

DEPARTMENT OF HARBOURS

The Department of Harbours is responsible for the operation and administration of the Oil Port of Scapa Flow and Orkney's miscellaneous piers and harbours, including Kirkwall and Stromness. Functions include Local Lighthouse Authority, Oil Port operations, conservancy, pilotage, and marine environmental services. The department does not have the same obligations to record performance indicators as other departments, but provides performance information to the General Lighthouse Authority and keeps internal records for its own use.



What did we do well?

The Council's performance is above the internationally agreed standard for the level of availability of Aids to Navigation. There has been a steady rise in cruise liner traffic with 30,708 passengers visiting Orkney in 2004/05, an increase of 34% on previous years, making Orkney the most popular destination in Scotland.

What do we have to improve?

The pilotage service is occasionally suspended due to adverse weather. Although the Council has no influence on weather conditions, the provision of equipment could extend the window of opportunity. Additional radar aerial planned for 2006 should provide better control of ships arriving and departing Kirkwall.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

- Upgraded the Stromness Ferry terminal building with new toilet, shower and washing facilities, an enlarged waiting area and left luggage facilities.
- Improved the waiting rooms and booking offices at Tingwall.
- Completed Scapa pier works.
- Launched the Harbours website www.orkneyharbours.com providing real time port information, navigational guidance and warnings.

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

Further develop the international container transhipment hub project on Flotta; replace one pilot boat; provide lairage facilities at Haiston pier.



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND HOUSING

The Department of Finance and Housing provides housing for the people of Orkney and financial services to both the Council and general public. The department includes accountancy, payments, revenues, internal audit and housing services.



What did we do well?

The Council maintained excellent performance in 2004/05 in the average time taken to process changes in benefit claimants' circumstances. The Council ranked first in Scotland in the percentage of council tax collected and for the percentage of income due from non-domestic rates which was received. The Council has shown significant improvement in performance with regard to re-letting and not losing rent from places lying empty by starting procedures before tenants have left.

What do we have to improve?

It is taking longer to complete Council house sales, though this has been linked to an increase in the volume of house sales. The Council's performance in relation to homelessness assessment has declined. This can be attributed to the increase in homelessness which reached an all-time high in 2004/05. The cost of benefit administration has increased, and the Council performed below the Scottish average in terms of paying invoices on time.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

- New budgetary monitoring and control procedures were piloted.
- The cash office was integrated with customer services in the one-stop-shop.
- The Capital project appraisal system was reviewed making significant changes to the level of detail required.
- The Fuel Poverty Strategy and Local Housing Strategy were published
- Information sharing with Orkney Housing Association on housing applications was developed.

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

The Housing division is to work with private developers to identify opportunities for mixed tenure developments; Fuel poverty research projects are to be conducted; new budgetary monitoring and control procedures are to be introduced.

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Department of Technical Services provides a wide range of services including central support to the Council, roads, airfields, operational environmental services, corporate land and property, voluntary competitive tendering arrangements and direct services.



What did we do well?

The Council has been very successful in recycling and diverting waste from landfill sites, showing continuous improvement to perform well above the Scottish average. This is a direct result of the Strategic Waste Fund Initiative.

What do we have to improve?

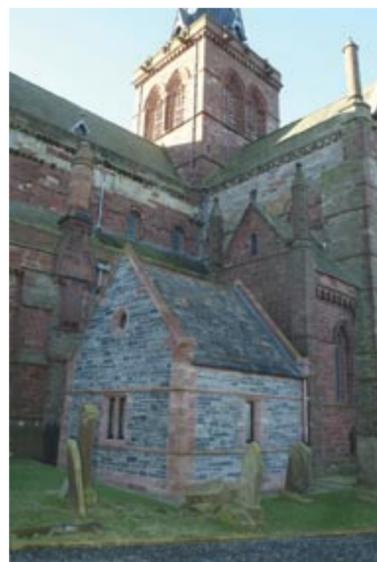
The cost of refuse collection is in general much higher than the Scottish average, partly due to the rural layout and distance between properties. In terms of refuse disposal Orkney also has higher shipping and handling costs as waste is shipped to the Shetland Waste Energy plant.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

