



Orkney Partnership Board

Minutes of the Board Meeting 22 March 2022 held via Teams

Present:	Cllr James Stockan	Orkney Islands Council (Chair)
	Meghan McEwen	NHS Orkney (Vice Chair)
	John Mundell	OIC Chief Executive
	Karen Greaves	OIC Chief Executive's Service
	Stephen Brown	Orkney Community Justice Partnership
	Graeme Harrison	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
	Gail Anderson	Voluntary Action Orkney
	Michael Dickson	NHS Orkney
	John McKenna	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
	Simon Hay	Police Scotland
	Seonag Campbell	Skills Development Scotland
	Claire Sim	Skills Development Scotland
	Cheryl Campbell	VisitScotland
	Alan Dundas	SEPA
	Issy Grieve	Integration Joint Board
	Clare Kemp	Orkney College UHI
	Cllr Leslie Manson	Orkney Islands Council
	Luke Fraser	Sustainable Recovery Delivery Group
	Craig Spence	Orkney Housing Association Ltd
	Graham Sinclair	HiTRANS

By invitation for the Fuel Poverty item:

Rhoda Walker	THAW Orkney
Caroline Butterfield	THAW Orkney
Robert Leslie	THAW Orkney
David Brown	OIC Education, Leisure and Housing

In attendance: Anna Whelan

OIC Corporate Services (Secretary)

1. Apologies

Graham Neville	NatureScot
George Vickers	Community Planning Business Manager
Alex McKinley	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Alistair Garrow	Police Scotland
Marcus Shearer	Scottish Ambulance Service
Jim Quate	Scottish Ambulance Service
Alan Johnston	Scottish Government
David Hall	Scottish Police Authority

2. Fuel Poverty

- 2.1. Rhoda Walker, Caroline Butterfield and Robert Leslie gave a presentation on behalf of THAW (see separate slides) entitled “Energy Crisis – a community opportunity to boost health & wellbeing and the economy.’
- 2.2. Fuel poverty remains very high for Orkney (31% compared to 25% for Scotland as a whole) and this will dramatically increase with the fuel prices rises from 1 April 2022.
- 2.3. Fuel poverty is worse in Orkney largely because:
 - 2.3.1. Higher living costs in general
 - 2.3.2. Lower average incomes
 - 2.3.3. Longer heating season
 - 2.3.4. Older, harder to treat houses that are more expensive to heat
 - 2.3.5. Higher travel costs – which is a separate element of fuel poverty
- 2.4. This is forcing households to make impossible decisions about how they spend their money.
- 2.5. THAW proposed ten steps to tackle fuel poverty in Orkney:
 - 2.5.1. Improve energy efficiency by supporting the achievement of new standards for all tenures;
 - 2.5.2. Create a gap-funding grant scheme for low-income households to install energy efficiency measures through approved schemes;
 - 2.5.3. Potential collaboration with/promotion of Hi-Scot Credit Union to offer loans to households to fund installations where grants are unavailable/don't fully fund measures;
 - 2.5.4. Work with landlords to require that, where there is a change in tenancy after 1 April 2022, the energy efficiency of the property will require to be improved;
 - 2.5.5. Ensure the availability of advice and support to householders, including household checks and bespoke advice on ways to save energy and improve access to affordable energy, including by switching (although restricted at moment);
 - 2.5.6. Maximise incomes, including through increasing the availability of low carbon jobs in local communities;
 - 2.5.7. Education in life skills;
 - 2.5.8. Introduce energy-inclusive rents from social sector landlords – takes away prepayment meter issues;
 - 2.5.9. Capitalise on Orkney's place at the centre of renewable energy and energy management innovation and how it offers the opportunity to take a unique approach to the resolution of existing fuel poverty issues and perhaps even the elimination of fuel poverty in Orkney, by increasing access to affordable energy based on community ownership and direction of distribution
grid/renewables/storage/district heating focussed on direct, subsidised provision of energy;

