

Our 10-Year Vision.

Investing in a better future for all

Contents

Foreword	2
Local context	3
Approach to spatial targeting	7
Vision for the future	10
Strategic case for change	13
Alignment with other programmes and investments	19
Match funding and leveraged investment	24
Community and stakeholder engagement	27
Governance	32
Assurance	38

Foreword



Since the Orkney Fund Board came together, we've been struck by the strength of local pride and people's willingness to get involved. Ideas have come from all over the Orkney Islands, shaped through conversations with communities, local groups and partner organisations. Drawing on community consultation, Local Place Plans and existing strategies, we've gathered more than 800 ideas and insights that reflect a shared ambition for Orkney's future.

This Regeneration Plan brings all of that together. It sets out a long-term vision for how we can build on our strengths and create opportunities that make a genuine difference to people's lives. As part of a £20 million, 10-year programme, the Plan combines a clear long-term vision with a detailed four-year investment plan. Together, these outline how the Orkney Fund will support communities to take forward their own ideas, help local places to thrive, and create the conditions for lasting positive change.

This is about investing in Orkney's strengths: our heritage, our culture, our creativity, and our people. Regeneration should never be something that happens to communities, but something shaped by them. Through the Orkney Fund, we're helping local groups turn their ideas into action, strengthening community leadership and creating opportunities that grow from within. In doing so, we're investing in the future of Orkney and the people who make it thrive.

The Board's work is rooted in partnership and shared purpose. Our discussions and decisions have benefited from the insight of local organisations, public bodies, and volunteers who give so much of their time for the good of their communities. Their input has shaped this Plan from the very beginning, and I want to thank everyone who has taken part in that journey so far.

As we move into the next stage, our focus turns to delivery – turning plans into projects and ambitions into action. There is a strong foundation to build on, and a shared determination to see this investment deliver real benefits across Orkney. The Orkney Fund is more than a funding programme; it's a chance to bring people together with a shared sense of purpose and pride in what we can achieve as a community.

Stephen Hagan

Chair, The Orkney Fund Board

01

Local context

Orkney's community and economy

The UK Government has identified 75 towns across the country to benefit from the £20 million Long-Term Pride in Place Programme, a decade-long initiative designed to revitalise local areas and address deprivation at its root. The programme focuses on three key goals: creating thriving places, building stronger communities, and empowering people to take back control.

Orkney is home to around 22,000 people, spread across a diverse group of islands, each with its own distinct charm and community spirit. With thousands of years of history and hundreds of miles of coastline, Orkney has a rich cultural heritage and long-standing traditions shaped by its maritime past.

In recent years, Orkney has regularly topped UK national surveys as one of the best places to live, particularly for health and life expectancy, employment, and low crime rates.

This has contributed to a strong sense of pride among residents and a welcoming atmosphere for visitors. Such a positive baseline provides a strong foundation for regeneration activity and helps make sure investment builds on the qualities that people value while responding to emerging challenges.



Orkney's strengths

Economically, Orkney is a prosperous part of Scotland that performs well for its size, with low unemployment and above average levels of household income compared with other rural areas. While Orkney has long benefited from natural resources – notably through the oil and gas sector – the past two decades has seen a substantial growth in the marine and renewable energy industry. This shift has attracted major research investment and established Orkney as a world-leading centre for energy innovation.

Alongside energy, agriculture, fishing, and aquaculture remain vital industries, and have done so for generations. They have built the foundation of Orkney's strong reputation for high-quality food and drink, with local producers exporting award-winning products nationally and internationally. The wider economy is also supported by a thriving base of small enterprises, crafts, creative industries, and professional services which contribute to Orkney's character and resilience.

Tourism is also a significant contributor to Orkney's economy, with Orkney annually receiving around 200,000 cruise visitors and more than 170,000 visits from day trippers and holiday makers. Tourism contributes £77 million to the Orkney economy, according to the 2024 Orkney Visitor Survey, and supports hundreds of jobs across several industries while boosting the vibrancy of towns and places.

The strength of the visitor economy is reinforced by marketing platforms such as [Orkney.com](https://www.orkney.com), which provides descriptive information for people looking to visit, work, or even settle in Orkney.



Island challenges

Despite these strengths, Orkney faces familiar island challenges that are placing increasing pressure on communities. Population decline in several outer isles is affecting community sustainability, making it harder to retain staff and volunteers in essential services.

High living costs and limited transport options continue to impact households and businesses, and Orkney's dispersed geography creates additional challenges for maintaining infrastructure and delivering services while limiting access to equal opportunities and amenities.

Housing shortages, combined with limited rental options and increased demand from short-term lets, place strain on both families and employers. The growing visitor economy is also creating new pressures: accommodation shortages, seasonal staffing difficulties, and increased demand on transport and local services during peak months, followed by quieter periods that make year-round business viability difficult.

