ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL

# Head of Marine Services and Transportation

Council Offices, Kirkwall

Key information:

**Hours**: 35 hours per week

**Salary**: £100,250 (inclusive of Distant Islands Allowance)

**Application deadline**: 14 June 2026

**Interview:** w/c 29th June 2026

Contact:

**Gareth Waterson, Director of Enterprise and Resources**

gareth.waterson@orkney.gov.uk

For application support contact **hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk** or call **01856 873535 ext.2250**

# Our vision



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Head of Marine Services and Transportation at Orkney Islands Council.

This is a pivotal and exciting leadership opportunity at the heart of our Enterprise and Resources Directorate.

This role is a unique opportunity for an exceptional person who can evidence outstanding leadership qualities and a passion for driving forward a shared ambition to provide the very best possible services for our island community and those who visit it or do business here.

As a Council, we are committed to delivering high-quality, inclusive services that enhance the lives of our communities. The Head of Marine Services and Transportation plays a vital role in achieving this ambition, leading a group of services that are critical for our connectivity and supporting our islands such as Orkney Ferries, our airfields and internal air travel, and public transport. In addition, the post has a key role in managing our function as a Harbour Authority, balancing tourism and business opportunities for the Council with the need to preserve our environment.

We are proud of our strong sense of place and community in Orkney. Our islands are regularly recognised as among the best places to live in the UK, and we are determined to ensure that our services reflect and support the needs and aspirations of our people. This role is central to that commitment, bringing together strategic leadership, innovation, and a deep understanding of how the infrastructure and services we provide support those who live in our islands.

You will be part of our Extended Corporate Leadership Team, working closely with colleagues across the Council and with our valued partners. We are looking for a dynamic and compassionate leader who can inspire teams, drive forward change, and deliver meaningful outcomes. You will need to be collaborative, forward-thinking, and committed to continuous improvement.

If you are passionate about service delivery, have a strong track record of leadership, and are ready to make a real difference in a unique and rewarding setting, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Warm regards,

**Oliver Reid**

Chief Executive



# Why Orkney?

## Community and culture

Orkney consistently tops national surveys for quality of life, happiness and community spirit. With the lowest unemployment rate in the country and a rising population, these aren't just beautiful islands - they're a thriving, forward-thinking community where your work has genuine impact.

In our close-knit population of just over 22,000 people, you'll quickly feel part of something special. Neighbours become friends, everyone pulls together to make communities thrive, and you'll see the direct results of your work whilst being part of a place where everyone feels genuine responsibility for their community.

Step outside your office to discover breath-taking beaches, rolling countryside and some of the world's most important archaeological sites. From our world-renowned St Magnus Cathedral and Neolithic sites to vibrant local arts, music and festivals, Orkney punches well above its weight culturally. The local creative scene is thriving, with renowned jewellery, knitwear and food producers.

With hundreds of miles of coastline, you're never more than a few miles from the sea. Whether you enjoy walking, cycling, kayaking, fishing, diving or simply exploring, extraordinary experiences are on your doorstep. Orkney has one of the lowest crime rates in Scotland - children play safely, communities look out for each other, and you can truly relax and unwind.

## Island life

Despite our island location, we're surprisingly well-connected. Our inter-island ferry and flight services connect communities daily, with Kirkwall Airport offering regular flights to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and beyond. Many people walk or cycle to work - the islands' gentle landscape and quiet roads make this a pleasure rather than a chore, whilst high-speed broadband and 4G coverage across most of Orkney mean you stay connected for work and leisure.

The Gulf Stream keeps our climate surprisingly mild. While it can be windy, we rarely experience harsh winters you might expect this far north. Short, dark winter days give way to glorious summer evenings where you can read outside at 11pm.

Living here means adventure is always within reach providing exciting opportunities outwith work. Whether it's coastal walks after work, exploring 5,000-year-old Neolithic sites at weekends, sports culture, or simply enjoying the peace of wide-open spaces, Orkney provides the perfect backdrop for both professional growth and personal fulfilment.



