



**Planning Performance Framework
Orkney Islands Council**

Annual Report 2016/2017

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1. Defining and Measuring a High-quality Planning Service

a. Quality of Outcomes

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. Historic Environment Scotland has also ring fenced a fund of £0.65 million to be utilised in the delivery of the Scheme. This investment will stimulate development and promote the survival of some of Scotland's most fragile communities. The development of the Phase 2 bid for funding continued during 2016/17 with a funding application to be made to the HLF in October 2017.

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.

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. The detailed planning application for the site was approved by the Council in November 2016.

A whole range of Supplementary Guidance to support the emerging Local Development Plan has been subject to public consultation during 2016/17. These have covered (consultation dates in brackets) - Settlement Statements (May-Jun 2016); Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage (Oct – Dec 2016); Natural Environment (Oct-Dec 2016); Energy (Dec 16-Feb 17); Housing in the Countryside (Dec 16-Feb 17); and Aquaculture (Mar-Apr 17).

The [Kirkwall South Development Brief](#) was approved as Planning Policy Advice in November 2016. This development brief has been prepared to inform the strategic development of a large area of land on the southern edge of Kirkwall. This land includes housing sites in the new Local Development Plan capable of accommodating up to 250 units together with the site of the new Orkney Hospital and various smaller associated areas of land.

CASE STUDY 1 – KIRKWALL SOUTH DEVELOPMENT BRIEF



The Kirkwall South Development Brief was a large scale masterplanning exercise covering four major housing land allocations on the edge of town to the south of the new hospital site. The vision of the document was to create a coordinated approach to this strategic expansion of the town's south boundary. It aimed to create a framework which supported contextually responsive, design-led development which is well connected to the town.

The drafting process involved detailed site analysis which addressed a number of issues including landscape character, townscape setting, flood risk and archaeology. It also considered the existing provision of open space and active travel infrastructure surrounding the allocations. An area of open space at Scapa Crescent, in close proximity to the allocations, was identified as being of low quality, and recommendations for improvements made in the Open Space Survey were carried through into the development brief.

The principles of the Kirkwall Urban Design Framework were also interpreted and utilised as part of this process to ensure that the approach to development taken in the development brief was derived from the vision and principles which underpin the future development of the town as a whole.

CASE STUDY 1 – continued

A series of Development Requirements and a Strategy Plan Diagram emerged from this analysis. These provided a clear spatial framework for development which responds to the site characteristics, constraints and opportunities. This included identification of site access points, active travel connections, landscape sensitive areas and building zones. Active travel connections were required within allocations, but also to connect them to the wider area, in particular to the new hospital and the open space at Scapa Crescent. Further, more detailed guidance was also provided for each allocation ensuring that the principles of each relate to the vision for the whole masterplan area. The approach taken is fundamentally underpinned by Placemaking Principles.

Of particular note on this project was the pioneering approach taken to the establishment of itemised developer contribution requirements for upgrades to and active travel connections to the existing area of open space at Scapa Crescent.

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 £3.5 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. Two of the priority projects within the THI – the change of use of the former Kirkwall Library into a shop, gallery, café bar and music venue both received planning approval in Summer 2016. In February 2017 the Council agreed the delivery through the Initiative of public realm improvements at three key locations in the centre of Kirkwall.

CASE STUDY 2 – FORMER LIBRARY CONVERSION – PROTECTED AMENITY AND DESIGN



Pre-application discussions were undertaken regarding the conversion of a former public library to a shop and gallery, with other phased works proposed on adjoining land. The building was vacant for over ten years. The building is of particular historic interest, designed by local architect J Malcolm Baikie and officially opened in 1909. It is Scotland's most remote and Europe's most northerly Carnegie library. The building is category B listed and located within Kirkwall Conservation Area.

Advice was provided on process, and agreement was reached with the developer to finalise the plans for all phases of the development so that it could be submitted as a single application. That included demolition of an adjacent modern building and extension of the library to form a café bar with a commercial kitchen and a music venue. That approach of encouraging all phases together allowed the cumulative impact on the appearance and setting of the listed building to be assessed from the outset, and allowed neighbours and the public to better understand the function of some extensions, which would appear incongruous without later phases.

CASE STUDY 2 – continued

In accordance with the principles of the guidance document 'New Design in Historic Settings', the developer was encouraged to produce a contemporary design response in new structures, to be harmonious with and respect the original building, but also suggest an honesty and confidence in modern architecture.