While the Mainland of Orkney, and particularly Kirkwall, continues to thrive as the Orkney's economic and cultural centre, supporting remote communities and essential services remains a key priority.

Investment for every community

Kirkwall was selected as one of only ten towns in Scotland to benefit from the programme, reflecting both its potential and the challenges it faces. However, the Orkney Fund Board recognised that the greatest impact would come from extending this opportunity beyond Kirkwall to include all of Orkney.

Expanding the programme's scope creates the potential for every community across Orkney to benefit from investment, fostering inclusive, long-term regeneration and supporting opportunities that reflect the unique strengths and needs of each place.

This 10-year investment provides a valuable opportunity to build on Orkney's strengths – its creativity, self-reliance and strong sense of place – while addressing long-term challenges. Through targeted projects, it aims to make Orkney's communities safer, more vibrant and better connected, promoting a prosperous and sustainable future for all who live, work and visit Orkney.

02

Approach to
spatial
targeting

Orkney's unique geography

The Orkney Islands comprise more than seventy islands and skerries, twenty of which are inhabited. Located about twenty miles north of the Scottish mainland, Orkney's geography combines vibrant town centres with dispersed rural and island communities.

This unique setting provides both opportunities and challenges for regeneration and requires a spatial approach that enables projects to deliver benefits across all areas while maximising impact of the Pride in Place Programme.

Inclusive investment across Orkney

The Orkney Fund Board is committed to supporting island-wide investment, extending the original Kirkwall boundary to include all Orkney. While this approach reflects the ambition for inclusive growth, it also demands careful balance between wide coverage and meaningful investment in individual projects.

The Board's intention is that every area will be eligible to receive support from the Orkney Fund over time, but allocations will be assessed based on needs case, opportunity, and potential impact rather than equal distribution.

Balancing regional and local impact

Kirkwall is home to around half of Orkney's population, and, serving as the central hub for transport, employment, and services, will naturally play a leading role in the regeneration programme. Major investments located here will need to deliver community-wide benefit, supporting accessibility to residents from across the islands and visitors to the islands. This strategic focus will help sustain key assets, attract external funding, and support long-term viability.

At the same time, investments in community facilities, heritage restoration, and local infrastructure will be distributed across Orkney. Many of these projects are deeply rooted in local identity and community ownership, particularly in rural and island areas where shared community spaces and facilities are vital for wellbeing and social cohesion. By linking these projects with Local Place Plans and local development frameworks, the Board aims to ensure that regeneration activity is both geographically balanced and community led.

This approach supports both economic and social regeneration across Orkney, recognising the distinct needs of mainland towns and remote island communities alike. Through ongoing engagement and regular review, the Board will monitor how investment is distributed to strengthen local resilience and create opportunities for every community to share in the long-term benefits of the programme.

Our Communities

Orkney's main settlements and inhabited islands





Vision for
the future

03

Our vision statement:

Investing in a better future for all

The Orkney Fund Board will help create fair, inclusive, resilient and successful communities, for now and for future generations.

Working with communities

Working with the UK Government, the Board has committed to using the Pride in Place 10-year funding to benefit every community across the islands. What was originally limited to Kirkwall has been expanded to include all of Orkney, ensuring that both rural and urban areas are eligible for investment.

This inclusive approach will target need wherever it exists, drive meaningful impact, and support sustainable development and prosperity throughout Orkney.

Building on local voices

Guided by more than 800 project submissions from the community, the Regeneration Plan reflects the identified needs, ambitions and priorities of people across the islands. Through this process of local consultation and community-led place planning, Orkney's residents have played a central role in shaping the direction of investment.

Building on this collaboration, the Plan seeks to strengthen the social setting of every community, creating opportunities for people of all ages to live well, remain connected and thrive.

Investing in what matters

Through the Orkney Fund Board, investment will focus on projects that deliver lasting, tangible benefits for communities. This includes increasing access to sport, culture and community activity; improving the safety and accessibility of shared spaces; revitalising buildings and public places; and supporting local enterprise and creativity.

Together, these priorities will renew the infrastructure and opportunities that underpin daily life and attract visitors to our islands, helping to build a more resilient and inclusive Orkney for the future.

Orkney Fund Priorities	Strategic Aims	Strategic Outcomes
Community and Cultural Wellbeing	Improve access to sport, recreational, community and arts facilities	Foster inclusivity, strengthen community ties, and support overall health and wellbeing
Safe and Accessible Spaces	Invest in active travel infrastructure and safety initiatives	Meet accessibility needs, create welcoming spaces, and build a stronger sense of security and belonging
Heritage, Conservation and Regeneration	Revitalise historic buildings, underused areas and promote local heritage	Strengthen Orkney's sense of place and identity
Local Enterprise and Creative Support	Promote vibrant retail spaces and community-driven creative projects	Stimulate the local economy, boost employability, and celebrate Orkney's distinct cultural identity

Transforming Orkney over the next decade

By 2035, the Orkney Fund Board will have invested in projects shaped by local people - initiatives that make their communities more vibrant, sustainable, and connected.

