



# Orkney Islands Council

## Annual Performance Report 2010

This is our seventh Annual Performance Report, and in it we will try to show how well we have performed over the last year.

This report is structured under the Council priorities identified in the Council Plan 2008-2013. This report gives you some indication of how we are doing for each priority, including key achievements, performance figures and some comparisons with other Scottish councils. Further information can be found on our web site at [www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk) and on Audit Scotland's website [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)

We would like to hear what people think of our annual performance report. If you have any comments or suggestions please call the Corporate and Community Strategy Team on 01856 873535 or email us at [policy@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:policy@orkney.gov.uk)

If you would like this publication in another language or in any other formats please contact us by using the details above.

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# 1 Council Finance

In 2009/10, for every £1 that we received to spend on council services, around 9p came from your annual council tax charge, with the rest coming from the Scottish Government (75p) and rates income from local businesses (10p). The balance (6p) came from income generated by interest invested in the Reserve Fund.

These figures are based on council tax Band D.

Council tax is not directly used to fund specific services. Instead it contributes to a range of services and activities as part of the overall funding Orkney Islands Council receives. Throughout this report there are examples of how much we spent on some of our services between April 2009 and March 2010. We have also provided a range of figures to show how we have performed in some areas of our work.

Our finance team has a key role to play in ensuring the smooth running of the council. The team provides a range of accountancy services that control and monitor council spending – and balance the books at the end of the year.

The team operates payroll for the council staff, pays bills owed by the council, collects council tax, rates and rental payments and also runs the housing benefit and council tax benefit schemes for people living in our community.

The following table shows the income we received from council tax each year over the last three years.

Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/10
Amount received	£6,815,086	£6,915,349	£7,053,110

## Some key facts

In 2009/2010 it cost the council £25.80 to collect council tax from each dwelling in Orkney. In 2008/2009 it cost £23.89 and in 2007/2008 it cost £22.29.

We have maintained a high standard for ‘the percentage of income due from council tax for the year that was received by the end for the year.’ The following table shows the percentage figures for the last three years:

Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Percentage	97.7%	97.4%	97.7%

### **Recognising that we need to improve**

We are the highest performing Scottish local authority in ensuring council tax due is paid within the year. However we do incur the highest cost per dwelling for collection of council tax. The Scotland average is £14.03.

In 2009/2010 a sample of 58,844 invoices showed that we paid 77% of invoices on time. Although we improved on the 2007/2008 figure of 76.7%, we recognise that there is more that can be done to improve payment times. The highest performing council, Edinburgh City Council, paid 95.2% of sampled invoices within 30 days. The Scotland average is 88.5%.

The following table lists the council budget for 2009/2010 and shows how the £82.1 million budget is spent by service area.

Service Area	£
Education	27,999,300
Leisure & Cultural Services	4,264,400
Community Social Services	15,615,900
Law, Order and Protective Services	3,863,600
Roads	4,660,300
Transportation	9,043,100
Operational Environmental Services	2,725,600
Environmental Health & Trading Standards	910,600
Other Housing	974,000
Economic Development	1,615,000
Planning	774,300
Other Services	9,617,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,064,000</b>

For detailed information about our income and our spending in 2009/2010, you can read our annual accounts online at [www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk) or request a copy from Finance by telephoning 01856 873535

## **2 Care for our older and more vulnerable people**

We spend 19 pence from every pound on our social work and care part of Orkney Health and Care. £15.6 million or 19% of the annual budget supports activities provided by the social work services. This is the second highest expenditure area in the Council after Education.

### **Fostering / Adopting developments**

During 2009/2010 Orkney Islands Council had [8 fostering households](#). We hope to recruit more foster carers in Orkney. We require foster carers for short term, long term, emergency and respite places.

The Care Commission recognises the Council's Fostering and Adoption Services as providing a range of strengths and new developments which include:

- Adoption packs for those interested in being considered as prospective adoptive parents.
- Information packs for prospective foster carers.
- A handbook for foster carers containing information on safe caring and moving on.
- Updated adoption policy and procedures to reflect current best practice.

### **Providing support**

Caring for people in their own homes is a key service for Orkney Islands Council.

In 2009/2010 we provided 1,546 hours of homecare per week to people in our community.

Telecare services increased by 21.9% in 2009/2010. The new telecare service is helping more people to remain independent. In 2009/2010 there were 489 people benefiting from telecare equipment, including community care alarms. A rise from 401 people in 2008/2009.

