



**Planning Performance Framework
Orkney Islands Council**

Annual Report 2015/2016

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1. National Headline Indicators

a) Development Planning

Key Outcomes	2015/2016	2014/2015
Age of Local Development Plan (years and months) at end of reporting period	1 year 11 months	11 months
Will the local development plan be replaced by its 5 th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Yes – 3 months later. The DPS 2015 stated that MIR would be published for consultation in April 2015, but this was delayed until July 2015.	No
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Partly – consultation on Main Issues Report completed. Consultation on Proposed Plan not completed by March 2016 target – delayed by 3 months	Yes

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
	2015/2016	2014/2015
Established housing land supply	1026 units	1088 units
5 year effective housing land supply	937 units	943 units
5 year housing supply targets	622 units	500 units
5 year effective housing land supply	7.5 years	9.43 years
Housing approvals	135 units	168 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	838 units	703 units
Marketable employment land supply	167.2 ha (within LDP Settlement Boundaries)	168.11 ha (within LDP Settlement Boundaries)
Employment land take-up during reporting year	0.9 ha	3.89 ha

b) Development Management

Project Planning		
	2015/2016	2014/2015
Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice	71%	68%
Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan	0	1
Percentage planned timescales met	n/a	100%
Decision-making		
Application approval rate	95.2%	96.7%
Delegation rate	91.9%	92.3%
Decision-making Timescales		
Average Number of Weeks to a decision:		
Major Developments	24.1	7.0
Local Developments (non householder)	9.3	9.8
Householder Developments	6.4	6.8
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	6	8
Number remaining	2	8
Enforcement		
time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (full years)	6 months	18 months
number of breaches identified / resolved	20/10	33/19

c) Notes

Development Planning

The [Orkney Local Development Plan](#) was adopted by the Council in April 2014. Significant progress was made on the Local Development Plan Review during 2015/16 with the preparation of the Main Issues Report which was subject to public consultation between 8 July and 16 September. Prior to publication there was significant engagement with key agencies (workshop session plus early draft provided for comment); elected members (workshop session, presentation and discussion at Member/Officer Working Group and drop-in Q&A session with officers); the Council's Corporate Management Team (Planning for Real exercise and discussion); and community councils (workshop session).

Various engagement events were held during the public consultation including community drop-in sessions at various locations throughout Orkney and a Stakeholder event in Kirkwall. The results of the [public consultation](#) were reported to the Council's Development & Infrastructure Committee in [November 2015](#) with committee approving the policy approach for the new plan together with the settlement allocations.

Further seminars were held with elected members in November 2015 to update on the Main Issues Report consultation findings and development of policies for the Proposed Plan; and in March 2016 to update on the progress and content of the new Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan will be presented to the Development & Infrastructure Committee in April 2016 for approval for public consultation. The core objective of ensuring that the Plan is reviewed within the term of the current Council, remains on track.

Development Management

There was a significant increase of 18.8% in the total number of planning applications (local and major) determined during the reporting period rising from 367 in 2014/15 to 436 in 2015/16. 95 of the applications determined (21.8%) were for wind turbines, predominantly single domestic turbines less than 18m in height.

The average decision time for local development has shown further improvement at 8.6 weeks for 2015/16, from 9.0 weeks in the previous year. Both householder and non-householder determination timescales have shown an improvement over the period. The above improvements in performance were achieved despite the Development Management team not having a full complement of staff at any time during the reporting period.

The timescales for determining major applications show a significant deterioration in comparison with the previous reporting period however it should be noted that the total number of major application determined is very small – 2 in 2014/15 and 1 in 2015/16. The single major application determined in 2015/16 was for the continued extraction of minerals at Heddle Quarry, Firth. For this application there was an extension of time agreed between the applicant and the Council for the determination of the application to allow additional environmental information to be submitted.

A number of applications for development in central Kirkwall have had to be notified to Scottish Ministers on the grounds of objections from SEPA that the proposals might place buildings and persons at flood risk contrary to SPP and PAN 69.

2. Defining and Measuring a High-quality Planning Service

a. Quality of Outcomes

The [Kirkwall Townscape Heritage Initiative](#) was launched in July 2014 following successful funding bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme) and runs until June 2019 delivering improvements to the built heritage of the Kirkwall Conservation Area. The £3.4 million project is aimed at regenerating the town centre of Kirkwall through revitalising historic buildings by providing grants for historic repairs and reinstatement and bringing vacant properties back into economic use. Work commenced on the first property to receive THI support in December providing a major overhaul of an 18th Century B Listed property in Bridge Street which will provide premises for a new business in the town centre.