# The role

As a Head of Service, you will be a key member of our Extended Corporate Leadership Team, sharing responsibility and accountability for the Council's successes and challenges. You will provide the critical link between operational service delivery and strategic planning, connecting day-to-day requirements with organisational strategy at Corporate Management Team level.

You will create and maintain a culture of openness and trust where people work in line with our values. This includes recognising staff achievements, promoting innovation, and encouraging people to challenge how we work. Reporting to a Director, you will act as strategic lead for key services and core outcomes, ensuring all activities focus on agreed council objectives while providing expert advice across the organisation.

Working closely with the Corporate Management Team and wider Chief Officer Group, you will develop and implement integrated change and transformation programmes across Council services. You will drive cultural, behavioural and organisational change aligned to our values, encouraging new ways of thinking and working with the Council and partner organisations to deliver better outcomes for Orkney's communities and service users.

You will need a comprehensive understanding of partnership working arrangements and must seek opportunities to integrate digital solutions for current and future service needs. You will challenge existing practices and lead initiatives for more efficient resource use through effective leadership that contributes to continuous improvement.

You will provide high-quality, responsive professional support to the Corporate Management Team and wider chief officers, helping implement corporate priorities and statutory responsibilities. This includes working collaboratively across the organisation to deliver strategic outcomes, effective partnerships and an effective response to operational demands.

**Marine Services and Transportation Business**

The Head of Marine Services and Transportation has responsibility for the operation of 29 ports and harbours within Orkney. This includes the strategic oil port of Scapa Flow and the associated crude oil tanker movements to and from the Flotta Oil Terminal and the Ship-to-Ship oil transfer operations that take place in the sheltered waters of Scapa Flow, and the port of Kirkwall which is the UK’s most successful cruise destination with approximately 200 cruise ship calls in a season.

The Marine Service portfolio also covers the operation of 18 ferry ports, the internal ferry service, a full pilotage service and a towage service. The transport portfolio includes, in addition to all internal ferry services, the operation of six isles airfields and the associated internal air service and publicly funded terrestrial transport services