The following table shows the number of people aged 65 and over receiving homecare over the last three years:

Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Number of people aged 65 and over receiving homecare	286	242	276

The following table shows the total number of people in Orkney aged 65 and over, over the last three years:

Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Orkney: the total population aged 65 and over	3,582	3,697	3,890

Social Services in Orkney continue to work closely with the community. Feedback from service users and carers shows that generally they feel our staff listen to them and respect their views, and work well with them to help them maintain or improve their quality of life.

The 24-hour 'Mobile Responder' service to people with community alarms or other telecare services on mainland Orkney was introduced in January 2010. The first six months of the service has been evaluated, showing that the service was regularly used and that satisfaction with the service was high.

In 2009/2010 the total budget for Elderly Residential Care, Elderly Community Care and Elderly Day Centre Care was £7,108,900.

In the Spring of 2010 a new project was started which provides the residents of St Rognvald's House in Kirkwall the opportunity to have contact with animals. Residents are now involved in feeding and raising chickens.

### **3 Sustainable Communities**

Sensitively encouraging growth to sustain:

- our population
- our communities
- jobs
- and the economy

#### **Your Islands, Your Plan: The Local Development Plan Review 2009-2012**

2010 has continued to be a busy year for the Development Planning Team. The Main Issues Report was published in November 2009 and the consultation resulted in over 700 individual responses. We have undertaken further consultation on Housing in the Countryside at the 2010 Agricultural Shows.

Target: new Orkney Development Plan by 2012

#### **Planning**

Nearly half the planning applications received during 2010 were for housing related developments. 79 (12% of all applications) were for renewable energy developments, mainly small scale single wind turbines.

#### **Renewables**

Interest of just over £4.7 million from the Council's Reserve Fund is used to support a wide range of activities which benefit Orkney and its communities. Orkney has a long established record in the renewable energy sector and Reserve Fund investment by Orkney Islands Council in the Hammars Hill Wind Farm will deliver a return on the investment which will not only further support Orkney but also contribute to the Scottish Government's renewable energy target of 80% of Scottish electricity consumption coming from renewables by 2020.

## **Planning for our future**

Although we are working in tough economic times, we recognise that we need to invest and build for the future. We are supporting the £8 million development of Hatston Pier, which will be extended from 225 metres to 375 metres, in order to berth larger cruise ships and receive shipping connected to the renewable energy sector. Work is due to start in October 2011. We have also started on a major refurbishment and development of the harbour facilities at Lyness, to attract and support renewables companies, and new jobs, in Orkney.

## **Cruise liners and their economic benefit to Orkney**

The spend by cruise ship visitors and cruise ship crew is estimated to be worth £2 million per year.

Orkney Islands Council recognises the importance of visiting cruise liners to the local tourism economy. In 2010 the Welcome Ashore Meet and Greet Service was tendered by the Council and awarded to the Mackenzie Wilson Partnership. A team of 12 provide a tourist information service to independent passengers and crew on the piers and streets of Stromness and Kirkwall.

Other interesting facts:

- In 2010 Orkney was awarded the UK's Best Cruise Ship Destination by the international cruise industry's website [cruise critic.com](http://cruise.critic.com)
- Orkney has improved its previous third place rating to become the most popular destination port for cruise in the UK
- In 2010 72 cruise ships were booked to visit Orkney with an estimated 25,700 passengers visiting our shores
- If recent trends continue, over 80 ships per season could be calling into Orkney by 2012

Want to know more? The Orkney Island Council Marine Services Annual Report can be found on the Harbours website at [www.orkneyharbours.com](http://www.orkneyharbours.com). This comprehensive report also contains the Marketing and Development Strategy for 2010-2013.

## 4 Planning and affordable housing

### Good Quality Housing

By 2015 our 780 council homes need to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). This means our houses must be:

- Free from serious disrepair
- Energy efficient
- Provided with modern facilities and services, and
- Healthy, safe and secure

The Council is committed to achieving this challenging standard and is currently upgrading insulation and removing older heating systems and replacing them with efficient, modern heating systems. It is intended that this programme of improvements will also reduce the number of tenants affected by fuel poverty. Currently 23% of our stock has already achieved the SHQS and the remainder is subject to planned improvements over the next few years.

### Response repairs

The following table shows the percentage of urgent repairs completed within 3 days over the last three years.

Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Urgent repairs completed on time	97.2%	93.3%	83.1%

We collect information on three categories of repairs – emergency (24 hours), urgent (3 days) and routine (20 working days). In 2009/2010 we had 95 repairs to undertake in the ‘urgent’ category. We completed 79 repairs (83.1%) within 3 days. The Scottish Housing Best Value (SHBVN) average for repairs completed within the timescales is 94% for emergency repairs, 92% for urgent and 90% for routine. This compares to 83.3% (emergency), 83.1%

(urgent) and 86.2% (routine) for Orkney. Performance was unfortunately affected by changes to our Measured Term Contractors who undertake most of the repair work. We anticipate these issues have now been addressed.

### **Managing tenancy changes**

When a property becomes available to let we aim to minimise the period of time that the property is empty before the new tenant moves in. This is known as the 'void period'. The table below shows the number of properties re-let in a period.

	Less than 2 weeks	2-4 weeks	5-8 weeks	9-16 weeks	More than 16 weeks	Total
<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>57</b>
2008/2009	4	13	25	9	7	58
2007/2008	2	21	25	17	1	66

### **Target: 140 new council houses**

The Council is building new housing in significant numbers for the first time in more than three decades.

### **Andersquoy: 18 flats**

The redevelopment of the former Andersquoy sheltered housing to provide 18 new build flats due to be completed in February 2011 is among the first of an initial 140 house Council house build programme.

The following table lists other housing development which have started or are due to start shortly.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of houses</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Finstown Phase 1	12 houses	Anticipated completion January 2011
Finstown Phase 2	10 houses	Anticipated start March 2011

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of houses</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Makerhouse, Dounby	4 houses	Anticipated completion May 2011
Orphir	2 houses	Anticipated completion May 2011
St Margaret's Hope	14 houses	Anticipated completion Summer 2011
St Mary's, Holm	12 houses	Anticipated start January 2011
Stromness	12 houses	Anticipated start March 2011
Kirkwall	12 houses	Commencing 2011
Garson, Stromness	15 houses	Early stage of development
Grainbank, Kirkwall	40 houses	Joint project (20 for Orkney Housing Association Ltd)

For more information telephone the Housing Team on 01856 873535.

## **5 Transport Networks**

### **Connecting our communities**

The significance of our ferries is never under-estimated. This year Orkney Islands Council has responded to 3 ferry consultations. The Scottish Government's Ferry Reviews encompassed both the internal ferry service, between the Orkney mainland and the islands, and the mainland of Orkney to Scotland. Orkney Islands Council stressed the need for fairness across Scotland, not only just in respect of the replacement ferries but in relation to fare structuring.

11 pence in every pound spent by Orkney Islands Council goes towards supporting transport.

£9 million or 11% of the annual budget supports activities in relation to transportation.

#### **Orkney ferries - some of the numbers:**

- 9 ferries serve 13 inter-island routes
- There are around 20,000 journeys each year
- On average 320,000 passengers and 80,000 vehicles are transported each year

In 2009/2010 39,762 vehicles used ferries to the Outer Northern Isles routes and 63,498 vehicles used ferries on routes to the Inner North and South Isles.

Our ferries are lifeline services to the island communities. Both passenger and vehicle usage has increased over the last 3 years. The Council continues to promote commercial growth of the ferries with new website development and new online booking facilities.

This was the second year for the 'Hoy Hopper', an integrated bus and ferry service to Hoy supported by European Union funding. Public feedback on the services reveals that the service has been warmly received by both visitors and the local community.

The following table shows the number of passengers using Orkney Ferries to travel to and from the Outer North Isles and also to and from the Inner North and South Isles.

	2007	2008	2009/2010
Passenger numbers: Outer North Isles	98,270	101,575	116,886
Passenger numbers: Inner North and South Isles	218,021	216,940	255,793

## Our roads

Orkney Islands Council is responsible for all road maintenance throughout Orkney. As has been the case across other Scottish council areas, the condition of our roads has been affected by the severe winter of 2008/9 and the increased cost of maintenance. However, just four out of the other 31 councils have a lower percentage of roads needing treatment.

The following table shows the overall percentage of our road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment.

	2008/2009	2009/2010
The overall percentage of our road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment	19.5%	27.3%

For every pound that we spent in 2009/2010, six pence contributed to maintaining our road network.

£4.7 million or 6% of our annual budget supports activities in relation to our roads.

## 6 Schools and Community Facilities

### Orkney Youth Café

In 2009, young people told us there were few facilities in Orkney where they were made to feel welcome and could socialise at nights.