The programme's legacy will be one of opportunity, inclusion and shared prosperity, creating a stronger and more resilient Orkney that remains an outstanding place to live, work, and visit.



Strategic case for change

Understanding the need

The strategic case for change sets out why investment through the Orkney Fund is needed and how it will address the key challenges facing Orkney.

It draws on quantitative evidence, local knowledge, and extensive community consultation to demonstrate both the need for intervention and the opportunities for long-term, sustainable regeneration.

Local challenges and inequalities

Orkney remains one of the most distinctive and resilient island economies in Scotland, yet significant inequalities exist between areas.

Data from the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#) identifies differences in access to services, employment, transport and housing across the islands – particularly when comparing Orkney’s ferry-linked isles with the Orkney Mainland.

While the SIMD data has limited value for national comparison given Orkney’s small population across a wide geographic distribution, it helps illustrate local variations in opportunity and access.

A robust evidence base

This evidence is supported by insights from the UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the ZenCity survey conducted in collaboration with the UK Government. Due to Orkney’s small population, results should be interpreted with care; however, the overall findings help to illustrate local strengths and persistent challenges affecting Orkney.

Evidence has also been drawn from the [Orkney Community Planning Partnership Annual Report 2024-25](#) to help contextualise local priorities and needs.

Relevant insights - Kirkwall and Orkney context

Thriving Places - Infrastructure, Access to Services, and Sustainable Growth

Analysis of local and national data highlights varying levels of access to services and opportunity across Orkney. While the islands perform strongly in areas such as employment and community resilience, challenges remain in connectivity, accessibility, and the long-term sustainability of key infrastructure.

These issues are particularly evident in rural and island communities, where geography and population dispersal continue to shape everyday experience and access to opportunity.

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- **Access to services remains difficult:** Over 30% of Kirkwall's Data Zones ranked among the 20% most access-deprived in Scotland in 2020, reflecting barriers to healthcare, education, and retail, particularly affecting residents in rural and island communities.
- **Employment and economy:** Job density is 15% above the national average, alongside relatively low unemployment and vacancy rates. However, reliance on a small number of key sectors and local services leaves parts of the economy vulnerable to seasonal fluctuation. Tourism creates both opportunities and pressures: during the busy summer months, demand for accommodation, transport, and hospitality staff increases significantly, often outstripping local capacity.

At the same time, quieter winter periods reduce income stability for businesses and workers. This seasonality is compounded by a recognised trend of young people leaving the islands for education or work and not returning, contributing to staff shortages across the visitor economy.

Addressing these workforce challenges is important, especially as the emerging offshore energy sector is projected to create substantial future demand for skilled labour, which will increase competition for staff within key local industries including tourism.

- **Resilient town centres:** Kirkwall's retail sector remains relatively strong, with commercial vacancy rates below the Scottish average. Continued investment in the public realm and accessibility improvements is essential to sustaining this vitality and attracting footfall. Targeted funding will also help surrounding towns and villages build greater resilience.
- **Housing:** Affordable housing scores 17% below average, with 63% of residents identifying it as the top local issue. The shortage of suitable homes in both the mainland and outer isles contributes to recruitment and retention challenges.

An increasing proportion of housing stock is being converted into holiday accommodation, further constraining supply and making it harder for young people and families to find long-term, affordable homes. This trend risks undermining community sustainability across several islands.

- **Connectivity:** Access to gigabit-capable broadband is still behind national levels, particularly in the outer isles. This limits digital inclusion and use of online services. Physical connectivity also places real pressure on daily life. Inter-island transport links are essential for work, education, health care and access to services, yet limited ferry capacity, weather disruption and infrequent sailings can reduce mobility and widen the gap between the Mainland and the isles.

On the Mainland itself, public transport options are limited which makes it harder for young people, older residents and those without cars to travel easily between towns and villages. These combined digital and transport constraints affect quality of life and access to opportunities.

- **Distinct travel patterns:** Kirkwall residents are more likely to walk or cycle to work, reflecting the town's compact layout. In contrast, the outer isles remain heavily car-dependent due to their rural nature and limited transport options. Increasing investment in active travel will help build confidence in walking and cycling to schools, services, and workplaces.

These findings emphasise the need for continued investment in infrastructure that improves accessibility, mobility, and inclusion across Orkney. The Orkney Fund will focus on complementary interventions such as active travel links, community infrastructure, and the renewal of shared public spaces.

These investments will aim to strengthen the resilience of Orkney's communities and improve overall quality of life across the islands.

Stronger Communities – Social Wellbeing, Safety, Inclusion, and Local Pride

Orkney continues to rank among the safest and most cohesive communities in Scotland, with residents reporting strong social ties and a high quality of life. However, demographic change and uneven access to services present significant challenges for future sustainability.

