



# The Orkney Partnership

Working together for a better Orkney



# Annual Report

2019 to 2020



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Working together for a better Orkney



## Our Values

Resilience  
Enterprise  
Equality  
Fairness  
Innovation  
Leadership  
Sustainability

## Our Strategic Priorities

aim to improve long term  
outcomes for individuals, families  
and communities where  
inequality persists.

These are:

- **Living Well**
- **Strong Communities**
- **Vibrant Economy**

The following partners have a collective duty to facilitate community planning:





## Other partners have a duty to participate in community planning:



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
**Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba**  
All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

**sportscotland**



**Historic  
Environment  
Scotland**

**Shaping our Future**

Working together for Scotland's historic environment



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Orkney College



**Skills  
Development  
Scotland**



Scotland's National Tourism Organisation  
Buidheann Turasachd Nàiseanta na h-Alba



Our Board also includes some local and co-opted partners:



**Scottish  
Ambulance  
Service**  
*Taking Care to the Patient*



**Orkney  
Community  
Justice  
Partnership**



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## Introduction

### Welcome to The Orkney Partnership's Annual Report for 2019 to 2020.

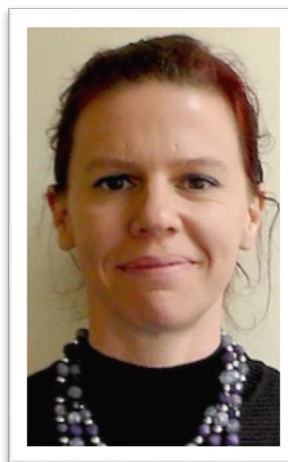
Community planning comes very naturally to our small community as there has always been a culture of pulling together when needed. The future holds many uncertainties for all of us and some challenges to be overcome. Often there is an expectation that public services will be maintained come what may, even with less resources. Through community planning we find imaginative ways to deal with these many challenges. This is achieved by the various organisations and agencies working together on those areas, where there is a particular need.

This report contains information on who is involved in the Partnership and how we aim to achieve our vision of "Working together for a better Orkney". It also contains an update on our recent activities and a look back at our first ever community plan from 2003, entitled Orkney 2020.

Thank you for taking the time to find out more about the Partnership and our activities.



*James Stockan*  
Chair



*Meghan McEwen*  
Vice Chair



## Looking Back

In 2003 our first community plan was published, entitled 'Orkney 2020'. As we have now reached 2020, we thought we would take a moment to look back to see what has changed and how far we have come.

Back in 2003, our Northlink ferries were brand new and the Orkney Library and Archive was nearing completion. The swimming pool was still up at the old Kirkwall Grammar School (KGS), and most of us only had a dial-up internet connection. Lots of changes have taken place since



### What would you like to see?

Here are just a few of the things that Orkney residents wanted in 2003:

"Faster, more reliable internet access"

"More public money to be spent in communities, by communities"

"Broadband access for all the isles – the more remote an area, the more it needs it"

"Cross-sectoral marketing initiatives"

"Better access and signage to footpaths"

"More variety of renewable energy"

