



Orkney Partnership Board

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2025 in person and via Teams.

1. Attendance and apologies

2.

DELEGATES

Facilitating partners

Orkney Islands Council
NHS Orkney
Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Police Scotland

Cllr Heather Woodbridge (Chair)
Issy Grieve
Katrina Wiseman
Davie Hall

Participating partners

Integrated Joint board
NatureScot
Skills Development Scotland
Community Justice Partnership
UHI Orkney
HITRANS

Cllr Rachael King
Graham Neville
Claire Sim
Stephen Brown
Seonaidh McDonald
Cllr Kristopher Leask

Co-opted partners

Orkney Housing Association Ltd.
Voluntary Action Orkney

Craig Spence
Rosalind Aitken

IN ATTENDANCE

Scottish Government
Orkney Islands Council
NHS Orkney
NHS Orkney
Orkney Islands Council
Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Orkney CPP

Ellen Leaver
Alex Rodwell
Laura Skaife-Knight
Hannah Casey
Oliver Reid
Ruth Kirkpatrick
George Vickers (Secretary)

APOLOGIES

Visit Scotland
Scottish Fire and Rescue
Orkney Islands Council
NHS Orkney
SEPA
Historic Environment Scotland

Cheryl Chapman
David McGroarty
Cllr Sandy Cowie
Meghan McEwen
Owen Robinson
Dorothy Hoskins

2. Draft minutes of the meeting of the Board 11 December 2024

Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Matters arising

Items will largely be covered elsewhere in the agenda.

4. Community Wealth Building (CWB) Delivery Plan

The plan had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Community Wealth Building Bill, if passed, will instruct Local Authorities to have CWB Action Plans, and the CWB has been published, and the Orkney CWB Delivery Plan is likely to meet that obligation. The Bill refers to Action Plans not Delivery Plans so the name of the Delivery Plan will be amended to be in line with that.

As there were no comments or questions, the recommendations in the report were agreed:

- The Draft Delivery Plan to be published on the Orkney CPP website.
- The views of members of the public, community organisations, community planning partners, trade unionists, local business and others to be sought.
- A revised Delivery Plan that addresses the issues raised to be brought to the June 2025 meeting for approval.

5. Gender Pay Gap

Discussion has been had about whether the objective should be to reduce Orkney's gender pay gap from 20% to the Scottish average of 10% or to 0%. The target for this 5-year Orkney Community Plan would be to get to 10%. Some work has already been done to discover what the drivers are for the gap and to define actions needed to reduce it. The actions are ambitious, and discussion is needed to define what the appetite is among the Partners in making these actions happen. Some big decisions are needed even though funding is tight, and Partners will need their own further discussions to help feed in to a more detailed plan.

Rachael King requested that the word 'flexibility' in the first action be changed to 'necessity' to remove the implication that flexibility is always a choice. Reductions in child care provision and increases in caring responsibilities often make this a necessity. Consideration should be given to the Gender Pay Gap under equality impact assessments to help put it in its wider context.

Other suggestions to consider were:

- Including the significant number of women with caring responsibilities who do not work in the public sector in the statistics.
- Including men's perspective in the discussion.
- Collecting data via interviews and focus groups rather than just by a quantitative closed approach.
- Being aware that caring responsibilities also include caring for school leavers with additional support needs as well as child care, and elderly care.

- Identifying the challenges in this area and focussing the limited resources on what will make the biggest difference.
- Trying to identify if any of the difficult decisions around funding taken in other areas, have had an impact on the gender pay gap.
- Understanding whether people feel forced into the choices they are making relating to work-life balance and caring responsibilities.
- Articulating the additional challenges faced in Orkney as an island community, both mainland Orkney and outer isles.
- Creating a dedicated working group to take this forward.
- Comparing other island groups' experience and discovering if they have done similar studies.

George will follow up on the suggestions and will create a list of people who would be willing to undertake this research. Seonaidh offered the resources of UHI Orkney to lead on carrying out the research.

6. Review of Risk Register

The document had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Rachael King asked for clarity of the definition of 'capacity' in Risk 1 as it seems to encompass everything from funding to workforce. In the ensuing discussion it was felt that the document is as streamlined as it can be and that it should be treated as a methodology and support for the process of the CPP. It was also felt that the mitigations were the area to focus on so that appropriate actions can be planned, bearing in mind available resources. The CPP has more control over choices of resourcing than it does over the legislative and political uncertainty at national level and the register is a starting point for action.

It was felt that a useful step would be to look at the risk before mitigation and do that calculation, then to track back to check if the mitigation strategies are having the desired effect.

The Board agreed that, subject to the amendments George will make following the discussion, the Register is agreed.

7. Review of Terms of Reference

The document had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that mention of SAS had been moved from the section describing those with a duty to participate, to the section describing those who are co-operative partners. This brings the document into line with the Community Planning (Scotland) Act 2015.