- **Safety and wellbeing:** Crime rates are 60% lower than the national average, contributing to Orkney's reputation as one of Scotland's safest places to live. However, community consultation has highlighted emerging hotspots of antisocial behaviour in parts of Kirkwall and Stromness, where incidents are becoming more frequent.
- **Population pressures:** The outer isles continue to experience population decline, coupled with an ageing demographic and a shrinking working-age population. These trends are placing increasing pressure on local services and making it harder for communities to retain the skills and capacity needed to remain sustainable.
- **An ageing demographic:** Orkney has a higher proportion of older residents and fewer young people compared to Scotland overall, creating future challenges for the local workforce and increasing demand for health and care services.

Around 40% of residents are aged 50 and above, with some of the smaller islands experiencing even greater demographic imbalance. Without action to attract and retain younger people, particularly working-age residents, these areas risk further depopulation and a loss of essential skills.

- **Child poverty:** While the proportion of children in low-income households is around 30% below the Scottish average, after housing costs are considered, an estimated 19.3% of children in Orkney live in poverty. This highlights the hidden pressures faced by families on low incomes, where the high cost of living and limited housing options continue to affect wellbeing and life opportunities.

Addressing these issues requires investment that supports opportunity and intergenerational participation. By improving access to sport, recreation, cultural, and community spaces, the Orkney Fund aims to support renewed and modernised social infrastructure that underpins local resilience and cohesion.

Other opportunities include maintaining Orkney's low crime rates by ensuring enough support is delivered toward crime prevention measures and initiatives that tackle crime at its root.

Taking Back Control – Empowerment, Participation, and Local Decision-Making

Evidence from community engagement, local government data, and ZenCity analysis highlights a strong culture of local participation across Orkney, supported by a well-established network of community trusts and associations.

Despite this strength, consultation findings indicate a clear desire for greater local influence in decision-making and more flexible, community-led investment approaches that reflect the unique needs of different places across the islands.

- **Local engagement and influence:** While community involvement in local projects is high, many residents expressed a sense of being underrepresented in strategic decision-making processes, particularly in more remote island communities.
- **Distinct local priorities:** Differences between Kirkwall, Stromness, and the outer isles reinforce the importance of flexible, place-based planning. Residents emphasised the need for decision-making structures that recognise the specific challenges and opportunities in each community rather than applying a uniform, island-wide approach.
- **Strong community capacity:** Orkney benefits from an established network of development trusts and voluntary organisations that provide essential services and manage community-owned assets.

Consultation highlighted that many of these organisations are ready to take on greater responsibility for delivering regeneration activity but require support to build capacity, secure funding, and sustain long-term operations.

These findings demonstrate that Orkney is well placed to maximise the impact of Pride in Place investment. With the right support, local organisations can take greater ownership of regeneration projects, build community assets, and strengthen long-term self-reliance across the islands.

35

Alignment
with other
programmes
and
investments



Supporting Orkney's strategic vision

The proposed activities under the Pride in Place programme build on existing local plans and masterplans and align with ongoing programmes and funding streams delivered by the UK and Scottish Governments.

This approach supports the directing of resources toward shared goals around community development, economic resilience, and sustainable growth, while reinforcing the delivery of Orkney's strategic ambitions at both local and regional levels.

Relevant documents include:

- [The Orkney Community Plan 2025-30](#) brings together local public service providers, the voluntary sector, and businesses to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. Its core focus is on reducing inequality and preventing disadvantage. The strategy sets out three key delivery priorities:
 1. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis and addressing the root causes of poverty.
 2. Promoting sustainable development.
 3. Reducing inequalities across Orkney.
- [The Orkney Islands Council Plan 2023-28](#) sets out a five-year vision to grow Orkney's economy, strengthen its communities, and develop local infrastructure. The plan aims to create a prosperous island economy that supports those most in need while focusing on empowering local communities and businesses.

A key element is the delivery of major projects designed to increase the sustainability of community infrastructure and long-term benefits - an area in which The Orkney Fund has the potential to make a significant contribution.

- [The Orkney Arts Strategy Action Plan 2023-27](#) is built around three key themes: people, place, and participation. Serving as a vital resource for the arts sector and wider creative community, the strategy celebrates Orkney's long-standing tradition of delivering innovative cultural experiences that strengthen tourism and reinforce the islands' distinctive identity.

It promotes sustained cultural investment to unlock social and economic benefits, including support for museums, public art installations, and new artistic attractions. Feedback from the Board's public consultation highlighted the importance of nurturing local enterprise and creative talent - now embedded as a core investment priority within the 10-year Programme.

- [The Orkney Islands Local Police Plan 2023-26](#) sets out a strategic approach to keeping Orkney a safe and vibrant place to live and work. The plan focuses on reducing crime – particularly antisocial behaviour and road offences – while strengthening community safety and enabling greater protection for vulnerable people. The Orkney Fund aligns with the Police Plan through promoting safety and crime-reduction initiatives to promote security and social cohesion.
- [The Orkney Tourism Strategy 2020-35](#) recognises tourism as a vital and growing part of Orkney’s economy, contributing significantly to local income and employment. While increased visitor numbers bring new opportunities, they also create management challenges.