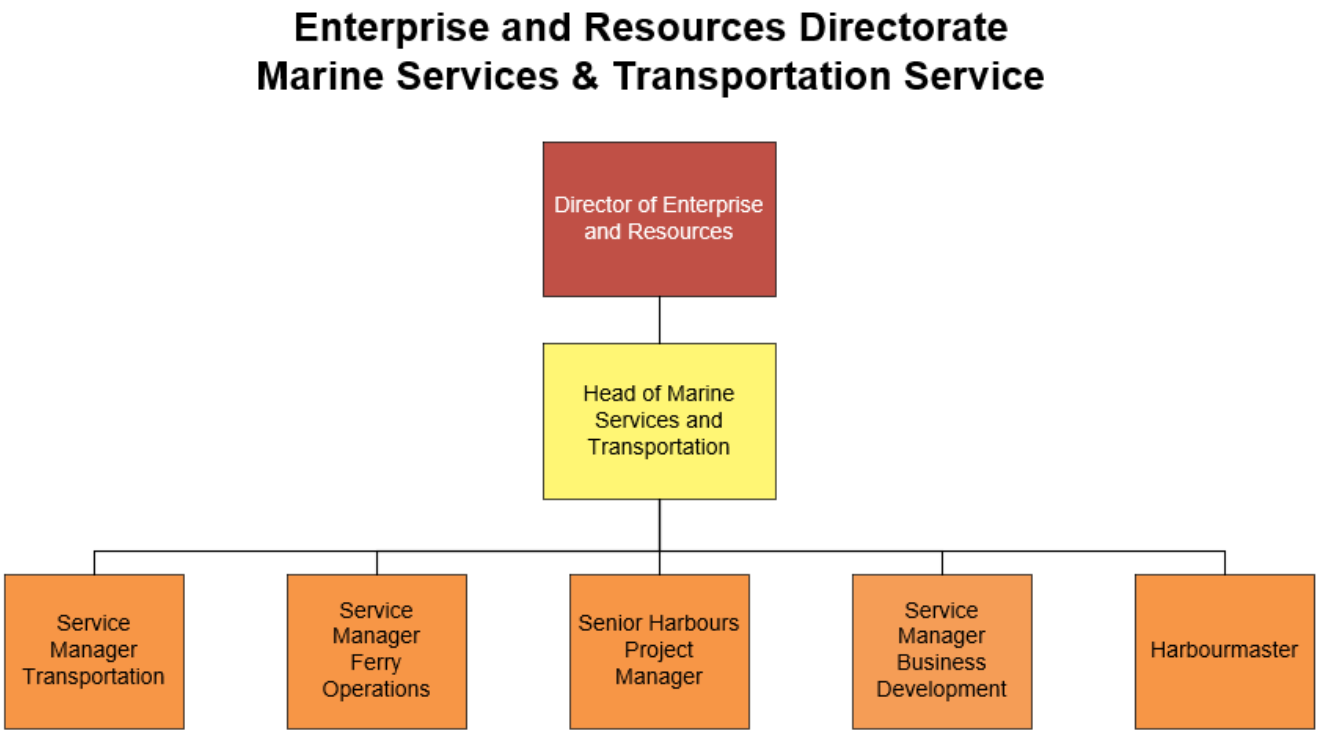
The Head of Service role is a demanding one which ranges from front line operational involvement to strategic vision for future internal ferry services and the delivery of an ambitious Port Master Plan. The successful applicant will be an experienced senior manager with strong strategic, commercial and leadership skills, capable of driving business development and ensuring the effective management and continuous improvement of Marine Services and Transportation.

Whilst the position is demanding, it is also extremely rewarding through its focus on delivering lifeline services and activity which is of significant economic benefit to the close-knit but forward-thinking community of Orkney. The Head of Service post is involved in some leading-edge low carbon projects and the port itself has seen significant growth in recent years with investment plans for new vessels and ports infrastructure.

In addition, as a collegiate member of the Extended Corporate Leadership Team, you will have the opportunity to contribute to the wider vision and strategic direction of the Council. This is an excellent opportunity to be at the forefront of leading and shaping services in Orkney.

Like elsewhere in Local Government, the challenges of improving services, meeting growing demand and balancing budgets are considerable. However, we believe that in Orkney we are better placed than most to meet those challenges thanks to a focus on innovation and a strong leadership partnership between Elected Members and Senior Officers.

## Organisational Structure



# Core Head of Service Duties and Responsibilities

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| As a member of the Extended Corporate Leadership Team, take responsibility to ensure the most effective delivery of services, consistent with the priorities and vision for the Council and be the principal adviser on his/her areas of responsibility. |
| Provide high quality, effective strategic management and Corporate Leadership. |
| Promote change and innovation in accordance with the Council's vision and direction. |
| Place customer needs at the centre of all decision making. |
| Demonstrate resilience and integrity and lead through challenging circumstances. |
| Take initiative and accept responsibility to ensure that effective outcomes are achieved. |
| Develop new ways of working to support continuous improvement. |
| Maintain and promote the core values and goals of the Council/Service objectives and ensure they are communicated effectively to employees. |
| Actively support and implement Council/Service objectives and be accountable for their delivery in accordance with Best Value |
| Ensure compliance with all requirements in terms of internal and external audit, inspection and accreditation as relevant to your areas of responsibility. |
| Develop service plans and policies and continually review performance, striving to improve the quality and efficiency of the service. |
| Work co-operatively with others (including external organisations where appropriate) to meet Council objectives. |
| Actively promote and deliver equality of opportunity to employees and service users. |
| Proactively manage the health and safety of employees within the post's functional area and ensure that all key elements of effective health and safety management are in place (e.g. risk assessments). |
| Value others by delegating responsibility and demonstrating trust within agreed boundaries |
| Create a culture where innovation and managed risk taking are encouraged. |
| Create and sustain a culture of performance. |
| Ensure the Council fulfils its duties in Corporate Parenting. |
| Use resources appropriately to achieve Best Value results for the organisation and the wider community, keeping an appropriate balance between cost, quality and price. |
| Ensure compliance with, and best practice in relation to, legislation, regulation, government and Council policies to secure organisational performance improvement and increased customer satisfaction. |
| As required, act as Lead Professional Adviser to the Council and provide relevant professional, specialist and/or technical advice and guidance to CLT/Council. |
| Undertake any other reasonable duties as the Council, Chief Executive or Director may direct. |