A Phase 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was successful in attracting £3 million of funding for a [North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme](#). The scheme aims to raise awareness and conserve and enhance the distinct identities of Orkney's North Isles through the delivery of a number of projects including projects aimed at conserving key buildings. This investment will stimulate development and promote the survival of some of Scotland's most fragile communities. The Phase 2 bid for funding will now be developed and if successful the scheme will run between 2018 and 2023.

The [St Margaret's Hope Masterplan](#) which details a future vision for the development of the village was adopted as Planning Policy Advice by the Council. The Masterplan includes an Action Plan setting out timescales and responsibilities in respect of a number of projects aimed at regenerating the village and providing local development opportunities. The preparation of the Masterplan followed an extensive consultation exercise with the local community.

The Council has adopted Placemaking Principles to provide the foundation for the development of future policies and proposals for Placemaking in Orkney. A [Placemaking Strategy Project Plan](#) has also been prepared and Supplementary Guidance on [Kirkwall Placemaking Proposals](#) were approved in September 2014. Extensive public consultation took place during 2015 on design proposals for potential public realm improvements to Broad Street which is the main street in the centre of Kirkwall. Due to there not being universal support amongst the local community for the proposed improvements the project is no longer being pursued by the Council.

We have worked closely with colleagues in NHS Orkney with responsibility for delivering the new hospital and health care facilities to ensure that the planning application process is dealt with efficiently. This has included engagement in the A+DS NHS Scotland Design Assessment Process by participating in Panel Assessments of the emerging designs.

We have developed guidance on an "[Orkney Local List](#)" to protect buildings and structures in Orkney which do not feature on the statutory lists of historic buildings but are nevertheless considered to make a significant contribution to the history, character and appearance of Orkney. This guidance received a commendation in the 2014 Scottish Award for Quality in Planning. We have also undertaken a survey of all war memorials in Orkney in order to support their conservation and assist communities make funding bids for restoration works.

CASE STUDY 1 – AYRE HOTEL ANNEXE - NEGOTIATED IMPROVEMENTS

A planning application was submitted for a freestanding, three storey annexe to an established hotel in central Kirkwall. The site was brownfield land, with several vacant commercial properties. Reclaimed from the sea in the 1930s, the area retained its pre-war development pattern with strong traditional building lines. The site was opposite the hotel and a former factory, both listed buildings. The site was within the settlement boundary and allocated for mixed use redevelopment, so the development was acceptable in principle. It was also part of a wider area covered by a development brief 'Central West, Kirkwall'. The development brief required all development to be sensitive to historic context, provide frontages, protect building lines, and be confidently contemporary, amongst other considerations.



In the first submission, the building was located to the south of the application site. To meet building regulation requirements, it was set back from the site boundary on three sides, resulting in an inefficient use of the constrained site. Critically, the location at the south end of the site resulted in potential overlooking from upper windows towards other vacant redevelopment land to the south, and also the potential of overshadowing from any future development in that land. The proposal therefore prejudiced the future redevelopment of the wider site.



CASE STUDY 1 – AYRE HOTEL ANNEXE - NEGOTIATED IMPROVEMENTS (cont.)

Through negotiations, the site layout was amended and the building moved to the north-east corner. That allowed retention of the parking spaces with additional green spaces, and ensured the frontage of the site wasn't wholly open and dominated by parking spaces. To further address the strong building line, the gable of the building was angled to align with the back edge of the footway.

The scale and proportions of the building relate to the neighbouring listed buildings. Negotiations ensured a simple palette of materials, consisting of natural slates on the roof, modern render, and metal framed windows. High quality hard and soft landscaping was also required, including tree planting and a local stone boundary wall. Renewable technologies were added, including air source heat pumps and solar thermal roof panels.



Overall, the building has contributed to the streetscape and roofscape of that part of the town. Contemporary detailing and finishes complement the traditional scale, form and proportions, and the building protects the setting of neighbouring listed buildings. It has a sustainable design, has led the redevelopment of the wider site and contributes to the vibrancy and vitality of the area.

