



**The Orkney Partnership**

*Working together for a better Orkney*

# Non-linked Isles

## Locality Plan 2018-2021

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several horizontal, wavy lines in shades of blue and teal, flowing from left to right.

**Closure Report – June 2022**

## **Introduction**

This report captures the work done to delivery the Non-linked Isles Locality Plan 2018/21 and the lessons learnt.

The Orkney Partnership is the name for Orkney's Community Planning Partnership. The Partnership has duty under law (The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) to identify any areas within its boundaries that are relatively disadvantaged in terms of social and economic opportunities. It is then required to write and deliver a plan setting out what the partners will do to improve socio-economic outcomes in the area. This is called a Locality Plan.

The Locality Plan complements the Orkney Community Plan (also known as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan or LOIP) which addresses deprivation across the county.

## **Why were the Ferry Linked Isles chosen?**

The Ferry Linked Isles (referred to as the Non-linked Isles in the Locality Plan) are among the most beautiful places to live in our county and there are many advantages to those who live in each of the islands. Every resident considers their own island to be special, and they are right, each island is unique and offers its own advantages.

Along with these advantages are disadvantages such as:

1. The cost of living is more expensive, such as the cost of buying food and fuel.
2. It is time consuming and expensive to travel to receive many essential services, whether it is the dentist or school with many of our children having to commute daily or weekly for their education.
3. Employment opportunities, including for our young people, are much more limited.

If these islands are to continue to thrive and maintain populations then we must not neglect them. For this reason, it was decided that Orkney's first Locality Plan would be for the Ferry Linked Isles.

## **The consultation process and how the priorities were set**

This is set out in full in the Locality Plan (Appendix One) and summarised below.

The Partnership decided to carry out what is known as a Place Standard Survey. This is a methodology used across Scotland and the UK for communities to assess what in their area is most in need of improvement. More details about the approach is available here: <https://placestandard.scot/>

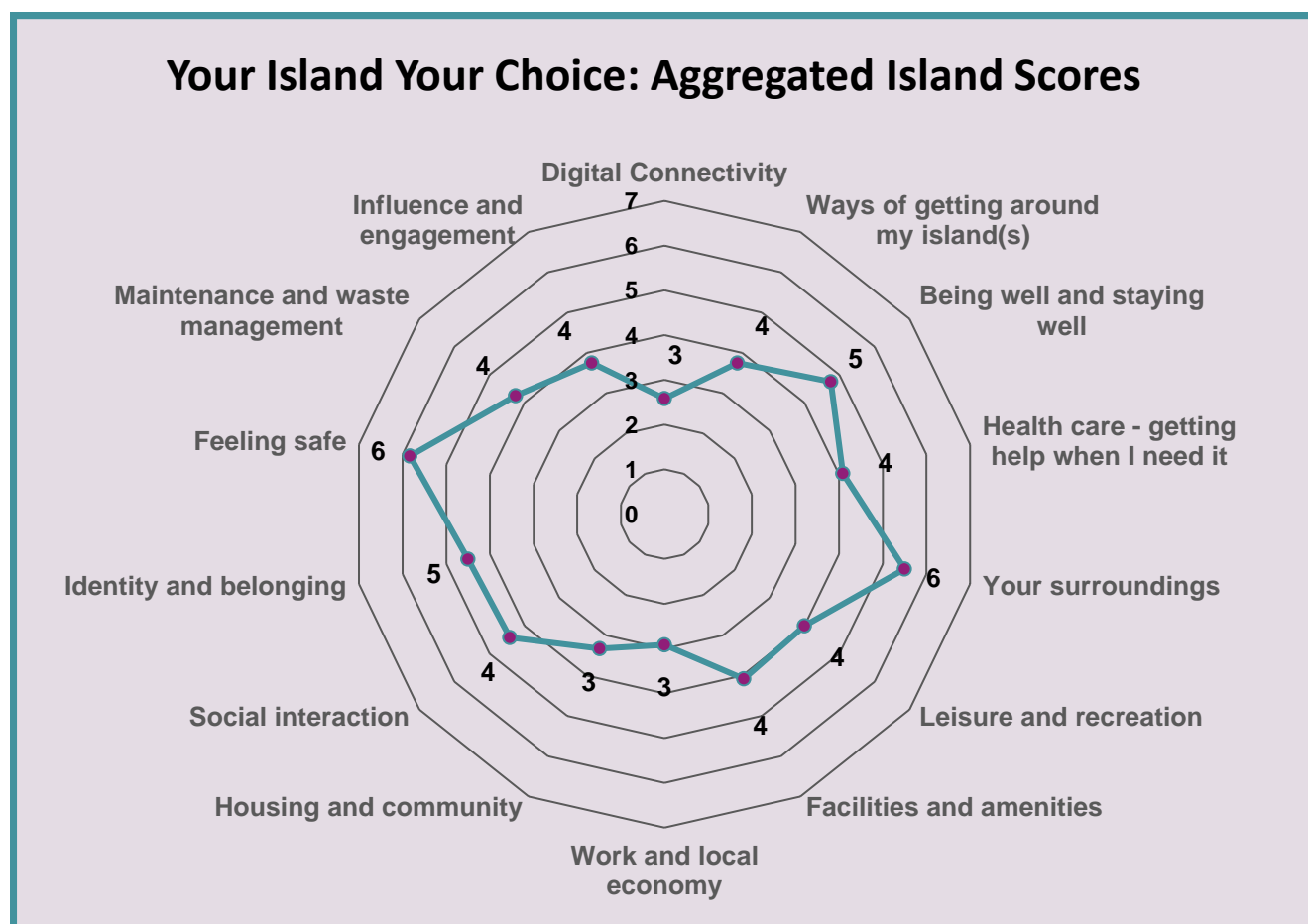
The survey was managed by Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) on behalf of the Orkney Partnership.

