



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

**ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2005/06**

Introduction

Orkney Islands Council is committed to providing the best services possible for you, the people of Orkney. We are also committed to publicly accounting for how well we provide these services.

This is our third Annual Performance Report, and in it we try to show how well we performed over 2005 and 2006. To do this we looked at the statutory performance information about all Scottish Councils which Audit Scotland publish on their website each year, and also report on the progress we have made on the key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08.

This year's report shows that we performed well in many areas, and made a number of improvements in others. In some areas we know we need to improve our performance and we're working hard to do so.

Throughout Scotland, a number of changes are being made in the way that public services are organised and delivered to local people. We have already made progress to modernise and change the way that we deliver services to you, and we plan to continue along this path. This report tells you about some of these changes.

We hope that you find the report interesting, and that it might stimulate your interest in more detailed information on the Council's performance. If you would like more detailed performance information, please contact the Corporate Policy Unit by writing to Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY; or by telephoning 01856 873535; or by emailing policy@orkney.gov.uk

Finally, we hope that you will take the opportunity to tell us what you think about the Council's performance, either in writing, by email or by telephone. This will help us to improve services in ways that suit as much of the population of Orkney as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Councillor Stephen Hagan
Convener



Alistair Buchan
Chief Executive

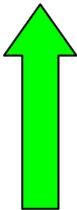
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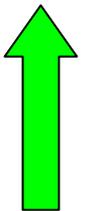
Homes

Everyone needs a decent affordable home. As a community, we need to try to make sure that we have housing solutions for people with different housing needs, whichever part of Orkney they may live.

Statutory performance information about homes helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve. Throughout this report you will see that some of the statutory performance indicators set out below have a small green arrow pointing up to indicate better performance since the previous year, or a small red or amber arrow pointing down to indicate poorer performance since the previous year. In some cases it is not possible to compare this year's figure with previous year since Audit Scotland recently changed the way that it calculates the performance indicator.



The amount of Council house rent lost due to housing being empty went down to 1.2% in 2005/06, from 1.3% the previous year. This is due to the introduction of pre-tenancy termination visits, which we started in 2004. Pre-tenancy termination visits are reducing the length of time that houses are empty, since any minor works are carried out either before or just after the tenant leaves, or after the new tenant has moved in. This reduces rent loss.



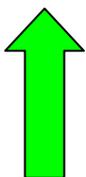
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 9th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of Council houses that were re-let within four weeks was 47.1% in 2005/06. The Council's performance in this area is being helped by our new void procedure, and more effective monitoring of empty houses.

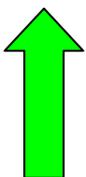
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 12th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The average time for Council houses to be re-let was 43 days in 2005/06. Pre-tenancy termination visits are reducing the length of time that houses are empty, since any minor works are carried out either before or just after the tenant leaves, or after the new tenant has moved in.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 12th out of 32 Scottish Councils

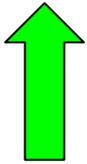


Council house rent arrears went down to 2.4% in 2005/06, from 3.8% the previous year. The Council's excellent performance in this area is due the implementation of our new rent arrears policy and procedures, and the introduction of more effective monitoring



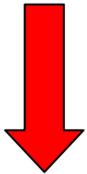
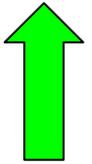
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils





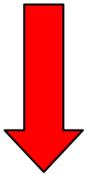
The number of Council house tenants owing more than 13 weeks' rent – but excluding those owing £250 or less - went down to 2.2% in 2005/06, from 2.8% the previous year. This is due largely to the relatively low numbers of tenants owing rent.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 6th out of 32 Scottish Councils



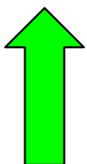
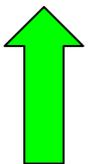
The number of Council house sales completed within 26 weeks went down to 20% in 2005/06, from 47.8% the previous year. The Council introduced its Right to Buy Policy from 2005/06, which includes detailed timescales for each stage of the legal process. We are currently monitoring the situation very closely.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 29th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The average time taken for the Council to complete its duty for homeless or potentially homeless people went down to 24 weeks in 2005/06, from 36.5 weeks the previous year. This was due to the return to full staffing levels of the Council staff who deal with homelessness, and as a result of the introduction of the housing advice and information service, which helps to prevent homelessness.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 25th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of cases reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of the previous case went down to 6.3% in 2005/06, from 21.6% the previous year. This was due to the return to full staffing levels of the Council staff who deal with homelessness, and as a result of maintaining contact with those threatened with homelessness until their situation is resolved. The Council's improved performance in this area shows that the Homelessness Strategy, introduced in 2003, is having a positive impact.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 13th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Throughout this report you will see that we have included the cost and timescale of each key action. These costs and timescales are taken from the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08, and are likely to fluctuate as each key action progresses. Progress on the key actions for homes are set out below.

Developing mixed tenure housing with private housing developers is about the Council working in partnership with Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd to help people to become owner occupiers through Rural Home Ownership Grants. Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd have also developed a Grants for Renting and Ownership scheme in Stromness, with 10 houses being built on sites provided by the Council. This scheme is due for completion in 2006/07. The Council is also seeking to buy land in suitable locations for housing, serviced sites, Grants

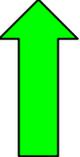
for Renting and Ownership schemes, and sites for Orkney Housing Association. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Progressing fuel poverty research projects stems from the objectives set out in the Fuel Poverty Strategy and Local Housing Strategy. Steady progress is being made, and the Council is assessing a range of technologies to reduce the amount of fuel used both in Council houses and other public buildings. Air source heat pumps are currently being installed in ten Council properties to replace coal fired central heating systems, with completion due for in 2006/07. Future plans include employing a fuel poverty officer from 2007/08 to take these projects forward. The total cost over 2005/06 is £20,000.

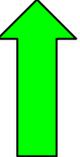
A safe and caring community

Orkney has a long and well deserved reputation for being a safe place to live. We also have a long tradition of caring for those people in our community who need some form of additional support. It is important that we continue to work to keep what we have and to make improvements where we can.

Statutory performance information about our safe and caring community helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve.