We listened.

We responded.

The Youth Café opened in 2010.

The Council's Community Learning and Development Service is an active partner in the Orkney Youth Café project, which provides a safe and friendly environment where young people can meet.

### Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Challenge and adventure: the number of young people (14+ years old) involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has grown from around 30 three years ago to over 90.

The following table shows the number of young people receiving awards through the scheme.

	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Duke of Edinburgh Awards; Number awarded in Orkney	12	15	10

### Education

We spend 34p from every pound of our budget on education.

£28 million or 34% of the budget supports our activities in relation to education.

## Teachers

In 2009/2010 teacher sickness absence was higher than in 2008/2009.

The following table provides more information about our teaching staff.

	2008/2009	2009/2010
Total number of full time education teachers	278	287
Total number of days lost through sickness absence for teachers	1,650	2,531
Average number of days sickness per teacher	5.9	8.8

Details of other council staff absence figures can be found later in the document.

## Investment in our schools and community facilities

In 2010 the Councillors accepted a new funding package (£40 million) from the Scottish Government for the Council's Schools Investment Programme. Over three years £58 million of investment will help to build two new schools, a halls of residence, a swimming pool facility at the Picky Centre and an arts theatre for Orkney. A further £1 million to £1.5 million a year for 30 years is being provided by the Scottish Government to support the maintenance over the life of the buildings. The funding will provide state of the art facilities for the students of Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Primary School.

## Adult Learning

Following a small dip in numbers in 2008/2009, the number of adult learners taking part in community learning courses reached 1,122 in 2009/2010. Courses take place in schools, community centres and local halls around the county.

The following table shows the number of people taking community learning courses in Orkney over the last three years.

	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Number of participants on community learning courses	985	975	1,122

In an evaluation of courses in December 2009, 95% of participants said they would recommend the course to others. This was from a sample of 166 returned evaluations from a group of 391 participants.

## 7 Improved services through joint working

In these increasingly difficult financial times, it is recognised that by working together, across our services and with other organisations in Orkney, we can combine expertise and pool resources in order to get more from our money. We started doing this during times when funding was less pressured. It is going to become particularly important to continue working with other organisations as budgets are reduced.

### Orkney Health and Care

Orkney Health and Care delivers health and social care to the public on behalf of the Council and NHS Orkney. This joined-up service was developed for the people of Orkney during 2009/2010 and agreed by the Scottish Government on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2010. This service is new but so far it has achieved:

- The fully integrated [All Age Disability Service](#).
- The [Intermediate Care Service](#) which helps people to be discharged from hospital into their own homes and puts in place services to help them continue to live at home.
- The [Telecare Service](#), which uses technology to help people to continue to live at home.

### Act Against Harm in Orkney

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 was implemented during 2008/2009. A great deal of awareness raising and training has been delivered locally in 2009/2010 and more is planned. People may recall seeing the local advertising campaign 'Act Against Harm in Orkney'. Referral rates are steadily increasing. In 2008/2009 there were 14 referrals. In 2009/2010 there were 24, a 71% increase and people in Orkney are continuing to benefit from this legislation.

## **Working with our voluntary sector colleagues in Orkney**

The Council provides support for voluntary organisations in a number of different ways. Funding is provided to ensure that people are able to access social care services and support for carers, people with learning disabilities, early years and family support, people with mental health problems, people who are offenders or at risk of re-offending, lunch/day club services and counselling services. In 2009/2010 the Council's community social services spent around **£1.5 million** on grant funding and commissioned services to support this activity.

## **The idea of joined up public services for Orkney: thinking of the future**

We have been working with Scotland's other two island local government authorities – Shetland Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) – aided by the Centre for Scottish Public Policy to investigate alternative models of public service reform. We have experience of joining with the NHS to deliver health and care and in working with HIE Orkney for business development and we are looking at new ways to work more efficiently with other public sector organisations. Ultimately we want to provide better services and keep jobs within the islands.

## **Business Gateway**

Business Gateway is a partnership between the Council's Economic Development Service and Highland and Islands Enterprise.

Since its establishment in at the Queen Street Offices on 1 April 2009, Business Gateway has received 392 enquiries: 261 business enquiries, and 131 workshop bookings. Of the 261 business enquiries, 165 have been from pre-start or start-up businesses; and 96 businesses requiring support with growth.

The following table shows the target and actual numbers attending at workshops and training events held by Business Gateway in 2009/2010.

