that were picked up extensively by the local media. The consultations were open until the end of September 2024.

To promote the consultations a specific stakeholder newsletter was sent to our mailing list. In addition, a paid two-page feature advert was taken out in the local newspaper, which has a circulation exceeding 8,000. A communication campaign, including several posts on the Council's social media accounts and emails sent to all contacts on the LDP mailing lists. BBC Radio Orkney interviewed staff in their Around Orkney programme as part of the Call for Ideas promotion. A total of 150 submissions were received and there are similarities with comments raised at the LDP Drop in Exhibition events.

The following section summarises the key issues/ideas raised at the events and Call for Ideas and, where applicable, where these have been taken on board within the topic-based Evidence Report.

## **Topic Responses from Drop In Exhibition Engagement Events, Orkney Matters Engagement and Call for Ideas**

### **Orkney Local Development Plan Current Spatial Strategy and Big Ideas for the Future**

General feedback was that broadly the current spatial strategy was the correct approach. Feedback noted that there did not seem to be a need for additional land for development with a good level of land still allocated for development in the current LDP. However, comments instead suggested a need to support delivery and develop approaches that will help facilitate development to take place.

Feedback also supported the continuation of a more flexible policy approach to encourage development in the ferry and air linked Isles. Feedback sought to maximise flexibility and opportunity in the Isles.

There was a wide variety of suggestions looking to the future of Orkney and what the Spatial Strategy should seek to address. These covered topics of concerning housing, infrastructure, and the environment, as well as wide ranging ideas for how Orkney and its communities should look in the future, including new opportunities in its economy. Specific comments included:

- The lack of housing is already an issue in Orkney. This, coupled with the failure to realise the scale of potential work coming from offshore wind activity based around the asset of Scapa Flow, is holding the County back. We are likely to need accommodation for several thousand people and that could give the opportunity to provide a new settlement and/or create further housing in present settlements. If properly designed this accommodation could be reused/remodelled when the building surge passes (from four 1-bed worker space to a 4-bed property etc). In addition, some of it could be sectional and be relocated (as happened after both wars). It is not clear that this is being considered, and the Local Plan presents an opportunity for this.
- Making more of the arts, digital technology, and environmental sustainability; by sustainability; by nurturing local talent and fostering digital innovation, Orkney can establish itself as a vibrant centre for both traditional and contemporary art, thereby boosting tourism and enriching the community's cultural fabric. Furthermore, prioritising sustainable living in Orkney's future will ensure that renewable energy and ecofriendly practices are seamlessly integrated into daily life, safeguarding the Islands' natural beauty and driving economic growth through green industries.
- More private house building plots for smaller houses for older folks.
- Orkney to be a vibrant, sustainable community with all our towns and villages providing access to high quality facilities.
- More use of colour and artwork in our towns and villages in the form of murals or painted walls/buildings. For example, Mounthoolie is a great space that locals and visitors access that, at the moment, has no beauty or impact. Suggestion made that working with the local schools and artists on a creative project to bring colour and life to that area and making it a destination and somewhere to be proud of. Just as we have the flags in the summer on the pier bringing colour and a welcoming atmosphere throughout Orkney.
- It should be a thriving and colourful place to live. There needs to be infrastructure improvements in terms of roads, parking, housing (and relevant services) and we need to be utilising our own green energy instead of restraining it and paying ridiculous daily charges and tariffs.
- Housing development needs to be spread around the county and not on a sprawling main town of Kirkwall, which is already struggling to meet the demand in schools and other services.
- No more wind turbines. I could understand it if the local people got cheaper electricity, but they don't.

- To make Kirkwall safer and reduce traffic pollution, leading to a cleaner environment for inhabitants, we believe there should be plans made for a bypass, incorporating Sunnybank Road. The town centre is not the place for heavy traffic. To deal with the safety, delays, and car fumes, waiting to exit supermarkets, housing estates, primary school, leisure centre, fuel station, industrial estate, bus station, giving easy access to town centre, a one-way system around the Peedie Sea would provide a solution. With very little disruption, or cost!
- Orkney has many advantages over other parts of the UK. These include a long-established community with mostly excellent services, relatively good internal and external transport links. Change is inevitable, but manageable if treated properly. Orcadian society has survived many events over the centuries. Indeed, it absorbed and benefited from the results of the Kelp Boom, the Herring Boom, the vast influx of two world wars and more recently North Sea Oil. Now we have the challenges of renewable energy, climate change and degradation of the natural environment. Orkney will rise to these things, but this should not be at the expense of our environment nor of our communities.
- Rural planning on housing needs to be made easy for locals (five years residency minimum).
- Better connectivity to Mainland Orkney.
- Orkney Council pay more attention to the isles and offer the same level of services that the Mainland gets.
- Improve NHS dental provision.
- No one living in the isles should be disadvantaged by living in the isles.
- Good affordable housing and recreational facilities for all ages to encourage more people to want to live and work here, especially in the health services.
- Support for the smaller islands to provide fresh food, shops, and places to meet without the restriction of needing a keyholder in attendance.
- Good transport links for all islands, with connecting buses.
- Good communications links for all islands.
- Limits on the number of tourists, especially from large cruise ships, so that islanders can go about their business unhindered, and also to afford some protection to Orkney heritage sites.
- Pathways that have been created for people to walk, cycle, wheelchair, pushchair, and buggy to be maintained and weed free. A few more poop bins on these routes. Resting places, benches, breathing spaces, picnic areas, viewpoint type areas.
- Spaces that can bring communities together, seasonal outdoor/indoor activities which would encourage neighbours to meet up and mix.
- We need businesses and opportunities to grow our population and encourage young families and skilled people to stay here. Over tourism is not the answer. We need to reduce fuel, food and child poverty and make Orkney the isles of opportunities and not just an idyllic retirement destination or somewhere to move to for better healthcare due to the low population. We need working islands.
- We believe that Orkney should be a place where planning is led by the community through joint decision making by anchor organisations, statutory bodies, and local business. It should have high quality, affordable and available housing that includes both retrofitted traditional and new modern housing that reflect both the rural aesthetic and sustainability focus of our local area. Planning should therefore support rejuvenation and establishment of small-scale rural settlements in preference to expanding urban areas. This must therefore include the establishment of related infrastructure, especially extensive active travel networks across all areas, which can be combined with the establishment of new wildlife corridors and pedestrian parks. There should also be greater use of local energy, either through infrastructure such as district heating pipelines and district heat pumps/water stores to use energy at source

or through increased use of microgeneration, potentially through shared neighbourhood mini grids.

- It should be sustainable (environmentally, financially, and socially), healthy and fair. Orkney needs to understand, plan for, undertake and benefit from an accelerated transition to net zero that is just, insightful, and complete.
- Orkney needs to be much better at retaining and recycling community wealth. Present policy, planning, procurement, investment, and behavioural regimes across the public, private and indeed the voluntary sectors do not prioritise and monetise community wealth well enough, nor in a consistent manner.
- An Orkney that has a greater say in its own affairs. One just has to look at the Faroes and Aland Islands to see how other island archipelagos have thrived since gaining autonomy. Historically, the Faroese were our poor relations, now the situation has somewhat reversed.
- A local authority that supports the economic sustainability and development of the area.
- A direct policy aimed at the preservation of cultural heritage via preservation of existing place names and naming conventions. The approach would be similar to that taken in other countries such as Sweden and Malaysia.

### Infrastructure

In terms of infrastructure requirements there was reference to ensuring high quality internet and mobile provision across the Islands which can support the ability to work from home and access services including health care remotely. In general, there was an acknowledgement that there has been a significant improvement in recent years in the coverage and speed of digital connectivity. Whilst there are some areas in need of improvement, it appears much less of a substantial issue than previous engagement with communities.

Feedback highlighted the need to support new housing development particularly for younger people to enable them to get on the housing ladder and for students to have greater choice for rental properties close to where they study.

There was a desire for schools to continue to act as hubs for parishes with suggestions of further facilities they could contain such as working spaces with high-speed digital connectivity. Some highlighted the condition of existing schools, and that further investment was needed to upgrade them.

The topic of play and open space came through as a key theme and priority for improvement in all the different engagement forums. Comments focussed on the need for more spaces that include play opportunities for a variety of ages. These views also came through strongly in the Play Sufficiency Assessment, which highlighted a strong demand for more and improved level of play park provision.

Several responders made the links between the delivery of housing and supporting the retention of local services and infrastructure, for example, highlighting where there are falling school roles and how extra housing allocations aligned with existing services and infrastructure could support pupil numbers.

Issues were highlighted in healthcare provision on the lack of available dental services.

Schedule 7 Local Living and Schedule 8 Infrastructure First in the Evidence Report identify several implications for the next LDP that reflect these comments.

### Supporting Employment, Business and Industry including Town Centres and Tourism

The engagement highlighted the need for continued policy support in Orkney's move towards net zero and continued support for other key sectors including agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, food and drink and the creative industries. Therefore, ensuring an appropriate level of land is safeguarded for business use was highlighted as being important. It was also

highlighted that housing next to business, or near business can impact on longer term growth opportunities for businesses if not effectively planned. Feedback also emphasised that business land should be explored in other smaller settlements in addition to Kirkwall and Stromness to encourage clusters of small businesses to locate together. Several businesses highlighting the need for more spaces suitable for smaller operators and encouraging younger people in setting up a business. However, some feedback was a bit more cautious, stating that there is a need to balance the policy of enabling/promoting business across rural areas with the need to continue to focus/build density of business in the town because people may not come into towns and town centre vitality and footfall will lessen.

Several issues were repeatedly raised by businesses that are impacting on their business, this included:

- Lack of housing availability often precludes businesses from recruiting.
- There is business demand to improve net zero and energy efficiency, but conservation zone regulations were highlighted as making it difficult to implement in the Town Centre, which increases operating costs for businesses. The question was raised if future planning policy could make it easier for energy efficiency technologies to be utilised in conservation areas.
- Lack of small business units – Could the plan support collaborative working space/small business clusters/incubator spaces?
- Lack of childcare in rural areas makes it difficult for smaller business to operate in rural areas.

There was feedback that there should be a continued focus on promoting town centres as “destinations” and support more businesses to be able to open and deliver food, drink, and facilities out of hours. The suggestion hoped this would encourage more of a night-time/weekend economy in the town centres for both for visitors and locals.

Comments noted that offices in towns lead to people using town centres. Looking to the future of Orkney's two towns feedback noted the need to diversify the town centres to other complimentary uses besides retail. For example, ensuring the town centres can act as a destination for things other than shopping/services which are now available online. Ideas included having more pocket parks / spaces for children to play; more spaces to eat and drink at lunch breaks.

Kirkwall was seen as having a vibrant town centre that was doing well. Responses highlighted the good range of shops that Kirkwall had with limited vacant units. The importance of preserving the high-quality appearance of buildings was highlighted as being particularly important with suggestions for improvements in terms of better signage and materials for the town centres and opportunities to further enhance the public realm and prioritise pedestrians. Within Kirkwall it was highlighted that many of the retail and businesses are owner operated, and consultation suggested that these businesses have a strong community interest to invest in the high street and support its vibrancy.

Stromness was highlighted as having complex cross topic issues, which need to be addressed in the next Local Development Plan. There were a range of interrelated issues raised that responses highlighted are impacting on the vibrancy of Stromness as a town.

Examples of the issues highlighted were that businesses on the high street are suffering from the high numbers of second homes and Air BnBs. Some felt this creates less footfall on the street and less interactions on the street. Other issues highlighted were centred around some key prominent buildings being empty or underutilised. Suggestions to address the issues included to use tools such as Compulsory Purchase Orders to take underused prominent assets into Council ownership facilitating redevelopment and bringing life back into the street. Other issues highlighted in Stromness, which could deter people from spending money on the high street, were around traffic management issues. The lack of provision of year-round services in Stromness, such as lack of places to go out and eat and socialise in the winter

months was highlighted several times, as was limited opening times of some businesses. This potentially could then have knock on consequences such as putting people off from wishing to live in the town or visit there. Concerns were also raised over the future of the town's resilience due to climate change impacts and the effect sea level rise may have on buildings, creating a barrier for future investment in the town.

The economic opportunities associated with tourism in Orkney featured with a variety of views expressed. A common theme was ensuring that better management of tourism is achieved to support sustainable tourism and ensuring there is an appropriate balance between tourism accommodation and housing accommodation in the settlements. The ability of local infrastructure such as roads being able to cope with the high level of cruise numbers visiting sites in Orkney transported in large buses was raised frequently.

There were a number of individual ideas put forward regarding business and industry, these included:

- Safeguarding of Highland Park Distillery, including the setting, water supply and extension of HSE consultation zone.
- Establishing digital and creative incubators can support the growth of startups, especially in the fields of art, technology, and ecotourism. Orkney can retain local talent and attract new businesses by providing mentorship programs and collaborative workspaces.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship through local funding initiatives and partnerships with larger organisations could help small businesses prosper. Investing in green energy jobs and sustainable practices can lead to the creation of long-term employment opportunities that align with Orkney's environmental objectives.
- Pay carers and child minders more money to work in Orkney.
- Support for business hubs and co-working space for small businesses.
- Develop sustainable, high-quality jobs to retain our young people and attract new people to Orkney. Consider carefully how the new jobs are created so as not to spoil what we love about Orkney and its environment.
- Wind farms provide an opportunity, decide what is best for Orkney and get on with it. Continue to promote and develop marine renewables. Work with farming and fish farming industries to ensure they can develop sustainably.
- Tourists should be exploited to provide care of historic sites, *i.e.* toilets, boardwalks to prevent erosion. OIC should be encouraging accommodation for visitors not penalising those who are taking financial risks. The control of numbers and behaviour of cruise passengers to be closely monitored. Development of any kind is to be encouraged, as no development means the community will stagnate and die.
- The Orkney economy is driven by agriculture, tourism, fishing and aquaculture. This will always be so. Public investment should support these industries and not be wasted on fantasy projects to support multinational companies. Post Covid much more support is needed for businesses that are still suffering. In general, very large businesses should not be encouraged to develop industrial projects in Orkney, except in areas already developed.
- Policy blocks on innovation in renewables should be removed and energy efficiency and self-generation and the use of fossil free fuel should be encouraged in any way possible.

Evidence Report Schedule 11 Tourism acknowledges the importance of the tourism industry to the Orkney economy and the need to identify appropriate ways to better manage tourism. Evidence Report Schedule 12 sets out the key economic sectors in Orkney and shows the current level of available land that can be used for Business and Industry. Evidence Report Schedule 13 Town Centres and Retail refers to the need to consider different policy approaches to support our town centres.

## Housing and Community

Across the whole of Orkney, a major concern raised was the lack of affordable housing and the price of housing, therefore, making it difficult for young people to get on the housing ladder and potentially having adverse economic impacts. The issue of a shortage of rental properties was also highlighted, including appropriate accommodation for students seeking to study at the various further education facilities in Orkney.

Concerns were also raised about ensuring that each community has sufficient policy support for housing in the next LDP. Other comments related to the need of avoiding housing land and services to be mainly centred in Kirkwall; with several seeking to stop a continued perceived sprawl in Kirkwall.

Housing in the countryside was a frequent issue with a variety of views expressed on how flexible a future policy should be. Several responders sought policies to be more flexible for houses to be built for family members on their own land, concerns over the promotion of groups of houses and that many of the one for one sites have been used up.

Evidence Report Schedule 8 Housing acknowledges the high levels of affordable housing need evidenced in the Housing and Need Demand Assessment (HNDA). Consideration will need to be given to introducing an affordable housing policy in the next LDP and how to support housing in the countryside whilst protecting the landscape character and avoiding its suburbanisation.

## Transport and Active Travel

Improved transport links and service improvements was a key priority from many of the responses. The links to the ferry and air linked Isles were particularly highlighted as an area for improvement, including ideas for improvements of transport links for all islands, with connecting buses.

There was a frequent theme raised around the lack of public transport in rural areas and that investment should be made in new active travel routes to create connections within towns, connecting main towns to smaller surrounding villages and upgrading of existing networks. The aspiration to deliver a segregated Kirkwall to Stromness active travel link was frequently highlighted as was providing better active travel infrastructure to existing transport hubs such as an off-road active travel link from Hatston pier along the coast to Kirkwall town centre.

Within Kirkwall and Stromness there was feedback that it would be good to further develop streets that prioritise pedestrians and have more management measures on motor vehicles.

The feeling of safety in the existing villages and towns was raised as an issue with specific concerns raised around the speed of cars. Improvements to provide safer routes to schools, including addressing widening pavements and providing footpaths where there are gaps in provision in settlements were also noted.

Ideas for public transport improvements included increasing the number of services and providing more evening bus services and reducing speeds in towns and villages.

Evidence Report Schedule 10 Transport sets out the commitment to active travel and details planned and delivered investment in active travel routes to improve connectivity and ongoing work around supporting active travel and behaviour change. Schedule 10 also highlights key strands of the Local Transport Strategy which contains many of the aspirations expressed by the community engagement.

## Safeguarding Play and Open Spaces

Extensive information was gathered from primary and secondary aged school children in terms of their views on play spaces and hang out spaces where they live and across the whole of Orkney. The key issues raised include the lack of provision for different ages of children across

play spaces, existing equipment being removed and not replaced, poor accessibility for wheelchair users and lack of equipment for those with disabilities.

In secondary aged young people, the focus was on the lack of suitable areas of teenage hangouts and that many play parks do not have basic play equipment such as swings. The Call for Ideas generated the following suggestions, including having more community growing spaces within the towns and villages of Orkney.

The importance of protecting the natural and cultural heritage came through strongly in many of the engagement feedback.

Evidence Report Schedule 2 and Schedule 8 sets out a summary of the information gathered from the engagement with schools and surveys relating to formal and informal play and influenced the Play Sufficiency Assessment prepared to support the Evidence Report. The findings will inform future planning and policy decisions to create a more play-friendly community. Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure sets out that the Council participated in a pilot with NatureScot to help inform the development of nature networks across Orkney, where protecting the natural environment will be embedded in the Spatial Strategy of the next Local Development Plan. In terms of biodiversity enhancement in new developments, the Schedule identifies the need for improved guidance for larger scale development proposals to measure how they are enhancing biodiversity.

**Key spatial themes highlighted for their respective communities during engagement events**

<b>Stromness</b>
Importance of parks and play
Strong housing need across all tenures in Stromness and competition with second homes/lets needs addressed
Lack of support/slowness of Development Management
More core paths
Cycle/walking path from Stromness to Kirkwall
No benefit from cruise liners felt
Focus development to north do not build in Garson

<b>Dounby</b>
Issues with movement - missing and poor path surfaces
Importance of play spaces and need to improve them/provide more opportunities for different spaces
Support for LPP and the Market Green proposals
Better links to existing core paths
Investment in the school needed - including play equipment
How do we encourage tourism to support local businesses - closure of Smithfield Hotel identified as a big loss

<b>Kirkwall</b>
Active travel routes needed and improved paths to help people get around town
Kirkwall to Stromness cycle path needed
Play spaces and parks should be improved and supported in the future
Shortage of rental properties, student housing and need to ensure affordable homes for people
Need for planning to support sustainable housing improvements in conservation areas
More spaces for people to meet and be active with outside, space for youth and all people regardless of mobility

<b>South Ronaldsay and Burray</b>
Loss of shop in Burray and concerns to safeguard other services in the Hope
Better signage and improvements to walking routes - potential links across the barriers and around the isles
Need for more homes, affordable need and co-housing opportunities should be supported
Bus services could be improved and better shelters

### **Key Agencies, Internal Stakeholders, and Infrastructure Providers**

The key agencies, internal stakeholders, and infrastructure providers (Table 1) were actively involved in the preparation of the Topic Papers. Organisations and stakeholders were contacted requesting data and evidence to feed into the preparation of the Topic Papers.

Some key agencies, such as Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Historic Environment Scotland and Transport Scotland, have prepared guidance notes to helpfully support Local Authorities in the preparation of the Evidence Report, setting out their individual requirements, which have been used to ensure the evidence complies with each agency's requirements. All the stakeholders below were sent the full draft evidence report for comment. Many stakeholders have replied with suggestions in different Schedules and noted that inclusion of their additional evidence would satisfy their requirements and they would be in a position to agree with the evidence report.

The key agencies, internal stakeholders and infrastructure providers have broadly agreed with the evidence however as part of the response they have provided additional evidence and made suggestions for implications for the proposed plan. All these have been incorporated into the Schedules there are therefore no outstanding disputes from the key agencies with the sufficiency of the evidence.

In addition, the SEA Consultation Authorities (SEPA, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland) were generally supportive of the SEA Scoping Report subject to a few points for consideration for the Environmental Report, which will be prepared alongside the proposed Plan. This will be supported by other assessments too including a Habitat Regulations

Appraisal. Section 9 sets out a summary of the Consultation Authorities responses to the SEA Scoping Report.

<u>Key Agencies</u>	<u>Infrastructure Providers, Council Departments, Utility Companies and representative body</u>
Nature Scot Scottish Water Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) Scottish Forestry Historic Environment Scotland Transport Scotland Hitrans Orkney Health Board Highland and Islands Enterprise Public Health (NHS Orkney) Architecture & Design Scotland Marine Directorate Sport Scotland British Geological Survey	Scottish and Southern Energy (SSEN) Mobile Phone/Broadband Providers Economic Development Waste Transport Housing Roads Education Marine Planning Archaeology Tourism Leisure and Culture Flood Engineering Property Services Community Planning Partnership Salmon Scotland Orkney Renewable Energy Forum Representatives from construction industry who sit on the Housing Market Partnership

*Table 1 - Key Agencies and other key stakeholders who were asked to review and input into the Evidence Report*

## 7. Evidence Report Schedules

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15 (5)- the principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district</li> <li>• Section 3G- policies regarding low and zero carbon generating technologies in new buildings.</li> <li>• Section 15(5)- the infrastructure of the district (including systems for the supply of water and energy)</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC001</b> <a href="#">Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></p> <p><b>OIC002</b> <a href="#">Orkney Sustainable Energy Strategy (2017-2025)</a></p> <p><b>OIC003</b> <a href="#">Carbon Management Programme</a></p> <p><b>OIC004</b> <a href="#">Latest annual council climate change report</a></p> <p><b>OIC005</b> <a href="#">UK National stats / Map available here</a></p> <p><b>OIC006</b> <a href="#">UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021</a></p> <p><b>OIC007</b> <a href="#">Setting Climate Commitments for Orkney Islands Quantifying the implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement for Orkney Islands</a></p> <p><b>OIC008</b> <a href="#">Coastal Change Plan infographic</a></p> <p><b>OIC009</b> <a href="#">Orkney Marine Plan State of Environment Report Section 4</a></p> <p><b>OIC010</b> <a href="#">The Orkney Flood Risk Management Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC011</b> <a href="#">Dynamic coast information</a></p> <p><b>OIC012</b> <a href="#">Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)</a></p> <p><b>OIC013</b> <a href="#">Adaptation Scotland: Impacts in Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC014</b> <a href="#">Hoy Action Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC155</b> <a href="#">Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill</a></p> <p><b>OIC156</b> <a href="#">Stronsay Coastal Zone Assessment Survey</a></p> <p><b>OIC255</b> <a href="#">Orkney Climate Resilient Net Zero Vision 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC289</b> <a href="#">Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3)</a></p> <p><b>OIC290</b> <a href="#">National Flood Resilience Strategy</a></p>

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
	<p><b>OIC291</b> <a href="#">Orkney Lidar 2023</a></p> <p><b>OIC292</b> <a href="#">Scotland's Climate Change Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC027</b> <a href="#">National soil mapping (which includes carbon rich soils)</a></p> <p><b>OIC028</b> <a href="#">Carbon rich soils and priority peatland mapping</a></p> <p><b>OIC029</b> <a href="#">Land capability for agriculture mapping</a></p> <p><b>OIC030</b> <a href="#">Land capability for forestry</a></p> <p><b>OIC293</b> <a href="#">Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)</a></p> <p><b>OIC258</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Draft</a></p> <p><b>OIC294</b> <a href="#">Winter Water Situation Report 2025</a></p> <p><b>OIC174</b> <a href="#">The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027</a></p> <p><b>OIC096</b> <a href="#">SEPA Water Classification Hub</a></p> <p><b>OIC295</b> <a href="#">Met Office Climate Report for Orkney Islands</a></p> <p><b>OIC190</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council, Council Plan 2023-2028</a></p> <p><b>OIC296</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council Delivery Plan 2023-2028</a></p> <p><b>OIC297</b> <a href="#">Islands Centre for Net Zero</a></p> <p><b>OIC347</b> <a href="#">Community Climate Action Plan - Eday</a></p> <p><b>OIC348</b> <a href="#">Community Climate Action Plan - Papay</a></p> <p><b>OIC349</b> <a href="#">Community Climate Action Plan - Sanday</a></p> <p><b>OIC350</b> <a href="#">Community Climate Action Plan - Shapinsay</a></p> <p><b>OIC351</b> <a href="#">Community Climate Action Plan - Westray</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>National Planning Framework 4 has significantly increased the requirements relating to carbon reduction, renewable energy generation and biodiversity enhancement through the planning system including the following requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LDP's must address the global climate change emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the Spatial Strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration.</li> <li>• Spatial Strategy should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions, guiding development to sustainable locations. The Strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>• Set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change. This should recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and island areas.</li> <li>NPF4 requirements relating to nature networks, blue and green infrastructure as a key measure in supporting climate resilient place through nature-based solutions, flood risk management, energy, sustainable transport, and woodland all feature in separate Schedules in the Evidence Report).</li> </ul> <p>NPF4 should be viewed as a cohesive framework, with its policies interconnected and designed to work together across the entire document. The climate change policy is integrated across various topic areas, influencing and connecting numerous policies throughout the framework, reflecting the urgency of the global climate change emergency. Examples of key linkages with this policy are outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>3. Biodiversity:</b> Protecting and restoring biodiversity is crucial for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Healthy ecosystems act as carbon sinks, absorb emissions, and help build resilience to climate impacts, directly supporting climate change goals.</li> <li><b>7. Historic assets and places:</b> Many of the Orkney historic environment assets and places are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and this policy seeks to ensure assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change</li> <li><b>15. Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods:</b> By promoting local living and reducing the need for car travel, this policy contributes to lower carbon emissions and more sustainable urban environments, aligning with climate change mitigation efforts and fostering climate-resilient communities.</li> <li><b>20. Bluegreen infrastructure:</b> Blue-green infrastructure (BGI), such as green spaces, wetlands, and sustainable drainage systems, plays a key role in managing climate risks like flooding and heat stress while enhancing carbon sequestration, helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change. BGI can also be a key measure in supporting climate resilient places through the planning process, with a particular focus on nature-based solutions.</li> <li><b>22. Flood risk and water management:</b> Effective flood risk management and water conservation strategies help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change, particularly in areas vulnerable to extreme weather events. This policy supports resilience and reduces the risk of climate-related damage.</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 (OIC127)</u></a></p> <p>The existing Local Development Plan Spatial Strategy seeks to support the growth of Orkney's communities in a sustainable manner, ensuring that development is directed in the first instance to places with sufficient infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable social and economic development; the towns, villages, and rural settlements of the Plan.</p> <p>To support this Spatial Strategy there are several relevant policies, including Policy 2 Design, Policy 5 on Housing, Policy 9 Natural Heritage &amp; Landscape, Policy 10 Green Infrastructure and Policy 12 Coastal Development. These policies promote development that is resource efficient and utilises sustainable construction technologies and materials.</p> <p>The Plan also has policies supportive of the use of renewable and low carbon technologies and aims to ensure that Orkney's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is</p>	

Issue: Schedule/Place	1. Climate Change
	<p>achieved. It includes an indicative heat network map. Linked to supporting renewables, the Plan has a policy with a spatial map for onshore wind energy development.</p>
	<p>Other relevant policies linked to climate change are policies on Flood Risk, Transport and promoting developments that make best use of infrastructure and reduce the need to travel.</p>
	<p><b>Current Context</b></p>
	<p>Climate change presents a significant long-term challenge for Orkney, with rising sea-levels, increased rainfall, and more frequent extreme weather events expected to impact infrastructure, communities, and the natural environment. Orkney's coastal areas are particularly vulnerable, with 92% of flood risk damage attributed to coastal flooding. The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2045, supported by strategies such as the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and the Climate Resilience Net Zero Strategy.</p>
	<p>Planning has a pivotal role in supporting climate mitigation and adaptation in Orkney. Land use decisions can help reduce emissions, protect carbon sinks, and build resilience through nature-based solutions. Work is currently underway on a Regional Coastal Adaptation Plan and a Surface Water Management Plan for Kirkwall, which will inform the spatial strategy and development policies in the new LDP.</p>
	<p><b><u>Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (OIC001)</u></b></p>
	<p>The Act places a statutory duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. Scotland aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2045.</p>
	<p>Under the Act, the Council has three main duties;</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigation: To contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, in line with five-year carbon budgets (see below), by monitoring and reporting on annual progress, giving due consideration to their physical assets. These assets include buildings and land and fleet.</li> <li>• Adaptation: To help Orkney adapt to the changing climate. Duties include identifying national adaptation objectives from SNAP (see below), which will include a climate related risk assessment, development and implement an adaptation plan and relate this work to their physical assets.</li> <li>• Sustainability: To act in a sustainable manner, ensuring that sustainable development is embedded in strategies, policies, plans and projects. Local authorities under this duty should be guided by the National Performance Framework, which is the overarching framework within which the work of central and local government takes place</li> </ul>
	<p>In November, Legislation in the form of <b>OIC155 The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill</b> amended the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to move away from the target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030 and instead introduce limits on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in Scotland over a five-year period.</p>

Issue: Schedule/Place	1. Climate Change
<p>The move, which is based on recommendations from the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC), aims to provide a more reliable framework for emissions reduction. The Bill does however keep the aim of reaching net-zero by 2045.</p>	
<p><b>OIC013</b> <a href="#">Adaptation Scotland: Impacts in Scotland</a> identifies 15 consequences through The Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme for Scotland that may occur from the impacts of climate change. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The health of our natural environment</b> - Climate change may affect the delicate balance of Scotland's ecosystems and transform Scotland's habitats and biodiversity.</li> <li>• <b>The change in our coast</b> - Sea level rise is already having a widespread impact on parts of Scotland's coast. With this set to accelerate over the coming decades, we can expect to see more coastal flooding, erosion, and coastline retreat.</li> <li>• <b>Our cultural heritage and identity</b> - The changing climate is already altering our unique Scottish landscape and threatening our historic environment through coastal erosion, flooding and wetter, warmer conditions.</li> <li>• <b>The increased risk of flooding</b> - Flooding can already have a devastating effect on those affected. With climate change likely to alter rainfall patterns and bring more heavy downpours, we expect flood risk to increase in the future.</li> <li>• <b>The security of our food supply</b> – Climate change may have an impact on global and local food production. Although Scotland may be able to grow more food, this will not offset the impact global disruption could have. The effects of increased volatility in the global commodity market, due to exposure to extreme climatic events, has an impact on supply and cost of food, potentially exacerbated for island communities.</li> </ul>	
<p><a href="#">Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3) (OIC289)</a></p>	
<p>This Scottish National Adaptation Plan sets out actions to build Scotland's resilience to climate change. It does this through support for communities, businesses, public services, and nature to adapt to the changing climate. The Adaptation Plan sets out a long-term vision and defines Scotland's priorities for action over the next five years. The vision that is set out is for a resilient, inclusive, and well-adapted Scotland as the climate continues to change. There are five adaptation outcomes and 23 objectives. The five outcomes are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature connects across our lands, settlements, coasts, and seas.</li> <li>• Communities are creating climate-resilient, healthy, and equitable place.</li> <li>• Public services are collaborating in effective and inclusive adaptation action.</li> <li>• Economies and industries are adapting and realising opportunities in Scotland's Just Transition.</li> <li>• Scotland's international role supports climate justice and enhanced global action.</li> </ul>	
<p>The Plan includes over 200 interventions for the next five years. It is built around the five main outcomes above for a climate resilient Scotland, responding to the risks set out in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment</p>	
<p><a href="#">National Flood Resilience Strategy (OIC290)</a></p>	
<p>This Strategy, part of The Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029, is in direct response to the climate emergency.</p>	

Issue: Schedule/Place	1. Climate Change
<p>The Strategy sets out a vision for a flood resilient Scotland through to 2024 and beyond and is structured around the themes of People, Places and Processes.</p> <p>The people outcome is creating flood resilient places involves our people and communities.</p> <p>The places outcome is land management and placemaking decisions follow good practice for flood resilience and the processes outcome is flood resilience is blended into out places at all scales; a broader range of actions are being delivered by a broader range of delivery partners.</p> <p>The four guiding principles laid out in the Strategy to make the most of all the resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The scale of the challenge means that the focus of action will change from ‘fixing flooding problems’ to creating flood resilient places.</li> <li>2. Flood resilience is part of community resilience and part of adapting to climate change.</li> <li>3. At the heart of flood resilience activities will lie the principles of a Just Transition (to secure a fairer, greener future for all by working in partnership to deliver fairness and tackle inequality and injustice).</li> <li>4. Everyone benefits from flood resilient places, and we all have a contribution to make.</li> </ol> <p>There are six priority areas for action identified. These are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a flood advisory service.</li> <li>2. Involve and support communities.</li> <li>3. Improve land-use for flood mitigation.</li> <li>4. Support a broader range of flood actions.</li> <li>5. Improve flood resilience through data.</li> <li>6. Support long-term transition planning for our most exposed communities.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Orkney Marine Plan State of Environment Report Section 4 (OIC009)</u></b></p> <p>In the Orkney context UK Climate Projections predict a 50% likelihood of 67cm sea-level rise for Orkney by 2100 in a high-emissions scenario.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea-level rise and changes to natural sediment supply is causing both erosion and accretion around coasts.</li> <li>• The Orkney Flood Risk Management Plan identifies that the main source of flooding in Orkney is from the coast, which accounts for approximately 92% of the annual average damage, (see flood risk management paper for more info on flooding).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Islands Centre for Net Zero (OIC 297)</u></b></p> <p>The Islands Centre for Net Zero (ICNZ) is a pan-island innovation project that will support Orkney, Shetland, and the Outer Hebrides to become lighthouse communities in the energy transition. By exploring and trialling solutions to decarbonisation that have replicability and application worldwide, the project will accelerate the islands' journey towards decarbonisation, while generating additional GVA and green jobs for the islands. ICNZ will work with local communities and businesses from the ground up, empowering the islands to navigate pathways to decarbonisation to deliver carbon emissions, green jobs, added value to low carbon future projects. Islands Deal funding will support the establishment of the core centre facility at the</p>	

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
	Orkney Research and Innovation Campus, the creation of a decarbonisation toolbox, and investment in energy transition capital projects across Orkney, Shetland, and the Outer Hebrides
	<b><u>Hoy Action Plan (OIC014)</u></b>
	<p>The Hoy and Walls community have been part of The Carbon Neutral Islands (CNI) project, which is a Scottish Government Programme that aims to demonstrate the climate-resilience and low carbon potential of islands. Within their action plan it predicts that the future climate may see Orkney have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winters are becoming wetter and summers drier by 2100.</li> <li>• Large erosion and accretion in various parts of Hoy.</li> <li>• By 2100 there could be an increase in temperature, up to 4.7 degrees in the summer.</li> <li>• Peak wave height is expected to increase resulting in increased intensity as these are sustained over longer durations by 2060.</li> <li>• Sea level rise could be up to 1m by 2100.</li> </ul>
	<b><u>Carbon Management Programme (OIC003)</u></b>
	<p>Orkney Islands Council aims to move towards a low carbon operation, through careful planning of all our energy consuming activities. Combined with assessing future plans in terms of their carbon impact we aim to reduce our total carbon dioxide emissions in the financial year 2025 by 42% of the baseline year 2004-05.</p>
	<b><u>Annual council climate change report (OIC004)</u></b>
	<p>The Council reports annually in accordance with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and subsequent amendments. This Council is required to provide the following information in annual climate change reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• its target date for achieving zero direct emissions of greenhouse gases or such other targets that demonstrate how the body is contributing to Scotland achieving its emission reduction targets.</li> <li>• any targets for reducing indirect emissions of greenhouse gases.</li> <li>• how the Council aligns its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reductions targets.</li> <li>• how it will publish, or otherwise make available, its progress towards achieving its emissions reduction targets; and</li> <li>• what contribution it has made to helping deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.</li> </ul>
	<b><u>Net Zero Vision Paper (OIC255)</u></b>
	<p>In Spring 2024 The Orkney Partnership, in The Orkney Community Plan 2023/30, set out its ambition to achieve Net Zero in Orkney. This Vision begins to describe the describe the journey to where we want to be. Identified Priorities set out are:</p>

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating equally to understand the transition challenge and to compile specific targets and associated data sharing. This includes collecting data to understand where we are now and to measure progress.</li> <li>• Working with others to ensure that plans for different key sectors of our economy support this Vision, including those for farming, housing, energy, transport, tourism, construction, and the public sector.</li> <li>• Decarbonisation and net zero projects that require partners to innovate and work together and which can secure funding to support Orkney's transition.</li> <li>• Initiatives to restore our natural environment, investigating peatland restoration, maintaining and increasing organic matter of soils and other nature-based climate change mitigation opportunities across our islands and in our seas.</li> <li>• We will urgently reduce fuel poverty through both reactive and proactive measures, with a focus on household and business energy efficiency and use.</li> <li>• Supporting Climate Adaptation and Resilience, helping Orkney to understand and respond to projected and emerging climate change impacts for our islands and communities.</li> <li>• Develop a Community Wealth Building Strategy as the means to deliver an economy which has the wellbeing of all our residents at its heart, and which supports the Just Transition principles and this Vision for Net Zero.</li> </ul>	

### Orkney Sustainable Energy Strategy (2017/2025) (OIC002)

The aims and actions to become a secure, sustainable, low carbon island economy.

#### **Targets:**

- Less than 20% households in fuel poverty by 2030 and 0% by 2032.
- 50% decarbonised energy use by 2030.
- 300% renewably generated electricity.
- 600 sustainable energy jobs by 2030.

There are several pieces of evidence with statistics which set out the level of emissions per annum from Orkney including [OIC005](#) which can be shown spatially and [OIC006](#) UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021.

There has also been a study undertaken by researchers at Tyndall Manchester, which produced The Tyndall Carbon Budget Reports. The Report includes recommendations on [OIC007 Setting Climate Commitments for Orkney Islands Quantifying the implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement for Orkney Islands](#)

These include:

- To stay within the recommended carbon budget Orkney Islands will, from 2020 onwards, need to achieve average mitigation rates of CO2 from energy of around -12.8% per year. This will require that Orkney Islands rapidly transitions away from unabated fossil fuel use, CO2 emissions are also within the recommended budget; provided that interim budgets with lower cumulative CO2 emissions are also adopted.

A Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is planned to be developed over the next couple of years with consultants just appointed. As part of this there is a community engagement [OIC008 project](#) to work with communities to improve their understanding of the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding, and the actions that are required now and into the future. The Adaptation Plan will recommend actions to address the risks from coastal change; informed by NPF4 Policy 10 Coastal development and the pathways approach to adapting to coastal change. The production of the

Issue: Schedule/Place	1. Climate Change
	<p>Plan will give an opportunity to identify vulnerable areas where future development should be avoided.</p>
	<p>The Council already has been considering the impacts of climate change through the development of <b>OIC010</b> <a href="#">The Orkney Flood Risk Management Plan</a>. This document sets out that main risk of flooding in Orkney is from coastal flooding. These Flood Risk Management Plans are designed to ensure effort to reduce flood risk is coordinated. This is achieved by working in partnership with all organisations responsible for flood risk management and the Plan focuses the work of these organisations to where the risk of flooding and benefits of action are greatest. These actions help to ensure that key aspects of flood risk management are taken forward in all locations. In addition, there are eight Potential Vulnerable Areas identified across Orkney, which are areas categorised as having a current or future risk from all sources of flooding and within these Potential Vulnerable Areas there are objectives and actions identified to manage flood risk within this area.</p>
	<p>Kirkwall has issues around the management of surface water with a history of surface water flooding in areas of Kirkwall. In order to take a strategic approach to addressing surface water management in the next Local Development Plan and take an infrastructure first approach to development, a Kirkwall Surface Water Management Plan study has been commissioned to identify within each of the Kirkwall catchments where blue-green networks should be located, how much land is required within developments as flood storage and identify areas where development should be restricted or encouraged, this will include the consideration of future climate change projections.</p>
	<p><a href="#">The Dynamic Coast (OIC011)</a> project has developed an assessment of the whole of the Orkney coast providing information on the findings from the Historical Change Assessment for Orkney and the Vulnerability Assessment for Orkney's soft coastline. A series of maps are included which sets out the coastal cells across Orkney and their vulnerability to change.</p>
	<p>In addition to the information contained in the Dynamic Coast assessment, work has just been completed undertaking a <a href="#">coastal zone assessment survey</a> for Stronsay (<b>OIC156</b>). The aim of the survey was to characterise and assess the condition and vulnerability of the archaeological resource along stretches of coastline identified as being at moderate to high risk of erosion by 2030. The aim of the survey was to characterise and assess the condition and vulnerability of the archaeological resource along stretches of coastline identified as being at moderate to high risk of erosion by 2030.</p>
	<p>This project has seen a survey undertaken to give coverage of all stretches of coastline modelled to be vulnerable to erosion and/or eroding by 2030 on the main island of Stronsay. These areas account for most of the island. Cliffs and stable coasts along the southeast part of the island from Odin Bay to Lamb Head on the east and Tor Ness to Dishes on the west, were not walked. The smaller islands of Stronsay were not included in this survey. The survey found that the most notable examples of recent historical erosion and coastal retreat are occurring on low-lying coasts where superficial deposits of glacial till directly overlay the island's sandstone geology. Sandy beaches backed by dunes are generally characterised by dynamic equilibrium, <i>i.e.</i> cycles of erosion and recovery. The presence of significant prehistoric and Norse archaeological settlement remains along sandy stretches shows that the long-term trajectory of these areas is one of net</p>

Issue: Schedule/Place	1. Climate Change
	<p>erosion. However, in the shorter term, these coastlines are susceptible to erosion and consequent loss of heritage, but recover, and there is little perceivable difference between the position of the coast edge today compared with the position on the Six-Inch Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition map surveyed in 1900.</p>
	<p>To investigate coastal change across Orkney as a whole, further work is about to start to develop a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan. It will identify the risks and consequences of change to the coast, helping to provide valuable evidence to develop a coastal policy and inform the spatial strategy of the next LDP.</p>
	<p><u><a href="#">Orkney Lidar 2023 (OIC 291)</a></u></p>
	<p>In June 2023 Field Group A/S completed a Lidar survey for the whole of Orkney. The data that is produced can guide where preventative works may be required in the future in coastal areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and flooding. This detailed baseline data can be compared to future surveys, identifying land and coastal changes over time. The topographical data is of equal value on artificial coastlines, sections with coastal defence structures, because it can monitor the resilience of defences.</p>
	<p><u><a href="#">Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) (OIC012)</a></u></p>
	<p>The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022 requires the Council to support the transition to net zero.</p>
	<p>The LHEES is a long-term strategic framework for:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the improvement of the energy efficiency of buildings in Orkney, and</li> <li>• the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the heating of such buildings.</li> </ul>
	<p>The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Delivery Plan will set out how Orkney Islands Council proposes to support implementation of its LHEES. A draft of the Plan is currently under development and will be reported to the Council in due course.</p>
	<p>Orkney's LHEES is primarily driven by Scotland's statutory targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and fuel poverty:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net zero emissions by 2045 and 75% reduction by 2030.</li> <li>• In 2040, as far as reasonably possible, no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty.</li> </ul>
	<p>The Strategy considers where there are opportunities to develop heat networks with some mapping undertaken identifying areas in Kirkwall, Stromness, and Dounby, where there are public buildings. However, further work is needed to look at these as initial findings demonstrate there is not enough density of buildings to create a heat network. The strategy:</p>

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sets out how each segment of the building stock needs to change to meet national and local objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.</li> <li>identifies strategic heat decarbonisation zones and sets out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.</li> </ul>	
<p>Accompanying this Strategy will be the LHEES Delivery Plan, developed in partnership with key stakeholders, to provide a strong basis for action in Orkney's communities, the Scottish Government, investors, developers, and wider stakeholders; pinpointing areas for targeted intervention and early, low-regrets measures.</p>	
<h3><b>CLIMATE CHANGE &amp; BIODIVERSITY</b></h3>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland (OIC015)</u></a></p> <p>A decline in biodiversity will exacerbate the climate crisis, and a changing climate will accelerate the rate of biodiversity loss. Globally, when they are functioning well, ocean and land ecosystems remove around 50% of human-made carbon-dioxide emissions each year. This twinning of crises, between climate change and biodiversity, is why NPF4 is headed up with Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Scotland's Climate Change Plan sit together, developing nature-based solutions, which will play a significant role in delivering Net Zero commitments.</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) (OIC293)</u></a></p> <p>AFOLU mitigations are a variety of land management practices that reduce GHG emissions and/or enhance carbon sequestration within the land system, for example, in forests, wetlands, grasslands, croplands and pasturelands. When these options are implemented with benefits to human well-being and biodiversity they are called nature-based solutions or natural climate solutions. Measures that result in a net removal of GHGs from the atmosphere and storage in living or dead organic material, or in geological stores, are sometimes referred to as negative emissions technologies. Further detail on nature-based solutions is found in Schedule 2 below, including the importance of soils as carbon stores.</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Draft (OIC258)</u></a></p> <p>The Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan contains general and sectoral policies, general Policy 3, Climate Change, has the intention of encouraging, promoting, and facilitating development, activities and uses that minimise emissions and adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change. The Policy also outlines mitigation measures, including the importance of blue carbon.</p>	
<p>Blue carbon is the carbon that is stored in coastal and marine ecosystems, which has a role to play in mitigating climate change. The largest blue carbon source in the Orkney Islands marine region are inorganic carbon sediments. Blue carbon habitats such as tidal marshes and seagrass meadows can help to sequester and store carbon. Therefore, development in coastal areas should consider the impacts of disturbing blue carbon habitats.</p>	

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
<b>Community Climate Action Plans (OIC347, 348, 349, 350, &amp; 351)</b>	
<p>The Community Climate Action Plans (CCAPs) for five Orkney Islands – Sanday, Eday, Papay, Westray, and Shapinsay – were developed under the Carbon Neutral Islands Project, supporting Scottish Islands to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Each plan combines mitigation (reducing emissions) and adaptation (managing climate impacts) strategies tailored to local needs.</p>	
<p><b>Key Themes from CCAPs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Climate Risks:</b> All islands reported wetter summers, warmer winters, stronger storms, coastal erosion, and flood risk. Adaptation priorities include dune restoration, drainage maintenance, coastal protection, and emergency resilience hubs.</li> <li>- <b>Energy &amp; Fuel Poverty:</b> Carbon audits show energy and transport as the largest emission sources, with heating oil and electricity dominating household energy use. Fuel poverty is a critical issue, prompting actions like home insulation, renewable energy adoption, and smart metering.</li> <li>- <b>Transport Emissions:</b> Ferries account for the majority of transport related emissions (up to 73% on Papay, 72% on Eday, 62% on Shapinsay, 60% on Westray), followed by on-road vehicles. Communities have limited control over ferry and aviation emissions but advocate for electric/hybrid ferries and EV infrastructure.</li> <li>- <b>Carbon Audits:</b> Each island completed audits using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, establishing baselines for energy and transport emissions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sanday</b> = 1,676 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (energy) and 1,597 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (transport).</li> <li>• <b>Eday</b> = Ferries 72% of transport emissions; electricity and heating oil dominate energy.</li> <li>• <b>Papay</b> = Heating oil 70% of residential energy; ferries 73% of transport.</li> <li>• <b>Westray</b> = 1,796 tCO<sub>2</sub>e residential energy; ferries 60% of transport emissions.</li> <li>• <b>Shapinsay</b> = 839 tCO<sub>2</sub>e residential energy; ferries 62% of transport emissions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Community Priorities:</b> Actions include renewable energy projects, active travel promotion, local food networks, waste reduction, biodiversity protection, and resilience planning. Each plan emphasises community hubs for emergencies, flood protection, and long-term sustainability.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Identified Gaps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need for Regional Coastal Adaptation Plan (underway/completion expected 2026).</li> <li>- Surface Water Management Plan for Kirkwall still in progress.</li> <li>- Limited evidence on carbon offsetting and removal opportunities for residual emissions.</li> <li>- Further work required on blue carbon habitats and peatland restoration mapping.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b></p>	

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
<p>Copies of the Schedule were sent to the following organisations/officers;</p> <p>Orkney Islands Council Climate Change Officer.</p> <p>Orkney Community Planning Officer.</p> <p>SEPA.</p> <p>HES.</p> <p>NatureScot.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b></p>	
<p>The summary of evidence outlines the sources and scale of greenhouse gas emissions in Orkney as well as the likely climate risks and who this is likely to impact most, with coastal change being a key risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Spatial Strategy and policies in the proposed Plan must recognise the pivotal role that planning has to play in addressing the impacts of climate change and reduce carbon emissions.</li> <li>• Orkney's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy will set out a framework for improving the energy efficiency of buildings and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from heating buildings; any opportunities for heat networks in this Strategy will be reflected in the LDP consideration will also be given to potential opportunities for green datacentres and how they could share heat with housing developments.</li> <li>• The summary of evidence notes the work that has begun on Coastal Adaptation Plan that identifies the risk and consequences of change to the coast and includes engagement with communities. This will build on the excellent work undertaken in Stronsay through the Coastal Zone Assessment for Stronsay and Dynamic Coast data. These are due to be reported to Council before end of 2026 and close work during development of the Coastal Adaptation Plan will be undertaken and will inform the Spatial Strategy of the proposed Plan.</li> <li>• The proposed Plan will need to consider a policy approach to implement NPF4 by helping to deliver carbon removal and carbon offsetting to address residual emissions in relation to the net zero transition.</li> <li>• The proposed Plan will consider the climate risks in Orkney and how to mitigate the effects of increased extremes of rainfall and the potential for water scarcity and link this to related work on blue and green infrastructure and nature networks. The Surface Water Management Study for Kirkwall will be a key piece of evidence to be reflected in the next Local Development Plan.</li> <li>• The proposed Plan will seek to manage and mitigate wider impacts of climate change, including infrastructure risks, community resilience, air quality, food availability and biodiversity loss.</li> <li>• The proposed Plan will identify and seek to protect and preserve carbon sinks, including blue carbon and peatland and other natural negative emission schemes.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b></p>	
<p>There are no outstanding areas of dispute. The Schedule been updated to incorporate additional data and evidence following comments and feedback from stakeholders</p>	

<b>Issue: Schedule/Place</b>	<b>1. Climate Change</b>
<p>NatureScot provided additional evidence and suggestions for potential implications for the LDP. They also sought more NPF4 policies to be linked into and referred to in the NPF4 section to show the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity which have all been incorporated into the Schedule</p> <p>Scottish Water commented on flood risk and coastal erosion in relation to infrastructure they are unable to provide and advocating surface water management and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>HES welcomed the acknowledgment of the historic environment in this Schedule. They suggested making links with Schedule 3 and the climate change topic. The table in section 4 Position Statement has been updated to show this cross reference and NPF4 section in Schedule has also made this link to NPF4 policy 7</p> <p>SEPA – Provided comments on additional evidence which should be included. The Schedule has been updated to incorporate all these.</p>	

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC023</b> <a href="#">Development Management Guidance - considering and including biodiversity in development</a></p> <p><b>OIC015</b> <a href="#">Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC016</b> <a href="#">Draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy policy framework for nature networks</a></p> <p><b>OIC017</b> <a href="#">Draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy policy framework for 30 by 30</a></p> <p><b>OIC018</b> <a href="#">OIC Biodiversity Duty Report 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023</a></p> <p><b>OIC019</b> <a href="#">Draft OIC Trees and Woodland Strategy 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC020</b> <a href="#">Orkney Open Space Strategy - Vision and Action Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC021</b> <a href="#">OIC Core Paths Plan 2018</a></p> <p><b>OIC022</b> <a href="#">Play Sufficiency Assessment 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC024</b> <a href="#">Protected areas (European sites, SSSIs, Ramsar sites) mapping available from NatureScot SiteLink</a></p> <p><b>OIC025</b> <a href="#">OIC Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS)</a></p> <p><b>OIC026</b> <a href="#">OIC Local Nature Reserve (LNR) information available from Local Nature Reserves   NatureScot Spatial Data Hub</a></p> <p><b>OIC027</b> <a href="#">National soil mapping (which includes carbon rich soils)</a></p> <p><b>OIC028</b> <a href="#">Carbon rich soils and priority peatland mapping</a></p> <p><b>OIC029</b> <a href="#">Land capability for agriculture mapping</a></p>

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
	<p><b>OIC030</b> <a href="#">Land capability for forestry</a></p> <p><b>OIC031</b> <a href="#">SEPA water quality information</a></p> <p><b>OIC032</b> <a href="#">NBN Atlas species records for Orkney region</a></p> <p><b>OIC033</b> <a href="#">BTO Wader Sensitivity Maps</a></p> <p><b>OIC292</b> <a href="#">Scotland's Climate Change Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC298</b> <a href="#">Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas</a></p> <p><b>OIC299</b> <a href="#">Verge Maintenance Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC300</b> <a href="#">Orkney's Conservation Verges</a></p> <p><b>OIC258</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Draft</a></p> <p><b>OIC301</b> <a href="#">Habitat Map of Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC302</b> <a href="#">State of Nature</a></p> <p><b>OIC303</b> <a href="#">NatureScot's Landscape Character Assessment</a></p> <p><b>OIC096</b> <a href="#">SEPA Water Classification Hub</a></p> <p><b>OIC174</b> <a href="#">The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027</a></p> <p><b>OIC346</b> <a href="#">Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Orkney Local Development Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC354</b> <a href="#">OIC Tree Conservation</a></p>

#### National Planning Framework 4 Context

This Schedule covers several policy areas related to biodiversity, natural places and green and blue infrastructure. While there are separate policies within NPF4 covering these topics, they are strongly interrelated and so the Schedule considers them together. This is particularly important in the Orkney context, where the boundary between urban and rural is often indistinct due to the nature and scale of settlements and surrounding land uses.

Throughout NPF4 there is a strong emphasis on biodiversity, along with specific policies to safeguard and enhance the natural environment, especially in the context of climate change mitigation, all of which require consideration as part of the LDP preparation process:

- Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis: places a duty on LDPs to address the global climate emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the Spatial Strategy will reduce

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
<p>emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Policy 2 Climate change mitigation and adaptation: natural places and biodiversity have an important role in spatial strategies that are designed to reduce and minimise GHG emissions.</li> <li>– Policy 3 Biodiversity: places a requirement on LDPs and development proposals to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. Local Development Plans must also “facilitate the creation of nature networks” and strengthen “connections between them.”</li> <li>– Policy 4 Natural Places: aims to “protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions”. LDPs are required to “identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The Spatial Strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural processes in their area.”</li> <li>– Policy 5 Soils: seeks to minimise adverse effects caused by removal, erosion, and soil sealing, with additional policy safeguards against development on peatland, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitats. LDPs should also “protect locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally valued soils, including land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use.”</li> <li>– Policy 6 Forestry, woodland, and trees: sets out policy safeguards for existing woodland resource and requires a Spatial Strategy to “identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodland and trees” including their “development, protection and enhancement” to “provide multiple benefits”.</li> <li>– Policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure: seeks to safeguard existing and encourage new blue green infrastructure and requires LDP spatial strategies to “identify and protect blue and green infrastructure assets and networks, enhance and expand existing provision” with “priorities for connectivity to other blue and/or green infrastructure assets”.</li> <li>– Policy 22 Flood risk and water management: while focussed on flood risk and so more relevant to a different Schedule, as part of this section of NPF4, LDPs are encouraged to identify opportunities to improve the water environment “through natural flood risk management and blue green infrastructure”, with policy support for development proposals that “create, expand or enhance opportunities for natural flood risk management, including blue and green infrastructure”. This ties in with nature networks under Policy 3.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 (OIC127)</u></a></p>	
<p>The existing Local Development Plan Policy 9 covers several Natural Heritage topics. Within Policy 9 there are detailed policies around natural heritage designations, protected species, wider biodiversity and geodiversity, the water environment, peats and soils, trees and woodland and landscape. These policies are supported where relevant by mapped data within the plan, for example, showing where the designations are. There is also Supplementary Guidance which supports the policy and since NPF4 has been prepared further <a href="#"><u>guidance (OIC23)</u></a> has been prepared detailing how the biodiversity enhancement requirements, outlined in NPF4, will be applied in the Orkney context.</p>	
<p>The existing Local Development Plan Policy 10 covers Green Infrastructure (Paths, Open Space and Green Networks). This Policy set out policies around each of these topics seeking to ensure development should have no unacceptable adverse impact on the relevant topic. The Open Space Policy is supported by an <a href="#"><u>OIC020 Orkney Open Space Strategy - Vision and Action Plan</u></a> document which includes the open space information.</p>	
<p><b>Current Context</b></p>	
<p>Orkney's natural environment is defined by its rich biodiversity, distinctive landscapes, and extensive coastal and rural habitats. The area includes nationally and locally designated sites, carbon-rich soils, peatlands, and agricultural land, all of which contribute to the ecological character and resilience of the islands. Nature Networks are being developed to improve habitat connectivity, supported by datasets from NatureScot and local mapping.</p>	
<p>Green and blue infrastructure plays a vital role in supporting biodiversity, managing flood risk, and enhancing community wellbeing. The Council's Open Space Strategy provides baseline data on recreational assets, while the draft Trees and Woodland Strategy outlines opportunities for multifunctional planting. Core paths and access routes are also integrated into the development of Nature Networks to support active travel and ecological corridors.</p>	
<p>The following evidence will inform the LDP's spatial strategy, ensuring that development supports biodiversity enhancement, protects sensitive environments, and contributes to climate resilience.</p>	
<p><b>Biodiversity and Natural Places</b></p>	
<p><b>Scotland Biodiversity Strategy and draft policy frameworks (OIC 0015, OIC0016 AND OIC0017)</b></p>	
<p>The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sets out a vision of a nature positive Scotland by 2030 and for biodiversity to be restored and regenerated by 2045. It is supported by two draft policy frameworks, one on 30 by 30 (the commitment made by Scottish Government to protect 30% of land and coastal waters by 2030) and the other on nature networks (which requires all public bodies to support delivery of nature networks on their land). The current and ongoing work by Orkney Islands Council on nature networks will contribute to Scottish Biodiversity Strategy priorities going forward.</p>	

Issue: Schedule / Place	2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure
<a href="#"><u>Scotland's Climate Change Plan (OIC292)</u></a>	
<p>The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Scotland's Climate Change Plan are intended to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. Scotland's natural capital is central to a future net zero economy as well as sustainable tourism, food and drink and energy. Land use planning for biodiversity is critical for a well-functioning ecosystem that can absorb emissions in a natural way; land use, land use change and forestry focusing on biodiversity will optimise land use such as the restoration of peatland, tree planting, and "rewetting" of bog land. Therefore, land use proposals that include uses that will increase the absorption of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases should be supported.</p>	
<a href="#"><u>State of Nature 2023 – Scotland (OIC302)</u></a>	
<p>Systematic monitoring of 407 Scottish species began in 1994 and has demonstrated that there has been an average decline of 15%; some species have increased but in the last decade 43% have declined. This data presents strong evidence of biodiversity loss that is likely driven by intensive use of the land and waters for agriculture, forestry, and fishing. These anthropogenic impacts are exacerbated by climate change, pollution, inappropriate development, invasive non-native species, and disease. The suite of evidence, including data sets and their spatial representations can inform where impacts are likely from development.</p>	
<a href="#"><u>Orkney Council Biodiversity Duty Report (OIC018)</u></a>	
<p>Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. In accordance with the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 public bodies must also publicly report its compliance with this biodiversity duty. This report <b>(OIC0018)</b> outlines how the Council has fulfilled its biodiversity duty over the period 2020 to 2023.</p>	
<a href="#"><u>Nature networks</u></a>	
<p>Work on identifying nature networks is in the formative stages. Orkney Islands Council were part of the AECOM nature networks pilot, however, only a small number of networks were identified in Orkney as part of the pilot. The outputs from the pilot can be found <a href="#">here</a>, the majority of which were out with settlements on land important for other uses, so with limited opportunity for the future LDP to influence. Further consideration and exploration of opportunities to connect 30 by 30 and sites locally important for nature in an Orkney context will be undertaken, as well as opportunities to connect urban to rural. The LDP should identify indicative opportunities to guide potential enhancements that arise from development proposals. This will require utilising a variety of datasets such as <b>(OIC031)</b>, <b>(OIC032)</b>, <b>(OIC033)</b> and Habitat Map of Scotland <b>(OIC301)</b>. Separately, a nature networks delivery group has been established by OIC for public bodies to work together to identify and deliver small biodiversity enhancement projects on public land, which over time will create stepping stone habitats and wider connectivity, as well as creating attractive places for people and contributing to surface water management and carbon sequestration.</p>	

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
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Draft Trees and Woodland Strategy (OIC019), (OIC030)

The Orkney Trees and Woodland Strategy is in preparation, which went out to public consultation in early 2025 and is due for finalisation in summer 2026. During its preparation, discussions have been had with stakeholders to get their informal ideas and feedback on the proposed approach and contents. The stakeholders have considered the general approach to be appropriate to the Orkney context and made useful suggestions. (The stakeholders include Scottish Forestry, Woodland Trust, NatureScot, SGRPID and NFUS.) While recognising that climatic conditions as well as competing land uses and sensitivities (such as archaeology and carbon rich soils) constrain large scale opportunities for trees and woodlands, the Strategy will encourage planting in appropriate locations including those associated with development, particularly where it supports biodiversity and is multifunctional. The Strategy will also safeguard existing trees and woodlands from development in line with NPF4 policy 6.

### **Strategy Updates:**

- The second draft of the Orkney Trees and Woodland Strategy is currently being finalised prior to public consultation.
- The Strategy is structured around three themes: Protecting, Enhancing, and Resiliency, each supported by a list of actions.
- Under the Protecting theme, the Strategy highlights the role of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and conservation areas in safeguarding Orkney's tree resource.
- A review of TPOs is identified as a specific action within the Strategy.
- For further details, see OIC354 for TPO's and Conservation Areas.

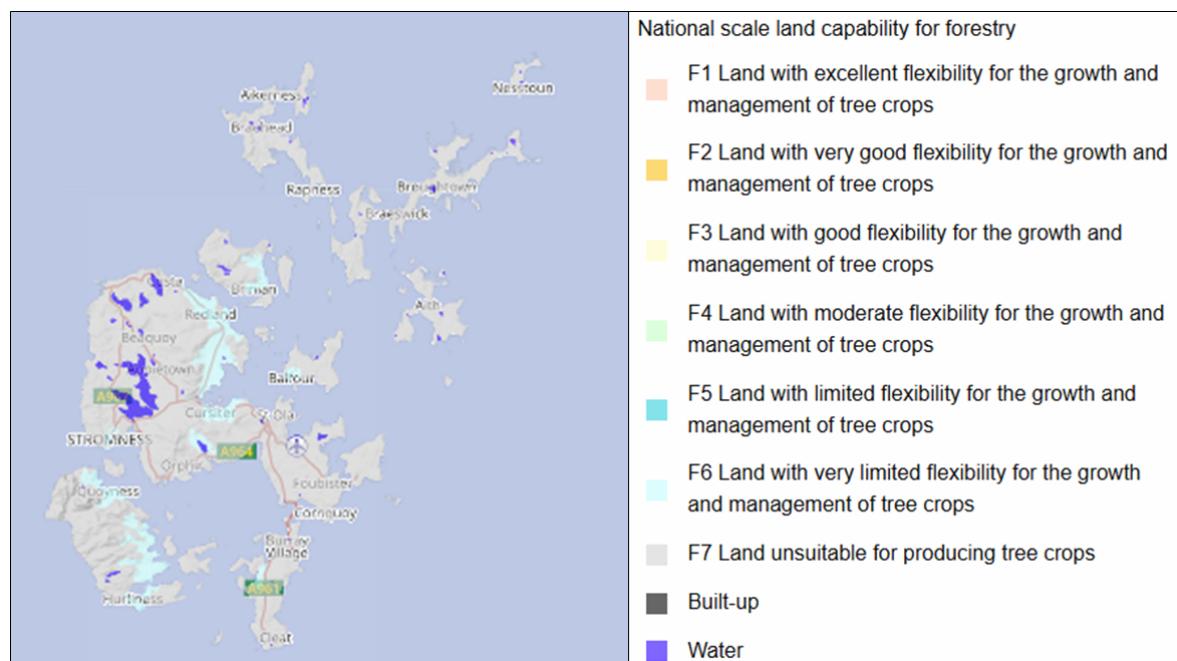


Figure 2 - Land capability for forestry (OIC030)

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
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#### **Areas protected for nature conservation (OIC24)**

There are 56 internationally and/or nationally important areas protected for nature conservation in Orkney, plus three nature conservation Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Some of these sites have multiple designations overlapping the same or similar areas. Condition data is not available for MPAs. However, the condition of the other protected areas could be seen as providing a reflection of the state of biodiversity in the Council area, and what pressures biodiversity outside of protected areas might be facing. The number of protected areas with features in unfavourable condition has remained consistent at around 50% since 2010.

	2020		2010		
	Number of protected areas	Number with all unfavourable feature(s)	Number with all features favourable	Number with all unfavourable feature(s)	Number with all features favourable
<b>Ramsar</b>	1	0	1	1	0
<b>SPA</b>	13	10	3	9	4
<b>SAC</b>	4	1	3	1	3
<b>SSSI</b>	36	17	19	14	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>

*Table 2*

A wide range of pressures, relating to climate change, native invasive species, agricultural operations, and water management are affecting multiple features. These pressures will be considered as the LDP is developed, particularly in relation to assessment of potential allocation sites. The Council has a [Verge Maintenance](#) Plan, which addresses some of the pressures created by invasive plant species (ragwort, broad leaved dock, curled dock, creeping or field thistle and spear thistle). Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultative Draft contains policies for the protection of marine and coastal habitats, accompanied by relevant maps, including seal haul-out sites, international and national nature conservation sites, and Priority Marine Features.

The map below shows the current local, national, and internationally designated sites in Orkney.

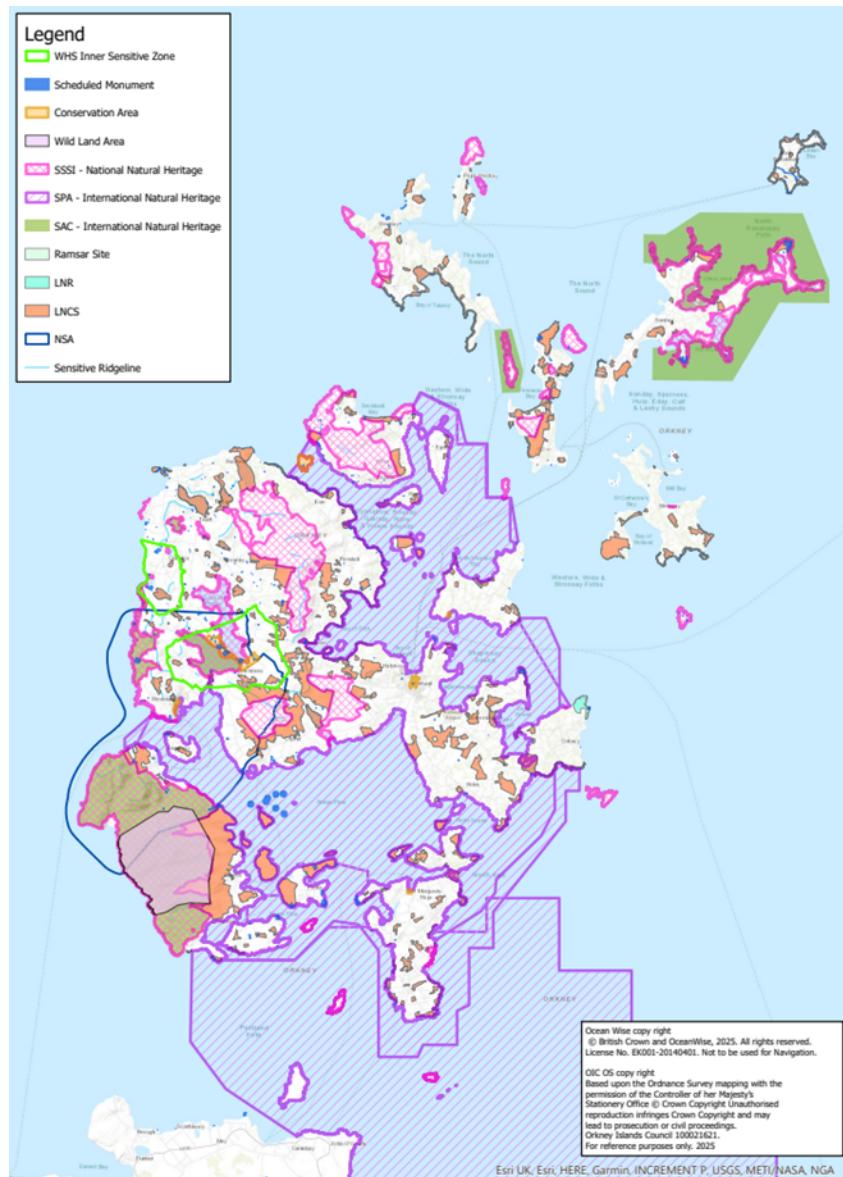


Figure 3 - Designated Sites in Orkney

### Areas Protected for Landscape Integrity

Orkney also has an NSA covering Hoy and West Mainland, which includes LNCSs for geodiversity and SAC and SSSI sites, as well as the [Hoy Wild Land Area](#). The map above includes landscape designations and the map (falls within the NSA covering Hoy). The map below shows landscape character types, the data, for the latter, is derived from NatureScot's Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland. Development proposals in areas identified as wild land (in the Nature Scot Wild Land Areas Map) must be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment. Only certain proposals should be considered, including renewable energy schemes and small-scale development linked to a rural business or croft, or development required to support a fragile community in a rural area.