The contemporary design detailing was focussed on the rear of the building, but elements of that were repeated in existing modern extensions on the side of the original building. The result is that the Victorian library building can be seen more clearly as a structure in its own right, on the basis of the deliberate contrast of the extensions on three sides, utilising high quality materials.

Negotiations with the developer accepted a significant increase in floor area but only if mitigated by works to reinstate the original building. The developer was willing to repair the unusual Norwegian slate roof, remove cement and re-point the frontage with lime mortar, carry out ashlar stone replacement, repair the original sash and case windows, and source metal rainwater goods to match the profile of the originals. The kitchen was located within the historic former librarian's house, with alterations accepted to allow its adequate function. The enhancement and protection of the listed building therefore greatly outweighed any impact on setting.

The building is in a mainly residential part of the town centre, and concerns were raised regarding the impact of noise from the music venue on neighbouring houses. Working closely with the developer and Environmental Health, the extensions were designed to contain noise, balancing construction and appearance. In order to minimise noise from users of the music venue, an operating plan was developed in conjunction with the developer, specifying no external smoking areas and normal hours of operation, but with a provision for a later night opening times to suit particular local festivals and events.

A mature tree is located within the garden to the rear of the library. The protection afforded to the tree was made clear throughout the process, and the developer ultimately designed the development to work around the tree, cutting the corner of one extension and making the tree a focus of the outside amenity space. The tree is therefore retained in perpetuity as part of the roofscape of the town.

As negotiated and approved, the development is a set of balances, between protection of residential amenity and promoting vitality in the town centre, and also between the contemporary extension of a building in a historic environment and the sympathetic restoration of a prominent and architecturally significant listed building.

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 area office in Stromness with a Senior Planner being based there on a permanent basis since 2015.

Details of pre-application advice are recorded on our UNIFORM casework management system. Two thirds (67%) of all planning applications were subject to pre-application advice. 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.

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

In order to provide more certainty for developers we have approved the [National Roads Development Guide and](#) the [Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy in Orkney](#) as Planning Policy Advice.

Supplementary Guidance covering [Developer Contributions and Good Neighbour Agreements](#) was approved in September 2013. 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 last monetary figure secured through a developer contribution in Orkney was in 2011. We have continued with identifying developer contributions required to make a development acceptable in the LDP Settlement Statements and Development Briefs with the most recent included within the [Kirkwall South Development Brief](#). Further contributions required towards a limited number of strategic capital infrastructure projects will be identified in new Development Management Guidance to be prepared. However we recognise the important role developers play in a fragile island economy, particularly in the continued challenging financial climate, so we will continue with our proportionate approach to developer funding.

The availability of processing agreements is publicised on our [website](#) and we worked with NHS Orkney and the successful bidder for the new Orkney Hospital project to develop a processing agreements which was agreed in June 2016. As the scale of development in Orkney is not significant, opportunities for using processing agreements for major development is limited. We also held a public Information session was in July 2016 to present the emerging plans for the new hospital.

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 Environment 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 Standards Stakeholders Forum.

We continue to encourage customers to submit planning applications electronically. 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.

The use of on-line interactive mapping technology has been developed to allow users of our Energy and Aquaculture Supplementary Guidance to have more accessible information in relation to potential constraints and sensitive areas in regard to wind farm and fish farming developments. We have also published our annual Housing Land Audit as an [interactive document](#) for the first time using the same ESRI ‘story map’ format as the proposed Local Development Plan and related supplementary guidance.

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 2016/17 we received 3 complaints about the Planning Service. Two of the complaints were partially upheld resulting in improvements being made by the Service to descriptions of documents being placed on the ePlanning system; and changes to the standard letter used for agreements to an extension of time to determine a planning application.

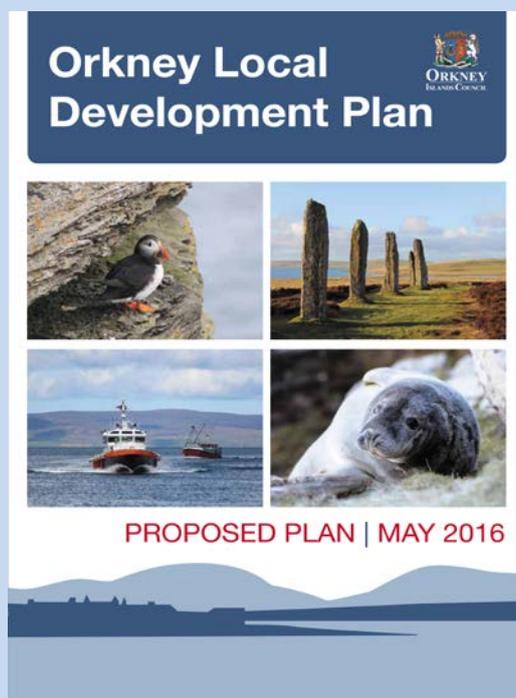
In March 2015 the Council commenced audio casting council committee meetings, including Development and Infrastructure meetings, which cover planning policy matters.