CASE STUDY 2 – SURVEY OF WAR MEMORIALS

In May 2015 Orkney Islands Council's Development and Marine Planning team published the first Orkney War Memorials Survey. The aim of the survey was to record all the war memorials in the county as part of the centenary commemorations for the First World War. This was intended both to provide a public record of the memorials and also to support their conservation. This survey documented and assessed 40 war memorials across the county, including all the parish memorials. For each site a record was made of its location, a detailed written record was made of its appearance to complement a photographic record, a condition survey was undertaken and repair recommendations given, and the inscriptions were recorded in full.

A copy of the survey was distributed to every community council, as well as other groups including the Royal British Legion. In addition, the data were uploaded to the War Memorials Online and Canmore databases to share the information as widely as possible. This was considered especially important as a high proportion of those commemorated on the memorials had emigrated before the war, giving this work an international audience. Publicity of the project in the local media ensured wide public awareness.

This work supported a number of community councils in their bids to the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund. The Council liaised closely with the War Memorials Trust and local communities to promote funding opportunities, support funding applications and provide advice on appropriate works. To date the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund has awarded over £44,500 to war memorials in Orkney.



b. Quality of service and engagement

We provide a good quality free pre-application advice service to members of the public including a 4 day/week duty officer to deal with public queries at the main office between 9-10am and 4-5pm. Outwith these hours officers planning officers are also available by appointment. Formal written advice is also provided. We also provide a duty officer service for the Development and Marine Planning service providing free advice 5 days a week, with no appointment needed. The Council operates a direct dial telephone system which allows improved and direct access to all Planning staff. The Planning Service now has a presence in the new area office in Stromness with a Senior Planner based there on a permanent basis.

Details of pre-application advice are recorded on our UNIFORM casework management system. The number of applications subject to pre-application advice (68% in 2014/15) has increased to 71% in 2015/16. We provide a single point of contact for development proposals throughout the planning application process.

In partnership with the Scottish Government we have a local protocol in place for determining development proposals in the Lyness and Hatston Enterprise Areas.

An internal Development and Infrastructure Pre-Project Planning and Information Exchange team ensures regular exchange of information on key development site progress and developer interests across service areas including Planning.

We have undertaken a wide-ranging public consultation on the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan. Engagement events included: community drop in sessions at a number of locations throughout Orkney; a key agency and planning stakeholders event; undertaking straw polls at different locations throughout Orkney in order to obtain views from persons who do not normally engage with development plan consultations, and questionnaires. A booklet detailing all land allocations and settlement boundaries for the Proposed Plan was delivered to all households and business addresses in Orkney in order to raise awareness amongst the public and allow them the opportunity to engage. Internally a number of workshops/seminars were held with elected members, the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Orkney Community Planning Partnership.

Our [Planning Enforcement Charter](#) was updated and approved in September 2015.

In order to provide more certainty for developers we approved the [National Roads Development Guide](#) and the [Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy in Orkney](#) as Planning Policy Advice. A review of all Local Nature Conservation Sites has been undertaken in partnership with the NFU, SNH, RSPB and landowners to inform revisions to future Natural Heritage Supplementary Guidance.

Supplementary Guidance covering [Developer Contributions and Good Neighbour Agreements](#) was approved in September 2013. In addition the need for specific developer contributions is identified in the Local Development Plan Settlement Statements, site specific development briefs and masterplans as they are produced. Feedback was sought during the Main Issues Report consultation on future options for seeking developer contributions, given that opportunities for seeking such contributions in Orkney are limited due to the small scale of development/developers. The preferred option is to continue with identifying developer contributions required to make a development acceptable in the LDP Settlement Statements and Development Briefs with contributions required towards a limited number of strategic capital infrastructure projects to be identified in new Development Management Guidance to be prepared.

The availability of processing agreements is publicised on our [website](#) and we worked with NHS Orkney and the two remaining bidders for the new Orkney Hospital project to develop processing agreements for progression by the successful bidder. As the scale of development in Orkney is not significant, opportunities for using processing agreements is limited.

We have prepared a Development Management Guidance Note to provide clarity to Development Management Officers and developers in respect of the implementation of the Council's affordable housing policy and guidance.

We have prepared Supplementary Guidance on [Development Briefs and Design Statements](#) to provide more certainty for developers in terms of the levels of information required for these documents and where they are required.

