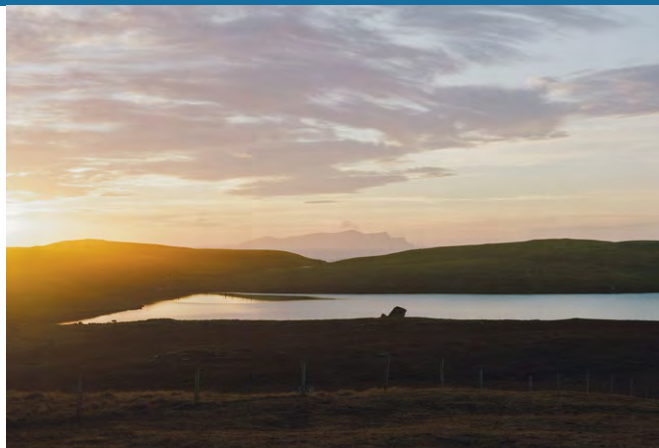


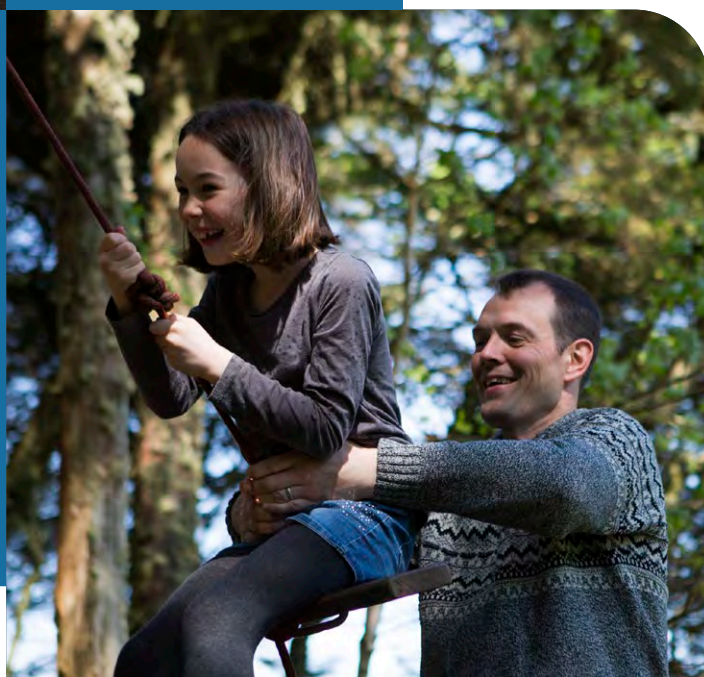
Our Ambition

2021-26

2021
Progress
Report



SHETLAND
ISLANDS COUNCIL



Our vision statement:

‘Our Ambition 2021-26’ is based on a vision of working together to create a **POSITIVE**, **CONFIDENT** and **SUSTAINABLE** future for Shetland. A Shetland where the community’s **OPPORTUNITIES** attract people of all ages to live, work, study and invest in our islands.

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Introduction



I am very pleased to introduce this 2021 progress report.

When we approved Our Ambition in 2020 we did acknowledge it was exactly that – ambitious. While the plan is one of five years, the progress we have collectively made in this past year has been very impressive, and credit to the whole organisation.

It is difficult to pick out highlights when there is so much that deserves mention. I will however highlight a few that demonstrate why we should be positive and confident about the future.

Firstly, we led and were successful in the bid to host the Tall Ships in 2023. Working in partnership with Lerwick Port Authority and the Shetland Tall Ships Ltd, we submitted a very positive and confident bid. There will be a lot of work to do before 2023, but I have every confidence that this will be a great community event.

2021 saw us resolve the long-standing issue of shortfall in revenue funding for our internal ferry fleet. Working with the community and the government we secured the necessary £10.7m of funding that ensured the Scottish Government settlement covered the full cost of running these vital services. Work will continue throughout the period of this plan on the required capital investment for our inter-island travel.

Alongside colleagues in Orkney and the Western Isles, we signed the Heads of Terms on our £100m Islands Deal. This Deal is the highest per capita deal of anywhere in the UK. Significant progress has been

made to develop the business cases for some really exciting projects in Shetland and we look forward to projects starting. These projects will create highly skilled jobs and training opportunities across our islands.

Political engagement has proved challenging in some areas due to the understandable impact of the Scottish Parliament election, the continuing impact of the pandemic and more lately the hosting of COP26. As we move forward, we will continue to ensure that Shetland's voice is heard, understood and actioned. With this in mind we do have some significant concerns around the potential impact of a National Care Service.

This may be the most significant policy intervention since the inception of the Scottish Parliament. We ensured that fulsome response was made to the consultation and are committed to working with the Scottish Government so that they can truly understand how services are delivered in Shetland.

We will continue to promote the retention of the principle that decision-making should be as close as possible to the people who are affected, with the responsibility for making decisions held by representatives that are democratically accountable to those people.

Steven Coutts
Political Leader



Our workforce is the engine of this organisation. Each individual's work is contributing to Shetland's sustainability. The success in delivering Our Ambition is our priority so that Shetland is a place that everyone can thrive. Our employees are also the creative engine of innovation and change, which can be seen throughout this report.

Overall, during the year, we made good progress on our journey to improve the sustainability of Shetland despite the challenges of continuing to manage COVID-19 disruptions and recovery. This would not have been achieved but for the exceptional commitment from the council's workforce and the strong partnership between the council and trade unions.

I am immensely proud of the way in which the council's workforce has responded and adapted. The efforts across the organisation to sustain critical services and to support those most in need have been extraordinary.

However, it is clear from this report that while COVID-19 has been challenging, it has not held us back from delivering improvement, experimentation,

innovation and stimulating opportunities for Shetland. This is real leadership of place – everything we do is for Shetland.

My focus this year has been to connect each employee to what drives them to provide this excellent service for our community. My regular communications have promoted our values. The Viewpoint Survey results show that despite the challenging COVID-19 environment, our staff are more engaged, more motivated and more positive about working for the council than three years ago.

The focus on staff wellbeing, on living our values and being kind has given us the capacity to face unimaginable circumstances and be stronger and more connected as an organisation. It's an exciting time to be Chief Executive and we have lots of reasons to be optimistic for Shetland's future.

Maggie Sandison
Chief Executive

Our Values



Excellent Service
Taking Personal Responsibility
Working Well Together

Shetland's population balance



What we have done:

- ✓ We will support and promote the [Shetland Partnership's 10 Year Development Plan](#) to attract people to live, work, study and invest in Shetland and regularly refresh the actions to match what the evidence tells us.

Shetland's Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan

As well as producing Shetland's Partnership Plan, which covers the whole of Shetland, the Shetland Partnership is also required to plan at a more local level. These 'locality plans' belong to the communities, are signed up to by partners and delivered together to find innovative solutions to key local challenges.

In October 2020, the Shetland Partnership published the 'Shetland's Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan', the first to be produced by the partnership. It covers the communities of Fair Isle, Fetlar, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries and is based on extensive dialogue between public service providers and the people who live and work in these isles. Communities were consulted on a regular basis and directly informed the priorities that were identified within the plan.

Since then, a strategic delivery group has been established consisting of representatives from all the islands, as well as key stakeholders and service managers. This group has now met six times, discussing a range of topics including health care, transport, connectivity, housing and tourism.

Fetlar welcome pack

The community involvement and development officer for the North Isles and Promote Shetland met with residents in Fetlar back in 2019. Fetlar is part of the Islands with Small Populations Project, with one of the priorities being to attract new residents and another to create a post that could undertake maintenance and social care work.

One of the outcomes from that discussion was the proposal to create a welcome pack, which would have two functions – to promote Fetlar and to explain what life on Fetlar is like. This would help people thinking about moving to have an understanding of Fetlar life and it would also be a useful tool on arrival.

Three residents, Promote Shetland and the council's community involvement and development officer have been working on creating the pack. Like many things, it was delayed by COVID-19, but is now nearly ready. The community volunteers created the text and checked it with all Fetlar residents, with some residents donating some of the images. Once ready, it will be available online through Fetlar.org and Shetland.org. The text has already been made available to candidates for the Fetlar nursing post.



Adult Learning autumn learning programme

The council recently launched its Adult Learning autumn programme, which is focused on providing safe spaces to help individuals re-engage in learning, meet other people and crucially build confidence in getting back out into the community. Classes include digital support, 'makkin and yakkin' and coffee and chats focused around learners' needs and interests.

Adult Learning moved all its learning online during the pandemic, and reached both existing and many new learners who previously were unable to attend classes due to barriers such as geography or transport. Tutors have also been recruited from off-island, broadening the range of online courses available. As we emerge from the pandemic, blended online and face-to-face learning will be the new normal going forward.



✓ We will refresh the Promote Shetland place branding and deliver campaigns to attract working age people to relocate to Shetland.

Promote Shetland activity

Activity earlier in the year coincided with the reopening of many aspects of tourism and hospitality, so much of the Promote Shetland activity was centred on promotion to visitors. A high-profile element of the effort to promote Shetland as a destination was the launch of a television advert that aired on STV across Scotland and in the Granada (Greater Manchester) region of north west England and, as tourism reopened, the service shared a video detailing how visitors could enjoy Shetland responsibly. The COVID-19 section of Shetland.org was updated as restrictions eased to provide guidance.

Work on the 'Live' and 'Work' strands also progressed with the launch of a 'Welcome Pack' ready to be shared with people who have recently moved or are planning a move to Shetland. Work also continued on the 'Recruitment Toolkit', which will be a useful reference for those advertising jobs, encouraging them to 'sell' Shetland as a location, as well as the job itself. An example of this was the recruitment for the Head Teacher of the Fair Isle Primary School, which gained national attention.

Promote Shetland activity also included supporting the promotion of Shetland space activity at the Space-Comm Expo at Farnborough in July 2021, and engaging with the Shetland Business Forum, making contact with industry sectors including fisheries, aquaculture and construction to discuss possible promotion of employment opportunities within these sectors, in response to recruitment difficulties.

- ✓ We will work with our partners to develop a clearer understanding of issues relating to recruitment and retention in Shetland and deliver a strategy that focuses our work on overcoming barriers to recruiting and retaining working age people.

Workforce Plan

The council produced its [Workforce Plan 2021-26](#) in September 2021, an action plan developed with council services following the approval of the Workforce Strategy in December 2020. It has been prepared to reflect the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's '7 Dimensions of Good Work', which contribute to individual wellbeing, are a mark of a fair society and are fundamental for motivated workers, productive organisations and a strong economy.

The plan includes 18 actions, with four of these designed to impact on the recruitment challenges faced by services. Work has already begun on the action designed to address the most significant challenges facing services in terms of recruitment and hard-to-fill posts.

- ✓ We will continue to deliver on the key themes of the Local Housing Strategy, aiming to increase future affordable housing supply across all tenures by making maximum use of funding streams and working with partner agencies to design and deliver energy efficient, modern homes. We will also meet the needs of people who are facing homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies.

Local Housing Strategy

An online development conference involving almost 60 stakeholders, including participants from the voluntary sector and community councils, took place in early November 2021 to help shape the outcomes in the council's new five-year Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

Key issues affecting the housing system in Shetland were highlighted, including:

- There are fewer smaller homes available here than elsewhere in Scotland
- Over 40% of households in Shetland cannot afford to access home ownership even at market entry level
- The cost of affordable housing development is over 30% higher in Shetland than elsewhere in Scotland
- Over 30% of households are in fuel poverty

The audience was asked to consider and debate:

- The LHS vision for a 'well-functioning housing system' in Shetland
- The main housing issues the LHS should tackle in the next five years
- The ideas, options and innovation that should be considered to guide action, investment and partnership

- The one single action that should be prioritised to address the housing challenge in Shetland

Ahead of the event, the council's Housing Service launched a survey asking residents and communities for their views on the housing issues that matter most in Shetland, which would also help inform and shape the new strategy. 227 responses were received, which were fed into the conference discussion.

The new Local Housing Strategy will be submitted to the Scottish Government in early 2022.

Revised Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

In September 2017, the Scottish Government formed the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG), with cross-sector membership and a remit to address ending rough sleeping and homelessness in Scotland and transforming temporary accommodation. This led, among other recommendations, to the requirement for local authorities to prepare and submit Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP) to the Scottish Government.

The actions contained within the [council's refreshed RRTP](#) focus on overcoming barriers that may prevent a quicker transition into settled accommodation. While housing supply is a key factor in enabling moves to settled accommodation, the value of person-centred support and proactive prevention work cannot be underestimated.

Collaborative working with partner agencies to prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance remains a high priority as detailed in the RRTP. A particular focus of the plan is ensuring that multi-agency wrap-around support is identified and available to enable people

with complex support needs to thrive in their settled accommodation. Early work in partnership with the Recovery Hub is demonstrating the value of this approach.

The Shetland Recovery Hub and Community Network opened its doors in 2020 and is a service that provides support to anyone affected by alcohol or drug misuse. A community housing support worker was appointed in early 2021 to work alongside the project manager and the Shetland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to develop integrated housing support provision and alcohol and drug services to customers, to support harm reduction, engagement with treatment and moving towards recovery and healthier lives, with the focus on securing and maintaining settled accommodation.

Homelessness is often one of the greatest barriers to the recovery process and the community housing support worker works with customers to offer housing support provision aimed at tenancy/accommodation sustainment. The role operates in a person-centred way to enable people with complex needs relating to alcohol and drugs to maximise their quality of life, independence and opportunities.