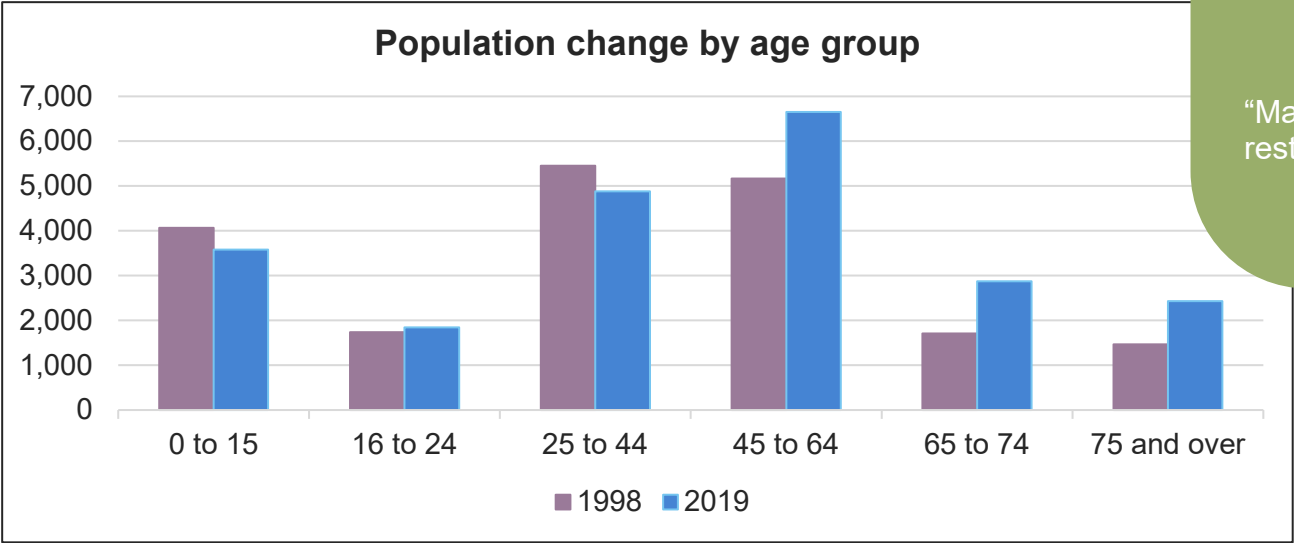
then. We have a new KGS, a new swimming pool and a new hospital, and we certainly didn't forecast that electric cars would become a regular sight on our roads by 2020, charged up with home-grown electricity.

Despite our best efforts, universal fast broadband access remains an aspiration, although it is one which we hope very soon to achieve.





In our 2003 plan, our strategic priorities were “Survival, Sustainability and Social Inclusion”. Orkney’s population of 19,500 had been decreasing for decades and was forecast to fall to 17,500 by 2016. Reversing that decline was our most immediate challenge. <sup>1</sup>Today Orkney’s population stands at more than 22,000, but we can’t afford to be complacent. Most of the increase has been on the Mainland, especially around Kirkwall, and our smaller isles are still at high risk of depopulation. People are living longer, which is good news but this is changing our age profile. Our current Locality Plan for the non-linked isles demonstrates that the long term sustainability of the isles remains a top priority.



As we look to the future, we are optimistic that the firm foundation of partnership working in Orkney will be resilient enough to develop, grow and adapt to new challenges.

With significant milestones this year, including Brexit and the global pandemic, we can be thankful of our strong tradition of...

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/orkney-islands-council-profile.html#population\\_estimates](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/orkney-islands-council-profile.html#population_estimates)

**What would you like to see?  
...continued**

- “Plastic bag tax”
- “Places for young people to go”
- “More university courses in Orkney and a wider range of them”
- “Bus service from Kirkwall airport”
- “Make all public places / restaurants non-smoking”
- “Swimming pool with flumes”

We are also constantly reviewing our priorities and adapting where necessary. This is demonstrated by the establishment of our short life working groups where current issues have been brought to the fore and addressed ‘head on’.