We launched an on-going Planning & Regulatory Services Customer Satisfaction Survey in October 2014. In 2016 75% of customers were satisfied with the overall quality of the service provided.

In March 2017 the Council established a new public consultation group – Orkney Opinions. This will give a group of residents the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on a range of topics. The Planning Service will be looking to make regular use of this consultation forum with specific planning questions to be issued with the first survey in 2017/18.

We have undertaken a wide range of measures to raise awareness on the public consultation on the Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan. This included publishing a video “Planning in Orkney” which covered the plan and gave folk an insight into planning and how decisions are made and policies developed. Every household in Orkney was also sent a booklet on the Proposed Plan and the Settlement Statements that gave information on the settlement development land allocations and the consultation process.

CASE STUDY 3 – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW



Stakeholder and community engagement were taken to new levels as part of the Orkney Local Development Plan review in 2016. It was an aspiration of the planning authority to engage with all elements of the community, in particular harder to reach groups, in line with the recommendations of the Main Issues Report Independent Gateway Review, which took place in 2015.

In order to ensure that members of the public were fully aware of the spatial strategy proposed by the emerging Local Development Plan, booklets were produced that included details of all settlement boundaries and all land allocations within the Proposed Plan. A copy of the booklet was sent to all address points within the County in order that every household and business was fully aware of the review timetable and of any proposed allocations that had the potential to impact upon them.

In addition, a [video](#) was produced by the Council featuring the Planning Manager and the Chair of the Planning Committee to advise of the on-going local plan review and how people could engage with the process. The video was uploaded to YouTube and linked to relevant Council and community websites, whilst also being promoted through local media platforms (newspaper and radio) and on social media to ensure maximum reach.

Close collaboration is taking place between the Planning Service and other Council services in the initial stages of key regeneration projects being developed by the Council in Stromness where the former primary school and Old Academy buildings will be refurbished, updated and extended to create an Orkney Research and Innovations Campus; and at Lyness on Hoy where it is planned to create a specialised base on Council-owned industrial

land and quayside facilities to service the emerging decommissioning markets of the North Sea oil and gas sector.

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. A key outcome of the review was that constitutional arrangements for the Planning Committee were amended from 12 members of the Council, to two elected members from each of the six electoral wards. This is to avoid an instance where all the members in a particular ward could be appointed to the committee thereby restricting the availability of members to constituents in that ward with issues to raise in regard to planning applications. A review of the Council's Schemes of Administration and Delegation is currently taking place.

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. The number of planning applications delegated to officers at 93% is slightly 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 in 2016 and this has 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. The visits to the islands will be repeated during 2018/19.

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 2016/17 was 10.2 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, as well as other performance related matters. 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 designing and implementing public realm works 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. The Planning Service is also represented on the Healthy and Sustainable Communities and Vibrant Economic Environment delivery groups of the community planning partnership.

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. The Council agreed in June 2016 the principle of the Council assuming the role of project developer of onshore wind farm projects. Two options are currently being explored – the Council acting as a developer of a small scale wind farm or farms for direct export to the National Grid, and the Council acting as the developer of a private wire onshore wind energy project to supply Council-owned properties in Kirkwall. Feasibility, planning and technical appraisals are currently being undertaken with support and input being provided by the Planning Service.

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. Further engagement with Historic Scotland to establish a Strategic Masterplan for the World Heritage Site which will consider key issues such as long-term visitor management, infrastructure provision and upgrades, opportunities for creating a World Heritage Gateway Centre and potential future governance arrangements for World Heritage Site were approved by the Council in February 2017.

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 have covered asset management; procurement; staff and workforce planning; fees and charges; outsourcing and partnerships; and modernising IT and digital shift.

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.

