SUBMISSION FROM ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL

1. Orkney Islands Council welcomes this opportunity to highlight some of the innovative approaches it has taken in recent years towards delivering improved outcomes for its citizens and communities, despite the challenges facing public services across Scotland and beyond. The Council and its partners recognise the urgency of the need to find new ways to deliver public services in the light of demographic and economic change, not just in the future but here and now. The Council is fully supportive of the direction of travel mapped out by the Christie Commission, and offers here some examples of work in progress to support public service reform in Orkney.

Our commitment to innovation

2. While this response is from the Council, most of the evidence presented is drawn from examples of partnership working, as this is integral to public service delivery in Orkney. Orkney Community Planning Partnership is committed to innovation in the delivery of public services. Local priorities under the new National Outcome 16 (formerly 15) are:

   - Encourage innovative partnership approaches to service provision
   - Pilot the Single Public Authority model for integrated service provision in Orkney
   - Shift resources towards preventative services

Partnership working

3. Community planning places great value upon local delivery of local services, run by individuals with a personal stake in the local community. There is increasing national pressure to merge services with those of neighbouring authorities, but partly due to Orkney’s history of integrated working and its unique geography, we see our future in joint working between community planning partners within our natural boundary. A common thread running through our “Asks” of the Scottish Government is the need to recognise that in terms of national governance, one size does not fit all. Policies designed to work in urban or mainland rural environments are rarely well suited to a remote islands community.

4. We want our public services to be easy to access and efficiently delivered to all of Orkney’s communities. To achieve this we actively seek to prevent any duplication of effort and to improve co-ordination between different public, private and third sector organisations. As a small islands community, we are all accustomed to working closely together. This is a strength upon which we have built via successive Single Outcome Agreements, and in most areas of provision it is now routine practice for any discussion of service provision to take a partnership approach. We aim to widen the scope of joint service provision, and expect innovative models such as social enterprises and co-production to take an increasingly prominent role.
5. Just as we ask the Scottish Government to “island-proof” Government policy, so we recognise that policies which work on mainland Orkney will not necessarily be a good fit on our outer isles. The Partnership will ensure that a pre-requisite in the design of all new ways of working is the need to cater for service users in all parts of Orkney.

**Preventative Services**

6. An important message from the Christie Commission was the urgent need across all areas of Scotland to shift resources towards preventative services, in order to reduce demand for acute services. This must continue if services are to be maintained at a time of shrinking budgets and tough choices. For a number of years the Partnership has taken a positive approach to preventative services, with much of the Fairer Scotland Fund budget from 2008-11 invested in projects with a significant preventative element, such as job coaching, training and counselling services for those furthest removed from the labour market. Engagement with young people was also given a high priority, with the establishment of the Youth Cafe in Kirkwall. Very early interventions are proven to be most cost-effective, and the Early Years Framework is well embedded across the Partnership. Many of the examples in this response are about preventative measures in various fields.

**Integrated Service Provision – the Single Public Authority model**

7. Orkney already has some success in merging services, with the creation in the past few years of the Business Gateway, and Orkney Health & Care. To improve public services beyond this point will require a step change in how we perceive and provide services. Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles are jointly developing a model for integrated service provision for islands communities, referred to locally as the Single Public Authority (SPA). This concept takes community planning to its logical conclusion by creating a single body to provide the majority of public services needed by a community, as a vehicle for improved outcomes. The islands authorities are ideally placed to pilot such a model.

8. The Christie Commission report of 2011 gave its support to a proposal from the three islands councils to work towards integrated service provision within each area, with a view to ultimately merging the major public service providers within each island group.

9. As a first step, the Scottish Government asked the three island CPPs to assess the potential for the closer integration of selected front line services with those of relevant community planning partners. Orkney CPP undertook to consider the three areas of social housing, ambulance services and economic development services. The focus is on service improvement, with an assumption that staff would remain employed by their separate organisations for the time being. Initial findings were reported to the OCPP Steering Group in June 2012.