COVID-19 – recovery and renewal



What we have done:

- ✓ Our [Recovery and Renewal Framework](#) provides a structure around which the council's COVID-19 activities will be delivered. This will be implemented in full, to ensure that the council is resilient and taking a lead role in building a more sustainable and fairer Shetland.

Survey of local businesses

The council undertook a business survey in June 2021, seeking views from local businesses on their experience emerging from COVID-19 restrictions, business performance, recruitment and retention, government support and barriers to growth.

Some of the key findings were:

- 18% of respondents said that they had fewer employees in June 2021 than in October 2020
- 30% stated that they intended to recruit staff in the next 12 months
- 94% had received financial support via government grant or loan schemes
- 4% said that they were likely to make redundancies in the next 12 months
- 57% stated that the biggest barrier to business growth was COVID-19, with 30% stating Brexit was also a barrier and 29% highlighting a shortage of skilled staff

The results show that there is some cautious optimism among the business community in Shetland, including plans for growth and expansion, but there remain deep concerns about the future, particularly around COVID-19 and any future imposition of restrictions, uncertainties around Brexit impacts, and shortage of skilled labour.

Shetland's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report

The council must publish a set of equality outcomes every four years and a mainstreaming report every two years to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

This duty is designed to make sure that public authorities consider how they can positively contribute to a more equal society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day business, to:

- take effective action on equality
- make the right decisions, first time around
- develop better policies and practices, based on evidence
- be more transparent, accessible and accountable
- deliver improved outcomes for all

Over the next four years, the council will focus on the following areas:

- People will be accessing employment in all sectors in innovative ways designed to minimise the barriers to involvement for all with a focus on recovery from the impacts of COVID-19
- People will be able to access the information they need, when they need it, in a wide range of different ways, with a focus on the range of communication methods the council uses
- Outcomes will be improved by developing better methods to assess the impact of what we do with a focus on data gathering
- The number of children, young people and adults affected by gender-based

violence, particularly domestic abuse and sexual violence will be reduced, and the consequences will be minimised with a focus on delivering the Domestic Abuse and Gender-Based Violence Strategy

It is currently still too early to gain a clear picture of the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on different equality groups.

As such, there is a focus in the plan on continuing to monitor and review the data, with an opportunity to update the outcomes at the next time of reporting progress, which is due in two years' time.

Connecting Scotland

To date, the Scottish Government's [Connecting Scotland Programme](#) has provided devices, data, training and support to over 300 individuals and families in Shetland. Facilitated locally by Community Development, the scheme aims to get digital devices into the hands of individuals who face barriers, for example, to low income households who do not have a device or internet connection. Adult Learning has provided additional support to individuals to develop the confidence and skills to use their new device. In addition, 523 digital devices were allocated to school pupils through the Scottish Government's separate COVID-19 digital programme, which means over 800 devices are now in the hands of individuals and families across Shetland.

Coronavirus Business Support Fund

Community Learning and Development partners worked closely with community organisations who own buildings to maximise the number accessing Government COVID-19 funding.

167 community organisations applied to the Coronavirus Business Support Fund, accessing a total of £2,105,000, and a further £694,800 from the Strategic Framework Business Fund/Islands Equivalent Payment.

The team have also been supporting many groups to develop their assets via applications to the Shetland Community Benefit Fund and the UK Government's Coastal Communities Fund.

Bressay – sustainable food production

The council's community involvement and development officer for Bressay has been working closely with Bressay Development Ltd (BDL) on a number of community-related projects.

The group has identified a wish to grow food and have been consulting with the community on the subject of sustainable food production and the availability of growing space. BDL is currently liaising with the council's Assets, Commissioning and Procurement Team to investigate the potential for acquiring a piece of land to grow vegetables.

Voices for Change

Voices for Change was set up to bring together individuals and stakeholders to take a proactive approach to shaping the future for Shetland. It does this by facilitating conversations between members of the general public and people with influence and responsibility for making decisions. Learning and insights from the conversations will inform the Place priority in the Partnership Plan, the 10 Year Plan to attract people to live, study, work and invest in Shetland, and the council's Recovery and Renewal Plan.

The project draws on the experiences and good practices from the previous Voices for Equity Project, which ran from 2018 to 2020, and was well recognised by both community and civic participants.

The main focus has been to recruit participants to the project, both on the community and the civic side. Emails were distributed among colleagues, as well as posters and leaflets shared in professional groups and forums, and on social media platforms.

Drawing on the success of the 'Community Conversations' method, an online information session was set up to invite people to get information about the project and to share their experiences and thoughts on the following questions:

- How has your life been affected by COVID-19?
- What do you think life in Shetland will be like in the future?

Attendees expressed gratitude for being offered the opportunity to share their experiences and views, with some also interested to learn how the conversation would contribute to community development.

Environmental Health new COVID-19 responsibilities

As many businesses closed in March 2020, the council's Environmental Health Team were very quickly given the responsibility to advise and regulate businesses on the new COVID-19 controls. So far this year (2021), over 100 enquiries have been received from businesses and residents seeking advice on how they should comply with guidance and regulations. The team has found that it is when guidance changes, restrictions being either tightened or eased, that they receive the most enquiries.

UK withdrawal from the European Union



What we have done:

- ✓ Responsibility for EU withdrawal lies with the UK Government, so the council is limited in how far it can influence matters. However, we will closely monitor negotiations and engage proactively with Shetland's MP, MSPs, COSLA and Government to seek to mitigate negative impacts and maximise any opportunities for Shetland.

£25m bid for the Fair Isle ferry replacement

Prior to the details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund being made known, the council engaged with the UK Government's precursor funds, the UK Community Renewal Fund and the Levelling Up Fund, with bids submitted seeking funding for key local projects – most prominently a £25m bid for the Fair Isle ferry replacement.

Unfortunately, we were not successful in this first round, but we are very keen to get the feedback that we have been offered by the UK Government, and take up the opportunity for help and advice on how we improve the chance of success in future funding bids.

In the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, the Chancellor announced funding of over £2.6 billion over the next three years for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which is the successor to the EU Structural Funds.

The UKSPF will rise to £1.5 billion a year by 2024-25 and is designed to enable local areas to invest in people, community and local businesses with an initial focus on supporting skills and employment to improve adult numeracy and employment prospects.

The fund is due to be operational from April 2022 and it is understood that there have been UK Government stakeholder meetings with limited Scottish attendees and the Scottish Government invited as observers.



- ✓ **We will engage with Shetland's Business and Community Resilience Forums, to help sectors plan for changes arising from post-EU withdrawal trading arrangements, as well as manage post-pandemic recovery and renewal.**

Brexit and export health certificates

A hugely significant and time consuming area of work for the Environmental Health Team, which began in 2020 and continued into 2021, was the council's preparations for Brexit. From 1 January 2021, all fishery products and other products of animal origin being placed on the EU market needed to be accompanied by an Export Health Certificate (EHC). This was a significant shift for the industry in terms of documentary requirements and presented real logistical difficulties that needed to be overcome within a very short period of time. It was critical to the local economy that this was done properly and the fishing industry received as much help and advice as possible to help them prepare for the changes ahead.

Although last year saw a 17% drop in the number of EHCs issued for non-EU destinations (due to the pandemic), 2021 has seen a higher combined number issued in the first six months alone – a rise of 115%. Many of these are exports of salmon destined for China and can be partly explained by companies seeking to open up alternative markets to the EU. After a slow start, EHCs issued for EU exports are now steady.

Shetland Business Forum

The Shetland Business Forum was set up to help facilitate information sharing between the public sector and industry, as well as assist the public sector's response to the economic recovery and development of Shetland post pandemic.

The forum is a vehicle through which public sector partners can provide industry with updates on the response to Shetland's economic recovery and development, with industry representatives also able to provide updates on business issues.

This has now moved to a quarterly meeting, and is a very important industry information sounding board on key issues that are currently impacting the Shetland economy. The last forum in September 2021 covered issues of recruitment and retention, where the forum heard from a number of industry representatives on specific issues and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.

Shetland Community Resilience Forum

The Shetland Community Resilience Forum was established at the outset of the pandemic to provide community organisations with regular updates on the public sector’s response to COVID-19, and community organisations with a means to provide regular updates on community issues relating to the impact of the pandemic. The forum was also a sounding board to support the public sector’s response to the outbreak and a vehicle through which relevant local and national information could be shared.

Membership included Shetland Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Voluntary Action Shetland, NHS Shetland, British Red Cross, RVS Shetland, Shetland Foodbank and Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau.

Communication was key throughout and a handy booklet was produced called ‘Looking for a little help’, sharing the message that ‘it’s ok not to be ok – you are not alone and help is available’. It was distributed to all households in Shetland and contained a number of contact details for organisations that could help if people were worried about money, couldn’t get food, felt lonely or isolated, didn’t feel well or were concerned about someone.



COVID-19 recovery and community conversations

The council’s Community Development Team has worked closely with communities, Community Learning and Development partners, community groups and volunteers to provide invaluable support to communities during the pandemic and through ongoing recovery.

Services were adapted to provide essential lifelines and support through face-to-face interaction, online digital engagement or through telephone contact with young people, adults, families and communities. Communities have gone that extra mile, with volunteers young and old working to get food to families, deliver essential medicines, check in with vulnerable individuals, and deliver wellbeing packs, to allow people to stay safe at home where possible.

- We have delivered 29 ‘Community Conversations’, involving 232 participants across Shetland to support communities to reflect and learn from the community response to COVID-19, and support the reopening of communities
- Community conversations have informed the council’s COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Impact Assessment, and posed challenging questions for renewal
- We have supported 21 anchor organisations to mobilise community assets and respond to the needs presented by the pandemic, building capacity and increasing participation

- ✓ We will prioritise securing funding for economic and social development stimulus projects, such as the Employability Plan, to help strengthen Shetland's economy and social infrastructures.

Scalloway Campsite development

The council secured £375,000 of funding from the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to support Scalloway Community Development Company to develop a new caravan park and campsite at Asta, and further funding has been secured from the council, HIE, the Shetland Community Benefit Fund and the Coastal Communities Fund for this project.

The site will include ten pitches for caravans and campervans, eight pitches for tents, an amenity block with toilets, showers and a kitchen/dining area, as well as on-site waste disposal and recycling facilities.

The plan to explore options for a caravan/campsite was highlighted in the [Scalloway Local Place Plan](#) and is a response to the increase in the number of caravans and campervans coming to Shetland, as well as a lack of provision in the central mainland.

Shetland Employability Plan

The council was awarded funding from the European Social Fund and Scottish Government to provide employability support. The pandemic has created some challenges so a task force was established, the Shetland Employability Task Force (now Shetland Local Employability Partnership), which was set up to co-ordinate support, funding and how the various employability services work together. An action plan has been developed to deal with the economic situation in Shetland, focusing on employability support, skills development and support for individuals and families.

The improvement actions in the plan include strengthening links with the Shetland Partnership and third sector, undertaking a mapping exercise to analyse partnership provision across the local authority, carrying out a training needs analysis for employability key workers, and enabling co-design and co-production to best meet local needs.

Climate change



What we have done:

- ✓ Prepare and implement a council net zero plan and lead the preparation of a Shetland net zero strategy involving community planning partners and a range of energy-focused businesses and organisations.

Net zero route maps

The council has commissioned the development of two net zero route maps, one for the council estate and the other for Shetland as a whole, in order to drive forward Shetland's commitment to reaching net zero.

The two route maps will provide a framework to measure and monitor our emissions over time, tracking our actual emissions against our projected emissions on the route to net zero. The route maps will also provide a foundation for actionable, practical and achievable plans for the council, local businesses, organisations and the community to meet the Scottish targets.

We already have a wealth of data on our own estate emissions, which will be put into the Shetland Islands Council pathway modelling tool. For the Shetland-wide route map, we will collate and analyse data relating to energy supply, transport, public and residential buildings, business and industry, waste, and land use to develop an accurate baseline across the six sectors. This data will be added into the Shetland pathway modelling tool.

Stakeholder consultation will be a key part of the process, including community engagement workshops. We plan to raise awareness on climate change and plans for net zero, while undertaking community-wide consultation to collate community priorities and ideas for climate change mitigation.

We are currently working through the baselining phase, with the route maps due for completion in June 2022.



- ✓ **Continue and, where possible, accelerate current energy efficiency, energy conversion, waste reduction and reuse initiatives, within the council and across the community.**

Major maintenance at the Lerwick Energy Recovery Plant

The council has installed essential upgrades to the Lerwick Energy Recovery Plant, which will lead to improved efficiency and capacity, as well as a reduction in carbon emissions. The project focused on the water cooling systems and included a new water-fed heat exchanger being installed within the furnace to replace the existing concrete and brick refractory walls. This will increase efficiency, thermal output and reliability, meaning there should be less frequent and lengthy shutdowns.

Not only will the project give the plant a new lease of life but, more importantly, it is future-proofing an ageing piece of infrastructure, which was 'cutting edge' when it was installed in 1999 and is now being brought back to the forefront of energy from waste technology.

Energy efficiency review

The council will be conducting an energy efficiency review, specifically looking at the delivery of the Scottish Government-funded Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS) and what options for change exist in how the funding is administered in Shetland.

EES:ABS provides funding for energy efficiency retrofit measures in domestic private and private rented properties. The overarching aim is to look at solutions to the lack of accredited installers, potential resources shortfall, rural housing issues and compliance with PAS 2035.

PAS 2035 is the key document in a framework of new and existing standards, acting as a framework that sets out an updated specification for the energy retrofit of domestic buildings.



Shetland Library reopens

After moving out of the nearby former St Ringan's Church, Shetland Library reopened to the public in November 2021, occupying the building at Lower Hillhead, which offers more than 50 per cent additional floor space to display books and materials than the St Ringan's building.