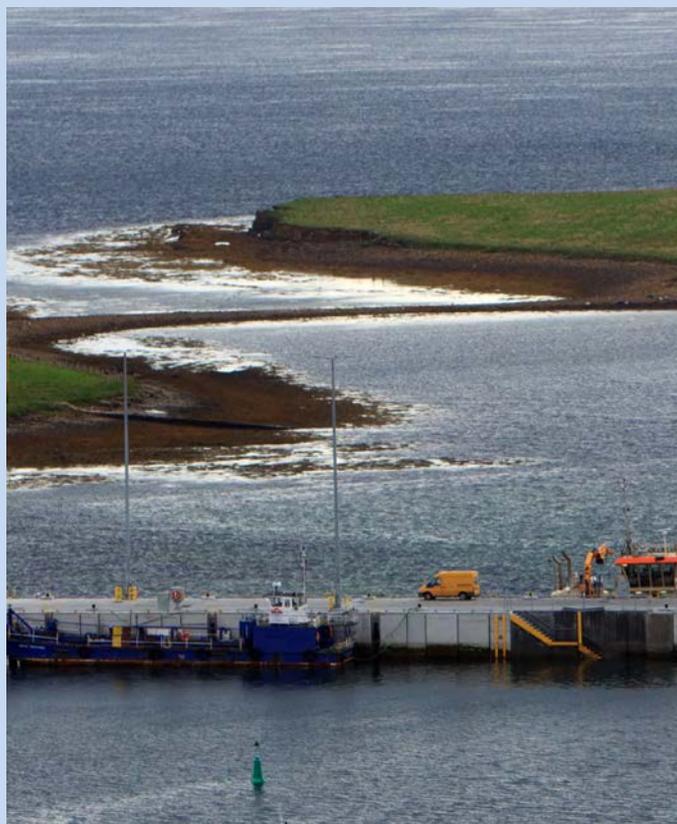
Through the “Empowering Scotland’s Island Communities” project we are working with the two other Islands Councils to identify opportunities for devolving more powers related to marine and terrestrial planning to a local level. This included a joint response by the Islands Authorities to the consultation on the Independent Review of Planning in December 2015, together with a response to the Scottish Government’s consultation on the Long Term Management of The Crown Estate in Scotland in March 2017.

A process for streamlining the procedure for the [preparation of Planning Policy documents](#) was agreed by the Council in February 2017. The revised procedure will reduce the number of draft documents being presented to committee for formal approval prior to public consultation. This will reduce the volume of reports being presented to elected members as well as reducing the timescales for the preparation and approval of planning documents.

A comprehensive [Travel Policy](#) to cover travel by Council staff and elected members was approved by the Council in September 2016. The new procedures are intended to simplify and streamline the administration process for booking travel and claiming expenses, and result in reduced costs and savings to the Council, particularly in relation to travel outwith Orkney.

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 success of this pioneering partnership working was recognised when the plan scooped the Partnership Working category at the 2016 Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning as well as being shortlisted for the Excellence in Plan Making in Practice award in the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence 2017. The Council produced a [short film](#) to promote this pioneering local marine planning project.

CASE STUDY 4 – PENTLAND FIRTH AND ORKNEY WATERS MARINE SPATIAL PLAN



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.

CASE STUDY 4 – continued

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

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

Training on particular topics continues to be provided to all staff e.g. planning officers participated in a landscape training workshop and site visit provided by Scottish Natural Heritage in November 2016.

Training continues to be provided to elected members serving on the Planning and Local Review Committees. This included a briefing on the assessment of planning applications by the Council's Roads Service in February 2017 and a training session by a QC in April 2016 providing an update on Local Review Body issues; a refresh on making good decisions, and reflections on the review of the Planning system.

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

The Planning Service was included in the Development and Infrastructure Workforce Plan 2017-22 which was agreed by the Council in February 2017.

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. Actions emerging from this exercise are currently being implemented.

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.

After continued efforts to remove legacy cases, we only have 5 planning application cases which have been in the system for over 1 year (at end of March 2017).

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

We support the development of staff to allow them to effectively undertake their duties. In 2016/17 the Planning Manager (Development and Marine Planning) completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Public Services Management and the Senior Policy Planner completed an MSc qualification in Marine Spatial Planning.

The Planning Service has embraced new technology by acquiring a commercial drone and training an Officer to pilot it to NATS standards. The technology will be used as a valuable aide in site analysis, application evaluation and for planning and access enforcement, especially in more remote and hard to reach places, during 2017/18.

2. 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 \(2016-March 2019\)](#);
- [Service Plan Monitoring Reports](#)
- [Development Plan Scheme 2016 and Development Plan Scheme 2017](#);
- [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.

