



The Orkney Partnership



Working together for a better Orkney

Photo courtesy of Colin Keldie/Orkney.com

Community Planning Frequently Asked Questions

October 2018

COMMUNITY PLANNING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These FAQs have been put together in response to common questions raised by people who are new to community planning as well as those who have been involved with the process for some time. Their aim is to provide enough information about the background and structure of community planning in Orkney to explain what it is all about.



'Community planning is an important challenge for Orkney. It has the potential to create a more efficient structure for the public sector in Orkney and provide improved services to our communities. In such unsettling economic times all public services are expected to do more in terms of providing improved services to larger groups, yet with less financial resource. Through community planning we must find imaginative solutions within this difficult environment, notably through better joint working. It also ensures we concentrate on those areas most in need of intervention.'

'Community planning can be a tricky concept to grasp. This may be because it is something we do naturally here in a small community, and in fact it would seem illogical not to pull together. It's important for you as a member of the Orkney Partnership to understand that we're working together towards a shared agenda. Our mission is Working Together for a Better Orkney, and that is essentially what we do.'

Councillor James Stockan

Chair of the Orkney Partnership

If you have unanswered questions, please send them to us and we'll answer them and include them in the next update of the FAQs. Contact details for the Community Planning Business Manager are at the end of this document, and there are suggestions throughout about further resources to look at.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY PLANNING?

According to the Scottish Government, 'Community planning is a process that helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives.'

Community planning is something which has happened in Orkney since long before it was given a title. It existed in an informal way due to the small, naturally collaborative way we do things here and then became a statutory duty in 2003. Its powers were updated under the new [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#).

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN PRACTICE?

It means public service providers working together, and with communities, to improve the quality of people's lives. In community planning what matters most is the outcomes - what is actually achieved and how people's lives change as a result.

We work with local communities, businesses, charities and voluntary groups and together we plan to improve and deliver better, more joined-up public services in Orkney.

By working together in partnership we can achieve much more than we could achieve as individual organisations. In many areas individual agencies are already working well, but through community planning we can identify and target any problem areas or gaps in provision and tackle these inequalities together. We can also make a concerted effort to address large and complex challenges.

To make sure we're doing the right thing, as we go along we need to ensure our communities and communities of interest are engaged in the decisions made about the services they use. This engagement work paves the way for the path that we need to follow together.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN ORKNEY?

Orkney's community planning partnership is called 'The Orkney Partnership'. Sometimes known as TOP or 'the Partnership' it is the lead body for joint working in Orkney.

The Partnership is headed up by a Board, supported by an Executive Group of senior officers. Each of the Board's strategic priorities is assigned to a Delivery Group:

- Living Well
- Strong Communities
- Vibrant Economy

From time to time the Board and the Delivery Groups set up short life working groups to address specific tasks on their behalf.

The Partnership focuses exclusively on problem areas which will take imagination and innovation to resolve, and challenges which no single agency can solve on its own. The structure has been designed to meet an evolving process and changing priorities. Although the overall core [structure](#) will remain the same over time, the focus or number of Delivery Groups may alter to reflect current and emerging priorities for Orkney.

Some problems arise in areas where challenges exist for all partner agencies, both individually and collectively. Cross-cutting issues locally are transport, housing, connectivity and fuel poverty. These cross-cutting issues have clear workstreams, led by individual agencies. The Board receives regular updates on these issues to ensure that relevant aspects are being addressed by partner organisations.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Community planning has a wide reach in terms of the number of organisations who are involved. The Council, NHS Orkney, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all have a statutory duty to **facilitate** community planning.

The following organisations have a statutory duty to **participate** in the process: Scottish Natural Heritage, Sportscotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Historic Environment Scotland, Orkney Health and Care, University of the Highlands and Islands, HiTrans, Skills Development Scotland and VisitScotland. In addition to all of those specified in the statute, we have included Voluntary Action Orkney, the Orkney Community Justice Partnership and Orkney Housing Association Limited in the essential core group of organisations who participate in community planning in Orkney.

The Improvement Service was also co-opted to advise on good practice. The Improvement Service is the national improvement organisation for local government in Scotland and provides advisory services to councils and their partners. You can read more about the support they provide to community planning partnerships [here](#).

A range of other organisations also play an important part in the Orkney Partnership as members of the Delivery Groups, for example: Job Centre Plus, Orkney Blide Trust, Age Scotland Orkney, Orkney Care and Repair, the Pickaquoy Centre Trust and Community Development Trusts. This is by no means a complete list but illustrates the wide range of service providers who contribute towards the process.

WHAT IS THE ORKNEY PARTNERSHIP DOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND?

Every community planning partnership is required to publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). Orkney's LOIP is incorporated in the Orkney Community Plan, a three-year rolling plan that is refreshed, updated and reissued every year. It's produced by the Partnership as our commitment to the people of Orkney and sets

out what we hope to achieve by working in partnership, over and above what we could achieve as individual organisations. Some of the developments described in the plan will be part of our lives for decades to come as it includes our long term vision for Orkney as well as our current strategic priorities.

We demonstrate through the LOIP how our planned activity will contribute towards Scotland's National Outcomes.

The Delivery Groups each have their own outcomes and activities and they report progress to every Board meeting. The Board has a strategic role and is responsible for developing the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. The Board explores and maximises opportunities for joint working, sets outcomes for the Partnership as a whole and provides a scrutiny role. The Board also takes the lead on priorities where the issues are too big for local action alone and the Partnership needs to liaise with the Scottish Government, for example support for remote and rural housing development.

When we published our first community plan in 2003 our most pressing aim was to reverse the population decline of the previous century to ensure Orkney's survival and sustainability. By the time of the Census in 2011 the population had reached 21,349, an increase of almost 11%, and is still continuing to rise.

You can find out more about [our plans](#) on the Orkney Partnership section of the Orkney Communities website.

WHAT'S MY ROLE?

Your role in community planning will vary depending on which group you're involved in. You may be a member of a Delivery Group which contributes towards a particular priority, for example Living Well, or perhaps you're on a short term working group. Or you may be a member of the Board, which is the decision-making body. You may be involved as an officer representing an organisation, as someone representing a community, or an Elected Member.

The best way to find out about your role and where it fits in the structure is to refer to the Orkney Partnership Terms of Reference which you can find [here](#). Alternatively, you can contact the Community Planning Business Manager for a chat about what the group does and what your role will be.

If you're not on a group you still have a role. Consultation and engagement is at the heart of community planning and we want everyone to have the opportunity to let us have their views on matters that are important to them - whether as part of a group such as a hall committee or as an individual. You can do this by responding to consultations or by getting in touch with us at any time.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITY PLANNING DO FOR ME?

Community planning has the potential to better align the priorities of all the organisations involved in the process. In a place as small as Orkney, it's often neither efficient nor cost effective for each organisation to undertake work or community engagement alone. The benefits to you, whatever your role, include:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of what other organisations are doing in your area of work.
- More efficient ways of working, for example through joint working. As you'll know, living and working in a small place depends upon this collaborative approach to problems.
- Getting things done which your organisation would not be able to do on its own.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A wide range of information is available on [the Orkney Partnership](#) section of the Orkney Communities website.

You can also contact the Community Planning Business Manager by e-mail on corporateservices@orkney.gov.uk or by telephone on 01856 873535 extension 2153.