We have developed a standard set of model planning conditions.

We provide a "[Validation Checklist](#)" for applicants, which covers the majority of information required to be submitted with a planning application in order to try to reduce the number of invalid applications being submitted.

We continue to have regular annual liaison meetings with key agencies (SEPA, SNH, Historic Scotland, Scottish Water, Marine Scotland) and specific stakeholders such as architects/builders and the fish farming industry. We engage regularly (primarily via e-mail) with our key stakeholders through our Planning and Building Standard Stakeholders Forum.

Key public consultations have taken place in the last 12 months covering the preparation of the Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan; public realm improvements for the centre of Kirkwall; Supplementary Guidance on Wind Energy and the Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan.

We continue to encourage customers to submit planning applications electronically. 84% of planning applications were submitted electronically during 2015/16, compared with 72% in Scotland as a whole. In order to make our office as paperless as possible we now only require one set of plans and supporting documents from applicants submitting an application in paper format.

We have used opportunities when the local newspaper has been undertaking advertising features on home improvements to remind the public of the need to check to see if works require planning permission.

The Council has a Complaints Handling Procedure which provides a standard approach for dealing with customers who are unhappy with the service that they have received. In 2015/16 we received 1 complaint about the Planning Service. The complaint was not upheld.

In March 2015 the Council commenced audio casting council committee meetings, including Development and Infrastructure meetings, which cover planning policy matters.

We launched an on-going Planning & Regulatory Services Customer Satisfaction Survey in October 2014. A review of the first 12 month operation of the survey was reported to the Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Member/Officer Working Group in November 2015. 86% of customers were satisfied with the overall quality of the service provided with the only negative comments being in respect of the quality of information provided via the website. Improvements have been made to the information provided on the website as a result of the feedback received from customers of the service.

CASE STUDY 3 – ENGAGING WITH LANDOWNERS ON REVIEW OF LOCAL NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

Following on from the adoption by the Council of draft Supplementary Guidance on Natural Heritage concerns were raised by the Local National Farmers Union (NFU) on the effect that Local Nature Conservation Sites could have on agricultural activity and management. As a result the Council agreed to review this local level designation. A Review Team was established with officers from the Council, RSPB, SNH and the Chair of the Local NFU. It was agreed to concentrate the review of land that was semi improved grassland and therefore actively managed by the landowner.

In total 76 sites visits have been completed across Orkney's Mainland and Isles. The Council Officers who completed the site visits used their local knowledge to establish who the landowners were. Landowners were initially contacted by phone and then visited, with time spent discussing the designation at their home or even out and about on their farms. As a result of the project the Development Plans Team at the Council has developed a close working relationship with the local NFU and there is now a better understanding amongst the farming community of how Planning interacts and effects Orkney's largest industry which is agriculture.



CASE STUDY 4 – ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ON MAIN ISSUES REPORT

As part of our attempts to seek more effective engagement with the public in the review of the Local Development Plan we decided to be more proactive in seeking the views of young people who are recognised as a group who do not engage with the Planning system.

During the consultation on the Main Issues Report in September 2015, the Development and Marine Planning Team put together a short questionnaire/straw poll which focussed on housing in the countryside and the development of large scale wind turbines. The questions only required a simple yes/no response and only took 5 minutes to complete.

The team undertook the straw poll at 4 separate locations in Orkney including Orkney College during Freshers Weeks. The team located themselves in the Main Foyer of the College and were able to quiz students who were happy to engage with the process.



c. Governance

During 2016 the Council commenced a Governance Review with a Review Survey undertaken amongst elected members and senior officers in March 2016. This covered a number of aspects including meeting cycles, delegation to officers and pre-determination hearings for the Planning Committee. The outcomes of the review will be implemented during 2016/17.

We have a Planning Committee dedicated to dealing with planning applications which meets on a monthly basis except in August which is the Members recess. We continued to review committee processes during the period resulting in improvements to Planning Committee reports and restricting officer's presentations at committee to five minutes. The number of planning applications delegated to officers at 92% is lower than the Scottish average of 95%. This can be attributed to the fact that a planning application attracting a single objection which is recommended for approval can only be determined by the Committee.