3. Service Improvements: 2017-2018

In the coming year we will:

Quality of Outcomes

1. *Publish all future Local Development Plans and associated guidance in both a standard, accessible format and also as an interactive digital document;*
2. *Monitor the performance of Local Plan Policies and produce 'Development Management Guidance' or 'Planning Policy Advice' in response to issues arising or to provide greater clarity in decision making;*

Quality of Service and Engagement

3. *Publish the proposals map of the Local Plan as an interactive tool for the first time, which will allow planning stakeholders to easily identify development opportunities and constraints;*
4. *Undertake Orkney's first 'charette' to inform future development and the preparation of a revised Kirkwall Urban Design Framework;*

Governance

5. *Adopt a new Local Development Plan for Orkney, and all associated supplementary guidance documents that are referenced within the Plan;*
6. *Review and update the Planning elements of the Council's Schemes of Administration and Delegation;*
7. *Explore governance arrangements for Regional Marine Planning in Orkney;*
8. *Review and update Planning Decision Notices;*

Culture of Continuous Improvement

9. *Provide detailed training for new Council elected members on all aspects of Planning; and*
10. *Explore the use of IDOX Enterprise module as a tool for assessing performance and workloads in the Development Management service.*
11. .

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2016-17:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Quality of Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Continue to work with NHS Orkney and A+DS to deliver a high quality Orkney Hospital;</i> 2. <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;</i> 	<p><i>Yes – close working taken place prior to determination of planning application in</i></p> <p><i>On hold – pending the adoption of the Local Development Plan</i></p>
<p>Quality of Service and Engagement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>Develop alternative forms of media to communicate with customers</i> 4. <i>Facilitate public information sessions to assist the public’s understanding of major and/or contentious planning applications and the development process</i> 5. <i>Increase the free pre-application advice service to five days per week from the current four day service</i> 	<p><i>Yes – Videos produced in regard to “Planning in Orkney” to support public consultation on Proposed LDP and video to raise awareness on the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan</i></p> <p><i>Yes – public information session held in regard to the plans for the new Orkney hospital in November 2016</i></p> <p><i>On-hold – due to staffing vacancies.</i></p>
<p>Governance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. <i>Develop a Workforce Plan for the Planning Service;</i> 	<p><i>Yes – Workforce Plan incorporated within wider Development & Infrastructure Services Workforce Plan</i></p>
<p>Culture of Continuous Improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. <i>Review feedback and progress implementation of the actions arising from the “How Good Is Our Council” self-assessment of the Planning Service;</i> 	<p><i>Yes – actions are being implemented.</i></p>

4. National Headline Indicators

a) Development Planning

Key Outcomes	2016/2017	2015/2016
Age of Local Development Plan (years and months) at end of reporting period	2 years 11 months	1 year 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?	No – Plan submitted to Scottish Ministers in September 2016 as planned	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.
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes – Public consultation on the Proposed Plan undertaken in May/June 2016 as planned	Partly – consultation on Main Issues Report completed. Consultation on Proposed Plan not completed by March 2016 target – delayed by 3 months

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
	2016/2017	2015/2016
Established housing land supply	908 units	1026 units
5 year effective housing land supply	846 units	937 units
5 year housing supply targets	622 units*	622 units
5 year effective housing land supply	6.8 years	7.5 years
Housing approvals	198 units	135 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	639 units	838 units
Marketable employment land supply	166.1ha	167.2 ha (within LDP Settlement Boundaries)
Employment land take-up during reporting year	1.1ha	0.9 ha

* during 2016/2017, a new Housing Needs and Demands Assessment (HNDA) was emerging, which would provide up to date housing target figures for the new Orkney Local Development Plan. The figure above is based on the former HNDA and replicates the target for the previous year.

b) Development Management

Project Planning		
	2016/2017	2015/2016
Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice	67%	71%
Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan	0	0
Percentage planned timescales met	n/a	n/a
Decision-making		
Application approval rate	96.4%	95.2%
Delegation rate	93.2%	91.9%
Decision-making Timescales		
Average Number of Weeks to a decision:		
Major Developments	n/a	24.1
Local Developments (non-householder)	8.3	9.3
Householder Developments	9.1	6.4
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	2	6
Number remaining	5	2
Enforcement		
time since enforcement charter published/reviewed (full years)	18 months	6 months
number of breaches identified/resolved	124/82	20/10

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 2016/17 with the Proposed Plan published for public consultation during May and June 2016. Following public consultation the Proposed Plan and unresolved issues were submitted to Scottish Ministers for Examination in September 2016. The Reporter appointed by Scottish Ministers confirmed that the council's consultation and engagement exercises on the Plan conformed with the

original Participation Statement. The Examination Report which detailed the conclusions of the Reporter was received in January 2017. In March 2017 the Council agreed to advertise the Council's intention to adopt the Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 having incorporated the modifications proposed by the Reporter.