**‘Working together for a better Orkney’**



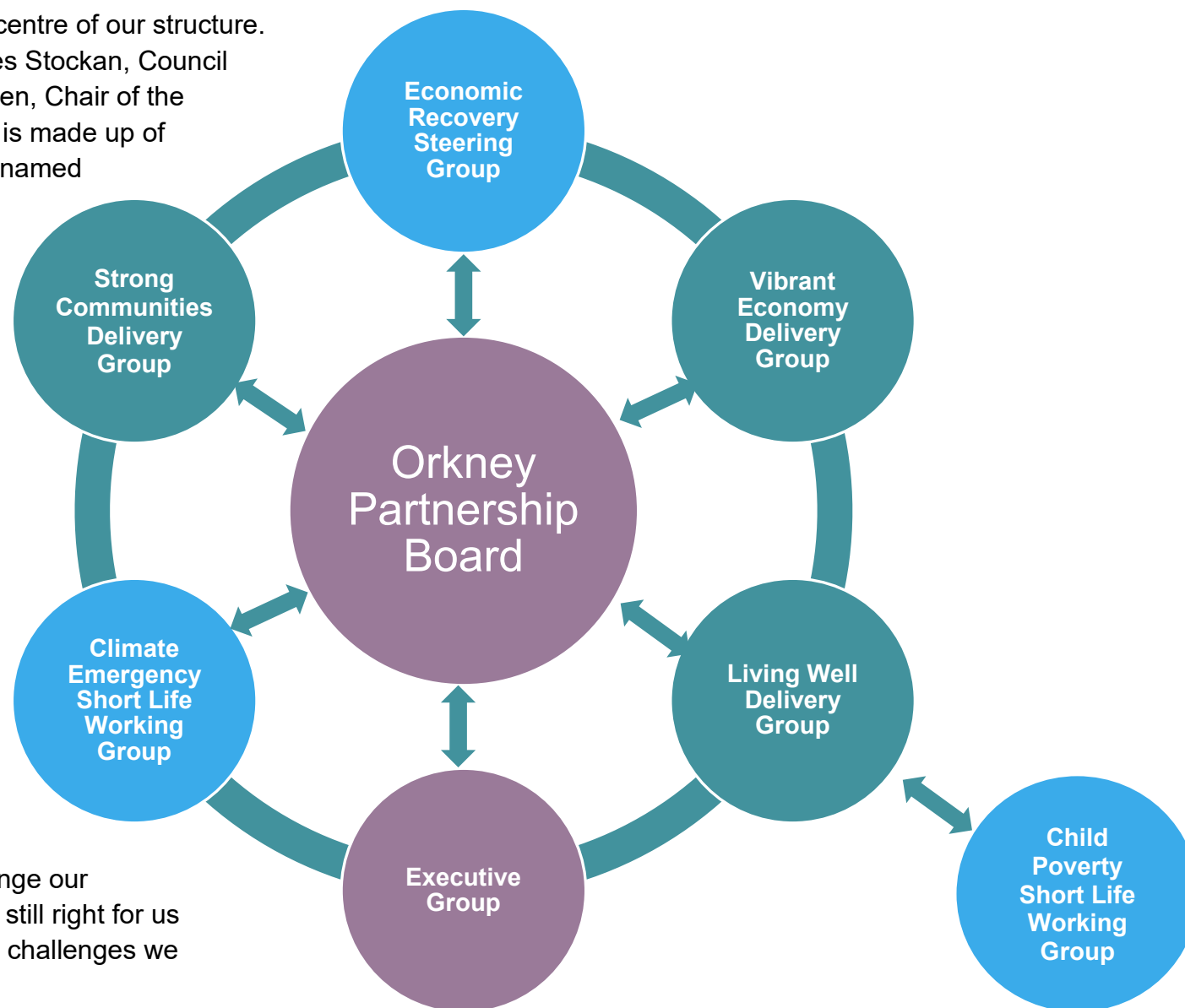
## Our Structure

The Orkney Partnership Board is at the centre of our structure. The Board is chaired by Councillor James Stockan, Council Leader, the Vice Chair is Meghan McEwen, Chair of the Board of NHS Orkney, and membership is made up of all of the statutory partner organisations named in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, plus locally co-opted partners.

The Orkney Partnership Board is assisted by an Executive Group comprising the five partners with a duty to facilitate community planning, plus Voluntary Action Orkney.

Each of the Board's strategic priorities is assigned to a Delivery Group. The Delivery Groups are chaired by members of the Board but membership includes representatives of any organisation or group that can help to deliver our priorities.

