

ISLANDS GROWTH DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held through Microsoft Teams on Monday, 10 November 2025 at 4.00pm.

PRESENT Ms Heather Woodbridge, Orkney Islands Council (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Mr Dennis Leask, Shetland Islands Council
Mr Donald Crichton, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Kristopher Leask, Orkney Islands Council
Mr Paul Steele, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

APOLOGIES Ms Emma Macdonald, Shetland Islands Council (Chair)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE Ms Kathlene Morrison, Islands Deal Programme Director
Ms Charlene Macmillan, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Erik Knight, Orkney Islands Council
Mr Gareth Waterson, Orkney Islands Council
Ms Hazel Tait, Shetland Islands Council
Mr Jan Riise, Shetland Islands Council
Ms Louise Shearer, Shetland Islands Council
Mr Neil Grant, Shetland Islands Council
Mr Sandy Gomez, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Sweyn Johnstone, Orkney Islands Council

Welcome and Apologies Ms Heather Woodbridge, Orkney Islands Council welcomed attendees to the rescheduled meeting of the Islands Growth Deal Joint Committee which had been convened as the meeting of 14 October 2025 had not been quorate. Ms Woodbridge, on behalf of the Joint Committee thanked Mr Neil Firth, Director, the Pier Arts Centre who had delivered an informative presentation on the Creative Islands Wellbeing Programmes – Orkney’s Creative Catalyst informally to members of the Joint Committee prior to the meeting being postponed.

MINUTE

Minute of Meeting of 27 August 2025 1. The Minute of the Meeting of 27 August 2025 was **approved**.

Declaration of Interest 2. There were no declarations of interest.

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of item 3 and 4 on the grounds of the amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by partners under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services. Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to partners in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

Quarterly Report – Q2 25/26 3. With reference to item 4 of the Minute of the Meeting of 14 July 2025, Ms Kathlene Morrison, Islands Deal Programme Director provided a summary overview of the quarterly financial (Q2) spend forecast across projects, including current status and grant claim for the quarter. It was noted that the Quarterly Report – Q2 25/26 had been submitted to the Scottish Government inline with agreed deadline and that any revisions to the Report would be submitted following the meeting.

Ms Morrison noted that projects are progressing well. Following approval from the Scottish Government, one project is now making monthly claims, and this model is working well. It was noted that there could be scope for other projects to follow this model, subject to approval from the Joint Committee and Scottish Government.

It was noted that the new, state-of-the-art Technology and Innovation Centre at UHI North, West and Hebrides' Stornoway campus is now complete. The project was delivered on time and budget. The TalEntEd project continues to make good progress, with Programme Manager appointments now made by Heriot-Watt University, Robert Gordon University and UHI North, West and Hebrides. Two projects have now been approved through the Shellvolution Project, and the project continues to make good progress. The Islands Centre for Net Zero is anticipated to have new managers appointed for both the ICNZ Outer Hebrides, and ICNZ Orkney imminently.

The Report provided an overview of quarterly/ longer-term risks across projects, including risk detail, mitigation, and target closure dates.

It was agreed to approve the Report.

Programme Reset 4. With reference to item 5 of the Minute of the Meeting of 27 August 2025, Ms Kathlene Morrison, Islands Deal Programme Director provided an update in relation to the Programme Reset. It was noted that a Programme Reset is being sought due to the need for several major amendments to the financial profile and overall deal, including the need for some projects to formally identify match funding within agreed timescales.

The Report details proposed changes to projects/ resources if match funding is not identified - with a recognition that projects would be supported to identify alternative funding solutions - and changes to the Island Growth Deal outcomes, including volume of jobs created, and forecasted match funding dependency in recognition of the removal, refinement and reallocation across some projects. It was noted that the reference to 'COVID recovery' has been removed to reflect the positive recovery of industry in the islands. Ms Morrison noted that it is anticipated that the UK Government and Scottish Government will make a decision on the Programme Reset by January 2026.

It was agreed to approve the Report.

Date of Next Meeting 5. The Islands Growth Deal Joint Committee will next meet on Wednesday, 26 November 2025 at 9.00am. The meeting will be held through Microsoft Teams.