10. Establishing a SPA would require primary legislation to remove barriers at national level but perhaps more challenging would be the cultural change needed for a successful merger of public sector bodies accustomed to different models of governance and operational control. We believe that a single public body would be
best placed to respond flexibly to the needs of small islands communities and to support sustainability through efficiently delivered services without disproportionate and unnecessary overheads. Budgets would be aggregated and targeted to ensure optimal efficiency and address our unique local needs, in a manner which would reflect all the benefits of 'Community budgets'.

Economic Development

11. Orkney has benefited from a close liaison between the main public sector bodies delivering economic development over many years. This has resulted in many successful outcomes including the Orkney branding and marketing programme, and integrated approach to community development, the successful establishment and growth of EMEC (the European Marine Energy Centre), the growing marine energy supply chain, significant infrastructure developments and the establishment of enterprise areas at Lyness and Hatston. Economic development staff from the Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise are co-located within Orkney’s Business Gateway office.

12. OIC and HIE are committed to the closer alignment of economic development services. Simplifying access to services by individuals, businesses and communities remains a priority, as does eliminating duplication. The following workstreams are being pursued where closer alignment will have a direct impact on encouraging sustainable growth in the local economy:

- Joint activity to implement Orkney’s Economic Strategy for 2012-16
- A united approach to attracting inward investment
- Smarter and/or joint commissioning and publication of research
- Matching the development of marine/offshore/onshore infrastructure to the needs of marine energy developers
- Joint strategy group for broadband

13. Six new industrial units for the renewable sector were completed on Hatston Industrial Estate in March 2012. Each unit provides workshop, storage and office accommodation to meet the needs of tidal and energy developers using the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) test site at Eday. The site is owned by the Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise is taking out a 99 year lease on the 2.5 acre site. EMEC itself will move into one of the units and when fully occupied, the six units are expected to support up to 35 jobs.

14. In September 2011 the Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Heriot Watt University jointly funded a project manager to develop a business case and funding plan for the concept of a Marine Renewables Campus. This campus would build on the presence of EMEC and its international client base and create a single gateway entrance to the range of organisations engaged in renewables activity.

15. An important current topic is the exploitation of the community wind turbines now being installed on several of the outer isles, and the impact that this new source of income will have. A number of workshops are planned to consider collectively the implications for public sector service providers, for the communities which will have new income streams, and for those which will not.
16. In the past year Orkney has seen a significant decrease in external funding into Trusts and the Third Sector. The general economic downturn has significantly affected the ability of third sector organisations to secure funding from traditional sources. In 2011-12 the Council committed £421k to a Community Development Fund to support capital projects which is strengthening communities and helping them to lever in external funding. The Council continued to fund each of the 12 Isles Development Trusts with £2,500 for capacity building, but is currently reviewing policy in light of the anticipated future income to some of the isles from community wind turbines.

17. Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Council have continued their partnership approach to supporting fragile communities by putting in place a second phase of the Community Account Management/Island Community Regeneration programme. With the help of LEADER funding to match the contributions from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Council, the second phase has provided Local Development Trusts with either a part time Administration and Finance Support Officer or some paid administration time. This resource is in addition to the part time Community Development Officer posts that were introduced during phase one.

**Employability**

18. Helping people to move towards employment is a win-win preventative measure, reducing welfare costs and improving wellbeing. A key priority of Orkney’s Single Outcome Agreement is “partnership action to support individual employability”. An Employment Hub is being developed to streamline access to employability services, but it is recognised that engagement with employers needs pro-active management. A partnership job has therefore been created to develop opportunities for clients of employability services. The Employment Worker is employed by Employability Orkney and is based in JobCentre Plus. The postholder works for Skills Development Scotland, Orkney College, JobCentre Plus, Orkney Blide Trust, Orkney Islands Council (including Orkney Health and Care), Lifeskills Centre and Voluntary Action Orkney, most of whom have contributed towards funding the post. The first year’s funding was matched by LEADER funds.

19. Within the first three months, the Employment Worker had worked with 40 service users, engaged with 45 employers and secured 29 employment opportunities (18 work experience, 11 paid employment). This success rate has been so impressive that partners have raised funds for one further year from their own resources.

**Health and Care**

20. It is arguable that the greatest challenge facing Orkney now and over the next 25 years is how we are going to support our aging population, and the Partnership has been imaginative in coming up with preventative strategies in this area.