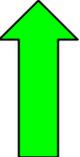
The number of qualified staff working in Orkney's care homes for older people was 15% in 2005/06. Although a large number of staff completed qualifications during the year, the Council appears to have performed poorly compared to other Scottish councils. This performance indicator changed recently when the Scottish Social Services Council set qualifications at higher levels than previously set by the Scottish Executive. As a result of this, it may be that other Scottish councils interpreted the new reporting guidance differently, leading to Orkney's lower position. We have now asked Audit Scotland to clarify the situation



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 27th out of 32 Scottish Councils

Single room accommodation in Orkney's care homes for older people went up to 93.1% in 2005/06, from 91.5% the previous year. This was due to the opening of the new care home in Dounby, Smiddybrae House which has 30 places for older people. Although this performance indicator is intended to show that single rooms mean more privacy for people living in care homes, its worth remembering that this may not always be true. For example, Smiddybrae House has four double rooms designed for couples to enable them to stay together if they choose.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 12th out of 32 Scottish Councils



Rooms with en-suite facilities in Orkney's care homes for older people went up to 53.4% in 2005/06, from 42.6% the previous year. This was due to the opening of Smiddybrae House which has en-suite facilities in every room.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 27th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of qualified staff working in Orkney's care homes for adults with disabilities was 25% in 2005/06. Although a large number of staff completed qualifications during the year, the Council appears to have performed poorly compared to other Scottish councils. This performance indicator changed recently when the Scottish Social Services Council set qualifications at higher levels than previously set by the Scottish Executive. As a result of this, it may be that other Scottish councils interpreted the new reporting guidance differently, leading to Orkney's lower position. We have now asked Audit Scotland to clarify the situation.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 20th out of 32 Scottish Councils

Single room accommodation in Orkney's care homes for adults with disabilities was 100% in 2005/06, the same as it was the previous year. Our excellent performance in this area continues to be maintained.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



Rooms with en-suite facilities in Orkney's care homes for adults with disabilities went up to 25% in 2005/06, from 13.6% the previous year. This was due to a decrease in the total number of adults with disabilities resident in care homes during 2005/06. So although the number of rooms with en-suite facilities hasn't changed, our performance has improved since there are fewer people resident in the care homes.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 25th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of qualified staff working in Orkney's care homes for children was 33.3% in 2005/06. Although a large number of staff completed qualifications during the year, the Council appears to have performed poorly compared to other Scottish councils. This performance indicator changed recently when the Scottish Social Services Council set qualifications at higher levels than previously set by the Scottish Executive. As a result of this, it may be that other Scottish councils interpreted the new reporting guidance differently, leading to Orkney's lower position. We have now asked Audit Scotland to clarify the situation.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 17th out of 32 Scottish Councils



Single room accommodation in Orkney's care homes for children went up to 100% in 2005/06, from 92.9% the previous year. All care home places for children, whether provided here in Orkney by the Council, or commissioned by the Council and provided on the Scottish mainland, offer excellent facilities where no child has to share a room.



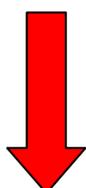
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



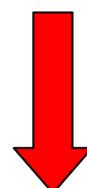
Rooms with en-suite facilities in Orkney's care homes for children went up to 25% in 2005/06, from 21.4% the previous year. This increase was due to the number of places for children commissioned by the Council on the Scottish mainland, some of which offer en-suite facilities.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 11th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The total number of hours of home care - per 1,000 of Orkney's population aged over 65 - went down to 643.1 hours each week in 2005/06, from 705.1 the previous year. The decrease in the number of home care hours provided by the Council is due to a lack of finance, which means that we have to prioritise the service for those



most in need. The Council continues to face real challenges providing home care across our dispersed community, with an increasing ageing population, some of whom have complex care needs, and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining home care staff.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 7th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of people over the age of 65 provided with personal care as part of their home care went down to 44.2% in 2005/06, from 49.5% the previous year. Although the Council's performance appears to have declined, this year's figures included services provided by Crossroads Orkney, Age Concern Orkney and Orkney Blide Trust, so the total number of people reported as receiving home care increased. However, since only the Council provides personal care, the overall result was a slight decrease, although in practice, the number of people receiving personal care increased from 157 to 184.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 28th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of people over the age of 65 provided with home care in the evening/overnight as part of their home care went down to 23.1% in 2005/06, from 29% the previous year. Again, due to the increase in the total number of people receiving home care, evening/overnight provision appears less than it was. However, the number of people receiving home care in the evening/overnight is actually similar to what it was the previous year.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 20th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of people over the age of 65 provided with home care at weekends as part of their home care went down to 38.7% in 2005/06, from 43.8% the previous year. Again, due to the increase in the total number of people receiving home care, weekend provision appears less than it was. However, the number of people receiving home care at the weekend actually increased to 161, from 139 the previous year.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 27th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The total number of nights of overnight respite care - per 1,000 of Orkney's population aged over 65 - was 608.8 in 2005/06. Two new care facilities have helped the Council to achieve excellent performance in this area, the Kalisgarth Care Centre on Westray and Smiddybrae House in Dounby.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 3rd out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of people over the age of 65 provided with overnight respite care which was not provided in a care home environment was 9.8% in 2005/06. The vast majority of overnight respite care is provided in a care home environment in Orkney.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The total number of hours of daytime respite care - per 1,000 of Orkney's population aged over 65 – was 375.1 in 2005/06. Two new care facilities have helped the Council to improve performance in this area, the Kalisgarth Care Centre on Westray and Smiddybrae House in Dounby.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 25th out of 32 Scottish Councils

Daytime respite care for older people which is not provided in a day centre environment is not provided by the Council. In Orkney daytime respite for carers is provided by the Crossroads Carers Centre.

The total number of nights of overnight respite care - per 1,000 of Orkney's population aged 18 to 64 – was 66 in 2005/06. The main providers of respite care for people of this age group are the St. Colm's Short Breaks facility and the Glaitness Centre, enabling good support for carers.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 5th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of adults with disabilities aged 18 to 64 provided with overnight respite care which was not provided in a care home environment was 99.7% in 2005/06. The Glaitness Centre comprises eight houses designed for people with physical disabilities, one of which is dedicated for short breaks, helping the Council to achieve excellent performance in this area.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The total number of hours of daytime respite care - per 1,000 of Orkney's population aged 18 to 64 - was 63.5 in 2005/06. Due to Orkney's geography, people using daytime respite sometimes extend their stay to include overnight, which eases travel arrangements. When this happens the daytime respite hours must then be included in the overnight respite performance indicator, and cannot therefore be included in this performance indicator.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 22nd out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of adults with disabilities aged 18 to 64 provided with daytime respite care which was not provided in a day centre environment was 0% in 2005/06. Daytime respite care which is not provided in a day centre environment is not provided by the Council. In Orkney daytime respite for carers is provided by the Crossroads Carers Centre.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 27th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The total number of nights of overnight respite care for children - per 1,000 of Orkney's population – was 117 in 2005/06. Aurrida House provides overnight respite care for children, enabling good support for carers.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils



Overnight respite care for children which is not provided in a care home environment is not provided in Orkney. Aurrida House is a care home, and is the only provider of overnight respite care for children in Orkney.