A separate Development & Infrastructure Committee deals with all development and marine planning policy issues and meets 5 times per year. This Committee completed its programme of touring the Isles which have provided an opportunity for the Committee to meet with Isles communities as a group and to establish a direct channel for residents to communicate with Committee Members and the Service senior management team on issues which fall within the remit of the Committee. In total 11 islands were visited with around 220 community councillors, development trust representatives and local residents attending public meetings. Only a limited number of planning matters were raised with issues relating to transport (air, ferries, piers and buses) being the most commonly raised.

We adopted a policy of undertaking site inspections for all local review cases in June 2014, in order to reduce delays in the decision making process. The Local Review Committee now meets as and when required with site inspection undertaken on the same day as the meeting. The average time for determining local review cases in 2015/16 was 10.6 weeks as opposed to 15.5 weeks in 2013/14.

We have a Planning & Regulatory Services Member/Officer Working Group set up to provide a less formal forum to discuss in particular progress with the Local Development Plan and other Plans falling within the remit of the service. This allows open discussion between Members and Officers and helps guide the strategic direction and policy approach of the various plans.

We have a fully integrated planning service under a single Head of Service post. A flexible approach to staffing has been adopted in response to workload issues e.g. secondment of member of the Development & Marine planning team to Development Management team to cover a vacant post while recruitment taking place.

A multi-disciplinary project team, comprising officers from the Planning, Roads, Design, Development and Engineering services, has been involved in implementing the Place-making Strategy and Policy within Orkney. Planning is also represented on multi-disciplinary teams dealing with House Build Programmes, Housing Market Partnership, Housing Forum and Ports Masterplanning to assist the development of the Council's house building project and its harbours infrastructure.

There are effective communication channels in place from the Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team, Directorate, Heads of Service down to individual teams. Planning and Regulatory Managers meet on a monthly basis with Development Management and Development & Marine Planning team meeting every 2 months.

We hold a 6 monthly Development & Infrastructure Managers Away Day to improve cross-service communication and awareness of cross cutting projects and professional capabilities.

There have been strong working relationships developed across the Council with a Renewables, Regeneration and Community Benefit Project team involving Planning established to explore options for generating income for the Council from renewable energy projects.

Strong working relationships have been developed with Marine Scotland and Highland Council in the preparation of the pilot [Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan](#).

The Planning Service has worked closely with Historic Scotland in the development of the [Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Management Plan 2014-19](#) launched in April 2014, and the Development and Marine Planning Manager is the joint Chair of the Management Board.

We have a share service working arrangement with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, whereby our Historic Environment Officer provides conservation advice on their listed building applications.

In order to assist with the monitoring of planning conditions we are using Building Inspectors to undertake a limited role in checking pre-commencement conditions in respect of access roads for developments of up to 4 houses and the demolition of existing derelict or ruinous buildings.

The Council is undergoing a Change Management Programme aimed at transforming service delivery by exploring different options for delivering and, where feasible, improving services within the context of a reducing budget. Initial projects are aimed at streamlining corporate processes within the Council including Human Resource, Finance and Customer Relationship Management. More strategic review are planned for 2016/17.

We operate a monthly budget monitoring system which ensures managers are well aware of budgetary positions. Quarterly Revenue Expenditure Monitoring Reports on each service are presented to service committees on a quarterly basis. The Planning Service is represented on the Capital Programme Team established to monitor the Council's Capital Programme and improve procedures for the future delivery of the programme.

Through the "Empowering Scotland's Island Communities" project we are working with the two other Islands Councils to identify opportunities for devolving more powers related to marine and terrestrial planning to a local level. This included a joint response by the Islands Authorities to the consultation on the Independent Review of Planning in December 2015.

CASE STUDY 5 – PENTLAND FIRTH AND ORKNEY MARINE SPATIAL PLAN PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters (PFOW) Marine Spatial Plan project has piloted the preparation of a regional marine spatial plan, testing an innovative model for partnership working and governance. The Plan provides an integrated planning policy framework to guide marine development, activities and management decisions in the Plan area.

The plan was prepared by Marine Scotland, Orkney Islands Council and Highland Council, supported by an advisory group including Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Historic Environment Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Royal Yachting Association Scotland, Orkney Harbour Authority and the Scrabster Harbour Trust. Valuable contributions from local communities, the various commercial sectors, community and interest groups were facilitated through focused discussions, workshops, stakeholder engagement events and consultation. Over 250 organisations and individuals were part of the stakeholder group that helped to shape the marine spatial plan.