Events	Target	Actual
For start-up businesses	7	10
For existing businesses	2	4

131 people attended courses between September 2009 and March 2010.

For every pound of our budget we spend 2 pence on supporting businesses in Orkney.

£1.2 million or 2% of the annual budget supports activities in relation to Economic Development. £1.1 million of this comes from income earned from oil reserves and directly support local economic development in the form of grants and loans.

## 8 Single Outcome Agreement

The Single Outcome Agreement is an agreement between the Scottish Government and Orkney Community Planning Partnership which sets out how we will work in the future towards improving outcomes for local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities.

The Orkney Community Planning Partnership Single Outcome Agreement between the key partners in Orkney and the Scottish Government covers the period 2009-2010.

In 2010 Orkney Community Planning Partnership published its first Annual Report on its Single Outcome Agreement 2009-2010. This coincided with economic uncertainty in the economy and the prospects of significant resource constraints hanging over all of Orkney's community planning partners, at a time when demand for public services is likely to increase.

As a result, although the Single Outcome Agreement performance indicators reveal trends moving in the right directions, progress towards targets set in earlier years has slowed. However there are a number of successes.

**Indicator 11.1: Percentage of residents stating their neighbourhood is a 'very good' or 'fairly good' place to live** has increased to **99%**. This indicator represents good public services and good community spirit. We are proud of this indicator and work hard to maintain it.

**National outcome 2: We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.**

**Population** increased by **2.8%** last year, despite predictions that it was expected to decrease.

**National outcome 4: Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.**

Close work between Orkney Islands Council and Voluntary Action Orkney has resulted in targets being exceeded for youth volunteering.

Target: 75 youth volunteers  
Achieved: 112 youth volunteers

The number of school leavers going into employment, education or training **increased by 2.3%** with **93.9%** entering a positive destination.

The number of Orkney residents living in the outer isles increased from 2,664 to 2,680 between 2007 and 2008 (latest data available).

### **New image, new logo**

The Orkney Community Planning Partnership was formed in November 2000. In May 2010 it was given a new image, developed 'in house' to keep costs down. The new logo has been used extensively to increase awareness of the work the partnership does.

## 9 Business Processes

Over the past year the Council has been looking at the working arrangements of our employees. The Council has always had a traditional approach to working hours, working location and to patterns of working. Times are changing and we have to look at modernising our working arrangements and promoting flexible working.

Part of this work has been to look at our IT and Business Processes. We need to work as efficiently and effectively as we can. Budgets are tight and we recognise that we cannot afford to duplicate work or take longer to do things than we need to. Technology will play a major part in helping us work faster and smarter over the coming years. Some of the areas we are looking at are:

- Home and Smarter working
- ICT: fast, efficient and business focussed infrastructure, services and applications
- Up to date web services with an updated intranet where staff can access all our key information and a web site which will provide customer self service

### **Saving time ... online payments**

Not everyone is able to get into our offices to make payments, so we now offer the facility for paying online.

Our 24 hours secure online payments service accepts most major credit and debit cards and is available through the Orkney Islands Council website [www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk)

What can you pay online?

- Non Domestic Rates
- Council House / Garage Rents
- Council Invoices
- Council Tax

## **Stretching time ... a day that starts earlier and finishes later**

No longer simply 9 to 5 ...

We know it can be annoying to find that we have all gone to lunch.

We are working with staff to see how we can provide a more flexible approach to our lunch times. Staggered lunches and a rota for covering the telephones is a new way of working for an organisation that has always taken its lunch break from 1 until 2 p.m. Very soon we plan to provide cover all through the working day.

As part of our flexi-time pilot scheme we are also looking at the potential to open our offices earlier and close them later in the evening. [We do understand that you may also work 9 to 5.](#)

## **Flexible time ... We want to give our staff a bit more say over when they start and finish work**

Our staff asked if they could work more flexibly. Not everyone finds it easy to work our traditional hours. Some of our staff have family commitments that conflict with our starting and finishing times. Some of our staff have to catch ferries or flight to get to and from work. Some of our staff are early birds and others are night owls. Not all of our work takes place from 9 to 5.

Our three month flexi time pilot is giving a small number of staff the chance to have a different starting and finishing time. They are testing whether it works for them and for you.

We want to be able to provide you a flexible service, and not just between the hours of 9 to 5.