The total number of hours of daytime respite care for children - per 1,000 of Orkney's population - was 674.7 in 2005/06. Daytime respite care for children is provided by Aurrida House and the Family Focus Service. These figures represent those children who attend a daytime session and then return home. However, since Orkney's only respite care facility for children is located in Kirkwall, children often stay overnight. When this happens the daytime respite hours must then be included in the overnight respite performance indicator, and cannot therefore be included in this performance indicator.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 11th out of 32 Scottish Councils

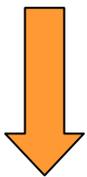
The number of children provided with daytime respite care which was not provided in a day centre environment was 39.7% in 2005/06. The Council's Family Focus Service provides this service in Orkney.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 25th out of 32 Scottish Councils

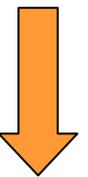
The number of social enquiry reports submitted by the Council to the courts by the due date was 100% in 2005/06, the same as it was the previous year. The Council's excellent performance in this area has been maintained.



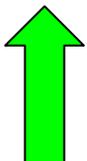
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of offenders newly placed on probation who were seen by a supervising officer within one week was 96.2% in 2005/06, only slightly less than the 100% the previous year. The slight decline in performance was due to a delay out-with the Council's control.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 5th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of children newly made the subject of a supervision order who were seen by a supervising officer within 15 days went up to 100% in 2005/06, from 77.8% the previous year. Excellent performance has been achieved by the Council in this area.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The average hours per week taken each week to complete community service orders went down to 4.3 hours in 2005/06, from 5 hours the previous year. This performance indicator measures the time taken by offenders to complete community service orders. However, since Orkney has very low levels of unemployment, many



offenders have full time jobs and therefore take longer to complete their community service.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 25th out of 32 Scottish Councils

As we consider the statutory performance information for a safe and caring community set out above, it is worth remembering that the Council has an increasing workload in relation to child protection services. Between February and April 2006 the Council had 25 child protection referrals, compared to eight for the same period in 2005. Child protection work demands the highest standards, and children in this situation need a high input of resources, particularly staff time. Because of this increase in statutory, high priority child protection work, some other preventative services cannot have such as high priority.

The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for a safe and caring community are set out below.

Applying for additional funding for services for older people is necessary if we are to meet the needs of Orkney's increasingly older population. Figures suggest that Orkney's over 65's population could rise from its current level of around 3,580, to around 5,700 by 2024. This means that by 2024, 30% of Orkney's total population could be over the age of 65, and we can also expect a large increase in the number of people over the age of 75. This will place further pressure on the Council's ability to deliver services to our increasingly ageing population.

Compared to other Scottish councils, Orkney helps many more people with high dependency care needs to stay in their own homes, and we have fewer people living in care homes. However, the need for care services which help people to stay in their own homes has increased to the point where all needs can no longer be met, and there are now a number older people waiting for high dependency care home places.

The Council has recently provided some additional care home places, and is currently considering the possibility of a further 52 care home places. In addition the Council and Orkney's MSP continue to make representations to the Scottish Executive for additional funding for care services, which are still being considered. Applying for additional funding is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Providing better accommodation for people with learning disabilities will help the considerable number who will require some form of supported accommodation or housing support services in the next five to ten years. This project will provide supported accommodation, short breaks, emergency accommodation and day care. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by 2010. The total cost over 2006/08 is £2,820,000.

Having a nominated social worker for every island helps to ensure better services for service users, carers and their families. It also helps to promote better working

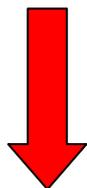
relationships between other professionals, especially island GPs and community nurses. The Council now has a nominated social worker for every island. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Installing a closed circuit television system in Kirkwall town centre helps the Police to respond more quickly incidents, to calm situations and to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour from being committed. Having a permanent closed circuit television system in Kirkwall is supported by the public since it provides reassurance, reduces the fear of crime, helps to improve quality of life and community safety, and gives local businesses confidence to re-invest in the area. The closed circuit television system was successfully installed in April 2006. The total cost over 2005/06 is £200,000.

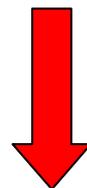
Lifelong learning

Providing and promoting education for people of all ages and abilities helps to develop more confident citizens, with enthusiasm for learning and determination to reach high standards of achievement. Education also creates a more able and skilled workforce which benefits our economy by encouraging business to locate and stay in Orkney.

Statutory performance information about lifelong learning helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve.



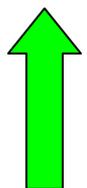
The number of primary schools in Orkney with a pupil to available place ratio of between 61% and 100% went down to 66.7% in 2005/06, from 76.2% the previous year. This was due to a falling roll, with two schools moving from a ratio of between 61% and 80%, to 41% and 60%. Ideally the ratio would be approximately 90%, with enough capacity to accommodate new people moving into the community. However, in island schools this is not possible.



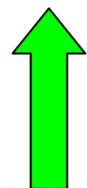
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 17th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of secondary schools in Orkney with a pupil to available place ratio of between 61% and 100% was 66.7% in 2005/06, the same as it was the previous year. Secondary and junior high school rolls in Orkney have remained stable. Since it is not possible to rationalise the four junior high schools in the islands, it is not possible to achieve a higher ratio.

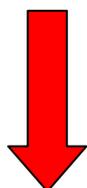
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 23rd out of 32 Scottish Councils



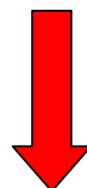
Meeting the national target for replenishing library books for adults in Orkney went up to 79.4% in 2005/06, from 77.8% the previous year. This was due to action being taken following a stock review.



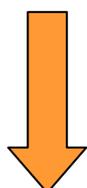
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 8th out of 32 Scottish Councils



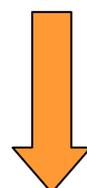
Meeting the national target for replenishing library books for children and teenagers in Orkney went down to 97% in 2005/06, from 116.1% the previous year. This was due to less duplicate copies of items being purchased, however, the Council's performance in this area remains excellent.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 3rd out of 32 Scottish Councils

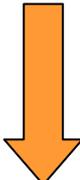


The number of people who borrowed library books in Orkney went down to 34.7% of the resident population in 2005/06, from 37.7% the previous year. This is in line with the national trend, and the Council's performance in this area remains excellent.

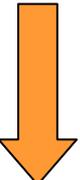


In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 3rd out of 32 Scottish Councils

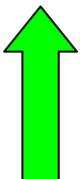




The average number of library books issued per borrower in Orkney went down to 26.3 in 2005/06, from 26.8 the previous year. This is in line with the national trend, and is not thought to be significant.



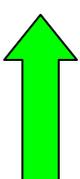
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 15th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of people who used learning centres and learning access points in Orkney went up to 13.4% of the resident population in 2005/06, from 8.8% the previous year. The Council's excellent performance in this area is due to our stated aim of enhancing public access to computers.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 5th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of times that learning centre/access point terminals were used – per 1,000 of Orkney's population - went up to 912.3 in 2005/06, from 802.9 the previous year. This is due to the Council's stated aim of enhancing public access to computers.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 11th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for lifelong learning are set out below.

