

Westray Local Development Plan



A Framework for Development

Westray Development Trust,

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Our Vision...

“ To develop the economic, social and cultural sustainability of our community by harnessing the quality of our resources, people and island environment”

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INTRODUCTION

Westray Development Trust was established in 1998 with a remit to address some of the socio-economic factors that were causing population decline. The first Development Plan *“Turning the Tide”* (published 1999) paved the way for a number of successful projects that bolstered community confidence and created substantial interest in the island’s regeneration.

A review of achievements with extensive public consultation led to the creation of a second Development Plan, *“The Tide is Turning”* which was published in 2005. This coincided with the community’s moving on from the first phase of the Scottish Executive’s Initiative at the Edge project.

One of the most important projects at that time was to develop a reliable income stream for the trust to continue doing this work, including ongoing funding for what was considered to be the extremely important post of Local Development Officer.

With considerable forward thinking a decision was made to pursue community ownership and control of a wind turbine as a way to produce this income stream.

The Westray Community can be proud of what has been achieved in 10 years, by individuals and businesses as well as the Development Trust and the many other community groups. The population has stabilised and we have a growing number of young families choosing to stay here, however there is still a lot that can be done.

The commissioning of our community owned 900Kw turbine in October 2009 has been a groundbreaking achievement for a community of our size. It brings enormous benefits, but also the need to find new ways of managing community planning and development.

A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

Our framework for development identifies the key elements needed for sustainable development of our island community. It includes the following elements:

- 100% Ownership of Westray Renewable Energy Company. Profits from owning and operating the community wind turbine are passed directly to WDT, ensuring an ongoing income for the Trust to use for community benefit
- A defined process for assessing and prioritising projects, including the formation of a Project Evaluation Group
- Identification of key themes (from community consultation)
- Continued employment of core staff
- A commitment to keeping community members informed

This Framework for Community Development on Westray is to ensure we can maintain what has already been achieved and identify how we can build on it. It provides the structure for what will be a dynamic process, able to respond easily to changing community needs, and using the turbine income wisely as an investment in our future.

THE ROLE OF WESTRAY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Westray Development Trust is a company limited by guarantee and has charitable status. Membership is open to any person over the age of 18 whose main residence is Westray. The Board of Directors is elected from within the Westray community and serve for fixed terms of three years on a rolling basis so we have elections each year. These are held at the Annual Meeting, which is also used as an opportunity to review progress.

The Westray Development Trust was set up with a broad brief and wide community membership and with the full support of the Westray Community Council. One of the roles of the Development Trust is to develop and manage the Community Plan, and provide the framework to allow things that the community wants to be taken forward.

It is acknowledged that the Development Trust may not always be the most appropriate lead organisation to take forward projects. This new framework seeks to empower any individual or group with an idea to be able to seek help, advice and potentially funding to further their cause.

The Trust will continue to develop to become more responsive to the community. The WDT board recognises our ongoing need to maintain and develop the assets owned by the trust for the community, and that we need to set an annual budget to enable this need to be fulfilled. We are also committed to the ongoing employment of staff.

The Trust retains the important role of managing the income from the community turbine for the benefit of the community, working in compliance with the rules of the Charities Commission.

KEY THEMES – THE SIGNPOSTS FOR ACTION

Following the community consultation process the following key themes have been confirmed. These are clear statements of what is most important to our community and give general direction and signposts for action that will be developed further in Action Plans each year.

It is acknowledged that many of the key themes of the Community Development Plan are already being

Theme 1: Housing

Our community deserves Housing that is suitable, accessible and affordable.

Increasing the quality and quantity of housing is so important that it needs to be taken forward with consideration of a range of options including rentals, new build, shared equity and repair and restoration of older houses.

Theme 2: Industry & Business (including Farming and Fishing)

Our Community places real value on our existing industries and businesses.

Securing the future of farming and fishing for our young folk is vital, as is support and encouragement to protect and enhance existing businesses and develop new ventures. There is support for community owned and managed business where this is appropriate.

Theme 3: Youth & Children

Our community values our young people and sees them continuing to play a very important role in the future of the island.

It is important to continue to work with young people and relevant agencies to understand their needs, coordinate activities, and seek to identify and fill potential gaps in delivery of services.

Theme 4: Health & Care

Our community values our existing health and care services and are keen to ensure that this provision keeps in step with changing needs.

Theme 5: Environment

Our community recognises the importance and potential of our local environment and has shown willingness to act on waste reduction, environmental protection, and sustainable use of our natural resources.

worked on by community groups such as the Westray Community Council; Westray Heritage Trust; Energy Action Westray; Westray Community Association; Westray & Papa Westray Tourist Association; Craft Association; Golf Club and so on.

Westray Development Trust is committed to working in partnership with our community groups in the delivery of the Development Plan.

Theme 6: Recreation, Leisure & Voluntary Groups

Our community recognises the enormous contribution that voluntary groups and organisations make to the life of the island in a wide range of areas – recreation, leisure, and service.

It is important to support the voluntary work of these groups to ensure and enhance the range of leisure and cultural activities available.

Theme 7: Transport

As an Island community, good and affordable transport links are our lifeline.

Continued liaison with other groups and agencies to support the development of effective solutions is essential.

Theme 8: Education & Training

Our community sees a need to build on the existing Learning Centre service and increase access to vocational and recreational training opportunities, with as many as possible being delivered on Westray.

We also acknowledge that our school is one of our greatest community assets and will work together to ensure its ongoing future.

Other areas

Westray has a rich (and relatively untapped) heritage and resources: archaeological, historical and natural.

We have an exceptionally creative and enterprising community with a wealth of talent and skills.