All library services now operate under one roof, including book browsing and borrowing and the computer suite.

The move followed months of refurbishment work on the 1960's building, which has seen it extensively modernised and redecorated. Externally, the building has been re-roofed, with new aluminium curtain walling and modern energy-efficient windows fitted. The building has also been upgraded internally, including the installation of a new air source heating system.

During the move, over 60,000 books and materials were transferred into their new location, along with shelving and furniture and IT equipment. Furniture and shelving have been specifically reused, along with some materials from the Anderson High School. With most of the book shelves on wheels, flexible use of spaces is possible, to host library events or to change layouts for different needs.



- ✓ **Make progress on alternative fuel sources for vessels by progressing, with Scottish Government, the internal ferries renewal project with a focus on reducing carbon emissions.**

In pursuit of decarbonising ferries and other modes of public transport

The council is actively investigating alternative technologies in the pursuit of decarbonising ferries and other modes of public transport. Progress is being made to set out a road map for achieving this, to be completed at the end of the 2021-22 financial year.

In the meantime, work is ongoing to network and establish connections with other like-minded organisations, with the council becoming a member of the Scottish Maritime Cluster and the Scottish Future Fuels Group. This fact finding enables us to contribute and receive information in this fast-paced environment, while contextualising our own activity and direction of travel.

- ✓ **Support the identification and delivery of a robust, green Shetland electricity distribution grid, which reaches across all of Shetland, and enables further public, community and commercial 'greening'**

Shetland Power Study

The University of Strathclyde is leading a consortia-funded Shetland Power Study that aims to improve our understanding of how the post interconnector grid will work and all the demand components in and around Shetland. This work began in October 2021 and should be concluded by the middle of 2022.

The study will begin to evaluate Shetland's power grid system to understand future electrification and infrastructure requirements. This study will be essential in developing grid configurations, and will help predict future supply and power requirements for local industry and domestic users, as well as for the future production of hydrogen and potential offshore requirements.

Until there is robust information on when, how and what a green / smart / resilient/ robust / affordable Shetland electricity distribution grid will look like, it is difficult to plan substantial electrification actions with confidence.

- ✓ Support the creation of community energy networks across Shetland that link in with a green and strengthened Shetland Electricity Grid and complement/enable local energy efficiency, recycling and carbon capture initiatives.

Supporting the creation of community energy networks across Shetland

ORION's project partners have begun advancing significant research work and the ORION Team is now engaged in five potential renewable energy business opportunities with prospective developers, with Non-Disclosure Agreements and/or Memorandums of Understanding in place on all of these projects.

Part of the project may consider alternative uses for some of the land at Sullom Voe Terminal and the surrounding area, as possible transitional energy projects such as carbon capture, hydrogen production etc are developed. Carbon dioxide captured at Sullom Voe could be transferred through the existing pipeline infrastructure to depleted oil fields for storage or be used for enhanced oil recovery for continued oil extraction.

Existing offshore infrastructure could be repurposed for carbon storage. This locks away greenhouse gases, reduces carbon emissions and minimises the environmental impact.

There are also strong links between this case study and the work on the Shetland Power Study being undertaken by the University of Strathclyde.

- ✓ Support partners to plan and deliver energy reduction/transition in key commercial sectors, focusing on renewable energy generation, fishing, aquaculture, agriculture, transport, aviation and oil and gas in particular.

Climate Change Survey

In May 2021, the council asked the community to respond to an online climate change survey, with 848 people taking the time to share their views. Of those, 81.7% said they believed the world is facing a climate emergency.

The survey also highlighted the community's priority action areas – energy supply, transport, business and industry, and waste management. Specific areas identified included 'more green energy', 'tackling fuel poverty with support for householders to make changes', 'improved recycling, waste reduction and reuse', 'fixed links to the isles', 'better public transport provision', and 'education across all ages'.

The top reasons given for tackling climate change were 'for future generations', 'global natural environment', and 'protecting people globally'.

The Climate Change Strategy Team is now working with others to focus on the insights gained from the survey results, and will share further details with the community over the coming months. The survey marked the start of an ongoing local climate conversation covering key topics such as energy supply, transport, business and industry, reuse and recycling, and buildings and land use.



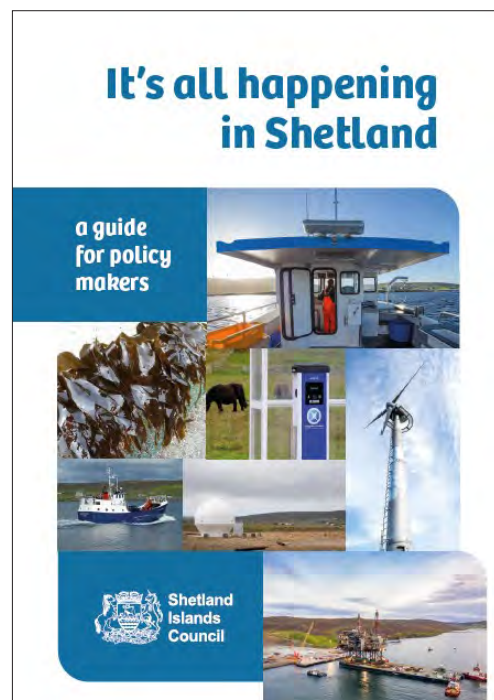
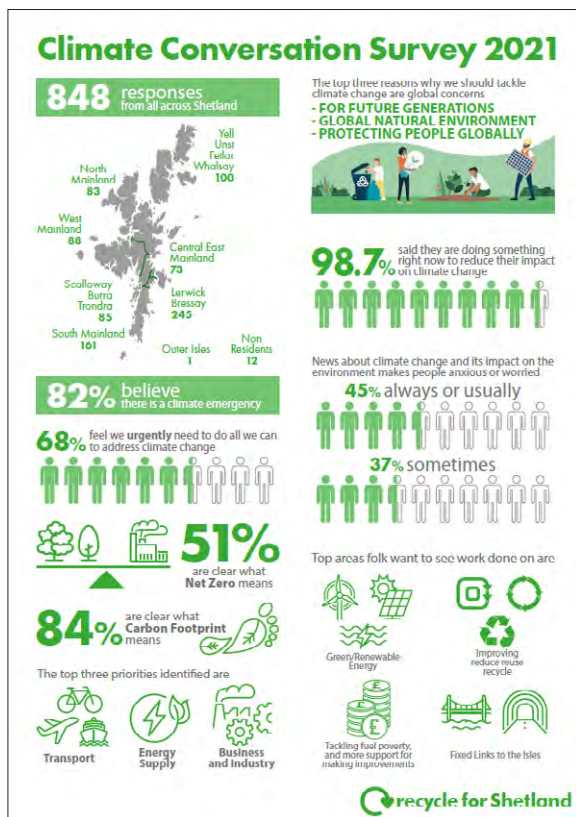
Shetland has a significantly higher than average carbon footprint per capita as a result of our location, exposed climate, island transport links, industries and dispersed rural population.

- ✓ Campaign at all levels to ensure future developments recognise that energy affordability is already a key issue in Shetland, and ensure that progress on that issue is designed into all significant proposals and solutions.

It's all happening in Shetland

A new guide for policy makers was developed by the council setting out what Shetland can offer central government and the country as a whole. The document also raised awareness of the issues Shetland needs help with to realise that potential.

One of those issues lies in the fact that Shetland is one of the coldest parts of the UK, and has one of the highest fuel poverty rates. The council is asking Scottish and UK Governments to commit to joint discussions to explore the Shetland Tariff so that, with all the resources to produce energy well beyond the islands, they start to see the benefits reflected in their fuel prices.



- ✓ **Work with our partners to achieve a more sustainable, ecologically diverse and resilient natural environment as it is Shetland’s most valued and distinctive asset. We will connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing as we work to improve, manage and promote accessible open space to deliver health, social and economic benefits to our community.**

West Mainland Community Sports Hub

This year, the West Mainland Community Sports Hub focused on the challenges of lockdown and the return to sport. The hub supported clubs to maintain engagement with members, funding to restart activities, and upskilling of coaches and volunteers.

Through online discussions, it became clear that clubs needed more qualified volunteers to enable longer-term club development. The hub funded a lead climbing course, a boat safety course and the purchase of new equipment for fencing. This support will increase club capacity and upskill volunteers.



Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan

The Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan builds on our success of marine spatial planning and partnership working to develop a ‘plan-led’ approach to the management of our coastal and marine waters. It will be used to guide and support a range of marine planning, licensing and leasing decisions throughout Shetland.

The plan aims to ensure a high quality marine and coastal environment for the health, benefit and prosperity of our local communities. It also promotes sustainable marine development in consultation with marine stakeholders.

In the last year, the plan was approved by the council for submission to Marine Scotland. Once adopted by Scottish Ministers, it will become the first Regional Marine Plan in Scotland.

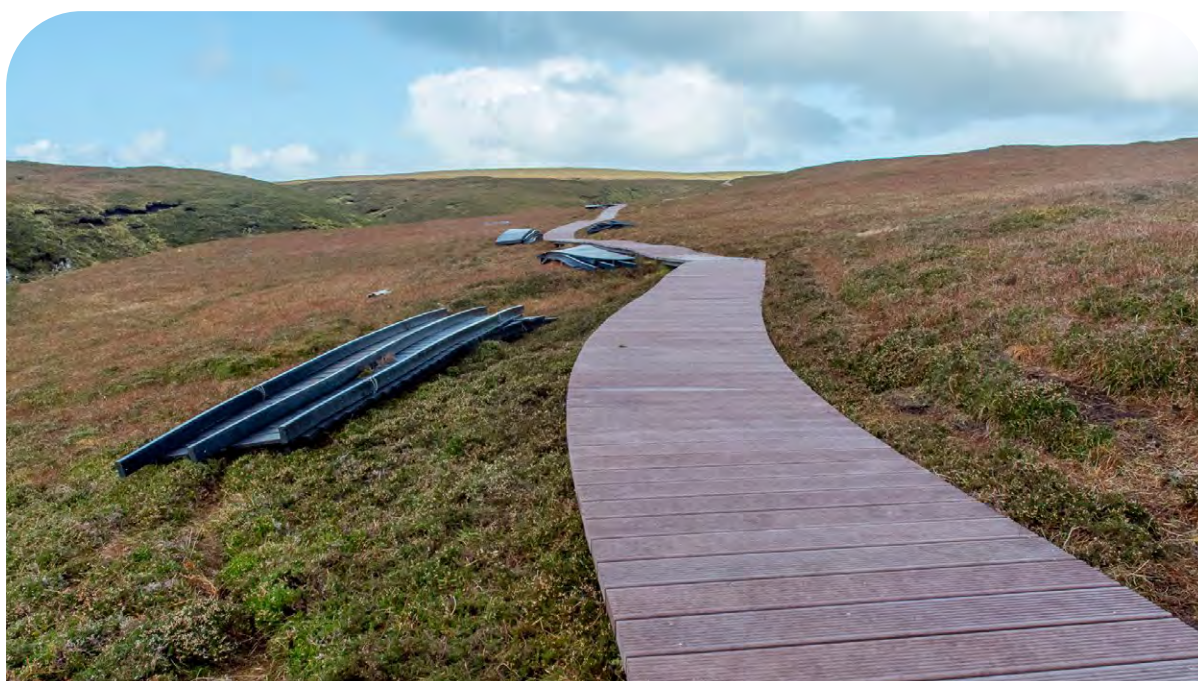
Exciting times at Hermaness

For the last three years, the council, VisitScotland and NatureScot have been working together to plan and secure funding for a visitor hub and nearly 2km of board walk on Hermaness National Nature Reserve. The £820,000 project will see a new hub with toilets, information about the area and wildlife, and car park improvements. Nearly 2km of recycled plastic boardwalk will give easy access through the heart of the reserve without risking disturbance to birds or erosion of peat.

Funding has been secured from NatureScot's Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund and VisitScotland's Rural Tourism and Infrastructure Fund. Work is expected to be completed by the end of March 2022.



EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future



Sustaining current jobs and creating new ones



What we have done:

- ✓ We will agree the Islands Deal with both UK and Scottish Governments, with Shetland's projects reaching full business case stage and significant investment flowing in from both Governments.

Islands Deal

The [Islands Growth Deal Heads of Terms Agreement](#) was signed in March 2021 with £100m of funding from UK and Scottish Governments and an anticipated £235m coming from project partners. Seven Shetland projects feature in the document: Shetland Clean Energy Project, Dales Voe Ultra-Deep Water Port, Shell-Volution, Shetland Space Innovation Campus, Shetland Campus Redevelopment and the Knab Redevelopment. The seventh, TalEntEd Islands, is a joint programme across the three islands, led by Shetland.

At the time, the council's Leader, Steven Coutts, said: "Our ambitious deal proposals will provide significant economic growth in our islands. We can be confident that this investment in key projects will deliver lasting benefit for our island communities, Scotland and the UK. The signing of the Heads of Terms today signals the collective commitment to see our islands as the attractive place to live, work, study and invest we know them to be." Projects are now working on outline business cases with the aim of reaching Full Deal later in 2022.

- ✓ We will progress the Shetland Energy Hub concept through the ORION – Clean Energy Project, helping to sustain employment at Sullom Voe Terminal and the Port of Sullom Voe, as well as ensuring Shetland is positioned to be able to benefit from the transition to alternative energy sources.

Shetland Energy Hub

ORION – Opportunity for Renewable Integration with Offshore Networks – is a strategic framework connecting organisations with a common ambition, to transform the Shetland region into a centre for secure and affordable clean energy.