The question was raised of whether this legislation had been Island proofed and whether the Islands Act should be used to retrospectively do so, so the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) had a duty to participate in community planning, because SAS's contribution to CPP discussions is vital for the successful planning of collective solutions. It was noted that the flexibility built into the legislation was to help enable island Partnerships co-opt the organisations most helpful in their unique situations.

Graham Neville asked that it be made clear that NatureScot is the operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage and should not be confused with Nature Scotland which is a private tour operator.

The Terms of Reference were agreed.

8. Procedure for OCPP to issue grants

OCPP has not routinely issued grants, but the Islands Cost Crisis Fund, SG moen via their Islands Team, has been allocated to OIC administer. For the last two years, OIC has asked the Partnership's COLTF to make recommendations on how th fund can best be used, and the COLTF has invited proposals from partners and other community groups. It is expected that the Islands Team will continue to make the Islands Cost Crisis Fund available, it was felt that it would be good practice to agree a general procedure for the allocation of grant funds. The procedure is generic and can be adjusted for other purposes. At present the grant funding is advertised on the OIC website, through the e-newsletter and by organisations represented on the COLTF. It was decided that Partners should also be invited to advertise these funds.

The Procedure for OCPP to issue grants was agreed.

9. First Responders

Heather Woodbridge gave a summary of the ongoing situation. The Report on the review of the volunteer model, requested by OCPP has been published, however, the specific challenges faced by islands were not part of the scope of the review. Heather suggested that the next steps should be a response to SAS containing comments from Partners, and that the EG should draw up further actions to be reviewed by the CPP.

It was noted that the report states that island groups were not consulted and affirms that voluntary capacity should work alongside the paid service. With an absence of paid capacity in some areas of Orkney this leaves those communities with nothing to work with and adds pressure to other responder services to bridge the gap. The lack of access for volunteers to training, mental health care, support and up to date medical equipment remains a serious concern. As does the failure to adhere to the Volunteer Sector's principle to not replace personnel with a statutory role with volunteers.

It would be useful to understand the reason behind excluding the specific challenges faced by islands from the review. It would also be useful to seek a legal opinion on excluding the challenges faced by islands from this sort of report.

VAO has been approached by SAS to provide some volunteer training and they are happy to do this.

It was noted that there is a successful model of first responder provision working in Shapinsay.

The CPP needs to communicate to the public its disappointment and intention to follow up on the report. There has been a lot of press interest in this, and The

Orcadian is gathering information. OCPP needs to consider its response, and this could include a statement about not being content with the report.

Partners were asked to send George their feedback on the report. The EG will then draft a suitable response to SAS. Following that the EG will discuss options for next steps and bring them to the Board.

10. Delivery Group Reports

10.1. Local Equality Delivery Group

No report as the Group have not met.

10.2. Sustainable Development Delivery Group

Kristopher drew the meeting's attention to the written report.

The Property Asset Management Future Sharing Protocol has existed since 2018. It has been amended to better align with the Community Wealth Building agenda and suggests ways that private assets can be used by communities. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires designated public authorities to publish a list of their assets. Attached to the amended draft Protocol was the original Confidentiality Agreement from 2018 drawn up to support the original version of the Protocol. Because the confidentiality agreement is from 2018, some of the names listed in the report no longer worked for the organisations.

Clarification will be sought as to whether the confidentiality agreement will need to be refreshed or whether the existing agreement will suffice, and a further report brought to the Partnership Board.

The SDDG report was noted.

10.3. Cost of Living Task Force

The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The ambition to provide breakfast for all school age children across Orkney was discussed. Provision does not need to be through a 'Breakfast Club' but could be as simple as children picking up a roll when they arrive at school. The implications for resourcing and staffing will be different in each school and on each island.

It was noted that resourcing and funding are a major issue, and difficult decisions are having to be made about priorities. Hannah mentioned that another Local authority uses a visual representation of their Impact Assessments which puts them all together to enable comparisons of the consequences for each decision. She will give Alex more information about this.

11. Any other business

Izzy Grieve shared information about a fund administered by SSE that provides up to 50% of the cost of a new electricity connection for private individuals or up

to 75% of the cost to community groups. The fund is not well advertised so Partners were asked to share the information with their networks.

Dates:

- Thursday 26 June 2025*, 9.30am – 12.30pm, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Great Western Road, Kirkwall
- Wednesday 17 Sept. 2025, 9.30am – 12.30pm, Council Chamber
- Tuesday 16 December 2025, 2.00pm – 5.00pm, UHI Orkney, Conference Room

Cllr Rachael King intimated that as she is rotating out of the chair of the IJB, this would be her last CPP meeting. She thanked Partners for their support. Heather thanked Rachael for her contribution to the board over the last two years.

**NB now 3 July 2025, same time and venue.*