Marine spatial planning practice is in its infancy with limited experience, policy and guidance to draw on both in the Scottish and international context. The dynamic three dimensional nature of the marine environment brings new planning challenges, new stakeholders and new governance structures into the planning process. A key challenge for planning is to balance the aspirations and requirements of traditional marine industries (e.g. commercial fishing, shipping, recreation and marine transport) and growth sectors such as marine renewable energy, marine tourism and aquaculture.

The PFOW marine spatial planning process has delivered many innovations:

- First time the Scottish Government and local planning authorities have collaborated to prepare a marine spatial plan in Scotland.
- Multidisciplinary approach – A marine scientist, marine ecologist and a planner have led the development of the MSP drawing on a wide range of expertise including mariners, fishermen, economists, GIS specialists, engineers, energy specialists and fish farmers to name a few.
- Set up the first Scottish Marine Spatial Planning Forum for practitioners - established to share knowledge and experience in this emerging field of planning.
- Transferring and applying experience from land use planning to marine areas - First application of a formal planning issues and options stage within a marine planning context, which proved very successful.
- Collaboration with academia – Stakeholder engagement workshops delivered in partnership with Heriot Watt University and the EU funded MESMA project for the monitoring and evaluation of spatially managed marine areas.
- An integrated marine and land use planning policy framework – The Caithness and Sutherland LDP and Orkney LDP were developed alongside the emerging MSP enabling a truly integrated approach to policy.

d. Culture of Continuous Improvement

We participated in the second pilot trial of the Scottish Government's "Gateway Review" process aimed at ensuring better project management of Local Development Plans. The review was concluded at the end of March 2015 and recommendations emerging from the review were implemented during 2015/16.

Key performance indicators relating to the Planning service are monitored and reported to the relevant service committee every 6 months.

Training continues to be provided to individual staff to allow development career development. We are currently supporting members of staff to participating in Public Sector Leadership and Marine Spatial Planning further education courses. Training on particular topic continues to be provided to all staff e.g. planning officers participated in training on European Protected Species provided by Scottish Natural Heritage. Officers from the Planning Service also attended training on dealing with complaints provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and internal Council training on report writing.

Training continues to be provided in advance of any elected member sitting on the Planning or Local Review Committee with induction training on Planning provided for a number of elected members who were newly appointed to the committees during the reporting period.

The Council's Performance Review and Development system has been implemented within the Planning service with all staff being appraised on an annual basis.

The Council has adopted the "How Good is our Council" self-assessment tool in order to identify areas for improvement. Previously undertaken in 2012 a further self-evaluation of all Council services including the Planning & Regulatory service was undertaken during 2015. Further consideration of how the actions emerging from this exercise are to be implemented will be progressed.

We continue to share good practice (primarily by e-mail) with other local authorities in the HoPS rural authorities benchmarking club.

We actively participate in Heads of Planning Group and Sub-groups where issues of best practice are continuously being discussed. We also participate in the North of Scotland Development Plans Forum and the joint Local Authority Aquaculture Planning group.

The updated ePlanning system was launched in January 2016.

After continued efforts to remove legacy cases, we only have 2 planning application cases which have been in the system for over 1 year (at end of March 2016).

In order to improve accessibility to housing land data our [2016 Housing Land Audit](#) has been published in an interactive online format.

CASE STUDY 6 – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN GATEWAY REVIEW

Orkney Islands Council volunteered to participate in the second “pilot” [Gateway Review](#) supported by the Scottish Government on the management of the processes for reviewing the Orkney Local Development Plan. The purpose of the review was to provide an independent review of the project management of the Plan advising on the process for preparing the new plan and ensuring the plan is delivered in a timely and efficient manner.

The review is a snapshot based on evidence gathered over a short 3 day period which identified a series of recommendations to improve management of review of the Local Development Plan. The range of recommendations included:- making additional staffing resource available to deliver the Local Development Plan on time; preparing a communications plan on how all sectors of the community are to be engaged and what channels of communication were to be used; the provision of timely feedback to stakeholders on how any representations they have made have been used; and the development of a project plan, risk assessment and contingency plan given the dependency on a small number of staff for delivering the review.