Shetland ports:

Shetland ports are crucial for the clean energy development and support of offshore wind.

A significant part of ORION involves exploring ways of storing and transporting hydrogen to markets in the UK and elsewhere in the world. This will involve development of port facilities at Sullom Voe and other sites, including Dales Voe and Lerwick.

Infrastructure at Sullom Voe Terminal and the Shetland Gas Plant could be repurposed towards hydrogen production while the sites continue to support the oil and gas industry. As a deep water port, Sullom Voe already meets requirements for hydrogen export such as docking for tankers.

Hydrogen use and export:

Both green and blue hydrogen could be used locally (transport, ferries, heating)



or exported via tanker or existing pipelines to the Scottish mainland.

Hydrogen production in Shetland could create a new economic market through local H2 use, as well as export nationally and internationally through the existing connections to the UK mainland and Europe.

This new industry in Shetland would utilise the long-standing local energy knowledge and skills of the current workforce, as well as creating new jobs supporting a just transition away from oil and gas to clean energy technologies.

The marine sector is the largest in the Shetland economy, but along with it comes high emissions as vessels are powered mostly by imported fossil fuels.

Hydrogen could be used to form synthetic fuels such as ammonia (combined with nitrogen) and methanol (combined with carbon monoxide). These fuels could not only help decarbonise the marine sector, but also decrease the reliance on imported fuels from outside the isles.

✓ **We will provide support to businesses and entrepreneurs that will help sustain jobs in core sectors of Shetland's economy and create new ones.**

Grant support to businesses and communities

In Q1, four business and community grants were approved under the Economic Development Grant Scheme, with £29,000 in grant funding approved in total. Grant funding of £60,000 to SSQC Ltd and £205,000 to Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation was also approved.

In Q2, four business and community grants were approved under the Economic Development Grant Scheme, with £62,253 in grant funding approved in total.

Between April and June (Q1) 2021, there were 36 local enquiries to the Business Gateway service, followed by a further 62 in Q2 (July to September 2021). An independent customer satisfaction survey highlighted Shetland as among the local authority areas with the highest satisfaction (100% satisfied). Shetland also featured in the list of the highest proportion of respondents whose expectations were met during this quarter, those where respondents reported that the service will benefit their business, and those likely to recommend Business Gateway to others. The report notes that some local authorities have small base sizes, which should be kept in mind when interpreting results.



- ✓ **Our significant investments in new infrastructure at Scalloway Fish Market, Toft Pier and addressing the constraints affecting Cullivoe Harbour, will provide essential onshore facilities for fishing and aquaculture, meeting user needs and promoting further economic activity around our coastline.**

Toft Pier construction completed

The construction of the £3.5m pier at Toft has been completed, providing an important new facility for aquaculture and commercial fishing industries in the North Mainland.

The new pier has been built on the site of the previous jetty, originally built as a ferry terminal in the 1970's, which had reached the end of its serviceable life and was closed in 2016. Compared to the old jetty, the working area of the new pier is

around three times larger, with a working area of around 1,100 square metres, including shore power and lighting. The pier design includes a 30-metre 'dog-leg' extension that will provide more berthing space for boats and better shelter in poor weather, as well as increased water depth on both the inside and outside of the pier.

Prolonged spells of poor weather and the coronavirus pandemic led to unavoidable delays in the project completion. The total construction cost is expected to be around £3.5m, which has been assisted by a grant of £1m from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.



- ✓ We will support the Shetland Space Innovation Campus project in order to help establish Unst as the site for new satellite launches and data tracking, as well as creating wider opportunities for supply chain services, education, research and innovation in Shetland.

Shetland Space Innovation Campus

The space innovation campus has been progressed to draft outline business case. A co-ordinated approach to bringing the space industry to Shetland has been led by the council on behalf of the community, to develop a Space Strategy for the islands. Along with establishing a close working relationship with the UK Space Agency, a project initiation document was developed and a structure formulated to roll out the project to the Shetland community, where

specialist skill sets could contribute to the overall strategy. Four sub groups of over 100 individuals and businesses have been set up: economy, community and environment; education, skills and employment; contingency planning; and promotion and tourism.

There are many strands to developing the Shetland Space Cluster, including the space innovation campus, and knitting them together to form a cohesive strategic direction is the next step in this iterative process. Many other factors are also considered outwith the working group's aspirations, which include the clients of the spaceport and other engagement already taking place with the downstream servicing, academia and the space industry in the UK and globally.



The SaxaVord Spaceport site at Lamba Ness in Unst

- ✓ We will encourage development and diversification of the creative sector in Shetland, working with delivery partners to derive economic opportunities from creative practice, and supporting those looking to turn their creative ideas into sustainable businesses.

Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards

The council provided match funding to Shetland Arts Development Agency to fund the Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards, a partnership that also involves Creative Scotland. This scheme supports visual artists and craft makers in their creative development through the provision of small bursaries of £500 (for emerging artists) or £750 (for established artists).

Supporting local crafters

The council's Trading Standards Team undertook promotional work directed towards local crafters, signposting them to free online advice and encouraging them to contact the team for further advice and support, as ways of helping them to comply with legal requirements (a key element for a successful business), particularly in light of the UK's exit from the EU.



- ✓ We will build the principles of community wealth building into the way we support the local community.

Community wealth building

According to [Scotland's Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth](#), community wealth building is a "people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people." The essence, or principles, of community wealth building have been built into how the council does its business in recent years, from how much we spend locally to community asset transfers and supporting economic participation in communities.

Two recent examples are our involvement in the Scalloway Campsite project (see separate case study) and the grant support to North Yell Development Council (NYDC) as match funding towards the capital costs of the Cullivoe Industrial Estate and Marina development, where the council helped develop an asset that will generate money that can be returned back into the local community. The council helped to secure £1.77m through the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund to support the Cullivoe Industrial Estate and Marina, and funding has also been secured from HIE and the Coastal Communities Fund.

The North Yell Community Development Plan has an objective to relieve poverty and unemployment among the residents of North Yell, with the industrial estate and marina development the main focus and a clear priority action, meeting the community's aims to develop tourism and support marine tourism, create opportunities for young people, and promote opportunities for full-time, part-time and occasional employment. North

Yell Development Council has been able to reinvest profits from the community wind farm into the development of the industrial estate and marina project.

The project extends the existing industrial estate by 12,000m² to create serviced sites for business development, addressing the lack of space available for new business, as well as expansion plans for current operators. The excavated material from the industrial estate site is being used to build a marina with pontoon berthing for commercial and community leisure use, improving access to the water for a range of leisure activities and tourism development. The new marina will also free up berthing space at the Cullivoe Pier, a busy hub for fishing, aquaculture and marine renewables.

NYDC's initial plan had been to extend the industrial estate but community engagement and consultation during the development phase identified the need for a new marina. Local input helped shape the design and identified the benefit of running the two projects together simultaneously. The project complements and enhances other major strategic projects in the North Isles, particularly North Isles Fibre and the redevelopment of the Cullivoe Road.

The project aims to have a long-term legacy from job creation that will help reverse the decline in population and, through economic generation, enable Cullivoe to become an attractive place for families to live and work.

✓ We will support the delivery of the Tall Ships 2023 bid and support the development of small-scale events and festivals to celebrate, increase participation and build pride in Shetland's heritage.

Tall Ships Races to return to Lerwick in 2023

Lerwick was selected in May 2021 for the third time to be a host port for the spectacular Tall Ships Races. Sail Training International, operator of the Tall Ships Races, announced the selected host ports for the 2023 series, with the Races expected to visit Lerwick, the only Scottish location, from 26-29 July. The isles previously hosted the event in 1999 and 2011.

The council has led the isles' successful bid, in partnership with Lerwick Port Authority and Shetland Tall Ships Limited, which will undertake delivery of the event locally. Many other organisations are supporting the event, including EventScotland, part of VisitScotland's Events Directorate, and Sail Training Shetland.



Skills and learning



What we have done:

- ✓ We will complete the redesign of Shetland's tertiary education, research and training sector, which will help sustain the number of young people accessing learning. This will also help businesses get access to the skilled local workforce they require, contributing to Shetland's Partnership Plan aim of helping people to reach their full potential.

Tertiary education merger

The merger of Shetland College UHI, NAFC Marine Centre UHI and Train Shetland was achieved on 1 August 2021, the Vesting Day of the new combined college, Shetland UHI. This has been a high priority for the council for a number of years. Work to establish a close working relationship with Shetland UHI is in hand; lessons learnt from the College Merger Project and an update on progress against the outcome targets will be reported to the Council by 31 March 2022.

- ✓ We will continue to provide opportunities for young people to access employment resulting in sustained high participation rates in Modern Apprenticeships, Foundation Apprenticeships and Employability Programmes.

Modern apprenticeships and Project Search

One of the actions in the Workforce Plan is to revamp the council's range of apprenticeships and graduate opportunities. Modern Apprenticeships have already been expanded – an example being the programme within Community Health and Social Care, which is an excellent example of workforce development, working with partners and the community. This year, there are 17 modern apprentice social care workers in Community Health and Social Care, as well as eight apprentices working in administrative support for these services. Elsewhere, there are 12 modern apprentices in Children's Services, including one apprentice gardener, and a further 11 working across the rest of the council.

The Workforce Plan also sets out our ambition to support employability programmes and increase the diversity and inclusion of our workforce.

Project Search, the programme to support young people with learning disabilities or autism to gain employment, restarted in November 2021 with two new job coaches supporting the new students. This is a one-year academic programme, delivered in partnership with Shetland UHI, combining class-based learning activities with work placement blocks. Students work towards an Employability Award, as well as a Steps to

Work Award. Work placements provide the opportunity to gain employment skills within a supported job role.

The council is also working in partnership with Enable Works (through the Developing the Young Workforce and Moving On Transitions Project) to deliver training for managers and staff designed to increase awareness and understanding of disabilities and diversity in the context of employment. A training programme will be in place early in 2022 to deliver on that outcome.

✓ **We will sustain the quality of learning and teaching in our schools to ensure all learners experience motivating and engaging learning opportunities that maximise attainment and achievement of positive destinations with a particular focus on closing the attainment gap.**

National Improvement Framework

The development of the council's National Improvement Framework 2020/21 Report and 2021/22 Forward Plan was informed by a period of consultation and self-evaluation.

The Plan began taking shape from the spring of 2021 onwards with opportunities for evaluation and professional discussion with local stakeholders, including school managers and teaching union colleagues, as well as reflecting on feedback and dialogue with Education Scotland and through the Association of Directors of Education In Scotland networks. This included a Head Teachers' Development Day in May 2021 that was specifically organised around learning, resetting, recovery and building back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was designed to support consultation on the direction of the 2021-22 recovery-focused National Improvement Framework Forward Plan and had a particular emphasis on reviewing the following areas of education delivery that are particularly relevant to education recovery:

- Learning and teaching with a particular focus on learner engagement, feedback to learners and addressing gaps in learning due to the pandemic
- Addressing inequality intensified as a result of the pandemic
- Continuing the focus on health and wellbeing, including support for

children and young people's mental health

- Remote learning and digital skills for learners and practitioners
- Transitions
- Outdoor learning
- The development of the curriculum and skills development in the recovery phase
- Approaches to parental involvement and engagement and family learning
- Support for the local education workforce, including wellbeing support, professional learning, collaboration opportunities for staff, mentoring, tackling workload and bureaucracy and leadership development
- School empowerment, including the empowerment of leaders, learners, staff and parents and carers
- The role of the local authority, including communication and partnership working between the local authority and schools and early learning and childcare settings

Questions that were considered as part of that session included reviewing what had worked well, improved and been done differently in the last 12 months compared to prior to the pandemic that can be built upon; what has not worked so well and what needs to be done to mitigate negative outcomes over the last year; the barriers/constraints and key challenges when moving forward; and what support is required to support recovery.

Food for Life accreditation

In May 2021, the council was recognised for the quality of its school meals with a Bronze 'Food for Life' award. The Food for Life Programme is run by Soil Association Scotland, and recognises schools that serve freshly prepared healthy meals, made using locally produced and sustainable ingredients.

The council is the 17th local authority in Scotland to achieve a 'Food for Life Served Here' award and one of only a few to hold the award across all our education settings. The award requires 75% of dishes on the menu to be classed as freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients but we have exceeded this with the menu in local schools calculated to be 96% freshly prepared – one of the highest levels in Scotland.

Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy

The council's Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Shetland was approved in November 2021, outlining the aspirations to enhance learning and teaching through digital technology in Shetland schools, to which a commitment was given in the 2019/20 National Improvement Framework Plan for Shetland, with a pause placed on its development due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work recommenced in March 2021, acknowledging a clear shift in the digital skills, user platforms and knowledge among learners and the education workforce. The pandemic also highlighted device and connectivity gaps for learners and the school staff.

The strategy has five strategic themes:

1. Digital Learners – who flourish in a digital world
2. Digital Educators – who inspire and motivate learners through the use of digital technology
3. Digital Leaders – who drive improvement
4. Digital Access – to enable all learners to participate in digital learning and teaching and to address the rural and poverty-related device and connectivity gaps
5. Digital Protection – providing a framework of support, security and standardisation.

The commitments within each of the strategic themes are underpinned by an action plan to ensure accountability, progress monitoring and evaluation to take place.



- ✓ We will work to achieve an empowered school system, with participation at all levels including parents, pupils and teachers.