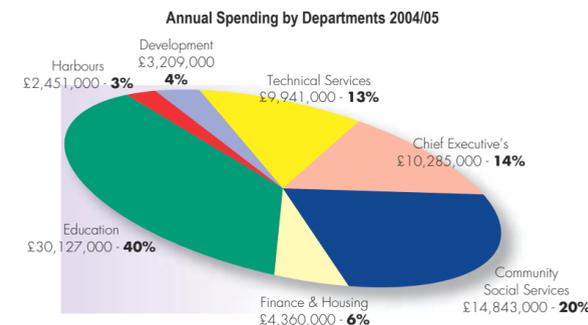
- The Area Waste Plan for Orkney was implemented, appointing Waste Reduction and Waste Awareness Officers, opening the new civic amenity site at Cursiter Quarry and issuing green cones free of charge.
- Major building projects were completed such as the Stromness Travel Centre, Hoy Outdoor Centre, Kalisgarth Care Home in Westray, Smiddybrae House Care Home in Dounby and the St. Magnus Cathedral toilets.
- Completed road projects included cycle tracks at Weyland and Stromness, footpath improvements at Papdale and in Longhope, improvement of A964 junction with Pickaquooy Road and A965 at Tormiston Mill.

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

Implementation of the Area Waste Strategy; 20 mph scheme round schools; improved access to St. Margarets Hope; improvements to A965 Barnhouse-Brodgar road; recreational slipways at Eday and Firth piers.



WHERE THE MONEY WENT



2004/05 level of grant aided expenditure

Although council performance does not entirely rely on finances, resources do play a significant role. We believe that the level of funding Orkney Islands Council receives from the Scottish Executive is historically and currently inadequate. Orkney's level of grant aided expenditure is very low when compared with the other two island councils, meaning Shetland and the Western Isles have much more money to spend per head of population. Despite this, in 2004/05 Orkney's band D Council tax was £940, only very slightly higher than Shetland at £936 and the Western Isles at £911.

Grant Aided Expenditure per head of resident population 2004/05



WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you would like to comment on any aspect of the Council's performance, please contact the Policy Unit, Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY, telephone: 01856 873535, email: policy@orkney.gov.uk

If you would like further information, you will find the complete Annual Performance Report on the Council's website at www.orkney.gov.uk



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We hope you will read it with interest and we welcome your comments.



INTRODUCTION

Every year Orkney Islands Council measures and monitors its performance to help plan, manage, and improve Council services. An important part of this is reporting our performance to Orkney's residents, so you know how your money is being spent.

We have a duty to record how we do things, so performance can be compared nationally. We also review individual services like refuse collection or the libraries to ensure they provide 'Best Value' under Scottish Executive guidance, and services such as care homes or schools are regularly inspected and recommendations made for improvements. We also report progress on Council projects and other developments.

Some of the Council's key achievements this year include: the completion of two new care homes – "Kalisgarth" in Westray and "Smiddybrae House" in Dounby; building improvements at the Stromness Ferry Terminal and St. Magnus Cathedral; the opening of new healthy living centres; and the launch of a brand new redesigned Council website.

The Council published its first Annual Performance Report last year for 2003/04. This year we have again produced a detailed report on how services performed compared with other local authorities. You will find the full report on the Council's website at www.orkney.gov.uk.

This leaflet gives a snapshot of the Council's overall performance, highlighting key achievements, service improvements and key targets for further improvement. We hope you will read it with interest and we welcome your comments.

*Alistair Buchan, Chief Executive
Stephen Hagan, Convener*



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

The Chief Executive's department supports other Council departments in delivering their services. It provides support services in administration, legal services, policy, communications, personnel and information.

What did we do well?

Sickness absence levels among teachers steadily improved, due to better support for staff and the procedure for managing absences. There has been an improvement in 2004/05 in relation to the number of female employees in the higher earning brackets, although this will not vary a great deal since staff turnover at senior levels tends to be low.

What do we have to improve?

In 2004/05 OIC Chief Officers and local government employees had a higher level of absence than other island authorities, but incidences of long term absence within a small workforce can have a distorting effect.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

- The Council's first Annual Performance Report was published.
- Work began on developing a performance management system for the Council as a whole
- The Council's website was redesigned.
- Efficient Government funding was awarded by the Scottish Executive to improve efficiency in support services through joint working across the Council, NHS Orkney and Orkney Enterprise.