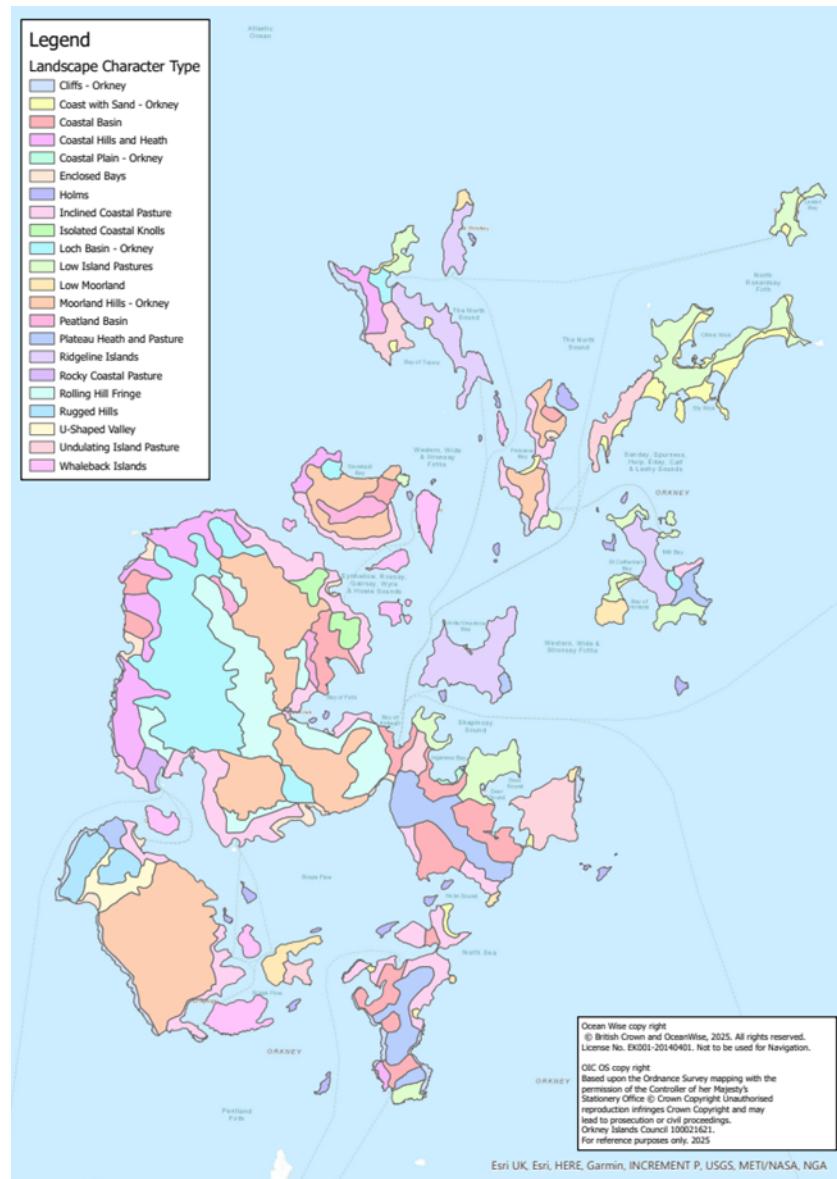


Figure 4 - Landscape Character Types of Orkney

### Locally important areas for nature (OIC025) and (OIC026)

There are also two Local Nature Reserves and 248 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), shown on figure 3 above, identified by the Council as being locally important for biodiversity and geodiversity interests, but that are not protected through legislation; although they have some policy protection via NPF4. RSPB also have 12 reserves throughout Orkney managed for biodiversity generally not just birds. Combined, these areas contribute to the wider nature network across Orkney.

### Peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats

NPF4 Policy 5 requires development proposals to minimise disturbance to soils, protect carbon-rich soils and restore peatlands. The Carbon and Peatland 2016 Map (OIC028) is indicative of the likely presence of deep peat, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitat, while the National Soil Map of Scotland (OIC027), partial cover, which includes detailed

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coverage for Orkney, provides detail for the full range of different soil types in Orkney. Together, these maps can help inform development proposals and assessment of allocations, however, site specific assessment will also be required where development has the potential to have significant effects on soils.

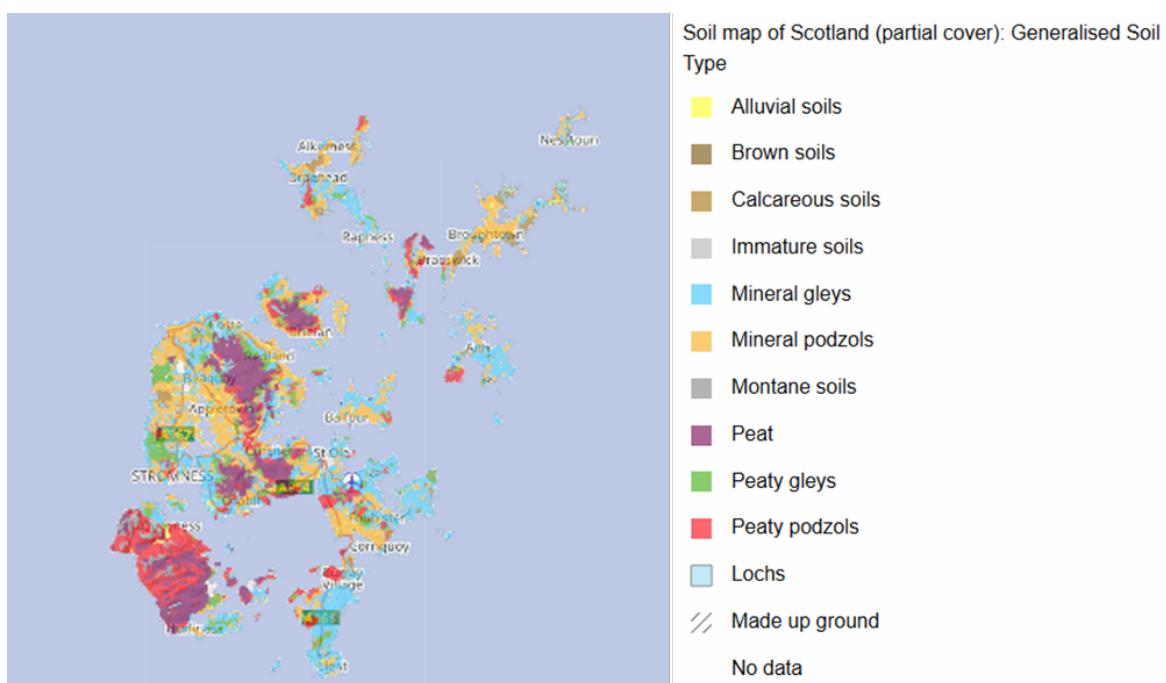


Figure 5 - Soil Map of Orkney (OIC027)

**Agricultural land**

Land capability for agriculture mapping (**OIC029**) provides information on the capability of land for supporting different forms of agriculture, from livestock grazing to crop growing. The majority of the land in Orkney is between classes 4.1 (pale blue on the map) and 5.3 (pale pink on the map) (primarily grassland but capable of producing a narrow range of crops, to capable of use as improved grassland with varying levels of difficulty in establishment and maintenance), with some areas of 6.3 (rough grazing, shown as light purple). There is a small area of land with very limited agricultural value (capability 7, shown as pale brown), mainly on Hoy. There is no land above class 4, meaning that land availability for high yields of arable crops is highly restricted. However, the soils in Orkney are known for being fertile, and supporting livestock, dairy and vegetable businesses. The mapping can help inform allocations to ensure that important agricultural land is not adversely affected.

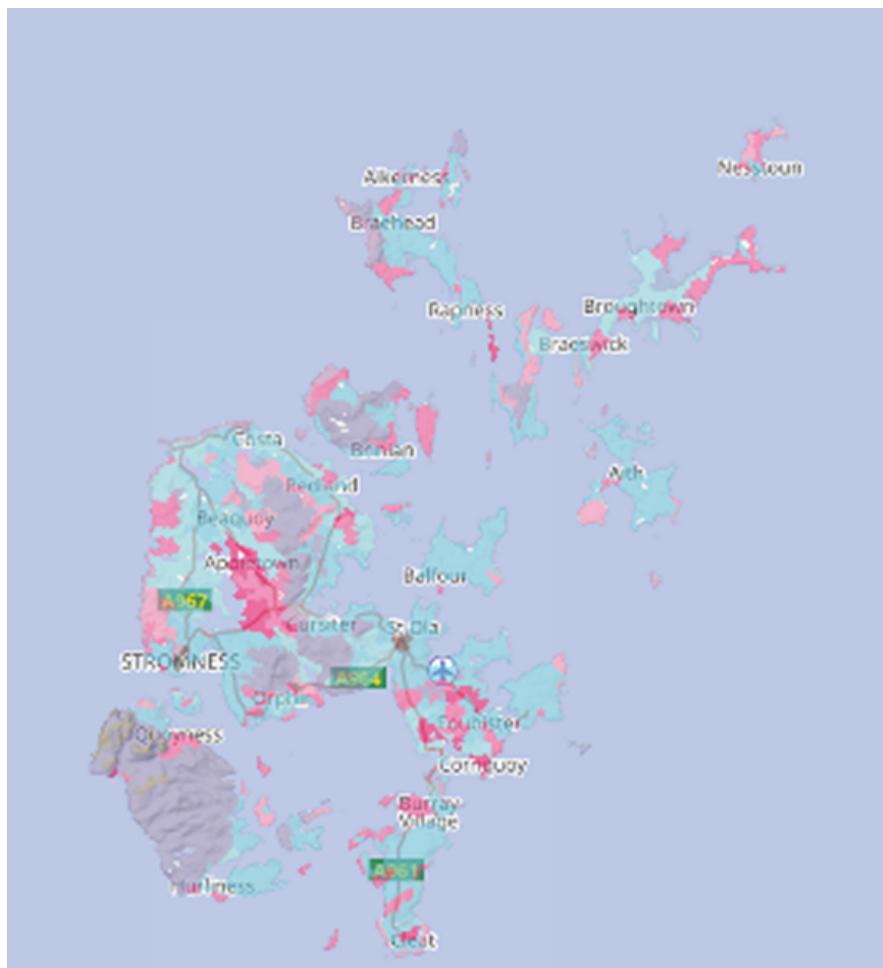


Figure 6 - Land Capability for Agriculture (OIC029)

### **Protected Species (OIC346)**

While the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Orkney has now lapsed, the species identified as priorities and those assigned legal protection remain unchanged. Orkney supports a range of species protected under European and national legislation. European Protected Species (EPS) include the European otter, which is widespread across the islands, and all species of bats, which are increasingly recorded locally. Cetaceans such as harbour porpoise, dolphins, and whales are regularly sighted in Orkney waters, and marine turtles are occasionally found, often stranded. EPS are strictly protected under the Habitats Directive and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Other notable protected species include grey and harbour seals, which benefit from additional safeguards under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, including designated seal conservation areas and haul-out sites. The basking shark, listed under UKBAP and OSPAR, is also present in local waters.

### **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

INNS pose a significant threat to Orkney's biodiversity. Established plant species include Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, and salmonberry, while aquatic species such as New Zealand pygmy weed present risk if introduced through SuDS planting. A major concern is the recent arrival of stoats, which are efficient predators that threaten ground-nesting birds and the Orkney vole, a key prey species for raptors like the hen harrier and short-eared owl.

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
<b>Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>	
<b>Kirkwall Surface Water Management Plan</b>	
<p>The Council is commissioning a Surface Water Management Plan that will identify existing and potential blue and green networks across Kirkwall that could be used to help with surface water management. The outputs of the report are due in Summer 2026.</p>	
<b>Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment</b>	
<p><a href="#">Orkney Open Space Strategy - Vision and Action Plan (2014) (OIC020)</a> was developed to support the 2014 LDP, to safeguard existing open space as well as improve the provision of open space. As the guidance is now outdated, an updated Open Space Strategy will be developed ahead of the LDP. A Play Sufficiency <a href="#">Assessment (OIC22)</a> has also been completed to better inform the future approach to play in the LDP. These should help highlight where multifunctional green spaces can contribute to nature networks. Further details on the Play Sufficiency Assessment can be found in Topic 8 Infrastructure First.</p>	
<b><u>Core Paths Plan (OIC021)</u></b>	
<p>The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 placed a duty on all local authorities to produce a Core Paths Plan. Orkney's Core Path Plan was adopted in 2010 and reviewed and amended in 2018. Core path networks were intended to create a basic network of paths that allow people to access and move around the countryside. Core paths were created using a combination of existing rights of ways and other paths, tracks, and quiet roads. This framework of routes links to, and supports, other networks of paths and the wider countryside.</p>	
<p>The paths may connect communities, natural landmarks, and recreational areas. This Plan aims to enhance accessibility, promote outdoor activities, and contribute to the well-being of residents. The protection afforded to the core path network aims to ensure that the path network is safeguarded from inappropriate development. The Plan can also inform work on and contribute to nature networks, as paths provide opportunities for enhancements alongside.</p>	
<b>Identified Gaps:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Nature networks identification incomplete; requires further integration of datasets and local knowledge.</li> <li>– The current Open Space Strategy is outdated (2014) (Currently being reviewed/Will be updated before LDP)</li> <li>– Limited condition data for Marine Protected Areas.</li> <li>– Need for local guidance on biodiversity metrics for major/EIA-scale developments (awaiting national guidance)</li> <li>– Review required on TPOs many of which are dated.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
<b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b>	
<p>NatureScot.</p> <p>SEPA.</p>	
<p>Scottish Forestry.</p> <p>Orkney Islands Council Rural Planner.</p>	
<p>LDP call for ideas, call for sites, associated public engagement events.</p>	
<p>Engagement with stakeholders during drafting of Trees and Woodland Strategy (with additional public consultation soon underway).</p>	
<p>Engagement with stakeholders during drafting and implementation of considering and including biodiversity in development guidance.</p>	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As outlined in the context section above, NPF4 includes several policies to safeguard the natural environment, many of which are robust and unlikely to require local adaptation for the LDP. For example, those that reflect separate legislative requirements such as NPF4 Policy 4 to safeguard areas protected or otherwise important for nature conservation and protected species.</li> <li>Consideration will be given as to whether local guidance is required to support the implementation of policies in the LDP. For example, Orkney guidance has already been produced to support NPF4 Policy 3.c on biodiversity for local scale development. The draft Orkney Trees and Woodlands Strategy will support the implementation of NPF4 Policy 6 on forestry, trees, and woodlands. NatureScot are in the process of preparing guidance and a metric for NPF4 Policy 3.b on biodiversity for national, major and EIA scale development. Once that is published, consideration will be given as to how it translates to the Orkney context and whether local guidance is required alongside the LDP to support the policy implementation.</li> <li>Nature network opportunities will be identified in the LDP, using local knowledge and a range of datasets such as, but not limited to, protected areas, Local Nature Conservation Sites, peatlands and carbon rich soils, riparian corridors, open space audit, surface water management plan, etc. The networks will influence the allocation of land for future development in the LDP, as well as assisting in the implementation of NPF4 Policy 3.b.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Schedule / Place</b>	<b>2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and the approach to identifying locally and culturally important soils (NPF4 Policy 5) will also be considered and influence the allocation of land in the LDP for future development.</li> <li>Information on blue green infrastructure has an implication for the LDP in relation to future development and land uses, as it influences where blue green infrastructure may exist or may be needed. The surface water catchment study being carried out for Kirkwall will help inform mapping outputs in Kirkwall. and for other settlements using datasets from SEPA, NatureScot and relevant strategies such as the updated Open Space Strategy.</li> <li>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Habitat Map of Scotland will assist with identifying where multifunctional green and blue infrastructure exists or require to be delivered as part of future developments.</li> <li>The LDP should be informed by the suite of designations in Orkney including areas that are protected for specific species and habitats but also areas that are afforded landscape designations, for example, the NSA and extant landscape character assessments.</li> <li>The LDP should consider the way in which the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change relate to all other policies, for example, where the use of nature-based solutions addresses climate change mitigation and benefits nature.</li> </ul>	
<b>Statements of Agreement/Dispute</b>	
<p>There are no areas of dispute outstanding.</p> <p>NatureScot have requested additions such as datasets and references to guidance documents which have been included in the evidence.</p> <p>OIC Rural Planner proposed additional text under the core paths plan section, this has been added.</p> <p>Scottish Water commented on their commitment to sustainable land management, green-blue infrastructure, surface water management schemes and the protection of soils, trees, and woodlands.</p> <p>SEPA supported the intention to identify nature networks in the LDP.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle built heritage characteristics of the district.'</li> <li>• Planning (Listed Buildings &amp; Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997</li> <li>• Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC157</b> <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance: Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage</a></p> <p><b>OIC158</b> <a href="#">Historic Environment Planning Policy Advice (Topics and Themes)</a></p> <p><b>OIC159</b> <a href="#">Urban Conservation Areas Management Plan - June 2017</a> Planning Policy Advice</p> <p><b>OIC160</b> <a href="#">Managing Change in the Historic Environment</a></p> <p><b>OIC161</b> <a href="#">The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site: Setting Report</a></p> <p><b>OIC034</b> <a href="#">Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment</a></p> <p><b>OIC035</b> <a href="#">Buildings at Risk Register</a></p> <p><b>OIC036</b> <a href="#">CANMORE National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE)</a></p> <p><b>OIC162</b> <a href="#">Pastmap National Record of the Historic Environment</a></p> <p><b>OIC163</b> <a href="#">NRHE data download</a></p> <p><b>OIC164</b> <a href="#">Historic Environment Policy for Scotland   Historic Environment Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC165</b> <a href="#">Designation Policy and Selection Guidance   Hist Env Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC166</b> <a href="#">Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site Management Plan 2014 - 2019</a></p> <p><b>OIC192</b> <a href="#">Islands Deal</a></p> <p><b>OIC138</b> <a href="#">Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) Assessment for the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site</a></p>

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>3. Historic Assets and Places</b>
	<b>OIC258 <a href="#">Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan</a></b> : Consultation Draft (2023)
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>Policy 7 Historic Assets and Places seeks to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places. NPF4 requires LDPs to support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect, and enhance valued historic assets. Policy 7 covers various elements of the historic environment including how development proposals affecting listed and other historic buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Monuments, gardens and designed landscapes, historic marine protected areas, World Heritage Sites, or the settings of such assets, may be supported or not, essentially when protected, preserved, or enhanced. Non-designated historic environment assets, places and their setting should be protected and preserved in situ wherever feasible or impacts upon them mitigated. Development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets or places will be accompanied by an assessment to provide a sound basis for managing the impacts of change.</p>	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p>Orkney's historic environment helps to define its character, identity and sense of place and it is important that this is preserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy. It brings huge economic, cultural, social and employment benefits to Orkney through its tourism, leisure, and educational value.</p>	
<p><a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 (OIC127)</a></p> <p>From the Neolithic village at Skara Brae to the wrecks of the German High Seas fleet in Scapa Flow, Orkney is internationally renowned for its historic buildings and archaeological remains. These are not only central to Orkney's cultural identity, but are the backdrop to the everyday life of the County: heritage tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy; the historic towns of Kirkwall and Stromness are the main centres of population and employment; historic lighthouses, ports and causeways keep the community connected; and religious buildings such as St Magnus Cathedral are the County's spiritual heart. It is therefore vital for Orkney's economy and society that its historic sites (known collectively as the "historic environment") are protected wherever possible.</p>	
<p>The current approach set out in the OLDP Policy seeks to assess all cultural heritage assets potentially affected by a development to establish exactly what is important about each site (its 'significance') and ensure this is protected as far as possible. This approach has been chosen to be proportionate, targeted, and inclusive. This existing Policy covers the entire historic environment, whether subject to a statutory designation or not, and also includes other sites which are important to Orkney's cultural heritage, such as public artworks, war memorials and burial places. All sites are assessed according to the same overarching criteria, although for certain sites specific policy considerations and guidance also apply. General guidance regarding the interpretation and application of this Policy is set out in <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance: Historic</a></p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<p>Environment and Cultural Heritage, (OIC157) while more specific considerations are set out in Planning Policy Advice: Historic Environment. (OIC158).</p> <p>Designated wrecks, Historic Marine Protected Areas, and other marine historic environments are considered in the <a href="#">Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan: Consultation Draft (2023)</a> (OIC258) rather than the LDP.</p> <p><b>Current Context</b></p> <p>Orkney's historic environment is central to its identity, economy, and sense of place. The islands contain a rich concentration of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including one World Heritage Site, 373 Scheduled Monuments, 629 listed buildings, conservation areas, and three Gardens and Designated Landscapes. These assets are spread across the islands and coastal areas, contributing to Orkney's cultural significance and supporting tourism, education, and community life.</p> <p>The Historic Environment Record is regularly updated and supported by datasets such as the Building at Risk register and national inventories. The LDP will play a key role in protecting these assets and their settings, while enabling appropriate change. The evidence below highlights the need for tailored policies to address climate resilience, reuse of historic buildings, and the safeguarding of sensitive landscaped, particularly around the World Heritage Site and its ridgelines.</p> <p>However, existing conservation policy tools – such as Article 4 Directions and Conservation Area Appraisals – are dated, highlighting an evidence gap around their current relevance and effectiveness. There is also limited understanding of how heritage protection objectives intersect with net zero goals, particularly where permitted development rights do not suit Orkney's unique settlement patterns. While some suitable approaches have already been adopted, such as allowing solar panels in certain conservation areas, further evidence is needed to guide a consistent framework that balances heritage and climate action. Additional gaps include data on the condition and capacity of historic assets, skills availability for energy retrofit and adaptive reuse, and landscape sensitivity around key sites such as the World Heritage Site.</p> <p><b><u>Our Past, Our Future – The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment (OIC034)</u></b></p> <p>This is Scotland's five-year national Strategy for the historic environment which was published in 2023. The historic environment is a national asset, and it creates jobs, enriches communities, and helps to tell Scotland's story to the world. It is a vital resource in our transition to net zero and in helping local places to thrive. The Strategy seeks to enhance the benefits of Scotland's heritage and ensuring that the historic environment is at the centre of national life. The next LDP will seek to incorporate the key aims of this Strategy and recognise the importance of Orkney's heritage assets and the wide-ranging benefits they can bring.</p> <p><b>Managing Change in the Historic Environment (OIC160)</b> is a series of guidance notes produced by HES. They give best practice advice across a number of topics to help guide changes to the historic environment, many of relevance to Orkney's historic environment, including approaches to developments affecting world heritage sites, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, aspects of the appearance and fabric of historic buildings, conservation areas, gardens and designed landscapes, and the setting of such assets.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<b>Historic Environment Designations and Assets (OIC163)</b>	
<p>How designated and non-designated assets and their setting are considered in the planning process is covered in NPF4, PAN2/2011 and the existing LDP with its accompanying supplementary guidance and policy advice.</p>	
<p>The Table below sets out the key statistics about Orkney 's historic environment:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Heritage Sites 1, divided into two areas.</li> <li>• Number of Scheduled Monuments 373.</li> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings 629 (of which 27 A-listed, 288 B-Listed, 314 C-Listed).</li> <li>• Number of Buildings at Risk 89 (of which 4 A-listed).</li> <li>• Proportion of dwellings which are traditionally built (pre1919) 37% (highest in Scotland).</li> <li>• Number of Conservation Areas 6</li> <li>• Number of Gardens and Designed Landscapes 3.</li> <li>• Number of Orkney entries in the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) 9,150. (1,011 designated as listed above, 2,281 maritime, 5,858 non-designated).</li> </ul>	
<h3>World Heritage Sites</h3>	
<p>The Heart of Neolithic Orkney (HONO) was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1999 as a Cultural World Heritage Site (WHS), judged to have Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), transcending national boundaries and of importance for present and future generations. It comprises four components: the settlement of Skara Brae located at the Bay of Skaill, Maeshowe chambered tomb and associated Barnhouse Stone, the Stones of Stenness and the associated Watch Stone, and the Ring of Brodgar with its associated ritual and funerary monuments, all located in the Brodgar-Stenness area. Individually, the sites are masterpieces of Neolithic design and stonework construction. Collectively, they represent one of the richest surviving Neolithic landscapes in Western Europe.</p>	
<p>A <a href="#">study (OIC161)</a> commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland provided an objective description of the setting of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site and provided recommendations on approaches to defining any future Buffer Zone and the nature of policies that may apply to that Buffer Zone. Aspects of this study were accepted by UNESCO, HES, and OIC, as below.</p>	
<p>Potential effects on the WHS, its OUV and its setting are a material consideration in the planning process. A two-part Inner Sensitive Zone surrounds the HONO WHS, one section centred on Skara Brae and the other on the central West Mainland group of monuments, referred to by UNESCO and HES as the "Buffer Zone." The existing Local Development Plan sets out the policy position of only permitting development in the Zone where it is demonstrated that the development would not have a significant negative impact on the OUV of the WHS or its setting.</p>	
<p>In addition to the Inner Sensitive Zone, HES, UNESCO, and the existing Local Development Plan recognise that the monuments on the Brodgar and Stenness peninsulas were deliberately situated in a vast topographic bowl formed by a series of visually interconnecting ridgelines. Their importance as a key aspect of the setting of the WHS is recognised in the Local Development Plan, where they are called 'Sensitive Ridgelines', and additional protection is provided to them through Policy by not permitting development where it breaks the skyline at the sensitive ridgelines of the WHS when viewed from any of its component parts.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<p>NPF4 states that development proposals affecting a World Heritage Site or its setting will only be supported where their Outstanding Universal Value is protected and preserved.</p> <p>Outwith the planning system, the <a href="#">HONO WHS Management Plan (OIC166)</a> is the primary document for guiding the future of the WHS. It is prepared by HES in partnership with OIC and has been subject to review every five years. The current draft Plan is for 2025-2035 (10 years) and is due for public consultation before being finalised in spring 2025. The Plan contains an overall vision for the site, long-term aims, shorter term policies and objectives, addressing the climate emergency, planning for uncertainty, tourism and access management and infrastructure, community involvement and communication, sustainability, research, and learning.</p> <p>Orkney Islands Council in partnership with Shetland Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilian Siar received commitment from both UK and Scottish Government through the <b>Islands Growth Deal (OIC192)</b> to support a range of projects amounting to £100M investment over a period of 10 years. <b>The Orkney World Heritage Site Gateway Project</b> is one of these projects. Responding to the commitments within the 2014-2019 Management Plan, this project is led by OIC in partnership with HES and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and is seen by the partners as an important opportunity to secure external funding to help realise the 10-year vision and shared aspirations set out in Management Plan. The Gateway Project includes improving opportunities for active travel and encouraging the transition to net zero, making improvements to the visitor experience at Skara Brae, improved interpretation, and digital platforms for managing visitor numbers and the creation of a new orientation centre to help safeguard the sites and surrounding area.</p>	

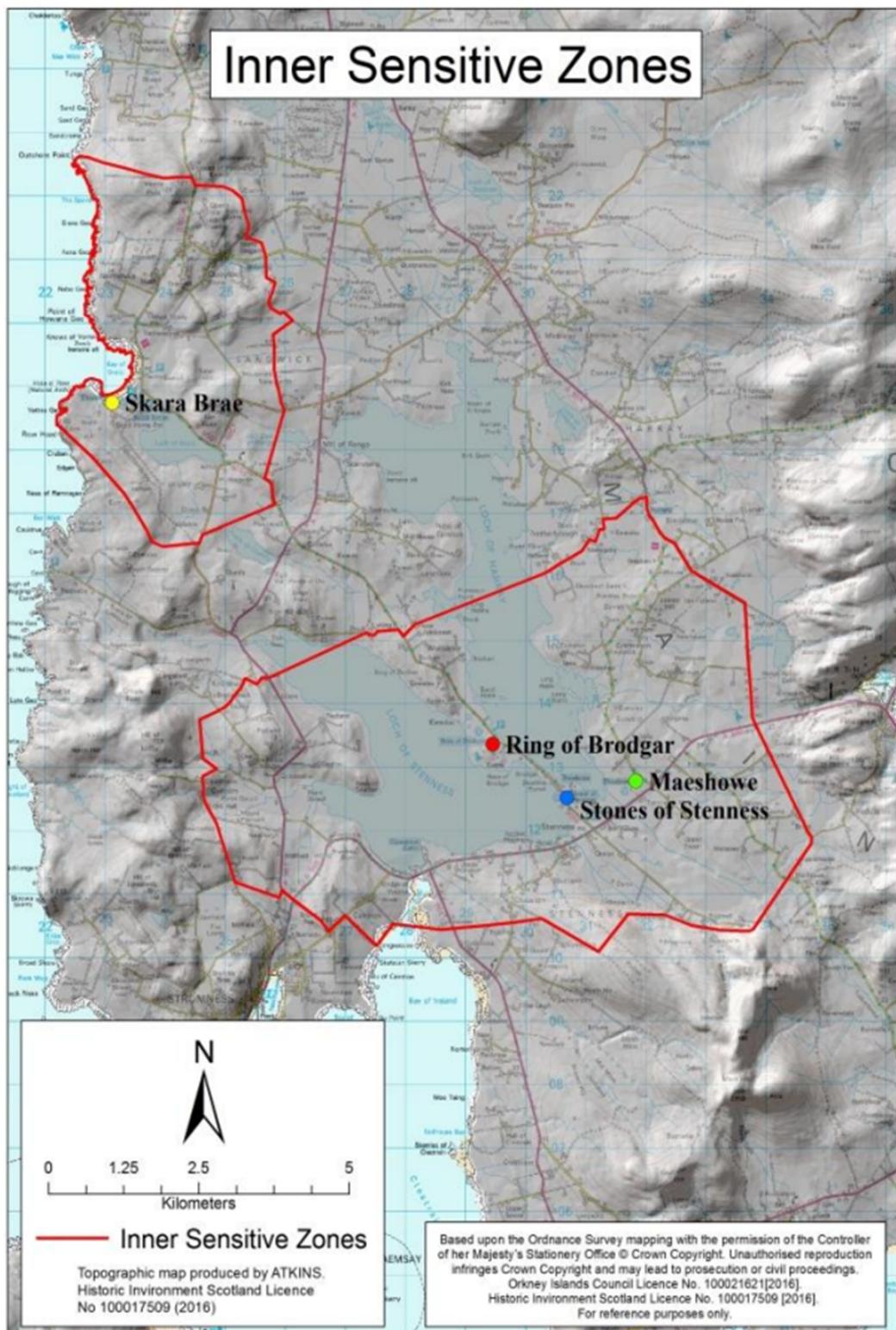


Figure 7 - WHS Inner Sensitive Zones

## Sensitive Ridgelines

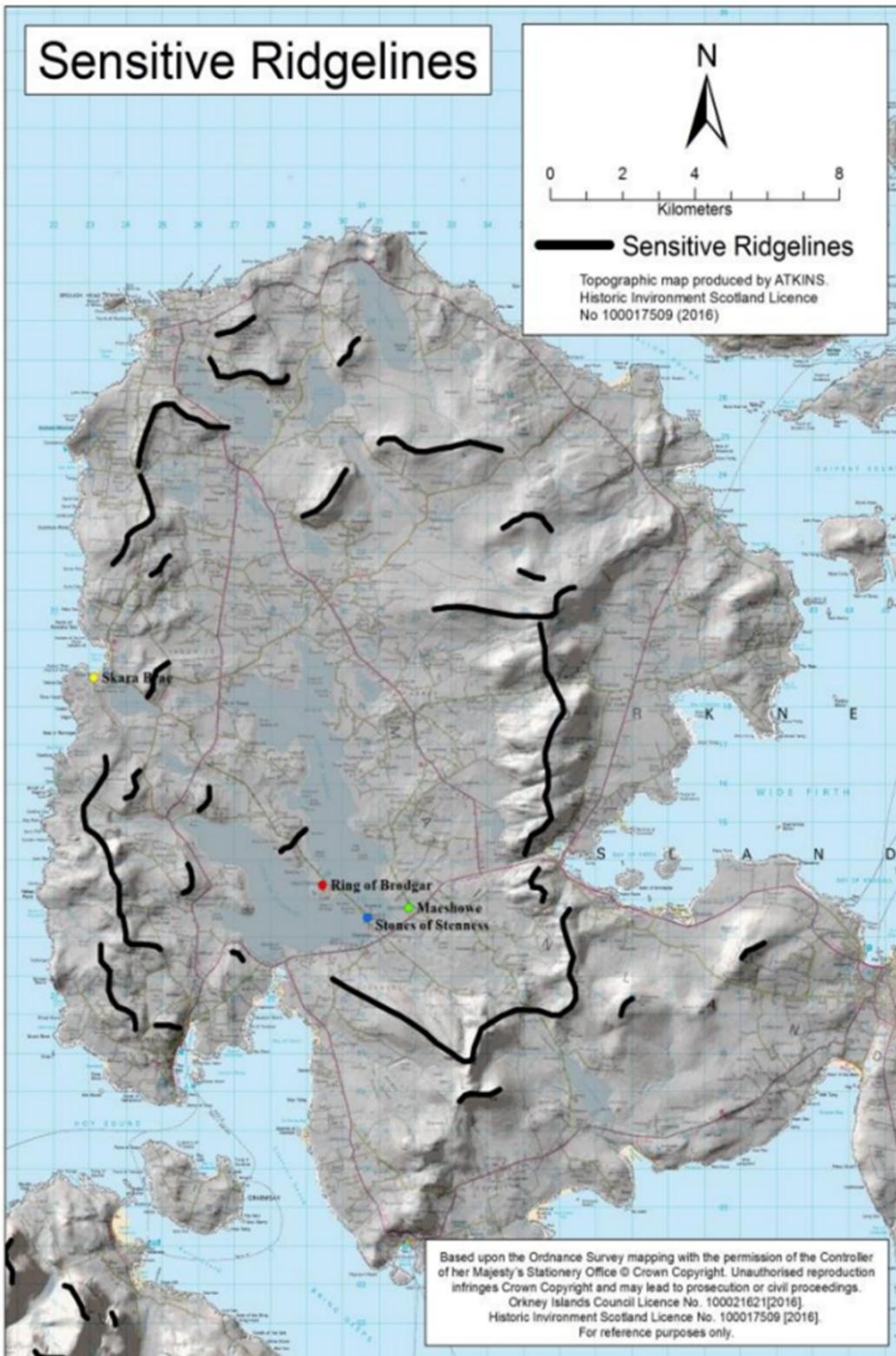


Figure 8 - WHS Sensitive Ridgelines

- **Scheduled Monuments (OIC163)**

Orkney's 373 Scheduled Monuments are spread across all the islands, round the coasts and in the waters. They comprise archaeological sites, areas, buildings, or structures deemed to be of

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<p>national importance and are protected primarily by The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These monuments include Neolithic tombs and villages, Bronze Age burial mounds, Iron Age broch's, Pictish, Viking and Norse settlement sites, mediaeval chapels, castles and palaces, wartime defences and the remaining wrecks of the German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow.</p> <p>It should be noted that not all assets that may be of national importance are Scheduled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listed Buildings (OIC163)</b></li> </ul> <p>Listing is the process that identifies, designates, and provides statutory protection for buildings of special architectural or historic interest as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. The definition of 'buildings' is anything made by people, such as houses, schools, factories, boundary walls, bridges, and sculptures. Once a building is found to be of special architectural or historic interest, it is then classified under one of three categories according to its relative importance. While the listing itself has legal weight and gives statutory protection, the categories have no legal status and are advisory.</p> <p>Category A: Buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are outstanding examples of a particular period, style or building type.</p> <p>Category B: Buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are major examples of a particular period, style or building type.</p> <p>Category C: Buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are representative examples of a period, style or building type.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Buildings at Risk Register</b></li> </ul> <p>The Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) (<b>OIC035</b>) has been in operation in Scotland since 1990 in response to a concern at the growing number of listed buildings and buildings that were vacant and had fallen into a state of disrepair, especially in Conservation Areas. The Register is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland and provides information on properties of architectural or historic merit throughout the country that are considered to be at risk. The BARR identifies 80 buildings at Risk in Orkney [BARR accessed online 13 November 2024], of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% (28) are classified as residential buildings, the majority cottages (16) but ranging in size up to country house. A further 37% of the Register (27) relate to the area's farming and fishing traditions, such as steadings, doocots and fishing stations. Many of these buildings are of vernacular construction. Orkney's war-time heritage features on the Register as do buildings such as mills and churches. Only 14% are in settlements, 86% are in rural or remote locations. All the buildings are now long-term At-Risk as they have featured on the Register for 10 years or more. Whilst the condition of the buildings varies from Ruinous to Fair, the most frequent condition assessment is Poor.</li> <li>• Since 1990, 32 At-Risk buildings in Orkney have been saved and none demolished. Nine further buildings are subject to active repair and their status recorded as Restoration in Progress. This includes community-based projects such as Happy Valley, Hall of Clestrain, St Mary's Church, and North Ronaldsay Old Kirk.</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Conservation Areas (OIC159)</b></li> </ul> <p>Local planning authorities have a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to designate as conservation areas parts of their areas which are of special historic or architectural interest the character and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.</p> <p>The coastal settlements of Kirkwall, Stromness, St Margaret's Hope and Balfour Village are designated Conservation Areas as are the rural areas of Eynhallow and Brodgar.</p> <p>Conservation Area Review: Local planning authorities also have a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to undertake Conservation Area reviews and appraisals. Ensuring that conservation area designations have appraisals and are reviewed checks that these historic environment assets are protected, valued, and managed sustainably. Therefore, a programme of reviewing and developing appraisals for Orkney's conservation areas will be developed that will support the aims of NPF4 Policy 7 Historic assets and places, which seeks to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places through Local Development Plans.</p> <p><b>Kirkwall Conservation Appraisal (OIC353)</b></p> <p>Although now dated, the Kirkwall Conservation Area Appraisal (2013) remains a relevant reference for managing and enhancing the historic environment within Kirkwall. It describes the area's character, reflecting its Norse origins, medieval street layout, and architectural heritage ranging from St Magnus Cathedral to later Victorian development. The appraisal identifies five-character areas: Harbour, Burgh and Midtown, St Magnus Precincts, Laverock, and East Kirkwall. It notes features such as historic building fabric and cultural traditions, as well as issues including alterations to properties, traffic pressures, and visual clutter. The document outlines potential actions such as redevelopment, streetscape improvements, and building repairs, with the aim of maintaining the area's distinct character while supporting regeneration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Gardens and Designed Landscapes (OIC163)</b></li> </ul> <p>Gardens and designed landscapes are grounds consciously laid out for artistic effect and are an important element of Scotland's historic environment and landscape. HES select nationally important sites for the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes under the terms of the <a href="#">Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</a>.</p> <p>In Orkney, the grounds of Balfour Castle, Skaill House and Melsetter House (themselves all A-Listed Buildings) are designated Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The key attributes of these can be found on the Inventory entry for each asset, including sightlines, design axes, built components, and the contribution of location and the wider landscape.</p>	

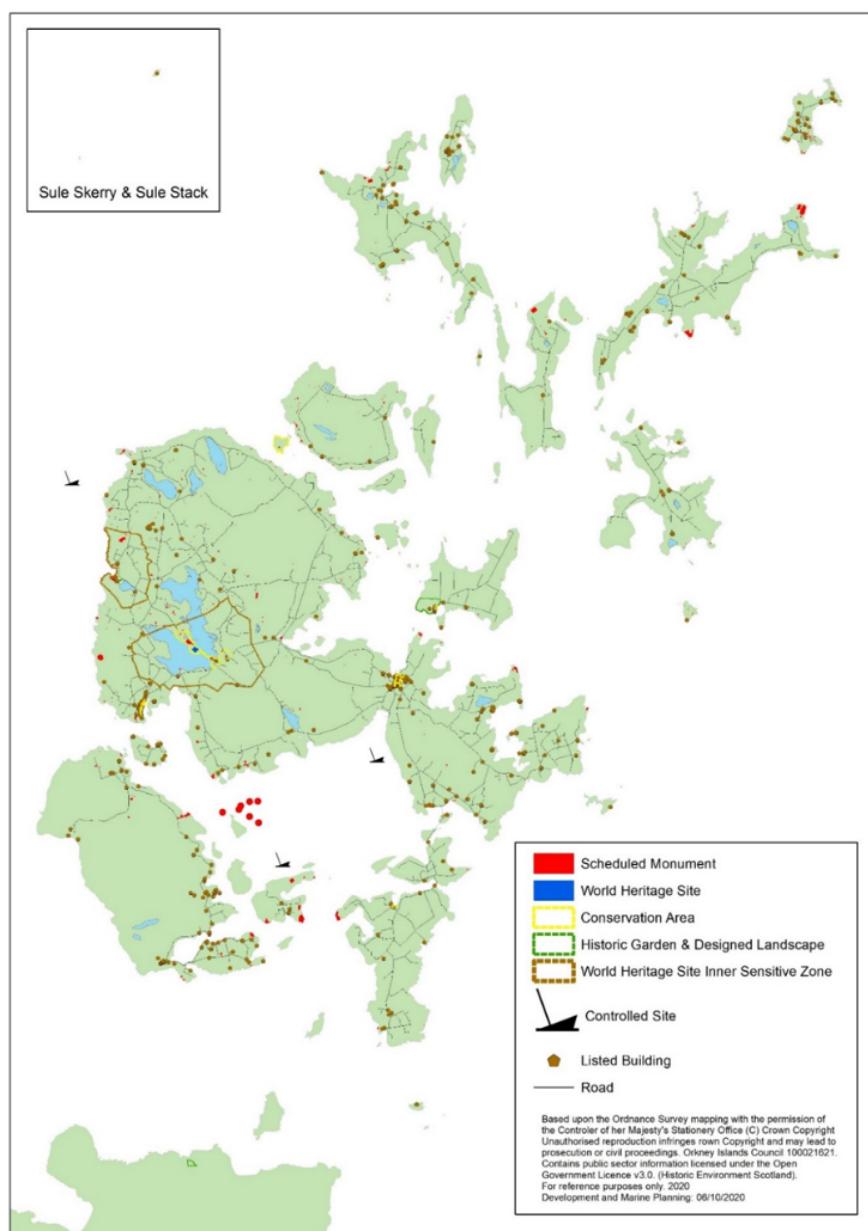


Figure 9 - Designated Historic Environmental Assets

- Non-designated historic environment assets and places

Historic environment assets (both designated and non-designated) are of historical, cultural, economic and recreational interest to Orkney communities and to the thousands that come to visit the islands. It is therefore vital for Orkney to protect its historic environment wherever possible. Canmore ([OIC036](#)) and Pastmap ([OIC162](#)) provide online catalogues of Scotland's designated and undesigned historic environment assets and areas, including those in Orkney and its Regional Waters. These are derived from the National Record of the Historic Environment, managed by HES. HES supplies the Islands Archaeologist and OIC Development and Marine Planning with the most up-to-date list of assets in Orkney extracted from the NRHE every six months (currently 1,011 designated, 2,281 maritime and 5,858 non-designated assets). It is noted that not all assets that are of national importance are designated (PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology) and that new sites continue to be discovered, through coastal erosion, fieldwalking,

**Issue: Topic/Place****3. Historic Assets and Places**

geophysical and lidar surveys, and work conducted prior to new developments. New discoveries are fed into the NRHE through the Islands Archaeologist, the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Investigations) reporting system and a Memorandum of Understanding between OIC and HES.

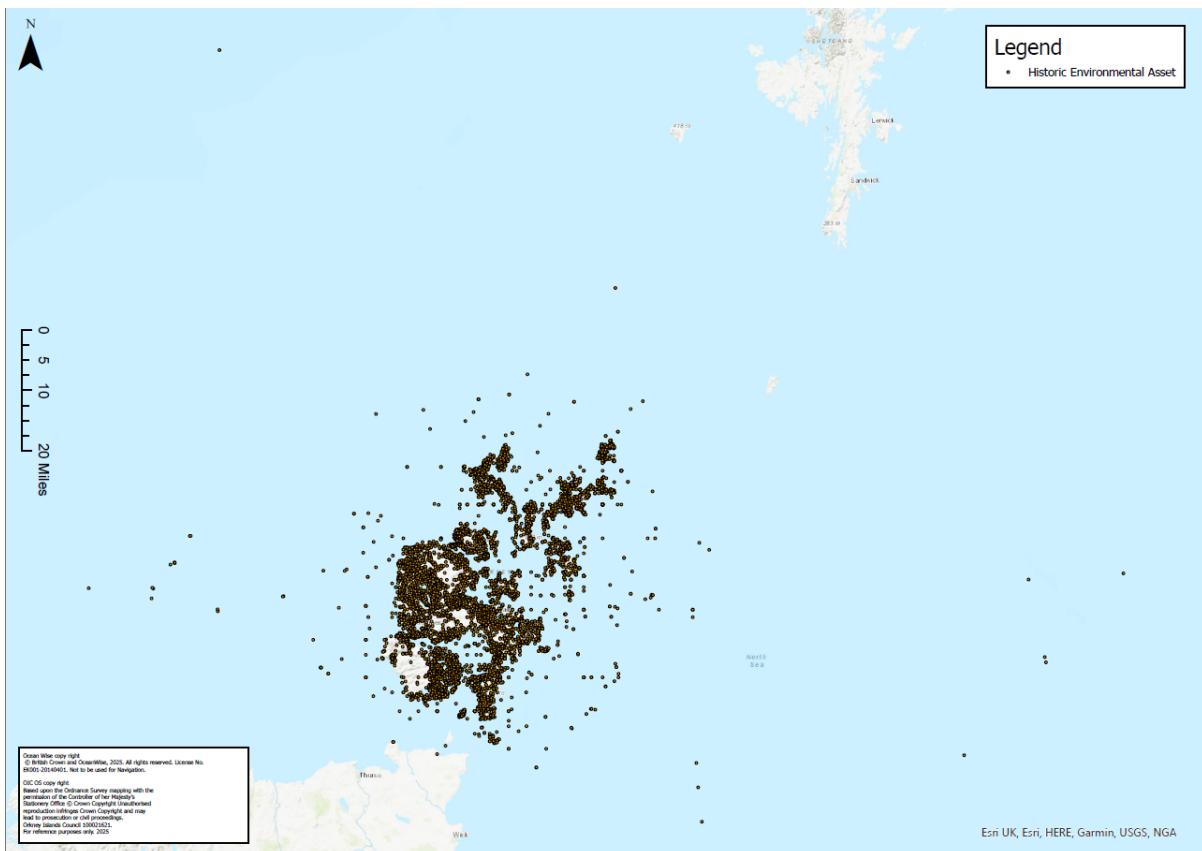


Figure 10 - All Historic Environment Assets

- **Wartime Orkney**

The enormous impact on the Orkney Islands of both World Wars has left an important legacy of military structures and archaeology, many of which are unique with no other surviving examples in the rest of the UK. Currently, these are managed through designation protections and the planning process. However, there are many communities of interest and projects that have provided more information, from publications on wartime Orkney, community projects such as the *Legacies of Conflict: Hoy & Walls Wartime Heritage Project*, a highly successful community and visitor engagement initiative run by the Island of Hoy Development Trust between 2013 and 2014; the current HMS Tern project under the Birsay Heritage Trust and ongoing research by Aviation Research Group Orkney and Shetland. OIC's Scapa Flow Museum and the independent Stromness Museum also hold large wartime collections and fund publications on the subject.

A comprehensive review/audit of wartime assets sites would identify gaps in knowledge and identify future opportunities for enhancement, public engagement, promotion, tourism and positive management. This would also allow an informed policy around the management of wartime assets to be considered for inclusion in the emerging LDP.

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Historic Environment and Climate Change</b></li> </ul>	
<p>An intended outcome of NPF4 Policy 7 is that the historic environment is valued, protected, and enhanced, supporting the transition to net zero and ensuring assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change.</p>	
<p><b>Our Past Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment (2023) (OIC034)</b> aligns with the Scottish Government ambition to deliver net zero in response to climate change.</p>	
<p><b>Pointing the Way to the Future, (OIC164)</b> HES' climate and nature crisis statement recognises that the historic environment is part of a just transition to net zero. It contributes to our places, communities and identities and the reuse of historic assets is central to sustainable development.</p>	
<p>HES' <b>Climate Action Plan 2020-25</b> combined with its <b>Green Recovery Statement 2022</b> set out how they will address the climate emergency and support the principles set out by the Scottish Government, highlighting seven key areas where the historic environment can help deliver climate change targets, a just transition and a "green" economic recovery.</p>	
<p>In 2019 OIC declared a Climate Emergency and reaffirmed its priority with respect to working towards a carbon neutral economy with the Orkney Community Partnership (see <a href="#">Orkney Council Plan 2023-2028</a>). An independent study to identify OIC net zero transition pathways commenced in 2024 and aims to help inform an OIC Climate Change Strategy. OIC is committed to making progress towards Net Zero and decarbonisation. See Topic 1 Climate Change. Topic 1 Climate Change.</p>	
<p>The next LDP will seek to incorporate the key principles of the above policies, strategies, and statements so that Orkney's historic environment makes a significant contribution towards the transition to a low carbon, resource efficient, climate change resilient and socially inclusive economy in response to Orkney's climate crisis.</p>	
<p>HES prepared <b>A Climate Change Risk Assessment</b> of the Properties in Care (PIC) of HES in 2018. The results of this initial risk assessment provide the strategic basis for their maintenance work programmes. HES is in the process of assessing all PICs in Orkney as part of a nationwide programme to inspect the historic properties they care for, surveying the high areas of these monuments and checking the stonework by hand to identify if these have been affected by the effects of more intense weather patterns.</p>	
<p>A specific <b>Climate Risk Assessment for the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Property (OIC138)</b> was prepared in 2019. This highlights the acute vulnerability of Skara Brae to the potential impact of sea level change. Other risks are highlighted including increased average precipitation, increased winter rainfall and an increase in extreme rainfall events. This increased ground saturation has led to significant footfall erosion issues at the Ring of Brodgar. The third issue the report highlights is changes to storm intensity and frequency, which, combined with sea level rise and increased rainfall on sites, creating the potential for a single extreme event, could destroy parts of Skara Brae, for example.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	3. Historic Assets and Places
<p>As a co-author of the above Climate Risk Assessment, OIC has resident expertise in the form of Professor Jane Downes, Head of the Archaeology Institute UHI at Orkney College. She is on ICOMOS's Climate Change and Heritage Working Group, contributed to the <i>UNESCO World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate</i> report, and is involved in the management and sustainable development of landscape and cultural heritage resources, at several World Heritage Sites around the globe.</p>	
<p>The risks identified above apply singly or in combination to all historic environment assets in Orkney, designated and non-designated. Approximately half of all coastal archaeological sites in Orkney are under threat from coastal erosion, a situation that will only become worse as sea levels rise and dramatic weather events increase in frequency. Various studies and reports have provided evidence, including the Coastal Zone Assessment Surveys conducted by EASE Archaeology around parts of Orkney's coastline in the late 1990s, SCAPE's (Scottish Coastal Archaeology and the Problem of Erosion) <i>A review of heritage at risk from coastal processes in Scotland</i> 2017, which identified that the largest number of National Priority Sites at Risk were in Orkney, and their subsequent Community Coastal Zone Assessment Survey (CCZAS) programme, including a survey of Stronsay's coastline, conducted 2023-24. The Swandro-Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust has been set up to help with emergency situations that arise in Orkney due to coastal erosion, although resources are limited. The Trust's main focus of attention is at Swandro in Rousay, a 5,000-year-old Neolithic chambered tomb and a large settlement occupied from around 1000BC to AD1200, partly located under the storm beach, with the aim to advance education, heritage and culture for people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of capability from anywhere in the world through the pursuit of archaeological activities.</p>	
<p>Identified Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conservation Area Appraisals are dated, review required.</li> <li>– Lack of comprehensive audit of wartime heritage assets.</li> <li>– Evidence gap on climate vulnerability of historic assets beyond WHS.</li> <li>– Need for policy guidance on integrating net zero technologies in heritage areas.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <p><b>Historic Environment Scotland</b> – summary of evidence supplied by email 11 March 2024 have been included in the Schedule and formally consulted.</p> <p><b>Orkney Islands Archaeology Service</b> – The County Archaeologist provided feedback on improving map clarity, updating the World Heritage Site Management Plan, and adding references to potential impacts on historic assets.</p> <p><b>Orkney Island Council Team Manager (Culture)</b> - formally consulted.</p>	

## **Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan**

Cultural heritage sites and their settings may be vulnerable to the effects of new developments and/or activities.

- The policies and proposals of the new LDP should provide effective protection to sites and their setting. There could be a need for a tailored approach to this in relation to the World Heritage Site within Orkney and the importance of ridgelines to the Outstanding Universal Value and setting of the World Heritage Site. Therefore, the existing LDP policy and guidance will be reviewed which covers these elements and consideration given to bring forward appropriate parts of the existing policy into the next LDP.
- There are currently six conservation areas in Orkney Islands, but none have up to date Conservation Area appraisals. As part of the LDP review we will look to develop up-to-date appraisals for the Conservation Areas prioritising the most populated Conservation Areas first.
- Consider the possibility of conducting a comprehensive audit of Orkney's wartime heritage to inform the LDP and associated guidance.
- Consider potential impact on designated and undesignated historic environment assets, both direct and indirect, on a case-by-case basis. This will be supported through the ongoing updating and maintenance of the HES database.
- Local planning guidance may need to be prepared to reflect appropriate local interpretation of NPF4 policies for specific types of historic environment assets.
- Consider how to ensure that Orkney's historic environment is valued, protected, and enhanced, whilst making a significant contribution towards the transition to a low carbon, resource efficient, climate change resilient and socially inclusive economy in response to Orkney's climate crisis.
- Co-ordinate the different topics in the LDP and other OIC policies and strategies to ensure overlap and agreement where possible, for example, with the Orkney World Heritage Gateway Project, The HONO WHS Management Plan, Tourism and Energy policies.

## **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no outstanding areas of dispute.

Scottish Water stated that they had no comments to make regarding Historic Assets and Places.

Historic Environment Scotland stated they were content all the data provided under this topic is accurate and reflects the data supplied to the Council by Historic Environment Scotland. They highlighted that they agreed with the implications set out for the LDP regarding this topic

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>4. Energy</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) - the infrastructure of the district and how that infrastructure is used.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Links to Evidence</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC037</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC038</b> <a href="#">Mapping of consented wind farms</a></p> <p><b>OIC039</b> <a href="#">Orkney Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy in Orkney</a></p> <p><b>OIC040</b> <a href="#">Orkney Landscape Character Assessment</a></p> <p><b>OIC041</b> <a href="#">CD Orkney Hydrogen Strategy 2019-2025</a></p> <p><b>OIC042</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022</a></p> <p><b>OIC043</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government Hydrogen Action Plan 2022</a></p> <p><b>OIC002</b> <a href="#">Orkney Sustainable Energy Strategy (2017-2025)</a></p> <p><b>OIC194</b> <a href="#">2023 Briefing: Scotwind Leasing for Offshore wind &amp; web page with current info on ScotWind projects</a></p> <p><b>OIC195</b> <a href="#">2024 Flotta Hydrogen Hub</a></p> <p><b>OIC196</b> <a href="#">Small Islands Energy System Overview Local Carbon Energy Systems Framework</a></p> <p><b>OIC197</b> <a href="#">Offshore Wind Focus Sept 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC198</b> <a href="#">Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland Sept 2023</a></p> <p><b>OIC199</b> <a href="#">Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan – delivering a fair and secure zero carbon energy system for Scotland Jan 2023</a></p> <p><b>OIC200</b> <a href="#">2020 Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy Oct 2020</a></p> <p><b>OIC201</b> <a href="#">2021 Energy Policy - Subject Profile</a></p> <p><b>OIC202</b> <a href="#">2020 Offshore Wind Policy Statement</a></p> <p><b>OIC203</b> <a href="#">2018 Climate Change Plan 2018-2032</a></p>

Issue: Topic/Place	4. Energy
	<p><b>OIC204</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Whole System Uncertainty Mechanism Feb 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC205</b> <a href="#">2023 Whole Electricity System Annual Report</a></p> <p><b>OIC206</b> <a href="#">Orkney-Caithness 220kV HVAC Subsea Link Sept 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC207</b> <a href="#">Projects by SSEN Transmission search by area</a></p> <p><b>OIC208</b> <a href="#">Projects and live works by area</a></p> <p><b>OIC209</b> <a href="#">Orkney ANM - SSEN</a></p> <p><b>OIC210</b> <a href="#">Orkney ANM status - SSEN</a></p> <p><b>OIC304</b> <a href="#">Distribution Future Energy Scenarios</a></p> <p><b>OIC305</b> <a href="#">Long term development statement</a></p> <p><b>OIC306</b> <a href="#">Strategic Development Plans</a></p> <p><b>OIC307</b> <a href="#">Distribution Network Options Assessment (DNOA) outcomes reports</a></p> <p><b>OIC211</b> <a href="#">Strategy and Policy Statement for Energy Policy in Great Britain</a></p> <p><b>OIC212</b> <a href="#">Orkney Renewable Energy Forum</a></p> <p><b>OIC214</b> <a href="#">Orkney Renewable Energy Forum - Grid</a></p> <p><b>OIC213</b> <a href="#">Strategic Energy Planning (SEP) publications, consultations and updates</a></p> <p><b>OIC185</b> <a href="#">Orkney Energy Heritage Strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC158</b> <a href="#">Planning Policy and Advice: Historic Environment (Topics and Themes)</a></p> <p><b>OIC216</b> <a href="#">Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1</a></p> <p><b>OIC326</b> <a href="#">NESO Zonal Pricing</a></p> <p><b>OIC258</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Draft</a></p>

## National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context

### Policy 11 Energy

The intent of this policy is to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore, including storage, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. The policy outcome is the expansion of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies.

Therefore, local development plans should support all forms of electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities. Repowering, extending, and expanding existing wind farms and enabling associated infrastructure that supports the transmission, distribution and storage of energy will be supported.

Although planning applications for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies must consider impacts on biodiversity, communities, public access etc., significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

### National Developments Statements of Need

National developments that are concerned with the generation of energy and associated infrastructure, where they are of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by 'The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009', will be designated a national development.

Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure for the whole of Scotland is required to meet zero carbon targets:

- Expansion of the electricity grid to connect and transmit output from new on and offshore generation.
- Large and rapid increase in electricity generation from renewable sources.
- Energy storage technology and capacity, to provide the vital services, including flexible response.
- Generation for domestic consumption as well as for export to the UK and beyond.
- The expansion of 4G and 5G mobile infrastructure is critical for renewable energy development. Opportunities should be taken to deliver the infrastructure as part of other infrastructure upgrades or installation works, such as energy transmission, transportation, and travel networks where appropriate.

Supporting services for the renewable and marine energy and shipping sectors includes:

- New or updated on and/or offshore infrastructure for energy generation from renewables exceeding 50 megawatts capacity.
- Electricity transmission cables and converter stations on and/or offshore of 132kv and above.
- Infrastructure for the production, storage and transportation of low and zero-carbon fuels including renewable hydrogen; and hydrogen production related chemicals including ammonia with appropriate carbon capture linked to transport and storage infrastructure.
- Oil terminal modifications at Scapa Flow to maintain asset use moving towards net zero emissions.

Energy Innovation Development on the Islands and Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure has specific deliverable outcomes in Orkney.

- **Scapa Flow Future Fuels Hub** - Clean fuels for shipping will be a critical requirement in achieving the UK and Scottish Governments' net zero targets by 2050 and 2045, respectively. In the short-term, cleaner fuels are needed to enable shipping to meet emissions regulations set by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).
- **Orkney Logistics Base** – The Logistics Base is an expansion of the current quay at Hatston. This development will provide additional berthing space to support industries such as offshore wind and oil and gas.

## Summary of Evidence

Orkney is home to the highest concentration of small and micro wind turbines in the UK, as well as several larger community owned and commercial turbines, one locally owned wind farm, and one commercial wind farm. The Energy sector is an important part of the Orkney economy and is likely to continue to be. There are a variety of large-scale grid improvement projects underway which will give improved capacity for energy development. In addition, NPF4 identifies national projects in Orkney related to supporting the renewables industries deliver offshore wind. It will be important for the next LDP to provide a framework to facilitate the delivery of a low carbon economy but ensuring appropriate consideration is given to where there are areas of constraint to safeguard the nationally important natural and cultural heritage assets of the Islands.

## Orkney Policy Context

### [OIC127 Orkney Local Development Plan 2017](#)

The Local Development Plan currently supports the use of renewable and low carbon technologies to heat and power our homes, workplaces, and community facilities, as well as seeking to facilitate appropriate developments associated with various types of renewable energy generation. For onshore wind energy development there is a spatial framework map and a policy framework on which proposals are assessed. As part of the approach a [Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy \(OIC39\)](#) considered the capacity of the Orkney landscape to accommodate onshore wind energy development. It was identified as a tool to assist planners and developers, shape proposals and assist in the assessment of planning applications particularly around the development criteria on landscape and visual impact.

The current Local Development Plan identifies an indicative Heat Network map for Kirkwall, which is intended to give an indication of how a heat network could look and the level of detail that would be included.

The current OLDP Policy is divided up into policy guidance for heat networks, energy from waste, district heating, fuel and energy storage, renewables, and low carbon energy developments and lastly, onshore wind energy development. The OIC Plan currently mirrors policy instruction in NPF4, that LDPs should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources. The OIC Plan also supports retrofitting of networks and other equipment, the safeguarding of pipe runs, connection to existing heat networks for new developments, micro-generation, energy storage solutions at the point of generation, fuel and energy storage within industrial locations and port and harbour facilities.

The Policy goes on to include support for all renewable, onshore, and offshore, schemes that do not have unacceptable impacts for people and the environment and that have net-economic benefits. Onshore wind energy development is outlined in more detail than the other schemes and includes spatial information for 'Areas with Potential for Wind Farm Development' and 'Strategic Wind Energy Development Areas.' Supplementary guidance for energy was produced in 2017, which includes more detailed guidance for all relevant renewable and low carbon energy schemes.

There are other relevant policies in the existing OLDP 2017 relating to Energy.

These are:

Policy 1 Criteria for all development, which outlines considerations where development would be supported in terms of landscape, townscape, and coastal characters. Other criteria that require to be met to support proposed developments are no adverse effects on the amenity of neighbouring uses, no over burdening of existing infrastructure and services, no unacceptable risk to public health and safety and the proposal is resource efficient with sustainable practices in terms of energy usage and waste production.

Policy 4 (D(i)) Business, Industry and Employment, mentions energy from waste products as one waste management solution.

Policy 8 Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage.

Development within the Inner Sensitive Zones will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the development would not have a significant negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site or its setting. Development will not be permitted where it breaks the skyline at the sensitive ridgelines of the World Heritage Site when viewed from any of its component parts, or where it will be sited in any location where there is the potential to impact upon the World Heritage Site, unless it is demonstrated that the development will not have a significant negative impact on either the Outstanding Universal Value or the setting of the World Heritage Site. These policy statements are of relevance to any potential onshore windfarm developments in this area of Orkney.

Policy 9 Natural Heritage and Landscape.

This Policy indirectly relates to constraints that would be a factor when considering planning applications for energy generation schemes, both in terms of mitigation and restoration plans for sites. Paragraph 9.3 states that steps must be taken to minimise the impacts of a development on natural heritage sites and protected species during the construction, lifetime and decommissioning of any development. Where the impacts of a development on either a nationally or internationally designated natural heritage site or a protected species are uncertain, but there is sound evidence that significant irreversible damage could occur, a precautionary approach will always apply. Wind farm developments will not be supported within Orkney's National Scenic Area.

Policy 12 Coastal development, this Policy is relevant to the siting of any development within the 'coastal zone' (above Mean Low Water Mark of Ordinary Spring Tides); the core emphasis of the Policy is concerned with the promotion of development at established coastal settlements.

Policy 14 Transport, Travel and Road Network Infrastructure, transport infrastructure is relevant to energy generation schemes because the increase in electric vehicle and alternative fuels use, for example, hydrogen, need low to no carbon electricity generating schemes to contribute significantly to reduced emission targets.

### **Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Draft (OIC258)**

Orkney's Marine Plan includes three sector policies that are relevant to energy production and have a strong interaction with terrestrial planning.

Sector Policy 3: Shipping, ports, harbours and ferries, notes that piers and harbours provide vital infrastructure for a variety of sectors including renewable energy. This Policy sets safeguarding for the expansion of piers and harbours, including the national developments in NPF4, as outlined above. The location of piers and harbours are mapped out on maps 14-16 of the consultation draft Marine Plan.

Sector Policy 4: Pipeline, electricity, and telecommunications infrastructure, outlines the movement and supply of electricity through transmission and distribution, including subsea cables. The development of subsea cables and pipelines can have significant impacts on the marine environment; associated environmental pressures are identified in the Orkney Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment.

Sector Policy 5: Offshore wind, wave, and tidal renewable energy, outlines the opportunities for these energy generation modes in Orkney waters. Orkney's marine areas are amongst the most energy-rich localities in Europe, with significant wind, wave, and tidal renewable energy resources.

### **Orkney Sustainable Energy Strategy (2017-2025) (OIC002)**

The aims and actions to become a secure, sustainable, low carbon island economy.

Targets:

- Less than 20% households in fuel poverty by 2030 and 0% by 2032.
- 50% decarbonised energy use by 2030.
- 300% renewably generated electricity.
- 600 sustainable energy jobs by 2030.

### **The Orkney Hydrogen Strategy (OIC041)**

This sits as a community owned document which seeks to identify how hydrogen can best be applied to energy systems in Orkney to maintain the early mover advantage by building on the success Orkney has had in attracting and demonstrating a number of world leading hydrogen projects already active on the Islands.

There are five hydrogen development themes:

1. Innovative local energy systems and hydrogen economies – using existing and new technology, software, and techniques to deliver locally produced energy to regional users, reducing waste and managing economics in balance with social and environmental impacts.
2. Renewably produced low carbon hydrogen – focus on green hydrogen production through electrolysis from renewable sources to minimise impact on the environment.

3. Energy security, system flexibility and self-sufficiency – to reduce reliance on imported energy streams and to use local energy in a smarter and more efficient way to the benefit of local communities.
4. Just transition – ensuring that the benefits from developing new ways to deliver energy are available across the broadest range of society.
5. Promoting innovative research and development using a collaborative approach – continuing to innovate, not just the technology, but systems as a whole. Particularly how these systems interact with the end-users and continue to work in partnership where possible to increase efficacy of information flows.

### **UK and Scottish Policy**

*“Those developing policy must ask how best to address the competing issues of the ‘energy quadrilemma’: addressing climate change; ensuring affordability; providing energy security; and developing energy policy, which is acceptable to the public, economically sustainable and just.”* (P7, 2021 ScotParl – Energy Policy)

Most key decision-making policies are reserved matters, as outlined in the Scotland Act 1998, sch5; policy statements are set by the UK government. However, devolved matters include management of planning matters for consents for generation, transmission, and supply and, therefore, control of environmental impacts.

### **Strategy and policy statement for energy policy in Great Britain 2023**

The UK Government provide the overarching policy for energy in Great Britain. The power to produce a Strategy and Policy Statement for energy was provided in the Energy Act 2013. The Scottish Government has followed these strategic priorities, which include:

- Just Transition.
- Security of supply.
- Storage potential.
- Climate Change targets.
- Network resilience.

The UK's Energy Act 2023 established an independent system planner and operator to boost the UK's energy transition; creating NESO (National Energy System Operator). In December 2024 NESO brought out three high level documents:

- Strategic Spatial Energy Plan draft methodology
- Centralised Strategic Network Plan High Level Principles
- Transitional Centralised Strategic Network Plan 2 Refresh Methodology draft consultation.

In early 2025, NESO will develop Regional Strategic Energy Plans (RESPs) for England, Scotland, and Wales. The plans will aim to ensure that local areas get the energy infrastructure they need to meet local net zero and growth ambitions.

[\*\*Scottish Government draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan \(2023\) \(OIC199\)\*\*](#)

The Strategy sets out the Scottish Government's plan to transform the way Scotland generates, transports, and uses energy. This presents a huge opportunity to deliver maximum benefits to Scotland's people, workers, communities, and economy from our vast renewable energy resources.

Targets in the draft Strategy include:

- More than 20GW of additional renewable electricity on and offshore by 2023.
- An ambition for hydrogen to provide 5GW or the equivalent of 15% of Scotland's current energy needs by 2030 and 25GW of hydrogen capacity by 2045.
- Increased contributions from solar, hydro, and marine energy to our energy mix.
- Accelerated decarbonisation of domestic, industry, transport, and heat.
- By 2030, the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans to be phased out and car kilometres reduced by 20%.
- Generation of surplus electricity, enabling export of electricity and renewable hydrogen to support decarbonisation across Europe.
- Energy security through development of our own resources and additional energy storage.
- A Just Transition by maintaining or increasing employment in Scotland's energy production sector against a decline in North Sea production.

### **Offshore Wind Focus – Scottish Government 2024 (OIC197)**

The Scottish Government undertook a strategic assessment of market opportunities, which considered how to maximise the combined impact of a programme of public sector investments to realise offshore renewables supply chain opportunities in Scotland. The findings revealed that the economic opportunities are likely to be greatest where a whole systems approach is taken, which includes through clustering and the importance of building regional port clusters to realise the opportunities from floating offshore wind.

### **The Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022 (OIC042)**

This Statement sets an overall ambition of 20GW of installed onshore wind capacity in Scotland by 2030. The Statement recognises that high ambition is delivered in a way that is fully aligned with, and continues to enhance, our natural heritage and native flora and fauna, and supports our actions to address the nature crises and the climate crisis.

### **The Scottish Government Hydrogen Action Plan 2022 (OIC043)**

Development of a hydrogen economy is a national priority. In December 2020, the Scottish Government published a Hydrogen Policy Statement which aims for Scotland to be a "leading hydrogen nation in the production of reliable, competitive, sustainable hydrogen". The Action Plan supports the Government's targets to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and a 75% reduction by 2030 against the 1990 baseline. Achieving these targets means that actions will be required at an unprecedented pace to enable steps towards net zero, within which development of a hydrogen economy could be a key element. The sixth Carbon budget report from the Climate Change Committee suggest that hydrogen production in the UK could scale up to 90TWh by 2035, which is the equivalent of a third of the current power in the UK. The Action Plan recognises that hydrogen can be used to decarbonise many parts of our economy, including industry, transport, power, and heat. Transported through the gas grid it could help decarbonise commercial premises and contribute to decarbonising home energy use. For energy intensive industries, switching to hydrogen is considered one of the limited viable options for significant decarbonisation over the next 10 years.

## Climate Change Context

One of the main policy drivers for energy policy is the climate change agenda bringing the need to reduce GHG emissions and, therefore, to decarbonise the generation, transmission, and distribution of energy. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets out these priorities:

- 2030 75% reduction in emissions.
- 2040 90% reduction in emissions.
- 2045 net zero.

Energy policy documents, such as the Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022 and the Offshore Wind Policy Statement 2020, align with the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032. Renewable energy generation has a critical role to play to meet climate change targets, the priorities include:

- 20.4GW of power generation from onshore wind farms by 2030.
- 25-30GW of installed onshore wind capacity by 2050.
- Taller and more efficient turbines, which will change the landscape.
- Co-location with hydrogen electrolyzers and battery storage.
- Shared land use, for example, 'keyholing' in forests.
- 42GW of offshore wind farm capacity in the pipeline.
- Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas (INTOG) – electrification of offshore oil and gas infrastructure.

## Orkney – Current and Future Generation, Transmission & Distribution

Peat and turf have been used for fuel in Orkney since at least the Neolithic period and was the main source of domestic fuel during the medieval and much of the post-medieval period.

Today peat is still burnt for heat on a small, local, scale. Orkney was peppered with small renewable schemes like micro-hydro-power and homemade turbines; creating an energy generation culture, often based on renewables (**OIC185**).

The Orkney Islands have been at the forefront of renewable energy generation innovation from the 1950s and have been installing ground and air pumps for heating domestic and commercial properties for more than 15 years.

Persistent winds mean that Orkney can generate a lot of power from wind farms, which result in higher annual exports of electricity than domestic consumption. Transmission connectors transfer the wind-generated power to the mainland grid; the electricity is sold back to consumers with a surcharge. Zonal, or regional pricing is a method of dividing the transmission system into several pre-determined zones or geographical regions. Each zone has uniform electricity prices separate from other zones in each settlement period. The boundary is typically set at key transmission constraints or areas where transmission links are most likely to become congested. The system means that Orkney is usually in the top ten highest electricity charges per unit.

One of the main drivers for Orkney's innovative lead is the fact that the Orkney Islands are off the gas grid and, therefore, have embraced other forms of low carbon technology in their route towards zero carbon.

## Orkney in stats

- 100% + of electricity demand generated by renewables since 2013
- 2kW renewable energy capacity per home (9 x UK average)
- 300 jobs related to renewables
- 1,000 + individual energy generators (domestic solar and wind turbines)
- 10% of homes have microgeneration installed (compared to 2.8% UK average)
- 892 small & medium wind turbines <50m (2023 data – extant approvals)
- 82 large turbines >50m (2023 data - extant approvals)
- 6 community turbines (included in the numbers above)
- 4 wind farms with planning consent
- 6 wind farms in scoping process
- 350 solar installations
- 14.7% of households have heat pumps installed (compared to 9% overall in Scotland) (as of August [2024](#))

Below is a map showing the high level of onshore wind turbines in Orkney.