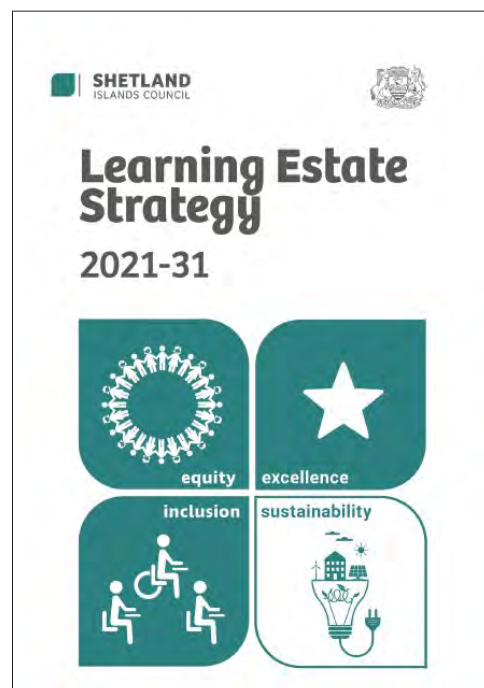
Learning Estate Strategy

The council's new [Learning Estate Strategy](#) was agreed in June 2021. Its aim is to make sure that all learners are given the opportunity to achieve the best outcome and reach positive destinations and, to do this, the strategy recognises that rural education must be sustained in a way that is equitable, strives for excellence, is inclusive for all and sustainable in the longer term. The aim is that:

- More young people will remain or relocate to Shetland
- Work on the learning estate will contribute to the council's net zero plans by ensuring that all of our schools are as energy efficient as possible
- The right people with the right skills and experience will be able to take advantage of opportunities created through developments in the local community
- Digital connectivity will be linked to the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy (see separate case study)
- We will deliver services to children and young people through our aspiration of having enhanced provision facilities appropriately positioned across the learning estate
- We will continue to develop early learning and childcare to provide more opportunities for parents to access employment opportunities
- We will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders as we develop our learning estate, to promote and encourage positive travel choices.

In recent years, other than the building of the new Anderson High School and the expansion of early learning and childcare to meet the requirement for 1,140 hours, there has been no significant investment in the learning estate to improve either suitability or condition.

Previous approaches to looking at the learning estate have focused on schools with falling rolls and options that surround them, however, taking a more strategic approach will ensure we invest wisely to meet the educational needs across the estate. The strategy sets out the proposals for developing that strategic approach to the learning estate.



Digital connectivity



What we have done:

- ✓ We will commission a piece of work to carry out network planning and engagement with both UK and Scottish Governments, industry and national programmes in order to assess the gaps in provision in local superfast connectivity and inform a strategic plan regarding the future of connectivity in Shetland.

Shetland connectivity overview

The council commissioned FarrPoint to produce a strategic plan regarding the future of connectivity in Shetland.

The findings show that, when compared to national averages, it is clear that Shetland's levels of connectivity are significantly below those of the UK and the rest of Scotland, with 16.7% of

premises unable to receive a 'decent' broadband speed, or what Ofcom refers to as broadband download speeds of at least 10Mbps. (96% of the UK can receive speeds of at least 30Mbps.)

The picture is similar for mobile communication – the availability of 4G is between 50-75% of that available to the rest of the UK.

The report concluded that by far the largest opportunity is the R100 programme but, in the absence of any detail on that plan at this present time, any local intervention must be paused.

Other recommendations were put forward including the creation of a connectivity plan, which is regularly reviewed to make sure that all communities and premises will benefit.



- ✓ **We will complete the North Isles Fibre project to Yell and Unst and investigate further opportunities to access funding and support to provide enhanced access to higher speed broadband to communities across Shetland.**

North Isles Fibre Project

In 2020, the council secured funding of up to £1.9m from the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) via the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme, to progress the North Isles Fibre Project, which was designed to extend the existing council-owned fibre network from Graven in the North Mainland to Yell and Unst, connecting up public-owned sites in these communities, including schools, health centres, and care centres. Following a delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project was completed in 2021.

Skerries connectivity

Skerries Community Council applied for funds from the Supporting Communities Fund through Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support a temporary connectivity boost scheme to improve phone and broadband connections for Skerries households and the ability of the community council to share information with residents.

The island's connectivity issues were exacerbated during the pandemic and the grant enabled the Skerries Development Group and a local volunteer to purchase 4G equipment so most houses are now connected.

The council's community involvement and development officer for the area carried out a survey to better understand the issues facing the community and compiled a connectivity issues impact requirements assessment. Working together with other council colleagues, a number of solutions were investigated before the application for funding was submitted.



Caring for our community



What we have done:

- ✓ We acknowledge the role of the IJB in setting the strategic agenda for the provision of health and care for our community and will support the delivery of the services commissioned from us.

Integration Joint Board (IJB) strategic planning

The process of strategic planning is trying to make sure that we use all the resources at our disposal (staff, assets, information, treatments etc) to best meet people's outcomes. In IJB terms, it is called the 'commissioning process'.

The 'commissioning process' has five key stages:

- assessing and forecasting needs
- linking investment to agreed outcomes
- considering options
- planning the nature, range and quality of future services
- working in partnership to put these in place

to answer the following questions:

- How many people will need services and what type will they need?
- What is the current provision, is it the right level, quality and cost?
- How can these services improve people's lives?
- Which services will best achieve this?
- How do we develop these services at an affordable cost?
- How do we procure and deliver these services to best effect?
- How do we monitor and review these services?

All aspects of service delivery, service quality, financing and risk need to come together as a cohesive approach, rather than seeing it as separate 'processes'.

During 2021, work continued to align the strategic planning, service planning, change programmes and budget process. Specific 'checkpoints' are built in for the IJB to consider:

- any changes to service needs that may mean that more (or less) resources (staff, budgets, technology) need to be planned for a particular service area
- more focused strategic change programmes or projects to address specific priority areas, particularly where any activity needs to work across several service areas
- formally refreshing the Strategic Plan and the Directions
- assessing the risks that may hinder progress on achieving the Strategic Plan
- making choices over how to spend money, and in which areas, through the budget process

Updating the current Strategic Plan began in December 2020 and, since then, a range of key activities have been undertaken. Work continues and the updated Plan will be presented for approval before the end of this financial year.

- ✓ **Working together with NHS Shetland, we will deliver the outcomes in the Integration Joint Board's [Strategic Plan](#).**

Lessons learnt from reducing delayed discharges

Shetland has had extremely low numbers of delayed discharges during the pandemic and we are managing to sustain the lowest numbers of delayed discharges across all local authority areas.

The success was achieved through a huge amount of joint working. The biggest change was something very simple – the hospital would tell the appropriate services as soon as someone was admitted, so that plans could be made for discharge at that early point.

This worked very well and services have continued to work well as a partnership. The model of early communication has continued, as has the continued use of technology, which makes it much easier for colleagues to get in touch with each other.

- ✓ **Community care services will continue to support people to be independent and able to live at home in the community.**

Continuing to support people to be independent

The [latest available national figures](#) on how the council scores in terms of supporting people to live independently are for 2019/20, with Shetland scoring second across Scotland. This indicator measured the percentage of adults who responded that they either strongly agreed or agreed that they are supported to live as independently as possible, with 93.8% of respondents in Shetland agreeing.

Indicator 3 explores whether adults supported at home agree they have had a say in how their help, care or support was provided, with 87.3% responding positively (Scotland – 75.4%). 88.2% of adults who responded to the survey and are supported at home agreed that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life.

Scambusters!

Scambusters! Shetland advice and support work, provided by the council's Trading Standards Team as part of a wider partnership of local organisations, together with our fitting of government-funded call-blockers, helps protect the more vulnerable people in our community, while also enabling them to continue to live independently.

- ✓ We will support as far as possible individual care pathways with a focus on prevention, self-care and early intervention.

Individual care pathways

Care and support in Shetland, and across Scotland, is provided under the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, which was implemented in 2014, creating a statutory framework to change the way services were organised and delivered across Scotland.

Self-directed support has its origins in the Independent Living Movement and the personalisation agenda, which share the core values of inclusion, contribution and empowerment through real choice and respect. Therefore, support, and the access to that support, should be shaped around the individual in order to meet the outcomes they identify as important to them, with individuals being seen as 'people first' rather than service users.

The Act sets out four options as to how individuals can choose for their support to be delivered – via a direct payment, a managed package, local authority provided or a mixed package. Locally, a lot of work has been carried out to make sure that access to support is in line with the statutory framework set out by the 2013 Act. This has included the development of asset-based and outcome-focused assessments designed to ensure individuals have choice and control over the support they receive, with discussion of the four options of self-directed support being key at the point of referral, assessment and review.

- ✓ We will manage the change from service provision to self-directed support.

Self-directed support

Through the implementation of self-directed support (SDS), the council has also been working to shift the balance of care into the community by pushing forward with the 'Home First' agenda. This involves supporting individuals to use the four options (see aforementioned case study) flexibly and innovatively in order to remain in their own homes and communities.

We have seen a significant increase in the uptake of direct payments since the implementation of the Act, with Adult Social Work currently funding approximately 80 packages and Children's Social Work funding approximately 30.

In terms of Adult Social Work, the majority of packages tend to involve supporting adults with learning or physical disabilities, however, more recently, and particularly over the course of the pandemic, we have seen an increase in direct payments being utilised by older adults.

Up until this year, we did not have any providers delivering managed packages, however Shetland Carer's Attendance Scheme is now providing this service for larger 'respite at home' packages, having diversified their service to best meet people's outcomes through the course of the pandemic. They are now delivering ten managed packages – and this new option is thought to be invaluable in terms of providing individuals with choice and control, as well as opportunities for more innovative support.

Adult Social Work and Children's Social Work Services, together with other

stakeholders, are currently involved in an implementation project looking at the roll out of the new National Standards for SDS, which will ultimately be implemented across all local authorities in order to improve quality and consistency across Scotland.

As part of this, we are looking at streamlining our processes and assessment to enable social work staff more time to collaborate with individuals to plan their support and look at how best to meet their outcomes, which is ultimately one of the most important functions of the social work role.

Shetland is one of three pilot areas currently taking part, with the other areas being Edinburgh City and Moray. We were selected after noting our interest and having an informal chat with the Social Work Scotland SDS Team earlier this year, who were looking to have representation from a wide range of authorities and were therefore keen to have one city, one rural and one island authority.

The pilot focuses on worker autonomy as, during the project undertaken by Social Work Scotland to create the new SDS National Standards, it was noted that lack of autonomy was an issue across Scotland and that this resulted in decision-making being taken further away from individuals. It is hoped that through increasing worker autonomy, choice and control is improved for individuals.

- ✓ **We will deliver services to children and young people with additional support needs and to adults with learning disability and autism that meet eligible need and reduces inequality.**

Neuro-development assessment approach

Through discussions with other services, Adult Services (Learning Disability and Autism) had become increasingly aware that there was a growing list of adults being referred for an autism diagnosis with no capacity in Shetland to deliver this. This was something first highlighted in Shetland's Autism Strategy and Action Plan, where the need to be able to offer diagnosis to children and adults locally was set out, and it is a national priority identified by the Scottish Government.

With a small amount of budget available and a staff member identified who had the capacity and skills to help, a working group was set up with colleagues from Community Health and Social Care and the team began exploring what could be put in place in Shetland. The first step was to assess the current level of demand by reviewing the adult waiting list and setting out a framework for the referral process going forward.

From there, the group began developing an autism diagnostic pathway, but quickly realised that this approach was too narrow and it would be better to broaden out the scope of assessing a person's needs by taking a neuro-development assessment approach instead.

The decision was also taken to offer post-diagnostic support as part of the pathway and to help improve outcomes for individuals.

A small 'test of change' was then set up involving some of the individuals on the waiting list and working closely with the NHS's Mental Health Team and GPs.

This test of change provided the evidence required to shape the business case to make this a permanent service. The team also spent time looking at other areas across Scotland, evaluating what had worked well for others, as well as what didn't and why. This learning was incorporated into the test of change and business case.

More than simply meeting national and local priorities, this approach is focused on improving the health and wellbeing of the individuals involved, including those of any families or carers. In addition to improving outcomes for individuals, having a neuro-developmental diagnostic pathway in place will help ensure people receive the right support at the right time and that resources are used effectively and efficiently.

The service is now exploring options for core funding to roll out this provision on a permanent basis.

Inclusion in sport and physical activity

Ability Shetland has recruited a sports development co-ordinator following successful funding bids. The work to secure funding and create the post was carried out by the 'Shetland Sport For All' Group, which consists of staff from Scottish Disability Sport, Ability Shetland, and the council's Sport and Leisure Service, and works to improve sporting and physical recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

It was clear that to be able to meet the Shetland Sport For All's wider aims, a full-time post was required and the group held numerous meetings over the last year to get to this stage. The new co-ordinator is already offering new sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities and developing existing ones.

- ✓ **We will support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of those in our community to provide better outcomes for individuals and less reliance on services.**

Learning about service provision

The council's Justice Social Work department has taken a 'trauma-informed lens' to its service in order to learn about service provision from those who access it.

Nationally, we are becoming more aware that many people live through adverse childhood experiences and traumatic events and that this impacts on health and wellbeing later in life. Taking a trauma-informed approach acknowledges that people with lived experiences of trauma, particularly complex trauma, are hard to reach and least likely to engage with services. The trauma-informed approach helps us to learn how to support engagement, while avoiding re-traumatisation and contributing to poorer outcomes for those within the justice system.

The trauma-informed lens involved meeting with people with lived experience of our service and using the NHS Education for Scotland Framework to explore the following headings: Access, Environment, Relationships, Supporting Recovery, Partnership Working and Materials and Media.