We regularly review and sometimes change our strategic priorities to make sure they are still right for us and consider whether there are any new challenges we need to tackle.



## Orkney Community Plan 2019-22

The Orkney Community Plan is a three-year rolling plan which is refreshed, updated and reissued regularly. It describes what we aim to achieve by working together in partnership and can be found on our dedicated partnership website at:

[www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CommunityPlanning](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CommunityPlanning)

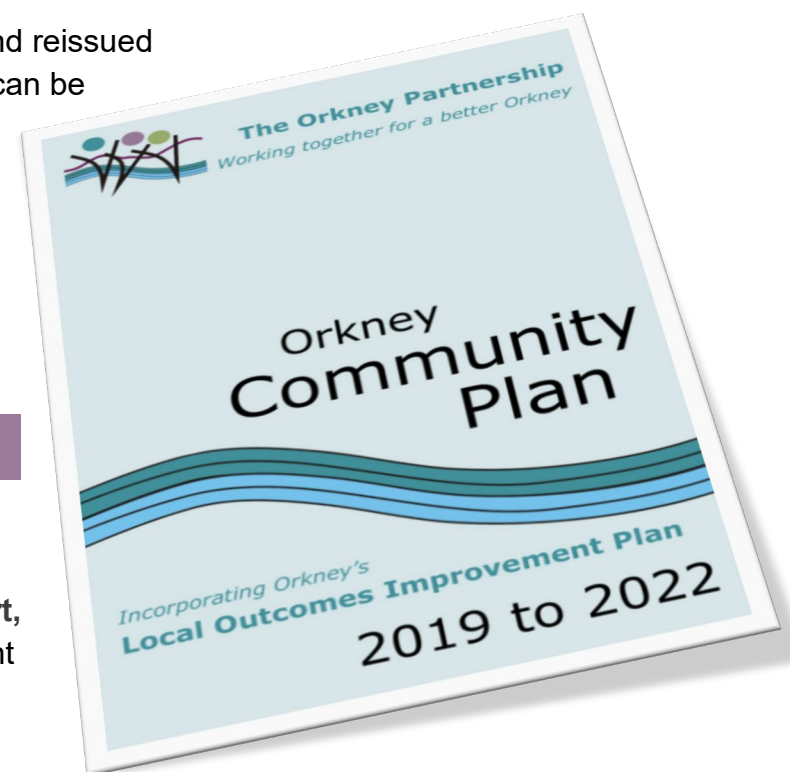
The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on community planning partnerships to prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). This document sets out the local outcomes that The Orkney Partnership has prioritised for improvement, and our community plan incorporates our LOIP.

### Challenges

An enterprising approach is needed in tackling Orkney's most challenging problems, where obstacles stand in the way of all partner agencies, both individually and collectively. The biggest cross-cutting issues locally are **digital connectivity, transport, housing and fuel poverty**, which impact on everything we do. The Board has oversight of these shared challenges and ensures that relevant aspects are being addressed by relevant bodies, and where appropriate by the delivery groups.

A significant challenge this year has been the need to improve the joint planning and delivery of **services for children and young people**, in line with our recent Care Inspectorate report and subsequent action plan. The Partnership acknowledged this need and has taken steps to drive this forward, with the Board receiving regular progress reports against the improvement plan and the Partnership fully involved in the preparation of Orkney's forthcoming new Children's Services Plan

The **Covid-19 pandemic** this year has posed challenges for us all and the Partnership has reacted quickly to incorporate the response and recovery into its plans. As shown in the **structure** above, an Economic Recovery Steering group has been created led by local business representatives which reports directly to the Partnership Board to enable dynamic and proactive decision making, driven by the business community. Our delivery groups have also begun to work alongside recovery groups as part of the Orkney Islands Council Community Recovery Strategy. This will enable them to review their delivery plans and prioritise those actions that are most needed.