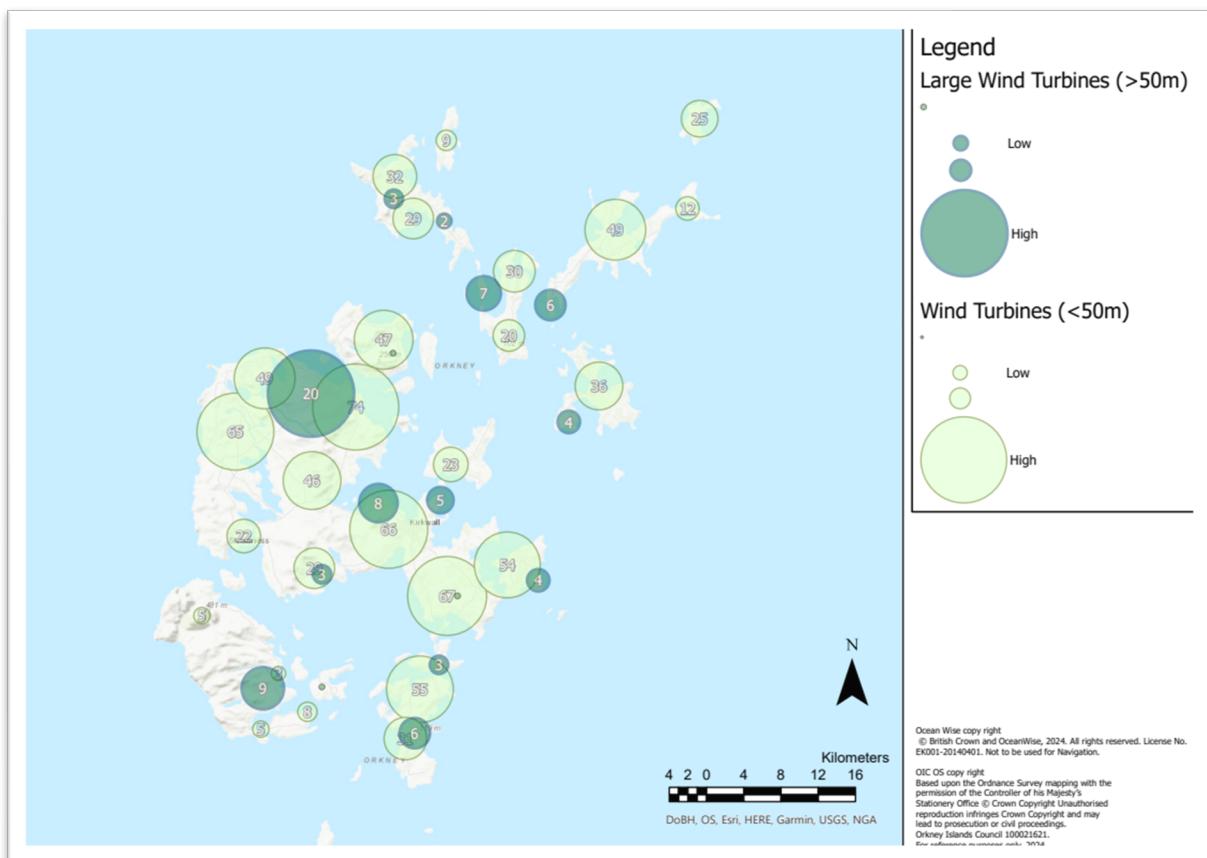


Figure 11 - Spread of Wind Turbines in Orkney

The Orkney Islands are currently supplied by two 33kV cable circuits that connect to mainland infrastructure at Thurso South Grid Supply Point (GSP). There is no transmission infrastructure on the island. Due to the extent of generation on the islands, an Active Network Management (ANM) system, the first of its kind in the UK, was developed to ensure that customers could continue to connect, but would be managed, to ensure that SSEN Distribution's distribution assets could be operated within safe operational limits.

The demand on the Orkney Islands has also increased steadily over the decades. To ensure that SSEN Distribution maintains the security of supply standards under the P2/7 security of supply standard, Kirkwall Diesel Power Station remains connected to the network to support the demand in the event of loss of one of the 33kV cables to the mainland. A single 33kV cable cannot support the full demand on Orkney, so the power station is required to provide additional support should one of the two distribution cables fail. In order to decommission the Kirkwall Diesel Power Station, in a bid to decarbonise the network in Orkney, a whole systems approach was taken to ensure security of supply in the future (see Orkney-Caithness subsea link and Eday transmission link below).

#### Orkney-Caithness 220kV HVAC Subsea Link (OIC206)

The Orkney transmission link, an SSEN Transmission project, will enable the connection of up to 220MW of new renewable electricity and consists of a new substation at Finstown in Orkney, and around 53km of subsea cable, connecting to a new substation at Dounreay in Caithness. This scheme, when completed, will mean that more renewable generation schemes on Orkney can go ahead due to the increased capacity. This substation will also provide a grid connection point for local power distribution. Finstown Substation is expected to be completed in 2027 and put into commission in 2028; development work is underway.

A Council commissioned study into the potential value of a new electricity transmission link between Orkney and the Scottish Mainland, has shown the development could be worth at least £371 million to the Orkney economy.

#### Eday transmission link

As part of the whole systems approach, establishing a Grid Supply Point (GSP) in Eday and constructing a transmission link from Eday to Finstown is recommended. The proposal is to create an indoor substation in Eday, from which generation will be connected to the grid via a single 132kV transmission connection back to Finstown.

#### **Marine Renewables, Orkney Harbours Masterplan & ScotWind Leasing Round (OIC216)**

Orkney has offshore sites leased from Crown Estate Scotland for wind, tidal and wave generation schemes. The ScotWind leasing process enabled developers to apply for seabed rights from Crown Estate Scotland, with a collective market ambition to deliver 28GW of offshore wind power. West of Orkney and Ayre offshore windfarms are currently going through scoping.

Investment in harbour infrastructure and facilities is proposed to attract offshore wind construction to Orkney, relevant infrastructure can support offshore industry activities of construction and assembly, mobilisation, operations, maintenance, renewal, and decommissioning. The Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1 outlines five harbour improvement projects, two of these are being processed by development management, see below.

**Scapa Deep Water Quay** is going through the planning process and currently awaiting decision. Scapa Deep Water Quay forms part of the Orkney Harbours Masterplan and comprises the creation of 575m of quayside with a water depth of -15m CD (chart datum), therefore, includes development onshore and below the Mean High-Water Springs Mark. This development will allow larger vessels to come alongside and provide anchorages in close proximity and structures on land for repair, supplies and crew changes.

**Hatston Pier and Terminal Expansion**, which also forms part of the Orkney Harbours Masterplan, has a live planning application. This proposed expansion would see Hatston Quay rebranded as Orkney Logistics Base. The increased berthing capacity would be able to support a range of economic sectors including the offshore wind and oil industry.

**Creation of hard standing areas at Lyness**, also outlined in the Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1, can also support the oil and gas and renewable energy industries, particularly in terms of a site for decommissioning smaller parts.

### **Flotta Hydrogen Hub and West of Orkney offshore windfarm**

An energy industry hub is pursuing the opportunity for offshore wind to power the production of green hydrogen on an industrial scale on the island of Flotta. A successful bid was made in the ScotWind leasing round for the West of Orkney windfarm.

### **EMEC – European Marine Energy Centre**

Established in 2003, EMEC is the world's first and leading facility for testing and validating wave and tidal devices in the sea that harness energy from wave and tide action. EMEC is also pioneering the development of a green hydrogen economy in Orkney and working on projects to support the development of offshore wind and other clean energy systems. EMEC continue to pioneer study on green hydrogen as a synthetic e-fuel in their R and D facility, helping to understand the logistics around the transportation of hydrogen and supporting infrastructure that is required.

### **Orkney – Current and Future Demand**

Although, Orkney currently has the capacity to generate more renewable energy than is required to meet demand, the situation is monitored, and future security takes account of projected increased demand.

**Distribution Future Energy Scenarios** (DFES) are produced in partnership with SSE Distribution and Regen, a process which aims to understand future needs for the network. The evidence and data collection includes development insights from local authorities.

The next two layers in the distribution forecasting are the Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and the Distribution Network Options Assessment (DNOA) process. The former outlines evidence that feeds into a load forecast, which informs system needs across the network. The latter, DNOA process, gives exact locations of system needs, outlines a proposed solution and the timeline for intervention works to remove constraints.

In the latest DNOA Outcomes Report (January 2025), asset solutions are proposed for Kirkwall PSS and Hatston PSS (new site) and St. Marys PSS; both proposals are the result of forecasted demand growth. The proposed Hatston PSS is to facilitate load transfer from Kirkwall PSS,

addressing overloading out to 2035. A proposed new PSS at Grimness in South Ronaldsay; the option addresses demand growth at St Marys PSS out to 2050.

Long Term Development statements can assist with better development locations for connecting to distribution systems.

### **Hebrides and Orkney Whole System Uncertainty Mechanism (HOWSUM)**

SSEN Distribution RIIO-ED2 business plan included proposed investments in 15 subsea cables. These proposals provide a funding route to improve capacity, reliability, and resilience, providing whole systems solutions for net zero and to support security of supply in Scotland's islands. This needs to be supported by strategic analysis looking at future whole system requirements out to 2045 and beyond.

SSEN Distribution plan to submit proposals for the Orkney Islands, Inner Hebrides, and any further informed position to update the Outer Hebrides in January 2025.

Areas that will increase future demand include continued electrification of heating systems, a growing housing, and commercial buildings stock and, growing numbers of electrical vehicles, in conjunction with increase in charging points. Proposals are also underway for battery electric vehicles and charging infrastructure for passenger ferries. Stromness Ferry Terminal already has an overnight plug-in for North Link's Hamnavoe ferry to allow the ship's generators to be turned off at night. Further pier plug-ins are being considered for Hatston in Kirkwall to allow cruise liners to plug-in while docked.

SSEN show live demand for electricity, against electricity generation. The total renewable generation does not include the significant amount of microgeneration (<50kW) installed on the network.

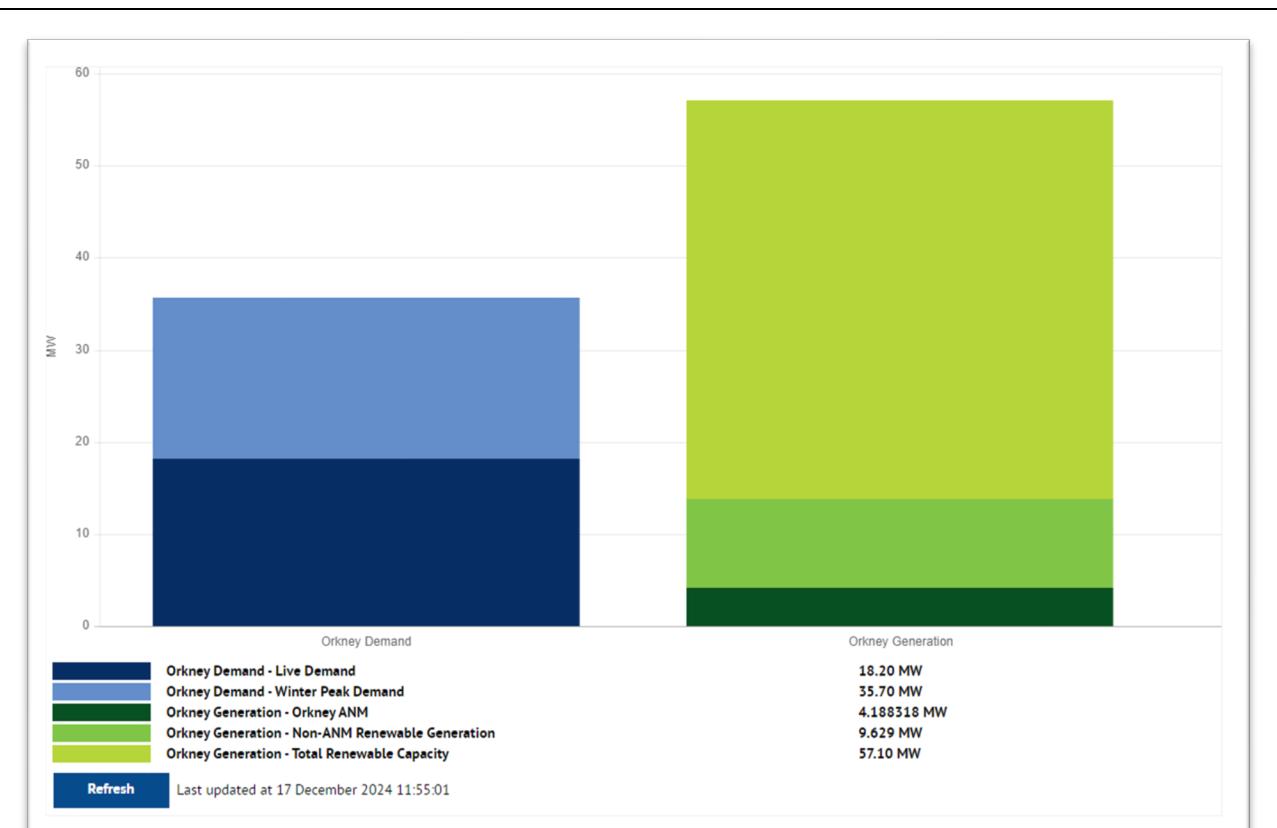


Figure 12 - Live Demand for Electricity in Orkney (OIC209)

#### Identified Gaps:

- Further clarity needed on grid update timelines and spatial implications.
- Evidence gap on hydrogen economy infrastructure requirements.

#### Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

SSEN Transmission and Distribution.

EMEC.

OIC Climate Change Officer.

OIC – Energy Manager.

Marine Services.

HES.

#### Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

In terms of Spatial Planning Priorities, Orkney's natural advantages ensure that the area is growing its research excellence, and driving low carbon is a core theme of the Islands Growth Deal. This will support the emergence of the planned joint Islands Centre for Net Zero, alongside island-specific initiatives. Orkney has been home to the European Marine Energy Centre since 2003 and the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus (ORIC) in Stromness provides a focus for Orkney's renewable and low carbon industries and research facilities.

*“Resilience and a growing green economy will depend on delivery of improved grid connections, including high voltage grid cables connecting the three island groups to the mainland. This will be complemented by the innovation in low and zero carbon fuels and the roll out of locally distributed energy systems to reduce emissions from buildings, address significant fuel poverty and secure longer-term resilience.....”NPF4.*

The evidence has shown that Orkney is at the forefront of transitioning to renewable energy and, will be a supplier of even more renewable energy when current and future proposals are complete. Orkney is also a link in the supply chain for the emerging energy from hydrogen.

The proposed Plan is likely to identify the route of Electricity Grid Development upgrades and other key energy infrastructure and consider a tailored local policy approach for associated supporting development to direct the right development to the right place.

The Local Development Plan will take account and identify projects set out within the Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 1 and any future projects that would be included in Orkney Harbours Masterplan Phase 2 and support the role they play in facilitating renewables.

The Local Development Plan will set out a tailored approach to renewables development to maximise renewable energy opportunities in Orkney within the appropriate locations. This is likely to require consideration of areas identified as having capacity for renewables development and providing guidance and mapping where there are areas of constraint. The sensitive ridge lines around the World Heritage Site are a particular local sensitivity in relation to wind farm development which will require guidance.

The proposed Plan should support development of a hydrogen economy, identifying opportunities for production and refuelling sites.

#### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no outstanding areas of dispute.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) noted that they welcomed the inclusion of OIC158: Planning Policy and Advice: Historic Environment (Topic & Themes) as part of the evidence base for this topic. They also welcome the need for a tailored approach, with particular reference to the sensitive ridgelines associated with the WHS.

Orkney Renewable Energy Forum (OREF) provided a range of comments centred around pp74-77, from Orkney Current and Future Generation, Transmission and Distribution. Some of the comments relate to writing styles, questioning the use of ‘transmission’ in one instance and erroneously quoting a sentence as present tense instead of past tense, these have not been changed as they are considered correct and appropriate, including the paragraph that sets the scene for the particular case of renewable energy use in Orkney. A short paragraph has been added to clarify zonal pricing and why Orkney’s rates per unit tend to be among the highest, the wording taken from NESO’s website. Several additions were made to the Orkney in Stats table to clarify figures given. Apart from correcting Coplands Dock to Stromness Ferry Terminal other comments were considered as not relevant to the EV as it is based on credible evidence researched at the time of writing.

Scottish Water commented on their support for renewable energy generation schemes and decarbonised heat network opportunities. Also noted were alternative solutions for hydrogen as a key energy source using treated effluent and desalination; these currently have no implications for the proposed Plan.

SSEN provided a further five web links for consideration in the evidence base; four of these reports have been included in the reference list and mentioned in the current and future demand section. SSEN also noted satisfaction at the inclusion of the Finstown substation ongoing works. Lastly, SSEN requested that SSEN Transmission be mentioned as responsible for the Substation works and SSEN Distribution be noted as responsible for the HOWSUM project; both these additions have been made.

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC308</b> OLDP2014</p> <p><b>OIC220</b> <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance: Settlement Statements</a></p> <p><b>OIC221</b> <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance: Housing in the Countryside</a></p> <p><b>OIC023</b> <a href="#">Development Management Guidance: Considering and Including Biodiversity in Development</a></p> <p><b>OIC223</b> Three Villages Masterplan</p> <p><b>OIC224</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall Urban Design Framework</a></p> <p><b>OIC225</b> Stromness Design Framework</p> <p><b>OIC020</b> <a href="#">Orkney Open Space Strategy – Vision and Action Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC227</b> <a href="#">OOSS: Planning for Open Space Supplementary Guidance</a></p> <p><b>OIC228</b> <a href="#">Stromness South End Dev Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC229</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Walliwall Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC231</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Black Building (Repeater Road) Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC232</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Central West Development</a></p> <p><b>OIC233</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Corse West Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC224</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Grainbank Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC235</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Hatston Enterprise Area Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC236</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Papdale Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC237</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: South Development Brief</a></p>

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
	<p><b>OIC238</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Watersfield Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC239</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall: Weyland Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC240</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Coplands Dock Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC241</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Eastbrae Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC242</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Garson Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC243</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Netherton Road Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC244</b> <a href="#">Stromness: North End Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC245</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Orkney Research Campus Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC246</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Upper Sunnybank STR-2</a></p> <p><b>OIC247</b> <a href="#">Stromness: Site STRA Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC248</b> <a href="#">Burray: Westermill Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC249</b> <a href="#">Finstown: Site H4 Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC250</b> <a href="#">Lyness Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC251</b> <a href="#">St Margaret's Hope (South) Development Brief</a></p> <p><b>OIC093</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Transport Strategy 2023-2043</a></p> <p><b>OIC252</b> <a href="#">What's Next for Stromness – Local Place Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC253</b> <a href="#">Your Kirkwall</a></p> <p><b>OIC309</b> <a href="#">NatureScot - Landscape</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>Policy 14 Design, quality and place requires LDPs to be place based and in-line with the Place Principle. LDPs should provide clear expectations for design, quality, and place taking account of local context, characteristics, and connectivity of the area. Development proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places, will not be supported. They should also identify where more detailed design guidance is expected.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<p>Annex D – Six Qualities of Successful Places</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy – designing for wellbeing, active lifestyles, accessibility, social connectivity, environmentally positive places.</li> <li>2. Pleasant – designing for positive social interactions, protection, connecting with nature, variety, and quality of recreational space.</li> <li>3. Connected – designing for active travel, connectivity, convenient connections, pedestrian experience.</li> <li>4. Distinction - designing for scale, built form, sense of place.</li> <li>5. Sustainable – designing for transition to net zero, climate resilience and nature recovery, active local economy, community, and local living.</li> <li>6. Adaptable – designing for quality and function, longevity and resilience and long-term maintenance.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Summary of Evidence</b></p>	
<p>Policies on Design, Quality and Place have been included as key policies within several of Orkney's Local Development Plans. Each of these adopted various approaches to improve the quality of urban design and placemaking across Orkney. Embedding placemaking and design quality into development at the earliest of stages not only improves the aesthetic and physical attributes of the built environment but has the potential to influence and support health and well-being, improve accessibility, and reduce inequalities, improve biodiversity and positively respond to the climate emergency.</p> <p>Having reviewed the policy approach within the OLDP2017 (<b>OIC127</b>), alongside consents and applications, it is apparent that the current Policy lacks clarity and requires further detail of what the OLDPs expectations are with regards to design, quality, and place. As a result, the quality of design and delivery of good placemaking practices has suffered during the current plan period.</p> <p>Approaches taken within historic OLDPs have also been reviewed as part of this topic paper. Within those policies are approaches which could be developed further and re-introduced into the next OLDP to help provide more informative guidance and reduced ambiguity that is missing within the OLDP2017. Examples of this include the OLDP 2014 (<b>OIC308</b>) specific policy on Location, Siting and Design. Using this evidence the next Plan will strive to address the shortcomings identified within the current and provide better up-front and clear guidance to support applicants and stakeholders in delivering higher quality places that people want to live and work in.</p> <p><b><u>The OLDP 2017 Approach</u></b></p> <p>The OLDP2017 includes one Policy on Design, Policy 2. This single Policy focused around six key principles that all development must demonstrate which broadly conform with the six qualities of successful places.</p> <p>“Where relevant, proposals must demonstrate, through consideration of scale, massing, form, proportions, plot size/density, materials, layout, and landscaping, that it complies with the following fundamental principles:</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. it reinforces the distinctive identity of Orkney's built environment and is sympathetic to the character of its local area;</li> <li>ii. it has a positive or neutral effect on the appearance and amenity of the area;</li> <li>iii. it facilitates easy wayfinding to and around the development and is appropriately connected to pedestrian, vehicular and public transport routes, encouraging and prioritising pedestrian access;</li> <li>iv. it allows for future conversion, extension, or adaptation to other uses;</li> <li>v. it promotes sustainable design, minimising use of energy and materials at all stages of the development, and maximises opportunities for shelter; and</li> <li>vi. all external lighting is designed to minimise light pollution. “</li> </ul> <p>The Policy wording itself was kept succinct and instead utilises/references Supplementary Guidance and Planning Policy Advice, Development Brief and Masterplan Frameworks, which were to provide further guidance on how to apply the six principles. However, due to resource constraints, Covid-19 and other external factors, some of these supporting documents were never finalised or started, leaving a gap in guidance and uncertainty in the planning system on the responsibilities around placemaking.</p> <p><b><u>Settlement Statements</u></b></p> <p>Settlement Statements were produced for all the settlements on Mainland Orkney and the linked isles to support Policy 2, with separate isles statements being produced for ferry and air linked isles, where the Spatial Strategy takes a more supportive approach to development. The Settlement Statements were intended to set out key information and provide analysis of existing characteristics within each settlement. This included highlighting the key issues, constraints, and design requirements, which development should acknowledge and respond to within that defined area.</p> <p>Each settlement is represented by a general description, which notes information on flooding and drainage, natural heritage, and historic environment and cultural heritage. Having reviewed the Settlement Statements, they contain generic principles and lack of site-specific detail. The current settlement descriptions focus on the historic development of the place in terms of timeline, with limited or no definition of the distinct character/character areas, typology and urban grain, architectural vernacular, landscape sensitivities and features, and open space character.</p> <p>There is an ambition for the next OLDP to include more of detailed settlement analysis within the plan itself, to ensure that recommendations and requirements are tailored and appropriate to the varied and rich settlement characters across Orkney. Our aim is to encourage better design quality and development that actively and appropriately responds to its setting. Settlement Statements and maps will also be able to draw on the extensive work and information incorporated within Local Place Plans or other community-led plans, to ensure the plan-making process encompasses community ambitions and priorities.</p> <p><b><u>Development Briefs</u></b></p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<p>For certain sites within OLDP2017, the Settlement Statements identified a need for a development brief to be produced prior to design and application stages. These briefs, which were predominately produced by the Council, included design criteria covering building design and placemaking, open space and landscape, movement, and connectivity. These criteria were then required to be incorporated into the designs of applications for these sites. Some of the briefs attempted to incorporate more site-specific recommendations to support a tailored approach to design policy. However, the briefs remain broad brush in their approach to most design principles, with only minimal variations between them.</p> <p>As part of monitoring of the plan and review of applications, against this style of development brief, analysis of the development demonstrates that the few tailored elements noted within the briefs are not being fully incorporated into the final designs, resulting in opportunities being missed to integrate desire lines within active travel routes, maximising multi-purpose open space, and integrate Sustainable Urban Drainage with other open spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stromness South End Development Brief (<b>OIC228</b>)</li> </ul> <p>The most recent Development Brief produced for Stromness (The Stromness South End Development Brief) covers six existing allocations within the OLDP2017 and includes overarching design principles to embed good placemaking, design, character, sustainability, and connectivity in all developments proposed within the area covered by the brief. These principles are consistent with the six qualities of successful places and provide a Stromness specific approach to delivering these qualities.</p> <p>The Brief then goes into site-specific design considerations to provide further guidance to future applications to further guarantee an additional tailored approach to design and placemaking as part of more complex individual site levels.</p> <p>At their core, the design principles within the Development Brief are appropriate for the wider Orkney context. As part of the drafting of the next OLDP, these principles, which have been part of extensive consultation discussions with key stakeholders and the community, could be built-upon and embedded within OLDP Policy to achieve a higher standard of urban design and good placemaking.</p> <p><u>Other Supplementary Guidance</u></p> <p>The Supplementary Guidance: Housing in the Countryside 9 (<b>OIC221</b>) was prepared in 2021, it supports and informs the policy provision for housing in the countryside, as set out in Policy 5, with regards to single houses and new housing clusters in the countryside of the OLDP2017. The guidance includes nine design criteria, which all proposals for housing in the countryside must comply with to be acceptable. These include siting development to fit with the landscape and minimise visual impacts, ensuring development is of an appropriate scale to its location and neighbours, ensuring layouts do not promote suburbanisation of the countryside, and planning development to ensure cohesion of infrastructure and design through the production of a Site Development Statement. The document provides a fictitious example Site Development Statement, to support applicants and landowners prior to application submission.</p>	<p>Development Management Guidance</p>

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Strategy and Audit</li> </ul> <p>The Orkney Open Space Strategy: Planning for Open Space (<b>OIC227</b>) was prepared in 2014 and provided guidance for the development, provision, and maintenance of open space in Orkney. As part of the Strategy a detailed audit of all the open space within Orkney was carried out, including assessment of its attractiveness, accessibility, community benefit and promotion of activity, health, and well-being.</p> <p>Access to well-designed, high quality and varied open spaces is not only important for physical and mental health and well-being, but these spaces also contribute to creating rich, characterful, and interesting places that benefit all parts of the community. The updated audit and Open Space Strategy will form an important part of the evidence base and support the delivery and design of better quality, multi-functional open spaces in the next Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DMG: Considering and Including Biodiversity in Development (<b>OIC222</b>)</li> </ul> <p>The Council produced Development Management Guidance: Considering and Including Biodiversity in Development, to assist with the new Policy 3 (biodiversity) requirement of NPF4. The guidance considers local biodiversity and includes examples appropriate and tailorable to Orkney environments. The aim of the document is to assist applications at various scales of development, across Orkney. The aims and guidance within this DMG will be embedded within the next OLDP, to ensure delivery of high quality, green and blue spaces, and networks, which enhance, preserve and restore biodiversity, in collaboration with opportunities for people to interact with and benefit from good quality open and green spaces.</p> <p>Local natural landscapes should also be considered in design statements. The second of the six qualities of successful places includes supporting attractive natural and built spaces, therefore, designing for connections with natural landscapes, existing landforms and features, biodiversity and eco-systems and visual connections. Schedule 2 has more detailed evidence on Orkney's landscape, including spatial data on landscape character and the NSA encompassing part of Hoy and West Mainland.</p> <p><u>Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods</u></p> <p>NPF4 requires LDP's to support local living, including 20-minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. Separate summaries have been included within Topic 6 Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods that provide further detail, however, the two topics work closely together, with good urban design and placemaking principles taken from our development briefs, masterplans and frameworks supporting the core principles of local living within an island setting. Embedding these principles and strategies graphically within the next OLDP will support deliveries of both topics throughout the lifetime of the plan.</p> <p><u>Active Travel Vision and Strategy</u></p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<p>The important of active travel and sustainable transport design and integration is highlighted within the Orkney Local Transport Strategy (<b>OIC093</b>), which sets out a policy framework to help guide and support decision-making within the Council. The Strategy emphasises the importance of the sustainable travel hierarchy, which supports our aspirations for design and places to consider how people will move through and interact with places from the earliest stages of the design and development process.</p> <p>There is ongoing work to continue to develop this with an aim to review and update the Active Travel Strategy. Development of the next OLDP will take this into account as part of policy recommendations to ensure the aims and benefits of moving towards an increase in walking, wheeling, and cycling are embedded and supported within the plan. Urban design and placemaking is a key tool in delivering and supporting active travel ambitions, especially within new development areas. Opportunities for the next plan to include guidance and requirements to encourage walking and cycling in favour of private vehicles by prioritising pedestrians and cyclists within the streetscape, ensuring paths are well connected and safe for all users, and that the features and infrastructure make active travel the easiest and preferred mode of transport are designed into the development from the outset are some ways will be considered and explored.</p>	
<p><b>Identified Gaps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Current Settlement Statements lack detailed character analysis; require update with mapping.</li> <li>– Development Briefs for some sites are outdated; need refresh to better reflect NPF4 and placemaking principles.</li> <li>– No design codes or quality auditing framework currently in place.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <p>Schedule was sent to:</p> <p>Architecture and Design Scotland.</p> <p>NatureScot.</p> <p>SEPA.</p> <p>Council Transportation Team.</p> <p>Embedded Sustrans Officer.</p> <p>Council Urban Design Officer.</p> <p>HES.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b></p> <p>Based on the evidence, local knowledge, and review of development outcomes from monitoring and delivery on the ground, the next proposed OLDP will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a stronger approach to development briefs and site-specific design criteria will be considered within the next Plan, to ensure that recommendations, design criteria and site-</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<p>specific issues are being acknowledged and recognised as part of applications and to ensure that going forward placemaking and design standards improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of development of the next Plan, opportunities to include additional clarity on matters such as, the importance of landscape character areas and visual sensitivities, the historic environment, better definition of appropriate massing, scale and heights, and further information and examples of rural street and development layout styles to further prevent suburbanisation of countryside areas</li> <li>Several Development Briefs, which cover sites that have not yet been bought forward for development now need updating to reflect NPF4 policy positions and other best principles. The ambition and aim of the next Plan are to include more visuals and mapping, with opportunities to incorporate key elements from existing development briefs (where still appropriate) into the main body of the Plan, as part of settlement statements and local/site plans. Additional site-specific features, issues and design criteria would also be incorporated into individual allocation plans and detailed design requirements.</li> <li>Seek to reintroduce further policy positions on design, quality and placemaking within the plan to assist with up-front clarity on the aspirations, requirements, and minimum standards for designing places and space within Orkney.</li> <li>Update existing placemaking guidance, incorporating it into the plan, with a tailored approach to better recognise and respond to the variety of urban, rural, landscape and islands characters across Orkney.</li> <li>The new LDP will be more visual and map-based, with placemaking principles on design in from the start of the process. Settlement Statement maps which incorporate wider strategies and evidence will be included to provide a holistic settlement/area-based approach to placemaking.</li> <li>Consider new masterplans to ensure a structured approach to long-term growth in appropriate areas in Orkney.</li> <li>Additional combined/individual allocation plans will be included that draw in relevant existing points within development briefs, and strengthen site-specific approaches to layout, massing, heights and scale, character areas, typology, landscape setting, green and blue networks, open space, biodiversity, and drainage.</li> <li>Explore opportunities to develop a Design Panel/Quality Auditing of applications against placemaking policies to deliver improvements in placemaking and design standards, providing up-front clarity and consistency to applicants on expectations and requirements, and championing good design and places.</li> <li>Consider the potential for Design Codes, both site-specific and wider area/county level, to elevate the quality, identity and aspirations of new developments and open space, in addition to providing certainty and clarity on what constitutes acceptable design.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b></p> <p>There are no outstanding areas of dispute.</p> <p>NatureScot have requested additions to make a clearer link to landscape which have been included in the evidence.</p> <p>HES highlighted the role that historic assets can make to design, quality and place and welcomed that the evidence highlights the opportunity for the LDP to include additional clarity on matters</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	5. Design, Quality and Place
<p>such as landscape character areas and visual sensitivities and highlighted that it would also be appropriate to include the historic environment in such considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A minor update has been made to include the historic environment.</li> </ul> <p>Scottish Water commented on the importance of planning in water efficiency schemes to new developments and refurbishments; including managing rainwater at plot and community scales for non-potable use. Support was also given for the inclusion of green-blue infrastructure when considering place-based solutions. Support was also noted for the benefits of open space but noted that tree planting can have positive or negative effects and refers to the Forest and Water Guidelines.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>6. Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> <li>• a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences. Section 15(2B)</li> <li>• a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC045</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government - Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood - draft planning guidance</a></p> <p><b>OIC046</b> <a href="#">Climate Exchange - 20-minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish context</a></p> <p><b>OIC047</b> <a href="#">20 Minute Neighbourhoods   Our Place</a></p> <p><b>OIC048</b> <a href="#">HITRANS Sustrans - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands</a></p> <p><b>OIC049</b> <a href="#">Transport Scotland - Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC230</b> <a href="#">20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Rural and Island Scotland Report from practitioner roundtable – January 2022</a></p> <p><b>OIC262</b> <a href="#">Scottish Islands Survey 2023</a></p> <p><b>OIC310</b> <a href="#">Telecommunication Masts – Planning Advice</a></p> <p><b>OIC311</b> <a href="#">Developing with Nature</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>NPF4 includes a specific policy on Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods (Policy 15), although it is recognised that this is a cross-cutting policy, and other areas will contribute to this policy requirement.</p> <p>The Policy aims to 'To encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling, or cycling or using sustainable transport options.'</p> <p>This is further qualified; 'LDPs should support local living, including 20-minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The</p>	

approach should consider the local context, the varying settlement patterns and the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. Communities and businesses will have a key role to play in informing this, helping to strengthen local living through their engagement with the planning system.'

Policy 15 also provides a list of criteria that should be considered when determining planning proposals. This suggests elements to consider ensuring that proposals will contribute to local living. This includes local access, but is not limited to:

- Sustainable modes of transport including local public transport and safe, high-quality walking, wheeling, and cycling networks.
- Employment.
- Shopping.
- Health and social care facilities.
- Childcare, schools, and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, opportunities for food growth and allotments, sport, and recreation facilities.
- Publicly accessible toilets.
- Affordable and accessible housing options, ability to age in place and housing diversity.

The above criteria will provide a framework to explore local living and through mapping, a methodology can be developed to deliver local living across Orkney.

### **Summary of Evidence**

Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods offer an opportunity to create places that are well-designed and welcoming, promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities, promote social mobility, and encourage vibrant and economically sustainable communities, whilst also proactively responding to the environment.

The importance and impact of this strategy across all the geographies of Scotland is explained within the Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods (**OIC45**) which states, '*Places with high quality housing, supportive local infrastructure, services, employment, education, and sustainable travel options, can help to break cycles of disadvantage and poverty, promote healthy lifestyles, and support physical, social, and mental health and wellbeing. They can also help support thriving local economies and community wealth building. Good place design and management will strengthen local ability to manage environmental and other emerging challenges and to protect the environment.*'

The document also recognises the challenges and the need for a flexibility of approach when considering a rural and island context. Developing a local living methodology for Orkney involves creating a sustainable and community-focused approach that considers the unique challenges and opportunities of the different rural areas within Orkney. The approach to successfully delivering local living across Orkney cuts across several policy areas. Evidence has been gathered through several corresponding Schedules; this information and the outcomes will form the basis of the Orkney local living approach.

### Local Living

The use of a networked approach, with local villages/hubs that provide services to support the majority of people's daily needs, alongside providing good digital connectivity, reduces the need for people to travel to the larger towns for work. Ensuring these hubs also have reliable transport connections enables people to utilise sustainable transport options when they do need to travel further distances. This approach not only improves the quality and sustainable economies of our places but helps to reduce the financial burden for residents within rural communities that often require private car ownership and reduces the environmental impact of increased private vehicle movements.

### Local Living in the Orkney context

The next Local Development Plan (LDP) strategy aims to look at how this networked approach can be applied within the Orkney context, ensuring it builds-on and further supports existing examples where similar ideas have already naturally developed. This concept of a tailored approach to development has already been established within the OLDP2017 and will be the basis for how Local Living Policy will be developed and applied within the next LDP.

The Spatial Strategy of the OLDP 2017 (**OIC127**) identifies three classifications that are used to represent the differing geographies and communities of Orkney, whilst also taking account of the locale of services and facilities across the County.

The three classifications are:

**The Settlements of the Mainland and Linked Isles** – 26 settlements throughout this area are identified where services, facilities, retail, infrastructure, employment, and centres of population are primarily located and act as service centres for our rural communities and ferry and air linked isles. There are opportunities for sustainable development.

**The Countryside of the Mainland and Linked Isles** – provides opportunities for new sustainable economic development including that of new homes, whilst seeking to protect Orkney's landscape and natural environments for future generations.

**The Isles Approach** – development which supports permanent resident populations and are served by public transport services and does not place any unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services, will be supported.

Using this strategy as a baseline, the next OLDP will look to develop a tailored approach to sustainable development, that responds to the unique characteristics and challenges faced by our rural and island communities, ensuring that everyone benefits from the opportunities that Local Living can provide.

Taking forward and building on the existing classifications as part of the OLDP2017 allows our approach to Local Living to recognise the differences between our communities across the county, and ensure we employ a varied approach that works within its localised context.

As part of the Spatial Strategy within the OLDP2017, the Plan identified a hierarchy of settlements across the Mainland and Linked Isles, based on existing services, infrastructure, and existing

population. The Plan acknowledged the significant role that these settlements have in acting as service centres for Orkney's more rural communities.

Building on this approach to sustainable development and supporting opportunities to fill the gaps in service provision within the villages and rural settlements will be a key aim of the next LDP. Understanding the current condition and service provision is vital to the development of the next Plan, ensuring its policies work within the existing settlement context. This includes consideration of the 14 key themes identified within the Scottish Government Planning Guidance (**OIC045**), to ensure all aspects of Local Living are considered.



Figure 13 - Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, showing the Local Living Framework. pg. 19

Several pieces of work have already been undertaken to look at the ability of our different communities across Orkney to be able to develop a live local approach. This has included desk-based assessments and the mapping of the existing key services and infrastructure within the current settlements within the adopted Local Development Plan. This analysis provides a snapshot of the facilities and services that exist within our settlements and their relationship to where we currently have land allocated for development.

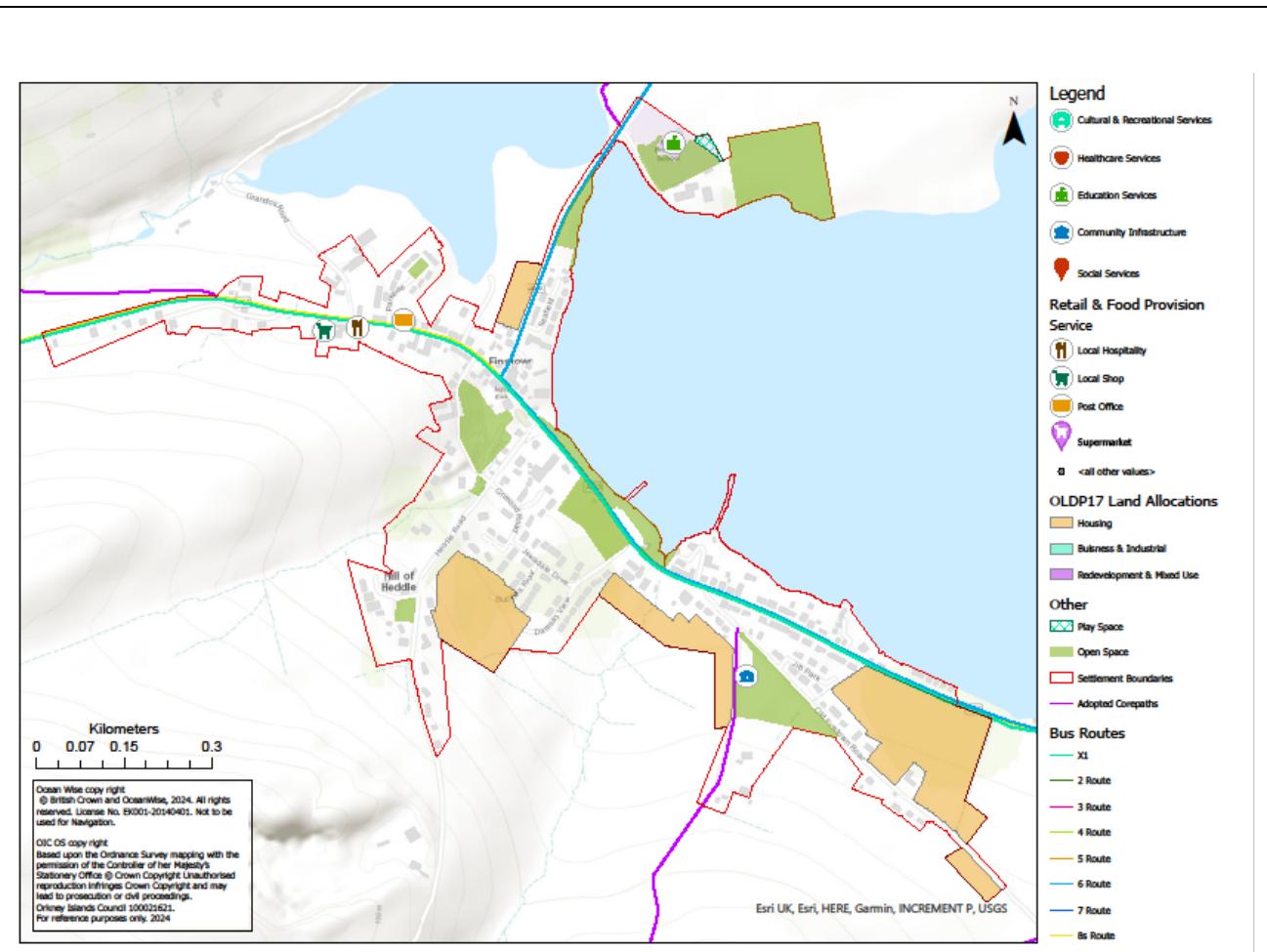


Figure 14 - Draft services and facilities plan of Finstown

## Our Towns – Kirkwall and Stromness

Whilst most of our rural and island communities will be looking at developing a Local Living approach to align with Policy 15 outcomes, our larger settlements of Kirkwall and Stromness incorporate features that align with the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. Development and growth of these two settlements include ambitions as part of Local Place Plans and Transport Strategies for increased active travel and pedestrian connections, improved connectivity, and sustainable transport links, and promoting place-based design that focuses on the needs of people rather than private vehicle access.

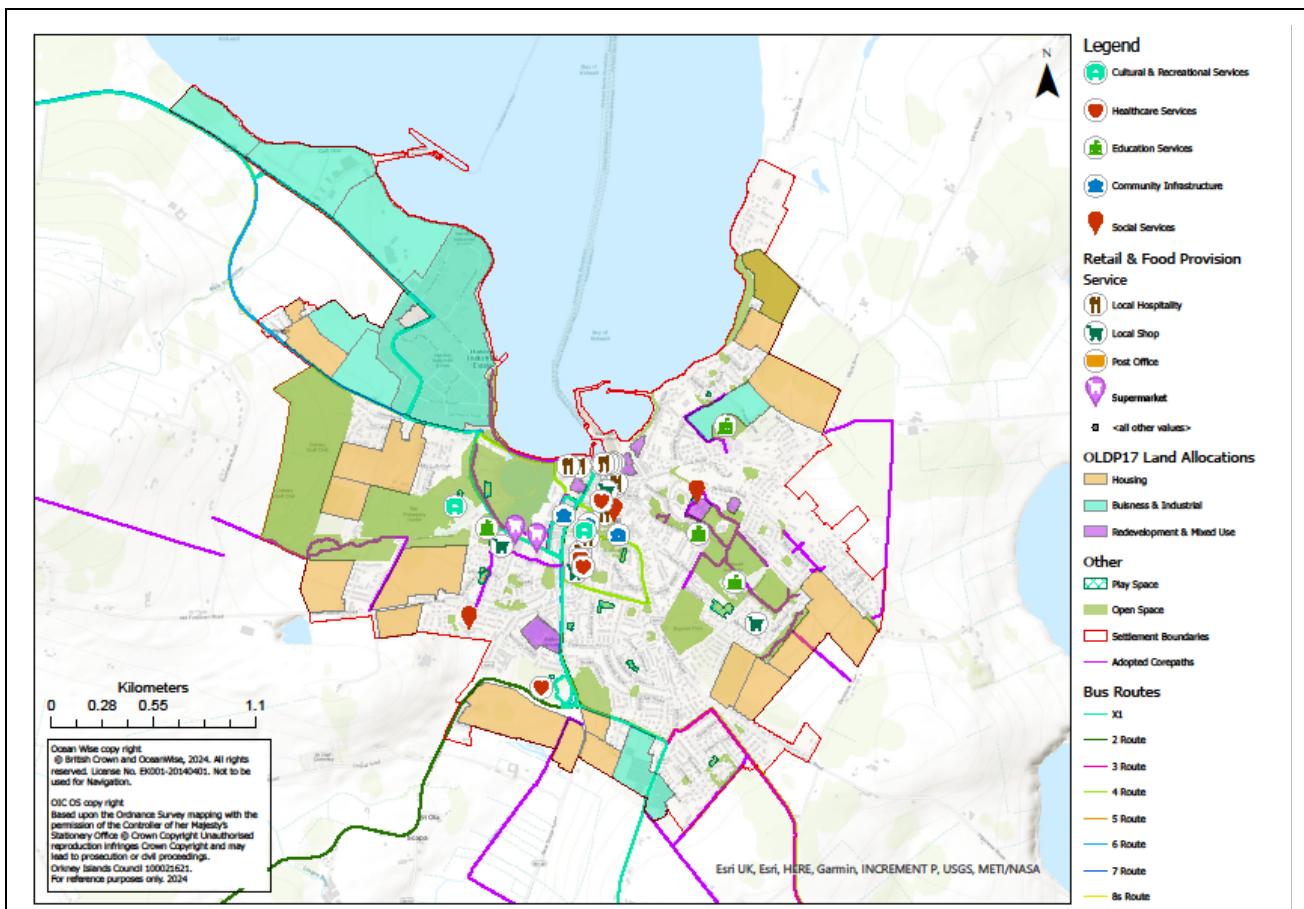


Figure 15 - Draft Services and Facilities Plan of Kirkwall

Works to understand the current condition and explore ways to integrate new infrastructure including active travel, sustainable urban drainage, and open space and leisure areas, are already underway, including a 'Surface Water Management study' of Kirkwall, which will identify how different catchments and neighbourhoods can deliver areas for housing alongside multi-purpose green corridors incorporating SUDS management, active travel and recreational spaces.

This work is being done to ensure that the next Plan plays a key role in ensuring that land allocated for development within our towns can support and advance the core principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

### Rural

Outside of the towns, our villages are more diverse and varied in scale and development pattern. The Living Well Locally - 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands report (**OIC048**) considers how the Live Local approach might be delivered within a rural and island setting, using several case studies as a basis for analysis. One of those examples is Dounby, located within the West Mainland of Orkney. The report highlights the key role that the village plays within the wider West Mainland in terms of service provision, opportunities for onward connectivity and other infrastructure, and how it functions within a hub and spoke type of relationship with the smaller rural settlements that surround it.

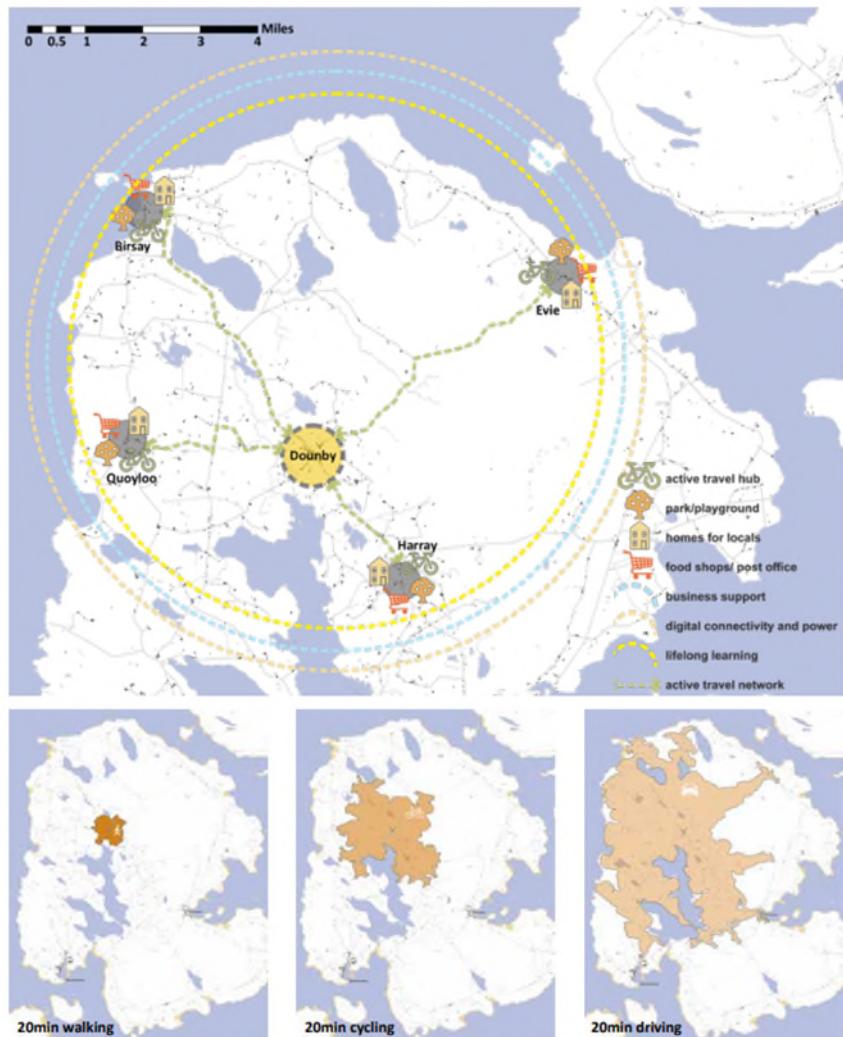


Figure 16 - Diagram from the Living Well Locally Report (OIC048)

By taking the approach, which is already naturally developing within our rural areas, the role of the next LDP will be to support the creation of a wider network of service centres across Orkney. This will include using land allocations for housing and other uses to maintain and strengthen existing facilities.

The 'Living Well Locally (OIC048) report, includes a rural interpretation of the Planning Guidance's key themes. Based on the current condition, most of Orkney's smallest settlements fall short in some of the themes within this framework, including a lack of access to basic facilities and services, infrequent public transport connections and poor digital connectivity. Through the implementation of a networked approach, settlements can work as part of a larger system of shared services, encouraging people to use local service centres in favour of relying on longer distance travel to larger settlements. This in turn allows businesses, services, and infrastructure to draw income and capacity from a wider catchment of residents, strengthening our rural economies and providing opportunities for new business and services to develop and grow. Review of our existing housing and land allocations will be undertaken to potentially seek a better alignment with this policy ambition, accepting that not all services will be available locally, but with consideration of how networked settlements could function and where development to facilitate this might be encouraged.

Developing a service centre approach, allows more people across the County to gain from the placemaking, health and wellbeing and environmental benefits a Live Local approach can offer.

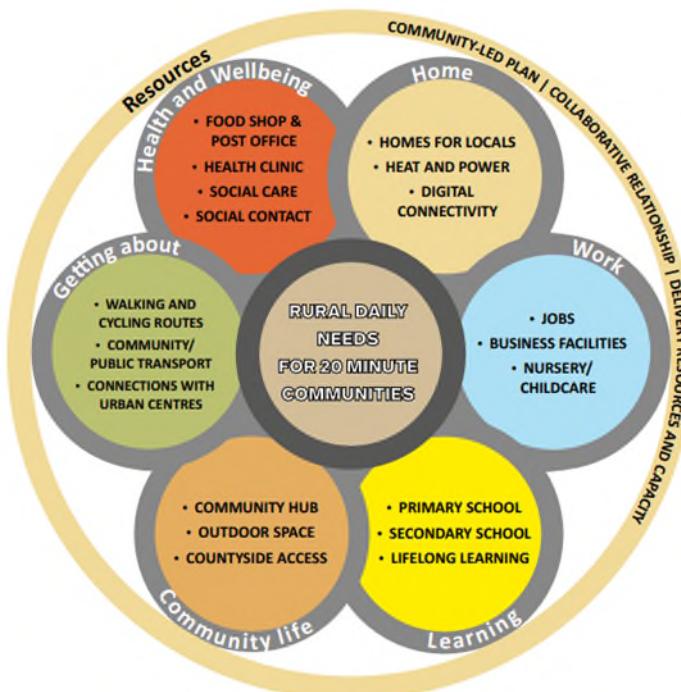


Figure 17 – Rural Needs for Living Local (OIC048)

There is some evidence of Local Living already occurring within some of our island communities. There are examples of Development Trusts creating and planning for hubs where new housing, care facilities, meeting spaces and other services such as schools and healthcare are all located in a cluster, alongside initiatives that support active travel, walking, wheeling, and cycling, and local on-demand transport services.

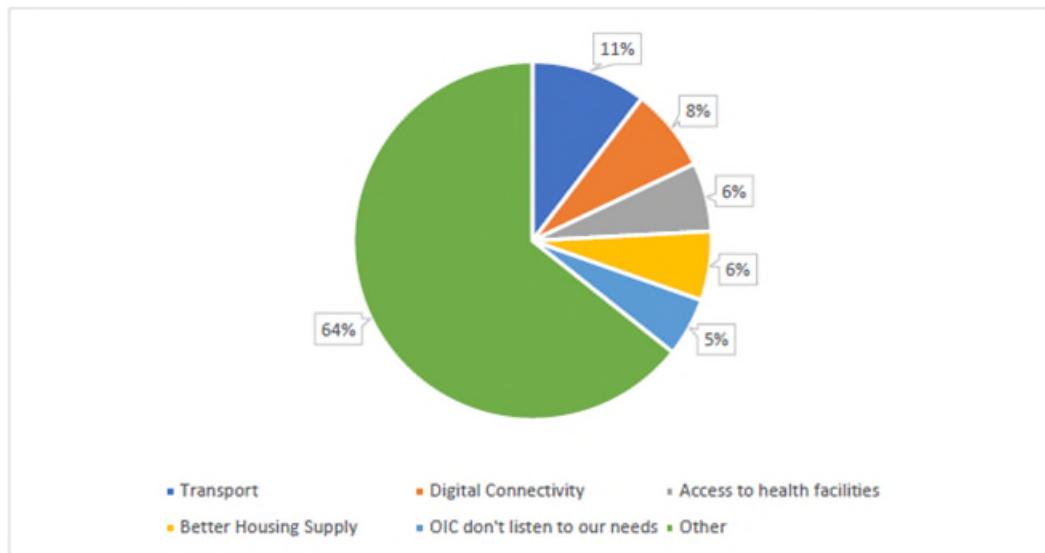
This is already supported as part of the Isles approach within the OLDP2017 Spatial Strategy, which we intend to carry forward as part of the next Plan. The Strategy's aim in reducing the reliance on travel to the Orkney Mainland for access to services has been taken up by Trusts and incorporated as part of their Community Action Plans. Such Action Plans, as well as developing Local Place Plans and other planned public engagement exercises with the communities across Orkney will all be considered and integrated as part of the next LDP strategy.

As part of some of this early engagement work, a series of conversations were undertaken in late 2021/early 2022 by the Council under the title of 'Orkney Matters'. This engagement looked at what different communities across Orkney like about their area but also what they would like to see improved. This process included working with lesser heard voices, including young people.

The importance of transportation, including access to bus services, the desire for more footpaths and cycleways, the County's reliance on an older ferry fleet, and road safety in relation to walking and cycling was a key theme that came out of the consultation.

#### Common Challenges identified across Orkney

The chart below shows Orkney's top 5 'areas of improvement' identified through the additional feedback/comments provided in the survey.



The 'other' category includes (but not limited to) the following:

- Unsafe roads, need walkways and cycle paths
- Lack of shops and services
- More activities/facilities for the younger generation
- More investment in economic opportunities
- More playparks/better maintenance of play areas
- Poor/no community spirit (mostly in the isles)
- Need OIC support to renovate/repurpose of buildings instead of new all the time

Figure 18 - Extract from Orkney Matters

Following on from this work, and after recognising that movement, connectivity and active travel between services and settlements came out as one of the key themes across a wide proportion of Orkney's communities, survey work has also been undertaken to understand the travel behaviour of Orkney residents. This survey (**OIC167**), dubbed 'Orkney Travel Matters', included questions on what would encourage people to make fewer short journeys by car, how often people undertake active travel, and what challenges they currently face. The results of this survey are available at a postcode level, allowing analysis of responses to be considered at a variety of scales, from parish right down to individual streets. The outcomes of this work further highlighted residents' desires to be able to walk, wheel and cycle more in their day-to-day lives, with improvements to the connectivity between smaller settlements and larger service centres being a key theme.

### This would help support more liveable places across Orkney

Among Orkney residents, more footpaths and more cycle paths were identified as the most helpful infrastructure measures to help them walk, wheel or cycle further.

**The provision of more footpaths, pavements and walking routes between towns and villages:**

70% would find useful

19% would not find useful

**More cycle paths alongside roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians:**

63% would find useful

23% would not find useful



Figure 19 - Extract from Orkney Travel Matters Report

## Transport

The National Islands Survey (OIC262) also sought views on subjects relevant to being able to live local, including public transport provision, digital connectivity and quality and safety on roads and paths.

The report found that over a quarter of respondents felt that roads, paths, and pavements in their areas were safe for cycling, and safe and accessible for wheelchairs and prams, with Orkney Mainland and Outer Isles respondents having some of the highest responses (Footnote). However, this was in response to existing paths and roads, and did not consider non-availability of such infrastructure in some areas. By considering the findings from both the National Islands Survey, and the Orkney Travel Matters works, opportunities to include mapping of both existing and missing infrastructure and routes for walking, wheeling, and cycling, and other sustainable transport will be able to be integrated into the next OLDP.

The quality of the network of public transport services across Orkney varies across the county, with some areas being able to utilise funding available to them to provide a good value and reliable service. This is evidenced by the steady growth in bus passenger figures in Orkney over the past decade compared with significant decline across the rest of Scotland (REF Transport Strategy). However, there are areas of the network where there is a very limited-service provision or often no services at all and therefore does not attract or enable people to move away from their reliance on using private vehicles. The reality in Orkney is that providing a conventional public transport service of sufficient frequency, that also covers enough routes to capture most travel origins and destinations would be unaffordable and unachievable. It is a complex situation, with many interrelated factors, including aspects such as a very dispersed pattern of housing, as described in earlier Schedules.

Some of the other practical issues with delivering effective transport connectivity are embedded in the geography of the County and in the context of historical planning. Public transport services are primarily driven by the need to get to or from Kirkwall and Stromness, as well as to the ferry terminals and airports for onward travel purposes.

The population outside of Kirkwall and Stromness is dispersed, with most villages located a significant distance from Kirkwall or Stromness, and furthermore, much of our rural housing is again dispersed quite significantly outside of our rural and village settlements. Partly in response to this dispersity, and to utilise existing infrastructure, services and facilities have historically been concentrated in Kirkwall, and to a lesser degree Stromness, with limited development of services and facilities in other settlements.

For context, on Mainland Orkney, distances to Kirkwall can range up to 20 miles, from Birsay in the west and around Burwick in the south, for example. Deerness to the east is around 12 miles from Kirkwall. With limited services and infrastructure in or close to these outer lying settlements, journeys into Kirkwall become a necessity. The geography and the historic pattern of road development also means that there are several route options to key destinations, further adding to the challenge of devising a comprehensive but efficient bus network.

As a result of this, there is a high level of car ownership across Orkney, although there are areas where up to 30% of households do not have access to a car or van (REF Orkney Local Transport Strategy 2022-2042, pg. 55). The areas with lower levels of no car accessibility still have accessibility barriers, in relation to running and maintenance costs of a vehicle, especially when required for multiple types of journeys.

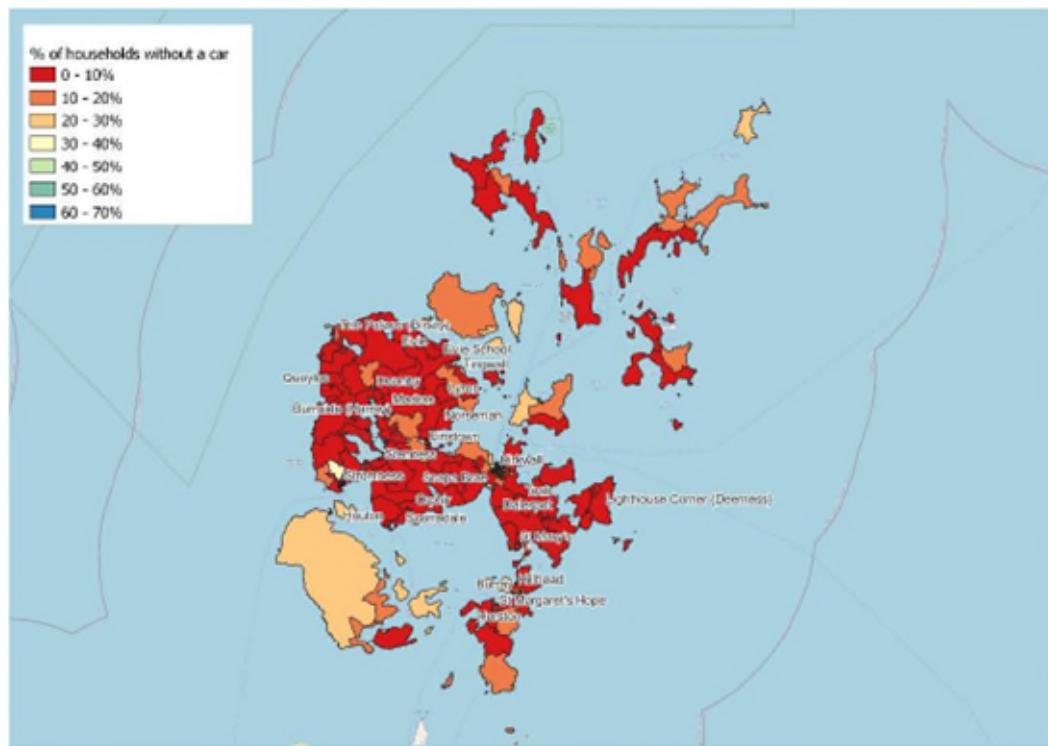


Figure 20 - Diagram from Orkney Local Transport Strategy 2022-2042

## Community Transport Schemes

Although for many communities within Orkney, Local Living will need to acknowledge a rural lifestyle context of needing to own or use a private vehicle, there are examples across the County on how Local Living practices are being employed, which could be used to further develop opportunities to reduce the reliance on shorter vehicles trips for many residents.

There are several Community Transport Schemes that have been implemented across the County, including several successful schemes across our inner and outer isles, this includes The Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Dial-A-Ride services, the Westray, Sanday and Stronsay Community Buses and the Hoy and Walls Low Carbon Community Bus. All these services provide sustainable and accessible ways for people to access services and facilities in and around where they live, without the need for using a private vehicle. They also provide opportunities to address and reduce barriers to accessing transportation, reducing other inequalities and isolation.

Schemes such as these are also being explored on the Mainland, with a recent trial of on-demand door-to-door community transport service. An example is the bus providing a link for residents living within South Ronaldsay to local services within St Margaret's Hope, and connection to the existing main bus service on to Kirkwall. The scheme also supports existing businesses and facilities located within their hub settlement of St Margaret's Hope. Schemes like this enable rural communities to access services closer to home, thereby reducing the need to travel into Kirkwall. Opportunities to explore how careful location of further housing in areas where such schemes are available or could be made available will all form part of our tailored approach to a Local Living strategy.

## Active Travel and other transport hubs

Transport cannot be seen in isolation. The reason for travel needs to be understood and taken into consideration. Opportunities to deliver services and other improvements closer to where people live might allow more folk to work at or closer to home, removing the need to travel, or allowing people to travel more sustainably.

Work to consider how people are moving and travelling within the County is already underway. Orkney Islands Council and Sustrans are partnering on several projects to build capacity within the Council's services to support development of active travel and sustainable transport. This work is building on ambitions and proposals already identified within Place Plans and community strategies, such as the Your Kirkwall Place Plan and the Dounby Community Plan.

As part of this work, Mobility Audits of Kirkwall and Dounby are being carried out to understand where, why and how people are moving around as part of their daily journeys. The Orkney Travel Matters Survey tells us that one in six Orcadians are making short journeys by car 15 or more times per week. This shows significant potential for shifting people's habits to more sustainable modes. The aim of this work is to be able to understand the current situation, whilst also looking at how planned and potential future transport proposals could contribute to modal shift towards sustainable transport options. Proposals for new hydrogen passenger ferries which will link isles residents to Kirkwall have the potential to promote increased uptake in active and sustainable travel as users of the service find themselves arriving at Kirkwall without a private vehicle and looking for ways to make their last-mile or onward travel connections.

Analysis and data collection in relation to existing parking provision and usage are also underway within Kirkwall and Stromness. The aim of this work is to inform our overall understanding of current movement and parking patterns, and whether there are opportunities to make better use of land that is currently car parking by providing more and improved cycle, walking and sustainable transport infrastructure within our towns.

Due to the dispersed nature of our population, walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport (for those residing in areas without a bus route) can be unsuitable for everyday journeys. Active travel can however form part of the equation and could be encouraged at trip ends alongside other measures already mentioned to reduce the need to travel or travel as far.

#### Digital connectivity

Access to online services, broadband and reliable digital connectivity is an important part of local living, as it further alleviates the necessity for people to travel long distances if they can easily access online services and communications.

The National Islands Plan Survey (**OIC262**) found that '*65% of island residents agree that their internet connection at home is fast enough to do what they want online*', however, a significant difference was noted between the Orkney Outer Isles (45%) and Orkney Mainland (70%). Addressing this disparity through ensuring infrastructure is installed so that new homes and businesses can be served by superfast broadband should this become available is part of the LDP's responsibility. As noted within other Schedules, works are already underway to bring superfast broadband to all homes and businesses within Scotland, as well as subsidies and other grants to help existing users. Despite recent improvements in mobile and broadband coverage through government-led programs, gaps remain. OIC should remain adaptable in supporting innovative solutions to ensure that no area is left behind.

#### Outcomes/conclusions

The next Local Development Plan strategy will look at creating the Orkney equivalent of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept where people can easily access more of their needs and opportunities locally, thus reducing the need to travel very far or at all. There is some evidence of this happening on some of our islands already with community development trusts creating hubs where new housing, care facilities meeting spaces and other services such as school and healthcare facilities are all located in a cluster. Through having a network of hubs across Orkney, there is potential to promote further opportunities for communities to work and access key services at these hubs rather than being forced to travel into Kirkwall.

The Local Development Plan will have a role in facilitating this through supportive policies and identifying potential land. This includes ensuring that where existing key services and infrastructure are located there is land allocated for development to support the retention of these uses, to focus growth into these towns and villages whilst also supporting opportunities for new services within these locations. Delivery will largely be influenced by what the community wants and needs; as well as future service delivery plans and public sector capital investment, such as school replacements and provision of transport.

Implementing and delivery of a local living across Orkney will require a tailored and varied approach. As Local Living is influenced by so many other policy areas including, infrastructure, climate change

and sustainability, transportation and active travel, open space and biodiversity and good design and placemaking, many of the aspects touched upon within this topic paper are detailed further in other Schedules within the Evidence Base. Detail of some of this crossover is listed below and what Schedules and their evidence are relevant to this topic.

Sustainable modes of transport including local public transport and safe, high-quality walking, wheeling, and cycling networks

- Schedule 9 Sustainable Transport includes evidence on existing transport movements including public usage, active travel, and infrastructure condition. The evidence establishes existing transportation and connectivity provision within settlements and the wider area and the provision for future transport development. This information has been informed by the Orkney Local Transport Strategy 2024-2044 and Orkney's Green Travel Plan 2016.

Employment

- Schedule 12 Business and Industry and Schedule 13 Town Centres and Retail provides evidence of the current situation across Orkney. They provide specific evidence on town centre health checks, and strategies regarding town centre improvements. This evidence will be used to guide retail and business development opportunities through land allocations to support Local Living opportunities in the next Plan.
- Furthermore, the Community Wealth Building Strategy will ensure that economic activity is retained within the Orkney, when appropriate.

Rural Development

- Schedule 14 Rural Development provides evidence of the DMG and out of town approach for Orkney in relation to Rural Development.

Health and social care facilities

- Schedule 8 Infrastructure First contains evidence on healthcare provision across Orkney. The evidence has established existing health provision across the County and the need for future development. This information has been informed by plans by NHS Orkney. As noted, expansion or rationalisation of the estate may require adopting shared services, which might form a key part of our future local living approach.

Childcare, schools, and lifelong learning opportunities

- Schedule 8 Infrastructure First provides evidence on education and learning including school education and further education. The evidence establishes the existing education provision and potential future need. This information has been informed by the Orkney Council Learning Estate Strategy, Orkney Council Housing Land Audit and School Roll Forecasts (SRF). This data will be used to support schools through appropriately allocating residential development to support existing school rolls, as well as ensuring any future land needs for expansion/development of education is noted within the Plan.

Playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, opportunities for food growth and allotments, sport, and recreation facilities

- Further detail is included in other Schedules that directly address a number of these issues – Schedule 1 Climate Change, Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Spaces and Blue and Green Infrastructure and Schedule 8 Infrastructure. First The evidence establishes existing

environmental designations, open spaces, play sufficiency within settlements and across Orkney. This information has been informed by the Orkney Trees and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Audit, and the Play Sufficiency Audit.

#### Affordable and accessible housing options, ability to age in place and housing diversity

- Schedule 7 Housing Land and Specialist Housing; and Schedule 8 Infrastructure First provide specific further evidence on these topics. The evidence establishes the existing development sites including housing and identified infrastructure requirements within settlements and the need for future development. This information has been informed by plans in the Orkney Housing Land Audit. Housing and infrastructure are key requirements of local living and the delivery of both will be fundamental to achieving the aims of local living. This data will be used to promote housing and infrastructure to support existing communities through allocations in the next Plan.

#### **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

The draft Schedule was shared with the following:

Council Education Team.

Council Economic Development.

Council Transportation.

Hitrans.

Council Housing Team.

Council Leisure.

Council Climate Change Officer.

NHS Orkney.

Sustrans.

Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS).

Council Urban Design Officer.

NatureScot.

SEPA.

#### **Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan**

- Impact on the Spatial Strategy due to allocation of land and promotion of sites to support the outcomes of local living.
- Criteria for development site selection to include assessment of proximity to active travel infrastructure to ensure that infrastructure is available nearby or can be provided to provide access by walking, wheeling, and cycling to key nearby services such as schools, community centres and local shops. Site selection process to also consider opportunities to access public transport services.
- Integration of the Core Path Plan to aid delivery of improved sustainable routes to address local living requirements e.g. upgrading to surfacing etc.
- Support appropriate local employment opportunities to reduce commuting trips and supporting local economic development.
- Seek to safeguard and support new local retail opportunities to support business and communities.