The participants were encouraged to talk about each topic within a one-to-one interview, with common strengths and weaknesses recognised for each section.

This was an encouraging and worthwhile exercise. Participants remain extremely positive about their experiences of the service, particularly in terms of professional relationships with staff and the ways in which recovery is supported.

For those who have experienced trauma, it is clear that the values of respect, personal choice and empowerment, while maintaining boundaries, are essential factors in avoiding re-traumatisation, and that the staff team are skilled at demonstrating these values. Developing and maintaining this culture within the organisation is essential in terms of maximising engagement and supporting recovery.

Understanding how people feel safe, have choice and feel empowered can only be fully understood through direct contact with those individuals. The staff team have also been directly involved through questionnaires and discussion within the feedback process.

The project highlighted that the team are hugely competent in working in a trauma-informed way. Some quotes from participants reflect this: *"I was treated as a person, not an offender"*, *"I was made to feel supported and not belittled"* and *"I was asked what I wanted to achieve"*.

Despite excellent feedback, there is always room for improvement and an action plan has since been developed. This is now in the process of action with effective changes already being made.

The challenge remains to implement the agreed changes to ensure that the trauma-informed approach is maintained in the long term.

We believe that listening to people with lived experience of the service is the most effective measure of success, or indeed failure, of the service.

FAST Programme

The 'FAST' Programme (Fitness, Attitude, Skill and Teamwork) uses Cashback for Communities funding to deliver sessions for young people identified by local support agencies. Following lockdown, the project was adapted and weekly sessions provided some routine and structure, as well as opportunities to reconnect with others and increase physical activity levels. FAST was expanded this year (2021) to include a summer programme of five 'adventure trips' with participants involved in the planning. Feedback was positive and one participant stated that they had not left their home other than visiting the shop since February 2020.



Employee assistance programme available for all council staff

The council provides a free and completely confidential employee assistance programme that includes an online practical health and wellbeing resource. This is delivered by Care First who provide emotional support and counselling 24/7 through Care First counsellors. Care First is an independent provider of professional employee support services and the service also includes access to webinars, general wellbeing and tailored help and support to suit individual needs.

NHS Shetland Walking Group

Active Schools worked with the local NHS Senior Walking Group to create an intergenerational project to bring people together while being active. Four walk routes were created in and around Sound School area so that the pupil participants could easily introduce the routes to their families. Walks were led by two qualified NHS walk leaders, lasted around 50 minutes and involved a further eight members of the NHS walking group.

Active Schools has also developed a booklet of the walks that is available to all classes.



- ✓ We will drive forward the work of The Promise in line with the national implementation plan.

The Promise

The Promise sets out Scotland's ambition for children and young people – to 'grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential'. The council has made a commitment to 'Keep The Promise' to Shetland's children and young people, and show a clear willingness and readiness to move forward with the programme of required transformational change.

We secured two Scottish Government funding streams to support The Promise – £140,000 from The Promise Diagnostic and a further £50,000 through an open call for applications. The funding will focus on the first three-year delivery of The Promise – Plan 21-24, transforming services to ones that put children and their families at the heart of redesign i.e. focusing on what could be better and different for Shetland's children and families. The Early Action Programme Board will oversee the project work across the Shetland Partnership.



- ✓ We aim to reduce the number of children that are accommodated in residential accommodation outwith Shetland, as part of our overall improved performance for looked after children.

Tingwall residential children's home

In 2019, the council approved plans for a new residential childcare service in Shetland, consolidating residential childcare provision and increasing the overall number of places in Shetland, reducing the reliance on services on the mainland. At the time, the business case highlighted that there was a risk that more children and young people would be placed outwith Shetland due to a shortage of appropriate residential care places locally, which would lead to poorer outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. A new build residential care facility for looked after children and young people was among the shortlisted options and was identified as the preferred and recommended way forward.

The new residential children's home at Tingwall was officially opened in August 2021, providing more scope with more space to support young people. A lot of thought has gone in to how the house is presented to make sure it has a welcoming feel and is child friendly.

Staff are now working with Transition Turriemfield (see Food Growing Strategy case study) to develop a plan to use the garden to grow produce. Plans include installing raised beds, which the Bridges Project is providing. The process of being involved in this project will give the young people a sense of achievement, to see things growing and to be able to prepare their meals using produce they have grown themselves. Staff will be working alongside the young people, so they can share skills and learn from each other.

Fairer Shetland



What we have done:

- ✓ We will champion prevention and early intervention, taking the leadership for health improvement by tackling the social determinants of health: supporting local sustainable development, building the economy and developing jobs, tackling inequalities, developing the knowledge and skills of local people, ensuring affordable and appropriate housing, accessing leisure opportunities and helping people to feel safe and well.

A return to sport

The pandemic brought all community and group sports and physical activities to a halt in the last months of the previous academic year, which had a negative impact on the mental and physical health of so many people. Much of this year (2021) was dedicated to supporting the restart of activities for schools, clubs and community groups.

Through the council's sports development officer, community sports hubs and Active Schools, we supported a range of sports and activities to restart, by providing sport-specific and generic guidance around COVID-19 regulations and use of facilities.

We organised various workshops including some with sports governing bodies for football and hockey to allow clubs to ask questions about the rules and regulations being set in their sport. We supported clubs to purchase required PPE and sanitiser, as well as additional equipment where sharing physical resources between different groups was an issue.

- ✓ We will progress the Fair Food Project with an aim of making Shetland an equitable food community.

Fair Food Project

The aim of the Fair Food Project is to move Shetland towards being an equitable food community. It is being delivered in conjunction with the council's Food Growing Strategy, which had been previously agreed in 2020. The strategy is designed to help communities across Shetland access affordable, healthy and environmentally sound food. This includes improving access to land for growing food, helping create opportunities for people to grow their own food, and supporting the increase of skills and knowledge in growing, cooking and eating healthy food.

Recent examples of support include:

- Grow Shetland – a new three-year project (2021-2024) being delivered by Transition Turriefield. This project is designed to support the Shetland community to grow more of its own fruit and vegetables, increase access to affordable food and encourage healthy eating. The project works with individuals, groups, communities and schools to create new growing spaces and take up food growing, fresh food sharing, cooking and eating.

In the first few months, the project has been able to support a number of community groups, schools and residential establishments (see the case study on the new Tingwall residential children's home).

The project is also supporting families, through the local housing

association and through a 'Growing Undercover Shetland' social media group with over 1,500 members, many of whom are new to growing fruit and vegetables during the pandemic.

- Grow Local is a new project through Northmavine Community Development Company, which aims to support local growing and food production by individuals and groups in Northmavine.

✓ **We will deliver the Fuel Poverty Action Plan to seek to reduce Shetland's fuel poverty rate.**

Fuel Poverty Action Plan

As part of the council's long-term commitment to tackling fuel poverty, a range of activities are currently underway and a number of strategies are in the process of being updated. These include the new Local Housing Strategy (see separate case study) and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, which are both in development.

It is important to note that no one service or even single organisation is able to resolve this issue on their own, so we are working collaboratively internally and with partners across three main themes to address the issues – increase incomes, reduce energy use and more affordable energy prices.

An example of the work currently underway is the review of existing fuel poverty advisory services in Shetland. This review has the broad objective to decrease fuel poverty by:

- developing a new fuel poverty, energy and financial health advice service
- developing and implementing a fuel poverty engagement plan
- realising health improvements in tackling fuel poverty

Currently, advice is offered locally through various bodies including Shetland Islands Council, Hjaltland Housing Association, Energy Savings Trust and the Shetland Islands Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as a range of other external organisations, and there are clear benefits from this being streamlined.

This multi-agency project will review support services available to the Shetland

public at the moment, with the aim of developing options for a new fuel poverty, energy and financial health advice service that speeds up positive outcomes and simplifies the customer journey.

The initial review has been completed and the next step will be to engage widely with customers who have previously used one or more of these services through a series of workshops. The council will also be speaking to partners in the social care, public health and charity sectors, as well as local contractors, to try to understand blocks to efficiency and hear ideas for how the service could be delivered in the future.

✓ **We will ensure children who are eligible for free school meals and other benefits receive them, helping to make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of those children.**

Free school meals and clothing grants

In a bid to further support the families most in need in Shetland, and with Scottish Government funding in place that widened the eligibility for support around clothing and free school meals, the council has been working hard over the year to encourage parents to check whether they are newly eligible.

More families in Shetland are benefitting than ever before, with an increase last year of 15% in pupils eligible for free schools meals, and an 8% increase in those eligible for a clothing grant.

At November 2021, 329 pupils received free school meals and 464 pupils received a clothing grant in the academic year 2021-22.

The Scottish Government funding allowed local authorities to provide free school meal holiday support during all school holidays in 2021/22 for families in receipt of free school meals.

The clothing grant was also increased and the council remains the only local authority to pay clothing grants to pupils in early learning.

We were able to top up the free school meal payments through our Financial Security Fund, until that was used up by summer 2021. The uplift recognised the increased food costs in rural areas.

- ✓ We will continue to invest in the [Anchor Early Action Project](#) to help to make positive changes to the lives of families in Shetland who are struggling.

Early Action Programme

In autumn 2020, the Anchor Project sponsored a programme of workshops to create a shared vision for household support in Shetland. The vision that emerged set out a new model for person-centred service delivery in the islands.

The Anchor Project's remit was expanded to encompass research, development and promotion of early action responses, and also included strategic oversight of two other initiatives – Community Led Support and the Emotional and Wellbeing Resilience Project, with strong links to both The Promise and trauma-informed practice.

To reflect this wider remit, the project changed its name to the Early Action Programme. A guide to [what has been achieved in the first and second years of Anchor](#) is available online.

Anchor has shown us that every one hour of early action support could replace 3.5 hours of crisis intervention. We've also learnt that it would take about 12 hours of early action support over a 12-month period to support a family that might be struggling back onto a positive pathway.

"This project has highlighted that partnership working can lead to improved outcomes for families. Parents involved in Anchor have felt supported. Often children can be negatively impacted when their parents are facing challenges and sometimes schools are unaware of the difficulties faced by families. So having us attached to the school meant that we could work together to make a real difference to families on their terms, allowing them to feel empowered to bring about change.

"Families need to feel that their school is a community resource where they can reach out for help, before things escalate and a longer period of intervention is required."

Vision for change:

- The support available to individuals in Shetland is enabling and kind.
- When Shetland's residents encounter difficult to overcome challenges, early interaction with potential support is the norm.
- Friends and family play a vital and widely recognised role in the provision of support.
- Where support from services is sought, the presumption is that support will be delivered in a local community-based setting that creates a comfortable environment for the individual.
- The support system works with an individual using a strengths-based approach and targets improvement in an individual's confidence and capacity to act.
- The organisations providing support services operate under a no door is the wrong door policy.
- The individual is listened to. What an individual says they need is listened to and the whole household is considered.
- The value of time spent with an individual to build a trusting relationship is recognised as a good investment by service providers. Engaging in simple practical helpful actions can be transformative.
- The individual receives tailored and flexible support that meets their needs and is matched to their capacity to act.
- The individual experiences a seamless transition from touch point interactions to, where appropriate, working with more specialist services on issues at the core of experienced challenges.
- Professionals and support workers have a wide knowledge base, supported by learning on the job, the sharing of best practice and good relationships between services.

- ✓ **We will continue to develop early learning and childcare to provide more opportunities for parents, particularly mothers, to access employment opportunities.**

Early learning and childcare

The Scottish Government set out plans to make sure that all local authorities delivered the policy of increased hours to 1,140 hours by August 2020. While the statutory requirement was put on hold until August 2021 due to the pandemic, the council continued with the plans and met the target date for all early learning and childcare (ELC) settings.

Since then, work has continued to progress the ELC capital programme, which is designed to increase capacity within settings and improve facilities to provide a high quality experience for the children attending sessions. In this year, upgrades have been completed at Mid Yell, Tingwall, Lunnasting and Sandwick, and we are currently on site at Scalloway and Brae, with Mossbank to follow by the end of the year.

Running in parallel with that, the ELC Team applied for funding and recruited a graduate project officer for childcare. The purpose of that post is to undertake local authority-wide and community-specific consultation to understand different childcare needs across Shetland, with a view to identifying possible solutions to different issues faced by communities. This is a really important piece of work at a strategic level that will help shape and direct next steps. Consultations with Sandwick and Yell communities have been completed and a local authority-wide consultation is currently underway, with plans to engage with north and west mainland communities to follow.

The council is also looking at two new wrap-around childcare facilities in Sandwick and Brae and we are at the early stages of developing these. There is no provision in either community at the moment and we are hoping to be live with both in August 2022. The aforementioned consultations will help shape the service models for these.

- ✓ We will continue to invest in emotional wellbeing and resilience to help reduce poor outcomes for children and young people and families in Shetland.

Get into Summer Programme

The council received funding from sportscotland to “improve the wellbeing of children and young people, providing opportunities for them to take part in sport and physical activity, and socialise and reconnect with peers during summer”. We covered the cost of Ability Shetland and Shetland Recreational Trust’s summer activity programmes, enabling families to access them for free. We also offered all of our own summer activities for free and used funding to support with equipment and venue costs. We supported clubs to offer junior summer sessions at zero cost, and subsidised the cost of Scottish Football Association summer sessions.

We expanded our summer programme, offering some new activities including Gymnastics Tasters (delivered by Shetland Gymnastics Club), Run/Jump/Throw and Outdoor Multi Sport Fun sessions. We also offered more activities in rural locations. In the past, we have offered two fencing camps in Lerwick, but this year (2021) we offered camps in Lerwick, Unst, Yell, Brae, Aith and Sandwick. The attendance at all sessions was excellent.