The core objective of ensuring that the Plan was reviewed within the term of the current Council has been met.

Development Management

Overall the average decision for all local development applications has improved from 8.6 weeks to 8.5 weeks and compares favourably with the Scottish average of 9.2 weeks. This improvement in performance has been achieved despite the Development Management team not having a full complement of staff at any time during the reporting period.

The improvement in timescales for determining non householder applications was in contrast to the deterioration in timescales for determining householder applications. This drop in performance is explained by the fact that householder and non-contentious applications would normally be dealt with by junior staff and turned around quickly. However a part-reduction in Assistant Technician cover and absence of a Graduate Planner for much of the reporting period resulted in those simpler applications being spread across all officers, amongst a general caseload. As a result, householder determination timescales deteriorated.

The reporting period also included the determination of a legacy householder application from 2010, which took 1,944 days to determine. That was stated in a footnote added by the Scottish Government in the quarter 3 performance statistics: "3. The average decision time has been skewed by one lengthy householder decision that took over 5 years."

Non-householder timescales improved to 8.3 weeks over the reporting period, from 9.3 weeks in 2015/16.

No major applications were determined during the reporting period. However two AMC applications were determined for significant developments which had been subject to a major application for planning permission in principle, including the new Orkney hospital.

5. Official Statistics

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

Category	Total number of decisions 2016-2017	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2016-2017	2015-2016
Major developments	0	0	24.1
Local developments (non-householder)			
• Local: less than 2 months	179 (67.8%)	6.4	6.4
• Local: more than 2 months	85 (32.2%)	12.2	13.3
Householder developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	99 (81.1%)	5.9	5.5
• Local: more than 2 months	23 (18.9%)	22.6	10.7
Housing developments			
Major	0	n/a	n/a
Local housing developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	68 (66.0%)	6.5	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	35 (34.0%)	12.6	12.5
Business and industry			
Major	0	n/a	n/a
Local business and industry			
• Local: less than 2 months	52 (72.2%)	6.6	6.5
• Local: more than 2 months	20 (27.8%)	11.5	12.1
EIA developments	0	n/a	13.7
Other consents*	102	8.7	6.8
Planning/legal agreements**			
• Major: average time	0	n/a	n/a
• Local: average time	1	9.0	7.6
Local reviews	7	10.2	10.6

* 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 & 7 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			
		2016-2017		2015-2016	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	7	2	28.6	7	58.3
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	2	0	0	2	40.0

C: Enforcement activity

	2016-2017	2015-2016
Cases taken up	6	20
Breaches Identified	124	20
Cases Resolved	82	10
Notices served***	7	2
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

Overall the average decision for all local development applications has improved from 8.6 weeks to 8.5 weeks and compares favourably with the Scottish average of 9.2 weeks. An improvement in non-householder timescales (9.3 weeks to 8.3 weeks) was in contrast to householder applications where performance dropped (6.4 weeks to 9.1 weeks).

As indicated previously the Development Management team did not have a full complement of staff at any time during the reporting period. Householder and non-contentious applications would normally be dealt with by junior staff and turned around quickly. However a part-reduction in Assistant Technician cover and absence of a Graduate Planner for much of the reporting period resulted in those simpler applications being spread across all officers, amongst a general caseload. As a result, householder determination timescales deteriorated.

During the course of the year the staffing resource dealing with enforcement matters was augmented for a temporary period resulting in an increase in the level of enforcement activity.

6. Workforce 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	5.7	0.5	2.8
	Vacant	2.0	0.1	0	0
Technician	No. Posts	3.0	1.0		
	Vacant	0.6	0		
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	1.0	1.0		
	Vacant	1.0	0.5		
TOTAL		8.8	8.8	0.5	2.8

Staffing profile	Number
Under 30	2
30-39	7
40-49	4
50 and Over	7

Committees & site visits	No. per year (2016)
Full Council committees	0
Planning Committees	9
Area Committees (where relevant)	n/a
Committee site visits	3
LRB	5
LRB site visits	5

Planning Services Structure