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

Ensure the Council meets the requirements of equalities legislation; develop and implement a Council-wide performance management system; lead the Orkney Community Planning Partnership on revising "Orkney 2020 - a community plan"; Revise the employee review procedure; implement a best practice framework for Information Technology.



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES

The four main functions of the Department of Community Social Services are community care, criminal justice, children and families services, and strategic services.

What did we do well?

The Council ranked first in Scotland for performance in relation to Criminal Justice social enquiry reports, probation and community service orders. The Council is also top in performance ranking in Scotland for the number of children in residential places with single rooms. Investment in staff development has resulted in continuous improvement over the last few years in levels of qualified staff working with children, older people, and other adults, and this has been maintained in 2004/05.



What do we have to improve?

Personal home care performance, including overnight and evening services, has declined in 2004/05. This can be attributed to increased budget pressures and increased demand on services due to Orkney's ageing population. Performance with regard to the number of residential places with en-suite facilities has improved slightly, but is still below the Scottish average. The decline in the number of children looked after by the Council at home or in community placements can be attributed to the decrease in the number of children in community placements due to early intervention through Family Support Services.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

- The Westray care home "Kalisgarth" and Dounby Care home "Smiddybrae House" were opened.
- Community Social Services and NHS Orkney developed innovative ways of supporting people to return home from hospital quickly.
- The post of Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator was established with Scottish Executive funding to tackle antisocial behaviour at a local level
- 117 staff received accredited awards following continued investment in staff development and training.
- The new client database (PARIS) introduced jointly with NHS Orkney was further developed.
- Requirements and recommendations made in Care Commission and Social Work Services inspection reports were acted upon.

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

Pursue applications for additional resources to address the growing needs of an increasing population of older people and increasing demands being placed on the Department; accommodation for people with learning disabilities; every island to have a nominated social worker; community safety team to lead on installation of a CCTV system in Kirkwall town centre.



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Department of Development Service's functions include economic development, transport, planning, environmental health and trading standards, and museums and heritage.



What did we do well?

The Council improved the performance of its food hygiene inspections following the successful recruitment of qualified staff. The trading standards section has maintained its good performance in processing consumer complaints and the time taken to deal with business advice requests, doing better than the Scottish average.

What do we have to improve?

In building control and planning the Council's performance has declined significantly. This is due to a substantial increase in the level of planning applications being received combined with a lack of staff to deal with them. The response to requests for, and the issuing of, building warrant and completion certificates has also been held back by the lack of a proper IT system.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

- Published the Local Plan.
- Secured Scottish Executive funding to enhance the planned Kirkwall Travel Centre.
- Completed improvements works to the Stromness travel centre.
- Published the Joint Health Improvement Strategy for Orkney.
- Put in place a licensing scheme required by law for houses in multiple occupation.
- Implemented measures with the Maritime Coastguard Agency on public health and food inspections for vessels.

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

Purchase and implement new IT system for building development and control services; extend use of the Council's website to widen access to planning services; review heritage and town scheme grants; develop the countryside ranger service in Orkney; complete partnership agreement with VisitScotland for the marketing and promotion of Orkney as a tourist destination; provide assistance to the European Marine Energy Centre; build new hangar at Kirkwall Airport for the inter-isles air service.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND RECREATION SERVICES

The department provides high quality education and recreation services to children and adults. Its services include school education, library services, community education, Orkney College, and recreation.

What did we do well?

The Council ranked highly nationwide in the number of people using traditional swimming pools, and indoor facilities. The Council's performance in updating its library stock was very good, and there has been continuous improvement in the number of users of library learning centres and internet access points due to an increase in the number of public access computers being made available. The ratio of pupils to available places in schools has also improved following Scottish Executive guidance.



What do we have to improve?

There has been a slight decline in the number of people borrowing from the libraries, but this seems to follow a national trend.

What improvements did we make in 2004/05?

- Opened the Shapinsay Healthy Living Centre.
- Opened the Kirkwall Grammar School Teen Gym for the use of school pupils.
- Noted recommendations from inspection reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe).

What new activities do we plan to do in 2005/06?

Develop the school estate including Burray Primary School, Papdale Primary School, Rousay Community School and Stromness Academy; continue to promote healthier lifestyles through initiatives improving the quality of school meals and health education; develop more effective practices to ensure the recruitment and retention of managers and teachers; develop the Active Schools programme improving physical education and sport provision for young people.