Developing the school estate is progressing well, with the opening of the new Burray Primary School in December 2006. Improvement work has now started at both the Papdale and Rousay Primary Schools, and work is due to commence at Stromness Academy. The total cost over 2005/08 is £5,876,000.

Addressing the requirements of Additional Support for Learning legislation is being taken forward by a multi-agency working group. The Council has provided training on the implementation of the Code of Practice to head teachers, school teaching and non teaching staff, support for learning staff, link officers and colleagues in NHS Orkney and the Department of Community Social Services. The Council will issue guidance to parents of children affected by the legislation in due course. The total cost over 2005/06 is £24,000.

Continuing to promote healthier lifestyles is now showing real benefits through the Hungry for Success initiative, which is about improving the quality of school meals, and the Health Promoting Schools initiative, which is about health education. Hungry for Success has now been implemented in all primary schools, and partially in secondary schools. Work is continuing to encourage healthy eating within the school curriculum, and the uptake of healthy meals and snacks by school pupils is relatively high. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Submitting the outline business case to the Scottish Executive is necessary to progress the development or replacement of Kirkwall Grammar School, Stromness Primary School and Papdale Halls of Residence. The outline business case has now been accepted by the Scottish Executive, and we will soon be consulting on our proposals before these are finalised. The total cost over 2005/06 is £45,000.

Providing behaviour coordinator training for a minimum of one staff member at all primary and junior high schools will help to tackle low level indiscipline. This training has now taken place, and further training and networking opportunities have been taken up by the relevant staff. In both Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy, training events have been arranged for staff, both in the classroom and in leadership roles. Other developments such as Solution Oriented Schools, Motivated Schools and emotional resilience training, are being progressed in various schools. The total cost over 2006 was £3,000.

Implementing A Curriculum for Excellence will ensure better transitional progress throughout school, and guidance will be issued based on the national initiative to 'de-clutter' the curriculum in primary schools. A small number of schools will also pilot greater curriculum coherence between pre-school and primary 1. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

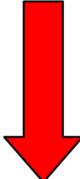
Implementing Ambitious Excellent Schools will lead to the 22.5 hour contract week in accordance with A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century, and maximum S1 and S2 class sizes for English and maths in accordance with A Partnership for a Better Scotland. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Developing more effective practices for recruitment and retention will help to recruit and retain managers and teachers, including probationers. This is being progressed by a working group which is developing a strategy to improve recruitment and retention, and includes accommodation issues. Work is ongoing in partnership with Aberdeen University to develop the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education by distance Learning. This helps to provide flexible routes into initial teacher education in order to widen access and attract students who otherwise might not participate. Orkney currently has students studying for primary teaching and secondary subject teachers in English. The total cost over 2006/07 is £19,000.

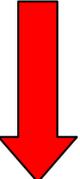
An active and culturally vibrant community

Orkney has a number of well established facilities, where local people and visitors can spend their leisure time. Facilities such as the swimming pools and fitness suites can help us with our general health and our sense of physical and mental well-being. Facilities such as museums help us to understand and conserve our rich cultural heritage, giving us our sense of place and community, and enhancing our well-being.

Statutory performance information about our active and culturally vibrant community helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve.

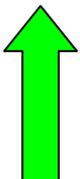


The number of attendances at swimming pools – per 1,000 of Orkney’s population - went down to 5,510 in 2005/06, from 6,393 the previous year.



Swim numbers increased in 2004/05 due to a successful grant application by the Council which provided free swimming for juniors during school holidays. Although swim numbers reverted to normal in 2005/06, the Council’s performance remains excellent in this area.

 In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 2nd out of 32 Scottish Councils 



The number of attendances at indoor sports facilities – per 1,000 of Orkney’s population - went up to 9,448 in 2005/06, from 8,765 the previous year. The Council’s performance is excellent in this area, and has now improved due to the introduction of healthy living centres, and greater use at the Dounby Centre.



 In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 3rd out of 32 Scottish Councils 

The key actions set out in the Council’s Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for an active and culturally vibrant community are set out below.

Developing healthy living centres will help to promote healthier lifestyles on the isles. Healthy living centres are now open in St Margaret’s Hope, Sanday, North Walls and Westray, and work has commenced on a facility on Rousay. The total cost over 2005/06 is £677,000.

Developing the concept of Active Schools, including improvements to physical education and sport provision for young people, is helping to promote healthier lifestyles for school children of all ages. Annual Active Schools programmes have been established, along with co-ordinated summer holiday activity programmes for those schools where this is viable. The Council is also planning further developments, for example, playground/sports markings and equipment in all schools. The total cost over 2005/07 is £1,300,000.

Exploring the development of the facilities at the Pickaquoy Centre and establishing a sustainable financial footing is needed due to the shortfall in funding experienced by the Pickaquoy Trust since the centre opened, which has meant that the Trust have had to ask for additional funding from the Council on a regular basis. To avoid this happening again, the Council have agreed to provide additional funding for the centre amounting to £700,000 in 2006/07, and £714,000 in 2007/08. This additional funding is essential if the centre is to operate efficiently and effectively, and meet the expectations of its customers.

There has also been some consideration of the possibility of developing swimming facilities at the centre. This is because the Kirkwall Pool is around 35 years old, has limited facilities in terms of customer expectations, disabled access, teaching and family swimming, and will need major investment in the coming years. Consultation with the public has established considerable support for improved swimming facilities, and the development is now closely linked with consideration of a new Kirkwall Grammar School. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Developing a world heritage area came about as a result of the Council applying for World Heritage Site designation from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. This was granted in December 1999, and implementation is now well underway, with an expected completion date of the end of 2008. The total cost over 2006/08 is £945,000.

Undertaking phase three of the upgrade of the Orkney Museum's archaeology galleries, is the next stage of a rolling programme to improve the museum galleries, reflecting new discoveries, new acquisitions and new research. The total cost over 2005/08 is £120,000.

Developing and implementing Orkney's cultural strategy highlights Orkney's cultural priorities and sets out how the Council will respond to the forthcoming Culture Bill. One part of the cultural strategy, which relates to an action plan for Orkney's museums, has already been produced. The cultural strategy is set to be published during 2007. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

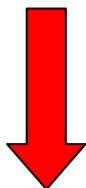
Developing the caravan site at Pickaquoy is needed since the current site accommodates only 35 caravans/motor-homes, which is less than half of the demand during the peak season. Temporary facilities were developed in 2006, and subject to approval, work on a new site with 80 pitches should begin in September

2007. This is an important facility since it generates revenue for Orkney's economy and for the Pickaquoy Centre. The total cost over 2006/07 is £250,000.

