Orkney Fund Board

Minute

Venue: **Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall**.

Date: **Friday, 1 May 2026**.

Time: **14:00**.

Present:

- Stephen Hagan, Chair.
- Morven Brooks.
- Cheryl Chapman.
- Chief Inspector Scott Robertson (via Microsoft Teams).
- Rachel Scarth.
- Councillor Gwenda Shearer (via Microsoft Teams).
- Craig Spence.

Orkney Islands Council Officers:

- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).
- Laura Hutton, Economic Development Manager.
- Harvey Crew, Economic Development Officer.
- Hudson Johnson, Communications Officer.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Stephen Hagan, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been intimated on behalf of Davie Campbell and Michael Morrison. No response had been received from Alistair Carmichael MP and Councillor Kristopher Leask.

2. Draft Minute of Meeting held on 25 February 2026

There had been previously circulated the draft Minute of the Meeting held on 25 February 2026, which was approved as a true record.

3. Budget Statement

Laura Hutton advised that, with the Council's finance systems closed down for year end processes, it had not been possible to obtain accurate figures for a budget statement. A budget statement would be available for the next meeting.

4. Website

Hudson Johnson advised that the website had attracted approximately 2,600 views, with 611 unique users, which was welcomed, particularly as the Fund could not be promoted through the Council's website during the pre-election period. All Board member profiles were complete, with the exception of a head shot of one member.

5. Roundtable Discussions

The Chair outlined the proposal for roundtable discussions with various stakeholders and sectors, with sport being the first sector, as representatives of the Board had already held several discussions with groups and individuals.

Arrangements were progressing to appoint a facilitator for the first roundtable discussion which was anticipated to take place in late May/early June, with sport and leisure representatives.

Actions:

- Appoint facilitator.
- Arrange roundtable discussion with sport and leisure sector.

6. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Craig Spence, the Board resolved that the public be excluded for Items 7 and 8, as the business to be considered involved the disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

7. Community Council Funding

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

The Chair advised that, although community councils received annual funding, they could also access other funding, as well as being allocated a sum from the Council's Community Development Fund. A meeting would be held with Community Council staff within the Council to identify how the Orkney Fund could support community councils.

Action: officers to meet with Community Council Liaison team and report back.

8. Year 1 Funding Applications

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 4 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

There had been previously circulated a report presenting the outcomes of the 2026/27 funding round assessment process and seeking approval of the allocation of funding to recommended projects.

Harvey Crew advised that the current approach reflected the Board's agreement to prioritise the first year of Pride in Place Programme funding to community-led projects through the Expression of Interest (EoI) process, using the refined process agreed at the last meeting, with a reworked application form and officer assessment.

Following a call for EoIs in late 2025, eligible applicants were invited to apply with a deadline of 20 March 2026. Thirty applications were received – 20 for capital funding, eight for revenue funding and two seeking both capital and revenue funding.

Ahead of the meeting, Members were provided with copies of each application and a spreadsheet outlining assessment scores against the agreed criteria. A separate summary sheet had also been circulated presenting key project information and Officer recommendations to support Members in recording initial views to facilitate efficient decision-making.

A summary of each application was attached as Appendix 1 to the report circulated. Applications that met the agreed pass threshold were considered eligible for funding. In deciding which projects to support, Members were requested to consider assessment scores, the available budget, and Officer comments on delivery readiness. While higher scoring projects indicated stronger alignment with the Fund's priorities, Members could also apply their judgement when setting final priorities.

There was flexibility to transfer revenue funding to capital, subject to approval from the Head of Finance, Orkney Islands Council. Certain elements of project expenditure might be eligible to be treated as capital, where they met the relevant criteria, again subject to confirmation by the Head of Finance.

The Board then considered the 30 individual applications and determined the awards, as set out in Appendix 1 to this Minute.

Councillor Gwenda Shearer declared an interest in a project and was not present during discussion relating to that application.

Rachel Scarth declared an interest in a project and was not present during discussion relating to that application.

Cheryl Chapman declared an interest in two projects and was not present during discussion relating to that application.

In summary, of the 30 applications, 23 received awards of funding as follows:

- Capital funding – £415,000 awarded (2026/27 budget of £360,000).
- Revenue funding – £31,726 awarded (2026/27 budget of £231,640).
- Capacity funding – £52,093 (2026/27 budget of £150,000).

The Board agreed that £55,000 of revenue funding within the 2026/27 budget allocation be transferred to meet the over subscription of capital awards.

Post Meeting Note: On 12 May 2026, the Board determined, via email, that the decision to support a project be overturned. As a result, the capital over-subscription has reduced (£376,420 awarded) and the amount of revenue funding requiring transfer to the capital budget is £16,420.

Actions:

- Officers to contact all applicants to advise of outcome.
- Public announcement of funding to be deferred until week commencing 11 May 2026.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

9. Any Other Competent Business

As there was a substantial underspend in the budget allocation for revenue funding for 2026/27, consideration should be given to progressing a community safety project and it was agreed that further discussion should take place at the next meeting.

Laura Hutton advised that the Council was currently undertaking a review of all community funding offered by the Council. The current allocation for the Community Development Fund was nearly fully committed and would be considered by the Council in June 2026.

Harvey Crew advised that he had been approached by another community wishing to access funding for a Local Place Plan, given that the funding from the Orkney Fund had now finished. There were very few alternative sources of funding available for feasibility studies.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course.

11. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting concluded at 16:10.