- Examine health facilities to ensure they are in accessible places or sustainable transport are in place to access these services.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate educational facilities including childcare opportunities, embed within communities.
- Provide opportunities for community indoor space.
- Enhance the varied opportunities for greenspace development including open space, play opportunities, biodiversity improvements, food growing etc.
- Provide and plan for housing options to allow for mixed communities with an appropriate density.
- Increased use of visual and mapped based settlement statements to ensure developments are following the Local Living principle and highlight opportunities for enhancement.
- Embed local place plan projects and priorities as supported by the Local Development Plan.
- The LDP should support infrastructure to support digital and mobile connectivity but ensure it is in the context of acceptable impacts on the natural and historic environment.

#### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no outstanding areas of dispute.

NatureScot proposed some additions which have been included in the Schedule to ensure digital connectivity considers landscape considerations and ensure that the LDP supports the application of the mitigation hierarchy.

Scottish Water noted support for the overarching principles and a continued commitment to plan for future water capacity needs.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>7. Housing</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(1A) The local development plan must also include targets for meeting the housing needs of people living in the part of the district to which it relates.</li> <li>• Section 15(5) requires the Evidence Report to set out the housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people; the availability of land in the district for housing, (including for older people and disabled people).</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC139</b> <a href="#">DMG Housing in the Countryside</a></p> <p><b>OIC140</b> <a href="#">HIE review of fragile areas and employment action report 2014</a></p> <p><b>OIC050</b> <a href="#">Orkney Housing Need and Demand Assessment - 2023</a></p> <p><b>OIC051</b> <a href="#">National Planning Framework 4 and MATHLR figure appendix E</a></p> <p><b>OIC052</b> <a href="#">Housing Land Audit 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC053</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government local development planning guidance</a></p> <p><b>OIC055</b> <a href="#">Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC056</b> <a href="#">Council Local Housing Strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC057</b> <a href="#">Self-Build Register</a></p> <p><b>OIC058</b> <a href="#">Orkney Essential workers strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC059</b> <a href="#">Short Term Lets data</a></p> <p><b>OIC060</b> <a href="#">Homelessness Strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC061</b> <a href="#">National Records of Scotland Data</a></p> <p><b>OIC312</b> <a href="#">Housing to 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC327</b> <a href="#">NPF4 Housing Land Requirement Explanatory Report Addendum</a></p> <p><b>OIC355</b> <a href="#">Vacant and Derelict Land</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	<p>NPF4 promotes an ambitious and plan-led approach for new homes. Providing land to accommodate a wide choice of homes across a range of scales of sites and locations will enable this. NPF4 is one of</p>

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<p>the key documents that will inform the next LDP, in particular informing the setting of our future housing requirements, with an increased focus upon climate change, improving health and well-being, and securing positive effects for biodiversity and nature recovery.</p>	
<p>Of particular relevance is:</p>	
<p>Policy 16: Quality Homes.</p>	
<p>Policy Intent:</p>	
<p>To encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality, affordable and sustainable homes, in the right locations, providing choice across tenures that meet the diverse housing needs of people and communities across Scotland.</p>	
<p>Policy Outcomes:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality homes are at the heart of great places and contribute to strengthening the health and wellbeing of communities.</li> <li>• Provision of land in the right locations to accommodate future need and demand for new homes, supported by the appropriate infrastructure.</li> <li>• More energy efficient, net zero emissions homes, supporting a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy and community wealth building, tackling both fuel and child poverty.</li> </ul>	
<p>This policy refers to Annex E which sets out the 10-year Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) for each local authority area. For Orkney, the MATHLR is shown as 1,600 homes over a 10-year period. The initial draft figure which the Scottish Government proposed was 450 units and the Council was asked via correspondence to our Head of Planning to provide feedback to inform draft NPF4. At this time (first part of 2021), the Council did not have an up to date Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and based feedback on population statistics that showed a high level of inward migration. The MATHLR was proposed by the Council to be 1,600 units for a 10-year period and this figure was accepted into NPF4.</p>	
<p>The intention of NPF4 Policy 17 Rural Homes is to encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality, affordable and sustainable rural homes in the right locations. NPF4 also recognises that the Orkney Local Development Plan should set out a tailored approach for rural housing to safeguard the distinct character of the area and reflect locally appropriate delivery approaches. In terms of the classification, it identifies Orkney as largely within the remote rural classification.</p>	
<p>Deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with the principle of “local living” including, where relevant, 20-minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure first approach. In rural and island areas, authorities are encouraged to set out tailored approaches to housing which reflect locally specific market circumstances and delivery approaches.</p>	
<p>LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Orkney is currently experiencing a severe housing shortage which is being driven by a variety of factors including high demand and limited supply, leading to significant pressure on both house prices and private rents. The average house price in Orkney has risen much faster than the Scottish average since the pandemic, making homes less affordable for people on lower or even average incomes.</p> <p>A lack of available properties in the private rented sector has further exacerbated the issue, impacting the ability to attract essential workers to the islands. The existing housing stock is predominantly older houses, and there is a particular need for smaller, one-bedroom properties to meet demand from single-person households and those on the social housing waiting list.</p> <p>In response to this Orkney Islands Council has undertaken a considerable amount of work over the last two years in strategic planning for housing which are set out below and are helpful in setting the strategic context for establishing the iLHHR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council Plan and Council Delivery Plan 2023-2028 which states under 'Developing Our Infrastructure' that 'We will invest in homes supporting choice, inclusion and economic growth' with the outcomes of 'more quality homes to rent or buy in various location, providing more choice'.</li> <li>• The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) – assessed as 'Robust and Credible' by the Scottish Government in October 2023. This is the foundation of all strategic housing planning and is required for both the Local Housing Strategy and the Local Development Plan (LDP).</li> <li>• The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) – this sets out the strategies and policies to meet those needs. The LHS was approved by Orkney Islands Council in June 2024 following 12 months of in depth analysis and consultation through the Orkney Housing Market Partnership.</li> <li>• The Essential Workers Housing Strategy – this sets out the particular circumstances in Orkney in relation to the acute need and demand for housing for essential workers (key workers and others essential to support Orkney's communities and local economy). This was approved in February 2024.</li> <li>• The Orkney Housing Market Partnership – this oversaw the development of the HNDA, the LHS and the Essential Workers Housing Strategy and includes stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors with an interest in the supply, access and improvement of housing in Orkney. The Partnership includes elected members from the Council, Board members from Orkney Housing Association and local housing developers. The Housing Market Partnership will also monitor the progress of implementation of the LHS and the SHIP.</li> <li>• The Council has agreed a formal working partnership with a new housing delivery partner <i>Places for People</i> in November 2025, with the provider having committed to developing up to 500 homes in Orkney over the next 10 years.</li> </ul> <p>There is an important role for the Planning System and specifically for the Local Development Plan to have an enabling role for the delivery of all tenures of housing which can help address the current housing pressures in Orkney. Whilst evidence has shown that there is still a plentiful amount of land in the existing LDP to meet even the high growth scenario in the HNDA, these sites will be reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. There is also a strong history of windfall development in Orkney and a</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
	policy framework will continue to be promoted in the LDP to encourage windfall developments to come forward.
	Ensuring there is a plentiful and ambitious supply of effective housing land to meet the high growth scenario in the HNDA and having a supportive policy for enabling appropriate windfall development in the next LDP will ensure that the LDP can be part of the solution to the addressing the current housing issues that exist in the county at the moment.
	<b>Orkney Local Development Plan 2017-2022 (OLDP 2017) (OIC127)</b>
	The Spatial Strategy seeks to support the growth of Orkney's communities in a sustainable manner, ensuring that development is directed in the first instance to places with sufficient infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable social and economic development; the towns, villages, and rural settlements of the Plan.
	The Plan identifies a hierarchy of 26 settlements throughout the Mainland and Linked Isles where services, facilities, retail, infrastructure, employment, and centres of population are primarily located. These are Orkney's most sustainable settlements, which are promoted as the main focus for new development, acting as service centres for Orkney's rural communities and the ferry and air linked isles.
	Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy:
	Towns: Kirkwall and Stromness.
	Villages: Burray, Dounby, Evie, Finstown, Orphir, Quoyloo, St Margaret's Hope, St Mary's, Stenness, The Palace, Toab.
	Rural Settlements: Burnside (Harray), Dalespot, Evie School, Herston, Hillhead, Houton, Lighthouse Corner, Scorradale, Lyron, Madras, Norseman, Scapa Brae, Tingwall.
	The Countryside of the Mainland and Linked Isles
	The Plan strives to support the economic and social aspirations of the rural community by encouraging sustainable economic growth through the creation of traditional and new businesses, and by providing multiple opportunities for the development of new rural homes, whilst seeking to protect Orkney's landscape and natural environments for future generations.
	The 'Isles Approach'
	Development within the islands, which support permanent resident populations and are served by public transport services, will be supported where it accords with relevant Plan policies and where it shall not place any unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services.
	The current approach is to support development within islands that have permanent populations and are served by public transport. NPF4 Policy 18 is a policy around proposals for new homes that support resettlement of previously inhabited areas where the proposal is in an area identified in the LDP as suitable for resettlement. Initial consideration of this is that our policy is likely to continue to focus on supporting our existing islands with populations and transport links and it will not be desirable to allocate land on currently uninhabited islands for the purposes of resettlement.

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<p>Policy 5 of <b>OIC127</b> OLDP2017 sets out the existing housing policy.</p> <p>The Plan aims to ensure there are sufficient options and opportunities for the development of new houses of a variety of types and tenures throughout Orkney to support existing communities and to allow them to grow in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>The development of new housing is supported within the defined settlements and in the countryside where it accords with the criteria set out within Policy 5 and all other relevant policies.</p> <p>The Spatial Strategy of the Plan sets out Orkney's sustainable settlements and their settlement boundaries, indicating the extent to which these settlements may expand by 2027.</p> <p>The current approach to housing outwith the settlements, on the Mainland and Linked South Isles is that developments of single houses and housing clusters will be supported where it involves one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The reinstatement or redevelopment of a former dwelling house.</li> <li>b) The conversion of a redundant building or structure.</li> <li>c) The replacement of an existing building or structure.</li> <li>d) The re-use of brownfield land, where the previous use is evident on site.</li> <li>e) The subdivision of a dwelling house or its residential curtilage.</li> <li>f) Single house infill development within existing housing groups.</li> <li>g) The provision of a single dwelling house for a rural business where 24-hour supervision is an operational requirement; or</li> <li>h) The provision of a single dwelling house to allow for the retirement succession of a viable farm holding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rural Housing – Spatial Strategy and NPF4 classification (June 2025)</b></p> <p>Development Management Guidance (DMG) (<b>OIC139</b>) was prepared following publication of NPF4 to interpret NPF4 Policy 17 Rural Homes as an interim position.</p> <p>Orkney Islands Council's current tailored approach is set out in Policy 5 Housing of the Local Development Plan 2017 with associated Supplementary Guidance on Housing in the Countryside. The Council does not believe that with the reference in NPF4 to using the Scottish Government 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 is an effective approach for planning in Orkney. Whilst its use provides a consistent way of defining areas based on population and accessibility it does not deal with rural-island characteristics and, therefore, there is a need for a tailored approach to reflect the local circumstances in Orkney. For example, using the remote rural classification for the whole of Orkney could cause issues of contradiction to aims in NPF4 around promoting local living and encouraging development that supports a more sustainable pattern of growth and reducing unsustainable travel patterns. Within Mainland Orkney there was a clear pattern of pressure for rural housing with an increasing population. The Isles have different pressures with an aging population that in some areas is declining. Therefore, ensuring a supportive policy for rural housing in these areas is viewed as important to encourage population retention and promote rural development.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<p>NPF4 accepts that finer grained, local classifications can be used to ensure rural housing approaches are locally tailored to reflect local circumstances. On that basis the Council considers the local approach, based on detailed information gathering, officer experience and in-depth knowledge of the issues, alongside landscape expertise, is a more appropriate means of establishing a tailored approach to rural housing. The use of the 6-fold Urban Rural Classification is not considered appropriate to Orkney Mainland as it would exacerbate pressurised and sensitive areas that the current LDP policy is seeking to address, its use would be appropriate in the ferry and air linked Isles. Interim guidance was approved in June 2025 to establish this position, and will be used as a basis for the LDP.</p>	
<p><b><u>Housing to 2040 (OIC312)</u></b></p>	
<p>Housing to 2040 outlines how the Scottish Government will take housing policy forward over the long term. A vision for - “More homes at the heart of great places” - establishes that the Scottish Government will make changes so that the housing system works well to deliver affordable and good quality homes for everyone. Housing to 2040, through Action 5, seeks to shift the planning system to be more directive about the quality of places, including where new development should happen and how those developments can deliver more for new and existing communities, including for 20-minute neighbourhoods.</p>	
<p>Key actions are to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new planning policies to discourage development in unsustainable locations and actively encourage new homes where they are closer to local services, supported by sustainable transport connections, and designed with green infrastructure, health, and wellbeing in mind.</li> <li>• Adopt an infrastructure-first approach to neighbourhood planning to improve access to services.</li> <li>• Support the development of quality homes that meet people's needs.</li> <li>• Tackle the question of housing land requirements up front, so that planning can focus more on quality and delivery.</li> </ul>	
<p>Housing to 2040 sets out a target for delivery of 50,000 affordable homes across Scotland by 2021/22. More recently A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22 confirms the ambition to deliver an additional 100,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which at least 70% will be available for social rent and 10% will be in remote, rural and island communities. It also looks to accelerate funding going forward to bring more existing homes into this programme, as well as building new ones.</p>	
<p><b><u>HIE review of fragile areas and employment action report 2014 (OIC140)</u></b></p>	
<p>As part of its remit to sustain and develop the communities of the Highlands and Islands, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) supports projects in a range of ‘fragile areas.’ It set out that ‘fragile areas’ are characterised by declining population, under-representation of young people within the population, lack of economic opportunities, below average income levels, problems with transport and other issues reflecting their geographic location.</p>	
<p>The 2014 Fragile Area Review has followed the same methodology as a previous review undertaken in 2012. The key elements of the methodology were:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 ‘key indicators’ were used to measure fragility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Percentage change in population between 2001 and 2011.</li> <li>– Drive-time (in minutes) to the nearest mid-sized service centre (defined as having a secondary school, NHS hospital and a large chain supermarket).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Median household income.</li> <li>- Average unemployment rate during 2013.</li> <li>• Data on these indicators has been collated and analysed for all 596 data zones within HIE's area.</li> <li>• For each of these key indicators, data zones were ranked and given a score ranging between 0 and 5. In each case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The most fragile 10% data zones were given a score of 5.</li> <li>- The most fragile 11-20% were given a score of 4.</li> <li>- The most fragile 21-30% were given a score of 3.</li> <li>- The most fragile 31-40% were given a score of 2.</li> <li>- The most fragile 41-50% were given a score of 1.</li> <li>- The least fragile (51-100%) were given a score of 0.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• These scores were then combined. The maximum score is 20.</li> <li>• The scores were then examined for the 159 data zones that were 'potentially fragile' – i.e. are at least 20 minutes' drive from the nearest mid-sized service centre and 40 minutes' drive from the nearest major service centre.</li> <li>• Data zones with a total score of 7 or higher were identified as fragile.</li> </ul> <p>This shows all the ferry and air linked Isles as being identified as fragile. This would very much align with our thinking of where is fragile and facing population loss and needs a supportive tailored approach to rural homes in the Local Development Plan.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence to Establish the Indicative All Tenure Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR)</u></b></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>The initial Evidence Report submitted to the Gatecheck recommended that the iLHLR should be based on the Principal scenario in the HNDA which was agreed at 1,345 units however the Scottish Government Reporter believed that there was insufficient evidence to not exceed the MATHLR of 1,600 units in NPF4 and recommended that the updated Evidence Report gives further consideration of the factors that could point to an increase in the iLHLR. Whilst the Council believes that its original approach to adopting the principal HNDA scenario was sound, we have reviewed our position to follow the Reporter's guidance and to take account of recent evidence. The case to establish an iLHLR is set out below in the bullet points and includes text on how this has now been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What real and identifiable infrastructure constraints are limiting housing growth, and how may these be overcome;</li> </ul> <p><i>The schedule below highlights the key infrastructure constraints identified in Orkney through the Evidence Report and Housing Strategy. Of particular relevance are flooding issues and the capacity of the construction sector to deliver a pipeline of sites as well as development finance. Further research is underway to help better understand and plan for flooding issues, including central Kirkwall, which will be completed ahead of the proposed plan being prepared. This information will provide certainty on the development capacity of allocations and help steer the spatial strategy to ensure developments avoid areas of significant flood risk which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of increasing the capacity of the construction sector and support the delivery of additional housing capacity the Housing Service of the Council has signed an Agreement with a Housing Delivery Partner in November 2025 that will be able to deliver mid-market rent properties as well as other tenures. This new housing provider has now been secured and has committed to deliver up to 500 new homes over the next decade with the first construction aiming to be delivered from 2027. With the new housing provider in place this should help bring extra capacity to the construction sector and unlock</i></p>	

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<p><i>delivery of housing across different tenures including affordable housing. Having this partnership now agreed formally is a significant change to the dynamic since the earlier draft of the Evidence Report.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The existing supply and a reasonable assumption for windfall development, that could point towards the deliverability of a higher number of houses;</li> </ul> <p><i>The schedule highlights that there is already an existing housing supply in the current LDP that can meet a higher iLHLR of 1,650 without the need to find additional land. This would exceed the MATHLR figure of 1,600. On reviewing the importance of windfall development whilst the average level of windfall over the last 10 years has consistently been over 50 units there has been years where there has been over 60 units completed. Therefore, windfall development in Orkney has a vital role to play to the supply of housing and there is potential to increase the supply of windfall housing particularly in the non-linked Isles of Orkney where there is in principle support for new housing and the Development Trusts have been recently taking forward community led housing delivery. The new LDP will ensure there is appropriate policy support to continue to facilitate windfall development of housing.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The potential connections between a more ambitious level of housing land provision and maintaining Orkney's population and limiting house price inflation:</li> </ul> <p><i>Orkney, like many rural and island communities, faces challenges of demographic change, housing affordability, and supply constraints. Increasing housing land provision is often proposed as a lever to address both retention (and attraction) of population, and to moderate or reduce house-price inflation.</i></p> <p><i>The Schedule has been updated to highlight that a more generous and ambitious level of housing land based on using the high growth scenario in the HNDA could support the aspiration of maintaining Orkney's population and also encourage and facilitate housing delivery to meet the anticipated demand generated through upcoming infrastructure projects. It is anticipated that increasing the housing supply could help reduce the high levels of house price inflation that has been experienced in Orkney in recent years which have been exacerbated through issues in housing supply and a growing population.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The identified need for housing for temporary rotational, agency and interim staff;</li> </ul> <p><i>The updated evidence report highlights the latest research on housing for temporary, rotational and agency and interim staff which was undertaken during the preparation of the Essential Worker Strategy which gives consideration to how these issues can be tackled. The development of the strategy included compiling data on issues they face on recruitment linked to housing pressures and includes data from the larger employers in Orkney such as NHS and Orkney Islands Council.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The potential for the iLHLR to be informed by the high migration scenario as set out in the HNDA.</li> </ul> <p><i>The revised schedule to calculate the iLHLR is based on the high migration scenario as set out in the HNDA and exceeds the MATHLR in NPF4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying an iLHLR in excess of the MATHLR as included in NPF4;</li> </ul> <p><b><i>The proposed iLHLR in the schedule based on updated evidence is now 1,650 which exceeds NPF4 MATHLR figure of 1,600.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering what further engagement could usefully be carried out (including with commercial interests) with regard to the setting of the iLHLR.</li> </ul> <p><i>Further engagement with Housing Market Partnership on revising the approach to the iLHLR and the decision to base this on HNDA high growth scenario rather than the previous decision to base on the principal scenario was presented at the Housing Market Partnership meeting on 12 December 2025. This was endorsed as a suitable approach. The housing market partnership is a multi-agency group whose members include the Council, Orkney Housing Association Ltd., local builders, Scottish Government, key employers and other stakeholders.</i></p>	

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<b>Detailed Evidence</b>	
<b>Understanding Housing Need and Demand</b>	
<p>An understanding and assessment of the need and demand for additional homes within the area forms the basis for setting housing supply targets in the local area, and in turn the overall local housing land requirement for the Local Development Plan. Local Development Plans are expected to identify a Local Housing Land Requirement for the area they cover. This is to meet the duty for a housing target and to represent how much land is required.</p>	
<p>Scottish Government Guidance states that “<i>deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with local living, including where relevant 20-minute neighbourhoods, and an infrastructure first approach. In rural and island areas, authorities are encouraged to set out tailored approaches to housing which reflect locally specific market circumstances and delivery approaches. Diverse needs and delivery models should be considered across all areas.</i></p>	
<p>The LHLR is the translation of these requirements together with other factors influencing housing growth and delivery including National Guidance, other key housing strategies and evidence, environmental and infrastructure constraints, financial constraints, and market conditions. The purpose of setting a LHLR in the LDP is to ensure that enough housing land is allocated to meet projected needs, and to deliver the required housing mix. NPF4 and the Development Plans Guidance expects the Council to set an indicative LHLR that is greater than the MATHLR. NPF4 states that “To promote an ambitious and plan-led approach, the Local Housing Land Requirement is expected to exceed the 10-year MATHLR set in Annex E.”</p>	
<b>Orkney’s unique local economic position</b>	
<p>Orkney’s current and projected economic context are key to its current housing system position. Orkney has high levels of employment and low unemployment, and due to its strong household growth public and private sector employers find it increasingly difficult to recruit with high vacancy rates, with the lack of housing availability being a key factor. In addition to the ongoing economic activity, Orkney is now on a path of significant economic growth driven mainly through growth in the renewables industry. This has impacts on short-term and longer-term housing needs.</p>	
<p>The Islands Growth Deal Heads of Terms was agreed in March 2021 and Full Deal entered into in January 2023. This set out a programme to achieve growth with support from the UK and Scottish Governments. Four Orkney specific projects were supported including the Orkney World Heritage Site Gateway Project, the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus, the Scapa Flow Future Fuels Hub and the Orkney Community Vertical Farm Project. Orkney is also involved in the three joint Islands Projects which includes the Islands Centre for Net Zero, Creative Islands Wellbeing and TalEntEd Islands Programme. The key themes in the Deal were to lead the way to a low carbon future, support growth and future industries, and support thriving sustainable communities. The potential to support transition to renewable industries is supported in the Scottish Government’s NPF4 identifies proposed infrastructure in Orkney as one of the national developments. These are significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver Scotland’s spatial strategy, with Orkney identified in the Energy Innovation on the Islands National Development. This includes harbour developments in Scapa Flow and at Hatston, offshore renewable energy generation, renewable low and zero carbon fuel production, infrastructure and shipping, and associated opportunities in the supply chain for fabrication, research and development.</p>	

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The key economic development projects planned for construction phases are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finstown SSEN Interconnector Substation - This development is a strategically important piece of infrastructure driven by the requirement to provide a transmission network connection from Orkney to the Scottish mainland and to support renewable energy generation. SSENT has now started work in Orkney with a temporary workers' village established at Finstown, and work on the interconnector is well underway. The Council is working with SSENT on maximising housing legacy from their investment in Orkney, and minimising impact on the local housing system that may be caused from an influx of 200+ temporary workers.</li> <li>• Investment in Orkney Harbours through the <a href="#">Orkney Harbours Masterplan</a>, an ambitious blueprint that provides a framework for the long-term future of our islands supporting renewable energy industry development around Orkney.</li> <li>• Offshore Wind Developments – For example the West of Orkney Windfarm. This project was granted offshore Section 36 and Marine Licence consents in June 2025, with estimates of Year 1 site preparations and installations of turbines commencing in 2028 and the earliest first power from 2029. The Windfarm has applied for a 30-year consent after which it will be decommissioned.</li> <li>• Flotta Oil Terminal - The Flotta Terminal has been operational since 1976 and has made a significant contribution to Orkney's economy and communities for almost 50 years. The owners prepared a vision to transition the oil industry to clean, green energy and a secure future for skilled oil and gas workers in Scotland and across the UK. At this stage the project is at 'vision' stage and so the detail on timescales is unknown.</li> </ul>	

These upcoming infrastructure developments are likely to result in demand for around 1,400 bedspaces for construction workers. These are temporary housing requirements over the next 5-10 years, but it is estimated that at least 200 additional long-term jobs will be created for the operational phases, 100 of which are assumed to be filled by incoming workers. The temporary housing requirements will have to be resourced through the developers, but the Local Housing Strategy sets out the Council's policy that the impact of this infrastructure development must minimise the impact on the existing housing system and residents and must maximise housing legacy from their investment.

The key housing market drivers in Orkney are:

- Orkney has had higher than average population growth - since 2001, the population in [Orkney has increased by 17%](#), compared with 8% across Scotland, the second highest growth area in Scotland after Midlothian. This has been driven by high net migration.
- There has been almost double the rate of [household growth in Orkney at 29.5%](#) over the last 20 years compared to Scotland's 16%. Orkney's growth is the highest in Scotland over the same period.
- It is predicted that population and household growth will continue. Kirkwall and East Mainland are projected to see the most growth while the North Isles are projected to see a decline in population.
- There is evidence of a higher level of net migration in recent years and in addition, significant temporary migration among the 'supplementary' workforce who live on Orkney on a rotational, agency and interim basis, this includes agency workers who are employed to support sectors struggling to recruit locally such as the social care services. This population is unlikely to be captured in official projections, and this temporary population adds further housing pressure.

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<p>There is evidence of migration being constrained due to the lack of housing for incoming essential permanent workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pressure is evidenced by increasing house prices, and rental prices, and lack of availability of private rented and social rented housing for residents and essential incoming workers. Most recent data from <u>Registers of Scotland</u> shows Orkney house price growth being double the Scottish average (2021/22 and 2022/23).</li> <li>Orkney has high levels of employment and low unemployment. There is potential for significant economic growth in Orkney as part of the Islands Growth Deal and from the renewables industry. This has impacts on short-term and longer-term housing needs.</li> <li>The supply of new housing in 2022 was at a 20-year low, particularly in the affordable sector. This partly explains the current severe housing pressure and imbalance between demand and supply. Reasons for this include a range of capacity and system issues which were considered through the Housing Market Partnership through development of the LHS and actions are underway to address these. This includes a new housing delivery provider coming into Orkney that has committed to building 500 homes over the next decade with 60% of these to be affordable.</li> <li>The current economic context is challenging for affordable housing delivery – with fluctuating inflation rates and high and unpredictable costs across the housing supply chain. There is also a very tight workforce, and interest rates have affected the cost of finance for housing providers, building contractors and individual renters and homeowners over recent years which has contributed to the slowdown in new build. However, the LDP should ensure that there is sufficient generosity in the land supply to respond positively if there are improvements in the economic context.</li> </ul> <p>The section below explains the methodology, evidence, and justification for calculating an Indicative All Tenure Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) for the Proposed Plan. Developing the Orkney Indicative All Tenure Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) is established through using several sources of evidence which all have an important role in ensuring that the Local Development Plan has enough housing land to meet projected needs. These are set out in detail below with key evidence highlighted and summarised. The information below has been updated following the original submission to the Gatecheck process taking into account the reporters' recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Housing Strategy.</li> <li>HNDA and Housing Need Estimates of the three scenarios.</li> <li>The MATHLR included in the adopted NPF4, and subsequent evidence since it was prepared.</li> <li>LHS Housing Supply Targets.</li> <li>Monitoring of the Housing Land Supply as evidenced through the Housing Land Audit.</li> <li>The Strategic Housing Investment Plan.</li> <li>Essential Workers Strategy.</li> <li>Other housing studies and statistical evidence.</li> </ol>	

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<b>a) <u>Orkney Islands Council Local Housing Strategy 2024 (OIC056)</u></b>	
<p>The Local Housing Strategy sets out the following vision for housing in Orkney: "Orkney has a wide range of good quality, sustainable homes that are affordable and meet the current and future needs of individuals, families and local communities across the Orkney Islands."</p>	
<p>The Housing Strategy sets out the housing priorities to be driven by the Council in partnership with the Orkney Housing Market Partnership over the next five years. These priorities are</p>	
<p>a) More Homes.  b) Quality Warm Homes.  c) Access and Choice of Housing for All.</p>	
<p>Within the Local Housing Strategy, it describes the current profile and housing context for Orkney across several topics.</p>	
<p>The Local Housing Strategy highlights that there is low turnover in social renting and high demand in Kirkwall and Stromness in particular, with lower demand on the Isles, but there is a need to sustain these communities by enabling targeted new housing supply. Over Orkney as a whole, the social housing waiting list is more than five times the number of lets available in a year. Empty homes are a significant issue for Orkney; unoccupied exemptions, long-term empty properties and second homes now account for over 1,200 properties (10% of dwellings). This is far higher than Scotland as a whole (4%), while rates of properties empty for 12 months+ are more similar to Scotland, at around 1% of the stock. Over the last 7 years 70 empty homes have been brought back into use.</p>	
<p>Short-term lets are clustered on the Orkney Mainland while second homes and long-term empty properties make up a larger proportion of properties on the Isles. Addressing the impact of short-term lets is challenging, with several hundred properties making the short-term let market almost a third of the size of the private rented sector. These lets also contribute to the local economy and individual household income. Home shares (part of the property rather than whole property being let) contribute to the local economy but do not take units out of the residential housing stock.</p>	
<p>The high demand for social renting and constrained supply of private rented properties indicates the need for more below-market options.</p>	
<p>There are a number of pertinent themes and issues which are highlighted which have been used to inform setting the updated iLHLR these are also included in the Orkney Housing Needs and Demand Assessment.</p>	
<p><b>Housing affordability</b></p>	
<p>Average house prices in the Orkney Islands have increased over time with Orkney's mean house price of £216,638 now slightly higher than the Scottish average of £216,333 (2022/23). Orkney's mean household income is £42,239 (CACI 2022) which is slightly higher than the Scottish average of £41,878. Lower quartile incomes in Orkney are £19,646 (Scotland £18,225) but there is considerable disparity between Housing Market Area with a mean household income of £34,622 on the Isles and lower quartile income of £15,512 per annum – 21% lower than the Orkney average. Lower quartile house prices are generally not affordable at lower quartile incomes while median house prices are more affordable for people on median incomes. Private renting is more affordable than purchasing, but not for lower wage occupations. There is also lack of privately rented property and increased pressure on private rents.</p>	

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<b>Orkney housing market drivers</b>	
<p>Orkney has had higher than average population growth - since 2001, the population in Orkney has increased by 17%, compared with 8% across Scotland, the second highest growth area in Scotland after Midlothian. This has been driven by high net migration.</p>	
<p>There has been almost double the rate of household growth in Orkney at 29.5% over the last 20 years compared to Scotland's 16%. Orkney's growth is the highest in Scotland over the same period. It is predicted that population and household growth will continue. Kirkwall and East Mainland are projected to see growth while the North Isles are projected to see a decline in population.</p>	
<p>There is evidence of a higher level of net migration in recent years and in addition, significant temporary migration among the 'supplementary' workforce who live on Orkney on a rotational, agency and interim basis. This population is unlikely to be captured in official projections and this temporary population adds further housing pressure. There is evidence of migration being constrained due to the lack of housing for incoming essential permanent workers.</p>	
<p>Pressure is evidenced by increasing house prices, and rental prices, and lack of availability of private rented and social rented housing for residents and essential incoming workers. Most recent data from Registers of Scotland shows Orkney house price growth being double the Scottish average (2021/22 and 2022/23). Orkney has high levels of employment and low unemployment. There is potential for significant economic growth in Orkney as part of The Islands Growth Deal and from the renewables industry. This has impacts on short-term and longer-term housing needs.</p>	
<p>Although the Orkney population has increased significantly since 2001, this has been disproportionately greatest among older groups. The figure below shows the projected change in the profile of households by age of reference group between 2018 and 2028, with the greatest expected proportionate growth in the older households. There is also some growth projected in the 16-19 age group and 35-44 years age groups, but a drop in the proportion aged 20-34 years and 50-60 years.</p>	
<p>In future, a significant increase in single and two-person households is projected alongside a reduction in the number of families over time, with the greatest expected proportionate growth in older households.</p>	
<p><b>Housing stock characteristics</b></p>	
<p>Orkney housing stock is predominantly houses, although more flats have been built in recent years in the social sector. Smaller properties are needed to accommodate newly emerging households and 60% of the social rented waiting list needs a 1-bedroom property. The private stock (owned and rented) is significantly larger compared with the social rented stock. The predominance of larger houses has continued recently in new build housing - between 2016 and 2022 while more than half of the properties built in the social rented sector were 1 or 2-bedroom properties, private sector new-build properties have tended to be larger, with around three-quarters having 3 or more bedrooms and a third having 4 or more bedrooms. The need for accommodation of all sizes and types (including smaller starter homes and 1- and 2-bedroom flats) has been identified in recent primary research through the Essential Workers Housing Strategy which surveyed essential workers and students.</p>	
<p><b>Stock pressures</b></p>	
<p>There is a low turnover in social renting and high demand in Kirkwall and Stromness in particular, with lower demand on the Isles, but there is a need to sustain these communities by enabling targeted new housing supply. Across Orkney as a whole, the social housing waiting list is more than five times the number of lets available in a year.</p>	
<p>Although the population has increased, the number of private rented properties available has not. There is evidence of pressure in private renting and owner occupation through rising prices, with not enough lets available and difficulty accessing ownership.</p>	

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### **Requirement for more affordable housing suppliers**

Following a recent independent review of the Council's Housing Revenue Account, this showed a currently constrained financial capacity for new build social housing to be around 14-15 per annum. Orkney Housing Association Limited (OHAL) Business Plan capacity is estimated to be for 20 new build per annum leaving a combined capacity of 35 social housing per annum against the requirement of 365 over 10 years. This leaves there is a requirement for more capacity through additional suppliers for new social housing provision, and MMR housing in Orkney. In November 2025 it was announced that a new housing provider had entered an agreement with the Council to deliver up to 500 new homes over the next 10 years with around 60% of those to be affordable.

### **Efficiency and effectiveness in the new housing supply system**

The work of the Housing Market Partnership has identified challenges in the local organisational and regulatory landscape which can make the approval and procurement of new affordable housing supply inefficient. The Partnership discussed the need to build workforce capacity. A range of solutions have been identified which are embedded in the Housing Strategy action plan: This can inform the strategy for identifying the housing land requirement for the Local Development Plan.

- Creating a more certain and longer-term pipeline of projects by developing the Council's strategic and enabling role through a proactive More Homes Programme – overall co-ordination to enable strategic housing site development including land assembly, infrastructure first, and placemaking approaches.
- Taking a partnership and scale approach to commissioning and procuring mixed tenure housing sites to ensure greater efficiency, with one partner leading and transferring ownership to different landlords/owners at completion.
  - Having design led solutions to maximise the potential of land in terms of density and infrastructure; and where possible to design out costs.
- For the review of the Local Development Plan to consider increased development density within urban location and to provide infrastructure and design information in the new Local Development Plan. This is in line with National Planning Framework 4.
- Adopting a housing programme approach for governance for the Council's Capital Project Appraisal process – starting with the Strategic Housing Investment Plan forming the Capital Planning and Asset Management Approval Stage.
- Where there is lack of capacity and relevant skills locally due to workforce constraint, draw more widely from the supply chain across Scotland, including design teams, contractors and exploring the potential for modular build.

#### **b) Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023 (OIC050)**

In 2023 The Orkney Housing Need and Demand Assessment was signed off by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis as being "robust and credible". This is a key piece of evidence which was not available when the MATHLR figure was submitted to the Scottish Government to support NPF4.

The HNDA results are presented for each five-year period, to assist in the development of Orkney's Local Housing Strategy and the Local Development Plan, as well as fully over the duration over the next 20 years of projections (2023-2042).

The HNDA sets out analysis of need and demand across the whole range of housing issues: the drivers of housing need and demand, the requirement for new supply, housing stock profile, pressures

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and management issues, the quality of existing homes including empty homes, access to housing, and specialist housing provision and needs.

Within the HNDA there have been five Housing Market Areas (HMAs) identified. These are definable geographical areas, where the demand for housing is relatively self-contained, *i.e.* a large percentage of people moving house or settling in the area will have sought a dwelling only in that area. Rurality presents some specific issues for practitioners, including defining HMAs, especially in sparsely populated areas, and small numbers in the data reducing its precision and robustness.

Results are reported by each of the five HMAs that have been developed for the HNDA and link to the requirements of Orkney's Local Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan as closely as possible.

**Household Projections in HNDA**

A key determinant of housing need is the number of households that are expected in the future. The household projections used in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), based on 2018-based projections show three scenarios. The principal scenario is based on ongoing trends projected forward, while the high migration scenario projections are based on more people moving to Orkney and the low migration scenario based on fewer people moving to Orkney.

The 2023 HNDA uses the 2018 household projections as the basis for housing needs estimates. The graph below shows that the main household growth is envisaged to be in the first 15 years, with growth of just 200-400 households between 2033 and 2043.

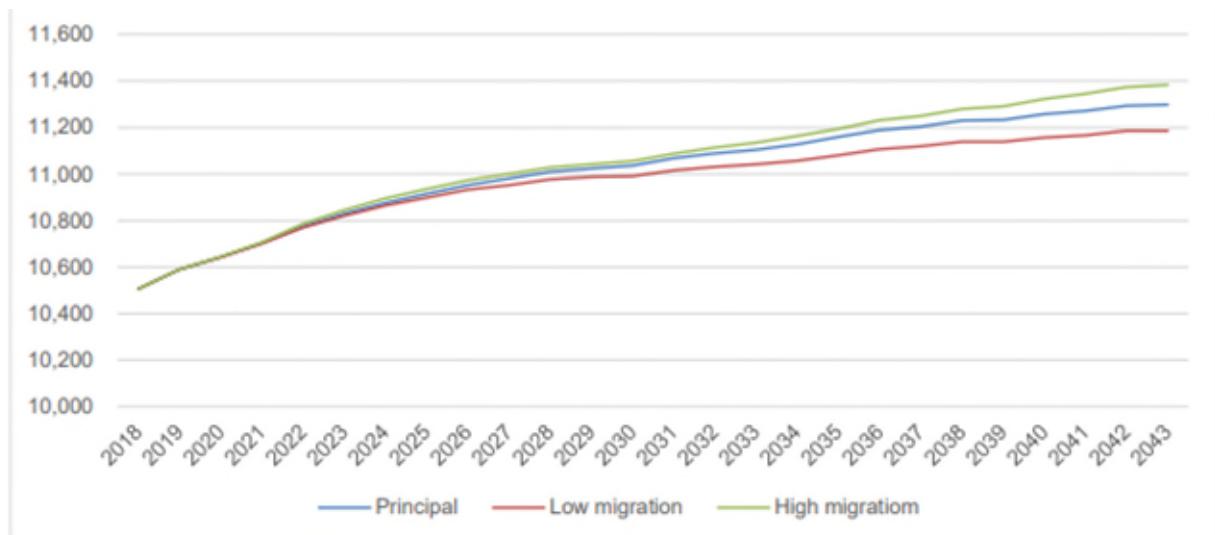


Figure 21 - Household Projections (2018-based)

There is a fairly modest difference between the scenarios until around 2030, when the estimates diverge slightly so that by ten years later (2040) the low migration scenario has around 100 households fewer than the principal scenario while the high migration scenario has around 70 more households.

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<p>The five HMAs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Kirkwall.</li> <li>b) Stromness.</li> <li>c) West Mainland.</li> <li>d) East Mainland and Linked South Isles.</li> <li>e) The Isles.</li> </ul> <p>The need for additional housing is estimated from existing housing need, plus emerging need. Emerging need is estimated from household population projections. Three main scenarios have been developed for the HNDA.</p> <p>These are the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal scenario - based on more recent migration rates.</li> <li>• High Demand scenario - assumes migration at a higher rate than the 2018-base to enable migration to meet employment needs in the public and private sector.</li> <li>• Low Demand scenario - based on the unadjusted NRS low migration estimates.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>The Principal scenario</u></b> extrapolates the trends from previous years into the future in both demographic and economic indicators (high price and moderate-income growth). The results of the Principal scenario show population increases across each of Orkney's five localities over the duration of the HNDA reporting period. This scenario has a population adjustment of +0.5% to take account of the fact that recent net migration has been consistently higher than in the period used in the population projections. The Principal scenario estimates overall need of 1,837 units across the whole HNDA period of 20 years, an average of 92 units per year. This ranges from 131 units a year while the existing need is tackled between 2023- 2027, to 75 units a year in 2038-2042.</p> <p><b><u>The High Migration scenario</u></b> is based on an outlook that Orkney will see an increase in migration into the islands as well as very high price growth and strong income growth. This reflects the experiences that in addition to the recent migration experienced in Orkney (which itself is higher than published population), it is possible that migration may increase even further due to ongoing workforce requirements and potential strong economic growth in the renewable sectors. The High Migration scenario (with +1% additional population growth to support net migration for workforce pressures) provides an estimate of 3,214 over the 20-year period – 161 units a year (ranging from 189 a year in the first five years to between 141 and 156 units in later years). The High Migration scenario shows strong population increases across each of Orkney's five localities as well as an improving economic outlook.</p> <p><b><u>The Low Migration scenario</u></b> assumes a lower level of migration into Orkney as well as more moderate housing market growth. The Low Migration scenario sees a lower level of increase in population across each of the five localities. The Low Migration scenario estimates need for 562 units – 28 units a year across the whole HNDA period, ranging from 71 units in the period from 2023- 2027 to just nine units per year in 2038-2042.</p> <p>Consultation with the local Development Trusts during the HNDA process highlighted the need to sustain communities and encourage younger people and families to move into the Isles. There was</p>	

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support for positive demand scenarios for the Isles to proactively address projected population decline. This is in line with the default tool scenario, without adjustment in each case, which produce modest growth rather than population decline.																																																																																																																																				
Extract from HNDA tool showing the breakdown of estimated housing need across three different scenarios:																																																																																																																																				
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<p><i>Figure 22 - Estimated Housing Need Across 3 Different Scenarios</i></p> <p>The five-year projection results from 2023–2027 show a significantly larger yearly requirement for additional housing than the full 2023–2042 results. This is largely due to the requirement to deal with the backlog of existing need over this first five-year period.</p> <p><b>Tenure, house size and type</b></p> <p>The HNDA showed that housing need and demand is broadly split 50:50 affordable and private housing. Some of the private demand was shown for private rented housing but the current housing development cost to value ratio on Orkney means that new build for unsubsidised private rent is unlikely to happen.</p> <p>More supply for Mid-Market (MMR) rented housing will be needed to meet demand, making the balance of supply broadly 60:40 affordable to private housing. Affordable housing includes social rent, MMR, and low-cost home ownership.</p>																																																																																																																																				

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<p>The HNDA showed that the majority of housing demand is focused on Kirkwall, followed by Stromness, the West Mainland, the East Mainland, and the Isles. The projected housing estimates include the need and demand from current residents and people moving into Orkney, based on recent migration trends. showed strong demand from households that have recently moved to Orkney for work or study (keyworkers, other essential workers across the private and public sectors, and students). They mainly demand private, or MMR rented housing, with demand also for home ownership. Orkney's housing supply is currently dominated by 3-bedroom houses, with a lack of supply of smaller houses, flats, starter homes, and rented housing which can be used as permanent or 'transitionary' shorter-term housing (say 6-12 months). The need for transitional and short-term housing is due to the increasing use of interim and agency staff across the public sector due to workforce pressure. The availability of housing for essential incoming workers will be increased by leasing from the existing private rented sector, acquiring homes from developers off the shelf, and where feasible re-purposing existing non-housing property.</p>	
<p><b>c) NPF4 Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR)</b></p>	
<p>The Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) is set out in NPF4, Annex E and NPF4 with the methodology set out in the Scottish Government <a href="#">explanatory report (OIC327)</a>. As part of the approach in Rural areas a 30% flexibility was applied to the existing need and household projections. NPF4 states that "To promote an ambitious and plan-led approach, the Local Housing Land Requirement is expected to exceed the 10-year MATHLR."</p>	
<p>The Council's initial view; as previously noted in this topic paper was that the draft MATHLR of 450 was too low and the Council fed back to the Government in June 2021 seeking a higher figure based on local evidence at the time which resulted in a figure of 1,600. This figure was submitted prior to the Council having a robust and credible HNDA in 2023 which has provided much more robust data.</p>	
<p>It should be noted that the work of Orkney's Housing Market Partnership fed into the HNDA and Local Housing Strategy; providing local context and is an evidence-based approach to housing development for Orkney. This is also reflected in the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan. The Scottish Government guidance highlights that when the indicative LHLR is being developed and there is more recent information available this should be used as it enables the Evidence Report to be more up to date in looking to the future, for example updated household projections, local need figures or a relevant change in local, regional or national policy.</p>	
<p>In Orkney there is a variety of pertinent and important evidence been developed since the MATHLR figure was developed and since the Council submitted the 1,600 unit figure in June 2021.</p>	
<p>Significant strategic planning work has been undertaken over the last three years by the Council and its community planning partners. This includes:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis of housing need set out in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment - assessed as 'Robust and Credible' by Scottish Government in 2023.</li> <li>• The Council's Local Housing Strategy approved in June 2024.</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Essential Workers Housing Strategy approved in February 2024 which set out how new housing supply will be a critical element of retaining and attracting essential workers to support Orkney's communities and economy.</li> <li>• All this housing strategic planning work was undertaken in consultation with the Housing Market Partnership – a large group of internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Places for People have now signed a formal agreement to become a new housing provider in Orkney and committed to building 500 homes over the next 10 years</li> </ul> <p><b>d) LHS Housing Supply Targets</b></p> <p>Within the Local Housing Strategy which was adopted in 2024 sets out a 10-year Housing Supply Target (HST) which is the target for new housing supply across tenure. The HST has been completed with input from the Housing Market Partnership (HMP) and underpinned by the evidence in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA).</p> <p>While the HNDA sets out an evidence based estimated needs, the HST is a policy decision and target for housing delivery <u>across all tenures</u> for 10 years. This is set at 1,035 homes over 10 years, or 103 per annum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In developing the iLHLR for the Local Development Plan appropriate account has been made for this policy approach. However, regard has also been taken account of the need to ensure there is a generous housing land supply ensuring there is sufficient flexibility in establishing an iLHLR to meet scenarios where there are socio-economic factors that result in continued high population growth driven by net migration,</li> <li>• Additional workforce to supplement the existing resident ageing workforce in the private and public sectors have been attracted to Orkney resulting in significant local economic growth driven by the renewables sector over the next 10 years.</li> <li>• Increased capacity and confidence within the construction sector is supporting the delivery of a pipeline of longer-term affordable housing an effective iLHLR could support this. There is also now an additional housing delivery body about to operate in Orkney which should bring additional capacity within the construction sector.</li> </ul> <p>There is also an important role that the planning system can play in facilitating housing delivery through a plentiful supply of housing land and a requirement to exceed the MATHLR figure in NPF4 so that there aren't tensions between the two plans which together make up the Development Plan.</p> <p><b>e) Monitoring of the Housing Land Supply as evidenced through the Housing Land Audit</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Housing Land Audit 2024 (OIC052)</a></u></p> <p>This Housing Land Audit provides an overview of housing development in Orkney since the adoption of the OLDP2017. Under the existing Local Development Plan, housing designations were allocated, providing enough housing land to meet the demand specified via the then, Housing Needs and Demand Assessment.</p> <p>The Audit covers Orkney's towns, villages and rural settlements as specified within the Spatial Strategy in the Local Development <u><a href="#">Plan</a></u>. OLDP2017 identifies a number of housing allocations in these areas across Orkney Mainland and the south linked isles. There are no housing allocations in the ferry and air linked isles. Policy 5C in the OLDP2017 outlines a general presumption in favour of development in</p>	

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the isles and in this audit, all development in the ferry and air linked isles is regarded to be on windfall sites.

Orkney currently has a supply of 1,678 units (short- and long-term supply) allocated in the Local Development Plan. In addition to this, a large proportion of housing development in Orkney is delivered through windfall development further increasing the supply.

The graph below shows the number of completions by each year and whether they are in a Local Development Plan allocation or a windfall development (See figure 23).

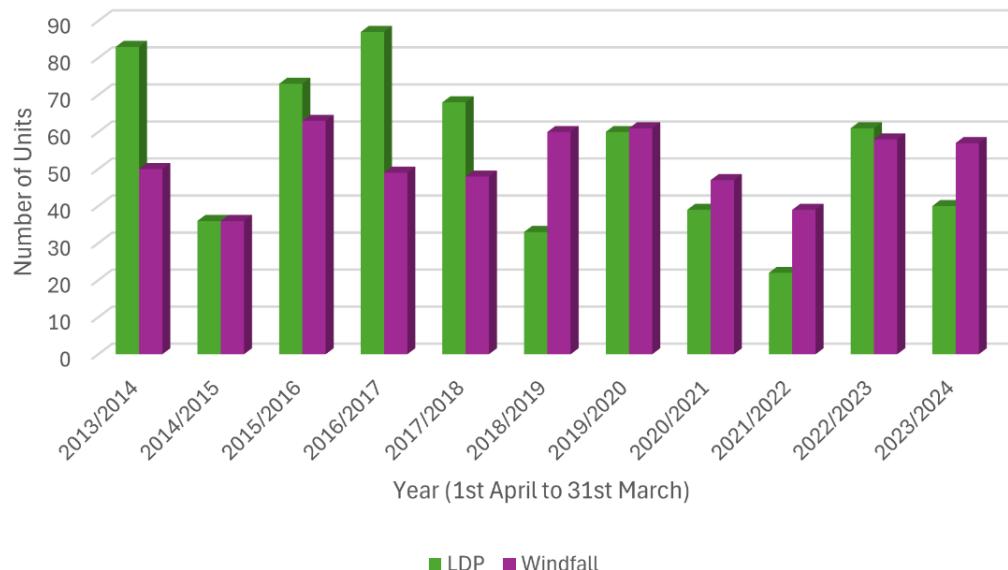


Figure 23 – Completions by Year

Although there is a fluctuation in completed unit figures over the years, there has been an average of 105 units per year over the last 10 years. Of this total, the number of units developed on windfall sites has been higher than those on OLDP allocated land for a number of years. This shows how crucial windfall numbers are in rural areas like Orkney, when projecting potential future development. Windfall sites are sites on which development is approved on the Mainland and linked Isles under Housing in the Countryside Supplementary Guidance. This guidance supports one for one or two for one replacements, conversions, subdivision of a curtilage and farmworker accommodation. In addition, the guidance supports 'infill' development, within Settlement Boundaries. The Isles approach in the Spatial Strategy also supports housing in the ferry and air linked Isles with all development coming forward as windfall development.

It is useful to take account of the 10-year trend in completions as a comparative benchmark in setting the LHLR. Past completions provide evidence of trends in the delivery of new housing, but do not in themselves, create demand for new housing. The information is therefore not a determinant of future housing requirements but is a helpful factor to use as a comparative benchmark to sense check whether the LHLR is reasonable. As can be shown there is consistently a high level of windfall development showing the importance of it as a way of facilitating housing delivery.

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The table below shows the level of completions by units over the last 10 years in total. This combines windfall development and development in allocated sites.									
2014/2015	2015/2016	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
87	136	136	116	121	86	61	119	93	97
<i>Table 3 - level of completions by units over the last 10 years</i>									
<p><b>f) The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) (OIC055)</b></p> <p>The Strategic Housing Investment (SHIP) is an important document, which is reviewed annually. The SHIP sets out the local authority's strategic investment priorities for housing over a five-year period, specifically affordable housing; these strategic investment priorities are aligned with the priorities and outcomes set out in local housing strategies.</p> <p>Specifically, the SHIP is the key document for identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed strategic affordable housing projects which require Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding support.</li> <li>Proposed affordable housing projects which are to be provided without Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding support (e.g., funded directly by the local authority).</li> </ul> <p>The current SHIP sets out the volume of housing planned for the next five years of 320 homes, with a breakdown of tenure and area:</p> <p>The planned affordable housing programme for five years is set out below by type and Housing Market Area.</p> <p>Tenure. 2026 - 2027 to 2030 - 2031.  Social rent. 189.  Mid-market rent. 76  Shared equity / subsidised housing for sale. 55.  Total to 2030/31. 320 units</p> <p>Housing Market Area. 2026/27 to 2030/2031  Kirkwall. 215.  Stromness. 25  East Mainland. 14.  West Mainland 16  The Isles 50</p>									

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<p>Total to 2026/31 320units.</p> <p><b><u>g) Essential Workers Housing Strategy (OIC058)</u></b></p> <p>In summer 2022, the Council commissioned the development of an Essential Workers Housing Strategy. The Strategy sought to answer questions around challenges faced by incoming workers, and Orkney residents relating to very high housing demand and constrained supply.</p> <p>The Essential Workers Housing Strategy, considers the housing needs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keyworkers and other essential workers moving to Orkney permanently.</li> <li>• Agency/interim staff working in Orkney, who are living temporarily on Orkney for work purposes, but who are permanent residents elsewhere.</li> <li>• Students moving to Orkney for study.</li> <li>• Workers required for potential infrastructure construction projects.</li> </ul> <p>The Strategy development process involved in-depth research of housing supply and demand, has involved four widescale quantitative surveys with employers, households that have moved to Orkney for work, students who have moved to Orkney (or want to move to Orkney) for study, and private landlords in Orkney. There has also been widescale consultation with community planning partners, the private sector and interviews were also undertaken with households who have recently moved to, or within Orkney.</p> <p>The main conclusions, from the housing demand and supply study, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The housing market drivers of increasing population and households, and strong prospects for economic growth means there is high demand for housing from existing households, incoming workers, and students.</li> <li>• There are significant workforce challenges with high vacancy rates, the ageing workforce and very high dependency ratio (the ratio between non-working households and working households which is one of the highest in Scotland). This means these workforce challenges will continue, with the increasing use of agency and interim staff across Orkney in public services. The private sector also faces these recruitment challenges. There is increasing recruitment for permanent staff from outwith Orkney.</li> <li>• Housing is a key factor in enabling the recruitment and retention of essential workers to sustain Orkney's existing communities, and support sustainable growth, and a key priority for community planning partners will be to attract and retain working age households, and young people, to rebalance the household population and the current high dependency ratio.</li> <li>• There is a requirement for a minimum of 305 bedspaces, or 220 housing units at any point in time for public sector keyworkers/other essential workers and students which is a combination of people moving into Orkney permanently, long term temporary agency/interim staff who live in Orkney temporarily, and students.</li> <li>• Most of the keyworkers moving to Orkney permanently are on higher incomes than the median-average Orkney residents (individual incomes of average £35k+, or household incomes of £50k+). This means they do not need social housing, and the survey showed they wish to rent private sector accommodation while they find their longtime housing option.</li> <li>• The housing market is not meeting the housing needs of incoming workers or students. For the vast majority of households moving to Orkney 80% of survey respondents found it difficult (54% very difficult) to find suitable housing. Employers responding to the survey also said their recruits find it very difficult to find housing when they move to Orkney, and some did not take up employment due to lack of housing. Even though some employers help, they too find it difficult to secure housing for employees. Employers also said some employees are leaving Orkney due to lack of suitable housing options.</li> <li>• There is an increasing requirement to use agency and interim staff, in the public sector, driven by the workforce challenges of the ageing population with increasing vacancy rates. The use of interim and agency staff are expensive resources, but the public sector sees this ongoing requirement for at least</li> </ul>	

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<p>the next decade due to the population/workforce profile. The Council and NHS Orkney tend to use the private rented sector and some limited social housing for agency staff which takes this housing away from residents. They also increasingly use expensive short-term lets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students moving to Orkney also find it very difficult to find housing, and the universities state that lack of housing impacts on the numbers applying for courses, particularly in key areas of renewables and archaeology for which Orkney is renowned. The housing challenge is said to be stifling growth in the research and innovation sectors and means lost opportunities of attracting young people who may then stay in Orkney on completion of their studies and contribute to sustaining Orkney's working population and growth sectors.</li> <li>• In addition, there is an estimated 1,359 bedspaces required for construction workers for the potential infrastructure projects. These are temporary housing requirements but may have a very significant impact on the housing market for existing residents. In addition to the temporary requirements, it is estimated that at least 200 additional long-term jobs will be created for the operational phases, 100 of which are assumed to be filled by new households to Orkney. The temporary housing requirements will have to be funded by the developers, but there is an opportunity to harness a legacy from this temporary provision for permanent housing (for example through serviced sites or improving empty homes).</li> <li>• The housing supply system in Orkney is not currently keeping up with demand. New build supply has dropped constantly from a peak of over 250 units of new build supplied across all housing tenures in 2011 to a much lower figure most recently of under 100 in 2021. There have also been significant underspends on Scottish Government resources for affordable new build housing. This suggests there are problems with the overall housing supply system in Orkney which need to be resolved to meet housing need and demand.</li> </ul> <p>The Essential Workers Housing Strategy highlights that there is clear evidence for the requirement to intervene in the housing system for the provision of housing for keyworkers/other essential incoming workers. This would be through the provision of additional supply, and other housing options, targeted for this group, potentially combined with student housing provision.</p> <p>This essential workers' strategy has several actions including: deliver 220 homes for essential workers over 10 years including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OIC securing 20 properties through private sector leasing.</li> <li>• Enabling 150 new build houses for mid-market rent.</li> <li>• Enabling 85 acquisition for mid-market rent.</li> <li>• Enabling 40 empty homes brought back into use targeted for essential workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>g) <u>Other housing studies and statistical evidence.</u></b></p> <p>There are a range of other strategies and demographic data available which are available all of which have been set out below.</p> <p><b><u>Demographic context - Population, households, and ageing population (OIC061)</u></b></p> <p>According to the National Records of Scotland (NRS) data and projections, Orkney had an estimated population of 22,540 people in 2021, with a slightly older age profile compared with Scotland overall, with proportionately fewer people aged 16-24 and 25-44 years and proportionately more people in the older age groups.</p> <p>Since 2001, the population in Orkney has increased by 17%, compared with 8% across Scotland. There has been a 7% reduction in the population aged 0-15 years, compared with 6% across Scotland. The working-age population (aged 16-64 years old) has increased by 10% compared with 6% in Scotland,</p>	

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	<p>while the population aged 65 years or older increased by over 70%, compared with 33% for Scotland as a whole.</p>
	<p>In terms of households the NRS projections estimate that from 2018 to 2028 there will be a 5% increase in the level of households and between 2018 to 2043 there will be an 8% increase in the number of households. Scotland as a whole is estimated at 5% and 10% increases over the same periods. In terms of numbers this would see 10,506 households in 2018 growing to 11,010 households in 2028.</p>
	<p>In terms of household types, it is projected that in 2028, the household type, "One adult", will remain the most common (38.1%) and the household type, "One adult, one or more children", is projected to remain the least common (4.5%) in Orkney Islands. Also, it is predicted that between 2018 and 2028, the age groups where there is the largest percentage increase in people living alone is in all the age groups over 60.</p>
<b><u>Demographic and social trends</u></b>	
	<p>Latest National Record of Scotland projects have been analysed and reported by the Community Planning Partnership which has highlighted that the National Records of Scotland predict that by 2043 the number of children (0-15) will decrease by 34% and the number of those aged 75 and over will grow by 86%.</p>
	<p>The population of Orkney was growing at a healthy rate but has slowed and may have currently plateaued. The population of the isles have flatlined and there is a real risk that it could decline significantly on one or more isles. Whilst the whole of Scotland faces challenges of an aging population, this is greater in Orkney, but the challenge is significantly higher on the isles of Orkney. If the isles are to continue to be sustainable, efforts need to be put in to encourage and support younger people to remain and move to the isles and attract people with the essential skills to provide services and develop the economy.</p>
<b>Specialist housing</b>	
<b>Meeting the housing needs of older people and disabled people</b>	
	<p>Within the HNDA there is a specific chapter highlighting the demographic issues in Orkney with an aging population. There is an expectation that this will increase the need for specialist housing. For example, the 2018-based population projections estimate that there will be a 38% increase in the number of people aged 65 years or over by 2043, up from 24% in 2018. Orkney's demographic is changing with a sizeable shift towards an older population. Increases in those aged 75 and over are expected to be especially large, with an estimated increase of 86% from 2,345 people to 4,366 people, or up from 11% to 20% of the population, which will put pressure on health, care, and housing services.</p>
	<p>In terms of actions to deliver accessible and adapted homes that will help meet the housing needs of older people and disabled people currently, many of the new build properties developed by the Council and Orkney Housing Association are designed to be accessible and the two-bedroom properties that are now being developed by the Council are predominantly bungalows to make them as flexible as possible.</p>
	<p>Other actions that have been delivered or work undertaken to meet the needs of older people and disabled people include:</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orkney Housing Association has continued to build amenity housing and now has a total of 200 amenity standard homes. Amenity housing is self-contained accommodation designed specifically with the needs of older people in mind but can also be suitable for younger people with needs.</li> <li>Age Scotland was commissioned in 2019 to capture information on the housing aspirations and preferences of older people in Orkney.</li> <li>Different models of providing housing and related services for older people have been examined, including 'Care for Sanday' by the Sanday Development Trust, and Hope Co-housing, a cohousing project for older people within St Margaret's Hope. More work is required to implement these projects.</li> </ul> <p>The Housing Need and Demand Assessment sets out the current provision and the requirements for additional accessible, adapted and wheelchair housing. It identified that around 300-600 households each year require adaptations to help people remain in their own homes. In homes, in practice, Care and Repair typically provides 550 adaptations annually, with the most common major adaptations being level access showers, external ramping, stair lifts and grab rails.</p> <p>Recent resource levels (until 2023) have been in line with needs, but with the increasing ageing population, this will mean increasing need and resource requirements for adaptations. There is currently a significant backlog of level access shower installations, in part due to lack of capacity in the specialised workforce required for this type of adaptation. The small repairs service offered by Care and Repair provided 520 small repairs in 2023.</p> <p>Again, the need will increase with the aging population, projected at 630 small repairs by 2033. This means a need for increasing resources. It is estimated that 50-70 wheelchair properties are required over the next ten years, based on varying assumptions on health outcomes. There is strong demand, and provision for/of bungalows among older residents, which will make adaptation for wheelchair use easier.</p> <p>There is also scope to adapt some of the existing social ambulant disabled housing stock to wheelchair housing to meet this demand. There is very high demand and unmet need for care at home services, in part due to lack of workforce. At the same time, the level of care home provision is well below the Scottish average rate. This does not mean the solution is more care homes, but there must be adequate resources for the alternative, including care at home, very sheltered and/or extra care housing as the need increases.</p> <p>The Council has recently completed a core and cluster development for people with learning disabilities and the Housing Market Partnership discussed using more core and cluster developments, including extra care housing for mixed client groups e.g. older people, those with dementia, disabled people. This could be a more efficient and effective approach compared to home care in a rural setting, particularly in the context of travel distances and lack of care workforce.</p> <p>There is a gap in supported housing provision for those of the Orkney community with enduring mental health needs who currently live on the Scottish Mainland due to lack of appropriate provision in Orkney. The Housing Market Partnership considered these needs and agreed a range of key actions including:</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring sustainable resourcing for the Care and Repair service, recognising the vital role this plays in enabling timely discharge from hospital and supporting independent living.</li> <li>Pursuing a core and cluster approach for new housing suitable for older people and a range of other needs, including extra care housing.</li> <li>Enhancing the telecare service and introducing SMART homes.</li> <li>Putting in place supported housing/care provision for those with enduring mental health.</li> <li>Review incentives for older people to downsize, to move to homes more suitable for their needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Student accommodation</b>  In relation to housing for students, Heriot Watt University and Orkney College UHI have been exploring options for student accommodation including using the youth hostel in the short-term and developing new purpose-built accommodation in Stromness which would also service Orkney Research and Innovation Centre (ORIC). The Housing Market Partnership will maintain dialogue with education providers to keep options open for existing and new housing supply for students.</p> <p><b>Short-Term Lets (STL) data (OIC059)</b>  In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of houses and flats being taken out of full-time occupation and used as short-term accommodation. To address this issue, the Scottish Government introduced new legislation in 2021 to allow local authorities in Scotland to designate all or part of their area as a Short-Term Let Control Area.</p> <p>In terms of short-term lets data there is a list of licenced premises on the Council website. This shows that currently there are just over 500 short-term licences in place. These can be broken down by post code and can be presented spatially to see if there are pressured areas. Initial spatial analysis shows that Kirkwall and Stromness are where there are areas with concentrated groupings of short-term lets. The Housing Strategy action plan highlights that:</p> <p><i>“Over the Local Housing Strategy period the Council will monitor the number of STLs in the area and consider the costs and benefits of STLs to the local economy and sustainability of Orkney’s different communities. It will also consider how STLs Control Areas are being implemented across other areas in Scotland and consider the introduction of STLs control in areas where there needs to be a rebalancing of housing for residents and accommodation for tourists. This process will be managed through the Local Development Plan review.”</i></p> <p><b>Self-Build Register (OIC057)</b>  There is currently a self-build register on the Development Planning website. Promotion of the self-build register was undertaken through a press release. To date there has not been any individuals who have asked to be placed on the self-build register. However, we do have anecdotal evidence from Local Development Plan engagement meetings from people wishing to secure land for self-build plots and we have also had several responses through the Call for Ideas which have highlighted this issue and, therefore, seek a supportive planning policy to facilitate self-builds in appropriate locations. We also know from Building Control figures that since 2016, 50% of new supply has been one property developments, many of which will be commissioned by the individual owner.</p> <p><b>Setting the indicative Local Housing Land Requirements</b>  The initial MATHLR was 450 (<a href="#">Annex E</a>) which was subsequently revised following input from the Council to 1,600. Since this figure was submitted for NPF4 significant updated evidence has been prepared. This includes now having a robust and credible HNDA which includes a high growth scenario. In this</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<p>scenario there is an increase of 1% population growth beyond the principal scenario and is based on the assumption of higher net migration to support workforce pressures and economic growth.</p> <p>The evidence presented in this topic section has demonstrated that a high growth scenario for the iLHLR is credible and necessary to support Orkney's potential population increase through potential economic growth, particularly from the renewables industry, and the Islands Growth Deal. Selecting this as the preferred scenario for the LDP is a proactive response to support the need for a significant increase in housing supply, as evidenced by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). Selecting this scenario can also help meet and facilitate the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Supporting significant economic growth:</b> Orkney anticipates substantial growth through the Islands Growth Deal and the expanding renewable energy industry. Using the high growth scenario ensures there will be generous housing land available to support the workforce needed for these key sectors across all tenures of housing.</li> <li>• <b>Addressing the current severe housing pressure:</b> There is a current imbalance between housing demand and supply, with a historic low in new housing stock, particularly affordable homes. A high growth strategy of land available for development provides a supportive framework to address this shortfall and prevents land availability hindering future development aspirations.</li> <li>• <b>Attracting and retaining a working-age population:</b> Orkney has an ageing population and needs to attract younger, working-age people to sustain its communities and economy. Providing a sufficient supply and variety of housing tenures, as outlined in the high growth scenario, is crucial for inward migration and demographic balance.</li> <li>• <b>Supporting fragile communities:</b> Failure to deliver sufficient housing poses risks to our communities some of which are already fragile. The high growth scenario is a proactive measure to mitigate these risks and support affordability of sites and also support an outcome where house price inflation is limited as there is a generous land supply available to support development.</li> <li>• <b>Leveraging strategic infrastructure investment:</b> The high growth scenario aligns with and supports major infrastructure projects, such as the development of Orkney Harbours Masterplan and Renewables sector which require a growing population and workforce to succeed.</li> <li>• <b>Ensuring flexibility for future needs:</b> The high growth scenario provides a more flexible approach to housing supply, allowing the LDP to be able to respond to different market conditions and ensure sufficient land and choice is available to facilitate a range of housing types and sizes (e.g., for key workers, families, and an ageing population).</li> </ul> <p>The high growth scenario effectively provides the evidence base for planning and allocating land for the significant number of new homes needed to meet expected population and economic expansion, ensuring Orkney can achieve its strategic aspirations.</p> <p>In taking forward one of the scenarios, given the existing housing need and the potential for economic growth in Orkney (which can reasonably be assumed to trigger additional in-migration) then it is considered reasonable that the iLHLR should be informed by the evidence and projections presented in the <u>High Migration scenario in the HNDA shown above in figure 22</u>.</p> <p>Figure 22 above sets out the estimated need over five year periods for a total of a 20 year period. To reflect difficulties in meeting target completions in recent years the first two five year periods covering in the high migration scenario in the HNDA have been used to calculate the requirement. This will ensure that current unmet demand is included in the calculation. This was included in the HNDA calculation. This has been approved as robust and credible.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>7. Housing</b>
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Therefore, to establish the iLHLR using the high migration scenario in the HNDA for 10 years is summarised in the table below broken down by tenure.

<b>Orkney – High Migration (+1%) in HNDA</b>	<b>Annual total (first 5 years)</b>	<b>Annual (years 6-10)</b>	<b>Total houses over 10 years</b>
Total (all tenures)	<b>189</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>945 +705</b>
Social rent	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>	
Below Market	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	
Private Sector	<b>40</b>	<b>43</b>	
Buyers	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>	
<b>All tenure total for 5 year periods</b>	<b>(189x5) = 945 units</b>	<b>(141 x 5) = 705 units</b>	<b>1,650 units</b>

*Table 4 - iLHLR Calculations using HNDA High Migration Scenario*

First 5 years ( $189 \times 5$ ) to meet clear backlog of unmet demand + ( $141 \times 5$ ) for future need and demand = 1,650 homes

Looking at the breakdown over a 10-year period taking account of the need to increase supply to cover a backlog of unmet demand over the first 5 years would see an iLHLR of 1,650 homes.

Using the high growth scenario would ensure there is a generous and flexible availability of housing land supply in all likely growth scenarios and across all tenures.

It is recommended that the iLHLR figure is based on the high growth scenario in the HNDA and is set at 1,650 units over a 10-year period. This will exceed the MATHLR figure set out in NPF4 and uses an evidence-based approach which has been prepared since NPF4 MATHLR was prepared and will ensure the housing need and demand in Orkney can be supported through the Local Development Plan.

#### **Actions underway to address key infrastructure and delivery challenges and support the iLHLR**

A key element of Orkney's Housing Strategy and the Essential Workers Housing Strategy is the requirement to increase the local capacity to deliver more homes in Orkney. As part of the solutions to this it was announced in November 2025 that there is now a new housing provider in Orkney that has committed to deliver up to 500 homes over 10 years and this will include supporting the delivery of additional affordable homes.

The Scottish Government More Homes Area Team has been supportive of the strategy to attract another provider to increase financial and organisational capacity to enable more housing supply in Orkney.