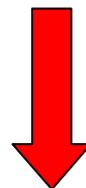
Land use and the environment

There can be little doubt that Orkney's natural and built environment makes a great contribution to the quality of our lives, and is among our most valuable assets. We all have a part to play to protect our environment, and make sure that we use the land in such a way that it will remain viable for the generations to come.

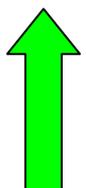
Statutory performance information about land use and the environment helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve.



The number of planning applications the Council dealt with within two months went down to 35.6% in 2005/06, from 48% the previous year. This was due to the significant increase in the number of planning applications being received by the Council, without an increase in staff to process these applications. This matter has now been addressed by increasing the number of staff for processing planning applications.



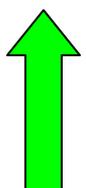
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 31st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of food premises in Orkney in need of inspection every 12 months or less, that were inspected on time went up to 90% in 2005/06, from 60% the previous year. Following recommendations by the Food Standards Agency, the Council transferred resources to improve the timely carrying out of inspections of food premises.



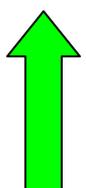
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 25th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of trading premises in Orkney with a high or medium risk level, that were inspected on time went up to 41.3% in 2005/06, from 7.5% the previous year. The Council's performance has improved in this area, and will likely continue to improve. This is because of a period of restructuring and staff replacement which meant that two of the three Council staff providing this service were new to the Council, and were not fully qualified. As the two new staff continue with their training and gain further experience of routine inspections, so the Council's performance will improve.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 30th out of 32 Scottish Councils

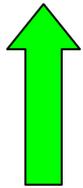


The number of complaints about noise in Orkney that were settled on first contact, and dealt with the same day they were received by the Council, went up to 100% in 2005/06, from 44.4% the previous year. For part of the year a pilot project provided an out of office hours responsive noise service, which helped the Council to achieve excellent performance in responding to noise complaints.

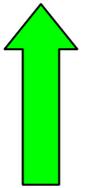


In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils

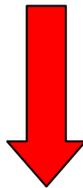




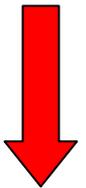
The number of complaints about noise in Orkney that needed further action, completed within 14 days of receipt by the Council, went up to 91.7% in 2005/06, from 25% the previous year. For part of the year a pilot project provided an out of office hours responsive noise service, which helped the Council to achieve excellent performance in responding to noise complaints.



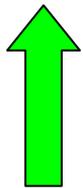
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils



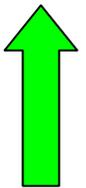
The cost of collecting refuse in Orkney went up to £76.04 for each premise in 2005/06, from £67.65 the previous year. The high cost of refuse collection in Orkney is due to our dispersed rural and island communities, which means that we need to transport refuse across relatively long distances, by both road and sea. Part of the increase in cost can be explained by inflation, and by investment in new vehicles.



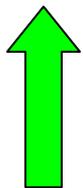
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 30th out of 32 Scottish Councils



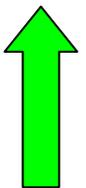
The cost of disposing of refuse went down to £83.08 for each premise in 2005/06, from £86.12 the previous year. The high cost of disposing of refuse in Orkney is due to having to transport much of our waste to the Shetland Waste Energy Plant. The reduction in disposal costs is due to an increase in our recycling rate.



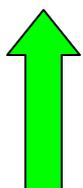
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 29th out of 32 Scottish Councils



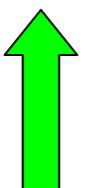
The number of complaints about refuse collection went down to 3.8 complaints for every 1,000 households in 2005/06, from 6.1 the previous year. The Council's performance is excellent in this area, which is due to our continuing efforts to improve the service we provide.



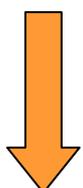
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils



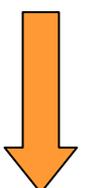
The amount of refuse recycled by the Council went up to 22.7% in 2005/06, from 18.1% the previous year. In 2005/06 16.1% of waste collected by the Council was land-filled, 7.1% composted, 15.7% recycled, and 61.1% the subject of some other form of recovery including the production of energy. Improvement in the rate of recycling resulted from increased funding and projects under the Strategic Waste Fund, and recently developed waste strategies.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 20th out of 32 Scottish Councils



Street cleaning in Orkney scored 73 on the Keep Scotland Beautiful cleanliness index in 2005/06, only slightly less than the 76 scored the previous year. Clean streets are a priority for the Council, and we continue to maintain excellent performance in this area.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for land use and the environment are set out below.

Progressing the Area Waste Plan for Orkney started in May 2004 with Scottish Executive funding, and is set to continue up until 2020. The purpose of the Area Waste Plan is to help with sustainable development by developing waste management systems that will control waste generation, reduce the environmental impact of waste production, improve resource efficiency, stimulate investment and maximise the economic opportunities arising from waste. The performance achieved in 2005/06 was better than had been set out in the plan. The total cost over 2005/08 is £1,350,000.

Developing the Orkney landscape partnership is about attracting funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for local projects which conserve and enhance our built, cultural and natural heritage. A first stage bid for funding for a number of projects based on Scapa Flow is being submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in March 2007, with work on projects scheduled over the next two to three years. The total cost over 2005/08 is £1,187,000.

Developing the access to the countryside initiative is about the Council developing and maintaining paths in the countryside. During 2005/06 we developed a network of paths in the East Mainland as well as providing interpretation boards at paths on Westray and Sanday. The total cost over 2005/08 is £179,000.

Producing some extra planning guidance on renewable energy, minerals, fish farming and the siting and design of housing will help to support Council planning policies contained in the Orkney Local Plan, by providing detailed guidance for developers on particular topics/issues. During 2005/06 we prepared and consulted on draft planning guidance for wind energy developments. The total cost over 2005/08 is £110,000.

Installing a new computer system to improve the building control and development control services we provide will help to effectively and efficiently run day-to-day operations, and enable the Council to move towards on-line provision of these services. The new system was installed and staff training commenced during 2005/06. The total cost over 2005/07 is £107,500.

Making more use of the Council's website for things like planning applications gives people convenient access to information about their area and helps them to become involved with the planning process. The Council has signed up to a national project that will result in the electronic delivery of the planning service across all Scottish councils over the next two years. The total cost over 2005/08 is £84,000.

Reviewing the heritage and towns scheme grants, which provide grant funding to people for repairs and to help offset the cost of the care, repair and enhancement of historic buildings and conservation areas, is currently being carried out. Historic Scotland have reviewed their system of historic environment grants, and as a result the Council is reviewing its own funding provision to investigate the potential for

assisting in the care and restoration of the historic environment within Orkney. The total cost over 2005/07 is £355,000.