The Gateway Review proved a very worthwhile exercise providing an independent review of the Council’s plan for reviewing the Local Development Plan and highlighting a number of critical weaknesses that needed to be addressed if the project was to be delivered on time. As a result of the recommendations highlighted in the report there were a number of key changes made with more clearly defined and separated roles identified for members of the team, a communications plan developed and better feedback provided to those making representations on the Plan.

In terms of the timely preparation of the Local Development Plan, the approval timescale is predicted to be 3 months later than that anticipated by the Development Plan Scheme in February 2014 and February 2015. This would result in the Plan being completed in 33 months which is slightly more than the 31 month target set out by the Scottish Government.

3. Supporting Evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources:

- The Council's "How Good is our Council" performance self evaluation & assessment;
- [Planning, Development & Infrastructure](#), and [Policy & Resources](#) Committee reports;
- Corporate Improvement Plan;
- [Council Delivery Plan 2015-2018](#)
- [Development and Infrastructure Service Plan \(April 2013-March 2016\)](#);
- Development Plan Scheme 2015 and [Development Plan Scheme 2016](#);
- [Main Issues Report Consultation Findings](#)
- The Monitoring Statement – The Review and Monitoring of the Orkney Local Development Plan – March 2015
- Orkney Islands Council Management of Development Plans – [Gateway Review](#)
- Planning & Building Standards Stakeholders meetings;
- Planning Managers meetings; and
- Scottish Government Planning Liaison meetings.

4. Service Improvements: 2016-2017

In the coming year we will:

Quality of Outcomes

- 1. Continue to work with NHS Orkney and A+DS to deliver a high quality Orkney Hospital while ensuring that the planning application process is dealt with in a responsive and efficient manner;*
- 2. Engage independent facilitators to work with the public to establish a series of design principles to meet the aspirations of the Orkney public and inform a revision of our Design Policy approach in the emerging Local Development Plan;*

Quality of Service and Engagement

- 3. Develop alternative forms of media to communicate with customers;*
- 4. Facilitate public information sessions to assist the public's understanding of major and/or contentious planning applications and the development process;*
- 5. Increase the free pre-application advice service to five days per week from the current four day service;*

Governance

- 6. Develop a Workforce Plan for the Planning Service;*

Culture of Continuous Improvement

- 7. Review feedback and progress implementation of the actions arising from the "How Good Is Our Council" self-assessment of the Planning Service.*

5. Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2015-16:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Open for Business</p> <p>1. Provide a Planning Service presence in the new area office in Stromness;</p>	<p><i>Yes, Senior Planner established in Stromness office</i></p>
<p>High Quality Development on the Ground</p> <p>2. <i>Continue to work with NHS Orkney and A+DS to deliver a high quality Orkney Hospital;</i></p> <p>3. <i>Engage independent facilitators to work with the public to establish a series of design principles to meet the aspirations of the Orkney public and inform a revision of our Design Policy approach in the emerging Local Development Plan;</i></p>	<p><i>Yes, engagement with A+DS Design Panel plus preparation of Processing Agreements</i></p> <p><i>On-going, a new design policy has been developed in the Proposed Plan and work on design principles will be progressed upon adoption of the Local Development Plan</i></p>
<p>Certainty</p> <p>4. Consider future options for seeking developer contributions through the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report;</p> <p>5. Develop a detailed Project Plan for the review of the Local Development Plan covering resources (staffing, technology, training and financial), identifying risks and providing contingency arrangements;</p>	<p><i>Yes, options considered through consultation on the Main Issues Report and preferred option identified for inclusion in the Proposed Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, Project Plan completed. See also Case Study 6</i></p>
<p>Communications, engagement and customer service</p> <p>6. Provide timely feedback to stakeholders on how comments received from them during public consultation exercises have been used, including providing a clear explanation where responses have not been acted upon;</p> <p>7. Development of a Communications Plan to clarify how all sectors of the community are to be engaged in the review of the Local Development Plan and consider what channels of communications should be used;</p>	<p><i>Yes, all those making representations now provided with detailed response by e-mail or in writing.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, Plan developed and more innovative approaches to engagement being undertaken – see Case Study 4</i></p>