The consultation process involved a paper and online survey which ran between from October to December 2016. Residents on each island were asked what they thought of 14 aspects of life in their community, to comment on each of these and to score each aspect on a scale from 1 to 7 where:

- 1 = needs a great deal of improvement
- 7 = does not need a great deal of improvement

A total of 376 responses were received. Several of these were completed collectively, for example by lunch club members or groups of young people, so the number who contributed their views was higher than the number of responses.

#### *Aggregate results of the Place Standard consultation:*



Five themes scored less than the half-way score of 3.5, indicating that they might be the top priorities for action:

Digital connectivity	2.39
Work and local economy	2.68
Housing and community	2.87
Influence and engagement	3.16

Follow-up meetings were held in each of the non-linked isles between 21 November and 16 December 2016 and the participants agreed that these five issues were the priority for the Ferry Linked Isles.

Much valuable activity was already taking place in the Isles and some of these were included in Appendix 1 of the Locality Plan. Consequently, the Locality Plan focused the collective efforts on where the Partnership could make the most difference to the Ferry Linked Isles.

### **Agreement of the Plan**

After consultation, the final draft of the Locality Plan was submitted to The Orkney Partnership's Board (the governing body of the Partnership) 19 March 2018 and agreed.

### **Monitoring of the Plan**

Progress with the Locality Plan was monitored by the Partnership's Stronger Communities Delivery Group which in turn reported to the Board. Both of these met quarterly. If problems were encountered and progress was slower than anticipated, this Delivery Group and the Board took action to overcome those problems.

More information about the role of Delivery Groups and how the Board operated during this period is available in the Orkney Community Plan/LOIP 2019-22 available here:

<https://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/documents/orkney%20community%20plan/orkney-community-plan-2019-22-incorporating-the-loip-indexed.pdf>

The Locality Plan continued to be monitored in this way until March 2020 when the UK and Scottish Governments introduced Lockdown and the other responses to Covid-19. The Partners and the Partnership then focused on the tasks necessary to protect the public from Covid-19 and, later in the year, what was required to recover from Covid. Work continued to be done by the Partners to address the priorities in the Locality Plan, but was inevitably delayed. Although the Plan was due to finish 31 March 2021, this Closure Report captures actions to the end of March 2022 in part to compensate for this delay and in part to assist the Partnership in deciding its priorities for future locality planning.

## **Your Islands Your Choice**

To encourage participation in the Place Standard Survey, a pilot Participatory Budgeting (PB) exercise, Your Island Your Choice, was conducted alongside it, using funding awarded from the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund for small grants PB. This was an opportunity to pilot PB and at the same time enable each island community to choose some "early win" projects to progress the priorities they had identified for their island.

Local Participatory Budgeting Steering Groups were set up on the Isles, training on Participatory Budgeting delivered and VAO developed tools for each community to use. The groups decided to divide the money available up equally between each of the isles and residents were given a chance to vote on projects which would progress the top five priorities selected in the Place Standard exercise. This was done by different means in the different islands – some opted for meetings, some for voting by post and others used methods such as dropping counters into jam jars in the isles shop (similar to the method cur the meetings and via post).