Making sure that environmental issues are considered whenever the Council is making policy decisions is now required by law. The Council has set up an internal working group to make sure that environmental assessments are carried out for all Council plans, policies and programmes. The total cost over 2005/08 is £92,000.

Developing a countryside ranger service will help conserve and protect our natural and cultural resources, and inform and educate all who work, visit and enjoy them. A ranger service was provided on Sanday with financial assistance from the Council. The total cost over 2006/08 is £60,000.

Prosperity and jobs

The local economy is at the centre of all of our lives, both as individuals and as a community. We need to attract, retain, and help to develop businesses that will provide local jobs and will generate the wealth Orkney needs to thrive.

The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for prosperity and jobs are set out below.

Providing support and assistance to those islands designated under the Initiative at the Edge programme helps them to create a more sustainable future. This is accomplished by making sure that the local community leads the development process, with support from the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Communities Scotland, the Crofters Commission, NHS Orkney and Scottish Natural Heritage. Eday, Stronsay, North Ronaldsay and Sanday have all been designated under Initiative at the Edge since 2004, during which time a number of projects have been completed, and others are progressing. These projects will have long term benefits for each island, and it has been agreed to extend the designations for a further year to make sure that the plans are more fully progressed before their designation status comes to an end. The total cost over 2005/08 is £35,000.

Providing assistance towards the European Marine Energy Centre will help to establish facilities that place Orkney in a premier position for the development of marine renewable energy. The European Marine Energy Centre started construction on the first grid connected tidal energy test facilities at Eday in 2005, and also operates a wave test site off Billia Croo. The centre will provide independent verification of new tidal energy devices and assist pioneering developers to turn prototypes into devices capable of producing power for the National Grid on a commercial scale. Council assistance amounting to £500,000 has helped to encourage significant additional public sector support, with around £15,000,000 coming into Orkney. The Council will continue to support the development of marine renewable energy in Orkney, encourage research and development and expand on the current impressive cluster of Orkney based knowledge companies. The total cost over 2005/07 is £500,000.

Completing the partnership agreement with VisitScotland will help to develop Orkney as a high quality tourism destination by marketing and promoting the area for our history, culture, environment and hospitality. The partnership agreement has now been completed, and the Orkney Tourism Partnership Plan 2006/15 has been published. This will guide the future development of Orkney tourism and make sure that all the partners are moving forward in the same direction. The total cost over 2005/06 is £204,000.

Progressing the Container Transshipment Hub project at the ex naval base of Lyness will introduce shipping trade into Scapa Flow, bringing with it trading stability, and compensation for the steady decline in the number of oil tankers using the oil port which has led to a loss of revenue. A container transshipment hub would also

generate direct and indirect sustainable employment in Orkney, and the trade would benefit not only Orkney, but the whole Scottish region.

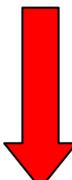
A number of possible designs for the terminal are now being assessed, after which the process of obtaining the numerous permissions and environmental assessments required for a project of this magnitude, will begin. Negotiations are ongoing with a proposed operator and it is hoped that if the project goes ahead, container shipping could be using the new terminal before 2010. The total cost over 2005/06 is £200,000.

Progressing the Stromness Pierhead Regeneration involves both refurbishment and a new build extension to the old ferry terminal building, along with the development of a public square. Public consultation commenced during 2005/06. The total cost over 2007/08 is £701,000.

Transport

As a remote island community, with our population spread across almost 20 inhabited islands, transport links are particularly important for Orkney. Our transport links, whether by air, sea or road are essential for business and social travel, for tourism, and for the import and export of essential goods. Orkney's geography presents real challenges for our transport links, particularly during the winter months.

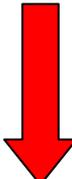
Statutory performance information about transport helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve.

 The percentage of Orkney's road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment went up to 30.5% in 2005/06, from 21.1% the previous year. The Council's performance in this area remains excellent, although it varies from year to year since the Council allocates funding for roads maintenance on the basis of need.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 2nd out of 32 Scottish Councils



 The number of street light repairs completed within seven days in Orkney went down to 84.9% in 2005/06, from 88.1% the previous year. This was due to an increase in complex faults, some of which occurred on our more remote islands, where repairs can take longer.

In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 26th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The number of Council and private bridges to be assessed, that failed to meet the European standard in Orkney was 0% in 2005/06, the same as it was the previous year. There are relatively few bridges in Orkney, none of which are subject to weight or width restrictions.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for transport are set out below.

Developing the Kirkwall and Stromness travel centres is providing new hubs for services and information about travel to, from and around Orkney. The improvements to the Stromness travel centre were completed in December 2004, and work on the Kirkwall travel centre is expected to be completed in summer 2007. The total cost over 2005/07 is £1,937,000.

Constructing a hanger at Kirkwall airport to provide modern maintenance facilities for aircraft employed on the lifeline inter-isles air service, was completed in September 2006. The total cost over 2005/07 is £800,000.

Developing cycling, walking and safer streets, including the 20 mph scheme, is being made possible through specific funding from the Scottish Executive. The initiative was set up in 2002 to help Scottish councils with projects for friendly residential streets with reduced vehicle speeds and integrated safety measures for children, pedestrians and cyclists. To date street lighting and pavement surfaces on routes from population centres to schools in Orkney have been upgraded and part-time 20 mph speed restriction zones have been introduced in Kirkwall and Stromness. Further 20 mph zones will be introduced in 2006/07. In addition, improvements have been made to cycling and walking access to the new Burray Primary School. The total cost over 2005/08 is £250,000.

Improving access to St Margaret's Hope is being brought about through the provision of a new road off the A961 into the village. This will improve access to the ferry terminal and open up land for other developments in St Margaret's Hope. The total cost over 2005/07 is £511,000.

Upgrading the A965 Barnhouse to Brodgar road has had to be postponed due to other, more pressing projects. The upgrade of the A965 will now need to be reconsidered by the Council.

Replacing a pilot boat with a more modern one will help to make the boarding and landing of pilots safer and more efficient. A design for a new pilot boat has been commissioned and tenders for its construction are being drawn up. It is expected that the Council will take delivery of the new pilot boat in early 2008. The total cost over 2005/06 is £1,250,000.

Upgrading the North Pier in Stromness was intended to provide additional parking and marshalling of vehicles following the introduction of the new ferry service in 2002. During the construction works associated with the new link-span, weakness in the construction and stability of the existing pier were discovered and needed to be addressed. All works have now been completed. The total cost over 2005/07 is £715,000.

Developing recreational slipways at Eday and Firth is a way of enhancing leisure facilities for local residents and giving access to the marine environment. The slipways are in the early stages of construction and should be completed by April 2007. The total cost over 2005/08 is £324,000.