## Our Strategic Priorities

We're no strangers to partnership working in Orkney, we've been doing it for a long time. We can't describe everything that the partners do together, and we don't record partnership working in areas where it is already working well. The Orkney Partnership focuses on a small number of strategic priorities at any one time that will improve long term outcomes for individuals, families and communities where inequality persists. Currently our priorities are:



Living Well



Strong Communities



Vibrant Economy

The principle of prevention is central to our plan and by focusing collaboratively on early intervention we can reduce negative outcomes for people. We have tasked our three delivery groups with delivering these priorities and the following pages show their long term vision and medium term outcomes for these priorities, along with a snap shot of some of what they are doing to ensure these outcomes are delivered for the people of Orkney.





## Living Well Delivery Group

### Long term vision:

Our people are resilient and live well.

### Chair:

Craig Spence, Chief Executive, OHAL.

### Vice chair:

Louise Wilson, Director of Public Health, NHS Orkney.

### Medium term outcomes:

- People live in safe, warm, homely settings.
- People have the support they need to adopt healthy lifestyles throughout their lives and take responsibility for their wellbeing.

### Spotlight On: Period Poverty

The Partnership has played a key role in the distribution of period products around Orkney. This year availability has increased further with them now being available on Orkney Ferries and all public toilets.

To improve availability for everyone, we are also trialling online ordering, with products posted directly to your home.

PERIOD  
EQUALITY

Our target outcomes/actions	What we did
Increasing number of energy efficiency measures installed in houses regardless of tenure.	THAW Orkney (charity) have carried out training with NHS Orkney staff and are rolling out further to increase the number of referrals. A checklist is also being developed to help assess what households are eligible for.
Less people live in substandard housing regardless of tenure.	Age Scotland carried out a housing survey which highlighted need for more preventative action and the results used alongside an energy efficiency survey to better inform local agencies.  Orkney Care and Repair offer the councils 'scheme of assistance' to help private homeowners and private tenants access range of housing related assistance, along with a small repairs service. Funding award requirements were also reviewed to make it more widely accessible and maximise use of resources.



Our target outcomes/actions	What we did
People have access to information and support to enable informed choices to be made around housing to allow early preventative planning and preparation for older life.	An interactive housing guide was developed by the Council for use for both staff and the wider community.
More people improve their health through participation in outdoors activity. Long term outcome Increase the proportion of the population with a healthy weight.	Results from recent surveys and Scottish Government reports have been used to identify local issues and inform projects such as Your Kirkwall. The Arcadia Community Park was completed, and partners have been working together to look at solutions for the ongoing maintenance. Funding has also been agreed for the Papdale area community-based project which is ongoing.
People experiencing mental ill health will have their needs more effectively met.	The Orkney Mental Health Strategy 2020-2025 strategy was created in conjunction with partners and the creation of a new resource centre is ongoing.
People have the information and support to access services and opportunities that will improve their life circumstances and allow them to make positive choices.	Voluntary Action Orkney have created a new online information hub to provide accessible information to the local community at any time. It links through to much of the information available from the various partners to provide a single resource area.
Older people and people with long term conditions have more opportunities and support to maintain their own health and wellbeing and have supportive social networks within their communities.	<p>Holm Ball (Be Active Long Life) Group was awarded funding from the Partnership's Community Development and Capacity Building Fund.</p> <p>The group provides exercise and social activities for people aged 60 and over. Its aims are to reduce social isolation, increase mobility, lessen the risk of falls and improve wellbeing. This in turn increases confidence, self-esteem, improves physical health as well as mental wellbeing.</p>



## Strong Communities Delivery Group

### Long term vision:

Orkney's communities and individuals are fulfilling their potential.

### Chair:

Gail Anderson, Chief Executive, VAO.

### Vice chair:

Francesca Couperwhite, Head of Strengthening Communities, HIE.