It is important to continue to support representative specialist groups in areas such as heritage, tourism, craft and renewables in identifying new goals to the benefit of the community.

ACTION PLANNING

The income from our community owned turbine means that Westray can now take a much more dynamic approach to community development with far less dependence on ever harder to come by grant funding.

The Key Themes and the Planning Process are the framework for our Community Development Plan.

Project evaluation group (PEG)

The Project Evaluation Group, consisting of two Westray Development Trust Board members, one representative from each of Westray Renewable Energy and Westray Community Council, and two elected community members is the group who will continue to assess projects and advise the board on which projects should be prioritised in the current year.

Annual Action Plans will be presented for approval each year by the community at the AGM and will give the detail of what is happening.

The process of getting things into the action plan will develop over time. The Project Evaluation Group functions as an independent group providing advice to the Westray Development Trust, so recommendations from the PEG will always go to a full WDT board meeting for approval.

The Project Evaluation group will meet regularly to assess all proposals using a system of scoring coupled with open debate in order to reach a decision on each case.

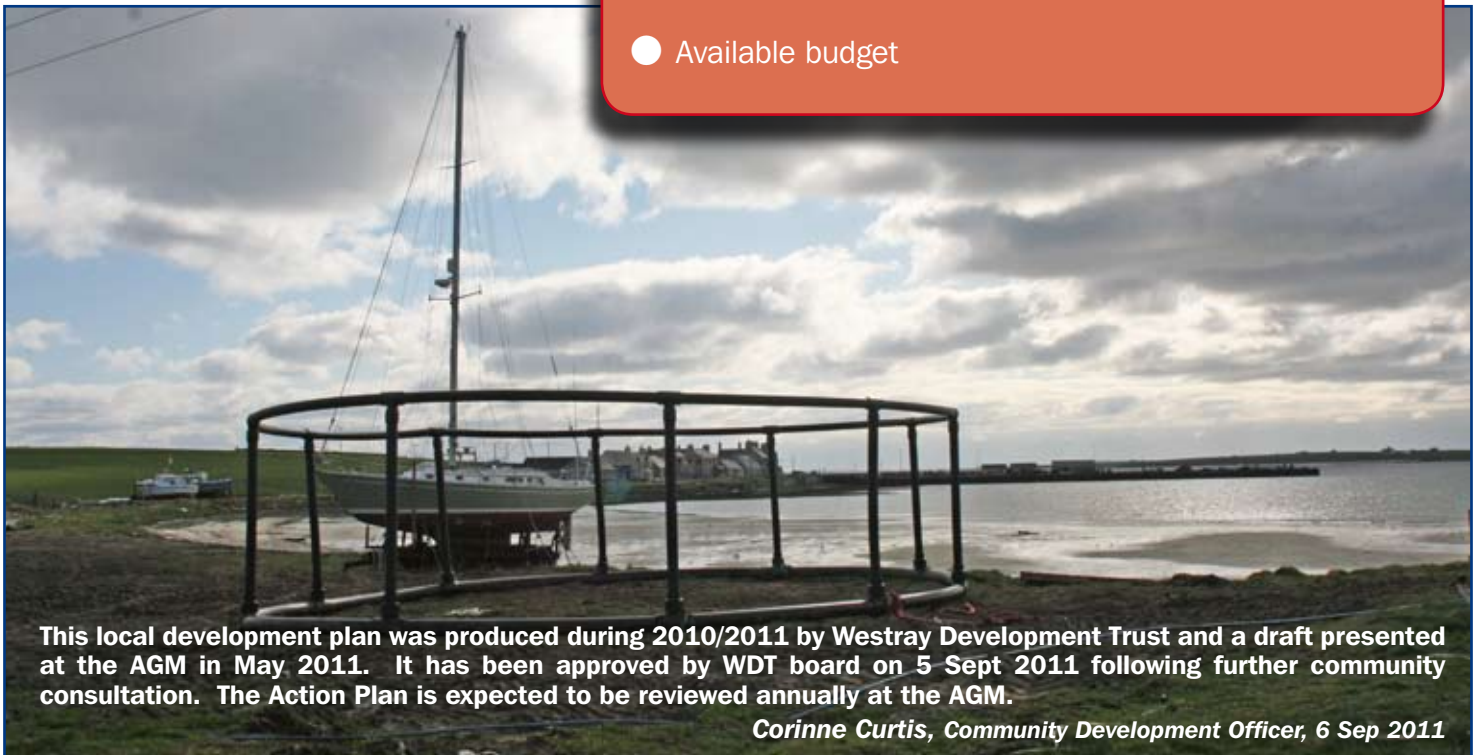
SCORING CRITERIA

There are 6 main criteria and provision for extra points for added value:

- Community Plan – addresses key themes
- Integration – fits well with what already exists without overlap or conflict
- Evidence of community support
- Community benefit – both short and long term
- Economic and/or social impact – what difference it will make
- Feasibility – achievable, value for money, risk
- “Added value” these are criteria that can give extra points, such as creation of training opportunities, potential future benefits for wider groups of people, activities that will generate further income for the community, reducing environmental impact, etc.

Prioritising will involve looking at all the following:

- Results of scoring (from initial assessment)
- Achievability – there is enough staff time or resources to get results
- Good balance – Mix of projects with short and long term goals, large and small
- Available budget



This local development plan was produced during 2010/2011 by Westray Development Trust and a draft presented at the AGM in May 2011. It has been approved by WDT board on 5 Sept 2011 following further community consultation. The Action Plan is expected to be reviewed annually at the AGM.

Corinne Curtis, Community Development Officer, 6 Sep 2011