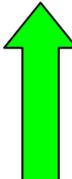
The Hatston lairage is necessary to form part of a system for the efficient movement of livestock. Designs are currently being approved and construction is expected to be completed prior to the 2007 livestock peak transport season. The total cost over 2005/08 is £525,000.

Updating the local transport strategy will help the Council and its partners to deliver on national transport objectives here in Orkney, and provide an action plan for responding to local transport challenges. The draft local transport strategy has been circulated for public consultation, and will be finalised in April 2007. The total cost over 2005/07 is £20,000.

Council administration

Like all large organisations, the Council has a great many systems and processes to make sure that it runs smoothly, sometimes known as 'back-office' work. Examples include minimising staff sickness and paying invoices on time. Although such systems are not visible to the public, they have a great impact upon the way that the Council runs and are therefore just as important as the Council's frontline services.

Statutory performance information about Council administration helps us to see where the Council is performing well, and where we need to improve.



The administration cost of dealing with each council tax and housing benefit application made to the Council went down to £64.14 in 2005/06, from £65.83 the previous year. The Council's costs in this area have been stable in recent years.

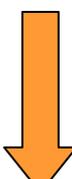


In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 23rd out of 32 Scottish Councils

The average time taken to process new council tax or housing benefit applications was 27.5 days in 2005/06. The Council's performance is excellent in this area, and recent improvements have been brought about through improving our procedures and practices.



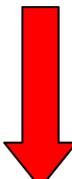
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of council tax and housing benefit applications calculated accurately was 97.6% in 2005/06, only slightly less than the 98.7% the previous year. We have recently been carrying out checks to help us to understand how we can improve in this area in the future.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 17th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The cost of collecting the council tax per dwelling in Orkney went up to £18.58 in 2005/06, from £17.87 the previous year. Although the costs associated with Sheriff Officer services have gone up, we have kept the overall cost of collection in line with inflation.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 29th out of 32 Scottish Councils

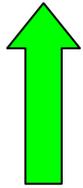


The amount of the council tax collected in Orkney went up to 97.6% in 2005/06, from 97.3% the previous year. The Council's performance remains excellent in this area, and has improved due to a review of our recovery procedures, the provision of additional direct debit payment dates, and the availability of on-line payments.

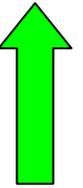


In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils

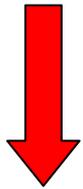




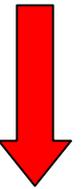
The amount of non-domestic rates collected in Orkney went up to 99.2% in 2005/06, from 98.8% the previous year. The Council's performance remains excellent in this area, and has now improved again.



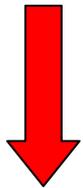
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 1st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of invoices paid within 30 days went down to 78.2% in 2005/06, from 81.5% the previous year. This is due to an administrative change within the Council which was made to better align invoice payments with the Revenue Support Grant from the Scottish Executive.



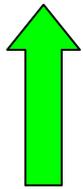
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 26th out of 32 Scottish Councils



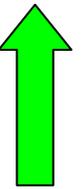
The number of complaints about consumer goods and services that were processed by the Council within 14 days of receipt went down to 77.8% in 2005/06, from 87.5% the previous year. This was due to the complexity of individual complaints received, which tend to fluctuate from year to year, and a period of restructuring and staff replacement which meant that two of the three staff providing the service were new to the Council, and were not fully qualified.



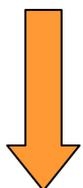
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 13th out of 32 Scottish Councils



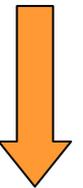
The number of requests for business advice that were dealt with by the Council within 14 days of receipt went up to 99.4% in 2005/06, from 97.5% the previous year. The Council's performance in this area is excellent, particularly so since we receive many more business advice requests than other comparable Scottish councils.



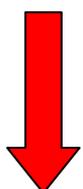
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 4th out of 32 Scottish Councils



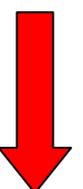
The number of work days lost by Council staff through sickness went up to 5.4% in 2005/06, from 5% the previous year. Sickness absence figures tend to fluctuate from year to year. The important point is that the Council has in place good procedures which help to reduce sickness absence wherever possible.



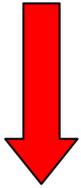
These figures were assessed as unreliable by Audit Scotland, and cannot therefore be ranked out of 32 Scottish Councils



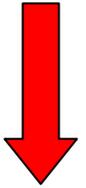
The number of work days lost by teachers through sickness went up to 4.7% in 2005/06, from 2.4% the previous year. This is partly due to a small ageing workforce, and some recent instances of serious long term sickness absence. The important point is that the Council has in place good procedures which help to reduce sickness absence wherever possible.



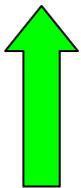
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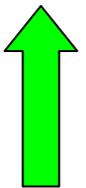
The number of litigation claims made to the Council – per 10,000 of Orkney's population - went up to 24.6 in 2005/06, from 18.6 the previous year. This was probably due to the unusual number of spells of severe weather during the winter of 2005/06, which resulted in an increased number of claims against the Council as Roads Authority.



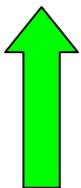
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 14th out of 32 Scottish Councils



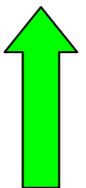
The number of women among the highest paid 2% of Council employees went up to 13.9% in 2005/06, from 12.5% the previous year. Despite having a low turnover of senior employees, the Council has recently been successful in recruiting women to senior posts.



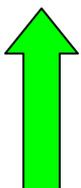
In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 31st out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of women among the highest paid 5% of Council employees went up to 28.7% in 2005/06, from 18.3% the previous year. Despite having a low turnover of senior employees, the Council has recently been successful in recruiting women to senior posts.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 27th out of 32 Scottish Councils



The number of Council buildings that are suitable and accessible to disabled people went up to 41.9% in 2005/06, from 34.9% the previous year. This has been achieved through a programme of upgrading of administrative offices, educational establishments and ferry terminal buildings.



In 2005/06 Orkney was ranked 18th out of 32 Scottish Councils

The key actions set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/08 provide us with a way of aiming for future improvements, and then measuring how well we do. Progress on the key actions for Council administration are set out below.

Ensuring that the Council meets the new requirements brought about by equalities legislation is progressing well with the recent publication of the Council's Race Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme. The Council's Equal Opportunity Policy has also been revised, and Council policies are being reviewed to make sure that they meet current legislation. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Developing and implementing a Council-wide performance management system will help all of the individual services within the Council, from care homes to street cleaning, to see which parts of the service are performing well and which parts need to improve. The performance management system is now partly in place and should be working by the end of 2007. The total cost over 2005/07 is £3,000.