Some of the funds were reserved for multi-island projects and a PB session was organised in Kirkwall to vote on these. The event was attended and reported on by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) for their PB Scotland website: [A Masterclass in Co-operation: PB in Orkney — PB Scotland](#)

Following publication of the Locality Plan, in 2018/19, Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) took the lead on behalf of the Partnership in a second Participatory Budgeting exercise in the Ferry Linked Isles. Projects, as before, had to support the five priorities set in the 2016/17 Place Standard – which were now embedded in the Locality Plan – and residents of thirteen isles took part. A total of 54 projects received funding including:

- Computer Club
- Dark Sky Lighting
- Projects providing facilities for community centres and groups
- Road improvement
- Rat eradication
- Travel funds

## Report on actions taken and ongoing work

### Digital connectivity

#### What outcomes are we aiming for?

- Digital and mobile infrastructure solutions which reliably meet the present and future needs of all businesses, services, residents, and visitors on the non-linked isles.
- By 2021, all premises on the isles will have the option to connect to superfast broadband at a minimum speed of 30 Mbps.

#### What more needed to be done?

Action	Lead	Action undertaken up to 31 March 2022	Ongoing work
<b>1</b> The Orkney Partnership will work together to develop a compelling business case for those areas in Orkney that do not have affordable and reliable full digital connectivity, including the impacts on: health services, education provision, business opportunities, training provision, employment, and social lives.	Vibrant Economy Delivery Group (VEDG) then (from 2021) the Connectivity Delivery Group	Plumb Consulting were engaged by Orkney Islands Council (OIC) to support the development of a digital infrastructure investment case for the County. The draft report was completed prior to 31 March 2022 and the final version will be submitted first to the Council's elected members and then the Connectivity Delivery Group and the Board in September 2022.	A Communications Plan for the Connectivity Delivery Group will be drawn up in 2022.  The Communication Plan will address the Digital Connectivity needs of the county and the specific needs of the Ferry Linked Isles and the requirement to continue to put a specific business case for a full rollout to the islands.

<p><b>2</b> The Orkney Partnership Board, along with the Shetland Partnership and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, will engage with the R100 programme and add its collective voice to the messages coming from the three Island councils.</p>	<p>Orkney Partnership Board</p>	<p>The Council led partners in lobbying for the reach of the national R100 scheme to extend to all isles premises. Following assignment of the North Lot contract, focus has shifted to collective optimisation of the voucher scheme and developing bespoke solutions to supply superfast broadband to areas left out of R100.</p>	<p>Ongoing. To be included in the Communications Strategy for the Connectivity DG.</p>
<p><b>3</b> The Vibrant Economy Delivery Group will take the lead in exploring interim wireless solutions for those localities on the non-linked isles which are currently without an acceptable broadband service.</p>	<p>Vibrant Economy Delivery Group</p>	<p>Several trials were run in Orkney and infrastructure is now in place for much of the area.</p>	<p>Ongoing – to be included in the Delivery Plan of the Connectivity DG.</p>
<p><b>4</b> The Orkney Partnership will promote take-up of superfast fibre broadband.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Take-up was promoted as it became available but has remained lower than anticipated, for reasons which need further research. Barriers may relate to cost and/or lack of confidence regarding technology.</p>	<p>The current need will be reviewed consideration given to how the Partnership can encourage take-up as part of the Connectivity DG Plan.</p>

## Work and local economies

### What outcomes are we aiming for?

- An increasing proportion of relatively well paid, full time and permanent employment on the isles.
- Better local access to further and higher education, research and development, and training programmes in key skills.
- Sustainable development which adds value to primary production on the isles and creates new opportunities.

### What more needed to be done?

Action	Lead	Action undertaken	What still needs to be done
<b>5</b> Collate information on existing groups carrying out community development to identify gaps in capacity and inequalities between islands and explore solutions towards tackling such gaps and inequalities.	Strong Communities Delivery Group  Since 2021, the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group	Groups identified in the Locality Plan 2018/21, Appendix One, and Inequalities identified in Appendix Two of the Plan.  Information was collated on existing community development support to identify gaps in capacity and inequalities between islands. A support plan was developed, and immediate needs were addressed.  Home working arrangements have been introduced across the county as a temporary response to Covid-19, organisations are learning the	Needs assessment for the new Locality Plan for 2023+ will involve an assessment of the challenges and inequalities facing different localities within Orkney and will form part of the agreed action plan.  For example, work will be done to explore the need for work hubs to be established on different isles (and other parts of Orkney) to allow residents to take up employment opportunities in the Mainland and across the world.