Flood risk has been raised as another challenge impacting on housing delivery. NPF4 has introduced a change in policy which strengthens the previous approach to flood risk and now requires

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<p>consideration of flood risk to also make an appropriate allowance for the effects of climate change and sea level rise. There are a variety of workstreams underway to look at the issue of flood risk which are of crucial importance to informing the spatial strategy of the next Local Development Plan. These are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Engineering Service (The Flood Authority) with assistance from the Planning Service are currently undertaking research in discussions with SEPA about this new requirement and understanding the potential implications on developments protected by the Kirkwall Harbour Flood Protection Scheme.</li> <li>• In addition, work is underway to consider the risk of flooding from coastal flooding across the whole of Orkney through the development of a coastal change adaptation plan. This will help inform a strategic approach to coastal flooding in Orkney.</li> <li>• In Kirkwall there has been a history of flooding issues as a result of surface water flood risk. Work is underway to develop a Kirkwall Surface Water Management Plan that will support development of an agreed strategic approach to management of surface water flood risk within Kirkwall. This will include setting out developer requirements that will be embedded in the site allocations of the next LDP.</li> </ul> <p>Schedule 8 sets out the current infrastructure in Orkney and its current capacity. Work will continue to be undertaken with infrastructure providers including the NHS, key agencies and Council services to ensure the proposed plan highlights any infrastructure requirements which development requires to provide to mitigate the impact of their developments, and the spatial strategy will embed an infrastructure first approach to development.</p> <p>The iLHLR has been set to ensure there is appropriate flexibility and choice in housing land and to have sufficient land to facilitate all the future housing estimates calculated for HNDA for Orkney. There is substantial evidence to support the iLHLR being based on the High Growth housing estimate (+1.0 population growth) in the HNDA. Using the high growth scenario would see an identified requirement over a 10-year period taking account for the need to increase supply to clear unmet demand over the first five years requires 1,650 homes. To support this scale of development the LDP will ensure an infrastructure first approach is embedded in the LDP and a detailed assessment and any developer requirements will be out in detail in the LDP.</p> <p><b><u>Vacant and Derelict Land (OIC355)</u></b></p> <p>The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Statistics (2024) confirm that Orkney had one recorded vacant or derelict site, measuring in at approximately 32 hectares, located at Lyness on Hoy (See figure 24). This site is a former naval base and is the only entry meeting the national survey criteria (minimum 0.1 ha) within the authority area.</p>	

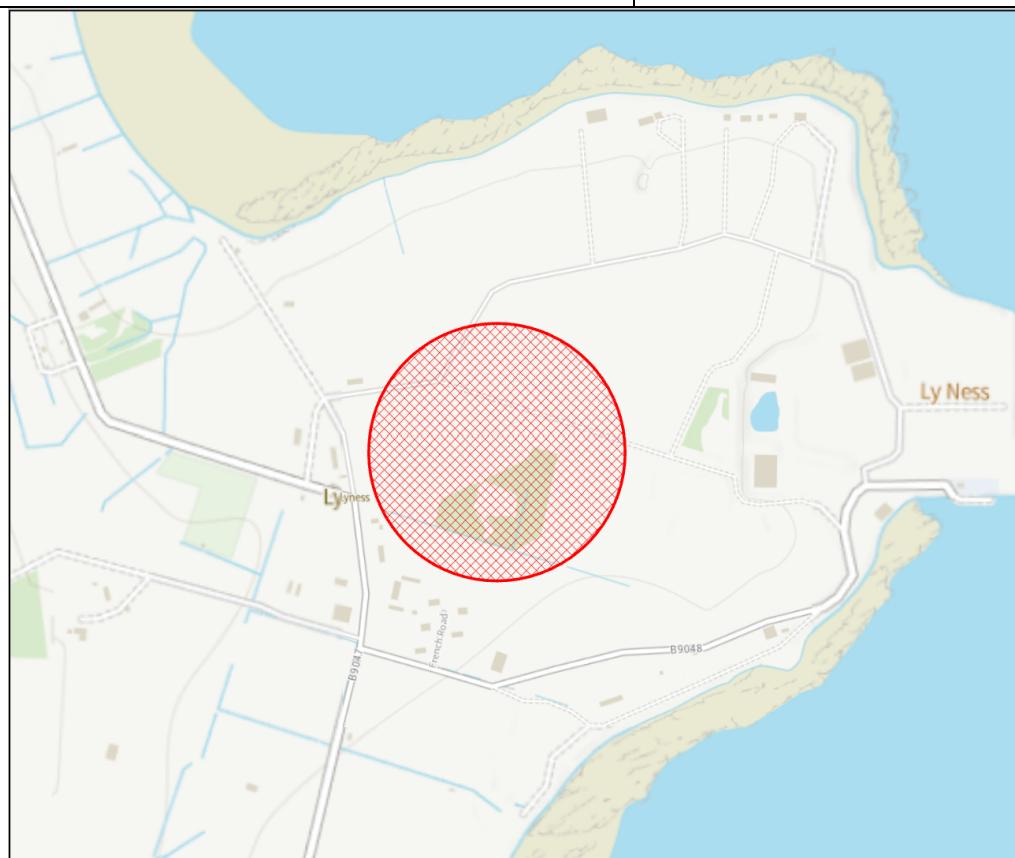


Figure 24 - Vacant and Derelict Site

### Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

The Schedule has been formally sent to:

Local authority housing colleagues representing the Housing Market Partnership.

Homes for Scotland do not have any members who currently operate in Orkney so have not been sent the Schedule however local construction developers who sit on the Housing Market Partnership have been presented the Reporter's conclusions and their feedback sought on using the high HNDA scenario of informing the setting of the iLHLR.

However, in addition to this formal consultation the evidence has been informed by extensive input through the Housing Market Partnership where the following are represented and inputted

- Local authority housing colleagues.
- Social housing providers- through the Housing Market Partnership through the HNDA.
- Private housing providers- stakeholder workshops to develop the HNDA and call for sites process.
- Landowners- engaged through HNDA process and call for sites process.
- Public services- engaged through HNDA process.
- Representative bodies of housing providers and landowners- as above.
- Gypsy Travellers and Travelling Show people- consideration given through HNDA.
- Details of how the Housing Market Partnership representatives and how they were engaged are set out in the HNDA.

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<p>Identified Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Further analysis required on short-term lets and second homes impact (data under review and further research underway in partnership with Destination Orkney).</li> <li>– No specific evidence for Gypsy/Traveller site needs which will be monitored.</li> <li>– Need for viability testing of affordable housing policy options.</li> <li>– Further engagement with NHS, Key Agencies and Council Services to ensure infrastructure first is promoted in the LDP when looking at specific allocations in settlements.</li> </ul>	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<p>Delivering an adequate supply of housing and the timely release of the land required is a key component of the current LDP and will continue to be for the emerging LDP. The challenge will be to plan for sustainable growth, to continue to address housing needs whilst ensuring the protection and promotion of Orkney's built and natural environment. This must be undertaken in the context of the climate and nature emergencies that are being faced, alongside ensuring that community infrastructure is sufficient to support growth in communities. Through the preparation of LDP, a focus will be put on how to accelerate the supply of affordable homes and provide a clearer framework for required housing mix.</p>	
<p>As discussed in the Evidence Report above taking account of a range of evidence including the MATHLR, HNDA, HLA and other up to date data and strategies, the proposed housing land requirement proposed for the next LDP is: 1,650 units over 10 years. This will exceed the MATHLR figure and take account of the significant new evidence prepared since the finalised figure was suggested to the Scottish Government during NPF4 discussions. This is considered an ambitious and generous approach and will meet housing need for all scenarios presented in the HNDA.</p>	
<p>Initial evidence showed that as there is an existing generous effective land supply meeting the proposed iLHLR in the existing LDP plus a strong history of windfall development, so there is no specific requirement to identify additional land to meet the identified need between 2027-2037. However, there are a number of issues to consider in the new local development plan which could mean further land is required:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demand for self-build plots and reviewing policy options to facilitate this this will include reviewing the policy for housing in the countryside where there is a history of self-build plots being delivered.</li> <li>• review of the indicative capacities of existing sites to reflect a significant increase in the number of smaller households and if increased densities are appropriate to better utilise land capacity</li> <li>• replacement of any sites which are removed as allocations from the Plan and replaced with new sites.</li> <li>• including reviewing the size of the allocation to have an increased amount of smaller site allocations to support the capacity of the local building industry and meet local needs aligning with the spatial strategy.</li> <li>• a review of empty homes, existing holiday accommodation in Orkney and how these can best contribute to meeting needs.</li> <li>• review the existing Spatial Strategy for housing to consider allocations against the live local policy agenda and infrastructure first approach and assess whether the current approach is still appropriate.</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	7. Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is proposed to require further evidence and viability of sites as part of the ongoing plan preparation process. If sufficient evidence of both effectiveness and viability is not forthcoming, then sites will not be included, and existing designations may be deleted from the Plan.</li> <li>Ensure there is longer term sites highlighted that can be rolled forward if there are issues with delivery of shorter term sites</li> </ul>	
<p>The proposed Plan will set out a strategy to address the housing and infrastructure issues identified through this and other topic papers and ensure growth is delivered under a planned and phased approach whilst directing future development away from the most sensitive areas. The LDP will seek to ensure that an appropriate level of housing is being planned for to meet identified needs now and in the future. There is likely to be a tailored approach required for the delivery of rural homes outwith the main settlements which departs from NPF4 Rural Homes Policy and its use of Scottish Government's 6 fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 to identify where it applies. In Orkney a finer grain of policy is required to take account of local housing pressures, locations local services, infrastructure and public transport.</p>	
<p>Sites will require to be allocated over a range of geographies and settlements and include a range of site sizes and tenures. This needs to be accompanied by higher standards of placemaking and delivery of the infrastructure requirements to support planned growth and establishing required densities as a minimum on specific sites. It is also worth noting that new growth areas will inevitably be greenfield sites as Orkney has a very limited vacant/derelict/brownfield land supply.</p>	
<p>The Council will continue to explore the effectiveness of all housing sites currently included within the 2024 Housing Land Audit. As part of the Delivery Programme for the new LDP there will be a housing pipeline included setting out a detailed programming of sites over the short-, medium- and longer-term periods. Only sites that are deliverable will be identified in LDP. Sites will not automatically be rolled forward from LDP2.</p>	
<p>The Plan will seek to ensure a proportion of accessible housing is provided on new developments in line with local need, and that includes a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to cater for all population groups, including the ageing population in accordance with the LHS and other supporting strategies. This will help to reduce inequalities faced by those with disabilities and ensures that accommodation is suitable for residents as they age. It is also with the aim of creating necessary movement within the housing market to help residents secure a suitable home for their needs over different life stages.</p>	
<p>The Council will also continue to monitor the uptake of self-build registrations and monitor if there are any future requirements for the Gypsy and Traveller Communities.</p>	
<p><b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b></p>	
<p>There are no areas of dispute from the evidence presented. NatureScot proposed a link to Schedule 5, this has been added. The Council Housing Manager supported the approach to housing set out. The development industry supported the revised housing figure based on the high HNDA scenario.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>8. Infrastructure First</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(d) The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities);</li> <li>• section 15(5)(e) How that infrastructure is used;</li> <li>• section 15(5)(cd) The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs;</li> <li>• section 15(5)(ce) The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs; and</li> <li>• section 15(5)(cg) The capacity of education services in the district.</li> </ul> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:</p> <p>Regulation 9(2)(e) The planning authority are to have regard to the following plans and strategies, insofar as relating to the local development plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The national waste management plan;</li> <li>(ii) Any regional transport strategy; and</li> <li>(iii) Any local transport strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC217</b> <a href="#">OLDP 2017 Planning Policy Advice Developer Contributions</a></p> <p><b>OIC062</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government Circular 3/2012 Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements</a></p> <p><b>OIC063</b> <a href="#">Orkney Community Plan 2023-30, incorporating the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)</a></p> <p><b>OIC259</b> <a href="#">Scotland's Zero Waste Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC052</b> <a href="#">Orkney Housing Land Audit – 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC065</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government National Improvement Framework</a></p> <p><b>OIC066</b> <a href="#">Scottish Government Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy 'Connecting People, Places and Learning'</a></p> <p><b>OIC067</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council School Roll Forecast March 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC068</b> <a href="#">NHS Orkney Asset Management Plan Summary 2019-2029</a></p> <p><b>OIC069</b> <a href="#">Orkney Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan – Health and Social Care Integration</a></p> <p><b>OIC070</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council Capital Investment Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC071</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council Key Facts and Figures 2024-2025</a></p> <p><b>OIC072</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council Corporate Plan 2023-2028</a></p>

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<p><b>8. Infrastructure First</b></p> <p><a href="#">OIC073</a> Scottish Water Capacity Plans and Datasets for Orkney  <a href="#">OIC074</a> <a href="#">CD140 SSEN Orkney Projects</a>  <a href="#">OIC075</a> <a href="#">Orkney Phone and Broadband Coverage</a>  <a href="#">OIC076</a> <a href="#">Orkney Digital Connectivity Programmes</a>  <a href="#">OIC077</a> <a href="#">SEPA Scottish Household Waste Generated and Managed Statistics</a>  <a href="#">OIC078</a> <a href="#">SSEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios - Regen</a>  <a href="#">OIC218</a> <a href="#">Orkney Health and Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</a>  <a href="#">OIC260</a> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Council Play Area Strategy</a>  <a href="#">OIC020</a> <a href="#">Open Space Strategy</a>  <a href="#">OIC261</a> <a href="#">NHS Orkney Clinical Strategy 2022-2027</a>  <a href="#">OIC080</a> <a href="#">STPR2</a>  <a href="#">OIC313</a> <a href="#">Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP)</a>  <a href="#">OIC310</a> <a href="#">Telecommunication Masts – Planning Advice</a>  <a href="#">OIC311</a> <a href="#">Developing with Nature</a>  <a href="#">OIC315</a> <a href="#">Out to Play</a>  <a href="#">OIC316</a> <a href="#">Active Scotland Outcomes Framework</a>  <a href="#">OIC317</a> <a href="#">Scotland's circular economy and waste route map to 2023</a>  <a href="#">OIC330</a> <a href="#">Mobile Network Coverage in Orkney</a>  <a href="#">OIC331</a> <a href="#">Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030</a>  <a href="#">OIC341</a> <a href="#">OIC Playing Pitch Strategy</a>  <a href="#">OIC342</a> <a href="#">OIC Built Facility Strategy</a>  <a href="#">OIC343</a> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Sports Facility Strategy</a>  <a href="#">OIC344</a> <a href="#">OIC Waste Strategy</a>  <a href="#">OIC352</a> <a href="#">Orkney Burial Grounds</a>  <a href="#">OIC356</a> <a href="#">Water Fill Locations</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
	<p>Policy 18 Infrastructure First sets out that the LDP and Delivery Programme should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. This means that infrastructure needs are understood early in the development planning process as part of an evidence-based approach, and that infrastructure considerations are integral to development planning and decision making. The LDP and Delivery Programme are to set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the Spatial Strategy, informed by the evidence base. This is to include information on the location, type, delivery timescales and body, and what level of contributions need to be sought. The LDP and Delivery Programme are to align with relevant</p>

national, regional and local infrastructure plans and policies and the Scottish Government's infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies.

Policy 15 Local Living and 20-minute Neighbourhoods sets out that the LDP is to encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options. A key outcome is that new and existing communities are planned together with homes and key local infrastructure including schools, community centre, local shops, green spaces, health and social care, digital and transport links. Mixed use neighbourhoods support health and well-being, reduce inequalities and are resilient to the effects of climate change. LDP's should support local living within settlements through their Spatial Strategy and associated site briefs and masterplans. Local Living is dependent on the provision of key local infrastructure. Local Living is addressed in Schedule 6.

Policy 13 Sustainable Transport is addressed separately in Schedule 9.

Policy 11 Energy sets out that LDPs should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy production. This Schedule only relates to grid/network capacity. Policy 11 is covered in detail in Schedule 4.

Policy 12 Zero Waste sets out that LDPs should encourage, promote, and facilitate development that is consistent with the waste hierarchy. This means that the reduction and reuse of materials in construction is prioritised and that infrastructure for zero waste and to develop Scotland's circular economy is delivered in appropriate locations. Therefore, LDPs are to identify appropriate locations for new waste management facilities and meet identified needs in a way that moves waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible.

Policy 24 Digital Infrastructure sets out that LDPs should support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

Policy 21 Play, recreation and sport sets out that LDPs should identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages. This should be based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community and informed by the planning authority's Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy. These spaces can be incorporated as part of enhancing and expanding blue and green infrastructure, taking account of relevant agencies' plans or policy frameworks, such as flood risk and/or water management plans. New provisions should be well-designed, high quality, accessible and inclusive.

### **Summary of Evidence**

#### **Orkney Local Development Plan 2017-2022 (OIC127)**

There are a number of policies relevant to the delivery of infrastructure and ensuring infrastructure is understood as a critical part of the local development plan policies and allocations.

Policy 1 Criteria for All Development includes a specific policy that requires development to “*not create an unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services that cannot be resolved;*” and “*it does not result in an unacceptable level of risk to public health and safety*”

The OLDP 2017 highlights that, “*Where it is essential to make a proposal acceptable in planning terms, Developer Contributions will be sought toward upgrades to existing, and the provision of new, infrastructure. Contributions may be sought toward transport infrastructure, active travel network, schools, waste facilities, open space provision, strategic flood risk defences. Details of where contributions are required will be set out within the relevant settlement statement, development brief or masterplan and within Planning Policy Advice: Developer Contributions.*”

Policy 11 – Outdoor Sports, Recreation and Community Facilities highlights that, “*New developments can introduce additional pressures on existing facilities and, in recognition of this, contributions may be sought toward the costs of new facilities or the upgrade of existing facilities.*” The scope of this policy relates to facilities such as schools, community halls, care facilities, children’s play facilities, public art installation and community growing facilities.

Policy 14 Transport, Travel & Road Network Infrastructure has statements around expectations on infrastructure provision which includes:

“*Any developments within settlements will be required to provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling, for both active travel and recreation, in order to encourage options for healthy living and positive aging.*”

“*Where public transport services required to serve a new development cannot be provided commercially, a contribution from the developer towards an agreed level of service may be appropriate. Any such contributions will be highlighted within the relevant Urban Design Framework, Masterplans or Development Brief.*”

“*The provision of low carbon transport infrastructure within developments is particularly encouraged, for example by providing community or commercial electric vehicle charge points. Where there is a specific requirement to provide such facilities, or to contribute toward the cost of nearby provision which serves an application site, this will be highlighted within the appropriate Urban Design Framework, Masterplan or Development Brief.*”

#### Policy 15 Digital Connectivity

There is support for, “*Developers to explore opportunities for the provision of digital infrastructure to new homes, businesses and facilities as an integral part of the development.*”

## Current Infrastructure Provision, Pressures, and Capacities

### Education

In Orkney, there is a school population of approximately 3,000. There are two senior secondary schools located in the main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness. Three Junior High Schools, located on Westray, Sanday and Stronsay, provide education from nursery up to secondary school fourth year. There are 18 Primary Schools in total and a Halls of Residence, located in Kirkwall, to permit island pupils to attend Kirkwall Grammar School. In terms of Early learning and childcare, there are 20 Local Authority Settings for (3–5-year-olds including eligible 2-year-olds)

There is a Community School structure in place in many School Estates settings to ensure the Council facilities are used for the maximum benefit. Community schools were established not as a simple letting arrangement but as a partnership agreement, whereby the facilities are used as a community hub to benefit the local community. Although owned by Orkney Island's Council and managed by the Head Teacher, the community area of the building is operated by a community organisation made up of local volunteers. The Community Association has a Management Committee who decide how the community facility will be run on a day-to-day basis. Of the Council's schools, 15 are designated as community schools.

The Council's Learning Estates Strategy phase one 2022-27 has been developed in partnership between Orkney Islands Council and stakeholders. The work on the Strategy led to five potential investment opportunities, in October 2024 these were reviewed and the following investment priorities identified.

### ***Updated Preferred Investment Options for Learning Estate (October 2024)***

Option Description	Option Preference
Expansion of Glatness Primary Site – extension and refurbishment	Preferred option 1
Do minimum – address condition, suitability, accessibility, and inclusion across entire school estate	Preferred option 2
Expansion of Glatness Primary site - demolition and rebuild	Preferred option 3
Investment in Westray Community School	Preferred option 4
Investment in Dounby Community School	Preferred option 5
Creation of joint Glatness/Papdale Primary School	Preferred option 6
Do nothing	Discounted
Integrated Additional Support Needs Centre of Excellence on the Kirkwall Grammar/Papdale Primary site	Discounted
Provision of ASN Centre in Papdale Primary School	Discounted

Further work will be undertaken with Education to consider the likely timescales and priorities for developing the above proposals and ensure the spatial implications of these are considered in the next Local Development Plan with appropriate land safeguarded. The investment in an Integrated Assisted Support Needs Centre has been determined as the key initial priority with the current preferred option to undertake feasibility work on options to develop the Glatness site to explore a potential solution that meets mainstream capacity and the development of the Additional Support Needs service. The feasibility work would produce a costed recommendation on the proposed way forward

There is an aspiration for three other Council's Learning Estates Strategies to be developed that will incorporate the Leisure and Culture estate, and the third phase will consider the requirements of Orkney College. Finally, a fourth phase will be included with the addition of a written assessment for every building within the learning estate.

### **Primary and Secondary Education Capacity (OIC067)**

The School Roll Forecast (SRF) is published annually. It is based on school census data, released in September, and other data sources such as the National Records of Scotland, the Orkney Housing Land Audit (HLA) and Local Development Plan allocations. The latest forecast identifies that Kirkwall is the area of primary pressure for housing development and the significant housing land allocation and demand for housing in and around Kirkwall may provide additional pressure over the coming years. While there is still capacity in both Glatness and Papdale primary schools, the amount of new build housing that may be developed over the coming years and the continued draw of families to the core of Kirkwall may well increase the pressure on these two schools. Other schools that currently have capacity issues are Burry Primary School and Firth Primary School, but these are forecast to lessen by 2029. There will continue to be close discussions with Education to ensure the subject of education capacity and the potential for developer contributions are a strong consideration when looking at land allocations in and around Kirkwall.

### **School transport for school aged children and young people**

The Council provides free transport to all children and young people of school ages who live more than the statutory walking distance from their designated school, which is two miles for children and young people of school ages less than 8 years old and three miles for children and young people of school ages aged 8 and over.

In Orkney, this reduces to 1.5 miles for all pupils during the winter terms, October break to Easter break. These distances are measured by the shortest available safe walking route. This is more generous than that prescribed by statute and therefore may be reviewed at any time. The policy decision was taken on the ground of safety of pupils due to our severe weather conditions. Discussions have been held with Education highlighting opportunities for development to have more direct footpath links to key services such as schools and due to the location and design of footpaths not taking a direct route this is placing additional requirements of having to provide school travel.

### **Childcare Provision**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide early learning and childcare for three to five year-olds and eligible two year-olds, meaning parents and carers who require care for younger children rely on other providers. This was previously provided by a private run

nursery called Peedie Breeks and childminders; however, the private nursery closed and there has been a decline in active registered childminders in Orkney, which has exacerbated the situation.

To support families and critical workers to carry out their roles, the Local Authority has made the decision to intervene, and a new £1.5 million early learning and childcare facility is currently being built at Orkney College by Orkney Islands Council. There is a tender out to find a commercial operator to run the service. The decision will mean moving forward there will be a new 51-place facility in Kirkwall for ages 0 to 3. In the short term, the Council provides nursery for 0 to 3 through the Willow Tree Nursery with provision then provided through early learning centres at the primary schools and the Strynd.

### **Further Education**

Additional student accommodation that may be required by the different further education facilities in Orkney will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the LDP. Feedback from the early engagement has highlighted challenges in students finding suitable accommodation and a lack of dedicated student accommodation at the campuses.

### **Spatial Implications**

As set out above, consideration will need to be given to the quantifiable and qualitative aspects of placemaking and local living in terms of the review of educational facilities within Orkney. The availability of funding is an important factor in delivering local infrastructure to promote, support and facilitate local living and its associated benefits. Any revisions to the school estate will be subject to the statutory consultation set out in legislation.

### **Infrastructure First Approach for Education and Developer Obligations (OIC217)**

Developer obligations can form part of the funding for education infrastructure where the five tests of Circular 3/2012 and NPF4 policy 18 are met. Given that development viability is a key consideration in development planning, the level of developer obligations that potentially could be sought would not cover the full cost of education infrastructure. Therefore, the timescale for delivery is largely dependent on the availability of other forms of funding such as the Scottish Government LEIP.

### **Healthcare**

NHS Orkney is the smallest territorial health board in Scotland and is responsible for the health care of the population of Orkney, covering 989sq.km with 20 of the Orkney Islands populated. The structure of NHS Orkney is that there is a Board which provides services from one hospital, 19 Primary care facilities and two office buildings.

NHS Orkney employ around 800 staff and provide a comprehensive range of primary, community-based and acute hospital services. The new Balfour Hospital and Healthcare facility was opened in June 2019, it provides a remote and rural general hospital service including Emergency Department, High Dependency Unit, Theatre, Maternity, as well as hospital inpatient and outpatient services. It also provides consultant led services for Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Orthopaedics and Anaesthetics. It also provides a six chair Renal Dialysis service as a satellite of NHS Grampian. The hospital is Video Conference enabled to support remote attendance and reduce patient travel.

NHS Orkney have prepared several relevant plans and strategies. These are included in their annual report, which highlights existing challenges and issues, these are:

- Fragile services and unacceptably long waits – outpatients and planned care (including ophthalmology, dentistry, pain services, rheumatology, children's services, speech and language therapy).
- Consistently timely treatment for cancer patients.
- Inadequate care home and system capacity – resulting in delayed transfers of care from The Balfour.
- Sustainability: workforce, financial and clinical services.
- Housing availability – impacting on recruitment and retention.

The NHS Orkney Strategic Plan outlines the changes that are increasing demands on healthcare, which include people living longer independent lives and also living with chronic multiple conditions, a shrinking workforce relative to demand, and budgets that are not keeping pace with inflation.

Due to limited capacity, Orkney has no NHS dental providers taking on new patients, this has been the case for several years. People moving to Orkney in recent years are unlikely to have been able to register with an NHS dentist.

Physical infrastructure such as buildings, equipment and Information Technology (IT) has a key role to play in supporting the clinical care provided within Orkney. The corporate plan highlights within the work programme to progress work on renovating the remaining NHS Orkney buildings, including the GP surgeries and houses on Sanday, Westray, Stronsay and North Ronaldsay.

### **NHS Orkney Clinical Strategy 2022-2027 (OIC261)**

NHS Orkney provides a wide range of healthcare in Orkney, from urgent and emergency care to GPs and dentistry. Some of these services are based in The Balfour, the hospital and healthcare facility, and many are provided in the community across the Mainland and our isles. The Strategy highlights that difficult decisions must be made regarding whether care can safely be delivered in Orkney and within our isles with the resources available, or whether it needs to be delivered outside Orkney.

The spatial implications of the above, such as any rationalisation or expansion of the healthcare estate will be reflected in the LDP. In accordance with the Place Principle, opportunities to share premises with other organisations will also be considered through the preparation of the LDP and discussions will be held with NHS around this.

### **NHS Orkney Asset Management Plan 2019-2029 (OIC068)**

The Strategic Plan showing the NHS priorities for investment includes

- Stromness Surgery.
- Sanday Surgery, Flebister House.
- Flotta Surgery, Springbank.
- Stronsay Surgery, Geramount.
- Westray Surgery, Trenabie House.
- North Ronaldsay Surgery, New Manse.
- Papa Westray Surgery.

Approximately 60% of the Primary Care premises have a physical condition in category C, which will require significant investment. The plan states these properties will form part of a prioritisation of investment programme alongside any service change plans being considered. Further discussions will be held with NHS Orkney to confirm if the plan is to upgrade the existing building or if new buildings/locations will be required.

### **Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership (Orkney HSCP) (OIC069)**

This is a Partnership between NHS Orkney and Orkney Islands Council. The Partnership aims to improve and develop social care, community health and wellbeing. It aims to provide the best possible care for people in Orkney, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.

The Orkney HSCP has, to date, been responsible for the delivery of the full range of NHS Orkney's community-based health services and the Council's social work and social services, for all age groups and service user groups since 2011, under joint management arrangements. The Partnership has continued to be accountable to both NHS Orkney and the Council for the effective delivery of these services through the Integration Joint Board.

Orkney Health and Care provide care homes on the Orkney Mainland in Stromness, Dounby and Kirkwall.

#### **Hamnavoe House (Stromness).**

Hamnavoe House has 36 single bedrooms providing long-term care for people over 65 years with high dependency needs. There is separate accommodation for people with dementia or physical frailty.

#### **St Rognvald's House (Kirkwall).**

St. Rognvald's House has 40 single bedrooms providing long-term care for people over 65 years with high dependency needs. There is separate accommodation for people with dementia or physical frailty.

#### **Smiddybrae House (Dounby)**

Smiddybrae House has 28 single bedrooms and two double bedrooms providing long-term care for people over 65 years with high dependency needs. There is separate accommodation for people with dementia or physical frailty.

Orkney Health and Care, Orkney Housing and Orkney Island Property Development provide supported accommodation in St Margaret's Hope, Kirkwall and Westray. Each property is leased on a tenancy basis. Tenancies are offered for people who have an assessed need for support and housing.

In addition, Orkney Health and Care Partnership is committed to providing flexible, responsive and good quality care at home services, which reflect individual need and

preferences, and encourage people to live as independently as possible in their own home, as well as to support carers in their caring role.

### **Orkney Health and Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (OIC218)**

This has been developed to provide evidence and the analysis of needs, and agreed priorities, and will be used to help to determine what actions local authorities, the local NHS and other partners need to take to meet health and social care needs, and to address the wider determinants that impact on health and wellbeing. The assessment highlights that Orkney faces many health and social care provision challenges across the life course over the short and longer-term. Many of the issues facing Orkney are not specifically unique to the Islands but key challenges facing Scotland as a whole. However, some are felt much more acutely in Orkney due to the remote and rural nature of Orkney and relatively limited access to services. Highlighted issues are:

#### Population Change

It is well known population demographics are evolving. Considering trends over recent years provides some initial insight into the beginnings of this impact. In the five-year period, between 2014 and 2019, the proportion of males aged 75+ increased by 30% and the number of females increased by 22%. In that same period, there has been an increase in home care waiting lists and the level of emergency admissions associated with people aged 65+ has remained constant. It is estimated that by 2035, Orkney residents aged 65+ could increase by 30%, while the number of people aged between 18 and 64 years is forecast to decrease by 10%, with a 15% reduction in the number of children and young people (those aged under 18 years). The increase in cohort size is estimated to be most acute in those aged 85+; males aged 85+ are set to increase by 114% in this period and females by 75%.

#### The wider determinants of health and wellbeing

The wider determinants of health and wellbeing cut across all issues facing Orkney. There are well known and established links between deprivation, negative health outcomes and risk related health behaviour. Examples of negative health outcomes highlighted include premature death, chronic disease and psychiatric hospital admission. Continually, the relationship between deprivation and lifestyle associated risk related behaviours indicates there are challenges associated with wider societal issues. These range from smoking prevalence, healthy lifestyle as well as substance misuse.

#### Mental Health

Common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety are areas that stand out as being increasingly problematic for the people of Orkney. There has been an increase in demand over the past decade and services are struggling to meet this. A review of data surrounding the wider determinants of health indicate there are stresses in the wider population influencing people's mental health and wellbeing. From financial instability to social isolation as well as the impacts associated with the COVID-19 legacy, timely access to mental health services has never been as important as it is now.

#### **Sport and Leisure**

The Scottish Government has outlined the ambitions for sport and physical activity in the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework and these are:

- We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active.
- We encourage and enable the active to stay active throughout life.
- We develop physical confidence and competence from the earliest age.
- We improve active infrastructure – people and places.
- We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport.
- We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport.

The availability of a network of places, of the right quality and capacity to meet the needs of sport, is crucial to deliver these outcomes.

In Orkney a draft Physical Activity Strategy has been prepared and recently approved. The approved the Strategy will be reviewed for any implications for the next LDP.

Built assets includes multi-purpose indoor sport and leisure facilities, which can host swimming pools, fitness suites, and sports halls, specialist facilities such as, climbing walls, and outdoor built and leisure environments such as, athletic tracks and sports pitches. Built assets are owned and/or managed by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

The benefits of physical activity and sports participation are well known and include helping to prevent and treat non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer as well as supporting mental health and social connections. The LDP will ensure that existing sports and leisure assets are protected, and that appropriate new infrastructure is identified to support the health and well-being of both existing and new residents.

Infrastructure planning for sports and leisure will be primarily informed by discussions with the Education and Leisure team at the Council. The planning of the Council assets in the LDP will be largely determined by the available budget. The planning of non-Council assets will be informed through consultation with the relevant groups/organisations/facilities and credible investment plans; any information contained in community led plans will also inform this planning.

In terms of the current provision of sport and fitness facilities the main venue for sport and leisure in the County is the [Pickaquoy Centre](#) in Kirkwall, known locally as 'Picky'. The centre boasts two swimming pools, a health suite, a well-equipped gym, squash courts, climbing wall ,indoor courts and a range of other facilities, including a modern athletic track outdoors, football and rugby pitches.

In addition to Picky there are Healthy Living Centres around Orkney. These are community-based fitness suites equipped with a range of cardiovascular and resistance exercise machines, aimed at providing accessible, affordable gym facilities for people living outside of Orkney's main towns. Healthy Living Centres aim to promote health in the widest sense, by offering local, affordable and friendly gym facilities, and seasonal 'fitness challenges' to make exercise fun and sociable, and to counter service inequalities for people who live in the more remote regions of Orkney.

There are seven Healthy Living Centres operated by Orkney Islands Council, all based at the communities' schools:

- North Walls.
- Rousay.
- Sanday.
- Shapinsay.
- St Margaret's Hope.
- Stronsay.
- Westray.

Each Centre has a mix of exercise machines including rowing, treadmill and stepping/elliptical stepping machines and exercise bikes, as well as changing facilities and toilets. All Centres are staffed by trained fitness instructors who are available for supervised sessions.

In addition to the Healthy Living Centres there are five swimming pools located across the Council area, as well as, playing fields at the following locations:

- Bignold Park.
- Burray.
- Dounby.
- Firth.
- Hope.
- Kirkwall Grammar School.
- Market Green.
- North Walls.
- Orphir.
- Sanday.
- Shapinsay.
- Stronsay.
- Westray.

There are two 18-hole golf courses in [Kirkwall](#) and [Stromness](#) and 9-hole courses in [South Ronaldsay](#), [Westray](#) and Sanday .

### **Orkney Islands Council Playing Pitch Strategy (OIC341)**

The Orkney Islands Council Playing Pitch Strategy provides an assessment of current and future needs for outdoor sport facilities across the islands. It covers football, rugby, cricket, hockey, golf, bowls, tennis, and equestrian facilities, and is intended to support planning decisions, guide investment, and inform the LDP.

The Strategy identifies a general surplus of grass football pitches, though many require improved drainage and maintenance. Rugby provision is limited, with Orkney Rugby Football Club facing capacity issues at its main site. Cricket participation is low, with minimal infrastructure. Hockey is played primarily at the Pickaquoy Centre, which meets current demand but lacks adequate changing facilities. Golf is popular, though courses tend to face

seasonal drainage challenges. Bowls and tennis have limited provision, with a noted need for indoor facilities to support year round use.

An action plan in the Strategy outlines site-specific recommendations for protecting, enhancing, or providing facilities. Key proposals include expanding 3G artificial pitch provision, improving maintenance regimes, supporting club development, and exploring opportunities for sports tourism and community partnerships.

### **Orkney Islands Council Built Facility Strategy (OIC342)**

The Orkney Islands Council Built Facility Strategy provides an assessment of indoor sports and leisure facilities across the islands, complementing the playing pitch strategy. It covers sports halls, swimming pools, fitness suites, squash courts, climbing walls, gymnastics, athletics, and related provision. Using Sports England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance (ANO) methodology and stakeholder consultation, it evaluates current and future supply, demand, quality, accessibility, and investment needs.

The assessment finds that most facilities are of good or excellent quality, with sufficient provision to meet current and projected demand to 2037. There is a notable oversupply of sports halls, swimming pools, and fitness stations, though winter capacity issues exist at the Pickaquoy Centre and Kirkwall Grammar School. Accessibility challenges remain for residents on smaller islands, though Healthy Living Centres help mitigate this.

The Strategy identifies specific development opportunities, including a dedicated gymnastics facility and enhancements to athletics infrastructure at the Pickaquoy Centre. It also makes recommendations for maintaining and improving existing facilities, supporting club-led development of gymnastics and athletics provision, securing developer contributions for active travel infrastructure, and ensuring ongoing monitoring of facility needs.

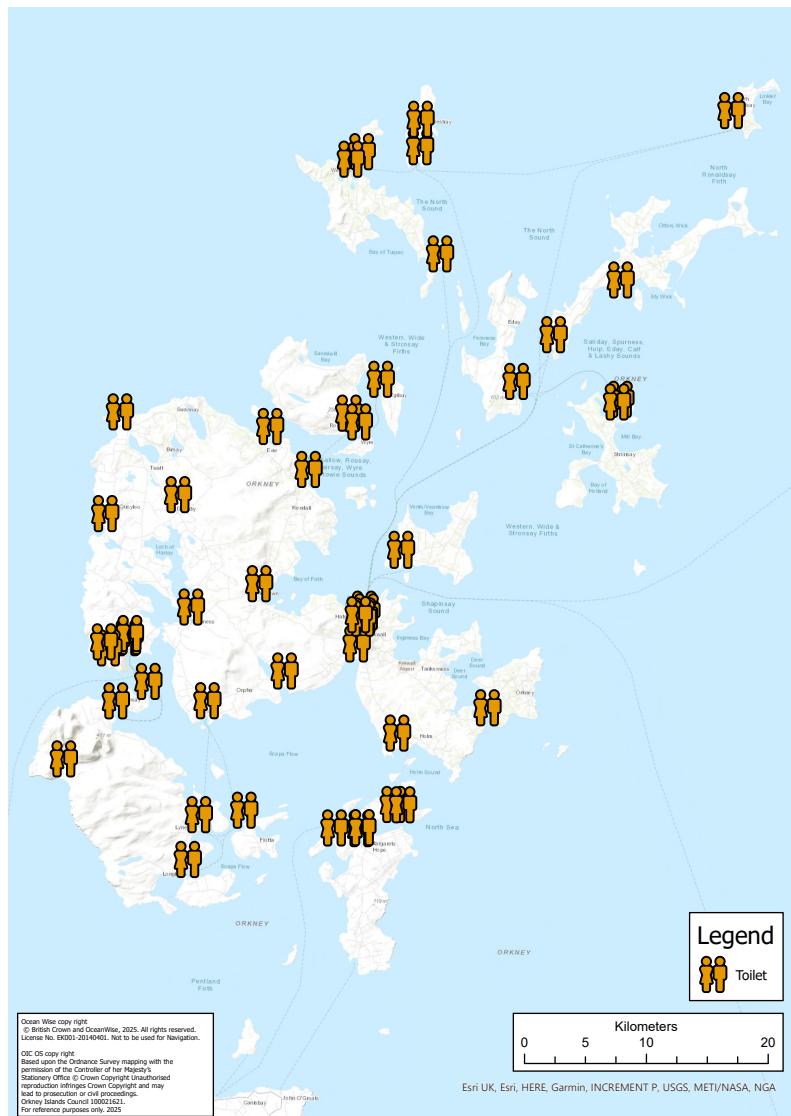
## **Utilities**

### **Water Fill Locations (OIC356)**

In Orkney the current provision of water refill locations can be found [here](#). There is currently one operational Top Up Tap located on Broad Street in Kirkwall, near St Magnus Cathedral. A second tap is planned for Dounby, which should improve further coverage.

### **Water and Wastewater**

The LDP will include a statement of the Planning Authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences and include a statement of the Planning Authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations. The current provision of public conveniences can be found on the map below. There is currently a good provision of public toilets across Orkney with 53 public toilets available for residents, businesses and visitors with most of the facilities open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They tend to be located in settlements, near visitor attractions such as beaches and at transport hubs such as ferry terminals.



*Figure 25 - Provision of Public Toilets in Orkney*

## Water supply

Scottish Water is responsible for the supply of water within the County and operates water treatment plants at Boardhouse and Kirbister Lochs on the Orkney Mainland; Saintear Loch on Westray; Bea Loch on Sanday; Sandy Loch which supplies Hoy and Graemsay and Heldale Water which supplies Walls and Flotta. Properties in North Ronaldsay, Eday and Stronsay are also linked to public water supplies. In Rousay the school is served by a public water supply but otherwise water is sourced from bore holes. Residents of Papa Westray access water from a community water scheme.

In the remaining outlying islands water is supplied from boreholes. In addition, some households continue to rely on private, untreated water supplies and are sources that may be vulnerable to diffuse or single-source pollution.

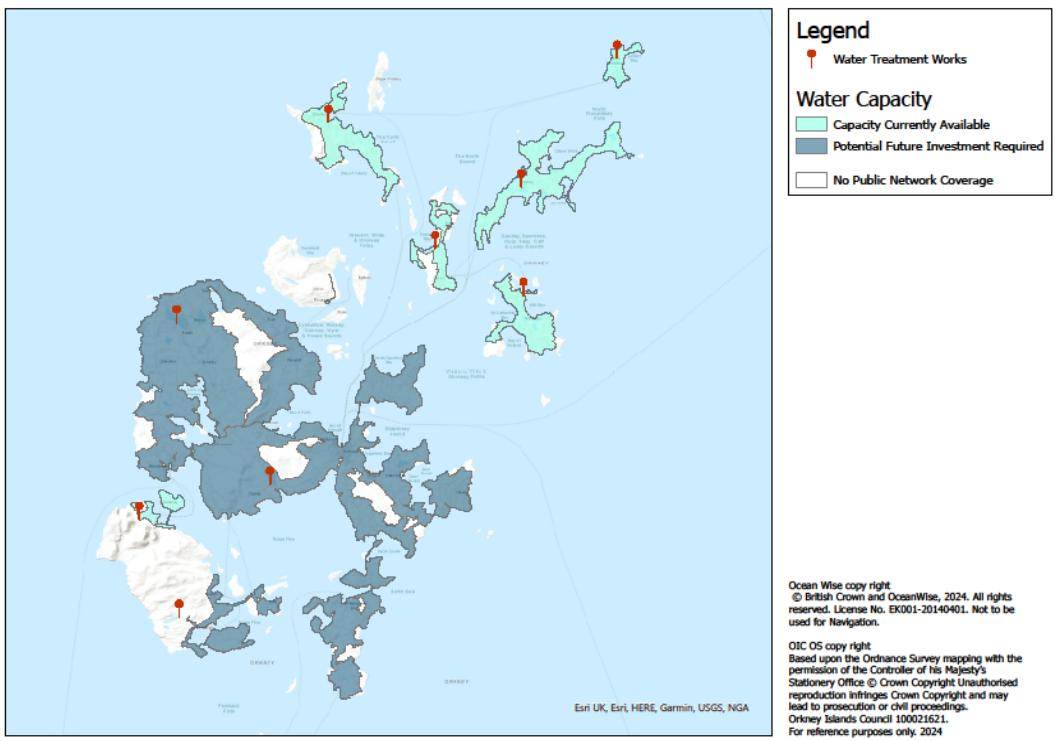


Figure 26 - Water Treatment Works and Water Capacity in Orkney (Mapping data supplied by Scottish Water)

FID	WOA_Name	WOA_Ref	NPF4_Status
0	Kirbister & Boardhouse WOA	WOA000224	Potential Future Investment Required
1	North Hoy WOA	WOA000280	Capacity Currently Available
2	Rousay School WOA	WOA000409	Capacity Currently Available
3	South Hoy WOA	WOA000330	Potential Future Investment Required
4	Boardhouse WOA	WOA000059	Potential Future Investment Required
5	Sanday WOA	WOA000316	Capacity Currently Available
6	Eday WOA	WOA000136	Capacity Currently Available
7	Westray WOA	WOA000387	Capacity Currently Available
8	Stronsay WOA	WOA000349	Capacity Currently Available
9	North Ronaldsay WOA	WOA000282	Capacity Currently Available

Table 5 - Locations of Water Treatment Works

### Wastewater treatment

Scottish Water also has responsibility for wastewater and, in recent years has upgraded sewerage treatment facilities at a number of locations including: Head of Work, which serves the town of Kirkwall; The Bu, which serves the town of Stromness; St Margaret's Hope; Burray; Holm; Stenness; Dounby; Evie; Finstown, Sanday and Westray. However, in a number of rural settlements foul water drainage facilities are at, or close to, capacity. In others there is no strategic provision for foul water drainage and properties are reliant on private systems, e.g. septic tanks and soakaways.

Scottish Water (SW) have a requirement to identify and provide new strategic capacity for water and wastewater to meet demand of all new housing development and the domestic requirements of commercial and industrial development. Factors such as the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from the treatment works may

impact on Scottish Water's ability to service them and therefore there is the potential that future growth investment may be required.

Scottish Water have provided capacity maps showing wastewater and water capacities for Orkney. It is a high-level snapshot in time of the current capacity of treatment works for initial screening and development planning purposes. Factors such as the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from our treatment works may impact the ability to service them and therefore potential future growth investment may be required.

The capacity maps give a high-level snapshot of current capacity of Scottish Water treatment works for initial screening and development planning purposes in Orkney. The Water Treatment Works (WTW) and Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) locations and if they have potential capacity for growth are set out below. Where there is limited capacity there will be a need for discussion between Scottish Water and the developer to facilitate development, which is a matter that will be addressed between Scottish Water and the developer separately.

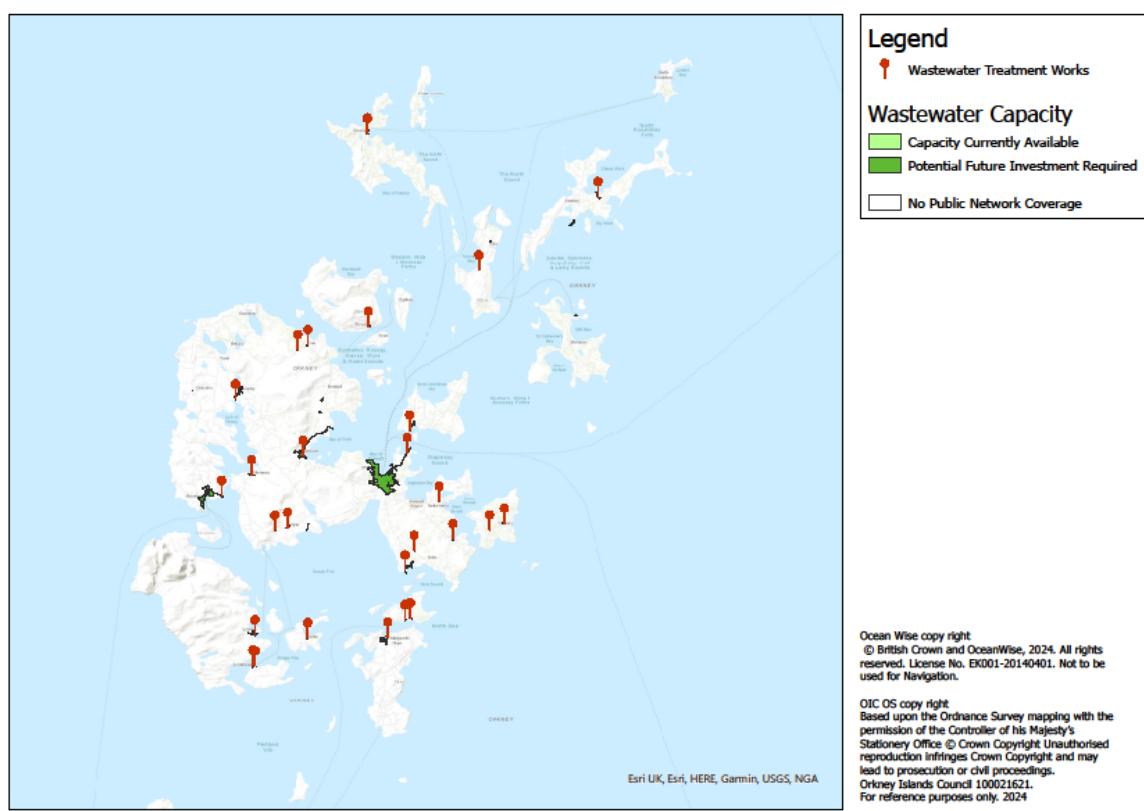


Figure 27 - Wastewater Treatment Works and Capacity in Orkney (Mapping data supplied by Scottish Water)

<b>FID</b>	<b>DOA_Name</b>	<b>DOA_Ref</b>	<b>NPF4_Status</b>
0	Kirkwall DOA	DOA000561	Potential Future Investment Required
1	Galaha DOA	DOA002560	Potential Future Investment Required
2	Greentoft DOA	DOA001546	Potential Future Investment Required
3	Holm West School DOA	DOA001547	Potential Future Investment Required
4	Lyness Village DOA	DOA002244	Capacity Currently Available
5	Nethersands DOA	DOA001549	Potential Future Investment Required
6	Orphir DOA	DOA001551	Potential Future Investment Required
7	Petticoat Lane DOA	DOA001552	Potential Future Investment Required
8	Rousay Brinyan DOA	DOA002428	Potential Future Investment Required
9	Stenness Reed Bed DOA	DOA001554	Capacity Currently Available
10	South Ronaldsay DOA	DOA000949	Potential Future Investment Required
11	St Mary's New DOA	DOA002564	Potential Future Investment Required
12	Custom House DOA	DOA001927	Potential Future Investment Required
13	Flotta DOA	DOA000948	Potential Future Investment Required
14	Lyon DOA	DOA001558	Capacity Currently Available
15	Quoyloo DOA	DOA000566	Potential Future Investment Required
16	Shapinsay DOA	DOA000958	Potential Future Investment Required
17	Burray Leaburn DOA	DOA002245	Potential Future Investment Required
18	Burray Sunfield DOA	DOA002246	Potential Future Investment Required
19	Kettletoft DOA	DOA002570	Capacity Currently Available
20	Howanbrek DOA	DOA001929	Potential Future Investment Required
21	Lastigar DOA	DOA001930	Potential Future Investment Required
22	Lynegar DOA	DOA001548	Potential Future Investment Required
23	Lyness Torpedo DOA	DOA002243	Potential Future Investment Required
24	Pierowall School DOA	DOA000954	Potential Future Investment Required
25	Pierowall DOA	DOA001931	Potential Future Investment Required
26	Rousay Pier DOA	DOA002429	Potential Future Investment Required
27	Whitecrest DOA	DOA001550	Potential Future Investment Required
28	Lady Village West DOA	DOA000953	Potential Future Investment Required
29	Stromness DOA	DOA000564	Potential Future Investment Required
30	Stronsay DOA	DOA000952	Potential Future Investment Required
31	Finstown Main DOA	DOA000567	Potential Future Investment Required
32	Dounby DOA	DOA000565	Capacity Currently Available
33	St Colms Quadrant DOA	DOA001928	Potential Future Investment Required
34	Norseman DOA	DOA001559	Potential Future Investment Required
35	Eday DOA	DOA000568	Potential Future Investment Required
36	Evie Bogie Houses DOA	DOA001556	Potential Future Investment Required
37	Evie Village Wwtw DOA	DOA001557	Potential Future Investment Required

Table 6 - Locations of Wastewater Treatment Works

Scottish Water model scenarios for future growth, based on Local Authority-provided housing development planning data and Scottish Government population projections. The model calculates the expected future populations at each water and wastewater treatment works across Scotland. When the demand for water or wastewater capacity exceeds the remaining available capacity at a treatment works then investment is required to investigate this and to understand the level of risk to service for existing customers when connecting new developments to the network. Whilst the need for growth investment may be identified through this modelling work, SW will only invest once they are confident that the development is committed.

Private water supplies and foul drainage will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, for example, a lack of capacity or existing drainage problems within the area. This matter is not addressed through NPF4 policy, and a tailored approach will be considered for the LDP. The site checklist criteria will verify whether developments are close enough to the mains supply to avoid the need for private facilities.

In terms of infrastructure investment in Orkney, Scottish Water are currently investing a significant amount of funding in Orkney to support new development, both in the immediate and long-term horizon; below is a summary of their current programme.

### **Boardhouse and Kirkbister WTW**

There is a Capital Maintenance and Growth Project underway which will start on site in Autumn 2028. This will be a two-year build. The solution is to build new WTW at Boardhouse, increase connectivity and derate Kirkbister. The project will see Innovative ceramic membrane technology used. As the project will not be completed until 2028 Scottish Water will put interim solutions in place until it is completed.

### **Orphir WWTW**

Orphir WWTW was replaced as a Capital Maintenance Project with works completing in 2024. The project cost £2M and included groundbreaking aerated reed bed technology which is improving treatment with additional biodiversity benefits.

**Sanday WTW** will see a Capital Maintenance Project which will cost circa £4m. Works are ongoing with a follow up project being scoped due for completion in 2030.

### **Kirkwall Surface Water Removal**

Since the disconnection of the rising main at the Lidl car park pressure has been relieved on the Wastewater network around Kirkwall. It does however remain a sensitive area that Scottish Water are monitoring closely and reviewing connections on a case-by-case basis. This betterment only covers a small portion of the overall area, but it also assists in reducing the overall bottleneck.

### **Scottish Water Network Modelling**

#### **Orkney Mainland Water**

- Stage 1 Strategic Water Impact Assessment is now complete; a rerun will be required once the next Local Development Plan is adopted.
- Orkney Mainland water mini study (Stage 2) with limited scope is complete and gives comfort for development over the next five years.

#### **Kirkwall Drainage Impact Assessment**

- Study is complete, a rerun will be required once the next Local Development Plan is adopted.

#### **Stromness**

- Stage 1 Strategic Drainage Impact Assessment is now complete – localised mitigations are sufficient. A rerun will be required once the next Local Development Plan is adopted.
- No upgrades are required in the water network - local mitigations will be applied where necessary.

## Dounby

- A Drainage Impact Assessment is required to enable development. Initially, a model build is required, which can be completed independently. Alternatively, Scottish Water will progress a strategic assessment when start dates can be understood are available.

## **Orkney Islands Council Waste and Resource Management Strategy (OIC344)**

The OIC Waste and Resource Management Strategy outlines a revised approach to managing waste following the cancellation of a proposed Integrated Waste Facility due to affordability constraints. Instead, the Council has developed a portfolio of projects aimed at improving recycling rates, reducing residual waste, and increasing the resilience of waste services. The Strategy was informed by national policy developments, local operational challenges, and the need to comply with forthcoming legislation.

The Strategy proposes a phased implementation of projects, prioritised as high, medium, or low, depending on urgency and resource availability. Key areas of focus include expanding kerbside recycling collections, improving household waste recycling centres (HWRC's), supporting community and household composting, and enhancing data management and reporting. The Strategy also considers the implications of national policy changes such as Deposit Return Scheme, Extended Producer Responsibility, and the inclusion of energy-from-waste facilities in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme.

The document includes an Islands Communities Impact Assessment, which found no significantly different effects across Orkney's communities but acknowledged the need for services to reflect local geographies. The Strategy is designed to be flexible and responsive to funding opportunities, with individual projects subject to further governance and budgetary approval.

## **Electricity and future energy (OIC074, OIC078)**

The Orkney Islands are home to some of the world's greatest resources of renewable electricity, from established onshore wind, to emerging marine technologies, where Orkney is at the forefront of global developments in marine energy generation.

Orkney has a number of investments being undertaken by Scottish and Southern Energy Network (SSEN) distribution network. SSEN are currently working to transform and future proof the electricity network to enable legislated Net Zero targets.

Following significant growth in small-scale renewable electricity generation in Orkney, the local electricity network has long been at full capacity and no new electricity generation can connect without significant increased capacity.

In March 2018, SSEN Transmission submitted investment plans to Ofgem to build a new subsea transmission link to provide the additional capacity needed to meet the demand of Orkney renewable developers. In September 2019, Ofgem set a series of conditions Orkney renewable developers had to satisfy prior to the regulator approving the investment case.

Following the consent of Faray Wind Farm in December 2022, those conditions have now largely been met and the decision by Ofgem paves the way to connect Scotland's final island group to the GB Transmission network. The upgraded transmission solution will enable the connection of up to 220MW of new renewable electricity generation. Work is underway to create the new substation at Finstown and around 53km of subsea cable,

connecting to a new substation at Dounreay in Caithness; starting with the on-island infrastructure required to connect and transport Orkney renewable generators to Finstown substation.

#### Orkney - Caithness 220kV HVAC Subsea Link

The project scope is to design and install a high voltage alternating current (HVAC) transmission system between Finstown in Orkney and Dounreay in Caithness, capable of transmitting no less than 220MW of power. This transmission system is to be composed of the following components:

- Finstown (Orkney) Substation

A new build substation, designed as the connection point to the grid for local generators around Orkney. The substation will transform the voltage to 220kV for transmission of this power to the UK Mainland. This substation will also provide a grid connection point for local power distribution.

- An Onshore HVAC Cable

Approximately 14km in length, connecting the Finstown Substation to the Subsea Cable Landfall point, terminating at Warebeth on the West Coast of the Orkney Mainland.

- A Subsea HVAC Cable

Approximately 53km in length, connecting the landfall at Warebeth, to Dounreay on the Caithness coast of the UK mainland, then a short underground cable section to the Dounreay Substation.

This Project is currently under construction, with works ongoing at the Finstown Substation site and for the HVAC onshore cable.

NPF4 promotes national developments including the Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure. The Council will continue to engage with SSEN on future grid infrastructure projects and future spatial routes could be reflected in the LDP.

For developer-led projects, SSEN Transmission have a legal responsibility to connect developments to the electricity network and capacity cannot be pre-booked by the developer(s). The cost is a matter addressed between the utility organisation and the developer, and is either met by the utility organisation, or in part or in full by the developer. This means that SSEN Transmission are reactive to development proposals, and it is difficult to forward plan and apply an infrastructure first approach to this element of the operator's business.

In addition to the above, SSEN have commissioned consultants to collate evidence around future electricity load growth across industries. Commitments relating to energy planning, transport, climate change and broader island decarbonisation could all drive an increased demand on the island's electricity network in the future.

#### Digital (OIC076)

Ofcom regularly update their 'Connected Nations' databases that form the basis of their annual Connected Nations and Infrastructure Reports. Using the Connected Nations September 2023 data, fixed line broadband performance was assessed. Reaching 100% (R100) is a programme to enable access to superfast broadband with speeds of at least 30

Megabits per second (Mbps) to all homes and businesses in Scotland. The programme is funded via the UK and Scottish Government's and BT (the contract delivery partner). The R100 contract for the North was signed in December 2020 and overall contract build is currently expected to be completed in 2027-28. The contract build is currently underway and live in all contract areas. The Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (SBVS) is available for homes and businesses to access superfast broadband where no contract or commercial build is Scheduled. A subsidy of up to £5,000 is available to all eligible premises and covers direct installation costs carried out by a registered supplier. The scheme is available to homes and businesses in parts of Orkney.

The R100 programme relies on fibre optic cables from properties to the exchange and availability and/or capacity at the exchange. The availability or capacity at an exchange is a commercial matter. However, the LDP can ensure that the infrastructure is installed so that new homes and businesses can be served by superfast broadband should this become available in their area. Whilst NPF4 Policy 24 Digital Infrastructure supports the delivery of digital infrastructure, it is considered that a tailored approach could be required to explicitly set out what will be required from applicants to deliver the ambitions of the R100 programme and facilitate economic growth in Orkney.

The Council has a digital project officer who is working closely with digital infrastructure providers such as BT, HIE and communities to deliver the R100 programme and SBVS across Orkney. Any associated spatial implications arising from the physical infrastructure necessary to implement the roll out of R100 will be reflected in the LDP.

### **Mobile Coverage (OIC075)**

Ofcom also report on mobile coverage in their Connected Nations and Infrastructure reports, but unfortunately data is only available at local authority level. The data shows coverage of 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G mobile networks and how many premises have access to these networks at premises outdoor and indoor. There are still several areas of Orkney where there are "not spot areas". The Council are working with the Scottish and UK governments to resolve this in several ways, for example, through the [Scotland 4G Infill programme](#) that has seen 4G improvements built in Burray, Deerness, Stronsay and Hoy. The Council are also working with the [Shared Rural Network](#), and the 'Big 4' UK mobile networks (EE, O2, Three and Vodafone), to push for further coverage of gaps in Orkney.

### **Mobile Network Coverage in Orkney research report (OIC330)**

In April 2025 the Council received the final report on a study they commissioned looking at mobile network coverage in Orkney. The study took a three-stage approach looking at specific areas of Orkney to investigate the mobile coverage of operators serving Kirkwall town centre, Stromness and the surrounding area and the route from St Margaret's Hope to Holm and to determine if there were any economic impacts from local businesses experiencing poor mobile performance. The following conclusions were identified for coverage results

- EE – Overall coverage is relatively poor in Kirkwall and across the barriers to St Margaret's Hope, with slightly better coverage in the Stromness area.
- Vodafone – Coverage is generally good in all areas except the main road to the northwest, which has poor coverage to the north.

- O2 – Coverage is good in Stromness and in some parts of Kirkwall. However, the road to the northwest and across the barriers, plus St Margaret's Hope, has more mixed coverage.
- Three – Coverage is poor in most areas, with Finstown having almost no coverage. Stromness is the exception from Three, which has good coverage.

Overall:

- Vodafone and O2 have the best coverage in the main areas surveyed. Three and EE have poorer coverage overall. EE and Three best serve the road heading to the northwest of the Mainland.
- However, it is important to recognise that user experience is affected by both coverage and capacity. Where the data suggests reasonable coverage, if user issues remain, then capacity could be an issue that would require the operators to take action.
- The survey recorded 4G coverage from all four operators, plus Ofcom indicates that O2 has some 5G coverage in Orkney. This will be non-standalone 5G, meaning that a sufficient 4G service is still required to enable access to the 5G network and potentially higher throughputs. Looking ahead, mobile networks will remain on 4G for a significant period of time, and it is expected additional operators will deploy 5G in Orkney as networks are refreshed. 5G Standalone coverage will increase in urban areas but may need further intervention if it was required in more rural areas.

When planning for increases in mobile coverage and digital connectivity, landscape considerations are included in the policy context in NPF4. Policy 24 Digital Infrastructure states that this type of infrastructure will only be supported where visual impacts are minimised through careful siting and landscaping, for example. In the case of NSAs, ground-based masts must not affect the integrity of an area.

### **Waste (OIC259)**

[Scotland's Zero Waste Plan](#) is the National waste management plan. It sets the strategic direction for national waste policy, informed by an understanding of the environmental consequences of how resources are used. The Plan aims to reinforce best practical use of the approach in the waste management hierarchy: waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery. It sets a framework for Zero Waste Scotland and SEPA together with other key partners to support zero waste policies and the data collected by those agencies will inform actions in the future. Since this was prepared there has now been the [Circular Economy \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) and following this Act a [Circular Economy and Waste Route Map](#) to 2030 (**OIC331**) been prepared. Within the document it sets out the Scottish Government vision and strategic aims for a circular economy. The route map sets out strategic direction for delivering a system-wide, vision for Scotland circular economy up to 2030. There are four strategic aims these are

- 1: Reduce and reuse.
- 2: Modernise recycling.
- 3: Decarbonise disposal.
- 4: Strengthen the circular economy.

NPF4 Policy 12 Zero Waste seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate development that is consistent with the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse and recycle materials. The Council

has a key role in delivering the necessary infrastructure in the right locations to achieve ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing recycling.

The Scottish Government previously set a 60% household recycling target by 2020, and an all-waste recycling target of 70% by 2025. Scottish household recycling rates grew by an average of 9% per year between 2005 and 2010. However, in more recent year's progress has slowed.

### **Waste Management Facilities in Orkney**

The Council is responsible for managing the treatment and disposal of municipal waste generated on all islands, and the household waste collection services on the Mainland (including the 'South Isles' – the road-connected islands of Burry and South Ronaldsay) and the islands of Hoy, Flotta, Westray and Shapinsay. Waste on the other outer islands is collected by private contractors. The Council is also the primary provider of trade collections in Orkney.

The current collection service consists of two separate types of collection. The majority of households on the Mainland and Shapinsay receive the following service:

- Residual – Alternate Weekly Collections – households have grey wheeled bins and
- Recycling – Alternate Weekly Collections of paper and thin card, plastic bottles, glass containers and metals (cans, tins, tin foil, aerosols, cans and caps/lids).

There are approximately 820 (2023) Mainland and Shapinsay properties that use sacks for residual waste and recycling. These properties either have restricted access, limited bin storage space or are situated over 75 metres from the roadside. There are 183 properties (2023) that receive assisted collection, provided for households where there is no one living at the property who is able to present bins for collection.

With the exception of the Mainland, and Shapinsay, all other islands receive a kerbside weekly collection of residual waste and have access to a bring-site for paper and thin card, glass and cans collection. Waste is collected in bags.

There are five Civic Amenty Sites in Orkney, all of which are located on the Mainland. Three of the five are Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and are staffed. These are Bossack, Hatston and Garson. Two recycling centres at St Margaret's Hope and Curister Quarry are not staffed and can only accept recycling material, no residual waste.

The Council also provides a collection service for trade customers as follows:

- 631 Sites with at least one waste service that are co-collected with household refuse rounds.
- 269 sites with segregated recycling service that are co-collected on household recycling rounds.
- 90 sites with dedicated commercial cardboard service.
- 27 Sites with dedictaed commercial oil service.

### **Current infrastructure**

- The main Council depot is at Environmental Services Depot, former abattoir building, Grainsshore Road, Hatston Industrial Estate, Kirkwall.
- Garson depot in Stromness, Orkney's second largest town out to the West, is primarily a Roads depot and is adjacent to the second busiest Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

- Bossack HWRC and garden/green waste composting facility has been considered in terms of the potential for both improved windrow composting activities and also as a location for a future In-vessel Composting facility for food waste plus green/garden waste (and fish waste).
- St Margaret's Hope Recycling Centre – recycling only, no black bag waste.
- Cursiter Recycling Centre – recycling only, no black bag waste.
- Chinglebraes waste processing facility – where household residual waste, dry mixed recyclables (DMRs) and bulky waste is consolidated – with recycling and residual waste are baled prior to shipment to recycling markets and Shetland respectively (the latter for incineration).

### Recycling Performance Targets

For 2021, household recycling rate for Orkney Islands Council was 23.7% (figure excludes quantities of garden waste, as dictated by current legislation, treated to provide a soil conditioner). For 2021, the Scottish household recycling rate was 42.7%.

Scottish Government targets for the recycling and composting of municipal waste are set within its Zero Waste Plan 2010. In summary these are:

Calendar year	Recycling and composting target rates
2010	40%
2013	50%
2020	60%
2025	70%

As of 2021, the Council collected a total of 9,360 tonnes of waste from households across Orkney, 2,215 tonnes of which is recycled (23.7% ([SEPA](#)) ([OIC077](#))).

At present, the recycling materials are brought to the Chinglebraes Transfer Station in Kirkwall where they are bulked and baled for onward transportation to the Scottish Mainland for reprocessing. The residual waste is also brought to Chinglebraes where it is baled and containerised for onward transportation to the Lerwick Energy from Waste Facility in Shetland. Around 25 containers a week are transported to Lerwick by the scheduled ferry service. It is received at Shetland's transfer station where it is debaled, sorted in materials suitable for the Energy from Waste Facility and those that are unsuitable that are then landfilled in Shetland. This is a long standing arrangement with Shetland that has no formal contract.

### Future infrastructure needs for waste

The Council has a new Waste Strategy ([OIC344](#)) and is looking for long term security from the service, reduced costs, and where viable, the potential to generate income associated with the collection, resource recovery and final treatment of waste. There are a number of changes to the Regulations that will change the way the service is delivered. Existing and future infrastructure is being considered in the Strategy. A few potential new sites have been identified within five miles of Kirkwall, which afford significant potential for co-location of the waste infrastructure options considered. However, importantly, there are also significant

opportunities to be explored in terms of the location of the infrastructure options considered at the existing sites (Chinglebraes and Bossack), depending on which is the preferred scenario that the Council decides to take forward. The next Local Development Plan will engage with the Council's Waste team to ensure appropriate land is safeguarded'.

### Burial Grounds (OIC352)

Active cemeteries are located across Orkney's communities and parishes, providing essential burial space for local populations. A map of existing cemetery sites is included below for reference.

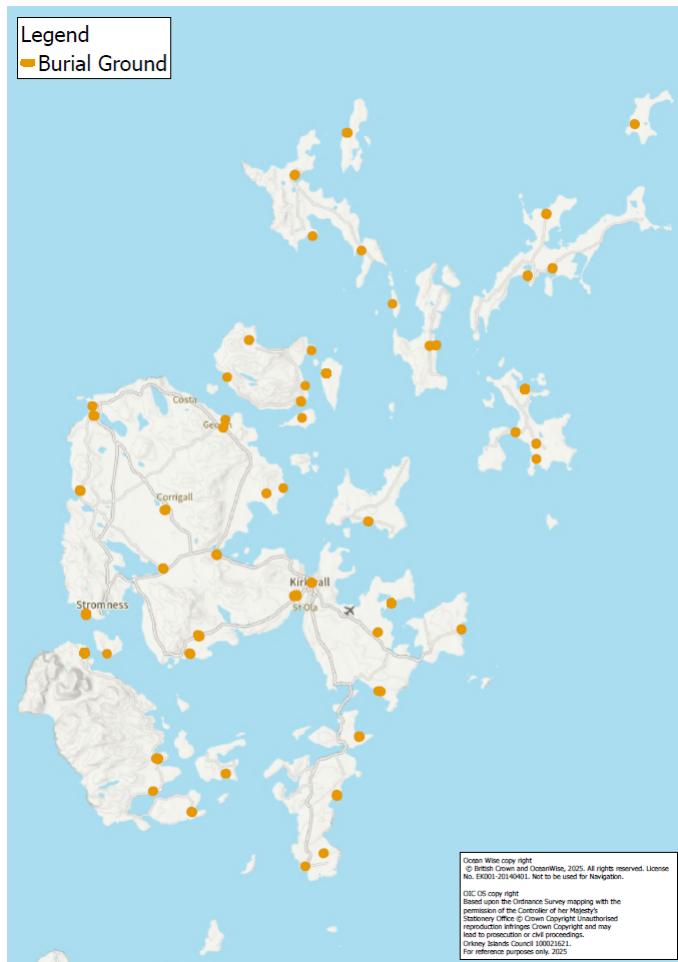


Figure 28 - Active Cemeteries Across Orkney

Work is ongoing with internal colleagues to assess the current capacity of these cemeteries. Where capacity issues are identified, the next LDP will consider allocating land for extensions to ensure future provision meets the communities needs.

### Play and Open Space (OIC260)

The Council has an existing [Play Area Strategy \(OIC260\)](#) which provides a framework and informed the approach to how the [Play Sufficiency Assessment \(OIC22\)](#) has been prepared. There is also an existing [Open Space Strategy \(OIC20\)](#) which will be reviewed and updated in time for the Proposed Plan. The outputs of both the Play Sufficiency Assessment and the Open Space Strategy will be used to inform the policy approach for the review of the Local Development Plan. In developing the Play Sufficiency Assessment there were 343 responses from across all ages of young people and their carers.

In order to categorise the play areas two categories of play parks have been developed. Play parks have either been assigned as a local play park or as a destination play park in line with the existing Play Area Strategy.

Destination Parks would often be larger parks with a varied selection of play experiences alongside opportunities for social gatherings between family and friends. It is expected that these would not necessarily be located within settlements, and that people would be willing to drive to get there. Furthermore, the local area in which the park is located would generally offer additional services/amenities, which would further enhance the visitor experience.

In Orkney there are six Destination Play Parks identified: Evie, Birsay, Burray, Finstown, Stromness (Community Centre) and Deerness. A further play area is hoped at Papdale East in Kirkwall, which is currently the focus of a community project.

All other formal play parks in Orkney have been categorised as a Local Play Park. These parks are expected to have a reasonable selection of play opportunities, in good condition, and be accessible to everyone in a town or larger settlement within around a five minute walking distance.

Maps have been developed for each of the town and larger settlements showing the location of existing play and hang out spaces and are in the Play Sufficiency Report. These maps provide a good indication of how accessible play provision is in relation to where people live. However, it is important to read the maps in tandem with the detailed analysis on each play area to consider the quality of each play park. Two extracts of the outputs of the maps in the Play Sufficiency Assessment are shown below.