With funding in place we were able to offer Outdoor Adventure Days for free. In previous years, we have had to cancel sessions due to low uptake – but in 2021 we had to create additional sessions to meet demand.

- ✓ We will support children and young people to help them thrive and reach their full potential:

- Developing the Young Workforce
- Employability Pathway Programmes
- Motivation, Commitment and Resilience Pathways
- Schools Counselling Service

Developing the Young Workforce:

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is the Scottish Government’s Youth Employment Strategy to better prepare young people for the world of work.

DYW Shetland is currently staffed with a project manager and two school co-ordinators, covering secondary schools in Shetland. An employer-led DYW Regional Board is made up of Shetland employers and businesses, as well as representatives from public sector and third sector organisations.

In 2021, the focus for DYW Shetland has been to develop the roles of the schools co-ordinators and continue the conversations with businesses and employers.

DYW Shetland is working to:

- increase employer engagement opportunities, and the number of employers actively engaged in supporting and preparing young people for the world of work
- support employers with the completion of the Young Person’s Guarantee asks
- increase the number of employers offering job and apprenticeship opportunities to young people (in collaboration with Skills Development Scotland and other learning providers)

- increase work-based learning and employer engagement opportunities for those who would benefit most

In collaboration with schools and partners, the DYW Team has facilitated uptake of new apprenticeships, offered employer-led workshops in schools and online work preparations activities. As a result, businesses in Shetland have now signed up and committed to the Young Person's Guarantee, working to offer new opportunities for young people in Shetland.

Employability Pathway Programmes:

The Employability Pathway is part-funded through European Social Fund with funding in place until December 2022. The Employability Pathway works with a number of services to make sure that services that are relevant and appropriate for those who want to move into employment are provided.

Our aspiration is to have an Employability Pathway that is:

- flexible and person-centred support, offering employer recruitment incentive programmes
- straightforward for people to navigate
- integrated and aligned with other services, particularly health, justice and housing provision
- provides pathways into sustainable and fair work
- driven by evidence, including data and the experience of users
- supports more people – particularly those facing multiple barriers, to move into the right job at the right time

There are two teams supporting participants – the Bridges Project and the Pathway Team. Bridges supports young

people aged 15-19, offering a timetable of classes, courses and activities that aim to improve confidence, self-esteem, motivation, employability skills and qualifications.

The Pathway Team supports participants from age 16 until retirement age to develop a variety of employability and other life skills, as well as gaining accreditation for their learning.

Motivation, Commitment and Resilience Pathways:

The ambition to establish a Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) school-based mentoring programme or pathway in Shetland to help young people in need of support to achieve educational outcomes and fulfil their potential was first mooted in the Shetland Community Learning and Development Plan 2018-21. In the lifetime of that plan, 71 young people were supported to achieve educational outcomes via the MCR training programme. The programme was delivered in the Anderson High School and 24 adult mentors were recruited. It is planned to roll out MCR pathways to other schools in the near future.

Surveys are regularly sent out by the MCR Team to young people who are being mentored and their mentors. These are used to evaluate the programme and ask for any suggested improvements. Funding by the Scottish Government for this national programme reinforces that it is hugely beneficial across Scotland.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and staffing changes, the council hasn't been able to progress MCR Pathways into other school settings. This will now be explored for 2022-23.

One of the actions in the Workforce Plan is focused upon supporting employability

programmes and increasing the diversity and inclusion of the council's workforce. With that in mind, opportunities to work in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce, Project Search, the Employability Pathway and corporate parenting partners are being explored to support those furthest from the jobs market to overcome barriers to employment and reach their full potential.

School Counselling Service:

In October 2020, a new School Counselling Service was launched following funding received from the Scottish Government as part of their commitment to ensure all children aged 10 and over have access to school-based counselling services. A team of three has been established to deliver the service to 10-18 year olds – one senior practitioner and two school counsellors.

One-to-one counselling is delivered via a blended model (online platform/ face to face) and is accessed from safe appropriate bases across Shetland. The School Counselling Service works together with staff, parents/carers and other agencies to ensure effective and meaningful counselling is delivered. The team also work with wider school communities to support a culture of nurture and positive wellbeing for all.

The main route to accessing the service is through schools and each school has an identified link who can support this process. The young person can also self-refer or the request can come through a parent or carer.

There has been a really warm response to the new service from colleagues across the school estate and in other agencies, as well as positive reactions from parents, carers and the young people themselves.

Since the service was set up, over 120 requests for counselling have been processed and more than 100 young people have been allocated to the School Counselling Service. There is a waiting list that is actively managed. Blocks of six sessions are offered at a time and then reviewed with up to three consecutive blocks available to accommodate the breadth of complexity of cases. Young people may re-refer back into the service in the future, if needed.

The value of counselling is in the process of self-understanding and change for each child or young person. Counsellors work alongside each young person to understand their experience and help them to make their own choices to facilitate personal growth and self-awareness.

With reduced emotional distress and improved mental and emotional wellbeing, there is an increased ability for children and young people to be active in the development of insight and perspective.

Evidence-based measurement tools are used, alongside what is shared in counselling, to help understand each child/young person's process and progress.

Learning points:

- Counselling can be a good fit for children and young people with a wide variety and level of need – mild, moderate and severe
- The effectiveness of counselling is enhanced by involving children and young people throughout the full process
- Service development is best informed by direct stakeholder feedback, ensuring that it remains responsive to the needs of those using it
- The commitment to creating this

service has filled a gap locally and it has naturally dovetailed with other services

- Widening awareness of and deepening understanding of school-based counselling is key to removing barriers to access and to tackling any stigma
- Paying attention to detail is worth it; strengthening connections and ensuring that access to counselling is safe, boundaried and responsive to individual needs

Some reflections from the young people:

Secondary pupil reflections:

"I think starting counselling, I wasn't sure what I wanted from it but it definitely helped, I got what I needed and more. You've been a massive help. Thank you. It's all gotten a lot better since coming to counselling and it's helped me understand things that I didn't realise were there and were affecting me so much."

"Everything has become a lot more manageable, I am letting things go more easily and not letting them stop me from living my life anymore. My head feels a lot less heavy. It's so much easier to go through a day and just live and not have to think about everything all of the time."

"I understand a lot more about myself. I feel better overall and find it easier to cope with things. I now know the things that make me happy and what I can do to help when I feel sad. I feel counselling has been really good, it's helped to have somebody to speak to regularly, when it was really stressful and feel like I can express how I am feeling and deal with it."

"I was so overwhelmed when I first came to counselling. My mind felt so complicated and I was totally stuck. Knowing I had a space to talk every week really helped to calm me. It was more than just off loading."

It was really emotional to realise how hard I was being on myself about how I was feeling. Now if I feel overwhelmed, I give myself time to figure out what I need....which is very different to feeling stuck."

Primary pupil reflections:

"I feel a lot better and it's helped a lot. I used to get panic attacks and get scared but now I am a lot more happy and not so scared. I used to want to be someone else but now I am happy in myself and a lot more confident."

"Because of counselling there have been a few things that are feeling better. I have been more happy and haven't been as angry as I used to be. I think I am alright, I am me and that's fine."

"It's ok to not feel ok sometimes. Sometimes I might need other people to help me and counselling has helped me to figure out some things I can do myself when I feel worried. I don't feel so tired every day now and I think that it's good to talk about stuff to somebody that tries to understand me."

"I can be myself when I am in my counselling, which is cool."

- ✓ We will demonstrate support for the Scottish Government's Fair Work Statement to meet the longer-term ambition for Scotland to become a Fair Work Nation.

Fair Work

The Scottish Government has a [vision to achieve 'Fair Work' by 2025](#), which was published in February 2019. Following on from that, Fair Work First guidance was published in January 2021 (and updated again in September), to help employers put the principles of 'Fair Work First' in place. These principles include providing 'appropriate channels for effective voice', taking action to 'tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace' and paying the real Living Wage.

The council repeated its Viewpoint Staff Survey in 2020 and followed these results up with a pulse survey in November 2021. The purpose of these surveys is to hear from staff on a number of topics, and have been extremely valuable during the pandemic.

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in the workplace. In the last year, [Shetland's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report](#) has been published (see earlier case study), as well as releasing the most recent [Employment Equalities Monitoring Report and Equal Pay Gap Information](#).

Actions in this latest report include carrying out an equal pay audit and improvement action plan, as well as demonstrating that we continue to meet the standards set by 'Close the Gap's Equally Safe at Work' at Bronze level.

The council's [Workforce Strategy 2021-2026](#) has a commitment to ensuring the workforce reflects the diversity within the Shetland community and

to ensuring fair work drives success, equality, wellbeing and prosperity for all by supporting people to reach their potential.

The council is a 'Fair Work' employer and is committed to paying the Scottish local government living wage. We are also a member of the Disability Confident Scheme.

Equally Safe at Work

In March 2021, the council received its bronze accreditation after taking part in the innovative '[Equally Safe at Work](#)' pilot scheme.

This is the first accreditation programme to be run in the country that focuses on gender equality at work and the prevention of violence against women, and has been developed by '[Close the Gap](#)', Scotland's expert policy advocacy organisation working on women's labour market participation.

Shetland Islands Council is one of the first four local authorities to be recognised in this way, along with Aberdeen City Council, Midlothian Council and North Lanarkshire Council.



Transport



What we have done:

- ✓ We will engage in the development of a new Shetland Transport Strategy that sets a clear strategic and policy framework in response to the drivers for change.

Developing a new Shetland Transport Strategy

Back in September 2021, ZetTrans, Shetland's Regional Transport Partnership, was looking for views to shape a new transport strategy for Shetland for the next 20 years.

These included how transport should develop, both within Shetland and to and from the Scottish Mainland, as well as the aims and priorities of the new strategy. The strategy will set the framework for a future transport system that reduces inequalities, takes climate action, helps deliver inclusive economic growth and improves individual health and wellbeing.

Consideration will be given to:

- the changing socio-economic and demographic profile of Shetland
- future developments in the transport industry and their potential impact in the Shetland context, including the development of alternative fuels, automation and shared mobility
- response to climate change
- current and potential future changes in travel patterns due to changes in the workplace and the way we shop – trends which may be accelerated by COVID-19
- transport inequalities which exist due to differing levels of access to opportunities and services both across Shetland and among different groups within Shetland society

- internal connectivity between Shetland's island communities and the Shetland mainland
- the future development of the active travel, bus, internal air and ferry and road network in Shetland
- external connectivity via both the air and ferry network
- transport integration, including the potential for integrated ticketing
- the overall cost of travel

It is expected that a final approved strategy will be submitted to Scottish Ministers later in 2022.

(Zetland Transport Partnership is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) in Scotland, established under the Regional Transport Partnership (Establishment and Constitution) (Scotland) Order 2005.)

- ✓ **We will continue to work to secure support from Scottish Government to ensure financially and environmentally sustainable internal ferries services, so we can continue to provide links between the islands that are reliable and support economic and social wellbeing, and will continue to pursue fixed links, where they can be proven to be a viable alternative.**

Working to secure support from Scottish Government to ensure financially and environmentally sustainable internal ferry services

In January 2021, the Scottish Government announced increased revenue funding to enable the council to maintain the existing lifeline inter-island ferry services. The funding shortfall of around £5.5 million per year was filled in the Scottish Budget.

There still remained a significant capital challenge to be faced with almost half of the ferries over 30 years old. Two ferries and infrastructure urgently need to be replaced at an estimated cost of £37 million.

In August 2021, the council submitted details of the full ferries revenue estimates for 2022/23, which amounts to a requirement of £10.848 million of funding support from Scottish Government. Scottish Government also requested details of capital estimates covering five years from 2022/23 to 2026/27. The amount submitted totalled £93.75 million subject to completion of business cases for Bluemull Sound and Papa Stour routes.

The council is a member of ZetTrans, Shetland's Transport Partnership, which has responsibility for the aforementioned regional transport strategy. Fixed links will be explored as part of that strategy development where viable.

- ✓ **We will continue to support air services to Foula and Fair Isle, including consideration of alternative fuels and technologies in the provision.**

Supporting air services to Foula and Fair Isle

A full business case for delivery of inter-island air services was approved by ZetTrans and Shetland Islands Council on 13 February 2020. The four-year contract for delivery to the remote isles was awarded, achieving savings of £14,000 on the anticipated budget.

During the pandemic, air services continued to operate to Foula and Fair Isle to provide essential travel. This meant that schedules for the carriage of passengers and freight had to be carefully managed to ensure the islands continued to access and receive essential services and resources while minimising risks associated with COVID-19.

In practice, this meant that regular services, as specified in the contract, were suspended in favour of a more responsive, flexible approach to ensure the wellbeing of each community was maintained. A return to the regular schedule of air services was reinstated in March 2021, with the agreement of the island communities of Fair Isle and Foula.

We are continuing to engage with these communities to make sure the most effective service configuration is provided to meet their needs.

Programmes such as the Islands With Small Populations and the consultation on the new Regional Transport Strategy help feed in views and keep the dialogue going.

Sustainable Aviation Test Environment

The council is working to become a partner in Highland and Islands Airports Limited's Sustainable Aviation Testing Environment Project. This project is looking at future fuels and technology for air travel, including inter-island air travel. We have agreed in principle that we will become a non-funding partner of the project, which will enable us to be part of the process to develop new technologies in fuel and aircraft types, as we work towards reaching a net zero position.

