



ISLANDS GROWTH DEAL SIGNED

Investment of £100 million in the future economic prosperity of Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides was agreed in Orkney on Friday 20th January 2023. The signing event for the Islands Growth Deal was attended by Scottish Government Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise Ivan McKee; and Lord Offord, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to the Scotland Office, along with the Council Leaders of Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Achieving this milestone means that the first projects in the 10-year programme can now move forward with their Full Business Cases and begin implementation.

ICNZ KICK-OFF MEETING

The first official meeting of the Islands Centre for Net Zero (ICNZ) took place at the start of May in Stromness, Orkney. Partners spent two intense but very fruitful days working through the details and interlinkages of the project, including the important step of building pan-island connections as a team.

The Islands Centre for Net Zero will receive up to £16m UK Government and £0.5m Scottish Government Funding through the Islands Deal, accelerating the transition to net zero across the three island groups.



FUNDED PROJECTS

Funding will be invested in an agreed suite of projects over the 10-year period of the Islands Deal. The Islands Growth Deal contains sixteen agreed projects and programmes built around three themes: low carbon; supporting growth and future industries; and thriving sustainable communities, subject to approval of Full Business Cases. The Islands Growth Deal programme includes a mixture of joint-island programmes (Islands Centre for Net Zero, Creative Islands Wellbeing, and Talented) and island-specific projects. More information on the projects and programmes that the Islands Deal will fund is at www.islandsdeal.co.uk. All funding is subject to approval of Full Business Cases.



UHI OUTER HEBRIDES CAMPUS

Work is set to begin on the re-development of the Outer Hebrides Campus in Stornoway in Summer 2023. A £2.3m total investment (£1.5m of which is coming from Scottish Government funding into the Islands Growth Deal), will upgrade and enhance facilities and learning technologies at the Stornoway campus, and bring the 'Campus into the Community' through a range of mobile technologies. Aiming to transform the Further Education and Higher Education offer provided by UHI in the Outer Hebrides, the aim is that the enhanced facilities, learning and training opportunities will attract more people to remain / relocate to study in the islands and will support the current and future needs of the local economy and skills base.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next steps are to develop Full Business Cases for the agreed projects and programmes within the Islands Deal. These will come forward as each investment is at an appropriate stage of readiness, including having a full match funding package in place.

Other projects hoping to be initiated in 2023 include 'Talented' - a cross island skills, talent attraction and entrepreneurship programme, and Shetland's Shell-volution Research and Development Programme, which will accelerate production in the mussel farming sector.



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