### Medium term outcomes:

- Our communities have vibrant, innovative, sustainable and inclusive populations.
- Our communities have access to the services, facilities and resources they require to enable them to lead, develop and innovate.
- Partners and communities share trusting relationships and understand their own and others' accountability, responsibility and capacity.

### Spotlight On: Engagement

Funding has been secured for an innovative community engagement project.

This will ensure that as many people as possible, particularly those experiencing disadvantage and inequality, have a say in shaping future services.

In addition, the project will be able to develop programmes and mechanisms to contribute the views of the community to Locality Plans.

Our target outcomes/actions	What we did
Provide support to communities who have ambition to access funding from the Islands Housing Fund to deliver local solutions.	Westray, Papa Westray, North Ronaldsay, Shapinsay and Stronsay Trusts have been supported with their applications, received funding and are progressing their plans.
Extend in five islands the Enhancing Wellbeing in Our Island Communities project. – a community led project to identify and address the needs of island residents	An evaluation report of the 2019-20 project has been published and funding has been secured from the Aspiring Communities Fund to extend the project until March 2022. . The project remit has also been extended to include all age groups with a broader focus on social inclusion, community and individual resilience and access to services.



Our target outcomes/actions	What we did
Demographics research project to provide an enhanced dataset on isles population.	Work on data gathering is ongoing, including data visualisation/mapping. Systems have been populated with data where relevant and resource requirements for data management, analysis and dissemination are currently being reviewed.
<p>Change working practices in order to provide staff with flexible work bases/employment opportunities.</p> <p>Explore the value of establishing work 'hubs' in islands and rural areas.</p>	<p>Due to Covid-19 restrictions almost all organisations/services have established home working with minimal detrimental impact on services. Work is ongoing to develop suitable case studies, promote good practice and ensure appropriate staff training, support and policies are in place.</p> <p>In some areas work 'hubs' are being established to provide suitable workspaces within communities to those who wish to work from a home location but who do not have private space or suitable internet connections.</p>
<p>Collate information on existing community development support to identify gaps in capacity and inequalities between islands.</p> <p>Develop solutions to towards tackling identified gaps and inequalities.</p>	Partners are contacting organisations to identify their challenges and opportunities from which to develop a support plan. Work has begun to formulate a 'cluster' funding application for lunch clubs across Orkney to ensure they meet local needs and are sustainable.
Raise awareness of and support communities to make use of the powers in the Community Empowerment Act ie community asset transfer and participation requests.	Information and guidance has been disseminated on an ongoing basis and specific events/sessions delivered as and when required. Additional information and events will be prepared and promoted.
Communities are supported to collaborate with relevant partners to deliver successful projects.	To date partners have supported the community with several projects including, community wellbeing project, community land projects, and Your Island Your Choice.





## Vibrant Economy Delivery Group

### Long term vision:

Orkney has a vibrant economic environment.

### Chair:

Graeme Harrison, Area Manager, HIE.

### Vice chair:

Stuart Allison, Economic Development Manager, OIC.

### Medium term outcomes:

- Orkney is a location of choice for people to live, work, learn, visit and invest.
- Orkney is widely recognised as a location for innovation and the application of experimental thinking in an island context.
- Orkney's economy offers a broad range of employment opportunities in all localities.

### Spotlight On: Islands Deal

This is a joint initiative led by the three islands councils (Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles). The Deal is focused on improving regional economies with a view to tackling economic barriers and maximising opportunities to drive local, regional and national economic growth.

£100 million of funding has now been agreed with the Scottish and UK governments for the ambitious proposals.

### Our target outcomes

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. This will improve service responsiveness, support independent living and better connect communities and individuals.

### What we did

Partners have been involved in discussions regarding digital and mobile infrastructure and canvassing of Scottish Minister's to support mobile and 5G opportunities has continued.

Several trial projects have been run in Orkney and some infrastructure is now already in place.