## 10 Tough Times, Tough Choices

*“From April 2011, Orkney Islands Council will face cuts from its grant from Central Government. Between 2011 and 2014 the grant will be reduced by between 10 and 20 per cent. This means a loss of between £9 million and £18 million over the three year period.*

*Council Tax makes up less than 10 per cent of the funding we need to run Council Services. A big reduction in our Government grant will have a huge impact on Orkney Islands Council – and on the people and communities across Orkney.*

*There will be an inevitable impact on jobs and the many services we provide.”*

Albert Tait  
Chief Executive

### **Giving people a chance to have their say**

- In July 2010 Chief Executive Albert Tait asked the Orkney Island Council (OIC) Directors to look at **options** for reducing budgets by 20 per cent
- In August 2010 OIC Councillors were briefed on the **potential impact** of reducing spending
- In August 2010 OIC launched the Tough Times Tough Choices Blog. 521 ideas were received. **240 responses**.
- In October 2010, the **Tough Times, Tough Choices publication** was sent out and **public meetings** were held across Orkney to get peoples' views

### **In 2010/2011 Orkney Islands Council will spend a budget of £85.6 million**

The council receives its money from Government Grants (£65.1 million); Non Domestic Rates (£7.8 million); Council Tax (£7.9 million) and income from Oil Reserves (£4.8 million). From April 2011 the Government Grant will be cut.

## **Savings and Cuts**

A reduced Government Grant will mean an unprecedented package of cuts: impacting on the jobs and services we provide and, potentially, on our ambitions for the future. We will not know until February 2011 just what level of cuts to the Government Grant will be. We have been asking for your views in order to shape our thinking as councillors meet in February 2011 to decide how best to find the savings required. However hard we try, these cuts will undoubtedly impact on the performance of the Council.

# 11 Some things you might not know about

## Tough Times, Tough Choices

- There were 20 road shows across Orkney, in every Community Planning area – with a combined audience of 678 people.
- The Convener and the Chief Executive attended every event to listen to your views and to answer your questions.
- There were 1,769 individual responses from members of the public and staff.
- We borrowed the Voxur yellow box from NHS Orkney to make it easier for you to record your views about the proposed cuts. This is the first time we have used this digital device for community consultation. 114 people gave video interviews.
- The online blog, the first on the Orkney Islands Council website, attracting 276 replies and generated 585 ideas.
- Meetings were held at the Blide Trust, St Colm's day centre, St Rognvald's House residential care home and The Learning Link. We try our best to get the views of those in the community who may find it difficult to get to us.

## Supporting Fair Trade

In 2009/2010 Orkney Islands Council decided to support farmers in poorer countries to get fair prices for their products. The Council has resolved to widely offer FAIRTRADE marked food and drink options internally and to make them available at internal meetings.

## Adverse Weather Reports

The Council is piloting the use of text message site 'Twitter' to post alerts about barrier closures, and social networking site 'Facebook' to provide online updates about adverse weather school closures. A link to the Update page can be found on the front page of the main Council website at <http://www.orkney.gov.uk>

## Skilled Staff

During the 2009/2010 academic year, 67 Community Social Services staff gained external awards. We also have an ongoing in-house training programme which ensure that all staff are trained to undertake their caring roles.

The following table shows the number of staff completing training course in the last two years and the qualifications they received.

Qualification	SVQ 2	SVQ 3	HNC
2009/2010	26	32	9
2008/2009	21	25	8

## Average Weekly Rents: £49.54 in 2009/2010

The average weekly rent level for a local authority house in Orkney was £49.54 in 2009/2010. The average weekly rent for a local authority property in Scotland was £52.93 for the same period. In 2009/2010 in the Moray Council area it was £40.49, in the Shetland Islands Council area it was £56.98 and the highest average weekly rent was £66.17 in the Edinburgh City Council area.

## Staff Absence

In 2009/2010 there were 287 teachers and 1,471 other full time local government employees working for Orkney Islands Council.

The following table shows the average number of days lost through sickness absence for other council employees (not teachers).

	2008/2009	2009/2010
Average number of days lost through sickness absence per council employee (not teachers)	12.9	9.8

The following table shows the total number of days lost through sickness absence (not teachers)

	2008/2009	2009/2010
Total number of days lost through sickness absence (not teachers)	15,787	14,408

We would like to hear what people think of our annual performance report. If you have any comments or suggestions please call the Corporate and Community Strategy Team on 01856 873535 or email us at [policy@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:policy@orkney.gov.uk)