21. Orkney Health and Care, Orkney’s health and social care partnership, is committed to a person-centred approach, which redirects resources into preventative
spend and builds a resilient primary and community care response. Key priorities are to support a shift from institutional care to services provided in the community, and for resources to follow people’s needs. Several current workstreams, described below, demonstrate how this policy is being translated into action.

**Blueprint for Older People’s Services**

22. Orkney Health and Care issued a draft strategy in 2010, setting out our thinking for the future care and support for older people in Orkney. Building on the high quality of care and support developed over many years, the strategy takes into account the changing needs, expectations and aspirations of Orkney’s older population, recognising the anticipated growth in the number of older people over the next 20 years and also the pressures on public finances. By working together across the statutory and community sectors our vision is to enable older people to optimise their independence and well-being by remaining safely at home or in a homely setting.

23. We will develop new models of care based on the following approaches:

- Together with our voluntary sector partners we will find innovative ways to protect and enhance the simpler low cost community based supports which are often what people need to remain involved and active in the community;
- We will strive to achieve the best quality of life for older people whatever their situation and our goal will always be to help achieve some improvement;
- We will ensure care is personalised and tailored to the individual needs and circumstances of each person.
- All our efforts will be aimed at helping to either sustain or regain physical and mental skills and competencies;
- We will provide joined up care so that where there is the need for several services we will work together to provide care seamlessly and coherently. Responsibility for providing information and advice, for co-ordinating all the care and helping the older person and their unpaid carer to make decisions will rest with a named member of the team;
- Where an older person has complex needs we will continue to provide care at home or as close to home as possible, and if hospital care is ultimately required we will aim to ensure a well supported discharge home as soon as clinically safe.

**Joint Commissioning Strategy**

24. The development of a Joint Commissioning Strategy is fundamental to delivering the Scottish Government’s key policy objective of re-shaping care for older people and the early years framework. At a time of substantially increasing numbers of older people, people with complex needs (including those living in the community), the personalisation agenda, self-directed support and the need for investment in preventative action, there are a number of significant challenges for the reducing resources available to OHAC. Orkney Health and Care recently approved for consultation a draft Joint Commissioning Strategy, focussing initially on Older People’s Services and their All Age Learning Disability Service. The Joint Commissioning Strategy represents an important tool that can provide rigour and
transparency to the decisions taken by commissioners and confidence to a public who otherwise see changes taking place that they do not understand.

Home Care

25. In early 2012 an independent review of Orkney Health and Care’s Home Care services was commissioned as part of a planned programme of service improvement and efficiency maximisation. Some proposals which are being progressed include (i) market testing the feasibility of a mixed economy of home care provision, with local variations for the more remote isles, (ii) a change in focus to need rather than entitlement, e.g. in determining eligibility criteria for services, (iii) integrating re-ablement and intermediate care rehabilitation, (iv) providing formal integrated approaches between Home Care and Nursing, Intermediate Care and Telecare and (iv) enhancing preventative and universal services as complementary to home care. Given the demographic pressures that will exist in the future, it is likely that any savings which are realised will require to be reinvested to meet the demand from a growth in the older population.

Change Plan

26. Orkney is now in the second year of its Change Plan, which is being implemented by a three-way partnership between the council, NHS Orkney and the Third Sector, represented and co-ordinated by Voluntary Action Orkney. Change Fund activity in Orkney supports the following shared aims:

- to enable more older people to remain at home;
- to increase levels of independence, self care and self managed care;
- to reduce unplanned, emergency and/or inappropriate admissions to hospital by utilising community resources more effectively; and
- to facilitate early discharge from hospital.

27. Examples of specific workstreams being progressed under the Change Plan include re-ablement training to improve hospital discharge time, training Care and Repair staff to assess need for simple adaptations, piloting the Quietcare’ lifestyle monitoring system, falls management and raising prevention awareness, and building capacity in the community in respite services, befriending services, patient transport and domiciliary services. 20 apprenticeship opportunities for generic health/care workers are to be created across the isles.

Early Years

28. The Partnership acknowledges the importance of preventative work in the early years of life. While this is less of a service pressure in Orkney than the challenges of later life, it is nonetheless regarded as a high priority.