The strategy emphasises the importance of protecting Orkney’s unique environment and culture while promoting responsible tourism, which the Orkney fund aligns with strongly. It provides a shared framework for collaboration through Destination Management and Marketing plans, helping to focus resources and efforts toward developing Orkney as a world-class, sustainable destination.

- [The Orkney Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan](#) sets out a long-term, sustainable approach to managing Orkney’s visitor economy. The STIDP identifies the need to support the responsible development of tourism infrastructure by addressing pressures created by sustained growth in visitor numbers and strengthening the resilience of the sector by dispersing visitor activity, protecting natural and cultural assets, and improving the overall visitor experience.

The Orkney Fund directly supports these aims by prioritising investment in projects that improve the quality and accessibility of local places, while regenerating heritage assets that promote tourism-related activity. These types of interventions contribute to the STIDP’s objectives of deepening the visitor offer and extending the visitor season while ensuring that growth benefits local communities in a balanced and sustainable way.

- [The Orkney Community Wealth Building Action Plan 2025-30](#) builds on the Orkney Community Plan to address economic challenges and make better use of local resources. It promotes Community Wealth Building, an approach that keeps wealth within Orkney by creating good jobs, supporting local businesses, and strengthening community ownership. Building on Orkney’s strong record of collaboration and sustainable practice, the plan aims to grow a fair, resilient, and sustainable economy that enables shared opportunities across all communities.

- [The Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022–26](#), developed by Orkney’s Child Poverty Task Force, takes a coordinated approach to reducing hardship by working closely with affected communities and drawing on lived experience. Aligned with the Scottish Government’s national framework of Pockets, Prospects, and Places, and strengthened locally by the themes of Prevention and Priorities, the strategy aims to ensure every partner agency supports children’s wellbeing and prospects.

The Orkney Fund contributes to these goals by investing in community-led projects that improve access to services, promotes inclusion, and strengthens community resilience.

- [The Orkney Local Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2024–2044](#) sets out a long-term vision to improve transport links, expand active travel opportunities, and develop infrastructure that supports mobility and accessibility across the islands. The annual Orkney Travel Matters survey provides valuable insights from community members on the opportunities and challenges they experience in relation to travel and transport.

These findings will play an important role in shaping priorities and identifying where investment can have the greatest impact. The Orkney Fund Board’s core themes align closely with the objectives of the Delivery Plan and informed by community consultation and survey evidence, will seek to support projects that strengthen local transport connections and promote sustainable, active travel throughout Orkney.

- [The Orkney Local Housing Strategy 2024–2029](#) aligns with the Orkney Fund Board’s Regeneration Plan by strengthening services, supporting Local Place Plans, and helping communities address depopulation, demographic, access challenges. The Programme contributes to the wider conditions required for sustainable housing and resilient communities across Orkney.
- [The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Strategy 2025–2035](#) sets out a shared vision for a dynamic, connected, resilient, and prosperous region with a balanced and growing population and a vibrant economy. It calls for regional collaboration through the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) to promote community wealth building, support Scotland’s transition to net zero, and improve the natural environment.

The Orkney Fund aligns closely with these ambitions by investing in community infrastructure, enterprise, and local resilience, helping to deliver sustainable growth and inclusive prosperity across Orkney in line with the wider regional strategy.

- **Scotland's National Planning Framework 4** establishes a national vision for sustainable, liveable, and productive places. The framework places strong emphasis on community empowerment, local resilience, and climate-conscious development.

The Orkney Fund aligns with NPF4 by promoting place-based investment that supports low-carbon communities, increase local identity, and improves access to essential services. Through its focus on community-led planning and equitable distribution of resources, the Orkney Fund aims to contribute directly to delivering NPF4 outcomes at a local scale.

- **Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF)** is Scotland's wellbeing framework and sets the vision for the kind of Scotland we all want to live in. It sets out a vision for collective wellbeing, drawing eleven National Outcomes that focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for communities across Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Nine of the eleven priorities are particularly relevant:

- **Children and young people** – we grow up loved, safe and respected to that we realise our full potential
 - **Communities** – We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
 - **Culture** – We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
 - **Economy** – We have a globally competitive entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
 - **Education** – We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
 - **Environment** – We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
 - **Fair Work and Business** – We have thriving and innovative businesses with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
 - **Health** – We are healthy and active
 - **Poverty** – We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.
- **Local Place Plans** across Orkney give communities the opportunity to shape the future of their areas by contributing their own ideas and proposals for the development and use of land. These community-led plans express local aspirations, identify priorities, and propose practical solutions for sustainable growth and improvement.

By setting out shared priorities for future development, Local Place Plans can also help communities deliver their own projects and drive meaningful change in their local area.