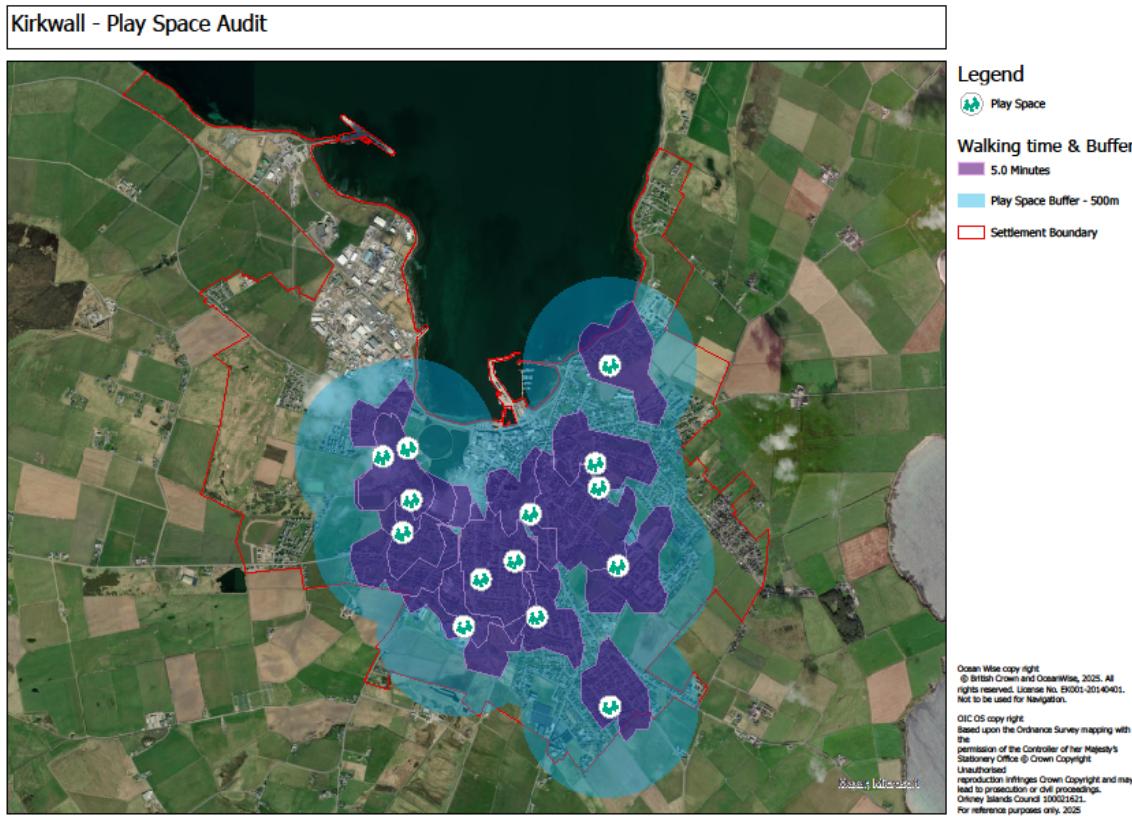


Figure 29 - Play Provision in Kirkwall

Map showing the locations of Play Parks in Kirkwall with a five minute walking buffer applied and 500m distance.

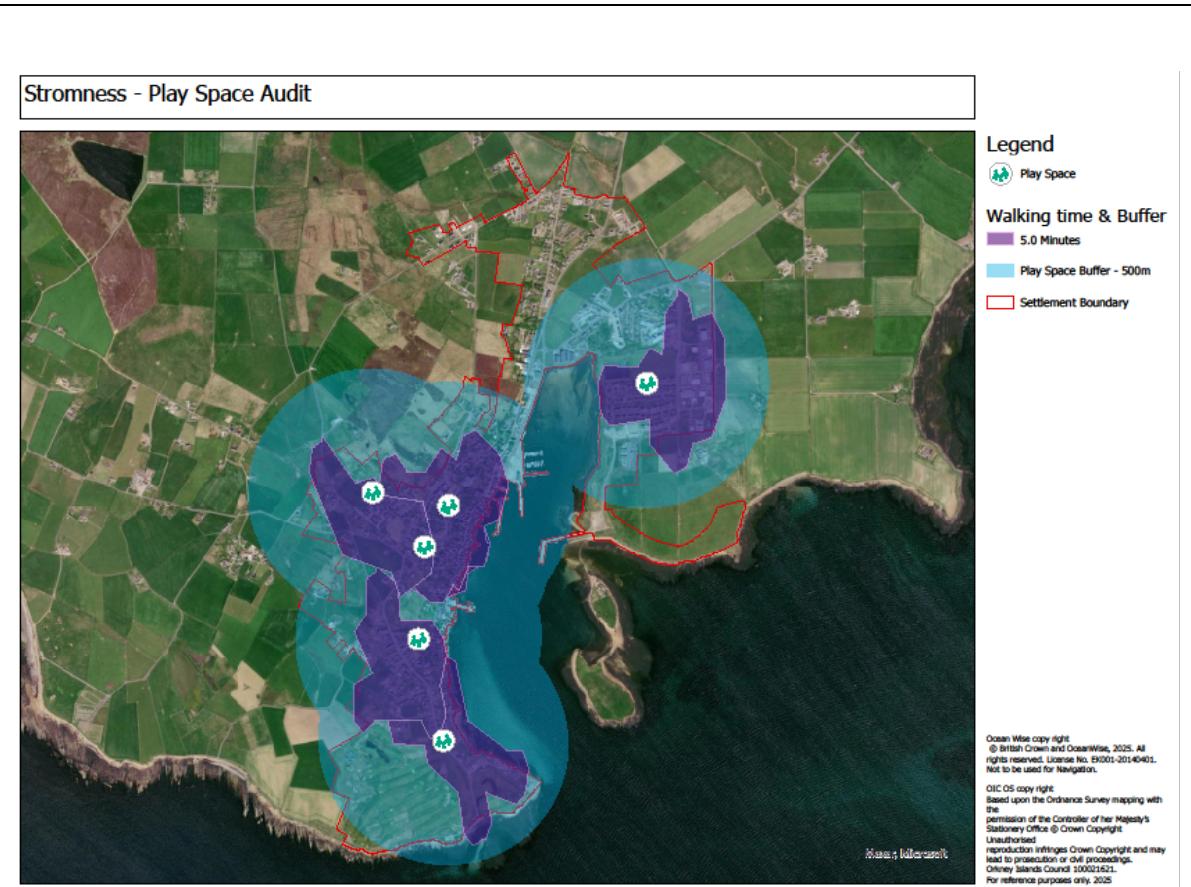


Figure 30 - Play Provision in Stromness

Map showing the locations of Play Parks in Stromness with a five minute walking buffer applied and 500m distance.

From the engagement the three top hang-out areas identified were

- The Beach.
- Home/Garden.
- Happy Valley.

The importance of play and hang out spaces came through strongly with 44% of responses stating that the hang-out and play spaces available in Orkney for their age group were poor or very poor with 16% stating it was good or excellent.

It also highlighted that 79% of responses said there wasn't enough play/hang-out spaces in walking or cycling distance of their home. Of the play space areas close to responders' homes, 35% rated the play space areas very poor.

Specific issues that were highlighted with the existing play/hang-out spaces were that 72% noted that the play equipment is broken or has been removed and 54% highlighted that there is nowhere to shelter from poor weather. The issue of the existing play provision not being near to where people live also came through, with 35% highlighting they can't get there themselves.

In terms of what responders sought to be included in play park the top ten suggestions were:

- Swings.
- Slides.
- Climbing frames.
- Zip lines.
- Roundabout.
- Seesaws.
- Opportunities for other sports (netball hoops, football area).
- Nature areas.
- Trampolines.
- Climbing walls/challenging climbing equipment.

### **Accessibility and Inclusivity**

There were a number of responses that raised concerns with the accessibility and inclusivity of the current play facilities in Orkney. It is acknowledged that in Orkney, there is a need for accessible equipment in the play areas. 15 people said they would like to see more accessible entrances and accessible equipment in their parks.

From the audit findings it has been noted that whilst in some parks, everyone can enter/exit through a suitable gate, it is often the case that they will struggle to move around (in a wheelchair or with a buggy) when in the park, due to lack of appropriate paths/surfaces. The audit has also highlighted that there is no, or very little, equipment in Orkney's play areas for young people with disabilities.

### **Audit Summary**

Play Scotland created a 'Quality of Play Environment' survey on which this survey is based. Below is a summary of the findings:

**Location:** Most parks received a score of six or above (out of a possible eight). Most areas don't have a sign welcoming play. Whether or not this is required may depend on the park (community or local authority) itself.

**Accessibility (access to the area):** Most parks received a score of two or three out of a possible four. Improvements to safe road crossing and/or improvements to paths/surfaces in the park would be required.

**General Features:** Scores varied from two to 10 (out of a possible 10). Litter bins/dog mess bins were not present in some parks and improvements to fencing was suggested in a number of areas. Condition of equipment present or the need for facilities such as a bin etc, would require highlighting.

**Environmental:** Varied results out of a possible nine. All parks in Orkney are free from noise and traffic pollution but many could benefit from additional natural features such as undulating ground, more trees/bushes and a water feature.

**Challenge:** Although this scored highly across Orkney, this can be down to individual preference/opinion and possibly not easy to measure across the board. General aspirations for bigger and more exciting play equipment were highlighted in the Play Park Survey.

**Physical Play:** This looks at the equipment provided in the park alongside any other surfaces/areas created for activities such as cycling/skateboarding. The results (out of 39) were hugely varied with the larger parks scoring fairly well.

The requirements of a park can be different depending on the location and the other amenities available locally, but the condition of the equipment available should be suitable. Improving the score in this part of the audit (and looking at the suitability and quality of the equipment provided) should be an aspiration of a community/local authority, taking into consideration the requirements of the young people.

**Creative Play:** Across the board this section scored low. A park may include one or two elements of creative play, but emphasis in Orkney tends to be on the physical play (equipment) which was apparent in the Play Space Survey. Most young people requested more equipment offering more excitement/challenge, not necessarily sand, water or similar. However, improving elements of creative play would enhance the play area, with little investment from the authority/community.

**Social Play:** Ensuring Play: Ensuring that there is a quiet place for someone to sit or somewhere for a young person to hide is important and this scored reasonably well in Orkney's parks.

## The Isles

The parks at Sanday, Shapinsay and Westray schools are relatively new and provide a wide range of play experiences for their community. If these parks were based on the Mainland of Orkney, they would likely be classed as excellent Destination Parks. Many visitors to these islands (with young people) would regard the parks as one of the main attractions.

This is in stark contrast to some of the other parks in the isles, for example, North Ronaldsay, Papa Westray and Eday. Although, there are areas for play provision in these locations, the facilities and general features score low in the audit. General maintenance appears to be more of a challenge in these areas.

Since the Play Sufficiency Assessment has been prepared there has been significant investment in Play Park facilities improvement works carried out into the play parks at Eday Community School, the Marwicks in Stromness and Brandyquoy in Kirkwall. Earlier there was also investment in Stronsay's Whitehall Village play area using the Scottish Government Playpark Renewal Funding therefore some of the feedback on play parks could already have been addressed in some locations.

### **Out to Play (OIC315)**

Outdoor play experiences are an important part of children's development and can create the right environment. Children have the right to play and learn as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out in Article 31(1). Apart from the fun factor, playing and learning outdoors is proven to have many benefits including improving mental and physical health, confidence and self-esteem and enhances functions and skills such as creativity, empathy and negotiation.

### **Open Space Strategy (OIC020)**

An existing Open Space Strategy has been developed with all areas of open space identified and categorised. This gives a detailed baseline of the existing situation and how much open space each settlement has across different typologies. The existing Open Space Strategy will be reviewed and updated for the Proposed Plan and set out where developers will be required to address any deficiencies. The aim will be to have a more integrated approach where open space is considered alongside nature networks and biodiversity enhancement opportunities as well as water management to deliver multifunctional green networks across our settlements.

The Council also has several allotments. These are located in:

1) Papdale	Kirkwall	12 allotments
2) Kelliequoy	Victoria Street, Kirkwall	38 allotments
3) Alfred Terrace	Stromness	8 allotments

In addition to this there are a number of community growing areas which are managed by community groups or the NHS, such as in Stromness, some of the ferry and air linked Isles, Finstown and in St Margaret's Hope.

### **Transport**

Transport infrastructure is discussed in more detail in Schedule 9, Sustainable Transport, and in Schedule 4, Energy. Schedule 9 refers to the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) with reference to active travel, STPR2 also makes recommendations regarding the decarbonisation of the ferry services to the islands and investment in port infrastructure. Climate Change targets are found in several Schedules, including 1.

The decarbonisation of the ferry service is discussed below in the Energy Schedule including power hook ups being part of future energy demands. The Energy Schedule also discusses the Orkney Harbours Masterplan, which contains a number of improvements to ports and harbours primarily to facilitate larger shipping for industry and leisure.

The Island Connectivity Plan (ICP), replaces the Ferries Plan but is wider in scope, taking account of ferry services, aviation, and fixed links, as well as onward and connecting travel. The ICP supports the delivery of the NTS2, and The National Islands Plan priorities. It will include a long-term investment programme for new ferries and development at ports that will aim to improve resilience, reliability, capacity and accessibility, while increasing standardisation, cutting emissions and meeting the needs of island communities. The

proposed local plan should be informed by the final ICP, especially with reference to any spatial requirements.

Existing infrastructure and capacity are generally sufficient in terms of the road network and inter-island ferries both for people who live here and visitors. Where there is a lack of capacity land use options are being considered.

An example of this is the World Heritage Site Gateway project that is part of the Islands Growth Deal. One stream of the project seeks to disperse and manage the movement of visitors to alleviate capacity issues on the single-track roads. The proposed plan will imbed any land use proposals that are brought forward. Another example is the Stromness South area where road improvements are required to be delivered; this information is captured in the Stromness: South End Development Brief.

Active Travel capacity is considered as lacking, according to local data collected in Orkney Travel Matters (2023); 70% of people would welcome more pavements and footpaths between settlements. This area of transport is discussed in more detail in Schedule 5, Local Living and Schedule 9, Sustainable Transport.

### **Hazardous Substances and Their Associated Safety Zones**

A map has been prepared looking at existing facilities and their associated safety zones using information from the Health and Safety Executive. In Orkney these safety zones tend to be located around piers and harbours, oil terminal, operating quarries and whisky distillery and associated warehouses.

### **Identified Gaps:**

- Open Space Strategy update required to inform multifunctional green space provision (currently underway).
- Limited evidence on digital connectivity gaps in some rural areas.
- Further work needed on school estate capacity and investment priorities.
- Further discussions with NHS and healthcare sector to understand any capacity issues.

### **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

Council Services including Education, Economic Development, Leisure, Transport, Roads, Capital Projects and Waste have been sent the Schedule, and any updates will be incorporated into the evidence summary. In addition, the following agencies have been consulted on the Schedule

- Sport Scotland.
- Scottish Water.
- NHS Orkney Joint Health and Social Care Partnership.
- SSE Distribution.
- SSE Transmission.
- Transport Scotland.

## **Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan**

For the LDP, it is proposed to:

- Consider the availability of infrastructure when reviewing land allocations for development; prioritising development that can be easily serviced with key infrastructure using the existing evidence base.
- Protect existing play provision and use the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy to identify where further provision is required and improvements to the existing play facility. Consider a tailored approach to provide clarity on the types, level and location of infrastructure necessary to support development and identify the sites that will be expected to contribute via developer obligations or through on site, *i.e.* path infrastructure or play/open space provision. This provides clarity and certainty to the development industry and communities as to what infrastructure is to be provided to support growth.
- As far as practically possible, identify how, when and by whom infrastructure will be delivered and what the priorities are. The balance between the level of information provided within the LDP, Delivery Programme and associated planning guidance will be considered during the preparation of the proposed Plan. This will be informed by the key infrastructure stakeholders.
- Where necessary, set out the spatial implications of infrastructure to support development (e.g. safeguard land for a new waste facility or new school) within the proposed Plan, and engage with key infrastructure providers to identify opportunities for sharing resources, for example, via community hubs.
- The LDP should outline potential impacts of any infrastructure on natural assets, including landscape, peatland, wetlands, heaths and moors.
- The LDP to support any infrastructure required to facilitate improved digital and mobile connectivity to address gaps in provision.
- Continue to work with the healthcare sector to consider health infrastructure and the impact of development on their services.
- The LDP will include a statement of the Planning Authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences and include a statement of the Planning Authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.
- The LDP will include proposal maps which identify the location of hazardous substances and include an appropriate safety buffer zone. It is anticipated there will also be a policy ensuring development does not result in an unacceptable level of risk to public health and safety as is contained in the existing LDP.

## **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no outstanding areas of dispute.

SSEN Transmission stated they found the Evidence Report satisfactory and suggested a couple of additional edits to help clarification which was incorporated into the Schedule.

SSEN Distribution provided additional evidence which has been incorporated into the Schedule.

Sport Scotland stated the Evidence Report looked ok and included some additional evidence which has been incorporated into the Schedule.

NatureScot have proposed additional evidence, which has been added.

Scottish Water supports the infrastructure first principle to check viability of sites and give early indication of new developments. Also noted was the importance of surface water management and conveyance in relation to sustainable transport routes.

Transport Scotland highlighted that the report should have further info on the STPR2 recommendations relevant to Orkney and include the Island Connectivity Plan. It also sought additional content on any potential impacts the next LDP could have on port infrastructure and ferry services. The Schedule has been updated to take account of this as has Schedule 9 Sustainable Transport.

Internal consultees provided comments, and the Schedule has been updated accordingly.

Issue: Topic/Place	9.Sustainable Transport
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(d) The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities);</li> <li>• section 15(5)(e) How that infrastructure is used; The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023;</li> <li>• Regulation 9(2)(e) The planning authority are to have regard to the following plans and strategies, insofar as relating to the local development plan area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Any regional transport strategy; and</li> <li>ii. Any local transport strategy.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><a href="#">OIC219 Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC079 NTS2</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC080 STPR2</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC081 Active Travel Vision</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC082 Active Travel Framework</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC083 National Walking Strategy</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC084 Cycling Action Plan for Scotland</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC085 Cycling by Design</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC086 Cycling Framework for Active Travel</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC087 A routemap to 20% reduction in car</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC088 Scotland's Road Safety Framework 2030</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC089 Hydrogen Action Plan</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC090 Switched on Scotland Roadmap</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC091 Hitrans Regional Transport Strategy</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC092 Hitrans Active Travel Strategy</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC093 Orkney Local Transport Strategy</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC167 Orkney Travel Matters Report June 2024</a></p> <p><a href="#">OIC168 2011 census</a></p>

Issue: Topic/Place	9.Sustainable Transport
	<p><b>OIC170</b> <a href="#">Spotlight on Rural &amp; Islands Transport - (SRITC 2017)</a></p> <p><b>OIC171</b> <a href="#">Arcadia Park</a></p> <p><b>OIC172</b> <a href="#">Papdale Park</a></p> <p><b>OIC021</b> <a href="#">OIC Core Paths Plan 2018</a></p> <p><b>OIC230</b> <a href="#">Living well locally: 20 minute communities in the highlands and islands</a></p> <p><b>OIC256</b> <a href="#">Orkney Parking Strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC257</b> <a href="#">Orkney's Green Travel Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC262</b> <a href="#">Orkney's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC263</b> <a href="#">Road Asset Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC340</b> <a href="#">Orkney Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)</b>	
Policy 13: Sustainable Transport	
Policy Intent:	
<p>To encourage, promote and facilitate developments that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport for everyday travel and reduce the need to travel unsustainably.</p>	
Policy Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in transport infrastructure supports connectivity and reflects place-based approaches and local living.</li> <li>• More, better, safer and more inclusive active and sustainable travel opportunities.</li> <li>• Developments are in locations which support sustainable travel.</li> </ul>	
<p>NPF4 states that LDPs should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes and emphasises using the 'place principle' to facilitate the delivery of sustainable development within the local built environment. The Spatial Strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services. The LDP must consider the relationship between an area's land use supply and transport network.</p>	
<p>Policy 13 requires LDPs to be informed by a transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. The proposed Plan will be supported by a Transport Appraisal in line with Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPMTAG) to shape the Spatial Strategy. The appraisal will consider how an area's transport network enables or impedes the ability of people to reach everyday destinations; and how existing service</p>	

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	<p>provision interacts with this transport network and in turn identify development sites for the proposed Plan.</p>
	<p>Plans should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the Spatial Strategy on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan's infrastructure first approach. The guidance highlights the importance of a sound evidence based and robust appraisal framework for considering land use and transport together and will assist in the delivery of the LDP Spatial Strategy. The appraisal will provide an understanding of changes in travel demand arising from changes in land use, population and economic activity and the resultant changes in transport supply and will help inform investment decisions. The guidance states that approaches should be tailored to planning authority's requirements and their specific land use scenarios, proposed scales of development and nature of the transport network and, whether or not, the current Strategic Transport Network and planned enhancements are capable of accommodating future land use proposals.</p>
	<p>NPF4 includes the National Development: National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network, which will support the Spatial Strategy for the Orkney Local Development Plan. A study exploring the feasibility of establishing this network in Orkney is being explored by Sustrans Network Development Team as part of the Strategic Partnership between the Council and Sustrans.</p>
	<p>NPF4 also highlights 'strategic connections' reflecting the ferry routes between: Stromness and Scrabster; Kirkwall and Aberdeen; and St Margaret's Hope and Gills Bay.</p>
	<p>LDPs should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. Consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development, local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes; and the accessibility for users of all abilities.</p>
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<b><u>OLDP 2017 (OIC127)</u></b>	
	<p>Policy 14 of the existing OLDP 2017 sets out the approach for Transport, Travel and Road Network Infrastructure. The Plan seeks to support development where it makes best use of existing infrastructure and reduces the need to travel wherever possible. Any developments within settlements will be required to provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling, for both active travel and recreation, to encourage options for healthy living and positive aging.</p>
	<p>The Kirkwall Settlement Statement also establishes an aspiration that Kirkwall, as Orkney's main settlement, becomes an exemplar location for Active Travel. To achieve this, all planning applications within the settlement boundary must demonstrate that they have positively considered how proposed developments will connect to and enhance existing walking and cycling routes.</p>

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	<p>The Your Kirkwall Local Place Plan was subsequently created in 2018, which includes a strategy for enhancing and consolidating fragmented sections of the existing network. It also plans for future active travel links to any unconnected parts of the settlement.</p>
	<p>A similar exercise was carried out in Stromness in 2019, creating strong visions for active travel in Orkney's two main settlements.</p>
	<p>A Local Place Plan for Dounby village is close to being submitted by the local community. This document establishes a comprehensive vision for the integration of active and sustainable travel, establishing a set of proposals and a spatial plan which reflects the Living Well Locally concept in a rural context. We are aware that other communities such as Stenness are also working on preparing a Local Place Plan where there is the opportunity for active travel to be a key theme, as well as opportunities to reduce car speeds and introduce safer routes in the form of active travel to local tourist attractions.</p>
	<p>Where public transport services are required to serve a new development, and cannot be provided commercially, a contribution from the developer towards an agreed level of service may be appropriate.</p>
	<p>The provision of low carbon transport infrastructure within developments is particularly encouraged, for example, by providing community or commercial electric vehicle charge points.</p>
	<p>Developments that have the potential to generate significant levels of freight will be directed to industrial allocations beside key ports and harbour facilities at Hatston, Copland's Dock and Lyness.</p>
	<h4>Current Context</h4>
	<p>Orkney's transport network is dominated by private car use, reflecting the dispersed settlement pattern and limited public transport options. Car ownership levels are high, and achieving the national target of a 20% reduction in car kilometres presents significant challenges for a rural island authority. Public transport provision includes bus services on the Mainland and inter-island ferries, but frequency and coverage are limited.</p>
	<p>Active travel infrastructure is improving, with ongoing investment in walking and cycling routes. Electric vehicle charging points are being expanded, and projects such as electric hydrofoil ferries and plug-in facilities for vessels aim to reduce emissions from marine transport. The Local Transport Strategy and partnership work with Sustrans provide a framework for promoting sustainable travel and integrating transport hubs with active travel and low-carbon options.</p>
	<p><b>National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) (OIC079)</b> and its four 'priorities' of: (i) reduce inequalities; (ii) take climate action; (iii) help deliver inclusive economic growth; and (iv) improve our health and wellbeing. Two key points of substance emerge from NTS2, one, prioritise active travel and accessible public transport connections and, two, discourage short, single car occupant journeys.</p>

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<p>The NTS2 Sustainable Investment Hierarchy dictates that investment in new infrastructure should only be considered once a wider package of options to reduce the need to travel; reduce the need to travel unsustainably; optimise use of existing infrastructure; and influence travel behaviour or manage demand have been explored.</p> <p><b>The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) (OIC080)</b>, which is the delivery plan for NTS2 with respect to nationally funded strategic infrastructure, makes specific recommendations of relevance to Orkney and is the desire to increase active travel provision. The policy is to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030 (<b>OIC087</b>), however, there is an acknowledgement that urban and rural targets and approaches may vary.</p> <p><b>National Targets of Relevance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Zero, where no one is seriously injured or killed on our roads by 2050, with 50% reduction in people killed and people seriously injured to 2030 (Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030). (<b>OIC088</b>)</li> <li>• Reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030 (update to the Climate Change Plan, Scottish Government, Dec 2020).</li> <li>• By 2030, the equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied from renewable sources; an increase by 30% in the productivity of energy use across the Scottish economy (Scotland's Energy Strategy 2017 sets two new targets for the Scottish energy system by 2030).</li> <li>• Phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035 and public bodies to lead the way by phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles by 2025 (Update to the Climate Change Plan, Scottish Government, Dec 2020).</li> </ul> <p><b>HITRANS Case for Change report</b></p> <p>A review of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy is underway and as part of the review the 'Case for Change' sets out at some length the transport problems in the HITRANS region which includes Orkney, these are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journey times for trips between settlements within the HITRANS region and to/from the region to elsewhere in Scotland are long and characterised by low average speeds.</li> <li>• Journey time reliability by road is also relatively poor, affected by vehicle platooning, inclement weather and limited daylight hours in winter. This is a particular issue for road freight, which is often moving high-value and time sensitive products to end customers or forwarding depots, which makes journey time reliability essential.</li> <li>• Reliability more generally is becoming a major issue on almost all ferry networks; these issues compound the underlying reliability challenges caused by inclement weather.</li> <li>• Public transport frequency is also generally very low and, in most cases, operates over a shorter day than would be found elsewhere in Scotland. This acts to limit access to opportunities and can lead to the need for expensive overnight stays, particularly for those travelling from and to island communities. Similarly, the use of much of the bus fleet to fulfil school bus contracts means that many timetabled bus services are off-peak, which is clearly ill-suited to traditional working patterns and limits time at destination.</li> <li>• The long travel distances, and in some cases the need to combine an overland trip with a ferry or air service, make the average journey more expensive than elsewhere in Scotland. For ferry travel, this is compounded by differential tariff structures.</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of the settlements in the HITRANS region are rural, and the region includes some of Scotland's most remote communities. The impact of this is fourfold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) labour markets are limited in size and in most cases largely self-contained within discrete travel-to-work areas – this can lead to labour shortages and challenges in matching skills to jobs;</li> <li>(ii) there is a reliance on the transport network to connect people to services (e.g. retail) and vice versa (e.g. social care), but the limitations of the network make such journeys long and expensive;</li> <li>(iii) very low travel volumes make the delivery of transport services expensive and, with respect to bus services, subject to short notice reduction and withdrawal; and</li> <li>(iv) the scope of active travel journeys between settlements is limited.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Connected to the above points is the issue of transport poverty, where low service frequency and/or short operating days can act to limit the ability to access essential services. Indeed, in some areas, there are no scheduled public transport services at all, leading to 'forced car ownership'. This can be a 'push' factor in out-migration in communities, which are already fragile. The above challenges are compounded by the extreme winter-summer differentials in travel in the Highlands and Islands. In the summer months, the network overall has to accommodate day trippers, staying visitors, motorhomes and cruise passengers, whilst traffic has to be managed at 'honeypot' locations such as Skara Brae. A particular feature of tourism in the region is that much of it is directed to where the transport infrastructure is least well-placed to support it.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy Refresh 2018 (OIC091)</u></b></p> <p>An outcome of The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 placed a statutory duty on the seven Regional Transport Partnerships to produce a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for their region. HITRANS has an existing <a href="#">Transport Strategy</a> in place which provides important context for the Council's proposed LTS.</p> <p>The existing vision is,</p> <p>"To deliver connectivity across the region, which enables sustainable economic growth and helps communities to actively participate in economic and social activities."</p> <p><b><u>Orkney Local Transport Strategy 2024-2044 (OIC093)</u></b></p> <p>There has recently been an update to the Orkney Local Transport Strategy which sets a policy framework to help guide decision-making on transport over the next period, with the goal of working towards four overarching outcomes:</p>

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<p>1. Transport contributes to a successful and just transition to a net-zero carbon and sustainable community.</p> <p>2. Transport plays a positive role in tackling the dispersed pattern of poverty across Orkney, and in improving health, reducing inequalities and isolation.</p> <p>3. Transport supports continued and inclusive economic development and innovation across all sectors.</p> <p>4. Our communities are places where people can thrive, regardless of mobility or income; with liveable and inclusive communities.</p>	

The Strategy specifically sets out key priorities in terms of transport around:

- Growing the network of paths across the islands, including routes to promote connectivity and leisure.
- Enhancing cycle networks across the islands and providing support facilities.
- Enabling and encouraging users of walking and cycling routes through signage and information.
- Supporting electric bike usage.
- Enhancing public bus travel to and from hubs and key attractions.
- Connecting bus transport with active travel routes.
- Integrating bus and ferry transport for visitors.
- Simplifying visitor ticketing for bus and ferry.
- Supporting electric car usage.
- Decarbonising public bus and ferry transport.
- Exploring support for electric planes and ferries between islands

In terms of issues that need addressed the Local Transport Strategy highlights the:

- dispersed population and therefore transport connectivity in some areas is limited.
- internal ferry and air services are not accessible and
- there is limited walking and cycling infrastructure to support Active Travel.

However, looking forward it also states that there are opportunities that the Local Transport Strategy can build on including:

- the growth in public bus passenger carryings across the county,
- increases in active travel and further investment in infrastructure,
- increases in home working,
- advances in low carbon transport solutions and
- more community empowerment.

Within the Local Transport Strategy there are policies that are very relevant to the Local Development Plan, for example, there are aspirations around undertaking traffic management reviews for Kirkwall and other towns, including consideration of the capacity of junctions in Kirkwall. The provision of minimum cycle parking standards for new developments. There are also policies in support of the Harbours Masterplan and promoting the concept of providing increased services closer to where people live/work, such as creating community hubs.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>9.Sustainable Transport</b>
<b><u>Parking Strategy for Orkney (OIC256)</u></b>	
<p>There is an existing Parking Strategy in place for Orkney, which sets out that Orkney has one of the highest levels of car ownership in Scotland. As a result, there are demands for parking; particularly in the towns of Kirkwall and Stromness, for residents, businesses and shoppers wishing to access the centre of town. This Strategy takes into consideration that parking may affect town centres, and that effective management can act to promote economic growth and help sustain the businesses of Orkney. However, it also highlights that unsuitable parking management can have adverse impacts, including reducing the profitability of local businesses and compromising the vitality of town centres. This can lead to inconsiderate on-street parking, which can result in safety implications for pedestrians and other road users. The Strategy identified that Orkney has sufficient levels of existing parking to meet the needs of the area, however, concluded that proper management is required to ensure best use is made of the available parking.</p>	
<p>The Council has an Active Travel Strategy which predates the <a href="#">Green Travel Plan (OIC257)</a>. Both these have been used to assist in gaining external grant funding for infrastructure upgrades such as walk and cycle paths and funding for softer measures such as promotion and education, working towards a more active and sustainable community. The current plan highlights the findings from a HITRANS audit that was commissioned, which found the following key issues:</p>	
<p><b>Incoherent Cycle Routes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of continuity between new off-road cycle tracks and existing road network.</li> </ul> <p><b>'Pedestrianised' (shared space) Town Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excess/unnecessary use by motorists reduces the attractiveness of the area and impedes pedestrians.</li> </ul> <p><b>Car Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents are used to parking where they want, when they want.</li> <li>• Plentiful car parking in the town centre and other trip generators/attractors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Designing for Pedestrians and Cyclists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration for the movement of pedestrians and cyclists is not apparent in traffic management schemes.</li> <li>• One-way systems are a deterrent to cycling.</li> <li>• Orkney Roads Development Guide is car orientated. This has since been superseded by the National Roads Development Guide.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cycle Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtually no cycle parking in the town centre.</li> <li>• Poor quality staff cycle parking at key sites.</li> <li>• Cycle parking standards not implemented at planning stage.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>9.Sustainable Transport</b>
<p>Weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The very windy weather in winter is a deterrent to walking and cycling and is used as an excuse by some for driving year-round.</li> </ul> <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of walking and cycling is restricted to schools.</li> <li>• Missed opportunities with regards to taking advantage of significant tourist flows in the summer.</li> <li>• No walking or cycling maps.</li> </ul> <p>In terms of current transport provision to and within Orkney the maps below show Orkney's current transport links.</p>	

# TRANSPORT LINKS

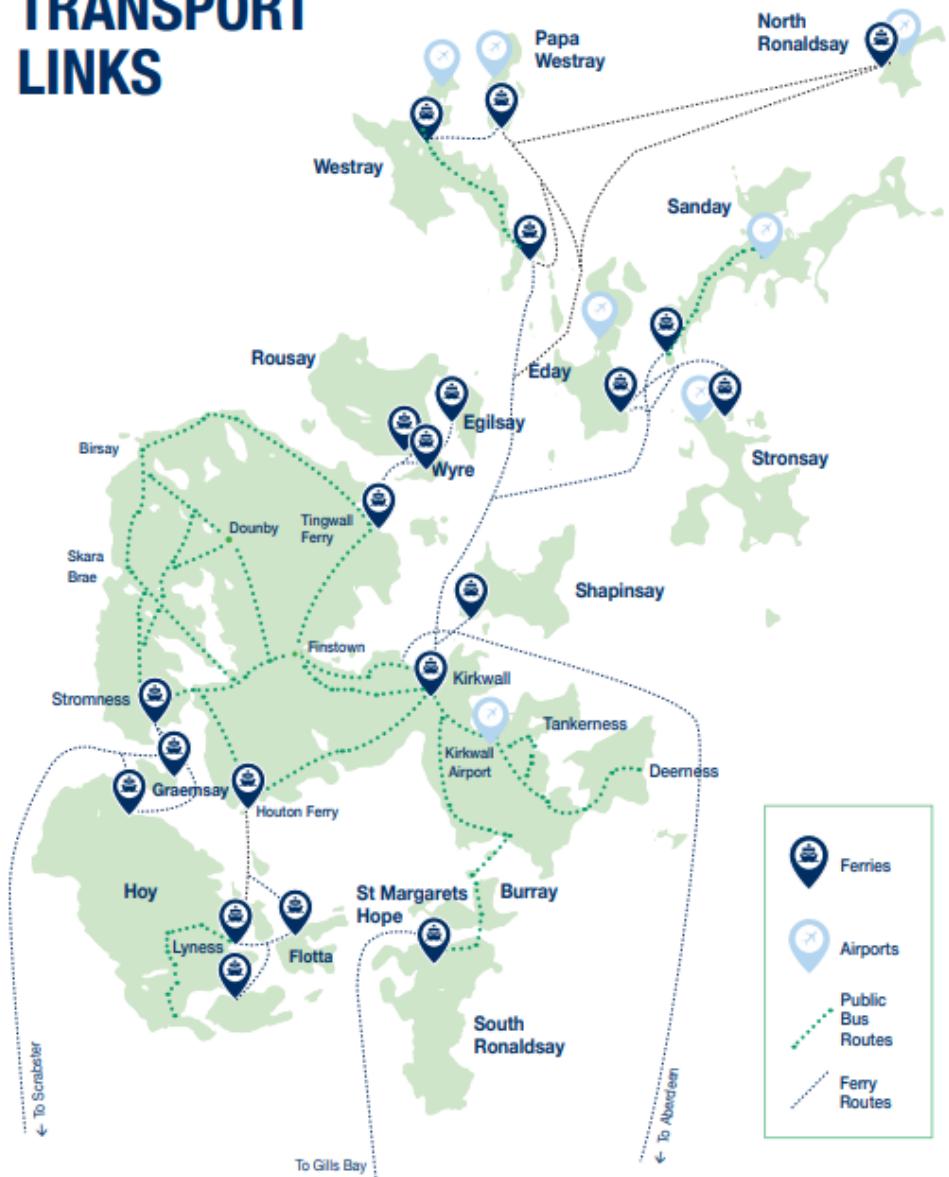
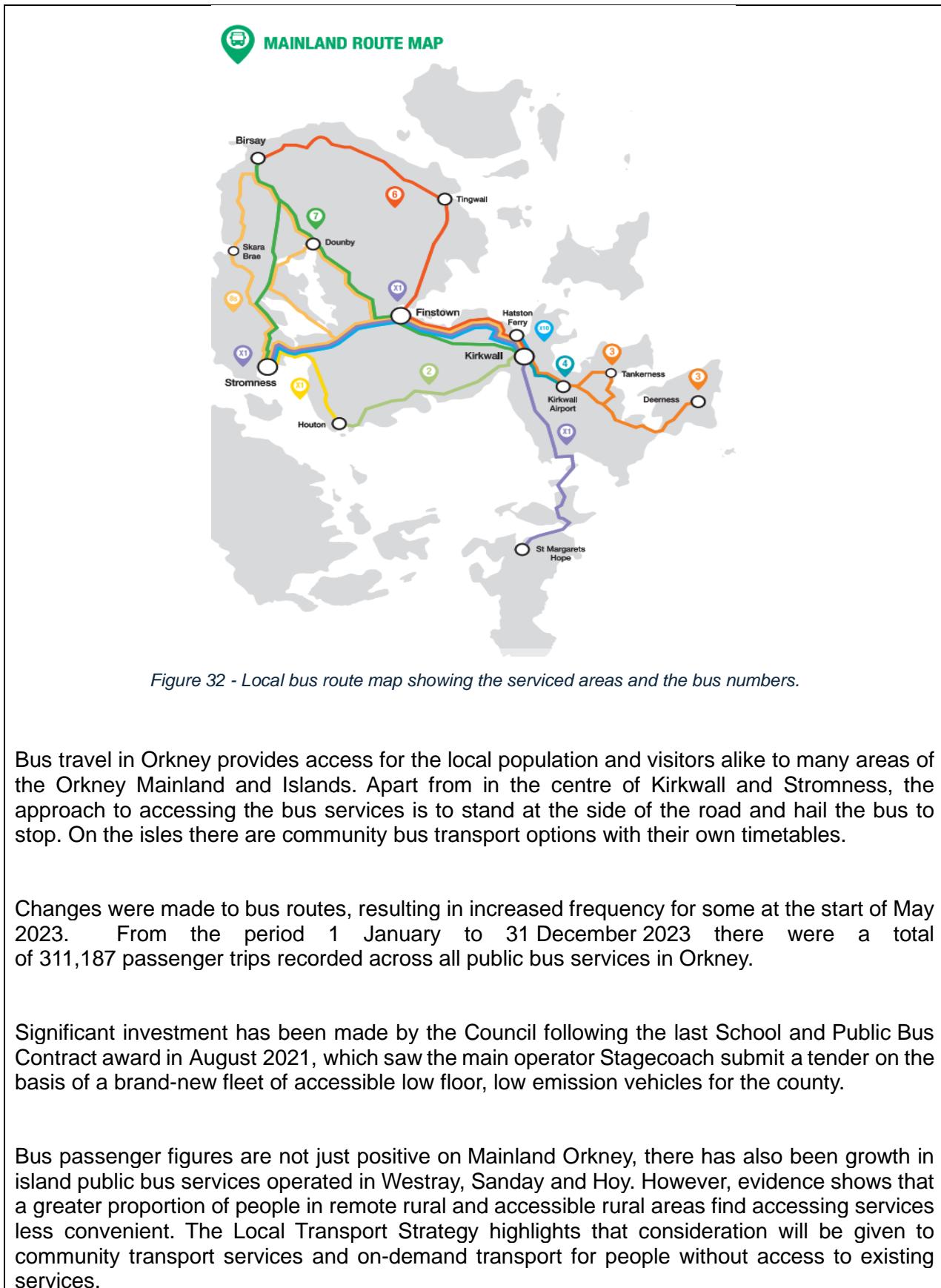


Figure 31 - Inter- Island and Scottish mainland ferries, airports and local public bus routes.



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<p>In terms of current car ownership, the 2022 <a href="#">census (OIC168)</a> showed that there is a high level of car ownership in Orkney with 44.3% of households having one car or van and 28.3% of households having two cars or vans. 16.8% of households in Orkney have no cars or vans</p> <p><a href="#">Orkney Ferries</a> operate regular passenger and vehicle ferry services from Kirkwall to the islands of Shapinsay, Stronsay, Sanday, Eday, Westray, Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay. A passenger and vehicle ferry to the islands of Hoy and Flotta can be caught from Houton in Orphir, a passenger ferry to the islands of Hoy and Graemsay operates from Stromness, and a passenger and vehicle ferry to the islands of Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre sails from Tingwall in Evie (See Figure 29).</p> <p>Orkney Islands Council has secured £3 million Scottish Government funding for plans to replace its internal ferry fleet. The funding will help the Council develop a planned pilot for two electric ferries and its business case for a replacement internal ferry fleet. The two electric passenger hydrofoil ferries will be coming to the islands in 2025. In a partnership agreement between Orkney Islands Council, <a href="#">Artemis Technologies</a> and EMEC there will be onshore charging infrastructure installed.</p> <p>In the longer term a business case is being developed to make access funding that will see eight new vessels to link communities, which may also boost tourism. Most of the vessels in the existing fleet are now over 30 years old, meaning they are less reliable, more expensive to maintain and not accessible for people with mobility issues. The new ferries would include three large ferries to serve the islands of Westray, Stronsay, Sanday and Eday, with plans being drawn up for all of Orkney's ferry and air linked island communities.</p> <p>Loganair operates services to several Scottish destinations. They also operate inter-isles flights, which service six islands from Kirkwall Airport. Kirkwall Airport is located 3 miles from the town centre of Kirkwall (See Figure 29 for location of Airports across the Islands)</p> <p><u>Existing EV chargers and car club locations</u></p> <p>Currently Co-wheels operate a car club with one car situated in Stromness and one car situated in Kirkwall.</p> <p>Currently, there is a good supply of charging points across Orkney. 30 of the county's EV chargers are provided, operated and maintained by Orkney Islands Council. There are 53 EV public chargers in different parts of Orkney, alongside a high uptake of electric vehicles in the region. An Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (<a href="#">OIC340</a>) produced by the Council outlines proposals to ensure suitable infrastructure in the County to support the use of electric vehicles. Within the Strategy it proposes to have rapid charge points at key locations in Stromness and Kirkwall in the first instance, with a view to extend this to other key hub areas, subject to external funding and suitable infrastructure. Key 'hub' areas in Orkney have been considered where it is envisaged that the charge points will be well used. The Strategy also notes that there is a need for charge points in other key inhabited areas of Orkney to provide a comprehensive charging infrastructure network in Orkney. The Strategy sets out a table of hub areas and their priority for delivery. This</p>	

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	was supplemented by a Strategy produced for the County by the Orkney Renewable Energy Forum 2018-2023.
<u>Active Travel</u>	
The Local Transport Strategy ( <b>OIC093</b> ) sets out aspirations to promote walking, cycling and wheeling to deliver a healthier, fairer, accessible Orkney. These include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking, wheeling and cycling are well recognised for their wider benefits, especially when integrated into people's daily lives, for leisure, to get about to where folk need to travel to, and as part of visitor experiences. The Orkney Travel matters survey tells us that one in six Orcadians are making short journeys by car 15 or more times per week. This shows significant potential for shifting people's habits to more sustainable modes.</li> <li>We want our communities, green spaces and towns, villages and settlements to be connected and easily accessed by active travel, with a focus on people rather than private vehicles. Active travel options offer safe, affordable and enjoyable choices for residents, employees and visitors alike, regardless of location, income level, or stage in life.</li> <li>Orkney Islands Council has an embedded Sustrans Senior Project Officer in place. The role of the officer is to facilitate a strategic approach to active travel infrastructure, to increase walking, cycling and wheeling in Orkney communities as a preferred mode of travel, working with the Council and partner organisations to further understand the local barriers to active travel, and to deliver a strategic approach to overcome them.</li> <li>The Council has an Active Travel Strategy to assist in gaining external grant funding for infrastructure upgrades such as walk and cycle paths as well as funding for softer measures such as promotion and education, working towards a more active and sustainable community.</li> <li>The Council is collaborating with and supporting schools across Orkney in developing School Travel Plans to promote health and active travel choices for the journey to school, and for travel within the school day.</li> <li>The Council is delivering a number of active travel-focused projects, such as the recently opened Papdale East Park project, and the Arcadia Park in Kirkwall. The Council's Sustainable Travel Group, with officers from Transport, Engineering, Development Planning, Outdoor Access, Roads, Education, Leisure and Economic Development progress active travel projects and other works to promote active travel.</li> </ul>	
The Objectives of the Orkney Green Travel Plan ( <b>OIC257</b> ) are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the modal share in active and sustainable travel <i>i.e.</i> walking, cycling and use of public transport for everyday journeys.</li> <li>Incorporate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists into all traffic management schemes.</li> <li>To increase the modal share of car sharing journeys, reducing the mode share of single occupancy car journeys.</li> <li>To reduce the modal share of private car use for business trips.</li> <li>To enable and encourage, where practicable, people to work at or closer to home.</li> <li>The introduction of 'behaviour change marketing' of active and sustainable travel modes, providing enabling interventions and information subject to external funding.</li> </ul>	
In 2024 a report called <b>Orkney Travel Matters (OIC167)</b> revealed for the first time how many people are walking, wheeling and cycling in Orkney, as well as bringing to light the barriers preventing more Orcadians from using active travel.	

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<p><a href="#">Orkney Travel Matters</a>, which is published by Sustrans in partnership with Orkney Islands Council and supported by funding from Transport Scotland, has found that 54% of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week, making it the most frequent mode of travel in the islands, with driving at 48%.</p> <p>The pilot report is the first of its kind carried out by Sustrans Scotland in an island setting. The report reveals the potential for many more local journeys in Orkney to be made by active travel, as 41% of residents living in villages said they do not currently cycle but would like to.</p> <p><u>Further findings in the report revealed that:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% of residents identified the provision of more footpaths, pavements and walking routes between towns and villages as the most helpful infrastructure measures to help them walk, wheel or cycle further.</li> <li>• 63% of residents said they would find improving the behaviour of people driving cars useful to help them start cycling, or cycle more.</li> <li>• 18%, so about one in five, cycle at least once a week. The Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index showed this is the same percentage as the eight Scottish cities. Meaning that walking and cycling is as relevant here as it is anywhere.</li> <li>• 53% of people said they would like to see more government spending in their local area on walking and wheeling because it makes walking, wheeling and cycling easier.</li> <li>• 45% of residents think the level of safety for walking and wheeling is good, however, this drops to 32% for cycling. The perception of safety level is even less when walking or cycling with children.</li> </ul> <p>The report identified the provision of more footpaths, pavements and walking routes in and between towns and villages as the most helpful infrastructure measures to help people walk or wheel more.</p> <p>Other findings included support for more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance, as well as better streets with more footpaths, pavements and walking routes in and between towns and villages.</p> <p>When asked about what would make cycling better residents highlights improved cycling infrastructure such as paths that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians. To make their neighbourhoods and communities better places to live there was support for increased space for walking, wheeling and cycling and space for social interaction in towns and villages, even if this reduces space for cars.</p> <p>In recent years there have been several projects undertaken in partnership with a variety of funders which have embedded active travel and access to improved open space. These include <a href="#">Arcadia Park (OIC171)</a> in Kirkwall. Arcadia Park is a new community-designed green space and active travel network in Kirkwall. Built on what was previously a section of underused land adjacent to Balfour Hospital, the project sought to transform the area into a place where local</p>	

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	<p>residents can take time out and relax, as well as providing a landscape link to the Balfour Hospital in the south of Kirkwall. The new park provides somewhere for walking, wheeling, cycling, and spending time outdoors. Kirkwall also has a new community park called Papdale East (<b>OIC172</b>). The Park, which is for all ages and abilities, features a de-culverted burn, a network of paths and cycle ways, native shrubs and trees, and a wildflower meadow. A new road crossing, which links the Park to Kirkwall Grammar School, from existing and future housing zoned land and a plaza has been created for community use.</p>								
<p>In addition to formal active travel routes there is also the <b>Core Paths (OIC173)</b> network, which forms the basic network of paths that allow people to access and move around the countryside. Core paths were a statutory requirement under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and were created using a combination of existing rights of ways and other paths, tracks and quiet roads. This framework of routes links to, and supports, other networks of paths and the wider countryside. The path network, nature networks and blue green infrastructure combined, help to provide multi-functioning active travel routes. NPF4 Policy 20 outlines the safeguarding of access rights, core paths and active travel routes and opportunities to link these to other networks.</p>									
<p><b><u>Roads Asset Management Plan (OIC263)</u></b></p>									
<p>These important infrastructure assets are extensively used by the whole community and are essential for the strength of the local economy. The Roads Asset Management Plan informs upon the asset base, its current condition and any investment required to maintain and improve the asset portfolio. There a number of demands placed on the Council roads and their ongoing maintenance; these include asset growth and traffic growth.</p>									
<p><b><u>Asset Growth</u></b></p>									
<p>The road asset has increased by approximately 5.2km in the last 10 years. This is mainly due to new housing developments complete with associated infrastructure. These new assets create increased maintenance and management costs.</p>									
<p>Below in the table is a summary of all the roads related assets which the Council currently maintains.</p>									
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="298 1529 811 1574">Asset type</th><th data-bbox="811 1529 1351 1574">Quantity</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="298 1574 811 1619">Carriageways</td><td data-bbox="811 1574 1351 1619">984.51km</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="298 1619 811 1664">Footways, Footpaths and Cycleways</td><td data-bbox="811 1619 1351 1664">127km</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="298 1664 811 2028">Structures</td><td data-bbox="811 1664 1351 2028"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 Road Bridges,</li> <li>• 1 Foot Bridge,</li> <li>• 4 Causeways,</li> <li>• 9 Cattlegrids,</li> <li>• 18km Retaining walls,</li> <li>• 18km Seawalls,</li> <li>• 39km Embankments,</li> <li>• 4km Parapet Walls,</li> <li>• 1km Gabion Baskets,</li> </ul> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Asset type	Quantity	Carriageways	984.51km	Footways, Footpaths and Cycleways	127km	Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 Road Bridges,</li> <li>• 1 Foot Bridge,</li> <li>• 4 Causeways,</li> <li>• 9 Cattlegrids,</li> <li>• 18km Retaining walls,</li> <li>• 18km Seawalls,</li> <li>• 39km Embankments,</li> <li>• 4km Parapet Walls,</li> <li>• 1km Gabion Baskets,</li> </ul>
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Issue: Topic/Place	9.Sustainable Transport
	• 1km Headwalls.
Street lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,232 Lighting Columns,</li> <li>• 135 Wall Lights,</li> <li>• 525 Lit signs,</li> <li>• 34 Lit Bollards.</li> </ul>
Traffic management systems	12 Zebra crossings
Road drainage infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,030km of Open ditches,</li> <li>• 158km of Pipes,</li> <li>• 68km of French drains,</li> <li>• 7km of Channel drainage,</li> <li>• 5,575 gullies.</li> </ul>
Street furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6,602 Signs,</li> <li>• 1,106 Bollards/Verge Markers,</li> <li>• 7km Safety Railing,</li> <li>• 5km of Railing.</li> </ul>
Other assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Electric Vehicle Charging Points,</li> <li>• 9 Car Park ticket machines,</li> <li>• 2 Weather Stations.</li> </ul>

Table 7 - All roads related assets which the council currently maintains.

### Traffic Growth and Composition

Over the longer term, traffic has significantly increased such that many of our roads carry traffic in excess of what they were designed for. Some routes are subjected to pressure from high levels of HGV traffic and in recent years increasing quantities of tour buses due to our thriving tourist sector. This is particularly damaging on single-track roads, such as Brodgar Road, which are not built to facilitate such volumes of traffic. There is a growing need for additional passing places or widened sections on these roads.

The width of the road network in general is not sufficient to deal with the volume of traffic currently experienced. This is becoming increasingly obvious on A-roads such as the A966 through Rendall, Evie and onwards to Birsay, or the A964 through Orphir. The limited widths of these roads mean that traffic must overrun the carriageway edge when passing larger vehicles. The carriageway strategy includes an allowance for edge treatment of these roads, but this need will increase over and beyond the duration of this plan and the plan states that ultimately consideration should be made for large-scale road widening on certain routes.

### Other relevant projects underway with report completed by summer 2025

#### School Travel Plans

New and updated School Travel Plans are being undertaken for Stromness, Shapinsay, Stronsay, and Westray. These plans look at the journey to and from school. It seeks to make the journey safer and more sustainable. It encourages 'active' travel like walking or cycling as a way to promote healthy lifestyles. In addition, it encourages parents and staff to think about safe travel

Issue: Topic/Place	9.Sustainable Transport
	choices and choose alternatives to the car when coming to school. A number of these plans would require physical improvements to fulfil their aims.
<u>Active Travel Network Development Project</u>	
	Following a Road Safety Audit in 2017, National Cycle Network 1 was completely reclassified in Orkney due to traffic speed and volume. Sustrans and Orkney Islands Council have an aspiration to see the National Cycle Network reinstated and have agreed that this should be explored in the context of the Local Transport Strategy's 'St Margaret's Hope – Kirkwall – Stromness protected cycling and walking route project.'
	Sustrans Network Development Team's initial work in 2024/25 will be focused on exploring the feasibility of a Phase 1 project between Stromness and Finstown in connection with the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Onshore Cable project between Warebeth and Finstown and the Islands Deal World Heritage Site Active Travel Network project. These are projects that are highlighted in the Local Transport Strategy.
<u>Restricting access to Albert and Bridge Street</u>	
	Sustrans are currently carrying out a community engagement exercise on behalf of Orkney Islands Council around the traffic management of part of Kirkwall's main throughfare.
	The project, known as <b>Streets for Everyone</b> , which focuses on Albert Street and Bridge Street, seeks local input with the aim of creating safer, more accessible, and vibrant public spaces that benefit everyone and where local businesses can thrive.
	This follows on from a Council committee decision to look again at how traffic is managed in the area, and it was agreed to ask the public and Kirkwall BID for feedback on the potential for driving restrictions on these two streets. This is a project that is highlighted in the Local Transport Strategy.
<u>Getting Around Kirkwall: Town Centre</u>	
	The focus of this project will be a study of infrastructure and movement, known as a mobility audit. The purpose of such a study is to provide a body of evidence which can inform future policies and projects on active and sustainable travel, public transport integration and car parking. This project is the first stage of what could potentially be a multi-year project that supports progress in the Your Kirkwall Local Place Plan strategic objectives of increasing opportunities for walking and cycling, developing a more walkable town and creating a more sustainable place. In 2024/25, Sustrans will support the commencement of a mobility audit in the town that aligns and responds to the design principles and relevant strategic objectives from the Local Place Plan and is highlighted as a project in the Local Transport Strategy.
<u>Getting Around Kirkwall: Peedie Sea</u>	
	The Your Kirkwall Local Place Plan identified community aspirations to make improvements to the Peedie Sea, with a vision towards creating an improved Town Park. The community identified opportunities for the park to be designed with active travel routes connecting housing to the west of Kirkwall with the town centre and becoming more of a formal leisure asset with enhanced landscape, biodiversity, and facilities to enable more people to spend time in the park area.

Issue: Topic/Place	9.Sustainable Transport
<p>Design support from Sustrans in 2024/25 will be focused on developing the conceptual vision established in the Local Place Plan, including the town park path network and aligning this activity to existing funding availability for biodiversity enhancements, identifying opportunities for improvements within the park.</p>	
<p><u>Getting Around Dounby</u></p> <p>As set out in the draft Dounby Local Place Plan, the local community wish to provide meaningful active travel routes in and around the village. The focus of design support in 2024/25 intends to pave the way towards this by combining and delivering two of the workstreams identified in the Local Place Plan, namely project 1 'Full Movement Study', project 3 'Existing Infrastructure'. With this overview of how people are moving around and where the gaps in the infrastructure are, project 4 'Design solutions' will then be progressed with a selection of early draft design ideas proposed. To compliment this work and the reference to signage and interpretation in the Local Place Plan, a Wayfinding Strategy will also be progressed. Community engagement will inform wayfinding priorities, which may include project 7 'Heritage Trail and Dounby specific interpretation'.</p>	
<p><u>A Safe Route to School – Ferry Road, Stromness</u></p> <p>This project will develop the What's Next for Stromness Local Place Plan project 13 'A Safer Route to School'. The work will build upon the excellent recent progress made through the School Travel Plan during 2024. By doing so, it will explore opportunities to improve the safety of the route to school along Ferry Road. Work during 2024/25 will determine the scope of the project with partners, initiate a soft launch of the project along with a parking usage survey as outlined within Local Place Plan project 17. Early engagement with key stakeholders will commence with the aim of bringing together a Community Advisory Group. The project will be taken forward in close collaboration with the community and further work to develop these proposals to a conceptual design stage could take place, subject to funding from Transport Scotland, in 2025/26.</p> <p><u>Data collection</u></p> <p>There are currently a variety of locations that are known to be used for walking and cycling where further data is being collected on pedestrian and cycle numbers to consider if the routes could potentially be considered as pilot Quiet Routes; there are a number of criteria that have to be met.</p> <p>Identified Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need for detailed active travel network mapping and integration with settlement plans.</li> <li>– Limited evidence on EV charging infrastructure demand projections.</li> </ul> <p><b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <p>The Schedules were sent to the following:</p> <p>Embedded Sustrans Officer.</p> <p>HITRANS.</p> <p>Transport Scotland.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	9.Sustainable Transport
Orkney Islands Council Transport Team.	
Orkney Islands Council Rural Planner.	
Orkney Islands Council Service Manager (Roads and Grounds).	
NatureScot.	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to align the policies and proposals in the Local Transport Strategy with the next Local Development Plan.</li> <li>• Using evidence such as community led plans, Sustrans supported projects and stakeholder feedback to spatially identify in the plan where there are gaps in the active travel network and connectivity with other modes of transport such as footpath provision, other active travel infrastructure and co-location opportunities of multiple transport modes.</li> <li>• Include in the plan spatially strategic projects such as the aspiration for an active travel route between St Margarets Hope and Stromness.</li> <li>• Include in the plan, through settlement statements, expectations on how developers should support increased active and sustainable travel. This could include having policies requiring delivery of certain infrastructure in developments, such as bus shelters and key footpath links.</li> <li>• Identify in key settlements public realm improvements and aspirations from community led plans that will encourage a greater level of people walking and cycling for short journeys rather than using a motor vehicle for that journey.</li> <li>• Identify and protect existing core paths and explore opportunities for new development to link into existing outdoor access routes.</li> <li>• Identify networks that combine core paths, nature networks and blue green infrastructure along multi-functioning corridors.</li> <li>• Within the Spatial Strategy identify locations of potential transport hubs where multiple transport options can be accessed such as bike/bus/car parking and electric car charging aimed at reducing the need to use cars for all trips. Also consider the potential opportunities from the onshore charging infrastructure for electric ferries and how this can support multiple transport options for onward journeys.</li> <li>• Undertake a proportionate transport appraisal to ensure there is good integration between transport and land use planning. Transport Scotland have confirmed that with limited scope for their remit they do not wish to comment on any transport appraisal.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>9.Sustainable Transport</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure any land allocations can be developed with reasonable infrastructure requirements and that any planned development will not cause capacity issues on the transport network individually or cumulatively. If there are upgrades to capacity necessary, the LDP should set this out in the settlement statement/development brief.</li> </ul>	
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
<p>There are no unresolved areas of dispute:</p> <p>NatureScot proposed the inclusion of multi-functional active travel routes, aligned with blue green infrastructure, this has been added.</p> <p>OIC Rural Planner has proposed some changes and additions, which have been added.</p> <p>Transport Scotland sought additional links to national strategies and projects which have been incorporated into the Schedule and into Schedule 8.</p> <p>OIC Transport Service Manager agreed with the evidence and emphasised the challenge in delivering 20% reduction in car km by 2023 in a rural authority like Orkney.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>10.Flood Risk and Water Management</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC094</b> <a href="#">Local Flood Risk Management Plan for Orkney</a></p> <p><b>OIC095</b> <a href="#">The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 - 2027</a></p> <p><b>OIC096</b> <a href="#">SEPA Water Classification Hub</a></p> <p><b>OIC097</b> <a href="#">Flood Risk Management Maps</a></p> <p><b>OIC098</b> <a href="#">River Flood Maps</a></p> <p><b>OIC099</b> <a href="#">Coastal Flood Maps</a></p> <p><b>OIC100</b> <a href="#">Surface Water Flood Maps</a></p> <p><b>OIC264</b> <a href="#">Riparian planting Opportunities</a></p> <p><b>OIC265</b> <a href="#">Recommended Riparian Corridor</a></p> <p><b>OIC174</b> <a href="#">Pressures Evidence: RBMP3</a></p> <p><b>OIC175</b> <a href="#">Recommended riparian corridor layer for use in land use planning</a></p> <p><b>OIC176</b> <a href="#">Natural Flood Management Maps: SEPA FRM Map Viewer</a></p> <p><b>OIC011</b> <a href="#">Dynamic coast information</a></p> <p><b>OIC318</b> <a href="#">Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</a></p> <p><b>OIC319</b> <a href="#">SEPA - Key Data</a></p> <p><b>OIC 338</b> Orkney Islands Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2025)</p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>NPF4 Policy 22 Flood risk and water management sets out a policy framework that seeks to increase community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change, by avoiding development in areas at flood risk.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	10. Flood Risk and Water Management
<p>Policy 20 Blue and Green Networks highlights the integral role of green and blue infrastructure in flood prevention and water management.</p> <p>Policy 10 Coastal development requires a precautionary approach to flood risk in coastal areas recognising rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change.</p> <p>g</p> <p>Other relevant policies include Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crises, Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation and Policy 3 Biodiversity.</p>	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p>There is a history of flooding in Orkney particularly coastal flooding which can impact communities. In Kirkwall there is a Flood Alleviation Scheme. The following sections sets out the flood risk plans and assessments the Council has in place in respect of flood risk to influence the next Orkney Local Development Plan</p>	
<p>The existing Local Development Plan has a number of policies relating to flood risk and water management with Policy 12 covering Coastal Development and Policy 13 covering Flood Risk. NPF4 has changed the policy approach so these policies will require to be reviewed and updated.</p>	
<b>Flooding and Natural Capital</b>	
<p>The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2045 outlines the importance of Natural Capital in relation to flood management. Under the concept of Natural Capital, nature is recognised as a valuable asset which provides a stock and flows of ecosystem services, for example, clean air, carbon storage and flood management. Drainage of ponds and marshes and soil compaction intensify flood risk and rivers; lochs and wetlands mitigate flood risk. Poorly vegetated upper catchments and canalised river systems exacerbate downstream flash flooding events. Schedules 1 and 2 also outline flood management and the strategies and plans below outline ways of managing water systems to mitigate flood risk. When nature-based solutions are employed to manage flood risk, biodiversity and climate change mitigation can be concurrently enhanced.</p>	
<b><u>Local Flood Risk Management Plans (OIC094)</u></b>	
<p>The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on responsible authorities to manage flood risk on a plan-led, risk based, sustainable way. Every six years the Council must produce and publish a Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the Local Plan District. This Plan is developed working in partnership with SEPA and Scottish Water. The most up to date plan was published in 2022 and a summary of actions within it are set out below.</p>	
<b><u>Principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district (OIC094)</u></b>	
<p>The Orkney Local Plan District covers an area of around 1,000km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of approximately 23,000 people. It includes all of the Orkney Islands, 20 of which are inhabited.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	10. Flood Risk and Water Management
<p>The majority of the islands comprise low-lying flat ground with hills on the Mainland, Rousay and Hoy. Land cover is dominated by agricultural land, predominantly improved grassland, with heather and wetlands also significant. There are large inland lochs in the area including Loch of Harray and Loch of Stenness. The coastline has a total length of approximately 860km, much of it soft and easy to erode, although, there are notable sections of maritime cliffs, these also erode at different rates. The main risk of flooding in Orkney is from coastal flooding. Orkney has been affected by several floods, notably widespread coastal flooding in January 2005. Heavy rain caused significant surface water and river flooding across Orkney in October 2006 with Kirkwall particularly badly affected. The Churchill Barriers, which are vital transport links between islands, are frequently disrupted by wave overtopping. Erosion of the soft coastline around Orkney is also of significance. Currently it is estimated that there are 2,300 people and 1,900 homes and businesses at risk from flooding. This is estimated to increase to 2,700 people and 2,200 homes and businesses by the 2080s due to climate change. The annual cost of flooding is estimated at £4.8 million. Note however that flooding from wave overtopping is not fully represented in the assessment of flood risk and the impact of coastal flooding may be underestimated.</p> <p><b>River Basin Management Plans (OIC095)</b></p> <p>SEPA has prepared a River Basin Management Plan for Scotland for 2021 to 2027, which sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment. The Council, through the next Local Development Plan, will seek to mitigate the impact on the water environment and help halt species decline by seeking to deliver high quality, multifunctional blue-green spaces in new developments and promoting natural solutions such as rain gardens to deal with surface water. The Council is working with consultants to develop a Surface Water Management Plan for Kirkwall that will identify a network of blue and green networks across Kirkwall, which includes enhancement and protection of blue and green infrastructure. Data from the riparian corridor mapping, geomorphic risk layer, riparian vegetation enhancement opportunities, Scottish wetland inventory layer, obstacles to fish migration, Water Environment Fund Project – existing and proposed, natural flood management maps and the outputs from the finalised Strategic Flood Risk Assessment can feed into this process and help identify the blue elements of a nature network across Orkney.</p> <p><b>Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP)</b></p> <p>Surface water flooding is experienced throughout Orkney. The Council is working in partnership with SEPA and Scottish Water to develop Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for Kirkwall. Orkney Islands Council will work closely with Scottish Water to implement the Surface Water Management Plan and identify opportunities for joint working. The impacts of climate change on flood risk will be considered. Opportunities to remove surface water from the sewerage system should be identified. In conjunction, the impacts of tide locking of the Peedie Sea need to be considered.</p> <p>SEPA manage a database for surface waters coloured by overall status for the latest available year, see map below. The map shows that the majority of Orkney's surface water</p>	

**Issue: Topic/Place****10.Flood Risk and Water Management**

is in a good condition. The Burn of Hourston, which empties into the Loch of Harray changed status from 'Bad' to 'Good' in 2019 and has remained in a good condition. However, the Burns of Netherbrough and Corrigall both changed from 'Moderate' to 'Poor' in 2019 due to a decline in water quality and ecology, they are also in the water catchment area for Loch of Harray. Loch of Harray's water condition changed from 'Good' to 'Moderate' at the same time. Therefore, the Surface Water Management Plan should consider where water management may aggravate poor water conditions or improve water conditions, especially within SSSI sites.

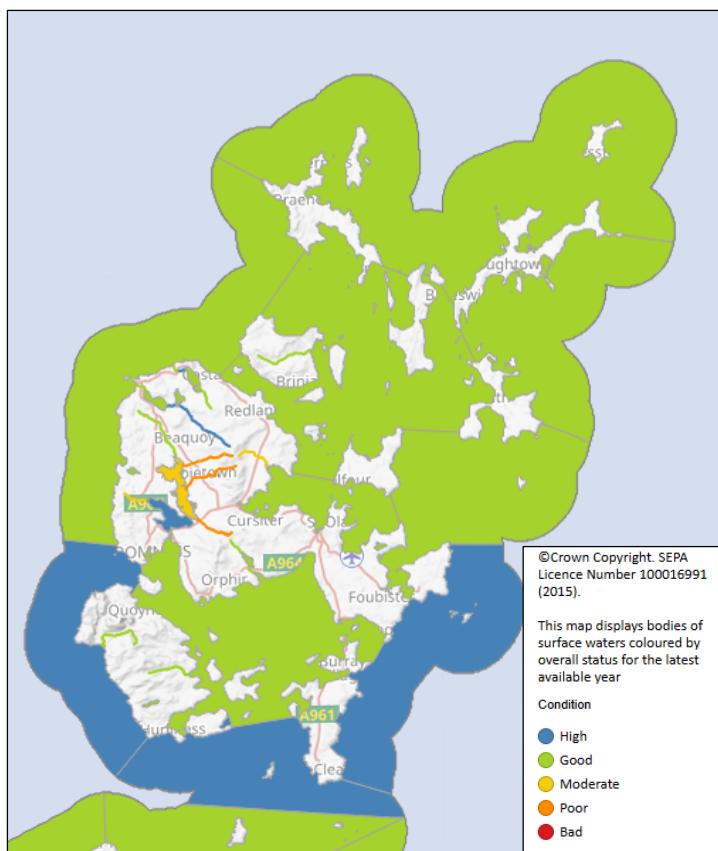


Figure 33 - SEPA water classification map (OIC096)

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (OIC098, OIC099, OIC100, OIC338)**

The initial part of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared for the Evidence Report and agreed with SEPA. A full SFRA will be prepared to support the Orkney Local Development Plan and will assess land designations against flood risk potential.

The assessment will be informed by work already undertaken on the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, the Surface Water Management Plan and input from SEPA and the Council's Flood Engineering Team. See map below which highlights areas at risk of flooding (all likelihood's) based on SEPA's river, surface water, and coastal flood data. The online map can be found [here](#) whole all of Orkney..

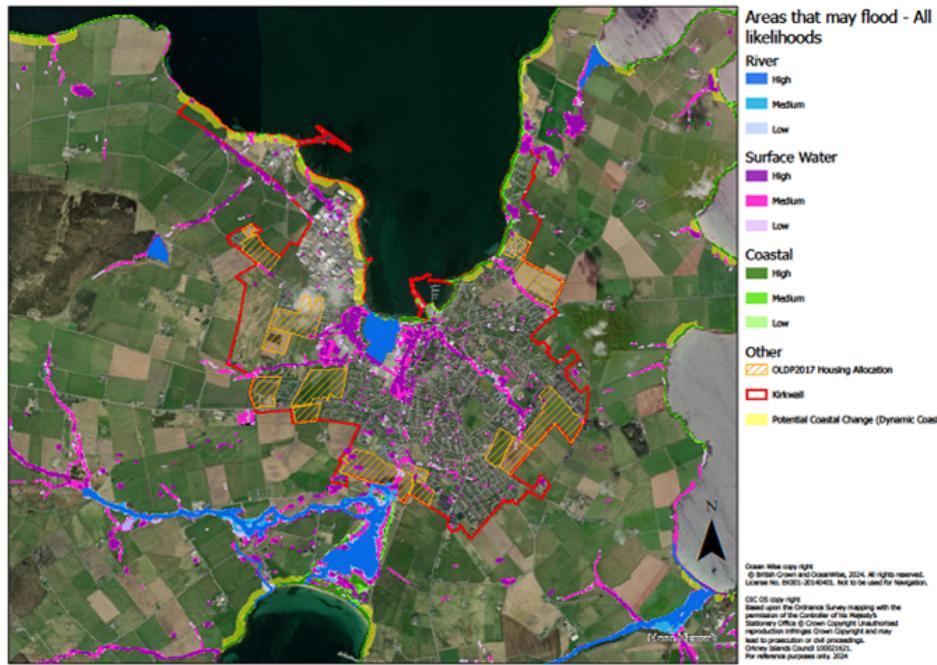


Figure 34 - SFRA for Orkney (Showing Kirkwall)

### Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Development handbook

The Council is in the process of preparing detailed Flooding and Drainage Impact Assessment Guidance providing advice to developers on the information required to support planning applications. The guidance requires flood risk and drainage to be assessed at an early stage in the development process by a competent and experienced professional. The level of detail required is proportionate to the complexity of the flood risk mechanisms, the site and the severity of the risk, which is affected by its location and to an extent the vulnerability of the proposed development. It is expected the information submitted will demonstrate whether the proposed development is not at risk of flooding and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. It is hoped to have this handbook in place for the new LDP as guidance and should help improve the level of information in planning applications

### Coastal Change Adaptation Plan

A Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is currently out to procurement with the aim for a plan to be developed over the next 18 months. The outputs will include a Strategic Level Assessment of future coastal change in Orkney. This will help inform the development of coastal management policies for Orkney's coastal zone, taking account of natural processes and the risks to people, property, transport, and service infrastructure and how these factors will change over time due to climate change.

### Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

The Schedule was shared with the following:

SEPA.

Issue: Topic/Place	10.Flood Risk and Water Management
<p>Scottish Water.</p> <p>Flood Engineer - Orkney Islands Council.</p> <p>NatureScot.</p>	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood risk will be embedded into the Spatial Strategy of the next Local Development Plan with a precautionary approach taken. This will be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and the upcoming studies that are being undertaken through the Kirkwall Surface Water Management Study and Coastal Change Adaptation Plan.</li> <li>• The next Orkney Local Development Plan should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources and make use of relevant flood risk and river basin management plans for the area to inform land use designations using a precautionary approach.</li> <li>• With predicted increases in the frequency and severity of flooding events in Orkney, existing policies in the Local Development Plan require strengthening and adaptation to avoid and mitigate the associated impacts of flooding. These considerations will form a key part of the review of potential development sites.</li> <li>• In the first instance, this would mean avoiding development in areas that are at flood risk, both now and when the effects of climate change are considered. A further basis for spatial development may be an 'infrastructure first' approach, where new development sites are laid out in such a way that natural overland flow routes and functional flood plains are accommodated through blue and green infrastructure. This can deliver multiple benefits, achieve flood risk management objectives while also considering open space active travel and nature networks in a holistic way. The Kirkwall Surface Water Management Plan aims to provide an evidence base for achieving designs of this kind for currently allocated development sites in Kirkwall. In other settlements other existing data will be used and the information will be ideally set out spatially in settlement statements</li> <li>• Spatially identifying a nature network with opportunities which included consideration of blue and green infrastructure opportunities will help embed flood risk management into the next LDP. To identify the opportunities a range of evidence including relevant water environment data, open space data, natural environment data, outdoor access and active travel data will be used.</li> </ul> <p>Identified Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coastal Change Adaptation Plan not yet complete (due 2026).</li> <li>– Surface Water Management Plans for settlements other than Kirkwall not yet scoped.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>10.Flood Risk and Water Management</b>
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
<p>There are no outstanding areas of dispute.</p> <p>NatureScot proposed a number of additions and these have been incorporated.</p> <p>Scottish Water have highlighted the importance of surface water management again, with specific reference to schemes including, SuDS, ponds and basins, swales, raingardens, and single property use of water butts.</p> <p>SEPA provided a number of comments and data which have all been incorporated.</p> <p>OIC Flood Engineering provided feedback and datasets which have all been incorporated into the Schedule and SFRA.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>11. Community Wealth Building</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC063</b> <a href="#">Orkney Community Plan 2023-30, incorporating the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)</a></p> <p><b>OIC266</b> <a href="#">Community wealth building briefing</a></p> <p><b>OIC267</b> <a href="#">Community Asset Transfers</a></p> <p><b>OIC268</b> <a href="#">The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation</a></p> <p><b>OIC177</b> <a href="#">Building Community Wealth in Scotland – Consultation Paper, 2023, The Scottish Government</a></p> <p><b>OIC189</b> <a href="#">Highland and Island Enterprise Research on community wealth building</a></p> <p><b>OIC190</b> <a href="#">Council Plan 2023-2028</a></p> <p><b>OIC178</b> <a href="#">Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, 2022, The Scottish Government</a></p> <p><b>OIC104</b> <a href="#">Orkney Locality Plan 2024-2026 - Ferry Linked Isles</a></p> <p><b>OIC320</b> <a href="#">Orkney Community Plan 2025-230</a></p> <p><b>OIC321</b> <a href="#">Orkney Community Wealth Building Delivery Plan (Draft)</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	<p>NPF4 requires local development plans to be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area. Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities, identify community assets, set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality and seek to provide benefits for local communities.</p> <p>The policy outcomes which NPF4 Policy 25 aspires to for Community Wealth Building (CWB) are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local economic development that focuses on community and place benefits as a central and primary consideration, to support local employment and supply chains.</li> <li>• Support community ownership and management of buildings and land.</li> </ul>

Issue: Topic/Place	11. Community Wealth Building
<p>There are other NPF4 policies that relate closely to community wealth building and highlight the community benefits that can be provided through developments. For example:</p>	
<p>NPF4 Policy 11, Energy c) states that: - Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business, and supply chain opportunities.</p>	
<p>NPF4 Policy 16, Quality homes b) states that: - Development proposals that include 50 or more homes, and smaller developments if required by local policy or guidance, should be accompanied by a Statement of Community Benefit. The statement will explain the contribution of the proposed development to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. meeting local housing requirements, including affordable homes;</li> <li>ii. providing or enhancing local infrastructure, facilities, and services; and</li> <li>iii. improving the residential amenity of the surrounding area.</li> </ul>	
<h3>Summary of Evidence</h3>	
<p><b><u>Local Development Plan (OIC127)</u></b></p>	
<p>In the current Local Development Plan there is limited reference to community wealth building or its associated ambitions. The one policy area which does cover this is the current Policy 7 on Energy which seeks to highlight that “the net-economic impacts of a proposal, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated businesses and supply chain opportunities, will be taken into consideration and any demonstrable benefits will be balanced against any identified adverse impacts on known constraints.”</p>	
<p>There are also several policies which give exceptions when the proposal will benefit communities they are intended to serve</p>	
<h3>Current Context</h3>	
<p>Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a new policy area for Orkney, aimed at tackling economic disadvantage and ensuring that local communities benefit from development. The approach seeks to embed CWB principles across public services and the wider economy, focusing on local procurement, fair employment, and community ownership. The Orkney Community Planning Partnership has developed a draft Community Wealth Building Delivery Plan, which sets out actions to strengthen local supply chains and retain economic value within the islands.</p>	
<p><b><u>Building Community Wealth in Scotland – Consultation Paper, 2023, The Scottish Government (OIC105)</u></b></p>	
<p>This consultation paper describes what CWB is, provides an overview of Community Wealth Building (CWB) activity in Scotland and outlines the background to and ambitions for CWB legislation. It defines Community Wealth Building as an approach to delivering inclusive growth. Specifically, it is a place-based approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people</p>	
<p>Community wealth building is recognised as having five pillars of activity, each of which denotes key areas of focus due to the economic levers they represent. One of the ultimate goals of</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	11. Community Wealth Building
<p>community wealth building is the retention of wealth in local places and regions for the benefit of communities, and all five of the pillars play a complementary role in this.</p> <p>There are five core Pillars to Community Wealth Building:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progressive procurement – developing local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment and keep wealth within communities.</li> <li>2. Fair employment and just labour markets – using anchor institutions to improve prospects of local people.</li> <li>3. Shared ownership of the local economy – supporting and growing business models that are more financially generative for the local economy.</li> <li>4. Socially just use of land and property – developing the function and ownership of local assets held by anchor organisations, so local communities benefit from financial and social gain.</li> <li>5. Making financial power work for local places – increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing and recirculating the wealth that exists.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, 2022, The Scottish Government (OIC178)</u></b></p> <p>This National Strategy focuses on priorities to create a wellbeing economy, with one approach to achieving this being Community Wealth Building. 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.</p> <p><b><u>Orkney Locality Plan (OIC104)</u></b></p> <p>The Local Equality Delivery Group's first task was to develop and lead in the delivery of a <a href="#">new locality for the ferry-linked isles</a>. Some of these communities already have their own local development plans and this Locality Plan does not duplicate these. Instead, it lends support to existing community-led plans wherever the Partnership can add value and improve outcomes.</p> <p><b><u>Orkney Community Planning Partnership briefing on Community Wealth building in Orkney (OIC177)</u></b></p> <p>Community Wealth Building (CWB) would support the generation of more wealth in Orkney and ensure that local people benefit. It would do this by utilising the resources and people in our community to best affect through the circular economy. CWB has been described as an approach that does not redistribute wealth but pre-distributes wealth. CWB would unlock local public sector spending, customer spending and savings to reinvest that money in Orkney's economy. It would build on the existing work done in the County, including the Sustainable Procurement Policy adopted by the Council and the Kirkwall BID to encourage spending in the high street. A good example of how the Sustainable Procurement Policy works is how the Council separates the contracts to supply food for school dinners into smaller lots. This means local suppliers can provide most of the food our school children eat.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>11. Community Wealth Building</b>
<b><u>Implementing Community Wealth Building: A Guide</u></b>	
<p>This guide offers practical support for all those seeking to pursue a CWB approach in their locality and/or wider region. It is both a first introduction for those new to the topic as well as a source of helpful advice and resources for any stage of the journey. Its sections provide an understanding about the benefits of Community Wealth Building; – as demonstrated by its advance in many places already – and the potential it offers for local, regional communities, and Scotland as a whole.</p>	
<p><b><u>Community Asset Transfers (OIC106)</u></b></p> <p>The Council Asset Register for Community Asset Transfers accords with section 94 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which requires that public authorities make available a register of land and buildings that it owns or leases to the best of its knowledge and belief. The inclusion of an asset on the register is a requirement of the Act but does not necessarily imply that the Council is actively seeking to transfer that asset to the community. The register identifies if assets are occupied by the Council, leased out, or transferred.</p>	
<p><b><u>The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (OIC107)</u></b></p> <p>SIMD is a “relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas, called data zones”. If an area is identified as deprived this can relate to people having low incomes but can also mean fewer resources of opportunities, SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived in relation to seven factors, namely, income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks data zones from the most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). People using SIMD will often focus on the data zones below a certain rank, for example, the 5%, 10%, 15% or 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. It is acknowledged that data zones in rural areas cover a large geographic area and reflect a more mixed picture of deprivation. The Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation shows that Orkney's most prosperous areas are St Ola (East of Kirkwall) and North Stromness. The highest levels of deprivation are in Kirkwall and the ferry and air linked isles.</p>	
<p><b><u>Council Plan 2023-2028 (OIC190)</u></b></p> <p>The Council plan highlights three priority themes. The three priority themes are built upon core principles, which will guide future decision-making relating to all our aims. These are Growing our Economy, Strengthening our communities and Developing our infrastructure. The three priority themes are built upon core principles. One of the core principles is community wealth building for future generations. Within the Council Plan it highlights that the Council are committed to the principle of community wealth building; redirecting wealth back into the local economy and placing control and benefits in the hands of local people.</p>	
<p><b><u>The Community Planning Partnership Draft Orkney Community Wealth Building Delivery Plan (OIC 321)</u></b></p> <p>The Delivery Plan sets out five core Pillars to Community Wealth Building.</p> <p>These are the levers that Anchor Institutions will use to deliver Community Wealth Building:</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	11. Community Wealth Building
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Fair employment and just labour markets</b> – Partners using their weight as major employers and actors in the local economy to ensure the workforce are in well paid jobs that benefit from an effective voice, security and flexibility, supporting the <a href="#">Fair Work First</a> agenda.</li> <li>2. <b>Spending</b> – Using public spend to deliver community benefit, fair work and build local supply chains.</li> <li>3. <b>Making financial power work for local places</b> – increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing and recirculating the wealth that exists.</li> <li>4. <b>Socially just use of land and property</b> – Ensuring that communities maximise benefit and generate wealth from local land and property.</li> <li>5. <b>Inclusive ownership</b> – Supporting and enabling the development and growth of locally owned enterprises that create employment and generate community wealth.</li> </ol>	<p>The Delivery Plan then sets out action under each of these pillars under pillar 4 there is an action for the new Local Development Plan will follow the guidance under National Policy Framework 4 (NPF4) and will embed community wealth building principles, so that new developments will support wealth generation in the community.</p>
<p>Identified Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Further research on land requirements for emerging sectors) e.g. renewables supply chain).</li> </ul>	
<h4>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</h4>	<p>The following were all sent the draft Schedules for comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orkney Community Planning Partnership Manager.</li> <li>• Orkney Islands Council Economic Development Dept.</li> <li>• Highlands and Islands Enterprise.</li> <li>• Scottish Water.</li> </ul>
<h4>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</h4>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider detailed policy approach to support national policy and council aspirations in supporting community wealth building.</li> <li>• To consider policy approach to support NPF4 Policy 9 Energy and the requirements to maximise socio-economic benefits from developments.</li> <li>• To consider how a strategic approach to delivering regional socio-economic inequalities can be delivered through the planning process.</li> <li>• To consider how to highlight community asset transfer opportunities and link to Local Place Plans.</li> <li>• To highlight areas of greatest inequalities from SIMD and ensure that Community Wealth Building Plans submitted with development proposals target support towards these communities.</li> <li>• To consider policy approach to link and support delivering the actions in the core documents referenced in this Schedule with a focus on addressing barriers to participation, poverty, and skills development.</li> </ul>

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>11. Community Wealth Building</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To embed Locality Plans into the LDP and reference in polices and delivery plan as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
<p>There are no outstanding areas of dispute</p> <p>The Orkney Community Planning Partnership Manager provided additional sources of evidence which have been incorporated into the Schedule.</p> <p>Scottish Water stated they had no comments to make.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>12. Business and Industry</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC269</b> <a href="#">SRUC Rural and Agricultural Development: Maximising the potential in the islands of Orkney, Shetland and Outer Hebrides</a></p> <p><b>OIC270</b> <a href="#">Businesses in Scotland data</a></p> <p><b>OIC271</b> <a href="#">Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)</a></p> <p><b>OIC141</b> <a href="#">HIE strategy 2023-28</a></p> <p><b>OIC142</b> <a href="#">HIE - Rural and Regional disadvantage in the Highlands and Islands</a></p> <p><b>OIC179</b> <a href="#">Employment, Unemployment, and Economic Inactivity in Orkney Islands</a></p> <p><b>OIC191</b> <a href="#">Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership Regional Economic Strategy 2025 – 2035</a></p> <p><b>OIC192</b> <a href="#">Islands Growth Deal</a></p> <p><b>OIC193</b> <a href="#">Orkney employment land audit</a></p> <p><b>OIC180</b> <a href="#">Orkney Economic Review 2020</a></p> <p><b>OIC322</b> <a href="#">Fraser of Allander Institute Orkney Islands Economic Review</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	<p>The spatial principles within NPF4 seek to support delivery of productive places that have a greener, fairer, and a more inclusive wellbeing economy. The intent of Policy 26 Business and Industry is to encourage, promote and facilitate business and industry uses and enable alternative ways of working. NPF4 states LDPs should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size, and quality in terms of accessibility and services. This allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.</p>

## Summary of Evidence

### OIC Local Development Plan 2017-22

The approach in the currently adopted Local Development Plan is that the Plan supports the principle of expanding existing businesses and creating new businesses in appropriate locations.

In general, developments that would create significant footfall, or proposals for heavy industrial/storage and distribution, will be directed toward relevant sites within the settlements unless there is a specific locational requirement for a countryside location.

The creation of new commercial uses at or adjacent to dwelling houses in the countryside is supported to encourage homeworking. The redevelopment of brownfield sites for commercial is also supported as part of the sequential approach to delivering business, industry, and employment where there is a specific locational requirement.

Within the ferry and air linked Isles there is a more open approach, where there is a presumption in favour of business and industrial development on the ferry and air linked isles subject to it according with 'The Isles Approach' set out within the Spatial Strategy.

### Current Context

Orkney's economy is characterised by a high proportion of micro-businesses and strong representation in traditional sectors, with 86.7% of private sector businesses classified as micro (0-9 employees). Key employment sectors include agriculture, forestry and fishing (19.2%), health and social work (15.4%), and wholesale and retail (11.5%), together accounting for around 6,000 jobs. Engagement with the business sector and the Islands Growth Deal highlights opportunities for growth in renewables, aquaculture, and creative industries, alongside challenges such as housing shortages and limited childcare provision in rural areas.

### Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership, Regional Economic Strategy 2025 – 2035 (OIC191)

The approved Regional Economic Strategy provides an overview of the economic context of the region and describes opportunities and challenges all of which are of considerable relevance to Orkney. The strategy outlines the following six goals:

- i. Increase the profile and understanding of the Highlands and Islands to support effective policy and unlock regional investment.
- ii. Become a region which delivers high quality and affordable housing for residents.
- iii. Enhance the region's transport and digital infrastructure to become an exemplar of efficient rural connectivity.
- iv. Build resilience and competitiveness through place-based opportunities and stimulating an active culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.
- v. Maximise the economic and community benefits from renewable energy investments and drive the region's move to net zero and climate resilience and adaptation.
- vi. Develop a coordinated response to skills and labour requirements across the region.

In addition to the above goals, the cross-cutting themes are also pertinent to the Orkney economy:

- i. Community Wealth Building/Benefit.
- ii. Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- iii. Population.
- iv. Net Zero and the Just Transition.

### **Orkney Economic Review 2020 (OIC180)**

The Orkney Economic Review pulls together a variety of data into one report. It highlights that, as of 2019, 44% of businesses in Orkney were in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector, and in terms of business units, 38% of Orkney's units belong to businesses in this sector. This terminology follows the UK Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, where "agriculture, forestry and fishing" is a defined category (Section A).

### **Fraser of Allander Institute Orkney Islands Economic Review 2020 (OIC322)**

The aim of this report, by the Fraser of Allander Institute, is to inform discussions on the future priorities of Orkney both locally and nationally. The report set out the following context

#### **Business Base**

The number of businesses in Orkney has increased by just over 7% since 2014. This growth has been driven by private sector businesses. Overall, Orkney has a higher business stock, per head of population, than Scotland as a whole. Unsurprisingly, as a small island economy, most businesses in Orkney are of a small scale. According to the latest data, of around 1,500 businesses on the islands, just over 90% (or 1,360 enterprises) had fewer than 10 employees. There were no 'large' employers, firms employing more than 250 people, and only 10 medium-sized employers, firms employing between 50 and 249 people. Overall, this picture of enterprises in the private sector in Orkney is not too dissimilar to Scotland as a whole, the majority of enterprises have fewer than 50 employees.

72% of employees in the private sector in Orkney work in small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. By contrast in the rest of Scotland, only 36% of private sector employment is in small businesses, with 49% of employment in businesses with 250 or more employees.

#### **Orkney Economy, Business, and Industry – Context**

Orkney is a unique economy in Scotland with many significant economic strengths. Its rich natural resources are set to play a pivotal part in the country's move towards net zero.

Agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture:

- There is a traditional reliance on agriculture and fishing, evident whilst travelling through the local countryside. The fertile, high-quality farmlands and grasslands supports Orkney beef and lamb, as well as a number of dairy herds.
- Fishing and aquaculture support around 90 local businesses, around 5% of the economy in the islands. Fish farms installed around the islands, thriving in the clean, fresh waters, are contributing to the growing aquaculture sector.

Renewable energy:

- Orkney has outstanding natural resources for renewable energy and around 300 people are employed in the sector. The islands have more than 650 turbines, over 400 solar installations and multiple experimental wave and tidal devices generating power, producing well above their need at around 130%.

Oil and gas:

- Oil and gas have been a mainstay of the Orkney economy since the 1970s with the establishment of the Flotta oil terminal. Whilst the outputs are much smaller today, there are proposals to diversify the industry with deep water berths, ideal for decommissioning work and support vessel services.

Creative industries:

- From cottage industries to large-scale businesses, the creative community is a mainstay in the Orkney economy with many drawing inspiration from the islands' landscapes and seascapes, traditional culture, and rich history.

Orkney is a relatively prosperous area of Scotland, with low levels of unemployment and relatively high levels of household income as compared to the Scottish average. Orkney performs strongly on wider socio-economic measures, including life expectancy, levels of social deprivation and quality of life. Key socio-economic challenges include remoteness from traditional economic and government centres, fuel poverty, transport connectivity and a trend towards an aging population.

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

A recently completed study found that one key issue affecting an understanding and measurement of the Orkney economy, and particularly the marine economy, is a lack of robust, reliable, and locally specific economic data. However, based on data from a variety of sources the study found that:

- Based on data taken from the Scottish Government Businesses in Scotland website it shows that between 2020 and 2022 whilst Scotland as a whole saw a 2.4% contraction in the number of businesses there was a 1% increase in Orkney from 1,515 to 1,545.
- The number of businesses per 10,000 resident adult population in the Orkney Islands decreased by 6.4% to 814 businesses per 10,000 resident adult population between 2010 and 2022. This is still 2.14 times higher than across the whole of Scotland.
- Data extracts from NOMIS website shows that Scotland's business sector is dominated by small and micro businesses, and in 2023 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accounted for 98.6% of private sector businesses in Scotland, 51% of total employment and 41% of turnover. In Orkney, small businesses (0-49 employees) represent the majority (95%) of registered firms. Moreover, these small businesses also accounted for most of private sector employment in Orkney at 70%.
- The high proportion of micro businesses in Orkney underlines their critical role in the local economy. Small and micro businesses are often the backbone of communities, contributing to employment, local economic development, and fostering entrepreneurship, as well as

delivering vital services. Despite this, the importance of larger SME businesses in the Orkney economy cannot be dismissed.

- NOMIS data estimates that the total workforce for Orkney was 13,600 in 2023. The ONS Annual Population Survey suggests 42% public sector employment in Orkney.

### **Employment and unemployment (OIC179)**

Unemployment in Orkney tends to be lower than the Scottish and Great Britain average. Unemployment did rise markedly during the COVID-19 pandemic, to 2.8% in February 2021. The latest reported rate of 1.8% is not quite back to the rate in February 2019.

The ONS Business Register and Employment Survey found that, in 2021, 45% of jobs were part-time in Orkney, with 55% full time. In Scotland, just 34% of employee jobs were part-time. Just 41% of Orkney residents aged 16- 64 years had a qualification at NVQ Level 4 or above, compared with 50% across Scotland.

Employment patterns differ also, with fewer people in the Orkney Islands working in manufacture, professional, scientific, and technical activities, finance, administration and support services and information/communications. More people work in construction and public services.

Skills Development Scotland found participation in employment among those aged 16-19 years is higher than the Scottish average in all local authorities in the Highlands and Islands area (except North Ayrshire), with rates as high as 27.3% in Orkney.

Conversely, the proportion of those aged 16-19 entering education is lower than the Scottish average. While many of these jobs may involve learning 'on the job' skills, there is clearly a skills gap in many remote and rural areas, including the Orkney Islands. As highlighted earlier, there is a net loss of young people aged 15-19 years old from Orkney.

Respondents in the National Islands Plan Survey, published in July 2021, felt there was a lack of support for young people to remain, move or return to the islands. There was perceived to be a lack of employment, training and higher education opportunities and a lack of childcare options to fit with residents' working patterns. Respondents also felt there was a poor variety of housing (type, size, and tenure) to meet people's needs and a lack of affordable housing.

### **Constrained employment**

Public and private sector employers find it increasingly difficult to recruit with high vacancy rates; as of January 2023, OIC had 520 vacant posts or 17%, and NHS Orkney requires to recruit 155 FTEs over the next five years (NHS Orkney Workforce Plan 2022).

The recent OIC private sector employer survey (2023) showed that businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit, with lack of suitable resident recruits and lack of housing being the key constraints.

### **Islands Growth Deal (OIC192)**

The Islands Growth Deal programme “Our Islands Our Deal” Heads of Terms was agreed in March 2021. This sets out a programme to achieve growth with support from the UK and Scottish Governments. Three projects are supported for Orkney Islands Council – the Scapa Flow Future Fuels Hub, the Orkney World Heritage Site Gateway and the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus. The key themes in the Deal were to lead the way to a low carbon future, support growth and future industries, and support thriving sustainable communities.

The potential to support transition to renewable industries is supported in the Scottish Government’s National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) identifying the Orkney Islands as one of the National developments. These are significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver Scotland’s Spatial Strategy, with Orkney identified as one of the Energy Innovation Developments for renewable energy generation, renewable hydrogen production, infrastructure and shipping, and associated opportunities in the supply chain for fabrication, research, and development.

There is likely to be significant economic growth in the renewables industry with a requirement for 1,359 bedspaces for construction workers for the potential infrastructure projects, possibly starting from 2024, pending approvals. These are temporary housing requirements, but it is estimated that at least 200 additional long-term jobs will be created for the operational phases, 100 of which are assumed to be filled by incoming workers.

The temporary housing requirements will have to be resourced through the developers, but there is an opportunity to harness a legacy through this provision for permanent housing.

The first two potential economic development projects planned for construction phases from 2024 are:

- Finstown SSEN Interconnector Substation - this development is a strategically important piece of infrastructure driven by the requirement to provide a transmission network connection from Orkney to the Scottish mainland and to support renewable energy generation.
- Investment in Orkney harbours through the Orkney Harbours Masterplan an ambitious blueprint that provides a framework for the long-term future of our islands supporting renewable energy industry development around Orkney.
- Flotta Oil Terminal - the Flotta Oil Terminal has been operational since 1976 and has made a significant contribution to Orkney’s economy and communities for more than 40 years. The owner and operator Repsol Sinopec has a vision to transition the oil industry to clean, green energy and a secure future for skilled oil and gas workers in Scotland and across the UK. At this stage, the project is at ‘vision’ stage and so the detail on timescales is unknown.

### **Employment Land Audit 2023 (OIC193)**

An Employment Land Audit is produced to monitor the supply, take up and status of employment land in line with National Guidance. The audit assesses the range and choice of marketable sites and locations for businesses with a variety of size and quality requirements. The audit identifies the availability and constraints of employment land sites within the local authority. The 2023 Employment Land Audit sets out the effective land supply, *i.e.* the supply that has a secure planning status (designated or planning consent), can be serviced within five years and is

accessible. The figures reflect Classes 4 business, 5 general industrial and 6 storage or distribution.

Based on the existing Employment Land Audit there appears to still be a good supply of land available. Although, there has been feedback in the engagement process that small businesses are struggling to find suitable premises and or land.

### **HIE Strategy 2023-28 (OIC141)**

HIE has developed the Strategy to capitalise on what it describes as several once-in-a-generation opportunities that could deliver hundreds of jobs and millions of pounds into the economy. These opportunities, it says, are of a scale and potential to transform the region and make a lasting positive impact on Scotland's economy.

The Strategy is guided by the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), which calls for a new approach to deliver a green recovery and wellbeing economy for Scotland and all its regions. It takes account of the leading role the Highlands and Islands play in developing sectors such as energy, life sciences, creative industries, tourism, food and drink, and space.

There is emphasis on harnessing the natural capital of the region to drive growth across these sectors as well as the wider blue economy; all of which are vital to Scotland's economic transformation.

HIE plans to deliver its strategy through investment in People, Place, Planet and Prosperity.

The People aspect focuses on entrepreneurship, leadership and management for both business and communities. It's about skills in regional growth sectors, attracting and retaining fresh talent, and championing the principles of Fair Work.

Place stresses a strong focus on the region's different geographies and predominantly rural communities, and the need to spread benefits and support community wealth building right across the region.

The Planet theme is about capitalising on the region's natural resources in the most effective and sustainable way. There's a particular focus on net zero, including opportunities arising from offshore wind and green hydrogen, as well as supporting businesses and communities to cut carbon.

Prosperity covers HIE's role in helping businesses and community enterprises become more productive and innovative.

The Strategy also addresses the challenges affecting the region's businesses and communities, with high cost of living, housing, transport, skills, population, and digital connectivity, being some examples.

**Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

Schedule was sent to:

Council Economic Development.  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

A specific business themed workshop was held with the business sector through the business gateway on 26 September 2024.

**Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan**

- The Local Development Plan will continue to identify sufficient land that can be used for business and industry. There could be a need for further research to ensure there is a suitable range of sites to meet the current market demand and that the location, size and quality of existing land for business and industry is suitable in terms of accessibility and services.
- Feedback from engagement with businesses has sought a supportive policy approach for business and industry across a range of settlements rather than just Kirkwall and Stromness and also a supportive policy to support and facilitate home working. There is likely to be a supportive approach for this in the next LDP

**Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no areas of dispute.

Scottish Water noted the work and support they provide to this sector.

OIC Economic Development were in agreement with the Schedule.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>13.Town Centre and Retail</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC145</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall Business Improvement District Business Plan</a> 2023-2028</p> <p><b>OIC146</b> <a href="#">Understanding Scottish Places – Scotland's Towns Partnership</a></p> <p><b>OIC253</b> <a href="#">Kirkwall Urban Design Framework</a></p> <p><b>OIC252</b> <a href="#">What's next for Stromness- Local Place Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC334</b> Kirkwall Town Centre Audit (2023)</p> <p><b>OIC335</b> Stromness Town Centre Audit (2023)</p> <p><b>OIC345</b> Town Centre Health Check (2025)</p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>NPF4 Policy 27, City, town, local and commercial centres, seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate development in our city and town centres by applying the Town Centre First approach to help centres adapt positively to long-term economic, environmental, and societal changes and by encouraging town centre living.</p> <p>NPF4 states LDPs should support sustainable futures for city, town, and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres. Where appropriate they should support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate. LDPs should identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision. LDPs should be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities. They should also consider, and if appropriate, identify any areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable, where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel.</p> <p>Policy 28, Retail, looks to encourage, promote, and facilitate retail investment in the most sustainable locations that are most accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes. LDPs should consider where there may be a need for further retail provision, this may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where a retail study identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area; or</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>13.Town Centre and Retail</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living.</li> </ul>	
LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported.	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<b><u>OLDP 2017 (OIC127)</u></b>	
<p>The Plan sets out that Orkney's towns, villages and rural settlements act as service centres for surrounding rural and island hinterlands, playing a key role in local community life. The Plan seeks to support development proposals within defined settlements where there will be no significant adverse environmental impacts or any adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding users. The Plan seeks to reinforce this strong role by directing the majority of development to settlements by specifically allocating land for housing, business, and industry within settlement boundaries.</p>	
<p>As part of the monitoring of the LDP town centre health checks have been undertaken every two years. The Council supports retail and commercial development which is appropriate to the scale and function of individual settlements, and which contributes to the vibrancy and vitality of the town centres. Uses which have the potential to create significant footfall are steered towards town centres first and only certain commercial uses are permitted at ground floor level in areas identified as having prime retail frontages.</p>	
<p>The Plan states that out of centre locations should only be considered for uses which generate significant footfall where:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all town centre, edge of town; and other commercial centre options have been assessed and discounted as unsuitable or unavailable;</li> <li>the scale of development proposed is appropriate, and it has been shown that the proposal cannot reasonably be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated at a sequentially preferable location;</li> <li>the proposal will help to meet qualitative or quantitative deficiencies; and</li> <li>there will be no significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of existing town centres.</li> </ul>	
<p>The Scotland's Town Website <a href="#">Kirkwall   Understanding Scottish Places (usp.scot) (OIC146)</a> undertakes analysis across different towns in Scotland, for Kirkwall it highlights that:</p>	
<p><i>"There are a number of light industries, and the town is the main service and retail centre for Orkney. This type of medium-sized town is extremely mixed in terms of demographics. There is a particularly wide range of people, housing and activities. The number of older couples with no children are higher than average. There is a mix of professional and non-professional jobs, and part-time and self-employment are both important for a significant proportion of residents. Socioeconomic status is higher than in other kinds of town and there is a mix of professionals and non-professionals, those with higher and lower educational attainment."</i></p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	13.Town Centre and Retail
For Stromness it highlights:	
<p><i>"There are particularly wide ranges of people, housing and activities. The number of older couples with no children is higher than average. There is a mix of professional and non-professional jobs, and part-time and self-employment are both important for a significant proportion of residents. Socioeconomic status is higher than in other types of towns, and there is a mix of professionals and non-professionals, those with higher and lower educational attainment.</i></p>	
<p><b><u>Current Context</u></b></p>	
<p>Orkney's town centre network is structured around two key settlements: Kirkwall, the main commercial and service centre, and Stromness, which functions as a secondary centre. Kirkwall serves as the primary hub for retail, public services, and employment, and plays a central role in supporting the wider island communities. Stromness, while smaller in scale, provides an important complementary role, particularly in relation to local services, tourism, and cultural activity.</p>	
<p>Kirkwall's town centre has undergone significant regeneration in recent years, supported by initiatives such as the Business Improvement District and the Urban Design Framework. Town centre audits show a stable mix of uses and a relatively low vacancy rates, with tourism playing a key role in sustaining footfall and economic activity. Stromness has a more modest retail offer and lower levels of visitor traffic but remains an important local centre with strong community identity. Both town centres maintain a varied mix of uses appropriate to their scales, with no dominant single use and no signs of adverse clustering. Both centres demonstrate functional diversity and land use integration, supporting footfall and local living in line with NPF4 principles.</p>	
<p><b><u>Kirkwall Business Improvement District Business Plan 2023-2028 (OIC145)</u></b></p>	
<p>The Business Plan highlights that 15 years ago Kirkwall town centre was in trouble. The number of vacant shops was growing. Several much-loved, long-established businesses had closed their doors. Prominent buildings were in bad condition. Worst of all, footfall was declining, as the public increasingly did their shopping at out of centre supermarkets and enjoyed themselves at the leisure centre and the bowling alley, also out of town. To cap it all, internet shopping was starting to take off.</p>	
<p><b><u>Kirkwall Urban Design Framework (OIC252)</u></b></p>	
<p>Amongst the proposals put forward are to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prioritise redevelopment of key sites around Bridge Street and St Catherine's Place, with guidelines to ensure that their redevelopment contributes positively to the town centre, enabled through improved surface water management and reduced parking requirements.</li> <li>• resolve tensions between traffic and pedestrians along the historic spine to increase pedestrian safety and comfort, first and foremost through better enforcement of traffic and parking regulations; accompanied by a review of the Parking Strategy for the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.</li> <li>• make the historic spine a more attractive and enjoyable place to be by promoting events, building conservation, signage and wayfinding, disabled access, and other improvements such as lighting and seating.</li> <li>• create a free, accessible social space for young people seven days a week, such as extending the opening hours of youth facilities; and</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	13.Town Centre and Retail																																																																									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exemplify Orkney's distinctive ability to conserve its heritage whilst also nurturing the latest design and technological advances, such as smart digital infrastructure and lighting, digital visitor information, Wi-Fi, electric bike schemes and electric vehicle charging.</li> </ul>																																																																										
<p><b><u>Stromness Local Place Plan (OIC144)</u></b></p>																																																																										
<p>The Place Plan highlights the issues in Stromness town centre seeking within its principle that there is a need for a vibrant town centre that exists all-year round with more shops, eating places and a reduction in the number of empty shops.</p>																																																																										
<p>The Place Plan highlights the following ideas to support the town centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring any future expansion of the town's settlement boundaries should maximise access by foot and bicycle to the town centre.</li> <li>• Encourage home ownership in the town centre and look for opportunities to have self-build plots and social housing in locations close to the town centre. Issues around sea level rise and climate change are highlighted, which needs further consideration.</li> </ul>																																																																										
<p><b><u>Kirkwall Town Centre Audit – April 2023 (OIC334)</u></b></p>																																																																										
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<p>We can compare 2017 figures to 2023, which will consider any major changes as a result of COVID. As we can see from the data below Kirkwall town centre continues to have a stable and good mix of uses with limited vacancies.</p>																																																																										
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<p><i>Table 8 - TCA Results</i></p>																																																																										

Issue: Topic/Place	13.Town Centre and Retail																																							
Kirkwall is a busy, bustling, historic town centre: no more so than in the summer, when over 140 cruise ships land up to 5,000 people at a time: equivalent to over half the town's population. This level of cruise passengers plus other tourism visitors has played a key role in supporting the town centre of Kirkwall. Stromness has seen a much lower level of cruise passengers.																																								
Many of Kirkwall's high street businesses are "cruise-ready;" they know what visitors want and are very active in providing that. The Council has been proactive in improving the high street environment in both Kirkwall and Stromness by securing investment in historic buildings and the public realm.																																								
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The current audit was undertaken in 2023. As we can see from the data below, there appears to be a good mix of uses with limited vacancies. The Scottish average in 2023 for vacant units was 15.7% so the Stromness level is well below this. However, feedback from community engagement has highlighted that there are some issues in Stromness, which are impacting on the vitality of the town centre. These include, seasonal opening times, limited times of opening, lack of variety of certain businesses.																																								
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Table 9 - Stromness TCA

#### **Kirkwall Town Centre Audit – 2025 (OIC345)**

Kirkwall remains a resilient town centre, with a strong mix of retail, leisure, public services, and financial institutions. The town centre has 211 business units, with comparison retail making up the largest share, supported by both independent shops and some national chains. Vacancy rates

**Issue: Topic/Place**
**13.Town Centre and Retail**

are low at just over 6%, which is below the Scottish average of 12%, and have improved since the 2023 audit. See table 10 below for a further breakdown of the business units in Kirkwall and figure 33 for the spread of businesses across Kirkwall.

Kirkwall		
Classification	No. of Units	% of total
<b>Comparison</b>	54	25.59%
<b>Charity Shops</b>	6	2.84%
<b>Convenience</b>	17	8.06%
<b>Retail</b>	18	8.53%
<b>Leisure</b>	42	19.91%
<b>Finance and Business</b>	22	10.43%
<b>Health &amp; Medical</b>	4	1.90%
<b>Public Service</b>	28	13.27%
<b>Religious Service</b>	5	2.37%
<b>Vacant</b>	13	6.16%
<b>Vacant (coming back into use)</b>	1	0.47%
<b>Storage Unit</b>	1	0.47%
	<b>211</b>	100.00%

Table 10 - Breakdown of business units in Kirkwall Town Centre

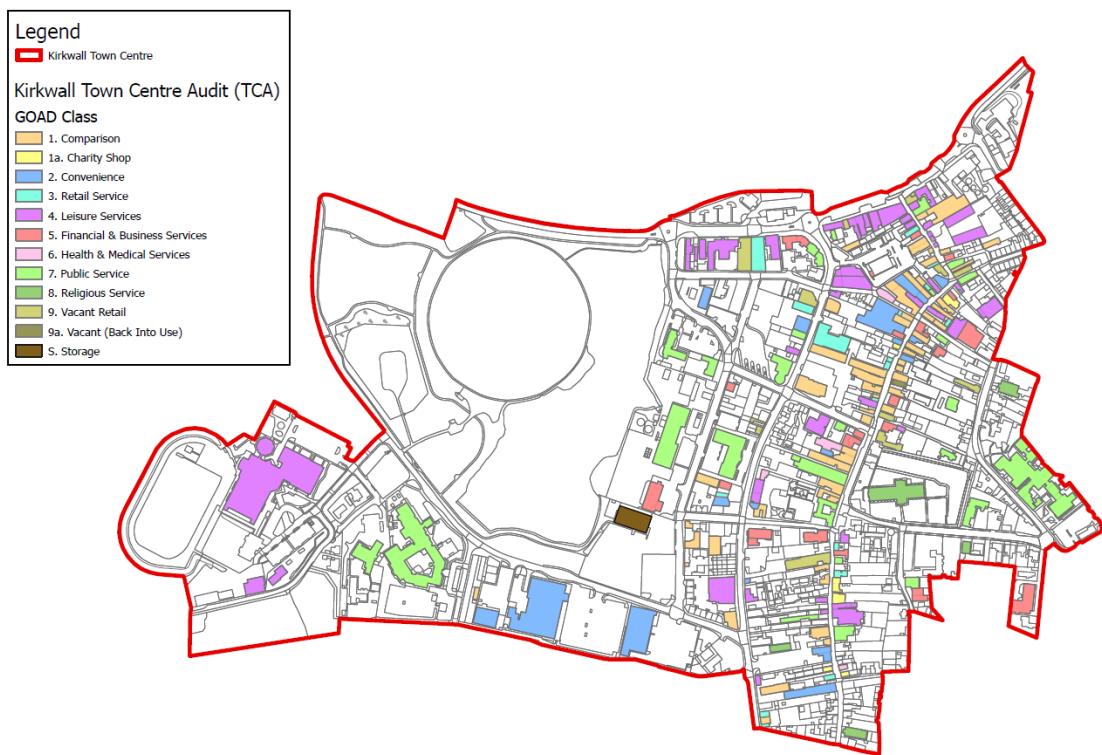


Figure 35 - Map detailing spread of businesses in Kirkwall

**Stromness Town Centre Audit – 2025 (OIC345)**

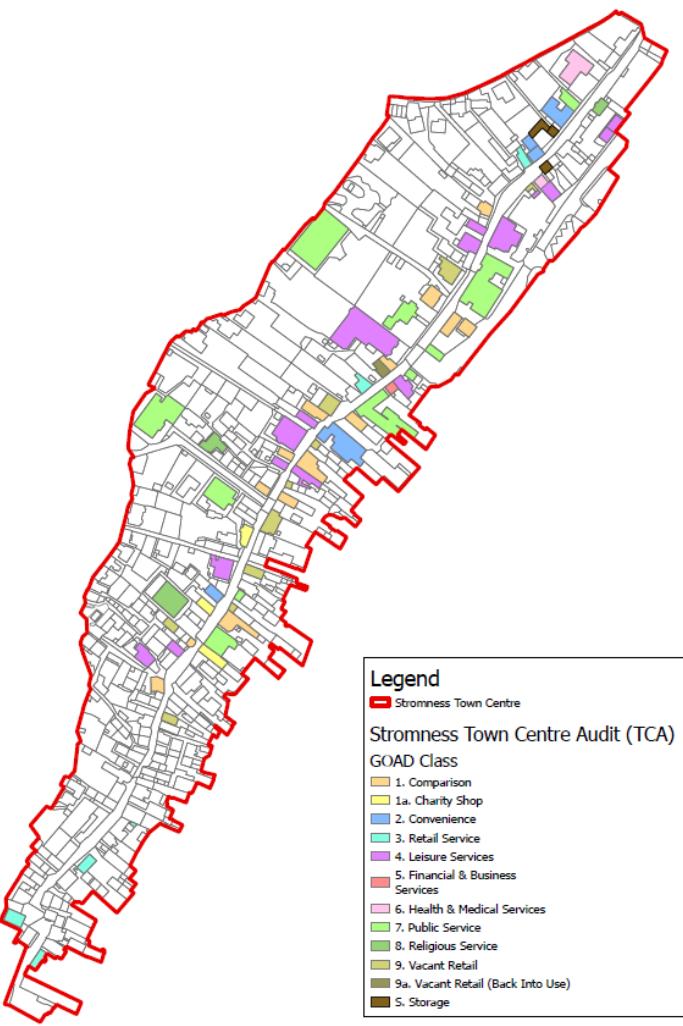
Stromness town centre has 75 business units, with a high proportion of leisure services (21.3%), including guest houses, cafés, and takeaway. Comparison retail also makes up a significant share,

**Issue: Topic/Place****13.Town Centre and Retail**

with outlets such as jewellery and clothing shops. The town has limited financial services, with only one solicitor remaining (1.3%).

The vacancy rate stands at 14.6%, above the Scottish average, indicating a more fragile town centre. Some recent developments – such as a large vacant building becoming a coffee shop – have helped to reduce further potential vacancies. See table 11 below for a further breakdown of the business units in Stromness and figure 33 for the spread of business across Stromness.

Classification	Stromness	
	No. of Unit	% of total
<b>Comparison</b>	14	18.67%
<b>Charity Shops</b>	3	4.00%
<b>Convenience</b>	5	6.67%
<b>Retail</b>	6	8.00%
<b>Leisure</b>	16	21.33%
<b>Finance and Business</b>	1	1.33%
<b>Health &amp; Medical</b>	2	2.67%
<b>Public Service</b>	11	14.67%
<b>Religious Service</b>	3	4.00%
<b>Vacant</b>	11	14.67%
<b>Storage Unit</b>	3	4.00%
	<b>75</b>	100.00%

Issue: Topic/Place	13.Town Centre and Retail
<i>Table 11 - Breakdown of business units in Stromness Town Centre</i>	
 <p><b>Legend</b></p> <p>■ Stromness Town Centre</p> <p><b>Stromness Town Centre Audit (TCA)</b></p> <p><b>GOAD Class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comparison</li> <li>1a. Charity Shop</li> <li>2. Convenience</li> <li>3. Retail Service</li> <li>4. Leisure Services</li> <li>5. Financial &amp; Business Services</li> <li>6. Health &amp; Medical Services</li> <li>7. Public Service</li> <li>8. Religious Service</li> <li>9. Vacant Retail</li> <li>9a. Vacant Retail (Back Into Use)</li> <li>5. Storage</li> </ul>	

*Figure 36 – Map detailing the spread of businesses in Stromness*

Both the Kirkwall and Stromness Town Centre Audits indicate no evidence of clustering of non-retail uses that could negatively impact community wellbeing. In line with NPF4, these non-retail uses include:

- i. Hot food takeaways, including permanently sited vans;
- ii. Betting offices; and
- iii. High interest money lending premises.

Orkney has no betting offices or high interest money lending premises, and while hot food takeaways and permanently sited vans are present, they are evenly distributed across the town centres.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>13.Town Centre and Retail</b>
<b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b>	
The Schedule was sent to the following:	
<p>Highland and Islands Enterprise.</p> <p>Council Economic Development.</p> <p>Scottish Water.</p>	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review town centre boundaries and policies to reflect NPF4 focus on local living alongside town centre first principles. This could require further appraisal of the town centres to understand opening times and a detailed breakdown of the uses to understand the mix of uses. A further comprehensive town centre health check will be undertaken in 2025 in order to give an up-to-date picture for the LDP.</li> <li>• There appears potential in continuing to identify town centre boundaries but widen the policy to support certain community and leisure uses as part of encouraging a greater and more viable mix of uses across Kirkwall and Stromness town centres but restricting other uses, including residential, on ground floors. However, the current town centre boundary for Stromness appears very large compared to the level of retail and leisure uses.</li> <li>• As part of the review of the Plan seek to ensure the next LDP reflects plans and strategies appropriately that aim to support the regeneration of our town centres in the new LDP. This will include considering any Place Plans and any projects and priorities that come out from the Orkney Towns Fund Project.</li> </ul>	
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
There are no areas of dispute.	
Scottish Water comments on the importance of above ground sustainable surface water drainage when re-developing brownfield sites.	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>14. Rural Development</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC269</b> <a href="#">SRUC Rural and Agricultural Development: Maximising the potential in the islands of Orkney, Shetland and Outer Hebrides</a></p> <p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC181</b> <a href="#">Development Management Guidance – Business Development outwith Town Centres</a></p> <p><b>OIC182</b> <a href="#">HIE Orkney Profile 2020</a></p> <p><b>OIC180</b> <a href="#">Orkney Economic Review 2020</a></p> <p><b>OIC183</b> <a href="#">Sanday Development Plan</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>Policy 29, Rural development, in NPF4, seeks to encourage rural economic activity, innovation and diversification whilst ensuring that the distinctive character of the rural area and the service function of small towns, natural assets and cultural heritage are safeguarded and enhanced.</p> <p>The Policy Outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural places are vibrant and sustainable and rural communities and businesses are supported.</li> <li>• A balanced and sustainable rural population.</li> </ul> <p>NPF4 sets out that LDPs should identify the characteristics of rural areas within the plan area, including the existing pattern of development, pressures, environmental assets, community priorities and economic needs of each area. The Spatial Strategy should set out an appropriate approach to development in rural areas which reflects the identified characteristics. The Scottish Government's 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 should be used to identify remote rural areas.</p> <p>Most of Orkney is identified as remote rural in this classification. NPF4 also states that spatial strategies should support the sustainability and prosperity of rural communities and economies.</p>	

## **Summary of Evidence**

### **OLDP 2017 (OIC127)**

The Spatial Strategy of the existing Local Development Plan seeks to support the growth of Orkney's communities in a sustainable manner, ensuring that development is directed in the first instance to places with sufficient infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable social and economic development; the towns, villages, and rural settlements of the Plan.

In the Settlements of the Mainland and Linked Isles the Plan identifies a hierarchy of twenty-six settlements where services, facilities, retail, infrastructure, employment, and centres of population are primarily located. These are Orkney's most sustainable settlements, which are promoted as the main focus for new development, acting as service centres for Orkney's rural communities and the ferry and air linked isles.

The current Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy:

Towns: Kirkwall and Stromness

Villages: Burray, Dounby, Evie, Finstown, Orphir, Quoyloo, St Margaret's Hope, St Mary's, Stenness, The Palace, Toab.

Rural Settlements: Burnside (Harray), Dalespot, Evie School, Herston, Hillhead, Houton, Lighthouse Corner, Scorradale, Lyron, Madras, Norseman, Scapa Brae, Tingwall.

The Countryside of the Mainland and Linked Isles

The Plan strives to support the economic and social aspirations of the rural community by encouraging sustainable economic growth through the creation of traditional and new businesses, and by providing multiple opportunities for the development of new rural homes, whilst seeking to protect Orkney's landscape and natural environments for future generations.

The 'Isles Approach'

Development within the islands, which support permanent resident populations and are served by public transport services, will be supported where it accords with relevant Plan policies and where it shall not place any unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services.

## **Current Context**

Rural Development is central to Orkney's economy and community resilience, with agriculture and small-scale enterprises providing most employment. While the Mainland and Linked Isles experience development pressure, several ferry and air linked isles face population decline and a service challenge. A tailored approach remains appropriate to support fragile areas, sustain local services, and enable diversification, while safeguarding landscape character and environmental assets.

### **Development Management Guidance - Business Development Outwith Town Centres (OIC181)**

This was developed following publication of NPF4 and sought to take account of several policies in NPF4, including Policy 29, Rural Development, and provides an interim position until the new

Local Development Plan is in place. This sets out guidance on proposals for all businesses in the countryside; retail, professional services, tourism accommodation and business use within settlements. The guidance, whilst continuing to support a town centre first approach, provides support for small scale business development in other locations.

### **HIE Orkney Area Profile 2020 (OIC182)**

Highlands and Islands Enterprise developed an infographic highlighting key facts around Orkney. A number of which are relevant to rural development. It highlights that:

- 86.7% of private sector registered businesses are micro (0-9 employees).
- Orkney experienced population growth between 2011 and 2019, although it is projected to decline by 2% by 2043.
- Employment rate: 84.8%.

Community led plans including place have been prepared in several of the islands and parishes of Orkney such as the [Sanday Plan \(OIC183\)](#) these contain valuable information on the local priorities to support rural development. The next Local Development Plan could place more weight on the content of these community plans to have a supportive framework for facilitating the delivery of their key project and priorities.

### **SRUC Rural and Agricultural Development: Maximising the potential in the islands of Orkney, Shetland and Outer Hebrides (OIC269)**

This SRUC research brings together data analysis and the views of island communities in Orkney, Shetland, and the Outer Hebrides to explore the potential impacts of agricultural and land use policy changes for communities across the island groups.

The findings confirmed that agriculture accounts for a higher share of private businesses, turnover and employment and population in these communities compared to other local authorities in Scotland, and that there are differences both within and between the island groups. The research highlights that in their current form, future policy proposals present some challenges for some island economies, environments, and communities.

The research highlighted that:

- Agriculture has important local multiplier effects on island economies, along local supply-chains and into the wider rural economy. Moreover, farming and crofting are important aspects of local culture.
- The Island areas contain a high proportion of nationally and internationally important habitats, species and peatlands reflecting the unique interaction between land management and nature in our islands. A prosperous farming and crofting sector matters economically, environmentally, and socially in our three island areas.
- The agricultural sector is constrained by several critical factors, including: the unreliability and higher costs of haulage for buying and selling from islands; uncertainty over future provision of ferry services; an ageing and shrinking workforce; and inflation impacts that have eroded the Government's financial support for farmers and crofters.
- There has been long term consolidation of the number of farms and crofts receiving agricultural support across the three island areas, with some localised declines in agricultural activity. Complexity and compliance costs of policy proposals may lead to further withdrawal from support structures and activity, particularly for small scale producers.

- Community Led Local Development (CLLD) has a critical role to play in sustaining island communities, particularly by sharing solutions and experience across island groups. This is amplified by the low business base meaning that community solutions are all the more important to overcome challenges. The current allocative model for funds from Scottish Government places limits on capacity building and leads to uncertainty for paid staff and volunteers. A return to multi-annual funding is needed.

### **Orkney Economic Review 2020 (OIC180)**

This document aims to bring together and review the latest data available on the Orkney economy and statistics and information which might influence the economy. The majority of the statistics come from published sources.

There are a number of key datasets which are relevant in this report, which are relevant evidence to inform how planning can support rural development, including data on sectoral employment such as agriculture fishing, aquaculture and energy. The report also highlights the estimated economic impact of key industries to the Orkney economy.

### **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

The following were sent the Schedules for comment.

Orkney Islands Council Economic Development team were consulted on this topic paper.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise were consulted on this topic paper.

Scottish Water.

### **Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan**

- The approach to rural development in NPF4 is not considered to be a suitable approach for the context of Orkney with the classification of remote rural covering most of Orkney and a blanket policy approach to everywhere covered by the remote rural classification considered inappropriate to the local characteristics in Orkney. It is therefore anticipated that a tailored approach to rural development will be required that takes more account of the local characteristics, place qualities and development pressures.
- In addition, consideration will be given to developing a policy framework that supports community led proposals and proposals which are identified in community led plans such as place plans. This could be one way to facilitate appropriate rural development opportunities.
- Further discussions will be held with key stakeholders on the suitability of the interim development management guidance which has a strong rural development theme to consider if any amendments in approach are required.

**Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no areas of dispute.

Scottish Water recognise the challenges of supplying rural catchments and the risk posed by climate change induced water scarcity. Well-developed drought plans including techniques to move water around is relevant in this development sector.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC051</b> <a href="#">NPF4</a></p> <p><b>OIC273</b> <a href="#">Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future</a></p> <p><b>OIC274</b> <a href="#">SNH commissioned Report no 398: Assessing the economic impacts of nature-based tourism in Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC275</b> <a href="#">Orkney Tourism Strategy 2020-2030</a></p> <p><b>OIC276</b> <a href="#">Orkney World Heritage Site (WHS) Gateway Programme</a></p> <p><b>OIC277</b> <a href="#">Orkney - Tourism Research &amp; Statistics   VisitScotland.org</a></p> <p><b>OIC278</b> <a href="#">Scotland Visitor Survey 2023: Orkney Factsheet</a></p> <p><b>OIC147</b> <a href="#">Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024</a></p> <p><b>OIC148</b> <a href="#">Orkney Responsible Tourism Management</a></p> <p><b>OIC149</b> <a href="#">Historic Environment Scotland – Evidence</a></p> <p><b>OIC150</b> <a href="#">Scottish Tourist Economic Activity Monitor (Steam) Report</a></p> <p><b>OIC279</b> <a href="#">Tourism Pressures on the World Heritage Site</a></p> <p><b>OIC254</b> <a href="#">Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP)</a></p> <p><b>OIC323</b> <a href="#">Nature Scot Enjoying the Outdoors</a></p> <p><b>OIC021</b> <a href="#">OIC Core Paths Plan 2018</a></p> <p><b>OIC288</b> <a href="#">Draft Heart of Neolithic Orkney - World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025-2035</a></p>

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
	<b>OIC324</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Visitor Survey 2024</a> <b>OIC337</b> <a href="#">OICMS – Orkney Cruise Report</a>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>NPF4 Policy 30, Tourism, aims to promote sustainable tourism development that benefits local communities, aligns with our net-zero and nature commitments, and inspires visitors to explore Scotland. The intended outcomes of this Policy are to ensure that communities and places gain economic, social, and cultural benefits from tourism, whilst stimulating job creation and supporting local resilience.</p> <p>LDPs should support the recovery, growth, and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The Spatial Strategy must identify suitable locations for tourism development, considering the needs of communities, visitors, the industry, and natural and cultural heritage. The Spatial Strategy should also identify and consider areas that are under pressure from existing tourism provision and are suffering adverse impacts in the natural and cultural heritage or the quality of life of the local communities, and where further development is not appropriate.</p>	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p><b><u>OLDP 2017 (OIC127)</u></b></p> <p>The policy stance on tourism in the OLDP 2017 is limited with current proposals assessed against the Spatial Strategy of the OLDP. NPF4 provides a framework that the future Plan can use to develop stronger tailored policies that reflect sustainable tourism approaches that endeavour to balance the needs of all stakeholders, address the needs and capitalise on the opportunities of tourism in Orkney.</p>	
<p><b><u>Current Context</u></b></p> <p>Orkney's tourism industry has seen rapid growth over the past decade, with increased visitor numbers and a shift in market profiles. However pre-2020, cruise and trade visitors were balanced with independent travellers who stayed longer and contributed more value. While this growth brought economic benefits, including harbour fees and jobs, it also caused social and environmental issues such as overcrowding, site damage, and pressure on key attractions and disruption to local communities.</p> <p>The onset of Covid delayed progress on addressing these issues and created uncertainty about the future of tourism, including the return of cruise and international visitors. However, Covid also provided an opportunity for Orkney to redefine its tourism goals, shifting from volume to value. The focus now is on increasing socio-economic and environmental benefits, improving the quality of experience for visitors and residents, and developing tourism resource and infrastructure.</p>	

### **Orkney's Core Path Network and Natural Assets**

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gave a right of responsible access to most open land and inland water as well as placing a duty on all local authorities to draw up a core path plan for their area. Orkney's Core Path Plan was adopted in 2010 and reviewed and amended in 2018. Core paths are intended to give people access to the countryside, but they also provide some active travel routes and facilitate access to built and natural heritage sites. These sites are visited by residents and tourists.

Sites of interest range from coastal cliff walks to Scheduled Monuments, and some have a high number of visitors, as evidenced below, which puts pressure on the path network, the roads network, and the natural environment. Current schemes, like the World Heritage Site Gateway Project, are looking at how to disperse visitors and reduce vehicle access to some sites, see below.

### **Visit Scotland: Research & insights on tourism in Orkney (OIC116)**

Several visitor surveys have been conducted to understand both the numbers and motivations behind trips to Orkney. In 2019, Orkney welcomed over 190,000 visitors, excluding cruise passengers. Of these, approximately 60% were first-time visitors. The total estimated spend by these visitors was £67 million. Below are charts that break down the number of visitors by sector and the total expenditure in more detail.

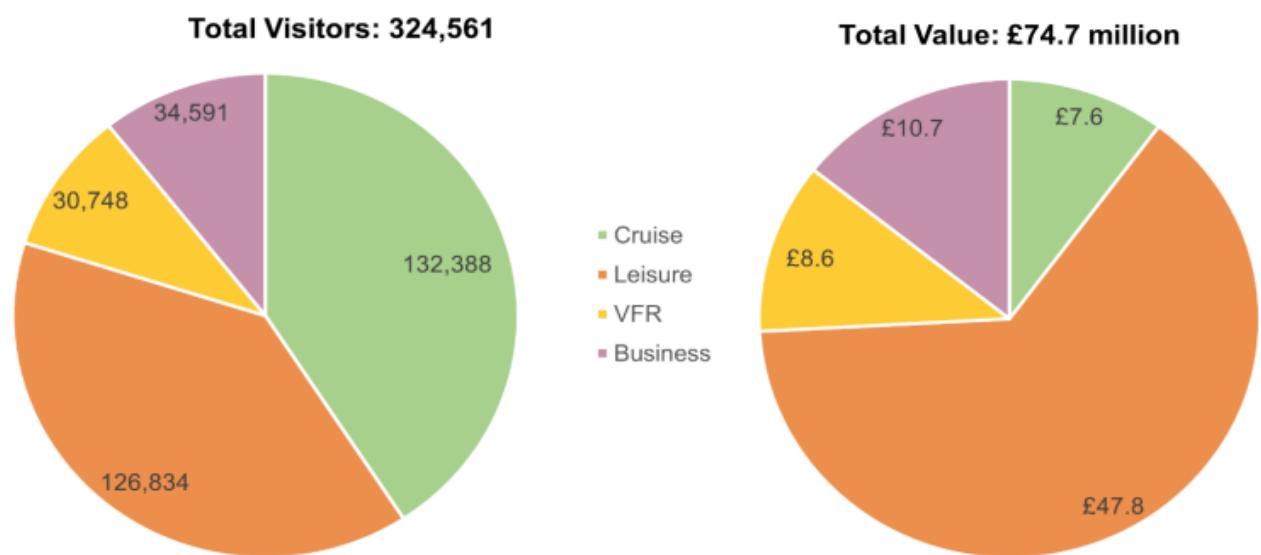


Figure 37

Among the top reasons for choosing Orkney as a destination were its stunning scenery and landscape, as well as its rich history and culture. There is no extant research that provides data on how many tourists visit Orkney for specific activities like walking, cycling or water sports. The most popular attractions included:

- Ring of Brodgar.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skara Brae and Skaill House.</li> <li>• St Magnus Cathedral.</li> <li>• Italian Chapel.</li> <li>• Public museums/heritage centres.</li> <li>• Bishop's and Earl's Palaces.</li> </ul>																													
<p>The most recent Orkney Islands Visitor Survey was undertaken in 2024 (<b>OIC324</b>) between April and October to provide an up-to-date picture of visitor behaviour, preferences, and satisfaction. In total, 173,000 visitors were estimated to have travelled to Orkney in 2024. While this figure is slightly lower than in previous years, overall visitor spending continued to grow, reaching an estimated £77.9 million, with an average per-person spend of £464 during peak months (See table below).</p>																													
<p><i>Table 12 - Total Spend by Visitors in Orkney (2024)</i></p>																													
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Peak months - April to October</th><th>Number of visitors</th><th>Average spend</th><th>Total Spend</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Leisure</td><td>110,437</td><td>£479.10</td><td>£52,910,130</td></tr> <tr> <td>VFR*</td><td>22,538</td><td>£406.80</td><td>£9,168,484</td></tr> <tr> <td>Business</td><td>17,279</td><td>£413.91</td><td>£7,152,026</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Total (peak months)</i></td><td>150,254</td><td></td><td>£69,230,640</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Total (off-peak months) *</i></td><td></td><td></td><td>£8,721,489</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Total 2024 spend</b></td><td></td><td></td><td><b>£77,952,129</b></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Peak months - April to October	Number of visitors	Average spend	Total Spend	Leisure	110,437	£479.10	£52,910,130	VFR*	22,538	£406.80	£9,168,484	Business	17,279	£413.91	£7,152,026	<i>Total (peak months)</i>	150,254		£69,230,640	<i>Total (off-peak months) *</i>			£8,721,489	<b>Total 2024 spend</b>			<b>£77,952,129</b>
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<p><i>*(Visiting Friends &amp; Relatives)</i></p>																													
<p>Motivations for visiting Orkney remained strongly aligned with the Islands' enduring appeal and echoed what. The most frequently cited reasons included Orkney's scenery and landscape (59%), history and heritage (57%), and its status as a 'bucket list' destination (54%).</p>																													
<p>The following section provides a more detailed breakdown of visitor numbers and growth at key sites across Orkney.</p>																													
<p><b><u>Orkney Responsible Tourism Management (OIC148)</u></b></p>																													
<p>Visitor numbers to Orkney's key attractions have risen significantly, demonstrating the growing popularity of the destination. The table below outlines this growth, with notable increases at sites such as St Magnus Cathedral, Orkney Museum, and Skara Brae.</p>																													

Issue: Topic/Place		15.Tourism	
Visitor Attraction (Managed By)	Visitor Numbers 2014	Visitor Numbers 2022	Change
<i>St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall (OIC)</i>	139,478	187,631	35%
<i>Orkney Museum, Kirkwall (OIC)</i>	34,716	44,934	29%
<i>Scapa Flow Visitor Centre, Lyness (OIC)</i>	11,279	11,421	1.2%*
<i>Stromness Museum, Stromness (OIC)</i>	8,370	9,463	13%
<i>Kirkbuster Museum, Birsay (OIC)</i>	5,110	5,828	14%
<i>The Ness Battery, Stromness</i>	741	1225	14%
<i>Skara Brae, Stenness (HES)</i>	81,258	90,234	11%
<i>Bishop's &amp; Earl's Palaces, Kirkwall (HES)</i>	13,571	13,384	-1.4%
<i>Broch of Gurness, Evie (HES)</i>	10,838	10,073	-7%
<i>Maes Howe, Stenness (HES)</i>	N/A	11,668	N/A
<i>Pier Arts Centre, Stromness (Trust)</i>	38,378	TBC	TBC
<i>Westray Heritage Trust, Westray (Trust)</i>	2,598	TBC	TBC
<i>Orkney Wireless Museum, Kirkwall (Trust)</i>	1,857	TBC	TBC
<i>Italian Chapel, Lambholm (Trust)</i>	113,401	TBC	TBC

Table 13 - Visitor numbers at key sites in Orkney

\* The new Scapa Flow Visitor Centre and Museum only opened in July 2022, missing 4 months of the season. Numbers for 2023 were 19,911 and 16,895 in 2025, the small drop off was anticipated as in 2023 it was awarded Museum of the Year.

#### **Scottish Tourist Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) Report (OIC150)**

The annual STEAM report commissioned by OIC stated that in 2023 there were over 247,000 staying visitors, including business, leisure and visiting friends and relatives, and more than 201,000 day visitors. Sustainable tourism is a key growth sector for Scotland and one of the most important drivers of the Orkney economy, with an estimated 448,610 visitors to the islands in 2023, generating more than £114M in expenditure. Following a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

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tourism's growth trajectory has resumed, with cruise visitor numbers increasing beyond pre-pandemic levels.

The tourism sector is a diverse industry in Orkney, with a range of sub-sectors such as hotels, camping sites and other types of short stay accommodation, restaurants, bars, travel agents, museums, and other recreational and cultural activities. In recent years, the tourism sector and local communities have been, and continue to be, significantly affected by the impacts of the following:

- Growth of the cruise sector.
- COVID-19 pandemic.
- Climate emergency.
- Short-term Lets Licensing Scheme.
- Increased energy costs and inflation.
- Increasing popularity of campervan and motorhome holidays.

One of the most notable trends of the past decade is the growth of the cruise sector within which Orkney has successfully positioned itself as a premier destination. Following a pause due to the pandemic, cruise's growth trajectory resumed, with passenger arrivals to Orkney increased beyond pre-pandemic levels. This growth is evident in the increase from 132,388 cruise visitors in 2019 to 213,785 in 2024. Between 2014 and 2024, passenger numbers surged by 237%. Below is a graph that illustrates this growth (OIC337).

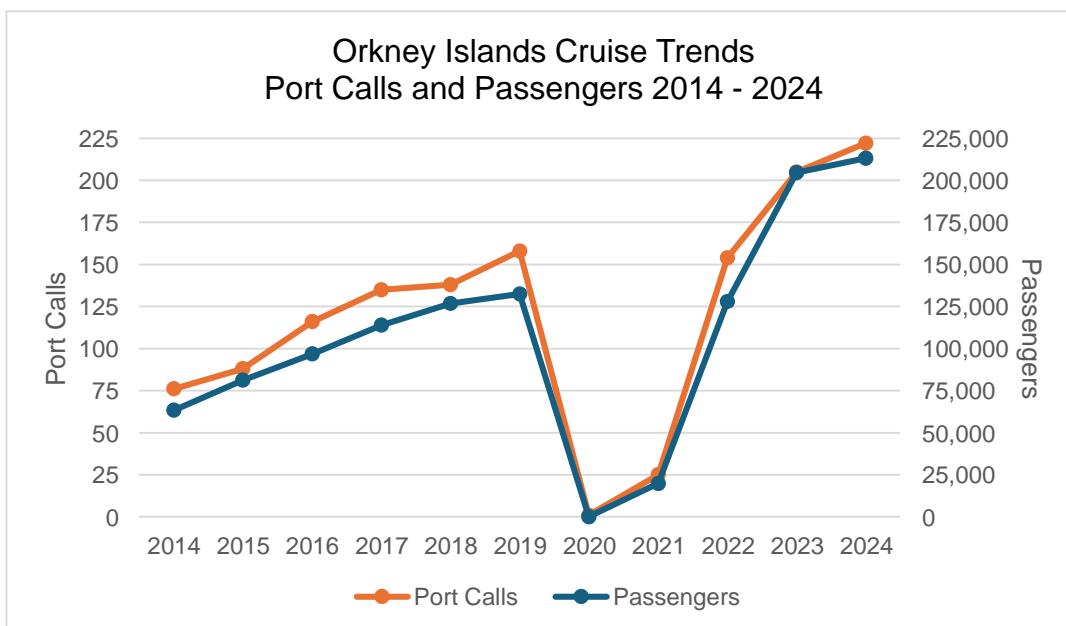


Figure 38

Year	Passengers	Port Calls
2014	63,346	76
2015	81,197	88
2016	96,658	116
2017	113,805	135

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	2018	126,724	138
	2019	132,388	158
	2020	0	0
	2021	19,732	25
	2022	127,875	154
	2023	204,606	205
	2024	213,785	222

The following key issues were outlined in the Orkney Responsible Tourism Management (**OIC148**) report as some of the main challenges facing Orkney's tourism sector:

- **Climate Change:** As one of the most significant and fastest growing threats to Orkney's communities and natural and cultural heritage, mitigating and adapting to climate change is a priority as recognised in the Orkney Tourism Strategy.
- **Limited Investment in Tourism Infrastructure and Facilities:** Increasing tourism pressures exacerbated by seasonality have accelerated the deterioration of Orkney's ageing tourism infrastructure and with it, the visitor experience and community wellbeing.
- **Overcrowding at Key Sites and in Towns:** Strong seasonality and significant tourism growth have delivered concentrated visitation to Orkney during the summer months. Consequently, pressure on the Islands' most popular natural and cultural heritage attractions has grown and visitor footfall has interacted with changing weather patterns to cause significant erosion at certain sites.