- ✓ We will continue to support delivery of an affordable and sustainable system of public transport services to meet the needs of Shetland. We will support the development of alternative solutions such as active travel and mobility as a service that encourages positive travel choices. These will evolve with the availability of alternative fuels and technologies and will complement other transport modes to form part of an integrated transport network. The network will support our community outcomes of achieving climate change targets, reducing inequality, improving public health and enabling access to essential goods and services, employment, education and health care, as well as other opportunities to ensure inclusive economic growth and healthy communities.

Shetland Active Travel Strategy

Following a period of consultation seeking the public's views on walking, cycling and wheeling, including wheelchair use, the Shetland Active Travel Strategy 2020-25 was approved by ZetTrans in March 2021.

'Places for Everyone' funding was secured from Sustrans Scotland to develop the strategy, which was led by ZetTrans in partnership with Shetland Islands Council, NHS Shetland, NatureScot, Shetland Recreational Trust and VisitScotland.

Now that it has been agreed, the strategy will guide development of facilities to encourage more active travel in Shetland, to help reduce Shetland's carbon footprint and respond to the climate emergency. ZetTrans has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Sustrans to secure £100,000 of funding to support delivery of the recommendations in the strategy.

- ✓ **We will invest in the maintenance of our roads network to ensure it continues to support our economy and communities. In addition, we will invest in road improvements and upgrades where they are necessary to support the sustainability of communities and businesses and/or support new economic opportunities in the islands.**

Shetland's strategic road network

Shetland's strategic road network is generally well developed due to significant investments during the oil construction era. These are our busiest roads linking Lerwick, Sumburgh Airport, the Sullom Voe Oil Terminal, Scalloway, our ferry terminals and our schools. Access to services and economic activity is largely dependent on this network and, therefore, it is important in delivering a number of key priority outcomes from Shetland's Partnership Plan that would benefit public organisations, communities, individuals and businesses.

However, there are sections of the network with existing or emerging issues, which require consideration for potential future action. These issues, which could require larger-scale projects to rectify, have been identified but not progressed as they are outwith the scope of the existing arrangements for the maintenance and management of the network.

These issues broadly lie within three categories – road safety, deteriorated condition and development related. This last issue focuses on lengths of road that, if upgraded, could help to maintain existing and promote new economic development in an area.

The council approved a Strategic Outline Programme for the strategic road network in November 2019.

The B9082 Gutcher to Cullivoe road is prioritised in the programme due to its deteriorating condition which, if unresolved, will have a significant negative impact on the community and



existing developments. The road also serves the Cullivoe Pier, which together with the existing community industrial estate, has enabled the development of a service hub for fishing and aquaculture.

This success can be measured in the fact that, in 2020, Cullivoe was ranked 19th in terms of landings at UK ports, with 2,984 tonnes of fish and shellfish landed in 2020, at an estimated value of £6.3m. In addition, 30,000 tonnes of salmon worth £130m were landed, with further expansion planned.

The Final Business Case for improvements to the B9082 was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council in March 2021, with the proposal approved. Work is now progressing well on the detailed design and land purchase.

The next project listed on the programme is the A970 Lerwick to Sumburgh Road at Levenwick. Improvements are being considered following a number of traffic accidents. Local councillors and members of the public have also raised concerns about a 'blind summit' on the route and the lack of safety barrier. Unfortunately,

the majority of the east verge is too narrow to accommodate a safety barrier so extensive works would be required to widen the verge, widen the carriageway and improve visibility at the summit. The Strategic Outline Case was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council in June 2021 and was approved. The next stage in the process is the Outline Business Case, which was reported to Policy and Resources and Full Council in November 2021.

Work has also begun on the A971 West Burrafirth Junction to Walls road.

The overall cost of all the seven potential projects identified within the programme is between £9.45m and £17m depending on the chosen options. The projects would be funded through the council's Asset Investment Plan, when resources allowed, although opportunities for contributions from external sources will be investigated. There is currently no specified timetable, however, given the programme is likely to be delivered sequentially, it would be likely to take at least 10 to 15 years to deliver the seven schemes identified.

Political engagement



What we have done:

- ✓ We will campaign to ensure that regulations and arrangements allow Shetland-generated green energy to be made available to Shetland consumers and industries at affordable prices to close the current energy affordability gap. Developing new and innovative arrangements where renewable energy generated in the islands, in particular electricity, could be consumed locally at affordable prices could transform the fuel poverty levels in the islands. We believe that could create a solution with significant economic, commercial and social benefits for communities, business and government and provide a much needed growth stimulus for the islands at a very concerning transition point for the oil and gas industry.

Community benefit and other opportunities arising from renewable energy generation

Scotland is estimated to have around a quarter of Europe's potential offshore wind resources. Both the UK and Scottish Government have ambitious targets for offshore wind development over the coming decades as a critical component in plans for replacing hydrocarbon energy sources with low carbon alternatives and combatting climate change. The waters around the islands are at the core of much of that potential.

It is not possible to predict with certainty whether any offshore wind projects in the seas surrounding Shetland will actually emerge from the current rounds of bidding activity. This will depend on the levels of interest shown in the various sites by developers, and the decisions reached by Crown Estate Scotland about which potential developers should be

granted options. The announcements of successful bidders for the ScotWind round are expected in January 2022.

Community benefits to the 'local host' are encouraged by the Scottish Government from projects that develop a national resource, including renewable energy. Community benefit arrangements now feature in all onshore renewable energy projects.

The council believes that it is both right and proper for similar community benefit to be part of the arrangements around any offshore renewable energy project; the seas around Shetland are just as significant and important to our community, probably more important, than the land.

Key points:

- Environmental protection, especially in the marine environment must always be our primary objective; it is absolutely critical to the wellbeing of an islands' group like ours.
- It is understood that large-scale / nationally significant developments that have key climate change impacts will be likely to continue to be subject to national determination and consenting processes and will happen without the requirement for direct local approval if they are judged to be of sufficient national interest. However, we believe there should be a robust local contribution and proper consideration regarding environmental protection to all decisions about offshore development in the seas around Shetland, regardless of scale and distance from the islands' coastline.
- Further research should be undertaken to determine the key

investments in local infrastructure and skills development required to attract jobs and contracts should developments arise in the seas around Shetland.

- Current arrangements, which cut off all seabed rental income to local communities at 12 miles from shore do not represent a fair balance between local and national interests. There are more than 12 miles between some of our islands and we do not regard them as being across some artificial boundary. This cut-off point should be revised to recognise the critical importance of our surrounding seas for our sustainability and wellbeing to deliver a more balanced and just arrangement.
- Further research should be undertaken to determine the potential impacts from proposed developments on fisheries and other established users of potentially affected sea areas and, should any large-scale development proceed, compensating adjustments are properly considered.
- Community benefit payments by developers to the host community have become an established and recognised arrangement for onshore wind generation projects. The council believes that similar levels of community benefit payment

should be made to the Shetland community for all offshore wind projects anywhere within the seas surrounding Shetland. Further research and engagement needs to be carried out to determine whether energy donation could be a viable and beneficial alternative route to secure the most impactful community benefit outcomes from future renewable generation projects, and how that could be implemented.

- Should energy donation emerge as an alternative community benefit mechanism then consideration will have to be given to the best arrangements to facilitate those benefits reaching individuals, families and businesses in Shetland. Any development of this mechanism will also require significant engagement with the UK Government as electricity regulation is a reserved matter.

Further engagement with other key parties will be required to explore future developments and how to secure community benefits from those. This will include UK and Scottish Governments and their agencies, developers, the Shetland community and local partners, neighbouring islands with similar issues and opportunities, and all relevant economic sectors.

Please note that some of the other actions in this section of Our Ambition are covered in the Leader's introduction, or elsewhere in this document.

Organisational values and culture



What we have done:

- ✓ We will develop a modern, efficient and flexible workforce with the right values, behaviours and skills through delivering the actions in our Workforce Strategy.

Developing a modern, efficient and flexible workforce

As mentioned earlier in this report, the council approved a new Workforce Plan 2021-26 in September 2021, with a focus on the Workforce Strategy's themes of Right Shape, Right Skills and Right Culture. This plan also reflects on what the organisation has learnt through the pandemic and links closely with the values of Delivering Excellent Service, Working Well Together and Taking Personal Responsibility.

Aiming to build workforce capability through upskilling, reskilling and increasing flexibility, the council will also look to establish new work practices, implement new technologies and develop a culture of adaptability and resilience.

Actions include refreshing the Workforce Development Policy to reflect a new approach to talent and development promoting a culture of personal responsibility, supporting digital transformation, and facilitating organisation design and development to deliver transformation/service design and a project-based approach to work.

- ✓ We will use technology to support modern, accessible customer interactions, to be a catalyst for crosscouncil service improvement and support flexible working practices.

New council website recognised in national awards

The council has made significant improvements to the accessibility of online information since the launch of its new website in autumn 2020.

Accessibility is about making sure council information is as easy to access by as many people as it can be, particularly important as more and more people are using mobile devices to access content about our services.

While the previous website was rated at 29% accessibility, the current one has scored 96% and this has attracted an award from SOCITM (Society of IT Managers) for the website 'with the most improved accessibility score'.

Also worth noting is that in the Sitemorse accessibility ranking, which compares government and public bodies' websites, the council website has gone up in ranking from 414th to 86th.

We are continually looking at how we can improve, but this award certainly shows we are on the right track with our new website.

Our progress so far has been helped by using a content management system built around accessibility standards, which shines a light on accessibility to all who use it and has started the conversation about the importance of adhering to these standards within our services.

- ✓ **We will be a learning organisation with a culture that supports psychological safety, intellectual bravery, experimentation, innovation and a willingness to learn from our mistakes, our experiences, and from employee, customer and community feedback, without fear or defensiveness.**

Learning Board

The Learning Board was set up as part of the council's [Customer First](#) project. The Corporate Management Team sits as the Learning Board every six weeks to extract learning from all customer interactions, share positive feedback, learn from negative experiences, understand what is driving the difference between good and poor engagement, and make improvements where we can.

One of the actions in the council's new Communications Strategy is to make sure learning from these meetings is shared across the organisation, and so updates are included in some of our internal communication publications.

Over the course of 2020-21, the Learning Board also served as a route through which key pandemic-related information could be considered on a regular basis to help inform strategic planning and decision making.

- ✓ **Our communications will enable us to clearly explain the challenges and opportunities to our workforce, community, partners and other key stakeholders and to engage them in being a part of the solutions, further strengthening these vital relationships and collaborative working.**

Communications Strategy

A [new Communications Strategy](#) was approved in November 2019 and, since then, the organisation has been working hard to implement the actions that will deliver on that strategy. Some of these include the production of a new Communications Toolkit for Managers (designed to provide guidance and some examples of best practice from across the organisation, as well as ideas for how existing internal comms tools could be shared with teams), as well as the more recent approval of the [new Social Media Strategy](#).

This strategy sets out four priorities to be progressed over the next three years:

1. We are using social media consistently and strategically to deliver upon Our Ambition priorities
2. Our staff are confident and have the support and skills they need to use social media in their day-to-day work
3. We are using social media to build and enhance our relationships with customers and strengthen our reputation as a council
4. Our official social media channels are clearly identifiable, connected and are being used to support any communication need the council faces

- ✓ **We will work with our partners and our community to deliver our priorities through effective leadership, governance and democratic processes.**

Low income, high costs: inequalities and poverty in Shetland

In September 2021, elected members took part in a seminar discussing the latest data available on inequalities and poverty in Shetland.

These findings were presented by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University who currently develop the Minimum Income Standard and Child Poverty (after Housing Costs) data.

Some key points noted from the presentation:

- Living costs are higher in Shetland across the board, but people with low incomes are at greater risk of financial distress
- Over 40% of working families in Shetland have been estimated to have too little to cover minimum living costs
- From data on average incomes, Shetland 'looks' very well off – the median weekly housing income after housing costs is top in Scotland at £491.95 (Scotland £378.74), while child poverty is second lowest
- One in six children are in poverty in Shetland, compared to one in seven in 2014-15 – this equates to 663 children
- Free school meals is another indicator worth considering, and while the figure is much lower in Shetland than Scotland as a whole, it is still a significant number

It is well known that Shetland has much higher living costs, demonstrated by the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) research undertaken in 2016. MIS determines what households require as a minimum, to meet material needs and participate in society, and is based on what members of the public agree should go into a minimum shopping basket.

- ✓ We will develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan to help us become more financially sustainable and resilient, safeguarding public funds while achieving value for money. This will ensure we are well placed to respond to the significant funding uncertainties and pressures we face and to target our money to where it can make the most difference. We will continue with disciplined financial monitoring, working towards a smaller base budget from 2022 onwards.

Medium-Term Financial Plan

The council's [Medium-Term Financial Plan](#) (MTFP) was approved alongside Our Ambition in December 2020 and is refreshed annually as business as usual. The MTFP is due to go before elected members on 19 January 2022 and so the next update will be presented then.

- ✓ We will promote and deliver social and economic value through effective procurement and contract management practices. Wherever possible, we will continue to spend our money locally to support local businesses and organisations.

Effective procurement

Since the pandemic, the council's Procurement Team have been promoting the e-tendering and e-procurement routes when it comes to seeking to do business with the organisation. Local businesses have also been actively encouraged to register on the Public Contracts Scotland website as the norm for accessing and responding to tenders.

A Supplier Development Programme event was also set up in November 2021 in collaboration with Business Gateway to provide an overview of the council's tendering process, highlight top tips for tendering – common mistakes and what a good response looks like, as well as hosting a question and answer session. The event was advertised locally to encourage local businesses to attend, with 21 attending.





SHETLAND
ISLANDS COUNCIL