29. Youth volunteering has gone from strength to strength in recent years and SOA indicators show that there has been a good increase in the number of youth volunteers. This has been achieved through regular presence and promotion in schools and at youth events. Voluntary Action Orkney reports a steady improvement in partner working with schools, helping them to engage with secondary school
pupils. Voluntary Action Orkney have also made use of ways to reach out to young people such as through social media and other online communication.

30. Safe Islander is an educational programme designed to provide children with important life safety skills and knowledge. A session was organised in Orkney and attended by 220 first year high school pupils. Workshops models were set up covering a range of areas where young people may find potential hazards such as on the farm, internet, at sea, with alcohol or drugs or around electricity. Young people were able to look around for potential hazards and dangers and learn for themselves how to be responsible for their own safety. The event was a partnership effort run by a local construction company - Casey Construction, Health and Safety Executive, Highlands and Island Fire and Rescue Service, Northern Constabulary, Scottish and Southern Energy, RNLI and Orkney Drugs and Alcohol Partnership. It was sponsored by the Council, Orkney College and Stagecoach.

31. Funding from the Orkney Childcare Partnership allowed five volunteer session leaders to take Bookbug sessions to the Outer Isles. Bookbug Sessions are free, fun and friendly events for babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and their families to enjoy songs, stories and rhymes together. Often people with young families find it difficult to travel to Kirkwall for sessions and funding for these small local sessions is important. The funding also pays for small sessions at the Life Centre for young parents. Training was held in the library and volunteers led sessions in Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Shapinsay.

32. Orkney has set up a local group to support the Scottish Government’s Intergenerational Working initiative. Intergenerational working has long been a feature of our smaller communities, especially within schools, although rarely identified as such. It is now being promoted within the Partnership as a preventative measure which benefits both younger and older generations.

The Third Sector

33. Many of the examples above involve public sector agencies working in partnership with the Third Sector. Orkney has a strong tradition of volunteering, well co-ordinated through Orkney’s third sector interface, Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO). VAO was a founder member of Orkney Community Planning Partnership in 2000, and has always been an integral and influential partner. In recent years a flourishing social economy has become established in Orkney and social enterprises provide a range of publicly funded services via commissioning or co-production.

34. Many of the services provided by third sector agencies are preventative in nature and encourage individuals to become more independent. In addition to the youth volunteering mentioned above, VAO provides a supported volunteering service, which enables people of all ages in need of additional support to volunteer, thereby building up their skills and confidence. The Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Orkney, Gail Anderson, explains in Orkney’s most recent SOA annual report why volunteering is so positive to the community:

35. “Volunteering, especially for people who have support needs and those who have been out of work for some time, provides a way of getting life back into a
routine; meeting new people, learning new skills and developing confidence and a sense of self-worth by contributing to the work of community groups. Over the year, a full time member of staff was dedicated to supporting volunteers who had additional support needs. Regular surgeries/information sessions were held at the Orkney Blide Trust, and at the local Job Centre Plus and several talks given about the service to potential referring agencies. These, in part, led to a large increase in the number of referrals particularly from Job Centre Plus. During the year, eight supported volunteers moved back into employment/education or training. Having additional support from a dedicated worker, made all the difference to these volunteers, who needed a little bit of help and support to volunteer."

36. Orkney Blide Trust provides a safe haven for people with mental health issues where they can find company and interact with others in a relaxed environment with the opportunity, should they wish, to develop their job skills through the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse encourages members to participate in a work ordered day. Members get involved in the work of providing services both within and outside the Trust. They work alongside a small staff group, as equals, and are fully involved in determining the work that needs to be done and in influencing the daily decision making of the organisation. During the year 2011-12 members completed 6,719 hours of work via the Clubhouse and two members gained paid employment.

Conclusion

37. It is clear from the above examples that there are many opportunities for improved outcomes through partnership and preventative working. However, the Orkney Community Planning Partnership is keen to seize the opportunity to use the public pound to maximum effect locally through a single public body as the simplest and best means of locally delivering better outcomes for these distinctive communities.

Alistair Buchan
Chief Executive
Orkney Islands Council
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