Match funding
and leveraged
investment

Maximising impact through partnership

The Orkney Fund seeks to maximise its impact by working alongside other sources of funding and recognises the value of having the first brick in the wall to leverage further investment. This is particularly important given the present complexity of the UK funding landscape. Within Orkney, the Fund will align with established local funding streams while also building connections to regional and national programmes across Scotland and the UK.

The Orkney Fund will encourage applicants to secure match funding wherever possible, drawing in additional resources to strengthen delivery and support long-term sustainability. This includes collaboration with funding mechanisms such as, but not limited to:

- Orkney Islands Council's Community Development Fund (CDF)
- Scottish Government's Community-Led Local Development Fund (CLLD)
- Crown Estate Local Development Fund (CELCDF)
- Sportscotland
- Relevant public, private, and third-sector programmes, including the Scottish Government's Islands Programme Capital Fund and Regeneration Capital Grant Fund



Connecting with strategic initiatives

The Orkney Fund also complements wider investment initiatives such as the Islands Growth Deal and other national programmes that support local economic resilience and sustainable development.

Examples of projects within the Islands Growth Deal that the Pride in Place Programme aligns with include the Creative Islands Wellbeing Project, a £6.1 million joint investment from the UK and Scottish Governments that supports creative sector and wellbeing infrastructure, and the Orkney World Heritage Gateway, a £6.5 million joint investment from the UK and Scottish Governments focused on sustainable tourism and improved transport connections.

More recently, Orkney has been named among six areas across the UK to benefit from the National Lottery Heritage Fund investment aimed at helping places of interest unlock the potential of their heritage. The funding comes through the Heritage Places initiative, which supports regions with strong cultural identities to strengthen local heritage.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund will collaborate with local partners to develop a coordinated approach to protecting and promoting Orkney's heritage. This presents a valuable opportunity for the Orkney Fund to collaborate on shared priorities and use its resources as match funding to deliver heritage projects of lasting local and national value.

By aligning with these complementary funding streams and strategic programmes, the Orkney Fund Board aims to maximise the reach of its investment and deliver a legacy of inclusive and sustainable growth throughout Orkney.



Community and stakeholder engagement

Shaped by community voices

The Orkney Fund has prioritised community and stakeholder engagement in developing and delivering the Regeneration Plan. This has built on existing community development plans and previous community consultation exercises such as Orkney Matters.

In addition, the Orkney Fund Board consulted with the general public, community councils, development trusts, local businesses, and third-sector organisations through a series of workshops, public meetings, and targeted surveys across the islands.

As a result, more than 800 project proposals and suggested priority actions were recorded by residents and various community groups and considered by the Orkney Fund Board. This early engagement has provided a clear picture of local priorities and directly shaped the Fund's four thematic areas.

The Orkney Fund will remain community-driven and responsive to the evolving needs of Orkney's people and places by embedding community consultation throughout the delivery of the programme, with Board members seeking to engage with as wide and representative a range of voices as possible. The Board is particularly focused on inclusive engagement to make sure that seldom-heard groups can influence decision-making.

Future engagement will build on existing networks and will include Board-led sub-groups dedicated to working with different communities around priority themes and funding opportunities, helping ensure that all parts of Orkney can shape and benefit from regeneration activity.

Engagement Activities

The Orkney Fund Board has undertaken a comprehensive programme of engagement to make sure the Regeneration Plan reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of communities across Orkney. A range of consultation methods were used to reach individuals, community organisations, and local businesses, generating strong participation and valuable insights.

July 2024 – QR Code idea registration

An open, long-running online platform was launched to enable residents, groups, and organisations to submit project proposals at any stage during the consultation period. This accessible tool promoted continuous community input and encouraged new ideas from across the islands.

July 2024 – Analysis of existing community-led and informal data

An analysis of an earlier ‘Orkney Matters’ community consultation, Stromness and Kirkwall Place Plans, and individual Community Development Plans. This analysis helped gather emerging project ideas that aligned with wider policy objectives and community-led aspirations already established across the islands.

18 July 2024 – Public Workshops

Three public workshops were held in Kirkwall at the King Street Halls, providing an opportunity for attendees to learn about the Orkney Fund, share project ideas, and help shape investment priorities. The sessions were tailored for different audiences – one for individuals and community representatives, one for young people, and one for local businesses – to ensure a range of voices were heard.

Each session attracted between 120 and 150 participants, reflecting strong local interest and engagement. Attendees represented a diverse range of Orkney’s community, including residents from across the mainland and the isles, local organisations, and small business owners. The discussions helped raise awareness of the Fund and gathered feedback to inform the development of future funding priorities.

10 August 2024 County Show Pop-up

Orkney's County Show provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the community. The annual agricultural event, held at Bignold Park in Kirkwall, attracts roughly 10,000 visitors each year and transforms the area into a vibrant hub of local activity.