<p>Efficient and effective decision making</p> <p>8. Establish procedures which will ensure better alignment between planning application and roads construction consent processes;</p>	<p><i>On-going – Planning and Roads Services are now aware and in agreement in relation to raising awareness with applicants at the pre-application stage.</i></p>
<p>Financial Management and Local Governance</p> <p>9. Review processes for undertaking direct enforcement action including the recovery of the costs of taking such action; and</p>	<p><i>On-going – the Planning Enforcement service is currently under review and a seminar was held with elected members in March 2016. Additional resources have been identified which will allow the appointment of an additional part-time officer to bolster the service.</i></p>
<p>Culture of Continuous Improvement</p> <p>10. <i>Progress development of Service Training Plan.</i></p>	<p><i>On-going as part of Council-wide implementation. Initial work on identifying the costs of training within each service has been undertaken.</i></p>
<p><i>On-going Actions from previous years</i></p>	
<p>1. <i>Report on the results of Customer Satisfaction Survey and progress any resultant improvement actions which are identified;</i></p>	<p><i>Completed. Results of first 12 months of survey reported to Council's Planning & Regulatory Services Member/Officer Working Group</i></p>
<p>2. <i>Council performance indicators for dealing with planning applications in top quartile of Scottish councils</i></p>	<p><i>No – equal 10th out of 34 for Major applications; 8th out of 34 for Local – non householder; and 10th out of 34 for Householder developments (overall average time)</i></p>

6. Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales (based on “all applications” timescales)

Category	Total number of decisions 2015-2016	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2015-2016	2014-2015
Major developments	1	24.1	7.0
Local developments (non-householder)			
• Local: less than 2 months	190 (58.1%)	6.4	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	137 (41.9%)	13.3	14.7
Householder developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	90 (83.3%)	5.5	6.1
• Local: more than 2 months	18 (16.7%)	10.7	10.3
Housing developments			
Major	0	n/a	7.0
Local housing developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	60 (54.5%)	6.7	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	50 (45.5%)	12.5	12.6
Business and industry			
Major	0	0	0
Local business and industry			
• Local: less than 2 months	21 (55.3%)	6.5	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	17 (44.7%)	12.1	25.1
EIA developments	1	13.7	22.8
Other consents*	68	6.8	13.6
Planning/legal agreements**			
• Major: average time	0	0	0
• Local: average time	1	7.6	36.7
Local reviews	12	10.6	11.3

* Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & 8 relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

** Legal obligations associated with a planning permission; concluded under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2015-2016		2014-2015	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	12	7	58.3	2	66.7
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	5	2	40.0	2	66.7

C: Enforcement activity

	2015-2016	2014-2015
Cases taken up	20	33
Breaches Identified	20	33
Cases Resolved	10	19
Notices served***	2	5
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

*** Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices, and Section 33 notices.

D: CONTEXT

There was a significant increase of 18.8% in the total number of development decisions (local and major) in Orkney from 367 in 2014/15 to 436 in 2015/16.

Average timescales for local (both non-householder and householder) developments have shown improvements over the previous year. The average timescale for householder developments (6.4 weeks) and non-householder developments (9.3 weeks) compared very favourably with the Scottish average of 7.5 weeks and 12.3 weeks.

The above improvements in performance were achieved despite the Development Management team not having a full complement of staff at any time during the reporting period.

The timescale for determining major applications show a significant deterioration in comparison with the previous reporting period however it should be noted that this refers to a single application - for the continued extraction of minerals at Heddle Quarry, Firth. For this application there was an extension of time agreed between the applicant and the Council for the determination of the application to allow additional environmental information to be submitted by the applicant.

7. Workforce and Financial Information

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Planning Service			1.0	

		DM	DP	Enforcement	Other
Managers	No. Posts	1.0	1.0		
	Vacant	0	0		
Main grade posts	No. Posts	3.8	5.8	0.5	1.8
	Vacant	0	0	0	
Technician	No. Posts	3.0	1.0		
	Vacant	1.0	0		
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	1.0	1.0		
	Vacant	0	0		
TOTAL		8.8	8.8	0.5	1.8

Staffing profile	Number
Under 30	3
30-39	7
40-49	4
50 and Over	6

Committees & site visits	No. per year (2015)
Full Council committees	0
Planning Committees	10
Area Committees (where relevant)	n/a
Committee site visits	3
LRB	8
LRB site visits	13

Budgets (2015/16)	Budget	Costs		Income
		Direct	Indirect	
Development Management	£392,900	£341,800	£51,100	£280,200
Development Planning	£379,400	£334,600	£44,800	£21,000
Enforcement (inc. within Development Management)				

Planning Services Structure