Reviewing support services in line with Efficient Government targets will help the Council and NHS Orkney and their partners to work jointly to make public services more efficient, and keep services and jobs in Orkney rather than some of these being centralised on the Scottish mainland. A bid for grant aid amounting to more than £1,000,000 has been made to the Scottish Executive's Efficient Government Fund, to help to develop the joint working programme. The total cost in 2006 was £67,500.

Leading the Orkney Community Planning Partnership on revising Orkney 2020: a community plan is progressing well, and we hope that the new community plan will be published in April 2007. One of the advantages of having a community plan is that it leads to a number of strategies and action plans which progress important matters, two of which are currently being prepared. The first is the Youth Strategy, which is about progressing the issues that are most important to Orkney's young people. The second is the Cultural Strategy which highlights Orkney's cultural priorities and sets out how the Council will respond to the forthcoming Culture Bill. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Revising the employee review procedure is important because this will help Council staff to perform better in their current jobs and to develop for their future careers. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Implementing a best practice framework represented by the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE 2) will together help the Council to be more effective and efficient. PRINCE 2 is considered to be a tried and tested method for managing large public sector projects. A shortened version of PRINCE 2 has been used for Council projects, and Council-wide implementation is now underway. ITIL represents the best practice standard for the management and delivery of the information technology support which Council staff rely on for their work. The process of adopting ITIL is well underway. This is being achieved without the need for additional Council spending.

Best Value and improvement

In Orkney Islands Council we are continually trying to improve the services we provide in ways that do not have a negative impact on our local environment, economy and community. We also try to make sure that everyone who needs a Council service is treated equally.

We rely on a number of ways to help us to continually improve the Council's performance, and some of these are set out below.

Statutory audits and inspections by, for example, Audit Scotland, the Care Commission, the Food Standards Agency and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. These regular audits and inspections of some of the services we provide help us to see where they are performing well, and where they need to improve.

Best Value reviews of the Council's services are carried out on an as and when required basis. A Best Value review of a particular service involves consulting with the people who use the service, comparing the way that the service is provided with similar services in other councils, and then planning the improvements shown to be necessary. The Best Value reviews that were reported to the Council in 2006 were home care, libraries, the marine environmental unit, services for older people, Papdale Halls of Residence, piers and harbours, swimming pools, trading standards and the Council's internal communications.

Joint working between the Council, NHS Orkney and other statutory and voluntary agencies is strong in Orkney, and has been increasing over recent years. This has a lot to do with the process known as Community Planning, which helps to ensure that the different organisations work with each other, and with local people, to improve the quality of people's lives through better services. The Council and its Community Planning partners are now planning a whole series of new joint working initiatives, and have applied for grant aid from the Scottish Executive's Efficient Government Fund to help. Over the next few years we hope to see closer working in areas where it would be much more cost effective to do so such as information technology, catering and building maintenance.

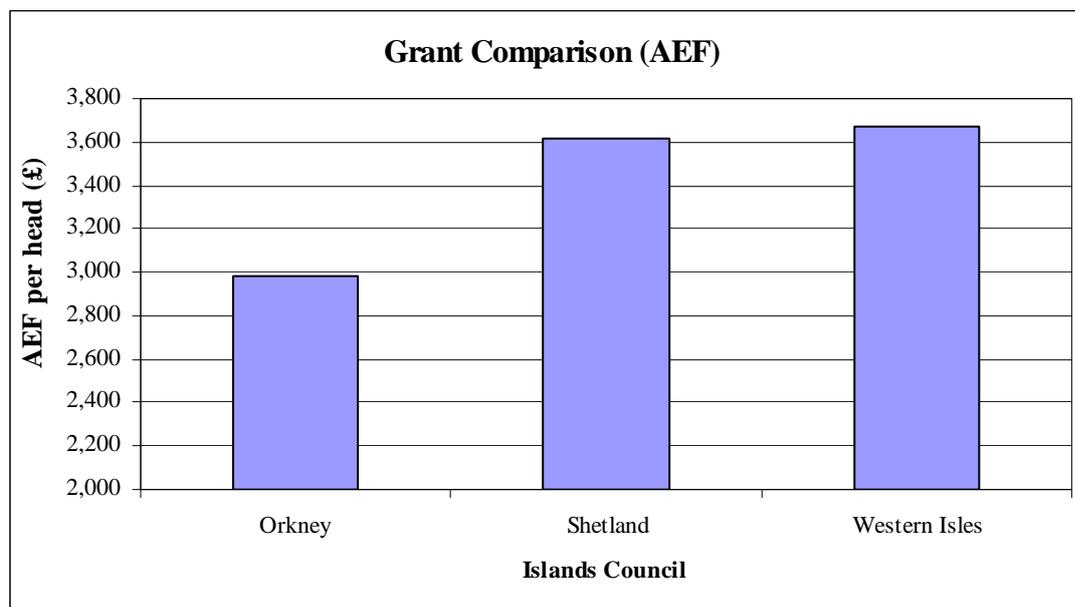
Promoting equality in the way the Council provides services to local people, whatever their age, abilities, gender, where they live, religion and beliefs, language, sexual orientation or income, is one of our main priorities. The Council has recently moved forward on promoting equality, through our Race Equality and Disability Equality Schemes.

Council finance

Grant aid from the Scottish Executive

The amount of money that any council has to provide services for local people is very important, especially since the public quite rightly expect better services. In Orkney Islands Council, we believe that the Scottish Executive does not provide us with enough grant aid to provide the services that the people of Orkney expect and deserve. To make this point, the chart below shows the differences between the amount of grant paid to the Council by way of Aggregate Exchequer Finance (AEF) relative to the other two island authorities.

Grant Comparison	Orkney	Shetland	Western Isles
Resident Population	19,590	22,000	26,370
AEF 2006/07 (£000)	58,510	79,562	96,738
AEF per head (£)	2,987	3,616	3,668
AEF difference per head (£)	n/a	629	681
Band D Council Tax 2006/07 (£)	1,007	1,053	1,024



The chart makes clear that Orkney's level of grant award is very low in comparison with the other two island councils. In simple terms, Shetland and the Western Isles have much more money available to them to provide services for local people. Despite this inequity, Orkney Islands Council has a Band D Council Tax in 2006/07 which is less than in Shetland, and only slightly higher than the Western Isles.

Where the money went

The table and chart below show the amount of money that each Committee of Council has to provide services in 2006/07.

Committee	Approved Budget	
	£000	%
Recreation and Cultural Services	3,126	4.9
Environment, Planning and Protective Services	3,896	6.1
Social Services and Housing	11,237	17.5
Transportation and Infrastructure	10,651	16.6
Education	23,670	36.7
Development	596	0.9
Policy and Resources	11,130	17.3
Total Approved Committee Budget	64,306	100.0

