



The Orkney Partnership
Working together for a better Orkney

Draft at 29 April 2024



**Net Zero
Orkney**

*Our vision for
a climate-resilient and
net zero future*

Spring 2024

Orkney vision for a climate resilient and Net Zero future

Climate Change is real, it is a threat to life on our planet and is being driven by human activity. Global warming is already here and, unless our response is greatly accelerated, the lives of billions of people are already threatened as more of our planet will be unable to sustain human life.

Orkney will not be immune to these impacts and many, including young people, are worried for their futures: both the future of the planet and their own financial security, and that causes anxiety.

The good news is that we have the power to reduce emissions, protect biodiversity and improve lives. By being at the forefront of change, Orkney will attract investment in our society that can benefit everyone.

The Orkney Partnership, in The Orkney Community Plan 2023/30 (see appendix), set out its ambition to achieve Net Zero in Orkney. This Vision begins to describe how we will make the journey which will take us from where we are now to where we want to be.

Our vision is a future which meets the challenge head on, where:

- The world is transitioning to Net Zero through a radical cut in climate change emissions during the current decade and to achieve Net Zero for Scotland by 2045 and globally by 2050.¹
- We are doing everything we can to ensure that Orkney will be ahead of the curve, aiming for sector Net Zero Emissions by 2030 and a fully decarbonised (zero carbon) island economy by 2045.
- Orkney's economy, communities and natural environment all prosper and benefit, playing a leading part in achieving a Just Transition.

What this means for Orkney

- Orkney is a small place, but we can make a disproportionately large contribution to addressing global warming while enabling our communities to benefit from these changes.
- We have set a high ambition that will require new ways of working (see below on how we will work with our partners). Our aim is to innovate and collaborate at pace. All partners are clear that a step change is now required.
- We are a testbed for innovative developments that will help the world conduct a Just Transition and we want Orkney to be recognised and our communities to benefit from our pioneering contribution. This work needs to be supported and every opportunity explored to grow and develop sustainable and impactful initiatives in the green and blue economies.

¹ There is now clarity internationally on the meaning of Net Zero (for actors below the global level), and this consensus involves cutting emission by (almost) 50% by 2030 from the 2020 levels and achieving net zero emissions by mid-century. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/high-level-expert-group>

- As well as underpinning our agricultural sector and islands' economy, our soils and pastures are also an important carbon store. We will work with our farming community to benefit from and support net zero transition opportunities.
- We need to reduce our own emissions, including the necessary investment in active and sustainable travel, moving rapidly towards low and zero emission forms of transport. Not just a shift from private petrol cars to private electric vehicles, but a move from less private to more public transport and active travel journeys.
- We can and should make a disproportionate contribution to the production of renewable energy through a range of different developments. Alongside this, we must ensure that we continue our success in attracting green jobs, and that these jobs are long-term and contribute to the community.
- We will ensure that more of the wealth generated in Orkney is retained in the county and shared more equitably through Community Wealth Building, including community ownership in the energy sector.
- We want the heating in our homes and buildings to be sustainable and affordable through modern forms of heating and improved insulation and building standards. This will deliver homes that are warm and dry, with no-one living in fuel poverty.
- We will help Orkney to become resilient to the changing climate, adapting and addressing projected impacts (flooding, sea levels, increased extreme weather).

How we will work as partners

- **Community engagement** – This vision can only be achieved with the active participation of the whole community, including determining how the vision will be delivered.
- **Collaboration and Co-ordination** – Active collaboration both through the Orkney Partnership and beyond.
- **Urgency and ownership** – All Partners will actively understand and manage down their emissions towards net zero.
- **Active Planning** – Focus is required on investigating options and preparing cases for emission savings at the earliest opportunities possible.
- **Transparency** – Partners will be transparent in addressing the climate emergency, setting interim and longer-term targets and collectively reporting on our progress.
- **Sustainability** – In addressing the Climate Emergency, we will seek 'Island Proofed' and sustainable approaches, following Doughnut Economics Principles of Practice.

Our priorities will include:

- 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.

- 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.
- Decarbonisation and net zero projects that require partners to innovate and work together and which can secure funding to support Orkney’s transition.
- 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.
- We will urgently reduce fuel poverty through both reactive and proactive measures, with a focus on household and business energy efficiency and use.
- Supporting Climate Adaptation and Resilience, helping Orkney to understand and respond to projected and emerging climate change impacts for our islands and communities.
- 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.

Summary

Orkney: ‘A secure, sustainable, low carbon island economy driven uniquely by innovation and collaboration: enabling the community to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets, address fuel poverty and provide energy system solutions to the world.’²

Appendix



<https://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/>

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² Orkney Sustainable Energy Strategy (2017).