The Orkney Fund Board hosted an information stand at the show, engaging directly with residents, businesses, and community representatives. This informal setting allowed people to speak with Board members, learn more about the Fund, share project ideas, and discuss local investment priorities. The event proved highly valuable in raising awareness of the Fund and gathering insights from a broad cross-section of the community.

26 September 2024 – Orkney Business Forum

A dedicated presentation and discussion session was held with local business owners, and industry representatives to explore how the Orkney Fund could best support enterprise and economic growth across the islands. The event provided a platform for businesses to share their experiences, highlight barriers to development, and identify opportunities for investment. Insights gathered from this forum have helped shape the Fund's approach to supporting a diverse and resilient local economy.

1 October 2024 – Online Engagement Workshop

An online workshop was delivered to make engagement more accessible to residents of the outer isles. The session enabled participants to contribute ideas remotely and share the challenges and opportunities specific to their communities.

17 October 2024 – Strategic Stakeholder Meeting

The Board Chair met with representatives from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Orkney Local Area Action Group to discuss alignment with existing funding programmes and explore opportunities for collaboration.

24 June 2025 – Call for Expressions of Interest

A call for project ideas was launched following synthesis of project ideas and selected priority themes by the Board, inviting applications from community groups, charities, and local organisations. Submissions were sought for Local Place Plans, feasibility studies, and capacity-building initiatives, and ready-to-deliver capital projects aligned with the Fund's priorities.

July 2025 - Capacity Funding Round

This targeted round of funding was designed to enable community-led organisations across Orkney to take forward early-stage project feasibility, development and consultation work, helping shape future investment priorities. The approach focused on building local capacity and accelerating the preparation of deliverable projects for the 10-year Pride in Place Programme.

By supporting feasibility and place planning activity at this stage, the Board helped communities to develop strong, evidence-based proposals that can attract future capital investment.

10 November 2025 – Seminar with Elected Members

An outline of the Regeneration Plan was presented to Orkney Islands Council elected members to discuss how the Orkney Fund Board intends to distribute funding in the early stages of the Programme and how community insights have shaped the Plan. As representatives of different wards across Orkney, their feedback helped reinforce that the Plan reflects local priorities and community needs.

Additional information about the Orkney Fund's engagement activities and latest updates can be found at www.orkney.gov.uk/theorkneyfund

08

Governance

Delivering with accountability

The Orkney Fund Board has been established to provide strategic leadership for the delivery of the UK Government's 10-Year Pride in Place Programme in Orkney. Its purpose is to support programme delivery in a way that reflects the needs and ambitions of local communities, while remaining fully compliant with UK Government requirements.

Role of the Board

The Board's role is to define the vision for the Orkney Fund and to set the strategic objectives that guide investment decisions. In doing so, the Board works collaboratively with communities, businesses, and residents to design priorities, using local knowledge, available data, and evidence of need.

The Board will listen to community voices throughout delivery. Local groups and community development-focused organisations will be invited to participate in advisory roles and provide feedback at key review stages. This will help the Board to respond flexibly to emerging local needs over the course of the programme's ten-year duration.

The Board is also responsible for adhering to strong governance standards. This includes maintaining clear lines of decision-making, operating with well-defined terms of reference, and embedding transparency in how decisions are made and communicated. The Board's Terms of Reference detail protocols and procedures for decision making and voting, a code of conduct, complaints, addressing conflicts of interest, and carrying out other governance functions.

The Board meets regularly to consider reports, assess applications, and agree the direction of the programme. Board papers are published on the Council's website for transparency. Where papers involve commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted information, these are considered in private. Such material remains subject to Freedom of Information legislation and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis against the relevant exemptions.

Role of the Local Authority

While the Board provides strategic direction, Orkney Islands Council acts as the accountable body, which is responsible for financial oversight, due diligence, and compliance with the conditions of funding. The Director of Enterprise and Resources, under Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

The Policy and Resources Committee holds responsibility for regulating and controlling the Council's finances. These regulations set out the standards required of all Council officers and elected members. The Council enters into the formal funding agreement with the UK Government and takes legal and financial responsibility for the programme. The Council oversees that funds are used appropriately, that financial and compliance controls are in place, and that delivery meets all required governance standards.

The Council's Economic Development service manages all grant processes and delivery of administration through established processes, ensuring transparency, audit, subsidy control compliance, and value for money. A dedicated Economic Development Officer supports the Board and assists with the effective delivery of the Orkney Fund programme.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Orkney Islands Council and the Orkney Fund Board sets out the respective roles, responsibilities, and working arrangements. This agreement formalises how decisions are made, how information is shared, and how both parties collaborate to deliver the programme effectively.

The accountable body model provides a clear division of roles: the Board focuses on vision, priorities and investment decisions, while the Council ensures that those decisions are underpinned by proper financial management and compliance. The governance structure will allow for community and partner input at both strategic and project levels, creating clear feedback loops into decision-making as programme delivery progresses.