		lessons to open-up employment opportunities for those on the ferry linked isles.	
<b>6</b> Keep a watching brief to ensure any opportunities arising from Brexit are seized.	Vibrant Economy Delivery Group  Ongoing work is being done by the Sustainable Recovery Delivery Group, OIC's Community Led Local Development Team (formerly the Leader Team), HIE, and the Community Planning Business Manager.	EU funding, including Leader, supported projects that supported the objectives of the Plan across the Isles during the period of the project.	This will include the successor to Leader Funding, changed funding for agriculture and fisheries, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the Levelling Up Fund. A bid will be submitted to the latter to improve piers on some isles to allow for 'roll on – roll-off' ferries to dock.
<b>7</b> Rollout of Empowering Communities project to Hoy and Sanday.	OIC	The rollout of the Empowering Communities project to Hoy and Sanday was completed in 2018.	None.
<b>8</b> Rollout of Empowering Communities project to other islands, subject to availability of funding.	OIC	Information and guidance have been disseminated and specific events/sessions delivered.	Ongoing: New Locality Plan to continue to highlight the need for identifying funding opportunities as they arise and assist with applications on request.
<b>9</b> Support isles community organisations to add value to projects undertaken as part of the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS).	Strong Communities Delivery Group	A series of different projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wildlife recording with 160 people.</li></ul>	Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oral history recording with over interviews.</li><li>• A programme of dyke repairs in North Ronaldsay delivered.</li><li>• Improvements to paths on five islands.</li></ul>	
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## Housing and communities

### What outcomes are we aiming for?

- Sufficient affordable and attractive housing to accommodate anyone wishing to live and work on the isles.
- Smart housing that meets 21st century requirements for home working, smaller households, and ageing populations.
- Greatly reduced fuel poverty among households in the non-linked isles.

### What more needed to be done?

Action	Lead	Action undertaken	Further action going forward
<b>10</b> The Orkney Partnership will liaise with the Fuel Poverty Group to identify any opportunities for the Partnership to assist.	Living Well Delivery Group Since 2021: Community Wellbeing Delivery Group	The Fuel Poverty Group has not been active but partners have worked with third sector bodies notably THAW to develop policy such as the Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26 which includes actions to address fuel poverty as a contributor to child poverty.	Ongoing: CWDG. The needs of the Ferry Linked Isles will be considered as part of the 2023-27 Fuel Poverty Strategy (in development) and monitored by the Community Wellbeing DG.
<b>11</b> Individual partner agencies to make referrals to ensure schemes to assist with fuel poverty and housing improvements are catching the most vulnerable households.	Living Well Delivery Group	Ongoing, depending on schemes available.	Ongoing: CWDG. The needs of the Ferry Linked Isles will be considered as part of the 2023-27 Fuel Poverty Strategy and monitored by the Community Wellbeing DG.

<p><b>12</b> Where communities are successful in accessing funding from the Islands Housing Fund, Partners will support them to gain the maximum benefit from the award.</p>	<p>Strong Communities Delivery Group</p>	<p>Westray, Papa Westray, North Ronaldsay, Sanday, Shapinsay and Stronsay Trusts have been supported with their applications, received funding, and were supported in delivering their plans.</p>	<p>Ongoing: CWDG.</p>
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## Influence and engagement

### What outcomes are we aiming for?

- Isles residents have regular opportunities to engage with their elected councillors.
- "Isles-proofing" is applied to all new local policy developed by the Council and / or national, regional, or local partner agencies.
- We demonstrate a clear commitment to securing effective participation with community bodies, communities of place and communities of interest to secure improved outcomes and reduce inequalities.

### What more needed to be done?

Action	Lead	Action undertaken	Further action going forward
<b>13</b> Explore options to improve coordination of consultation and engagement on isles by Partner agencies.	Orkney Partnership Board	The Orkney Matters Survey was carried out October 2021 to February 2022, led by the Council and VAO and involving the community councils, with online meetings with residents. This will contribute to the new Orkney Development Plan, the Council Plan, the Locality Plan and the new LOIP.  381 residents of the Ferry Linked Isles responded to the survey.	Feedback will be sought from the community councils and others and the survey will continue to run periodically.
<b>14</b> With reference to the principle of "island-proofing" in	To be actioned on an individual agency basis	Following the introduction of Island Communities Impact	This will be adopted by The Orkney Partnership when its

the Islands Bill, consider adopting the principle of “isles-proofing” local policy.		<p>Assessment in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, the Orkney Partnership Board and statutory agencies now isles-proof policy and plans as a matter of course.</p> <p>For example the Council agreed a second home discount of 50% should apply where a person’s home and work were separated by a body of water and transport provision did not allow daily commuting.</p>	Equalities and Diversity Strategy is reviewed and revised in 2022.
<b>15</b> Explore new opportunities for participatory budgeting activities to build on the success of the Your Island Your Choice project.	OIC	A second Participatory Budgeting exercise, your Island Your Choice 2, led by VAO on behalf of TOP, was delivered 2018/19 in 13 Outer Isles. (Community Choices Fund Report 2018/19)	To continue to explore.
<b>16</b> Progress on the Locality Plan actions to be included in The Orkney Partnership quarterly newsletters and other appropriate channels, including islands newsletters.	Community Planning Business Manager	Complete.	Reporting of progress will be incorporated into The Orkney Partnership’s Communications Strategy which will be revised by the end of 2022.