## Role Specific Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic lead, management and development of the following areas of service:

- Marine Services
- Pilotage & Tugs
- Orkney Ferries
- Harbours
- Isles Airfields (including Fire Service)
- Public Transport

## Responsibilities for All

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| Embody the Council Values of Accountable, Reliable, Considerate and Collaborative. | Participate in team meetings, 1 to 1s, supervision and Good Conversations process |
| Handle all information in confidence and in line with Data Protection requirements | Comply with the Council Employee Code of Conduct |
| Work safely to prevent risk to yourself and others | Comply with relevant professional body codes of practice/conduct |
| Ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Any other duties appropriate to your grade |
| Undertake mandatory and relevant training and development | Where required Support the Council's emergency response |

## Additional responsibilities

**Communication**

You will engage with a wide range of stakeholders including members of the public, service users, external agencies, elected members, senior management, Scottish Government Inspectorates, CoSLA and other statutory bodies.

**Employee management**

You are responsible for effective direction and management of all employees within your area of operational responsibility. This includes ensuring employees are consulted, engaged and kept well informed about Council and service objectives and priorities. You will enable employees to contribute their ideas and views in pursuit of Council objectives, apply fair recruitment processes to deliver high quality skilled employees, and manage the effective implementation of the Authority's HR policies, procedures and practice. You will actively contribute to creating a flexible, agile and learning organisation.

**Financial management**

You will ensure the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are adhered to and have overall responsibility for budgets within your remit. You hold budget responsibility and are accountable for effective management of service budgets within the scope of the role, balancing budgets at year end. You will participate in the budget setting process, monitor agreed budgets ensuring value for money is

achieved, and ensure spending is allocated in accordance with agreed priorities whilst ensuring budgets are not overspent and expenditure is justifiable.

**Working environment**

You will be predominantly office-based but required to travel to other locations as needed.

**Information systems**

You will use a range of computer packages including Microsoft Office, email and related software and be responsible for considering current and future information systems requirements within the context of the services you manage.

# Our requirements

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| The minimum knowledge required for this role can be evidenced by: |
| Holding a qualification at SCQF 8/9 i.e. SVQ4, HND, General Degree, Higher Apprenticeship, Technical Apprenticeship, **or** having a minimum of 5 years previous relevant experience, as detailed in the experience section of this person specification. |
| At least 7 years strategic management experience in a large complex organisation. |
| Experience of leading and delivering transformational change. |
| Experience of working at a senior level in a complex, political environment. |
| Experience of building effective partnerships with Trade Unions, internal and external parties. |
| Senior level experience of Inspection and Audit processes. |
| Significant and relevant experience in strategic budget management. |
| Senior management development and training. |
| Demonstratable commitment to CPD. |

## Requirements of the Role

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|---|---|---|---|
| Disclosure/PVG: | Level 1 Disclosure Check | Convictions to Declare: | Current |
| Politically Restricted Post: | Yes | Sponsorship: | Possibly |
| Work Additional Hours: | Yes | | |


AYRE HOTEL

# About us

Orkney Islands Council is Scotland's smallest local authority. We're proud to be more than just a traditional council - we're the harbour authority, we run marine and transportation services including six island airfields, and we manage UHI Orkney in collaboration with UHI.