Board Membership

The composition of the Orkney Fund Board reflects a balance of independence, democratic accountability, and sectoral expertise. In accordance with government guidance, the Board is chaired by an independent Chair, appointed by Orkney Islands Council, and includes Orkney's Member of Parliament, the Member of the Scottish Parliament, and representatives from the Council, public services, business, and the third sector.

Current members include:

- **Stephen Hagan** – Former Convener of Orkney Islands Council – Chair
- **Craig Spence** – Chief Executive, Orkney Housing Association Ltd. – Deputy Chair
- **Michael Morrison** – Former Business Development Manager, Orkney Islands Council – Deputy Chair
- **Alistair Carmichael, MP** – Member of Parliament for Orkney and Shetland
- **Cheryl Chapman** – Development Manager, VisitScotland, Chair of Kirkwall BID
- **David Campbell** – Interim Chair of NHS Orkney Board, Business and Community Consultant
- **Gwenda Shearer, Cllr** – Chair of the Council's Education, Leisure and Housing Committee
- **Kristopher Leask, Cllr** – Chair of the Council's Development and Infrastructure Committee
- **Liam McArthur, MSP** – Member of the Scottish Parliament for Orkney Islands
- **Morven Brooks** – Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Orkney
- **Rachel Scarth** – Project Manager, Developing the Young Workforce
- **Scott Robertson** – Area Commander, Police Scotland

Route to Market and Management

Funding decisions are made through a structured, staged process:

1. Community engagement sessions identify local challenges, opportunities, and ideas for investment.
2. Analysis of consultation findings highlights key themes and priorities.
3. Expressions of Interest are invited, aligned with the agreed themes.
4. Eligible organisations are then invited to submit full applications with evidence of need, delivery capacity, and financial information.
5. Council Officers review applications to confirm that proposals are compliant with Subsidy Control requirements and that submissions are suitably competent for consideration by the Board.
6. Applications are assessed and scored by a sub-group of the Board against agreed criteria.
7. The full Board considers the scoring outcomes and makes final funding decisions at a formal meeting.
8. Funds are allocated through a dedicated cost centre managed by the Council in its role as accountable body.

While the Expressions of Interest process forms the main route for project selection, the Board also retains the ability to develop its own strategic initiatives where opportunities for the wider impact through collaboration are identified.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are central to the delivery of the Orkney Fund and will take place throughout the duration of the programme. This allows the Orkney Fund Board and the Council to track progress and assess how funded projects are contributing to local priorities.

Alongside UK Government requirements, the Orkney Fund Board will operate its own monitoring framework to assess how well projects are meeting local priorities. This will include the collection of qualitative community feedback and the use of performance indicators to measure progress across the Fund's four priority themes.

Applicants will be required to identify which of the Orkney Fund's strategic outcomes their project will deliver against, and to describe how these will be achieved, as part of their application.

Programme Delivery Monitoring

Progress against agreed milestones will be tracked regularly with updates provided to the Board. Each project will be monitored against the outcomes selected at approval stage to confirm that delivery remains on course and that the programme as a whole is achieving its intended aims.

Financial Monitoring

Programme spend will be monitored against the indicative 4-Year Investment Profile to ensure appropriate allocation across themes and to prevent overspend in any area. Financial updates will provide assurance to the Council that funds are being managed properly and transparently.

Risk Monitoring

A live programme risk register will be maintained and reviewed at each Board meeting. Risks and issues identified through project monitoring will be escalated promptly through by the Economic Development Officer.



09

Assurance

The programme's assurance framework incorporates the following commitments:

Statutory and Regulatory Compliance

- Funding decisions will be taken in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, with equality impacts to be considered with funding applications to demonstrate how a project promotes inclusivity and participation.
- Funding passing Council for approval via reporting requires Equalities Impact Assessment consideration and Islands Community Impact Assessment upon review.
- Environmental considerations will form part of the project appraisal. Planning permissions following NPF4 must demonstrate adherence to biodiversity and environmental policies which ensures the Council, as the accountable body, maintains compliance with environmental legislation and Orkney's net zero ambitions.
- All procurement undertaken through funded projects must comply with Public Contract Regulations and the Council's procurement policies, including requirements for Best Value.
- Delivery and financial risks will be monitored throughout project lifecycles, with issues escalated to the Orkney Fund Board and the accountable body where appropriate.

Governance and Decision-Making Standards

- Uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.
- Align with the Council's policies, regulatory framework, and financial governance requirements, including subsidy control and audit standards.
- Apply high standards of project management practices, ensuring proportionate but robust oversight and appropriate delineation of administrative tasks and financial responsibilities.
- Maintain clear processes for monitoring, reporting, and performance review, feeding into quarterly and annual UK Government returns.
- Embed transparency in decision-making, including the publication of Board papers except when exempt under legislation.
- Maintain fraud prevention and detection measures, including fraud-risk assessment and controls to protect public money.

