

Item: 8

Orkney Towns Board: 12 May 2025

Local Place Plans – Investment Potential

1. Overview

- 1.1. This report aims to provide context to Place Planning and outline the potential for the Orkney Towns Board to allocate funding to support Local Place Plans across Orkney.
- 1.2. It provides a summary of existing Place Plans within Orkney, highlighting areas that have already received a plan, as well as identifying other regions that could potentially receive funding to develop their own Place Plans in the near future.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Orkney Towns Board:
 - i. Approve the allocation of capacity funding to support applications for Local Place Plans and the Expression of Interest (EoI) form attached as Appendix 1 to launch this process.

3. Background

- 3.1. Following the release of the UK Government's Plan for Neighbourhoods prospectus, which outlines additional capacity funding of £200,000 through to March 2026, the Orkney Towns Board Chair seeks to explore the potential allocation of funding to support additional Local Place Planning across Orkney. After a meeting between the Chair, Deputy Chairs, and OIC staff, it was agreed that a summary of Local Place Plans across Orkney be prepared to identify opportunities for funding these initiatives.
- 3.2. Capacity funding is intended to improve community consultation outcomes, providing the Board with evidence of community needs that can be addressed through grant funding over the course of the 10-year programme.

- 3.3. The outcomes of Place Plans are considered potentially useful in complementing existing community engagement and consultation results, which collectively contribute to the development of the OTB Vision and 4-year regeneration plan, due in Winter 2025.
- 3.4. A broad estimate of the potential cost of supporting Place Planning based on approximately £10k per plan suggests between £30-50k could facilitate plans that are currently being considered but are yet unfunded.

4. Place Plans Overview

- 4.1. Local Place Plans focus on enhancing community engagement, reducing conflict, and building public trust in planning matters. They provide an opportunity for a community-led, collaborative approach to creating vibrant local spaces. Local Place Plans can help address the key challenges faced by a community and support its aspirations. It is essential that local people and statutory agencies have the chance to engage meaningfully and positively influence the future planning and development of their areas. The goal is to significantly improve engagement in development planning, empowering communities to take a proactive role in shaping the future of their places.
- 4.2. Local Place Plans provide a framework for communities, in collaboration with local authorities and other public sector organisations, to develop proposals that align with local outcomes. The process of creating a Place Plan helps build confidence that potential projects will meet the community's desired goals. These plans also strengthen funding applications by demonstrating community engagement, giving communities a greater influence over projects that address key challenges and opportunities in their area.
- 4.3. The process of submitting a Local Place Plan begins with a community working together with local authorities and other public sector bodies to identify local needs and aspirations. Communities gather input through consultations, workshops, and surveys to develop a shared vision for their area. The plan outlines projects that address local challenges and opportunities. Once the Place Plan is drafted, it is submitted to the local authority for consideration. The plan must align with broader planning policies and demonstrate community support. If approved, it can influence local development and attract funding for identified projects.

- 4.4. It is not possible to project the costs of developing a Place Plan for any community, but broadly, officers note that these have previously been around £10k for local community areas. Place Plans for Kirkwall and Stromness, which were previously funded by Sustrans, were considerably more expensive and involved. However, any refresh would be significantly less costly to update the plan.

5. Place Plans in Orkney

- 5.1. Several areas in Orkney, including Kirkwall (2018) and Stromness (2019), have successfully completed Local Place Plans. While these plans continue to hold significant relevance, there is a growing need to revisit and update them to address emerging challenges. For instance, Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council has recently reached out to Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) to explore opportunities for a refreshed Place Plan. Additionally, the Stromness Community Development Trust has expressed interest in developing an updated Place Plan to ensure the community's needs and priorities are effectively reflected in future planning efforts.
- 5.2. The current 2025/2026 Expression of Interest (Eoi) round for the Scottish Government Community Led Local Development funding (CLLD) has identified several Place Plans eligible for and interested in funding plans. Additionally, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will also support Place Plans in Orkney, with intentions to fund Place Plans through the LAG.
- 5.3. Where CLLD cannot afford to fund Place Plans due to too big a revenue funding ask, it is anticipated that the Orkney Towns Board can stand in and fund them, ensuring the pot of revenue funding goes further and has maximum impact.

Expression of Interest (Eoi) for the Orkney Towns Fund (OTF) 2025/26

Please return this form to orkneytownsfund@orkney.gov.uk by midnight on Sunday 15th June 2025. An Officer will be in touch once received. If you have any questions meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Orkney's 2025/26 OTF allocation of capacity funding has been confirmed as XX. The overall OTF investment plan for 2025-2030 has not yet been approved by OIC or UK Government. The EOI process will help pull out projects that are eligible and can be delivered in the 4-year Investment Plan. This initial funding does not guarantee any subsequent delivery funding from OTF.

Organisation name	
Contact name	
Position	
Organisation type	
Contact address	
Phone number	
Email address	
Project name	
Project location	
<p>Please tick the box(es) to indicate which of the Orkney Towns Fund grants you are hoping to apply for:</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Place Plan The development of Place Plans, where the community has indicated a desire for such a plan to ensure that their wishes influence future planning decisions. Place Plans also identify the priority projects that the community wish to see progressed and lend weight to funding applications.</p>
Estimated project cost	
Estimated OTF funding	
<p>Project description (paragraph):</p>	

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For office use only:

1. Suitable for OTF funding? – Yes/No

2. Level of Funding Requested is Reasonable/Appropriate? – Yes No

<input type="checkbox"/>	Further contact made to assist progression	Date of Initial Enquiry:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advised not suitable for OTF funding	Project Ref:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Applicant has withdrawn	Scanned for File:	

Officer	
Date	

DRAFT