- 2.5.10. Recognise that short-term fixes around energy costs support will still be necessary until medium and longer-term solutions are developed.
- 2.6. Much of this work could be done locally and would be a boost to the local economy, jobs and households' income that would also address fuel poverty.
- 2.7. Summary of recommendations from THAW:
 - 2.7.1. Secure funding from a broader base of local and national organisations to stabilise service delivery so we can maintain and enhance service as energy crisis continues
 - 2.7.2. Orkney-wide collaboration needed on poverty - food and fuel - as well as addressing impact on health & wellbeing
 - 2.7.3. Make fuel poverty a separate Orkney Partnership delivery group
 - 2.7.4. Collaborate on Orkney solutions to accelerate energy efficiency
 - 2.7.5. Lobby nationally for removal of social and environmental tariffs from electricity – 23%
- 2.8. David Brown (OIC) explained that the Council has a responsibility for responding to Fuel Poverty. There are four drivers of fuel poverty, all of which need to be addressed:
 - 2.8.1. Poor energy efficiency of the home – requires money but can be tackled
 - 2.8.2. Home energy is used in the home – involves educating the public
 - 2.8.3. High prices of energy – a matter of lobbying
 - 2.8.4. Household incomes – hard to address
- 2.9. The SG has published (December 2021) a new Fuel Poverty Strategy and further guidance will be published shortly. The former Fuel Poverty Steering Group will be reconvened to work on this and develop a new Orkney Fuel Poverty Strategy.
- 2.10. Work is being done by the Council to bring social housing up to the new standards. Regarding the private sector, the Council has a contract with Warmworks to provide insulation works with spending over £1m for the previous year and anticipated similar for the next year. With the contract, there is an emphasis on developing local people and skilling them up to deliver the work.
- 2.11. Within TOP, Fuel Poverty sits under the Community Wellbeing Delivery Group. The CWDG will liaise with the reconvened Fuel Poverty Steering Group and consider the recommendations from THAW.

3. Draft minutes of the Board meeting 10 December 2021

- 3.1. Minute approved.

4. Matters arising

- 4.1. Item 5: Joint Resourcing of community planning support for 2022-23

Karen Greaves reported that joint resourcing to appoint the Business Manager post and support community planning during 2022-23 was agreed following the December 2021 meeting. There will be a review of the working of the partnership before there is a decision on joint resourcing beyond the next financial year. The Joint Resourcing Plan to support the LOIP will come to the June 2022 Board meeting.

5. Report from the Chair of the Executive Group

- 5.1. John Mundell summarised the written report.
- 5.2. It was noted that the Joint Resourcing Plan would need input from all Board members and their co-operation would be appreciated.
- 5.3. NHSO welcomed the news that the planned review of the Partnership was to be undertaken by the Improvement Service.

6. Connectivity Wellbeing Delivery Group

- 6.1. Graeme Harrison summarised the written report.
- 6.2. John Mundell explained that the forthcoming report on digital connectivity was commissioned by the Council once it was clear that R100 would fail to provide the service needed in Orkney and to look at other options. The Digital Connectivity Workshop will be scheduled once the report has been presented to the Council's Senior Leadership Team and Elected Members.
- 6.3. Meghan McEwen emphasised that the work of the Delivery Group must include understanding of how poor connectivity carried high costs for individuals e.g. the need to retain a landline at additional cost. Graeme confirmed that affordable connectivity throughout Orkney was the aim of all concerned.

7. Community Wellbeing Delivery Group

- 7.1. Gail Anderson summarised the written report.
- 7.2. There was a discussion on item 8 addressing poverty in the round. Craig Spence agreed that it was important to address poverty in the round, but he felt that it was not necessary to develop a separate strategy and that there had not been a decision to adopt one. There was a statutory driver for a Child Poverty strategy, as there was for Fuel Poverty, to facilitate reporting on these issues. Instead, Craig suggested that the Partnership and partners adopt a charter on poverty and that would provide the clarity needed by the Partnership to address issues of concern. Meghan McEwen agreed that a new strategy was not necessary but that there should be a clear ask to the Delivery Groups to address poverty and it should be clear what is being asked of them.
- 7.3. Agreed that the next Board meeting should consider what should be done following the adoption of the Child Poverty Strategy, along with the work on Fuel Poverty and Food Security.

8. Sustainable Recovery Delivery Group

- 8.1. Luke Fraser, as Vice Chair of the DG, gave the report on behalf of the Chair, Graham Neville, who was not able to attend. This included the proposal from the Delivery Group that Orkney should adopt an aspiration to decarbonise by 2030.
- 8.2. Luke then spoke to the written report for Engage Orkney, and this led to a conversation on avoiding consultation fatigue and how Engage Orkney might avoid this. John Mundell welcomed that the supplier was addressing the security concerns and emphasised the importance of this being resolved.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 Craig Spence proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr James Stockan for his chairing of the Orkney Partnership Board during his term of office as Council Leader, and extended further thanks to Cllr Stockan's Council colleagues for their contributions to the work of the Partnership.

- 10. **Date of the next meeting – 30 June 2022.**

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