Non-linked isles communities have better inter-island connections. / Communities have better connections.	Recommendations from a community transport report is being taken forward by partners and new legislation means that public buses will be more accessible.
People have access to greater employment opportunities within Orkney's businesses / sectors, including work placements, modern apprenticeships, foundation apprenticeships, graduate placements, re-skilling opportunities, volunteering opportunities and supported employment. Employers / businesses have the workforce they need to address current skills shortages.	<p>The partners are exploring the use of improved information regarding the availability of modern apprenticeships, foundation apprenticeships, placement opportunities, volunteering opportunities and re-skilling opportunities.</p> <p>There is continuing engagement with local employers through the Developing the Young Workforce initiative and the provision of entrepreneurship within schools, colleges and universities is under review.</p> <p>Local delivery of a wider range of university networked courses and facilitating broadening of scope is also being encouraged.</p>
An increased proportion of people in employment. Reduction of barriers to sustaining work.	<p>The jobs section on Orkney.com provides a strong online platform and single point to signpost people to the latest opportunities and has seen an increase in the number of people viewing the page.</p> <p>A live, work and study campaign was created for TV and social media. With funding secured for advertising at bus shelters, tube lines and on buses.</p> <p>Orkney.com also enabled employers to advertise for free, link to student accommodation, housing association properties and Orkney lets.</p>
Orkney is positioned as an exemplar in sustainable development and facilitation of a low carbon future, attracting investment and employment opportunities.	The Reflex project, which aims to maximise the potential for renewable energy generation in Orkney and ultimately eliminate the need for fossil fuels. Proposals are currently being developed for five new projects.
Employment and financial opportunities for people and sectors	A regional funding bid has been submitted.



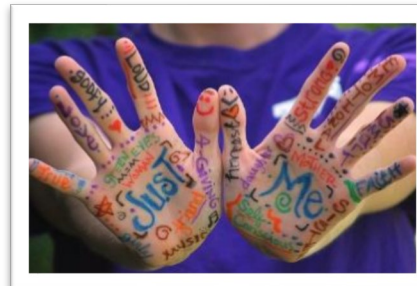
## Short Life Working Groups

Our short life working groups are formed to achieve a specific purpose or task and the Board can decide to form them at any time. We currently have three such groups and a short update from each follows.

### Child Poverty

The Child Poverty Act was introduced in February 2017 and this requires that local authorities and health boards must jointly publish annual reports on what they are doing to reduce child poverty in the local area.

The Partnership is committed to tackling child poverty and this group, which reports regularly to our Living Well delivery group, is tasked with progressing the creation of a new child poverty action plan and reporting back on the previous year.



### Climate Emergency

The climate emergency group has been working on its recommendations for the Partnership and how we can collectively help Orkney to adopt, and adapt to, a greener future. They will shortly be reporting this back to the Board and will be considering what adaptations may be required due to the global pandemic this year.

In particular they have been discussing how they can contribute significantly to recovery planning through alignment to 'green recovery'. Graham Neville of Scottish Natural Heritage, who chairs the group, said "in responding to the critical, acute economic crisis... we must not hinder our ability to deal with the chronic crises of climate change and biodiversity loss".



### Economic Recovery Steering Group (ERSG)

Our latest group formed as a response to Covid-19 pandemic is made up of local business representatives, councillors and officers of the Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise and reports directly to the Orkney Partnership Board. They are tasked with developing an economic recovery strategy for Orkney and determining how best to target resources to support recovery. They are currently working on a shared vision, priorities and action plan which they will use to move forward with the strategy.



## Find Out More



We give regular updates on what we're doing, and we want anyone who's interested to be able to find out more, so we publish regular newsletters. All of this information and much more can be found on our web pages at:

[www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CommunityPlanning](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CommunityPlanning)

If you would like this report in a different language, format or just require more information please contact us at:

[community.planning@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:community.planning@orkney.gov.uk)