## Getting around the islands

### What outcomes are we aiming for?

- Flexible and bespoke public transport options within the isles.
- Better co-ordination of inter-island, internal and external transport connections.
- Better reliability, accessibility, affordability and availability of inter-isles flights and ferries.

### What more needed to be done?

Action	Lead	Actions taken	Further action going forward
<b>17</b> Regular Board updates to ensure that, if needed, the Orkney Partnership can offer additional support to ongoing issues including in relation to freight costs, road equivalent tariff and ferries.	Orkney Partnership Board	Orkney Islands Council lobbied the Scottish Government to provide funding that would allow cheaper fares on local inter-island ferry routes (i.e., road equivalent tariff fares). This was successful and, from 14 June 2021, there was a 38% reduction in fares.	Ongoing – Connectivity Delivery Group.
<b>18</b> Undertake a review of local co-ordination arrangements in relation to transport connectivity.	Vibrant Economy Delivery Group	Recommendations from a community transport report is being taken forward by partners and new legislation means that public buses will be more accessible.	The current position to be assessed as part of drawing up the Locality Plan for 2023+ and any appropriate actions identified incorporated into the Action Plan.

## Conclusions

Considerable good work has been done to reduce socio-economic inequalities in the Ferry Linked Isles and much still needs to be done. The current cost of living crisis and especially the cost of fuel is impacting especially heavily on isles residents but families across Orkney are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

The approach for developing a new Locality Plan for 2023+ is discussed in a separate paper to be considered by The Orkney Partnership Executive Group and Board in June, but the further actions going forward captured in the Closure Report will help inform the decisions to be taken.

This Closure Report will also inform the other Delivery Groups and feed into the discussions on a new Orkney Community Plan/LOIP for 2023+.

The following actions are directly relevant to the following current and future Delivery Group Plans.

### Connectivity Delivery Group Plan

**1** The Orkney Partnership will work together to develop a compelling business case for those areas in Orkney that do not have affordable and reliable full digital connectivity, including the impacts on: health services, education provision, business opportunities, training provision, employment, and social lives.

**2** The Orkney Partnership Board, along with the Shetland Partnership and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, will engage with the R100 programme and add its collective voice to the messages coming from the three Island councils.

**3** The Vibrant Economy Delivery Group will take the lead in exploring interim wireless solutions for those localities on the non-linked isles which are currently without an acceptable broadband service.

**4** The Orkney Partnership will promote take-up of superfast fibre broadband.

**17** Regular Board updates to ensure that, if needed, the Orkney Partnership can offer additional support to ongoing issues including in relation to freight costs, road equivalent tariff and ferries.

### Sustainable Recovery Group Plan

**6** Keep a watching brief to ensure any opportunities arising from Brexit are seized.

**9** Support isles community organisations to add value to projects undertaken as part of the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS).



### Community Wellbeing Delivery Group Plan

- 10 The Orkney Partnership will liaise with the Fuel Poverty Group to identify any opportunities for the Partnership to assist.
- 11 Individual partner agencies to make referrals to ensure schemes to assist with fuel poverty and housing improvements are catching the most vulnerable households.
- 12 Where communities are successful in accessing funding from the Islands Housing Fund, Partners will support them to gain the maximum benefit from the award.
- 15 Explore new opportunities for participatory budgeting activities to build on the success of the Your Island Your Choice project.

The following actions will feed into the new Locality Plan 2023+:

### Locality Plan 2023+:

- 5 Collate information on existing groups carrying out community development to identify gaps in capacity and inequalities between islands and explore solutions towards tackling such gaps and inequalities.
- 18 Undertake a review of local co-ordination arrangements in relation to transport connectivity.

The following action will feed into the new Community Plan/LOIP:

### Community Plan/LOIP 2023+

- 18 Undertake a review of local co-ordination arrangements in relation to transport connectivity.

George Vickers, Community Planning Business Manager, 13 June 2022.