

Orkney Fund Board



Minute

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

Date: **Friday, 31 October 2025.**

Time: **14:00.**

Present:

- Stephen Hagan, Chair.
- Morven Brooks.
- Davie Campbell.
- Cheryl Chapman.
- Inspector David Hall, Police Scotland (via Microsoft Teams).
- Councillor Kristopher Leask.
- Liam McArthur MSP (via Microsoft Teams).
- Michael Morrison.
- Rachel Scarth.
- Councillor Gwenda Shearer (via Microsoft Teams).
- Craig Spence.

Orkney Islands Council Officers:

- Gareth Waterson, Director of Enterprise and Resources.
- Sweyn Johnston, Head of Enterprise and Economic Growth.
- Stuart Allison, Service Manager (Enterprise).
- 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 Chief Inspector Scott Robertson. No response had been received from Alistair Carmichael MP.

2. Draft Minute of Meeting held on 26 September 2025

There had been previously circulated the draft Minute of the Meeting held on 26 September 2025, which was approved as a true record.

The Chair advised that he had met with the Communications Officer to finalise the communications strategy, and reported that the website was expected to go live by the end of January 2026.

3. Budget Statement

There had been previously circulated a report setting out a budget statement for the UK Government's Plan for Neighbourhoods' funding received up to 30 September 2025, along with a summary of costs incurred and committed.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

4. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Craig Spence, the Board resolved that the public be excluded for Item 5, as the business to be considered involved the disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

5. Draft Regeneration Plan

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.

There had been previously circulated a report presenting the outcomes from a Board workshop held on 17 October 2025, designed to progress the draft Regeneration Plan, providing direction on investment priorities and funding frameworks to support the 4-Year Investment Plan and the 10-Year Vision required for submission to the UK Government by 28 November 2025, for consideration and approval.

Discussion followed on the level of detail to be included in the Regeneration Plan, bearing in mind the revised guidance issued by the UK Government, and whether by detailing specific projects which might receive funding, gave a perception of support, however this could be overcome by adding a disclaimer.

Discussion also took place regarding the signing off procedure for the Regeneration Plan, prior to submission to UK Government. In April 2024, Orkney Islands Council had determined that the Long-Term Plan and the initial 3-year investment plan be approved by the Council prior to submission to the UK Government. In the intervening period, updated guidance had been issued by the UK Government, changing both the name of the initiative and the supporting documents, as well as confirming that the approval of the local authority was no longer required prior to submission of the documents to the UK

Government. It was generally agreed that the draft Regeneration Plan should be shared with Orkney Islands Council prior to submission.

The Board was also reminded that Orkney Islands Council had, in April 2024, set out the process for approval of projects. However, when the draft Regeneration Plan was submitted to the Council, the accompanying report would recommend a system of delegation, similar to that which already operated within the Economic Development service. This would hopefully speed up the approval process for the majority of projects seeking assistance from the Orkney Fund.

Members suggested specific additions and/or amendments to the draft documents, including the tone of language used, inclusion of maps and photographs, confirmation of quoted data, embedding hyperlinks to other documents, more detail on community and stakeholder engagement, more detail on governance (should the delegation referred to above be agreed), as well as reference to subsidy control, if applicable.

Officers took on board all comments and confirmed that revised drafts of the 10-Year Vision and the 4-Year Investment Plan would be circulated as soon as practicable, noting that a session with Elected Members was planned for 10 November 2025, with the final drafts being considered by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 25 November 2025.

Although the documents required to be submitted to the UK Government to meet governance requirements, it was agreed that a short summary, including a glossary, be produced as an easy read for the general public.

Liam McArthur MSP and Inspector David Hall joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

Councillor Gwenda Shearer left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Actions:

- Officers to incorporate feedback from Board members and circulate updated drafts as soon as practicable.
- Co-ordinate with OIC Communications team to produce a presentable and accessible document.
- Officers to prepare for seminar with Elected Members on 10 November 2025.
- Officers to draft report for Policy and Resources Committee on 25 November 2025.
- MP to have sight of final Plan prior to sign off.

6. Any Other Competent Business

The Chair advised of discussion at the recent workshop about increasing membership of the Board, with particular reference to younger people, which would be considered further at a future meeting.

7. Date of Next Meeting

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

8. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting concluded at 15:10.