#### **Orkney Tourism Strategy 2020-2030: A strategy for sustainable tourism (OTS) (OIC114)**

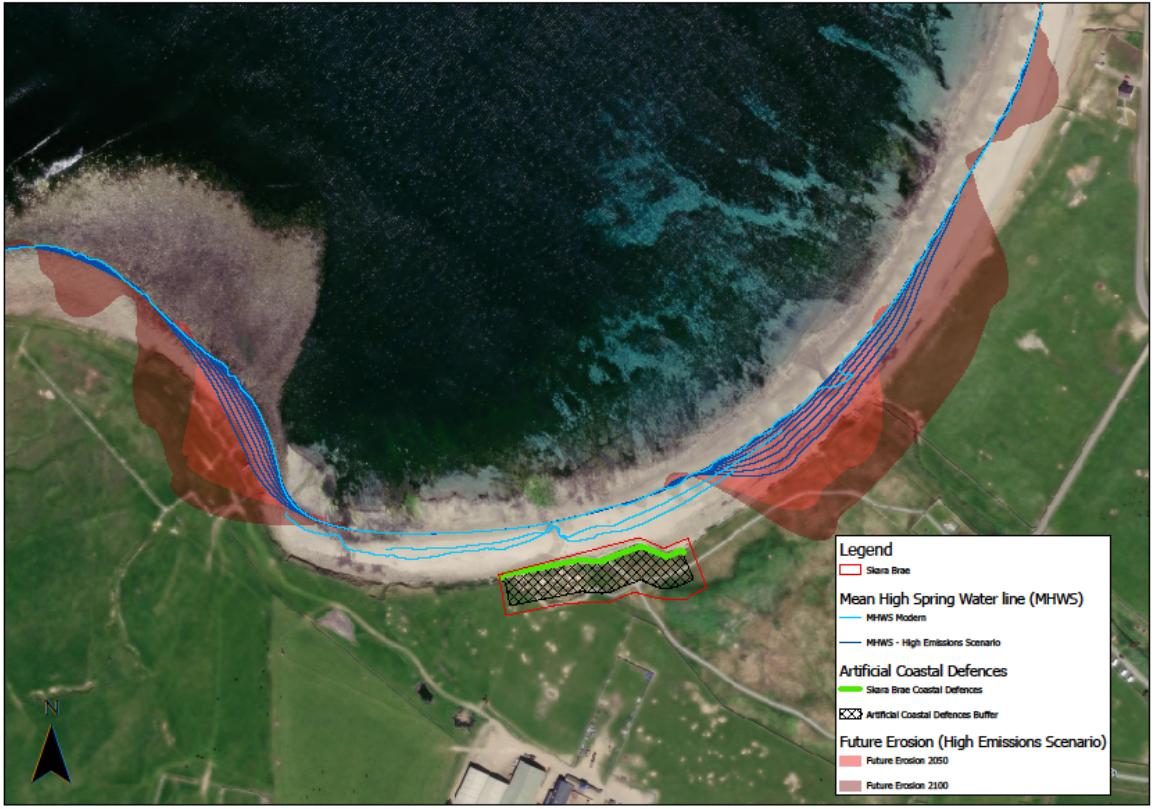
This Strategy aims to prioritise strategic tourism infrastructure projects that foster a regenerative approach. The OTS acknowledges tourism as a key component of Orkney's economy and one which continues to grow in importance in terms of the creation of income and jobs in the islands. Whilst creating further opportunities, the rapid growth in visitor numbers also poses significant management challenges. It also recognises that it is vital that to protect and conserve the integrity of the Orkney environment and local culture.

The OTS sets out a vision that by 2030, Orkney will be a world class sustainable destination enriching the lives of its people and visitors, and has five objectives:

- Grow the prosperity of the islands through responsible tourism.
- Responsibly manage visitor numbers to protect sites and improve the quality of experience for visitor and residents.
- Develop the tourism resource and infrastructure that meets current and future demand.
- All communities benefit from tourism resource and visitors enjoy a broader experience.
- Mitigate climate change impacts of and on tourism.

It further qualifies that three overarching principles also guide all tourism-related planning and management decisions: (1) a 'cross-islands' approach should be adopted; (2) all tourism development is underpinned by sustainability considerations, including climate action, assessment of environmental impacts, social inclusion, and natural and cultural heritage preservation; and (3) all decisions will be evidence-based and informed by community and stakeholder engagement.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
<p>The OTS features a SWOT analysis that highlights the various pressures Orkney faces due to tourism. The table below outlines the key impacts of tourism on the region.</p>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Growing visitor numbers</li> <li>– Growing business numbers</li> <li>– Increase in accommodation</li> <li>– Quality and quantity of visitor attractions</li> <li>– Number of new visitor attractions</li> <li>– Strong town centre offerings</li> <li>– Good air and sea links</li> <li>– Natural and cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of vehicular capacity on ferries for islands travel</li> <li>– Lack of appropriate visitor facilities in some areas</li> <li>– Concern amongst local people that industry is growing too fast</li> <li>– Few indoor attractions</li> <li>– Public transport</li> <li>– Digital connectivity</li> <li>– Deficit of appropriately serviced touring sites</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dispersal of visitors</li> <li>– Tourism Levy</li> <li>– Destination management</li> <li>– Industry engagement &amp; development</li> <li>– Expanding business tourism</li> <li>– Extension of day/night-time economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Growing visitor numbers</li> <li>– Unlimited volume tourism</li> <li>– Degradation of visitor attractions</li> <li>– Climate change</li> <li>– Lack of investment funding</li> <li>– RET impact Airbnb impact</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Historic Environment Scotland (HES) – Evidence Report (OIC149)</u></b></p> <p>In 2022, HES conducted a nationwide program to inspect historic properties across Scotland. This program identified various challenges and pressures related to tourism in Orkney, which are outlined below:</p>	
<p><i>Active travel &amp; public transport</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Many of the more remote HES sites across the islands require additional travel from the Mainland, and transportation options are limited. Transport links outside of Kirkwall can pose significant challenges for those relying on public transport.</li> </ul> <p><i>Challenges &amp; drivers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The growth of cruise and trade markets is placing additional pressure on various sites, with high visitor volumes raising concerns about the impact on the surrounding environment and infrastructure at many HES locations. Site capacity limits have now been set in an attempt to protect the sites.</li> <li>– On-site infrastructure is becoming less resilient while demands for new facilities (e.g., Ring of Brodgar toilets) are increasing. HES are currently in collaboration with OIC to address this challenge and are exploring various options.</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	15.Tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Staffing and recruitment challenges mean that vacancies at HES and other historic sites in Orkney remain unfilled. Those who do accept roles are frequently seasonal workers who struggle to find accommodation in Orkney, preventing them from taking up positions.</li> <li>– Coastal erosion at Skara Brae presents a high risk to the long-term resilience of the site. See image below.</li> </ul> 	<p><i>Figure 39 - Erosion risk at Skara Brae</i></p> <p><b>Tourism Pressures on the World Heritage Site (WHS) (OIC279)</b></p> <p>The WHS has been central to Orkney's tourism, with images of its key monuments featured globally. First-time visitors often view the WHS as the focal point of their experience, shaping their understanding of Orkney and the Neolithic period. Surveys consistently identify the Islands' heritage as the main reason for visits, with the WHS playing a crucial role in boosting tourism, particularly in the cruise sector.</p> <p>The WHS attracts more visitors than it can sustainably accommodate. In 2023, visitor numbers were estimated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Ring of Brodgar</i> = 174,000</li> <li>– <i>Stones of Stenness</i> = 76,500</li> <li>– <i>Maeshowe</i> = 15,074</li> <li>– <i>Skara Brae</i> = 106,839</li> </ul>

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
<p>Unrestrained tourism growth and unmanaged visitor footfall have had significant impacts on both the natural and cultural heritage of the WHS, as well as on the safety and wellbeing of visitors and local communities. In particular, the Brodgar-Stenness area and the Ring of Brodgar face several ongoing concerns. These include damage to the monuments themselves, wear on fragile vegetation and underlying archaeology caused by excessive foot traffic, and the effects of climate change, which are exacerbated by high visitor numbers.</p> <p>Further issues include overcrowding at the sites and their car parks, along with compromised road safety and deteriorating infrastructure on the single-track B9055, which sees increased traffic during the peak season. There is also visual intrusion from coaches, which disrupt the views of the monuments and the surrounding landscape. Environmental health risks have also arisen from undesirable toileting behaviour and anecdotal reports of irresponsible campervan waste disposal. The Orkney WHS Gateway Programme (see section below) has been designed to address these various challenges and has been allocated £6.5 million in funding through the Islands Growth Deal. However, decisions on project scope, costs, and timelines are still pending, meaning it will be years before the full programme is implemented.</p>	
<p><b><u>Orkney WHS Gateway Programme (OIC276)</u></b></p>	
<p>This Programme aims to transform the visitor experience through creating high-class management systems for Orkney's key sites, enhancing visitor engagement, and improving transportation and accessibility. It will also implement digital tools to disperse tourists across the islands, reducing overcrowding and benefiting both the local economy and residents and is backed by £6.5 million in joint investment from the Scottish and UK Governments.</p>	
<p>Heart of Neolithic Orkney – World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025-2035 (HONO WHS) (OIC288)</p>	
<p>This draft Management Plan, developed by HES and OIC, outlines a ten-year strategy for preserving and managing the Heart of Neolithic Orkney. It includes six long term aims, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS for present and future generations.</li> <li>2. Inspire and engage people with the Heart of Neolithic Orkney and deepen their understanding of the site's values.</li> <li>3. Benefit people and communities in Orkney and elsewhere.</li> <li>4. Interpret and present the Heart of Neolithic Orkney to the highest standard.</li> <li>5. Enhance access to and experience of the World Heritage Site responsibly, sustainability and equitably.</li> <li>6. Facilitate a diversity of research connected to the Heart of Neolithic Orkney and draw on the results to pursue the Long Term Aims.</li> </ol> <p>The Plan presents a comprehensive vision for the site, outlining long-term goals, short-term policies, and specific objectives. These focus on addressing the climate emergency, planning for uncertainty, managing tourism and access, improving infrastructure, fostering community involvement and communication, promoting sustainability, and supporting research and learning.</p> <p><b><u>Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future (OIC273)</u></b></p> <p>Scotland's National Tourism Strategy, <i>Scotland Outlook 2023</i>, is a collaborative effort involving key partners: the Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scottish Government, VisitScotland, Scottish</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	15.Tourism
<p>Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Skills Development Scotland. Recognising the significant role of tourism in Scotland's economic strategy, the vision is to establish Scotland as a global leader in 21<sup>st</sup> century tourism. The Strategy is centred on sustainability and focuses on four core priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Our Passionate People:</b> Promote fair work practices, enhance career mobility, and foster diversity within the workforce.</li> <li>• <b>Our Thriving Places:</b> Engage local communities as stakeholders in tourism, helping Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) manage tourism responsibly and effectively.</li> <li>• <b>Our Diverse Businesses:</b> Support businesses in becoming more entrepreneurial, resilient, and agile, while driving a commitment to sustainable practices.</li> <li>• <b>Our Memorable Experiences:</b> Ensure the delivery of inclusive and accessible destinations, enhancing the visitor experience for all.</li> </ul> <p><i>Scotland Outlook 2030</i> advocates for sustainable growth, encouraging active participation from all sectors while protecting people and places. The Strategy's mission is: <i>"Together, we will grow the value and enhance the benefits of tourism across Scotland by delivering the best for our visitors, our businesses, our people, our communities, and our environment."</i></p> <p>The Strategy also underscores the need for the tourism sector to contribute to Scotland's broader goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. To realise this vision, six national priorities have been identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Improve Digital Infrastructure:</b> Enhance sector understanding through better data collection, analysis, and digital tools.</li> <li>2. <b>Strong Policy Framework:</b> Develop policies that align with the vision for the 21-century tourism.</li> <li>3. <b>Access To Investment:</b> Ensure continued growth by securing both public and private investment in tourism.</li> <li>4. <b>Improved Connectivity:</b> Upgrade transport and digital infrastructure to improve access and mobility.</li> <li>5. <b>Cross-Sector Collaboration:</b> Strengthen partnerships and networking across sectors to drive economic value.</li> <li>6. <b>International Positioning:</b> Raise Scotland's profile as a premier tourism destination, attracting increased visitor numbers and creating jobs.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act (OIC147)</u></b></p> <p>The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 provides new discretionary power to local authorities to introduce a visitor levy. This levy is intended to generate revenue for the development, support, and maintenance of facilities and services primarily used by visitors in the area for leisure or business purposes. At committee on 24 September 2024, members agreed in principle to support the concept of generating funds through a Local Visitor Levy. A formal consultation process was conducted over the winter months, engaging local communities, tourism businesses, organisations, and other stakeholders. This will help assess potential impacts and guide the design of a future scheme, should it move forwards.</p> <p>Additionally, a cost-benefit analysis will be carried out to evaluate the potential benefits of the scheme against its associated costs. The results of these feasibility studies will be presented to the Councillors, informing their decision on whether to follow the lead of other councils in introducing a visitor levy.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
<p>Tourism pressures in Orkney are largely attributed to insufficient infrastructure at key sites and limited public transportation options, as highlighted in the HES evidence report. By enabling local authorities to invest more in tourism facilities and services, the new legislation represents an opportunity to generate benefits for the local communities and visitors in Orkney.</p> <p>The Orkney Tourism Infrastructure Stage 3 Report, commissioned by the Council and prepared by LUC in October 2023, highlights findings from site appraisals, stakeholder engagements, and community aspirations from various settlements in Orkney. It outlines the key needs identified by stakeholders to effectively and sustainably support tourism in Orkney. Below are the recommendations to enhance Orkney as a tourism destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Installation of water refill points in key tourist destinations.</li> <li>– Public toilet renovations.</li> <li>– Installation of motorhome wastewater disposal facilities (located at public toilets).</li> <li>– Interactive ferry terminal signs, in Kirkwall and Stromness, to enhance visitor information.</li> <li>– Installation of E-bike charging station at key tourist arrival points.</li> </ul> <p>There will be value going forward in the LDP identifying the strategic tourism sites where improvements are needed to enhance visitor infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP) (OIC254)</b></p> <p>This Plan focuses on the responsible management and sustainable development of tourism in Orkney post-Covid. It outlines clear aims, strategies, and a prioritised list of essential and desirable projects, emphasising high-value, regenerative tourism that would enhance community well-being, conserve heritage, and contribute to Orkney's net-zero goals. For this Plan, an asset audit was conducted in 2021, which identified the key issues and opportunities for Orkney's tourism infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited luxury and year-round accommodation options, especially for larger groups and short stays.</li> <li>– Inconsistent opening times for retail, food, and attractions, especially on the weekends and in the off-season.</li> <li>– Outdoor attractions less appealing in bad weather, with few indoor options year-round.</li> <li>– Lack of information on walking and cycling routes, limiting safe exploration across the islands.</li> <li>– Overcrowding at key sites during peak season, lowering visit quality, and increasing conservation risks.</li> <li>– Poor signage and way finding, with outdated or conflicting messages.</li> <li>– Limited cross-promotion of sites and their connections to encourage broader exploration.</li> <li>– Insufficient brown signs and poorly placed signage hindering impromptu visits to attractions.</li> <li>– Marketing focused too narrowly on specific heritage themes, neglecting other offerings.</li> <li>– Few circular walking routes, some on dangerous roads, with limited site information.</li> <li>– Poor quality and complicated booking for inter-island ferry services, with limited travel information.</li> <li>– Inadequate waste disposal facilities, particularly for motorhomes, leading to outdoor waste disposal.</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	15.Tourism
Opportunities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support niche, high-end, and luxury self-catering accommodation to attract longer stays and repeat visits.</li> <li>– Offer bookings for shorter stays to facilitate multi-centre holidays across more locations.</li> <li>– Align opening times of retail, food, and attractions with public transport to encourage longer stays and relieve key sites.</li> <li>– Explore sheltered facilities at outdoor sites to attract visitors in poor weather and provide rest stops for walkers and cyclists.</li> <li>– Create new keynote attractions and invest in key sites to spread visitation and maintain quality.</li> <li>– Improve signage, route information, and marketing to encourage wider exploration and eco-friendly travel.</li> <li>– Link multiple sites and stories in marketing and interpretation to encourage exploration beyond high-impact sites.</li> <li>– Broaden marketing themes to include wellbeing, arts, crafts, and literature, encouraging visits to more attractions.</li> <li>– Expand walking and cycling routes and promote eco-friendly travel between sights through improved signage.</li> </ul>	
<p>The asset audit further reported that the increased levels of tourism activity had also negatively impacted the road networks in Orkney, largely due to the high volume of cruise ship shore excursions, although increasing levels of motorhome and other motor vehicle traffic have also contributed to these worsening conditions. OIC identified the following sections of the network that require consideration in terms of further investment if tourism levels continue to rise:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A964 St Ola, Orphir and Stenness.</li> <li>• A966 Evie, Costa and Birsay.</li> <li>• B9050 Deerness.</li> <li>• B9053 Scapa Bay St Ola.</li> <li>• B9055 Brodgar area.</li> <li>• B9056 Skaill, Quoyloo, Marwick and Birsay.</li> <li>• B9057 Quoyloo to Maggie Garsons corner.</li> </ul>	
<p>The development plan outlines for key objectives designed to address the issues and capitalise on the opportunities identified in the asset audit:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aim 1: Dispersal</b> = Distribute and enhance the tourism offer across the mainland and islands to diversify experiences, spread visitors, and extend the season.</li> <li>• <b>Aim 2: Market Focus</b> = Target investment and promotion at key market segments that align with Orkney's culture.</li> <li>• <b>Aim 3: Sustainability</b> = Foster sustainable growth through responsible tourism that benefits communities, the environment, and the economy.</li> <li>• <b>Aim 4: Conservation</b> = Protect and celebrate Orkney's heritage through visitor management, conservation, landscape initiatives, and habitat restoration, enhancing biodiversity and conservation outcomes.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Short-Term Lets Licenses (STLL) Register 2024</u></b></p>	
<p>In recent years, the growth of short-term lets (STLs) has become a significant aspect of the tourism landscape in Orkney. The expansion of short-term letting has raised important questions regarding</p>	

**Issue: Topic/Place****15.Tourism**

the sustainability of tourism across the islands, particularly regarding its impact on local communities, infrastructure, and the natural and cultural environment.

STLs are a growing concern across rural Scottish Islands, where they can often contribute to a range of social and economic issues. In many areas the rise in short-term rental properties have been highlighted as putting an additional strain on the availability of housing. With limited housing stock and a growing demand from tourists, the implications of this trend are felt more acutely in more rural communities.

In Orkney, through the evidence base engagement in some communities it was highlighted that STLs exacerbate the housing crisis, leading to rising property prices and a severe shortage of long-term rental options. Communities argued that many properties that could serve as homes for local residents are instead used for short-term tourism, making it harder for local people, especially young individuals and essential workers, to find accommodation. This has not only made housing less accessible but has also raised concerns about community displacement and the long-term sustainability of the local populations. As of December 2024, there were 550 total STLs in Orkney, with 102 in Stromness (87 listed as self-catering) and 205 in Kirkwall (169 listed as self-catering). In accordance with statutory requirements, the most up to date public register of STLs is available on OIC's website. Initial analysis has identified areas with a higher concentration of STLs, with both Kirkwall and Stromness emerging as key hotspots. This is particularly evident within their respective Conservation Areas (see Figures 36 and 37).

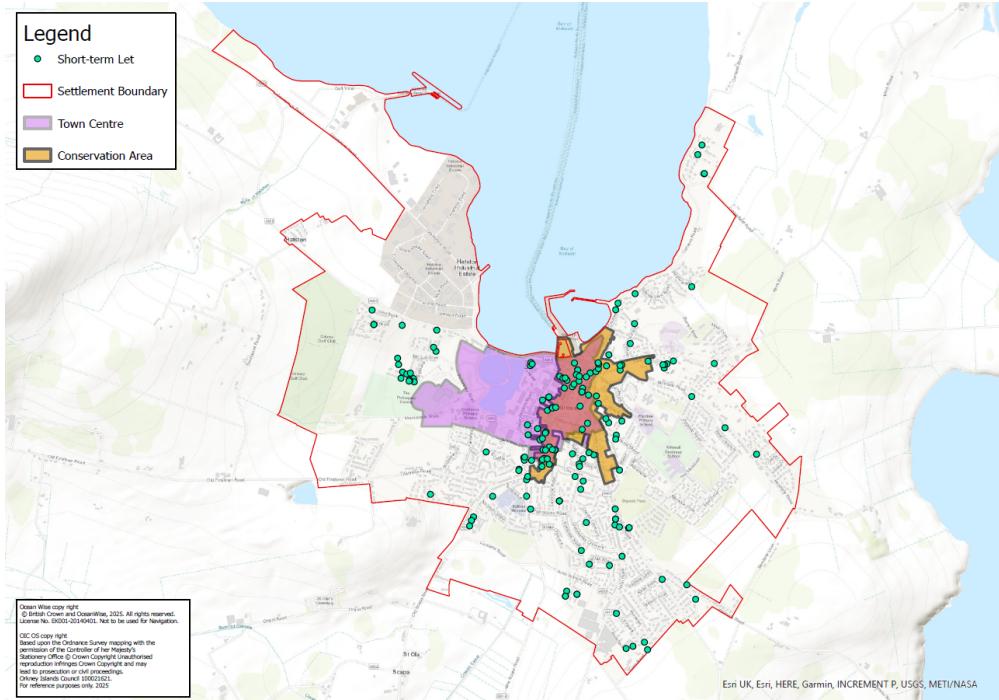


Figure 40 - STL Provision in Kirkwall

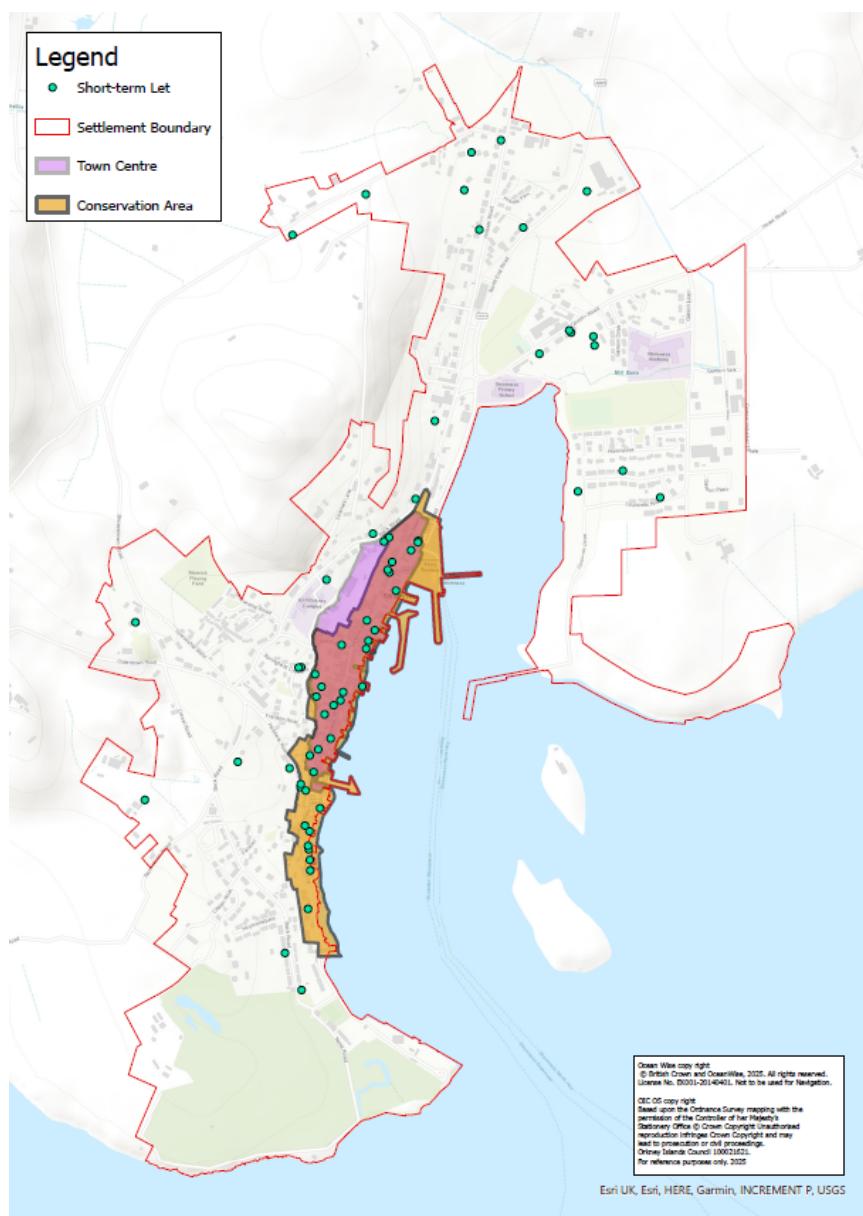


Figure 41 - STL Provision in Stromness

#### Identified Gaps:

- Evidence gap on visitor pressure points and what measures are required to address visitor management pressures.

#### Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

The following were asked to provide comment on the Schedule:

Council Team Manager (Sustainable Tourism).

Council Economic Development Department.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
<p>NatureScot.</p> <p>Council Rural Planner.</p> <p>Scottish Water.</p> <p>Historic Environment Scotland.</p>	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<p>In its preparation the proposed plan should seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In accordance with NPF4 Policy 30(a), the LDP will need to consider the demand for new tourism facilities/accommodation as the industry grows and consider what is an appropriate policy approach in Orkney.</li> <li>• Support the viability of existing tourist infrastructure and identify land for new sustainable tourism development that supports the visitor economy while also protecting local communities and natural assets from potentially adverse effects.</li> <li>• Support the delivery of key agreed projects such as those identified in the Draft Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development.</li> <li>• Support delivery of the Orkney WHS Gateway Programme.</li> <li>• Facilitate the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the tourism sector.</li> <li>• The LDP can develop policies that support the development of schemes and infrastructure aimed at alleviating the pressures on key tourism sites across the islands.</li> <li>• Consider the priorities of community-led plans and identify the long-term needs of Orkney's local communities, which are already facing increased pressures from tourism growth. The LDP must address these challenges and promote sustainable solutions to support them.</li> <li>• The growth of STLs poses significant challenges for housing availability and community sustainability. The LDP will need to consider the STL data and develop an appropriate approach to balance the demand for visitor accommodation and supporting rural diversification and rural development opportunities with the need to preserve housing for local residents.</li> </ul>	
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
<p>There are no areas of dispute.</p> <p>NatureScot proposed some additional information, which has been included.</p> <p>HES welcome the frequent reference to the historic environment throughout the topic and that their evidence in relation to challenges and pressures has been used and welcome the clear linkage between tourism and the historic environment in the Orkney Council area.</p> <p>OIC Rural Planner proposed the addition of the core path network as part of tourism infrastructure to sites of natural and built heritage (NatureScot had also included this addition in their consultation).</p> <p>Scottish Water supports the tourism Schedule.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>15.Tourism</b>
Council Team Manager (Sustainable Tourism) suggested additional data sources and supporting text all of which have been incorporated into the Schedule.	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>16.Culture and Creativity</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, Section 15(5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the principal cultural, social and built heritage characteristics of the district; and</li> <li>• the desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including in particular, but not limited to, live music venues) in the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC151</b> <a href="#">Orkney's Creative Future: Action Plan 2023-2027</a></p> <p><b>OIC275</b> <a href="#">Orkney Tourism Strategy 2020-2030</a></p> <p><b>OIC152</b> <a href="#">Scotland's Creative Learning Plan 2022-23</a></p> <p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC252</b> <a href="#">What's Next for Stromness – Local Place Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC154</b> <a href="#">Orkney's Creative Future: A Ten Year Strategy for the Arts</a></p> <p><b>OIC277</b> <a href="#">Orkney - Tourism Research &amp; Statistics   VisitScotland.org</a></p> <p><b>OIC184</b> <a href="#">North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme</a></p> <p><b>OIC185</b> <a href="#">Orkney Energy Heritage Strategy</a></p> <p><b>OIC186</b> <a href="#">Culture in Communities: The challenges and opportunities in delivering a place-based approach</a></p> <p><b>OIC252</b> <a href="#">What's Next for Stromness – Local Placer Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC339</b> <a href="#">Culture Fund Open Pot 2023-2024</a></p>

#### **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context**

NPF4 emphasises that distinctive local areas should reflect the diversity of their communities, promote the regeneration and the vibrancy of town centres, support the growth of culture and creative industries, create jobs and attract investment, while also ensuring that communities have access to these industries.

Issue: Topic/Place	16.Culture and Creativity
<p>Policy 31, Culture and creativity, provides guidance that must be considered when determining planning proposals relating to the principal cultural, social and built heritage characteristics of Orkney. Including, but not limited to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development proposals involving significant changes to public open spaces must include public art that reflects diversity, culture, and creativity.</li> <li>- Proposals for temporary creative workspaces in vacant properties will be encouraged.</li> <li>- Support for proposals resulting in the loss of arts or cultural venues will be conditional on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is no sustainable demand for the venue, and it has been marketed at a reasonable rate for at least 12 months without interest.</li> <li>• Consultation shows the venue no longer meets user needs and cannot be adapted.</li> <li>• Alternate provision of equal or greater quality is available nearby.</li> <li>• The loss does not result in damage to significant cultural assets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Proposals near existing arts venues must adhere to the agent of change principal. Support will only be granted if the proposals demonstrate measures to manage noise and disturbance impacts, ensuring existing venues can operate without additional restrictions.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Evidence</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Policy (OIC127)</u></b></p>	
<p>The Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 (OLD17) presents a vision which directly addresses culture in Orkney.</p>	
<p><i>“The Local Development Plan for Orkney seeks to ensure that effective planning policies are in place to strengthen and support Orkney’s communities by enabling those developments which will have a positive and sustainable socio-economic impact, and utilise locally available resources, whilst striving to preserve and enhance the rich natural and cultural heritage assets upon which Orkney’s economy and society depends.”</i> OLD17 includes 15 policies, with Policy 8 specifically addressing culture. However, many other policies throughout the plan also refer to build and social cultural aspects. Relevant excerpts from OLD17 are detailed below.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 1 (Criteria for All Development) (1.2.x)</b> – States that development will be supported where it protects and where possible enhances Orkney’s cultural heritage resources.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 8.2</b> – This policy aims to evaluate cultural heritage assets impacted by development to identify their significance and ensure protection.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 8A</b> – States that any development that preserves or enhances the archaeological, architectural, artistic, commemorative, or historic significance of cultural heritage assets, including their settings, will be supported.</p>	
<p>From a planning perspective, culture can be understood as a multifaceted concept that encompasses the values, traditions, heritage, and social practices of a community or society. In</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	16.Culture and Creativity
<p>Scotland, the concept of culture is increasingly integrated into planning policies, particularly under the framework of NPF4, which provides a strategic vision for land use and development across the country.</p>	
<p>This is particularly relevant to Orkney, where a rich cultural heritage and vibrant creative scene play a central role in the identity of the Islands. Maintaining and expanding creative industries in Orkney would not only support the preservation of its unique traditions, arts, and history, but also provide sustainable economic opportunities for the local communities, reinforcing the connection between culture, community, and economic growth.</p>	
<b>Current Context</b>	
<p>Orkney has a rich cultural heritage and a vibrant creative sector that is central to island identity and economic resilience. Arts, crafts, and cultural venues support community wellbeing and attract visitors, while creative industries provide opportunities for growth. Maintaining and enhancing these assets is vital to sustain traditions, promote participation, and strengthen Orkney's role as a cultural hub.</p>	
<b><u>Orkney's Creative Future: A Ten-Year Strategy for the Arts 2020-2030 (OIC154)</u></b>	
<p>In 2017, Orkney Islands Council (OIC) published 'Orkney's Creative Future: A Ten-Year Strategy for the Arts'. This Strategy aimed at facilitating and promoting arts in Orkney through three strategic themes: <i>People, Place, and Participation</i>. The theme of <i>People</i> focuses on the importance of engaging the next generation as vital contributors to the preservation and growth of Orkney's cultural heritage, including Orkney's built cultural assets. <i>Place</i> was also identified as a key theme and vital to the future sustainability and resilience of the Orkney Islands and its culture. The Strategy highlights how the islands' unique landscape serves as a profound source of inspiration for artists, musicians, writers, and creators. The <i>Participation</i> theme aims to increase the local community's engagement in cultural experiences such as arts and crafts. This focus seeks to improve mental and physical wellbeing, tackle social isolation and enable people to develop important skills.</p>	
<b><u>Orkney's Creative Future: Action Plan 2023-2027 (OIC151)</u></b>	
<p>In 2023, the Council developed a revised focal matrix to guide the OIC's operations – including planning - and funding in alignment with the 'Ten-Year Strategy for the Arts'. This matrix will serve as an Action Plan for the period from 2023 to 2027. Refer to <a href="#"><u>Orkney's Creative Future: A Ten Year Strategy for the Arts: Action Plan 2023-2027</u></a> for the focal matrix, which outlines the strategic themes, OIC's core values and priorities, and the key ambitions of Scotland's National Culture Strategy. It includes specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) actions for the next phase of work, as well as an overview of the goals achieved from the previous Sector Aims and Ambitions document, covering the period from 2019 to 2021 and addressing the impact of COVID-19.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>16.Culture and Creativity</b>
<b><u>Culture in Communities: The challenges and opportunities in delivering a place-based approach (OIC186)</u></b>	
<p>The Participation and Communities Team Annual Report (PACT), produced by the Scottish Parliament, highlights the committee's visits to Orkney and several other regions across Scotland. These visits were conducted to gather evidence on best practices and identify barriers to place-based cultural policy and cultural participation within local communities. The following points summarise the key findings from the Orkney visit:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities acknowledged the critical role of volunteers in preserving and promoting local culture. The OIC highlighted that much of the cultural activity in Orkney is grassroots and managed by volunteers.</li> <li>• The committee observed a remarkable community commitment in fostering cultural activities. Levels of volunteering were high, with most initiatives being led by small, local organisations. This highlighted the community's significant responsibility to be proactive and self-sustaining in creating cultural opportunities.</li> <li>• The reliance on the community to sustain cultural activity was recognised as both a challenge and a strength for Orkney, with volunteer fatigue and burn-out identified as key concerns. The committee heard that there was an ageing population, including among volunteers, with concerns raised about the sustainability of volunteer-led culture in Orkney.</li> <li>• The committee reported that many community assets were being used as multipurpose spaces for various cultural activities (e.g. the town hall was used as a concert hall, cinema, and theatre, with the differing groups being able to use the building and share resources).</li> </ul>	
<p>The following groups participated in the discussions for the PACT: Birsay Heritage Trust, Culture Collective (Creative Islands Network), George Mackay Brown Fellowship, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Hoy Heritage Trust, Orkney Arts Society, Orkney Folk Festival, Orkney Heritage Boat Society, Orkney Islands Council (Councillors and officials), Orkney Japan Association, Remembering Together, Soulisquoy Printmakers and Wasps Stromness Studios, Stromness Community Centre, Stromness Community Council, Stromness Development Trust, Stromness Drama Society, Stromness Museum, The Pier Arts Centre, Voluntary Action Orkney, and Westside Cinema.</p>	
<b><u>North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS) (OIC184)</u></b>	
<p>NILPS was established to support the livelihoods of Orkney's North Isles while preserving and promoting their unique culture, identities, and heritage. The Scheme also focuses on protecting cultural venues and the built environment across the isles, ensuring that both natural and man-made assets are safeguarded for future generations.</p>	
<p>The initiative is funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, the Orkney Leader Programme, the European Regional Development Fund, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Orkney Islands Council (OIC). The scheme is delivered in partnership with OIC (the lead partner), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), NatureScot,</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	16.Culture and Creativity
<p>Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and a number of small community groups across the North Isles.</p> <p>Over the past three years NILPS has run various projects designed to conserve, enhance, and celebrate the natural, cultural, and built heritage of the North Isles. These projects have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>North Isles Educational &amp; Learning Programme:</b> Delivered activities and opportunities for all school-aged children and young adults living in the North Isles to work on projects related to the cultural heritage of the areas.</li> <li>• <b>North Isles Traditional Skills Training:</b> This project provided training in traditional skills like drystone dyking, masonry repair, and local crafts, helping to preserve and revitalise the cultural heritage of the North Isles. Through equipping local communities with these skills, the initiative has helped to ensure the continuation of cultural traditions for future generations.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Scotland's Creative Learning Plan (Creative Scotland) (OIC152)</u></b></p> <p>The Scottish Government's Creative Learning Plan highlights the importance of creativity in education. The vision for this LDP is to foster a more creative Orkney, where people take pride in their identity and community. It will highlight the need for creative expression through ideas, invention, writing, and the arts, aiming to build Orkney's resilience and unlock its people's potential.</p> <p><b><u>Community-Led Plans and Culture (OIC252)</u></b></p> <p>Community led plans often highlight opportunities for cultural growth in Orkney. This can include identifying significant cultural buildings and exploring ways to utilise existing spaces for cultural activities that benefit the wider community and protect Orcadian culture, as was identified in the PACT report. See the Stromness Local Place Plan (2019), for example, of a local place plan that can successfully promote culture and creativity by proposing the asset transfer of unused, but culturally significant, buildings for use as community cultural hubs.</p> <p><b><u>Culture Fund Open Pot 2023-2024 (OIC339)</u></b></p> <p>In the 2023-2024 period, the Culture Fund Open Pot allocated £23,000 to support cultural community groups. The table below outlines the diverse range of cultural organisations and activities currently taking place across Orkney, along with the corresponding fund allocations.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place		16.Culture and Creativity
Culture Fund Allocations 2024-2025		
No.	Name	Project
1	<i>North Isles Dance Academy</i>	Christmas Production of the Nutcracker (Now Summer Production)
2	<i>Orkney Camerata</i>	Camerata The Next Generation - rehearsals and concert series for YP
3	<i>Ness of Brodgar Trust</i>	Ness of Brodgar: Past, Present, and Future-Large Museum exhibition to mark end of the excavation
4	<i>Orkney Historic Boat Society</i>	Old Herring Factory - equipping facility for boat restoration and preservation
5	<i>Friends of Hoy Kirk/Hoy Heritage Centre</i>	Buying Hoy and Walls Parish Map - creating a community art collection
6	<i>Orcadian Story Trust</i>	Orkney Storytelling Festival 2024
7	<i>Orkney Music and Culture</i>	Singer/Songwriter/Composition Weekend
8	<i>Orkney Arts Society</i>	24/25 Events Season Program including new commission
9	<i>Soulsquoy Printmakers</i>	Soulsquoy Young Associates Peer Network and Development Program
10	AOP (Another Orkney Production)	2024 Events: Celebrating Scapa Flow, Orkney Aviation Festival, Billy's Night Oot
11	Kirkwall Arts Club	Pantomime 2024
12	Friends of Sanday Kirk	Cross Kirk Celebrations

#### **Tourism in Orkney – The Strategy for Tourism Development in Orkney (OIC275)**

Tourism plays a vital role in Orkney's economy, with cultural and historical attractions being significant draws for visitors. The 'Orkney Tourism Strategy' (OIC114) reports that 57% of leisure visitors cited that the islands' rich culture and history as their primary reason for visiting. *Research and Insight on tourism in Orkney*, produced by Visit Scotland, reported that 70% of visitors to Orkney cited history and culture as a top ten reason for choosing to visit Scotland, compared with

Issue: Topic/Place	16.Culture and Creativity
	<p>only 48% of the Scotland wide sample (OIC116). These statistics highlight the importance of preserving and promoting Orkney's cultural heritage as it is a key driver behind tourism visitation to Orkney. See section 15 for further evidence on Tourism.</p>
<p><b><u>Orkney Energy Heritage Strategy (OIC185)</u></b></p>	
<p>Orkney has established itself as a global leader in renewable energy, with a rich history that includes the pioneering development of wind power at Costa Head in the 1950s (home to the first grid-connected wind turbine), the advancement of tidal and wave power generation over the past decade, and the emerging field of green hydrogen production.</p>	
<p>This paper outlines the initial scoping for a strategic plan to be developed in the coming years, with the aim of guiding and prioritising current initiatives related to energy heritage and culture. The Strategy will also support future projects, including archiving efforts, the creation of dedicated spaces for archiving and curation, and the establishment of heritage centres, which are all relevant to the LDP's spatial strategy. It recognises that industries such as wind, tidal, and wave energy have a developing history, leaving tangible traces in the landscape that can be explored through archaeological recording. Beyond the energy technologies themselves and the material culture of energy sites, the stories and memories of the workers and communities involved are also integral to preserving this legacy.</p>	
<p>Identified Gaps:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited data on condition and capacity of cultural venues.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b></p>	
<p>The Schedule has been shared with:</p> <p>Arts Officer, Orkney Islands Council.    Team Leader (Culture).    Orkney Islands Archaeologist.    Leisure and Culture Service Manager, Orkney Islands Council.    Historic Environment Scotland.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b></p>	
<p>In its preparation the proposed plan should seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure culture is integrated into the next LDP and Spatial Strategy, safeguarding its role in island life while supporting Orkney's economy and tourism as key components of sustainable growth.</li> <li>• Support the role Local Place Plans can have in reflecting community aspirations for cultural and creative arts.</li> <li>• Protect existing arts and cultural venues across Orkney, in accordance with NPF4 Policy 31, and support further provision of cultural venues where suitable.</li> <li>• Promote the use of community assets as multipurpose spaces for various cultural uses and safeguard their future use.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>16.Culture and Creativity</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPF4 provides strong policies regarding culture and cultural assets, which should be adopted in the LDP.</li> </ul>
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
<p>There were no issues raised by any of the stakeholders therefore there are no areas of dispute.</p> <p>HES welcome the strong focus on both the physical historic environment assets and culture itself within this topic including the need to foster and encourage traditional skills by funding educational and training programmes. They welcome the aspiration to ensure culture is integrated into the LDP and the Spatial Strategy and to protect cultural venues and assets by adopting policies within NPF4.</p>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>17. Minerals</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC128</b> <a href="#">Priorities for the next Government: Decarbonisation, Growth, Delivery</a></p> <p><b>OIC129</b> <a href="#">2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland</a></p> <p><b>OIC130</b> Mineral Survey 2020-2023</p> <p><b>OIC131</b> <a href="#">OIC planning records</a> – search for quarries</p> <p><b>OIC132</b> <a href="#">Cursiter Quarry Business Plan 2024-2029</a></p> <p><b>OIC133</b> <a href="#">Orkney Harbours Masterplan</a></p> <p><b>OIC134</b> <a href="#">History of Orkney Geology</a></p> <p><b>OIC135</b> <a href="#">National designations and geological conservation</a></p> <p><b>OIC136</b> <a href="#">Geological Conservation Review</a></p> <p><b>OIC137</b> <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance: Natural Environment Annex 1: Local Nature Conservation Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Un-notified Conservation Review Sites</a></p> <p><b>OIC328</b> <a href="#">NatureScot – Landscape and Mineral Extraction</a></p> <p><b>OIC329</b> <a href="#">NatureScot – Planning and development: geodiversity</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<b>Policy 33 Minerals</b>	<p>The intent of this Policy is to support the sustainable management of resources and minimise the impacts of mineral extraction on communities and the environment. The policy outcomes are to ensure there are sufficient resources to meet industry demand and to protect resources from sterilisation by other developments.</p> <p>Therefore, local development plans should support a land bank of construction aggregate of at least 10 years. Landbanks are defined as 'a stock of planning permissions to which valid</p>

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>17. Minerals</b>
	conditions are attached for the winning and working of minerals' (p73 BGS 2023). At the same time workable mineral resources, of economic and conservation value, should be safeguarded.
<b>Other policies</b>	
Mineral extraction is specifically noted in Policy 5, Soils, as development that is permitted on prime agricultural land. Elsewhere in NPF4 Policy 33, Minerals, is listed as a key policy connection to Policy 12, Zero waste, Policy 23, Health and safety and Policy 29, Rural development.	
The policy intent of Policy 3 Biodiversity, Policy 4 Natural Places and Policy 20 Blue Green Infrastructure relate to mineral extraction in terms of managing impacts and restoration of economic quarries. These policies are also relevant to mineral conservation.	
<b>National developments</b>	
In Annex B, National Developments Statements of Need, two future proposals are noted for the Orkney Islands, Scapa Flow Future Fuels Hub and Orkney Harbours Masterplan, are plans to support services for the renewable and marine energy and shipping sectors. Initialisation of these developments is likely to create a surge in demand for construction aggregates.	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<b>POLICY</b>	
<b><u>Orkney Islands Council Local Development Plan OIC 2017 (OIC127)</u></b>	
There are five vision statements in the 2017 plan, Vision Statement 1 is relevant to the importance of locally won minerals and is a positive vision statement to carry forward into the next OIC LDP. The statement is also relevant to the policy intent and outcomes in the NPF4 context.	
<i>"The Local Development Plan for Orkney seeks to ensure that effective planning policies are in place to strengthen and support Orkney's communities by enabling those developments which will have a positive and sustainable socio-economic impact, and utilise locally available resources, whilst striving to preserve and enhance the rich natural and cultural heritage assets upon which Orkney's economy and society depends." (OIC LDP 2017).</i>	
There are 15 policies in total, minerals are mentioned specifically in Policy 4. However, other policies can relate to proposed mineral extraction. The relevant exerts from the policies are summarised below; starting with Policy 4, which relates directly to mineral workings.	
<b>Current Context</b>	
Mineral resources in Orkney are essential for construction and infrastructure projects, with local quarries providing aggregates for development. National policy requires maintaining a 10-year landbank of construction aggregates while safeguarding workable resources of economic and conservation value.	

Issue: Topic/Place	17. Minerals
<p><b>Policy 4 (4.3) Business, Industry &amp; Employment</b> states that developments that would compromise the continued operation or expansion of minerals facilities will not be supported. Paragraph (4.4) states that all applications for mineral developments will have to demonstrate that there are sufficient funds within the plan to provide for the restoration and after-care of the site. Section E alludes to the fact that proposals will be supported 1) when located within a Minerals Safeguard Area or, 2) where the proposal would meet identified need or demand for minerals that cannot be provided within the Minerals Safeguard Area. The Spatial Strategy has ten sites listed within the Minerals Safeguard Area, three of these are in the outer isles of Rousay and Westray.</p> <p>The Policy continues to detail what planning applications for mineral extraction must include, for example, location, size, expected duration, surrounding environment, waste production, phasing, and restoration. Other requirements include a transport assessment and proof of sufficient credit. Finally, there is a presumption against development that would sterilise future mineral extraction.</p> <p><b>Minerals Safeguard Areas in the 2017 OIC LDP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gairsty Quarry – stone.</li> <li>• Heddle Quarry – stone.</li> <li>• Cursiter Quarry – aggregate/stone.</li> <li>• Liddle Quarry – stone.</li> <li>• Hobbister – peat.</li> <li>• North Links, Bu – sand.</li> <li>• Newark – sand.</li> <li>• Trumland Farm (Rousay) – stone.</li> <li>• Banks (Rousay) – stone.</li> <li>• Noltland (Westray) – sand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy 1 Criteria for all development</b> outlines considerations where development would be supported in terms of landscape, townscape and coastal characters. Other criteria that require to be met to support proposed developments are no adverse effects on the amenity of neighbouring uses, no overburdening of existing infrastructure and services, no unacceptable risk to public health and safety and the proposal is resource efficient with sustainable practices in terms of energy usage and waste production.</p> <p><b>Policy 2 Design</b> includes mention of materials, the distinctive identity of Orkney's built environment and sustainable design, including minimising energy use. Locally sourced minerals for building can contribute to these policy intents.</p> <p><b>Policy 8 Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage</b> This Policy does not relate directly to minerals. However, the conservation of traditional buildings relies on locally sourced stone and, therefore, the continued quarrying of local stone is a factor. Sand extraction may also impact</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	17. Minerals
	historic assets such as prehistoric and Norse sites located in sandy bays, as evidenced at Bu Sands, Burray.
<b>Policy 9 Natural Heritage and Landscape</b>	
<p>This Policy indirectly relates to constraints that would be a factor when considering mineral extraction planning applications, both in terms of mitigation and restoration plans for quarry sites. Paragraph 9.3 states that steps must be taken to minimise the impacts of a development on natural heritage sites and protected species during the construction, lifetime and decommissioning of any development. Where the impacts of a development on either a nationally or internationally designated natural heritage site or a protected species are uncertain, but there is sound evidence that significant irreversible damage could occur, a precautionary approach will always apply.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 12 Coastal development</b> This Policy is relevant to sand workings, to some extent, although, the core emphasis of the Policy is concerned with the promotion of development at established coastal settlements. Policy 13, Flood risk, SuDS and Wastewater drainage, can relate to quarrying where flood risk is a potential impact from the processes of quarrying, especially at sand workings. Policy 14 Transport, Travel and Road Network Infrastructure Transport infrastructure, is relevant to quarries because planning applications for quarries have to include a transport assessment. Generally, developments that would generate 'significant levels of freight,' would be directed towards business and industrial areas at key ports. However, quarries are site specific to their workings, therefore, section C, Road Network Infrastructure, applies.</p>	
<h3>Sites</h3>	
<p><b><u>Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland 2019 (OIC129)</u></b></p>	
<p>Orkney Islands Council did not submit a return for the Mineral Survey for 2019, conducted in 2022. Therefore, the figures given in the collation of results from this survey do not give a full picture of mineral workings and reserves in Orkney. There are 11 market regions according to the AM2019 survey report, Orkney and Shetland are one market region. Therefore, some of the data will only refer to Shetland, especially with reference to planning applications submitted during the survey period of 2019. The data about sales and exports will include data from the largest quarries in Orkney because this data was submitted by quarry managers; the submissions are confidential.</p>	
<p>However, OIC have responded to the AM2020-2023 Survey (<b>OIC130</b>). Therefore, other sites have been noted and are now included in the list of active and dormant quarries below. The dormant quarries are currently not being worked but have scoping requests or planning applications submitted from 2009 up to the present time. The planning applications for the dormant quarries include applications to re-open quarries and applications for temporary class 5 uses to support other industries. The latter group will not sterilise these quarries because there is no permanent development being proposed. The historic quarries are the main quarries that have been exploited for stone, from the neolithic period up to the 1900s, but have no existing planning applications from 2009 and are dormant. Note that Cruady and Fersness are also SSSIs.</p>	

### **Orkney Islands main quarries (OIC131)**

Orkney Islands Council own Cursiter Quarry and have drawn up a Cursiter Quarry Business Plan 2024-2029 (**OIC132**). Cursiter Quarry produces aggregate and coated stone products to meet the needs of Council road projects, Council capital projects and other construction projects led by the private sector. The quarry has recently been extended, with an expected lifetime of 30-50 years, taking the lifespan of the quarry from 2023 up to 2060.

Historically, in the 1950's, Cursiter Quarry was extracting around 25,000 tonnes per annum. During the mid-1980's there was a revival of outer island quarries, mainly for road infrastructure work. In the early 1990's aggregate production reverted to Cursiter Quarry. At this time there was an annual output high of 300,000 tonnes. Annual tonnage outputs vary significantly and are subject to the scale of civil projects being developed.

Following approval for the extension of Cursiter Quarry in 2021, a rolling 12-month limit of 100,000 tonnes is permitted for extraction. There are only two major producers of construction stone in Orkney and only Cursiter Quarry produces coated surfacing materials. OIC Quarries also own:

- Borrow pit (Near Pitcou, leased site), Shapinsay.
- Breck Depot, Eday.
- Loth Quarry, Sanday.
- Pictou Quarry, Shapinsay.
- Walliwall Quarry and compound, Kirkwall.

Whilst these sites may offer potential for extraction, the majority have minimal rock reserves available, however, they can contribute to projects on the outer islands. Some are currently used for storing OIC assets, which, due to its temporary nature, does not sterilise any future need to re-open them. Another important use of quarry sites is outlined in this business plan, the recycling of construction materials, this can reduce the need for raw materials. The quarry is also involved in the development of warm mixes; this process reduces carbon dioxide emissions.

The other large quarry in Orkney is Heddle Quarry, owned by Orkney Aggregates Ltd. Heddle Quarry is situated 1.6km west of Cursiter Quarry. In 2014, annual production at Heddle Quarry was 100,000 tonnes per annum, lower than previous years when there were large infrastructure projects, for example, the Stromness THI and extension of Coplands Pier. In 2014, Heddle Quarry was awarded a 30-year extension until 2045.

Active quarries	Dormant quarries	Historic quarries
<b>Bu Links</b>	Banks Quarry, Rousay	Cruady Quarry, Quoyloo

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<b>Cara Links</b>	Gallo Hill area, Westray	Fersness, Eday	
<b>Cursiter Quarry</b>	Gallow Tuag Quarry, Hoy	Head of Holland	
<b>Gairsty Quarry</b>	Loth Quarry, Sanday	Links of Noltland, Westray	
<b>Grobust Sand workings</b>	Rapness, Westray	Vestra Fiold	
<b>Heddle Quarry</b>	Witter, Hoy	Walliwall, St. Ola (finished 70s/80s probably spent)	
<b>Newark Bay, South Ronaldsay</b>	Liddles, Orphir		
	Pitcou Quarry, Shapinsay		
	Breck Depot, Eday		
	Hellie Quarry, south Ronaldsay		

NB: There are several copper, lead and iron ore quarries from the 1700-1800s. These are not of economic importance; however, they may be of relevance for conservation safeguarding.

### Designations

#### Geological Conservation (OIC136) (OIC135) and (OIC137)

The Geological Conservation Review (GCR) selects sites that contain geological and geomorphological features of national and international importance. There are 900 GCR sites in Scotland, Orkney Islands have 16 GCR sites. The Orcadian sites contain examples of Old Red Sandstone igneous rocks, Non-Marine Devonian Palaeozoic stratigraphy blocks, Palaeozoic Palaeobotany blocks, Silurian – Devonian Chordata, Quaternary of Scotland and Coastal Geomorphology of Scotland. Ten of the GCR sites in Orkney are also designated wholly as SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) or form part of an SSSI. The Orkney Islands' Local

Issue: Topic/Place	17. Minerals
	Nature Conservation Sites include 63 that are listed wholly or partly because of their geodiversity. These are also referenced in Topic 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Trees and Woodlands.
GCR Sites & SSSIs:	
<i>Old Red Sandstone Igneous</i>	<b>Point of Ayre</b>
	<b>Too of the Head (SSSI)</b>
<i>Non-Marine Devonian</i>	Bay of Berstane Greenan Nev Coast, Eday Old Man of Hoy Coast (SSSI) South of Fersness Bay, Eday South of Stromness Coast (SSSI) Taracliff Bay to Newark Bay Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast
<i>Palaeozoic Palaeobotany</i>	Bay of Skaill (SSSI)
<i>Silurian – Devonian Chordata</i>	Cruaday Quarry (SSSI)
<i>Quaternary of Scotland</i>	Den Wick (SSSI) Mill Bay, Stronsay (SSSI) Muckle Head and Selwick North Hoy (Ward Hill, Enegars Corrie and Dwarfie Hamars) (SSSI)
<i>Coastal Geomorphology of Scotland</i>	Central Sanday (SSSI) West Coast of Orkney (SSSI)

The evidence shows that the Orkney Islands have a wealth of geodiversity, including national and local designations. With consideration to the safeguarding of minerals for economic and conservation purposes the scope of safeguarding mineral deposits should include designated geological sites and historic quarries that can be re-opened for temporary periods when required. The Mainland and, especially, the outer isles do apply for quarries to be re-opened in line with specific development projects. Quarry workings that fall entirely or partly within a SSSI require consent from NatureScot to carry out certain operations. The evidence also highlights the importance of minerals for several policy areas and, therefore, their protection should reflect this situation. The fact that there are National Developments in Orkney outlined in NPF4, in the National Developments Statements of Need, augments the requirement to widen the Minerals Safeguard Area.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>17. Minerals</b>
<b>Economic Mineral Extraction and Externalities</b>	
<p>Quarrying is an invasive industrial process that can, if not managed, have negative impacts on the environment and communities. Significant adverse impacts on biodiversity, geodiversity and natural habitats including visual impacts on the landscape. Communities can be impacted by noise and increased traffic movements and the dust can be damaging to people and the environment. Therefore, policy on minerals must include reference to environmental impacts to guide the planning process.</p>	
<b>Identified Gaps:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need for updated aggregate landbank data and future demand projections.</li> </ul>	
<b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b>	
<p>Topic Paper shared with:</p> <p>Manager of Cursiter Quarry at Orkney Islands Council.</p> <p>British Geological Survey (BGS).</p>	
<b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the existing OIC LDP against the relevant policies within NPF4 has highlighted that the exploitation of minerals is permitted on land that includes prime agricultural land or land of a lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use (NPF4 Policy 5 Soils). The parameters for development that will be permitted should be strengthened in the LDP in line with national policy and are discussed below.</li> </ul>	
<p>The evidence has informed matters that need to be addressed in the proposed plan. Therefore, the proposed plan should consider a three-tiered hierarchy for the safeguarding of quarries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Continue to set a Minerals Safeguard Area as outlined in the existing OIC LDP Policy 4.</li> <li>II. Consider safeguarding to meet increased demand for National Developments, which may include further extensions to the largest quarries and/or temporary quarries.</li> <li>III. Consider adding usable quarries in the Outer Isles to cater for local projects.</li> </ol>	
<p>Furthermore, the proposed plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider widening the protection of locally designated sites for conservation and economic purposes, while ensuring there are no significant impacts on biodiversity, geodiversity, the natural and historic environment, sensitive habitats, and visual and landscape interests</li> <li>• Should support on site or co-located renewable energy resource for long-term quarries.</li> <li>• Should continue to give appropriate guidance for when development is likely to be supported, as outlined in NPF4, including an outline of environmental impacts that would require mitigation measures.</li> </ul>	

**Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

All the stakeholders who responded were agreement subject to the incorporation of suggested additions.

NatureScot gave an extensive consultation, and all relevant additions have been incorporated into the text.

Scottish Water had no comments to make regarding this topic.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>18.Aquaculture</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <p>section 15(5)(a) 'the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.'</p>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b>OIC283</b> <a href="#">Orkney Islands Marine Region: Finfish Farming Spatial Guidance</a></p> <p><b>OIC127</b> <a href="#">Orkney Local Development Plan 2017</a></p> <p><b>OIC187</b> <a href="#">OLDP SG Aquaculture</a></p> <p><b>OIC188</b> <a href="#">Orkney landscape capacity for aquaculture: Scapa Flow and Wide Firth</a></p> <p><b>OIC281</b> <a href="#">Scotland's National Marine Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC282</b> <a href="#">Draft Orkney Regional Marine Plan</a></p> <p><b>OIC285</b> <a href="#">Scapa Flow Aquaculture Water Quality Impact Modelling Assessment – Development Management Guidance (2018)</a></p> <p><b>OIC332</b> <a href="#">NatureScot – Marine Aquaculture</a></p> <p><b>OIC333</b> <a href="#">NatureScot – Landscape and Aquaculture</a></p> <p><b>OIC009</b> <a href="#">Orkney Regional Marine Plan state of the environment report</a></p>
<b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b>	
<p>NPF4 states that LDPs should guide new aquaculture development in line with National and Regional Marine Planning, as well as ensuring adverse environmental impacts are minimal, including cumulative impacts, that arise from other existing and planned aquaculture developments in the area while also reflecting industry needs.</p> <p>The policy outcomes NPF4 seeks to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New aquaculture development is in locations that reflect industry needs and considers environmental impacts.</li> <li>• Producers will contribute to communities and local economies.</li> <li>• Prosperous finfish, shellfish, and seaweed sectors.</li> <li>• Migratory fish species are safeguarded.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>18.Aquaculture</b>
Other policies relevant to Policy 32 Aquaculture are Policy 3 Biodiversity and Policy 4 Natural Places; protection of biodiversity and the natural environment.	
<b>Summary of Evidence</b>	
<p><b><u>Orkney Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance Aquaculture (OIC127, OIC187)</u></b></p> <p>The Plan supports an integrated approach to terrestrial and marine planning. The current LDP has a specific Aquaculture Policy with policy criteria assessing effects on various natural, built, cultural and environmental issues relating to users of the marine environment. It also seeks applications to maximise opportunities to deliver social and economic benefits to local communities. The associated Supplementary Guidance sets out how the policy will be interpreted and applied.</p>	
<p><b>Current Context</b></p> <p>Aquaculture is a major employer in Orkney and a key contributor to the local economy. The sector has strong links to marine planning, with policies in the draft Marine Plan and National Marine Plan guiding sustainable growth.</p>	
<p><b><u>Scotland's National Marine Plan (OIC281)</u></b></p> <p>Contains a specific policy around aquaculture and sets out that regional marine plans should consider the potential for sustainable growth of aquaculture in their region, taking into account the policies within the National Marine Plan.</p>	
<p><b><u>Draft Orkney Regional Marine Plan (OIC1282)</u></b></p> <p>Orkney has prepared a consultative draft Regional Marine Plan. The Plan sets out an integrated planning policy framework to guide marine development and activities, whilst ensuring the quality of the marine environment is protected, and where appropriate, enhanced. To accord with the statutory purpose of a regional marine plan, the policies relate directly to public authority decision making on development and activities, and the consideration of use in the marine environment. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decision in accordance with the appropriate marine plans unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.</p>	
<p>The Plan will be used by public authorities in the determination of relevant licences and consents. The Plan's policy framework consists of a suite of general policies and a suite of sector policies. There is a specific policy on aquaculture which has many common criteria with the existing Local Development Plan.</p>	
<p>Salmon farming has been established in Orkney for many years, providing significant employment and wider socio-economic benefits to island communities. Fish farming jobs and the economic value added to local supply chains support the sustainability of island communities, particularly in more remote and economically fragile locations.</p>	
<p>Finfish farming development and/or activities can have significant impacts on the marine environment; associated environmental pressures are identified in the <a href="#">Orkney Regional Marine Plan state of the environment report (OIC009)</a>. It is therefore important that these potential impacts and risks be carefully managed to safeguard the marine environment in Orkney.</p>	

Issue: Topic/Place	18.Aquaculture
<p>Marine fish farming, out to 12 nautical miles, requires planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 ('the 1997 Act). Fish farming is defined in the 1997 Act, for purposes of development, as 'the breeding, rearing or keeping of fish or shellfish, which includes any kind of sea urchin crustacean or mollusc'.</p> <p>Marine fish farms also require a marine licence for equipment and moorings, a Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) licence from SEPA, and a seabed lease from Crown Estate Scotland (CES).</p> <p>There has been significant expansion of salmon farming development and activities in Orkney over recent decades, including new fish farms and increases in equipment size and production, and/or biomass, at existing fish farm sites. This has increased the cumulative impacts on the marine environment and may result in cumulative impacts on European sites. The continuing growth of aquaculture within the North Orkney Special Protected Area (SPA) and its qualifying features at Quanterness are considered to have potential cumulative effects. It is therefore important that the location, scale, siting and design of fish farm development and activities be appropriately managed to safeguard the marine environment and the landscape. An existing piece of research which could help inform the landscape considerations for future aquaculture sites is Orkney landscape capacity for aquaculture: Scapa Flow and Wide Firth (<b>OIC188</b>)</p> <p><b><u>Orkney Islands Marine Region: Draft Finfish Farming Spatial Guidance (OIC283)</u></b></p> <p>To help inform decision making Orkney Islands Marine Region has prepared a draft Finfish Farming Spatial Guidance. This guidance will be used to inform decision making on proposals for finfish farming development and activities in Orkney. The guidance identifies the significance of environmental, historic, social, economic and infrastructure features, and the sensitivity of these features, or receptors, to finfish farming development and activities.</p> <p>It does not identify locations that are suitable or unsuitable for finfish farm development and/or activities. The spatial guidance is a decision support tool to help identify areas of greater and lesser sensitivity and/or constraint to finfish farming development and/or activities.</p> <p>The following issues are mapped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 1: Nature conservation designation receptor locations.</li> <li>• Map 2: Priority Marine Feature locations.</li> <li>• Map 3: Nature conservation receptors significance and sensitivity landscape and seascape.</li> <li>• Map 4: Landscape and seascape receptor location.</li> <li>• Map 5: Landscape and seascape receptors significance and sensitivity Historic environment.</li> <li>• Map 6: Historic environment receptor locations.</li> <li>• Map 7: Historic environment receptors significance and sensitivity Socio-economic/infrastructure.</li> <li>• Map 8: Harbour infrastructure and operations receptor locations.</li> <li>• Map 9: Energy, utilities, and aquaculture infrastructure receptor locations.</li> </ul>	

Issue: Topic/Place	18.Aquaculture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 10: Shipping (AIS data) and ferry route receptor locations.</li> <li>• Map 11: All socio-economic/infrastructure receptors significance and sensitivity all receptors.</li> <li>• Map 12: All receptors significance and sensitivity (i.e. combination of all the maps above).</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Scapa Flow Aquaculture Water Quality Impact Modelling Assessment (OIC285)</u></b></p>	
<p>This guidance provides a predictive far-field modelling assessment of current and proposed finfish fish farms in Scapa Flow. The assessment approach provides a better understanding of the water quality impacts of nutrient dispersion arising from existing and planned fish farms, including cumulative impacts.</p>	
<p>The salmon farming industry is moving towards larger cages, higher biomass sites, and the siting of fish farms in higher energy locations to benefit from improved waste dispersal and to reduce adverse interactions with other marine users. It is anticipated that current technical innovation in the sector will enable finfish farm development in locations further offshore. These innovations have the potential to reduce future development pressure in more sensitive near-shore locations. There is also potential for the development of multitrophic, semi-closed and closed-containment aquaculture.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of Stakeholder Engagement</b></p>	
<p>Engagement has been undertaken with:</p> <p>Orkney Islands Council Marine Planning Team.</p> <p>Salmon Scotland who are the representative body for the Scottish salmon sector.</p> <p>Marine Directorate – Scottish Government.</p>	
<p><b>Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With detailed work having been undertaken in the production of the Draft Orkney Regional Marine Plan and associated draft guidance on finfish and aquaculture it is likely that the next LDP will seek to align with the approach of the Orkney Regional Marine Plan and its spatial guidance, this should help ensure there is a consistent approach to both marine and terrestrial planning giving clarity to decision makers and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Sector Policy 2: Aquaculture in the Draft Regional Marine Plan sets out the environmental sensitivities and constraints in relation to fish farming. These are spatially identified within the supporting guidance, which attributes significant and sensitivity values to produce a heat map/decisions support tool. The draft policy addresses both direct and cumulative impacts on environmental, historic and infrastructure receptors. Sector Policy 2: Aquaculture in the Draft Regional Marine Plan has been prepared to be in conformity with NPF4 Policy 32 Aquaculture and it is intended that it will be included within the new LDP. This is to ensure an integrated approach between land and marine planning as outlined in NPF4.</li> </ul>	

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>18.Aquaculture</b>
<b>Statements of Agreement / Dispute</b>	
<p>There are no areas of dispute from stakeholders.</p> <p>NatureScot requested the addition of some evidence which has been included where relevant.</p> <p>Salmon Scotland noted that they were happy with the evidence gathered at this stage and had no comments to make.</p> <p>Scottish Water had no comments to make regarding this topic.</p>	
<p>Orkney Islands Council Marine Planning Team offered support for the approach to align the next LDP with the Regional Marine Plan.</p>	

## 8. Site Checklists

The Council intends to use assessment checklists as part of its site appraisal process. The checklist will include an assessment of the nature of the effect, a scoring of the significance of the effect before mitigation. What mitigation and enhancement opportunities there are and a scoring after any mitigation is applied. This will include consideration of the site in relation to infrastructure and services. Once all the information is gathered and collated including the scoring for SEA, it will allow officers to make a determination on the suitability of the site for inclusion in the new LDP. Sites that may be deemed suitable for inclusion in the new LDP will be subject to further assessment to ensure that they are deliverable and effective it should be noted that changes may be made to the checklists in the future to ensure that they are fit for purpose and cover all pertinent issues.

### Assessment for site assessment

++	+	0	?	-	--
Significantly positive	Positive	Minor or neutral	Uncertain	Adverse	Significantly adverse

Settlement		Source of site suggestion:		Summary Description:		
Site assessment question		Related SEA topic	Comment Information available – GIS/site visit?	Scoring pre mitigation	Mitigation	Scoring post mitigation
<b>Climate change</b>						
Is the proposal close to a range of facilities? Can these be accessed by public transport?	Population and Human health					
Is the proposal protected from prevailing winds?						
Site aspect – does the proposal make best use of solar gain?						
Is the proposal thought to be at risk of flooding or could its development result	Water and Human Health					

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Source of site suggestion:</b>		<b>Summary Description:</b>		
<b>Site assessment question</b>	<b>Related SEA topic</b>	<b>Comment Information available – GIS/site visit?</b>	<b>Scoring pre mitigation</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Scoring post mitigation</b>
in additional flood risk elsewhere?					
Could the development of the proposal help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?	Water				
<b>Biodiversity, Flora, and Fauna</b>					
To what extent will the proposal affect any international or national biodiversity designation, e.g. SAC/SPA/Ramsar/SSSI?					
To what extent will the proposal affect any locally important designations such as LNRs or LNCSSs.					
To what extent will the proposal affect non designated features – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, species rich grasslands,					
To what extent will the proposal affect Protected Species –e.g. bats, otters, etc.?					
How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?					

<b>Water</b>					
Could the option result in a change of status of a water body or significantly affect a designated water body as identified in the Scotland River Basin Management Plan?	Water				
Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?					
Could the proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example result in the need for watercourse crossings or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse?)	Water				
Does the proposal avoid impact on Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs), i.e. are there any wetlands and boggy areas on the site?	Water and Biodiversity, Fauna, and Flora				
For large scale developments are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the proposal which may be affected?	Water and Human Health				
<b>Soils</b>					
Is the proposal on greenfield or brownfield land?	Material Assets and Soils				
Does it result in the loss of high-quality agricultural land?					
Are there any contaminated soil issues on the proposal and if so, will the option reduce contamination?	Material Assets and Soils				
Is the proposal on peatland and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat?	Climatic Factors and Soils				

Are there any national geodiversity sites that could be affected by the proposal?						
Are there any local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal?						
<b>Landscape</b>						
To what extent will any designated sites be affected – including NSAs and local landscape designations?	Landscape					
Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as current settlement boundaries, existing townscape, and character of surrounding area?	Landscape					
To what extent will the proposal affect features of landscape interest, including the distinctive character of the landscape and the qualities of wild land?	Landscape					
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>						
Is development of the proposal likely to affect any Scheduled monuments or their setting?	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape					
Is development of the proposal likely to affect any locally important archaeological site?	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape					

Is development of the proposal likely to affect any listed buildings and/or their setting?	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape				
Is development of the proposal likely to affect any Conservation Areas? (e.g. will it result in the demolition of any buildings)	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape				
Is development of the proposal likely to affect any Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape?	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape				
Is development of the proposal likely to affect the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site?	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape				
Is development of the proposal likely to result in the opportunity to enhance or improve access to the historic environment?	Cultural heritage, and links with landscape				
<b>Service Infrastructure</b>					
Are there educational or health facilities nearby?	Population				
To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space, or result in a loss of open space?	Population, human health, or material assets				
To what extent will development of the proposal affect core path links or other key access networks such as cycle paths, coastal paths, and rights of way?	Population, human health, material assets or climatic factors				

Is there any opportunity to enhance the green network through for example green infrastructure on site?	Population, human health, or material assets				
<b>Material assets</b>					
Will development of the proposal minimise demand on primary resources e.g. does it re-use an existing structure or recycle or recover existing on-site materials / resources?					
Is the proposal in the vicinity of a waste management site and could its development therefore compromise the waste handling operation?	Human health				
<b>Deliverability/sustainability constraints</b>					
Will the proposal be delivered within the LDP timeframe? Are there any site servicing constraints, e.g. wastewater treatment capacity?	Material assets				
Are there any vehicular access constraints or opportunities - is the road network capable of accommodating traffic generated?	Material assets and climatic factors				

## **9. Summary of SEA Scoping Responses from Consultation Authorities**

The SEA Scoping report has been prepared and there have been responses from the relevant Consultation Authorities.

**A summary of the responses from each Consultation Authority is below**

**Historic Environment Scotland** - We understand that the scoping report sets out the approach to the assessment of Orkney Island Council Local Development Plan and that the historic environment has been scoped into the assessment. On the basis of the information provided, we are content with the approach outlined in the report and are satisfied with the scope and level of detail proposed for the assessment, subject to the detailed comments in the attached annex. We welcome that the historic environment is scoped into the assessment.

**NatureScot** – Subject to the specific comments set out below in the annex to this letter, NatureScot is content with the scope and level of detail proposed in the Environmental Report. We welcome that the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been considered as part of the SEA for the proposed Local Development Plan.

**SEPA** - We agree that in this instance all environmental topics should be scoped into the assessment. We are content with the proposed detailed assessment matrix and particularly welcome the commentary box to fully explain the rationale behind the assessment results. We also welcome the link between effects and mitigation / enhancement measures in the proposed assessment framework and the consideration of mitigation of impacts.