## What makes us different

Our island location means we deliver services that mainland councils never touch. From emergency services at our airfields to inter-island ferries, we keep our communities connected and thriving.

We're delivering ambitious projects including community windfarms, major offshore wind infrastructure at Scapa Flow, cruise industry growth, a significant house build programme and the Islands Growth Deal. We think big and act boldly.

Our Council comprises 21 locally elected members representing six ward areas, and with 19 Independent Councillors and 2 from the Scottish Green Party, we focus on pragmatic solutions rather than party politics.

## Marine Services and Transportation

The range of ports and harbours within Marine Services are both varied and diverse; from the Oil Port of Scapa Flow that hosts multiple ship to ship transfer operations of crude oil and vessels serving the Flotta Oil Terminal, to the major harbours of Stromness and Kirkwall that receives around 200 cruise ships annually making Orkney the most popular cruise ship destination in Scotland, to the remote island facilities of the North and South Isles which receive daily lifeline services from our fleet of Inter Island Ferries carrying over 320,000 passengers annually.

Ro-ro ferry services via Northlink Ferries operate to the ports of Aberdeen and Lerwick from Hatston and to Scrabster from Stromness; a freight service operates twice weekly between Aberdeen, Kirkwall and Lerwick.

In addition to the larger vessels using the port facilities, there is a strong commercial inshore fishing fleet located throughout the islands as well as the increasing pleasure craft fleet, some of which call into our three Marinas in Kirkwall, Stromness and Westray. Berthing and landing facilities are provided throughout the islands to meet the needs for these sectors.

Marine Services provides all pilot launch and pilotage services directly, as well as Vessel Traffic Services for Scapa Flow and approaches and the Kirkwall Harbour area.

The emergence of the Renewable Energy sector in Orkney and the awarding of Crown Estate leases in Orkney waters, will add to the considerable growth that this industry has witnessed in recent years.

Orkney is firmly placed on the map as the centre for the development of wave and tidal Renewable Energy in the United Kingdom. This places Towage Services based in Scapa, as a key logistical element in the installation and servicing of Renewable Energy devices in Orkney waters.

Towage services have experienced activity in the installation and servicing of wave and tidal devices and the utilisation of quayside for energy device construction has been significant. Towage activity is serviced through a fleet of three modern 80-ton bollard pull tugs.

## Our people and culture

We employ approximately 2,200 staff who all share a genuine commitment to our communities. Working here means being part of something special - where everyone feels responsibility for making our services as good as they can be.




Our values of Accountable, Reliable, Considerate and Collaborative are more than words on a wall. They guide how we work together and serve the people of Orkney.

## What we offer

We offer a competitive salary, membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme, and access to our Employee Assistance Programme. We're committed to helping you grow, with access to training opportunities and support for relevant professional qualifications.

Working for Scotland's smallest local authority means you'll have exposure to a breadth of services and projects that you wouldn't find elsewhere, making your role varied and impactful.

We understand the importance of work-life balance and offer flexible working arrangements where appropriate. If you are a candidate who requires to relocate, we understand that moving to an island community is a big step, and we're here to support you through it. Our team understands the challenges and rewards of island life and will ensure you feel welcomed and supported as you settle into both your new role and your new home.

# Our strategy

Our Council Plan sets out our commitment to work tirelessly to safeguard our cherished islands and achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Orkney. We've identified three key strategic themes that guide everything we do:

- **Growing our Economy:** We will reduce poverty and disadvantage, create favourable conditions for sustainable economic growth, and work towards becoming net zero.
- **Strengthening our communities**: We will support communities to develop local solutions, establish the highest standards of public support and protection, and widen access to opportunities for better learning, achievement and wellbeing.
- **Developing our Infrastructure**: We will invest in homes to support choice and economic growth, remove barriers to digital connectivity and vital transport, and invest in projects that further our economic ambitions.




## Key strategic initiatives

- **Community Wind Farms**: Delivering renewable energy projects that will provide essential income and support our net zero ambitions.
- **Islands Growth Deal**: Securing investment from UK and Scottish Governments for ambitious development programmes across Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles.
- **Harbours Masterplan:** Identifying projects that bring significant opportunities for attracting investment into our islands.
- **House Build:** Delivering 1030 homes over the next 10 years at 60:40 affordable, private programme



# Useful links

## About Orkney

### General information

- www.orkney.com - Official visitor information and island life
- www.orcadian.co.uk - Local newspaper for news and community updates
- www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/orkney - Tourism and attractions

### Community and volunteering

- www.vaorkney.org.uk - Voluntary Action Orkney
- www.orkneycommunities.co.uk - Community groups and activities

## Housing and accommodation

### Property search

- www.ohal.org.uk - Orkney Housing Association
- www.lowsorkney.co.uk - Property sales and lettings
- www.kallanproperties.co.uk - Property specialists
- www.dreverandheddle.co.uk - Local solicitors and estate agents

## Transport

### Travel to Orkney

- www.hial.co.uk/kirkwall-airport - Kirkwall Airport flights
- www.northlinkferries.co.uk - Ferry services from mainland Scotland
- www.pentlandferries.co.uk - Alternative ferry route

## Local services

### Council services

- www.orkney.gov.uk - All council services and information
- www.orkney.gov.uk/your-council/our-plans- Council strategy and plans
- www.orkneyharbours.com
- www.orkneyferries.co.uk

### Social media

- Facebook: @OICUpdates
- LinkedIn: @OrkneyCouncil
- YouTube: @OrkneyIslandsCouncil

# Next steps

## How to apply

### Online application

Apply at orkney.gov.uk/ using our online application system. Please note that CVs will not be accepted - a completed application form is required.

### Application requirements

Your application should demonstrate clearly how you meet the essential requirements and competencies outlined in this pack.

### Accessibility

If you require an alternative format for your application, please contact hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk.

## Key dates

- Closing date – Sunday 14th June 2026
- Shortlisting – w/c 15th June 2026
- Interviews – w/c 29nd June 2026

All correspondence regarding your application will be sent by email. If this isn't suitable, please let us know.

## Selection process

### Stage 1

Applications will be considered by the Interview panel involving, Elected members, Chief Executive, Director of Enterprise and Resources, and HR.

### Stage 2

Candidates who are shortlisted for interview will be invited to Orkney for a selection process which will either be held over one day or two, depending on the number of candidates.

### Selection process

There will be 3 parts to the selection process:

1. Professional interview with a panel involving senior officers
2. A scenario exercise which you will receive on the day and have 30 minutes to consider before feeding back to the professional interview panel
3. A full panel interview involving Elected members and Officers.

Candidates invited to interview will be required to attend in person in Orkney (unless exceptional circumstances apply).

## Pre-employment checks

All offers of employment are subject to:

- Satisfactory references
- Right to work verification
- Occupational health clearance
- Level 1 Disclosure
- Professional registration verification in respect of eligibility to be designated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as the organisation's Accountable Manager for all regulated aerodrome functions and to become the OIC's CAA Accountable Manager.

References will be sought for shortlisted candidates in advance of interviews. If you have concerns about early reference requests, please contact us when you apply.

## Interview expenses

Interview and relocation expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with our policy.

## Informal discussions

For an informal, confidential discussion about this role, please contact:

**Gareth Waterson, Director of Enterprise and Resources**

- Email: gareth.waterson@orkney.gov.uk
- Phone: 01856 873535 Ext. 2521

We encourage candidates to have an informal discussion to learn more about the role and what working for Orkney Islands Council involves.

## Application support

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact our HR team at hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk.