



Shetland

Islands Council

MINUTE

A & B

Scrutiny Committee

Board Room, Economic Development Unit, North Ness

Friday 3 November 2006 at 11 a.m.

Present:

J P Nicolson

B Cheyne

R G Feather

F B Grains

L G Groat

I J Hawkins

F A Robertson

Apologies

T W Stove

In attendance (Officers):

J R Smith, Head of Organisational Development

P Peterson, Performance Management Co-ordinator

A Cogle, Service Manager – Administration

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minute

The minute of meeting held on 12 September 2006, was confirmed.

Min. Ref.	Subject	Action/Info
21/06	<u>Statutory Performance Indicators – Follow Up Report Appendix 1</u> The Performance Management Co-Ordinator advised that this report was a summary of the reasons behind the poorer performances, commented on by the Committee at its last meeting. The Committee noted the case study on staffing of the Benefits Section, and agreed that this was a useful and interesting report. Members queried whether this could indicate a need to look across	

	<p>the whole Council, to try and understand the continuing increase in staffing.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development said that may be useful, but in this particular example, the work and staffing requirements of the Benefits Section was defined by the population levels, in addition to the introduction of technical solutions – direct debit and automated payment systems on-line. He said other service area requirements fluctuated or increased depending on the service – e.g. education and social work, and that whilst the approach taken by the Benefits Section could be extended to other service areas, this should be done in the context of the parameters of those service areas.</p> <p>The Committee noted that whilst the statutory performance indicators could be meaningless and it was preferable to set and monitor local indicators, there was a concern that this should not allow standards to drop.</p> <p>The Committee considered the information relating to street lighting, and agreed to ask the service to explain to the Committee how they were effectively managing street lighting.</p> <p>Regarding the double counting of some income resulting in a higher net cost per property, the Committee asked that this be checked to see if it was only on last year's figures that this matter had come to light, or if this had been a long standing error.</p>	
22/06	<p><u>Performance Management Update - Appendix 2</u></p> <p>Mr J P Nicolson referred to section 3.1 of the report and said that despite a “not achieved” response at this stage not being a failure to meet the target, he hoped that such a response did not diminish the usefulness of the report.</p> <p>Reference was made to page 3 of the appendix, and to the involvement of Organisational Development in areas which Members believed lay more appropriately with Community Development. However, it was noted that Organisational Development's involvement was through its responsibility for Community Planning, which drew together support from public sector agencies, and worked alongside officers from Community Development.</p> <p>Members referred to targets under Community Safety, and it was noted that the Head of Housing held responsibility under his chairmanship of the Community Safety Partnership, although the day to day work was carried out by the Community Safety Officer. It was further noted that Neighbourhood Support Workers had contributed towards the meeting of targets in relation to the reduction of vandalism.</p> <p>Regarding section 2.2, Mrs I J Hawkins said that it should be noted that the failure to achieve the flooding and coastal protection policy and grants</p>	

	<p>scheme was due to lack of staffing. Regarding section 2.5 and public bus services, Mrs Hawkins questioned how the number of passengers was being calculated, and was concerned that this did not necessarily reflect the quality of the service.</p> <p>It was agreed that this would be a useful area for Members to receive further information on.</p> <p>Reference was made to the SVQ training programme for Social Care Workers, and Members were aware of the problems this was causing for some individuals who were not keen to undertake academic study. However, it was noted that failure to achieve qualified staff was a high risk for the Council and had prompted criticism from the Care Commission, and Social Work staff were working hard to achieve the targets, but more detailed information could be sought as to how the targets were being achieved.</p> <p>Regarding the Community Portal, the Committee noted that this was an excellent facility, and that the target should be to assist groups to establish websites 'as appropriate'.</p>	
23/06	<p><u>Concluding the Scrutiny Investigations and bringing recommendations to the Council – discussions</u></p> <p>The Committee noted that the Head of Organisational Development would draft reports regarding the Committee's completion of its investigation into both Housing Voids and Gender Balance. The reports would come to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for approval before being submitted to Council.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to arrange a follow-up visit to the Planning Service.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the timescale for carrying out many more investigations was limited, and agreed that further information be sought regarding the Transport Service, and that consideration be given to the remaining business of the Committee.</p> <p>At the request of the Committee, the Head of Organisational Development agreed to find out from Social Care the extent to which the requirement for SVQs was causing problems with training.</p>	

The meeting concluded at 11.50 a.m.

J P Nicolson
Chairperson



Shetland Islands Council

REPORT

To: ~~Scrutiny Committee~~~~Shetland Islands Council~~ ~~4 Dec 2006~~
~~February 2007~~~~Executive Committee~~ ~~10 May 24th June~~
~~2003~~~~2005th~~
~~Executive Committee~~~~Shetland Islands Council~~ ~~20 March 2007~~
~~May 2005~~

From: Head of Organisational Development

REPORT No: ~~CE-50-F-54-D1~~~~31-D120-D1~~

~~ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES PERFORMANCE~~
~~MANAGEMENT UPDATES~~~~SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE~~

1 INTRODUCTION Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the ~~Executive Committee~~Council of the outcome of recent investigations by the Scrutiny Committee, the recommendations flowing from these investigations and provide further information on its recent and planned activities. ~~and Council of the perceived priorities of the Organisational Development Service, set out some proposals for tackling those priorities and provide an opportunity for discussion and feedback to help work planning on progress and plans for Corporate Performance Management and associated matters.~~

2 BACKGROUND Background

2.1 The creation of an Organisational Development Service was approved by the Council in February 2003 to enable a more focussed and better resourced integrated service for;

- ? Policy & Planning Coordination
- ? Organisational Development and Structures
- ? Community Planning & Focus
- ? Best Value

2.2 The remit to deliver this agenda was seen to be vested in the new Executive Committee.

~~EST~~~~ALUE~~~~alue~~~~AND~~~~and~~~~ERVICE~~~~ervice~~~~LANNING~~~~lanning~~

Link to Corporate Priorities ~~Best Value~~ Audit

~~The "Audit-~~ The Council is committed to "Challenging target setting and the frank and honest review of performance" as part of its commitment to organising our business effectively.~~of Best Value" in Shetland Islands Council was published at the end of March this year and has previously been distributed to members, officers and the media as well as being available on the Council's website.~~

General Scrutiny Activity

The committee had its first meeting in March this year. During its short life this far it has considered a wide range of evidence relating to Council service performance against its objectives in the Corporate Improvement Plan, our relative and trend performance on Statutory Performance Indicators and other benchmarking information and Service performance against service plans as part of the periodic service review activity undertaken across the Council. ~~These and other sources of information on the performance of the Council has generated a number of topics which the scrutiny committee considered warranted further investigation.~~ Other areas covered have included:

- ~~Customer Care Standards – led to these being included in the performance management reports for all Services and is now monitored at the quarterly performance reviews~~
- ~~Planning Service performance and staffing levels – led to additional resources being agreed for the Planning Section~~

~~tion.~~

The majority of these were dealt with through requests for further information or clarification to the officers most directly involved in the area concerned and have resulted in either greater understanding of the issue involved or minor changes to practices to improve outcomes.

Two areas were selected by the ~~Scrutiny~~ ~~Committee~~ for more in-depth investigation. The objectives ~~being~~ were to determine the underlying causes of apparent poor performance, and to establish whether there were recommendations that could be made as to how this performance could be improved. The results of these investigations into the proportions of men and women in the Councils higher paid jobs, and length of time it takes to let Council ~~houses,~~ houses are summarised below and attached in detail as appendices.

The presentation of the recommendations from these investigations to Council completes the ~~– Committee's work on these areas~~ standard investigation cycle. The ~~Committee~~ expects at its next meeting to consider further performance data and select other areas for further enquiry, to continue the activity of open review of Council performance.

The ~~Scrutiny~~ ~~Committee~~ has ~~ve~~ also been keen to identify areas where valuable lessons might be learned from good performance and to have

those lessons communicated across the Council. An example of this was a case study on reductions in the cost of Council Tax collection and administration, which was circulated to all managers recently.

~~The content of the report largely builds on a self-assessment exercise carried out during last year when the Council generally examined its service delivery and business arrangements. A substantial amount of work has already been undertaken to address many of the issues raised, however much also remains to be done.~~

~~The Council is now required to consider this report, and the Accounts Commission's findings, and prepare and submit an improvement plan by the 30 June 2005 that sets specific targets and timescales to address remaining issues.~~

~~Suggested main themes for our improvement plan are set out in the last page of the Audit report. The Executive Committee is invited to consider these and make any comments to the Council on areas for further debate or discussion.~~

2.3 EDUCATION ~~education~~ **ESTALUE** ~~alue~~ **SERVICE REVIEW** ~~Service Review~~ **A Head of Service** ~~was appointed for Organisational Development on the 1st May and this report is a brief summary of the perceived key priorities for discussion.~~

3 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES ~~Sest Value Audit~~ **EST VALUE** **AUDIT**

Service Reviews **Scrutiny Investigation – Gender Balance**

~~Budget task forces reviewing Social Work and Ferries have been initiated with Education and Administrative Overheads following later. The work already done on Support Services will be incorporated into the Administrative Overheads group's work. The Committee were concerned that the Council had one of the lowest percentages of women among the highest paid groups of staff compared to other Councils.~~

~~These review groups have a terms of reference which cover the core Best Value features of balancing quality of service against cost. They will also be expected to consider a wide range of options or alternative models for service delivery. The investigation confirmed that this was the case but found a major cause of this was statistics in Shetland being skewed by the number of male marine staff we employ.~~

The Committee did however conclude that efforts had to be made to improve matters in a number of areas including;

- Ensuring that staff development opportunities were fully accessible to all
- The Exit interview arrangements recently introduced were carried out as often as possible and issues arising communicated and resolved
- Efforts were made within schools and more widely to promote entry by women to marine cadet schemes -so that greater equality in the Marine area would be promoted over time.
- Both staff and members to have- induction support on the effective maintenance of professional working arrangements.

The Committee also undertook to continue to monitor this area to understand further whether progress was being made. ~~toolkits and guidelines for these types of service reviews will be reviewed and updated as part of this exercise.~~

Corporate PlanningScrutiny Investigation – Housing Voids

Updates on progress against Corporate Plan implementation up to the end of March 2004 are included attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. The Executive Committee are invited to discuss and comment on progress. The Committ

When comparing the Council's performance with Orkney and Western Isles Councils, the Committee noted that only 17% of empty Council houses in Shetland had been re-let within 4 weeks. That had meant the Council was ranked 24th out of 32 Local Authorities for 2004/2005.

As this was a subject that constituents commonly raised with Councillors, they felt that it was worthy of more detailed investigation. ~~ee were concerned that~~

5.2 The investigation found that there were several contributory factors to the level of performance, not all of which were within the control of the Housing Service. These included: ~~All Heads of Service and Service managers have now completed 4 days management development training. This has covered the linking of Corporate Plans to service plans to service delivery and to performance management, monitoring and reporting. This, along with other planned support, should allow the improvement plan to be developed and implemented from within existing staff resources.~~

During next cycle the Council's Corporate Pplan will be updated and refreshed with new targets and timescales set. It is anticipated that required

~~improvement actions highlighted in the Best Value Audit will be integrated into this refresh.~~

~~Therefore it is proposed that work on the development of a Corporate Improvement Plan is continued and that a draft of that plan will be the subject of a special seminar with members during June with a view to obtaining final Council approval at the meeting of the full Council on 29th June.~~

- ~~• the condition of the housing stock~~
- ~~• houses being returned in poor condition~~
- ~~• requirement to carry out major repairs or improvement works on some properties~~
- ~~• trying to keep management costs, and subsequently rents, as low as possible means that there are limits to the number of DLO staff available to carry out repairs on void houses~~
- ~~• time for relatives to clear a deceased tenant's house~~
- ~~• houses having to be offered to more than one prospective tenant~~
- ~~• low demand for Council houses in some rural areas~~

Service Planning

~~All services are currently consolidating year-end reviews on implementation of their Service Plans. Summaries of these reviews are being published on the Council's Intranet site as they are completed. All are targeted to be finished by the end of May.~~

~~As a follow up activity Services are also updating service plans for this year with new performance targets and service improvement actions. Summaries of these plans will again be available on the Council's Intranet site and approval for their contents will be requested during the June meeting cycle.~~

5.3 Following discussion sessions with members of the Housing Management Team and Hjalmland Housing Association, it was agreed that the following improvements would be put in place:

- Review the existing Void Management policy and produce a void management manual – early 2007
- Carry out a review of the Allocation Policy to take account of possible implementation of choice-based lettings scheme and the Homelessness Policy Review
- Put in place arrangement for Hjalmland Housing Association to advertise the Council houses that have been void for the longest time
- Start the void management process earlier – not waiting till the departing tenants hand their keys back

5.4 The Committee concluded by committing to continue to monitor progress through the Statutory Performance Indicators and through performance review sessions with the Housing Service.

Steps have now been introduced by the Chief Executive on freezing recruitment (other than essential front line), calls are out for voluntary redundancies and early retirements with end of May deadlines. Temporary staff contracts are not being renewed (unless by rare exception), and the number and need for policy and strategy groups across the Council is to be reviewed.

BEST VALUE RESOURCING ~~Best Value Resourcing~~
Corporate Plan –

~~As this is perhaps the key political statement made by the Council it would seem appropriate that the Executive Committee forms the “working group” that develops the plan.~~

~~Officer support will primarily come from Organisational Development as other senior managers main function in relation to this plan will be to develop appropriate service responses to implement its objectives. These responses should be captured in the Service Plans, an area which the External Auditors felt warranted higher priority. Guidance is now sought on the timetable for corporate plan development.~~

~~**3.2** Community Planning Board and Community Plan – With the Local Government Scotland Act, the Community Planning now has a statutory basis and the Council has an obligation to facilitate and co-ordinate the Community Planning process. The Community Planning Board is in the process of updating the Community Plan and would expect to inform and be informed by the Council's Corporate Plan. The Community Plan, in general, must seek to balance economic, social and environmental objectives and reflect cross-cutting themes such as equality, health improvement and sustainable development. Council member appointment to the Community Planning Board is made by the Executive Committee. The last Council had a single political representative on the Community Planning Board; as there is a general wish to engage on environmental, economic and social themes a wider representation with links to each of the stakeholder forums may be an alternative option.~~

~~The Community Planning Board will have its next meeting on the 7th July and is continuing to update its community plan and develop supporting structures to strengthen effective community planning.~~

~~**3.3** Best Value – Best value has also become a statutory duty with the adoption of the Local Government Scotland Act. The Council now has to “achieve continuous improvement in the performance of all its functions” and provides the Accounts Commission with the power to ensure that is happening.~~

~~Locally Best Value has found progress limited beyond the Education Service Review and options will have to be examined to complete work in that area. In the short term this will be informed by the seminar on the 26th June. Regardless of the outcome regarding Education effective progress will also have to be made in other areas.~~

~~In the previous Council the Standing Committee was the “member working group” providing political leadership to this process. The Executive Committee are requested to confirm that it will assume that role from now on.~~

~~Following that confirmation a detailed review of the overall state of progress regarding service reviews and options for next steps will be brought forward.~~

~~**3.4 Single Status** — The single status initiative to harmonise terms and conditions of staff is the biggest individual project being run out of Organisational Development. It is perhaps the biggest internal project the Council has ever undertaken and there are significant concerns about its timetable. An update report was provided to Council in February that overviewed progress and obtained approval to augment the project team with additional staff funded from existing Council budgets. Progress must now be made in this area and confirmation is sought from this committee that this project should continue to feature as a high priority for the service in order to achieve the implementation date of April 2005.~~

~~**3.5 Staff Development and Training** — There is widespread agreement that the Council's main asset is their staff and that if any real service improvement is going to be delivered it will be through the development and better application of the skills and abilities of staff and members. A Performance Appraisal scheme for Executive Directors and Service Heads has been in place since June 2000 and it is necessary to consider the next stage in the natural development of this scheme which is to cascade to other levels within the organisation. There is currently much discussion and debate ongoing about how the Council's staff development functions should be organised with Induction, Management Development and the College and Training Section Reviews all currently happening. It seems likely the conclusion of all these reviews will identify the need for proper co-ordination of Staff Development requirements, including members, within the core of the organisation. That will probably require a Staff Development role to be re-established within the Personnel Service, however that will be the subject of future reports.~~

~~Currently the general views of the Executive Committee are invited on the relative priority of staff development, particularly on any member training and development issues, as efforts will be made to deal with these, if possible, without waiting for all reviews to be complete.~~

~~**3.6 Communications** — The last Council's Corporate Plan recognised the need to improve Council communications. To that end a Communications Strategy and Customer Care Guidelines have been prepared and are now ready to be brought forward for final discussion and implementation.~~

~~The overall package of work also includes revised Public and Staff Suggestion Schemes, and updated Complaints Scheme and a revised version of the Council's Corporate Styles and Standards. The strategy contains proposals regarding Internal, External and Media Communications and recommends that the vacant Communications Officer post is filled to provide a dedicated member of staff whose prime function is to assist and improve the Council in all aspects of its communications.~~

~~The responsibility for ensuring a corporate approach to communication has not been delegated to any Committee or officer, therefore a decision of Council will be sought prior to implementation, with detailed reports next cycle. However the views of the Executive Committee regarding the priority of this work area is sought to inform the planning of future activities within Organisational Development.~~

4FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONSFinancial Implications

~~There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.~~

~~4.1 Detailed proposals to progress each of the priority activities will be brought forward as required.~~

5POLICY & DELEGATED AUTHORITYPolicy & Delegated Authority

~~5.1 Arrangements to ensure effective Corporate Performance Management The and monitoring of the discharge of Best Value are part of the remit of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has delegated authority to implement decisions within its remit for which overall objectives have been approved by the Council, in addition to appropriate budget provision (SIC 90/03) Recommendations on changes to Corporate or Service Policy are the Responsibility of the relevant Service Committee. As this report makes recommendations regarding activities across a number of Services falling within the remit of a number of Service Committees, a single consideration by CouncilExecutive Committee is sought for clarity and efficiency.~~

~~It is a requirement of the Best Value regime that the findings of the Best Value Audit regime and the any the associated improvement plan require decisions of Council.~~

~~Council is currently considering the delegated responsibilities and decision making powers of the Executive Committee. However the nomination of Member representation of the Community Planning Board was specifically delegated by the Council to the Executive Committee, Minute Ref SIC 70/03.~~

6CONCLUSIONSConclusions

~~6.1 Continuous improvement in the delivery of services to the public of Shetland is the Council's prime objective. The Best Value regime and the Council's emerging Pperformance Mmanagement Fframework provide important opportunities to contribute to this improvementChecking whether we are doing a good job at doing what we said we would do is key to finding ways to do things better.~~

The Scrutiny Committee is one way to take an honest and frank look at areas where the evidence suggests we could do better or could learn more about why we are doing well.

The initial investigations performed on behalf of the Committee have provided useful insight into a number of areas and suggest this approach has a continued value as part of the Councils overall Performance Management Arrangements.

~~7~~RECOMMENDATIONS—Recommendations

~~The Executive Committee recommend~~I recommend the Executive ~~to Council~~Committee;

notes the activity of the Scrutiny Committee to date and;
endorses the findings and recommendations of the two completed investigations.

~~that they note the contents of this report, and endorse the development of a Corporate Improvement Plan by 29th June to address the issues raised in the Audit of Best Value and progress implementation of the Council's Corporate Priorities.~~

~~I recommend that the Executive Committee~~

;

~~7.1 Confirm member appointment(s) to the Community Planning Board, and~~

~~7.2 Note the other contents of this report.~~

Date: ~~24 December~~February 2007~~65 April 2005~~10th June~~nd~~November
2003~~November 2003~~

Our Ref: ~~JRS /AMAAMA~~ Report No: ~~CE-50-F-54-D120-~~
~~D131-D1~~

~~Report No:~~

Report

1. Introduction

1.1. This report is a review of employee gender balance within Shetland Islands Council as requested by the Scrutiny Committee. The Terms of Reference for the Investigation is attached as appendix 1 to this report

2. Summary conclusions

2.1. Shetland Island Council continues to perform poorly against the Statutory Performance Indicator which drew the scrutiny committee's attention to this area in the first instance. Indeed performance has worsened against that indicator in the last year.

2.2. However there is a specific and identifiable local reason for this indicator being skewed in a significant fashion. The conclusion at this stage is that when those circumstances are factored into the statistics the situation in Shetland is similar, or perhaps even better balanced than most Local Authorities in Scotland. And that further actions are in place which should continue to assist in supporting gender balance into the future.

2.3. Analysis of individual opinion provides more of a picture of complex relationships between senior members of staff, their colleagues and members regardless of gender than any specific gender issue.

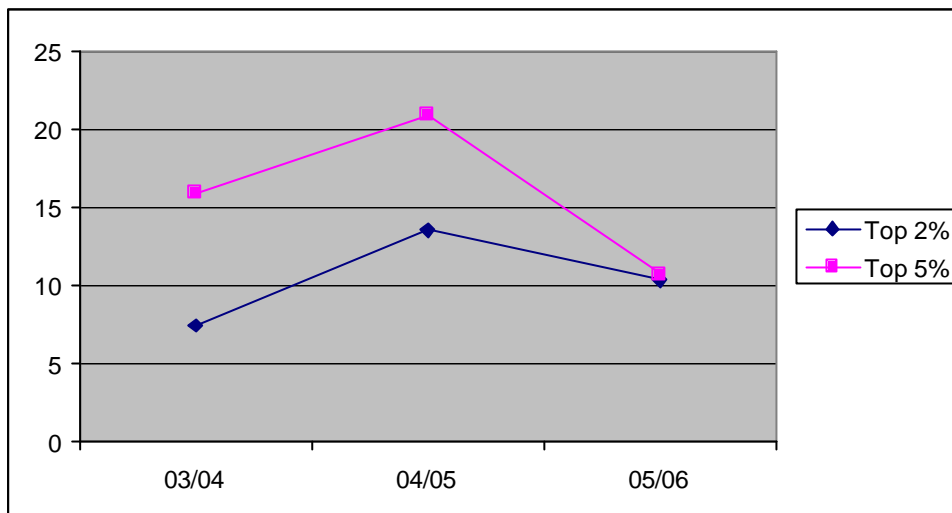
2.4. Gender equality is a key component in the Councils commitment to Equal Opportunities and will need to continue to be progressed. The Councils overall commitment to merit based appointment and development, however remains its overriding principle.

3. Statistical evidence

3.1. Two statutory performance indicators are collated by Audit Scotland in relation to Local Authority Staff gender balance. %'s of the top 2 and 5% of earners who are female.

3.2. These statistics have been collected since 2003/04 and are set out for Shetland in figure 1.

3.3. *Figure 1 - % of highest earners who are women (all staff other than teachers)*



3.4. These statistics exclude teachers whose gender balance is monitored through other performance indicators.

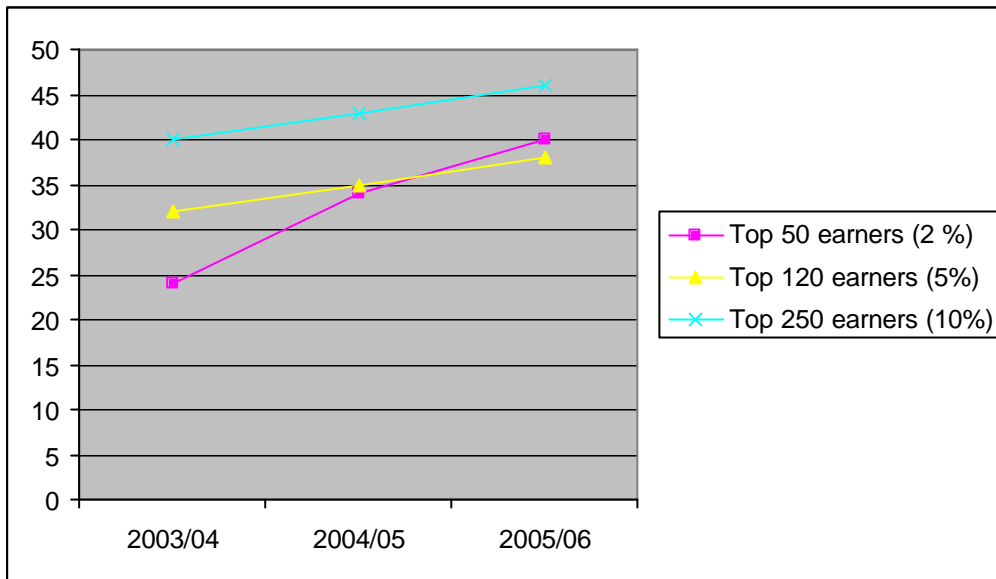
3.5. Apart from the recurring statistical issue of low numbers, the underlying cause of the decline between 04/05 and 05/06 is the Shetland Towage merger. This brought in a significant number of additional marine staff in the top pay bracket's, who were all male.

3.6. Figure 2 – Breakdown of Highest Paid Council staff by Area and Gender

Analysis of payroll for 2005/2006 – 996 male staff & 1873 female							
For the top paid 325 staff							
	Numbers				%		
	Female	Male	Total		Female	Male	Total
Teachers	79	58	137		58	42	42
Marine	0	102	102		0	100	31
All Other	39	47	86		45	55	26
Total	118	207	325 Total		36	64	100

3.7. When statistics are analysed for Council employees excluding Marine Staff and Teachers a rather different picture arises. This analysis is more comparable with other Local Authorities and Public bodies.

3.8. Figure 3 - % of highest earners who are women (non teaching / non marine)



3.9. When these figures are compared to the returns made by other Scottish Local Authorities, Shetland Islands Council would have the 3rd highest % of females among the top 2% of earners and would be 11th for the % of females in the top 5% of earners on 2004/2005 SPI figures.

3.10. The two other Island Authorities, Orkney and the Western Isles currently also return low SPI figures against this measure, at least in part also caused by the skewing due to Marine Staff.

3.11. Trend analysis of the statistics in this Council also shows a steady improvement in the general position measured with the number of women in the top 50 earners rising from 12 to 20 over the last two years.

3.12. While the comparative analysis with other Local authorities is possible, it is quite difficult to find meaningful data for Shetland or Scotland as a whole in other agencies or organisations. Locally there are a number of high profile posts held by women in the NHS, Scottish Enterprise and Charitable Trust, however with low overall numbers statistical comparisons are difficult to make.

3.13. Generally representation of Women at the highest levels within public organisations, the business community and in political leadership in Scotland is low. A survey by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2005 found that while 33.1% of managers in Scotland were women only 14.4% of directors were female Overall in Scotland 22% of Councillors are female, but that falls to an average of 15% among Independent Councillors. In Shetland 14% of Councillors are women.

4. Policy

- 4.1. Shetland Islands Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer and is committed to recruitment, development and reward of staff on the basis of merit regardless of Gender, Race, Age or Disability. These principles underpin our recruitment and all other staffing policies.
- 4.2. An analysis of recruitment data for the Heads of Service posts recently appointed suggests that applications have a similar gender breakdown to appointment.
- 4.3. Staff development is encouraged by the Council at all levels starting from apprenticeship and graduate recruitment schemes, through career grades and "grow our own" programmes in a number of areas. These development arrangements are being extended and enhanced through the roll-out of the performance review scheme to all staff and the management development and succession planning programme currently being implemented. These policies and programmes, along with all other key policies, are subject to Equality Impact Assessments including gender and form part of the Councils Equalities Strategy.
- 4.4. Retention of women staff at senior levels does not show any specific statistical variation from men. Low overall numbers mean some variation from year to year when analysing leavers however generally Shetland Islands Council enjoys very good staff retention rates and experiences long service from its staff.
- 4.5. There is a higher level of career interruption among female staff, principally maternity leave, but also flexible working arrangements, than with male staff. These interruptions, and the greater responsibility which women still tend to bear for family care, continue to figure highly in the analysis of gender balance. Equally the benefit of flexible working opportunities among promoted posts is often highlighted as beneficial in supporting gender balance development.

5. Opinion

- 5.1. A range of interviews and other contact with staff who work for the Council and who have recently left was undertaken as part of this investigation. This focused on staff at senior levels as this is where the indicator of gender balance was felt to be of concern.
- 5.2. **The information has been obtained from contacts around employee exit, and other discussions with a number of individuals including both male and female ex-employees and some further contextual discussions with other staff in Council employment. The information obtained is of value in setting the scene generally for further analysis around the environment in which staff, particularly senior staff work within. While much of the information provided was positive in respect of the staffs experience of the Council, there were some less positive comments.**
- 5.3. **In particular the theme of the complexity of relationship between these officers and the leadership of the Council, especially elected Members**

emerged. This was most often instanced through comments on dissatisfaction with the level of political support given to these officers by Members when decisions were being taken over difficult policy matters. There does appear to be a raised perception among female exits that this interface was most complex for them, however this issue was also highlight by male staff.

- 5.4. This issue of leadership in organisational culture was highlighted as a factor in leaving decisions, however promotional opportunities and exit opportunities also featured as reasons.**
- 5.5. The interface with elected members, some perceived deficit in political leadership and curtailed strategic responsibility were mentioned as issues regarding job content but would not appear to be a gender specific issue.**
- 5.6. Working relationships were generally described as positive, particularly with staff and with partners. Issues were again noted by individuals in terms of the general culture of the Council and community and a lack of challenge to what was described as an “old boy” network in one instance.
- 5.7. There was less general satisfaction with the Councils overall personal development arrangements. While the availability of training was noted, it was generally not felt to effectively stretch or develop these most senior officers.
- 5.8. When asked specifically about any discrimination, some exits felt they had experienced difficult relationships with Members and some colleagues but this was not specifically attributed to a particular issue of gender or race, although a comment was made around the issue that alternative views can be quickly discounted by some.
- 5.9. Suggestions for changes included further observations that inertia or unwillingness to change needs to be challenged, and that the general culture of community dependency needs to be overcome by a sensible mature and adult debate being held with the community at large about the future.
- 5.10. General opinion about the Council as an employer was mixed with overall levels of pay for senior positions being compared unfavourably to those available out with Shetland in senior positions.
- 5.11. The single changes proposed by this group of ex-staff ranged from the need to avoid temporary appointments as far as possible, through observations about the need for improvement in the dialogue between senior officers and leading politicians, and observations that improved gender balance of Councillors and senior officers would be helpful to a more open and inclusive style of communications.
- 5.12. Final comments also complimented many aspects of living and working in Shetland and the satisfaction with the contribution that all ex-staff believed the services delivered by the Council made to the community. However they

also returned to the theme that there could be more effective service development and personal development if there was a more professional relationship between Councillors and Senior Management.

- 5.13. With a limited sample number it would be wrong to try to apply detailed statistical analysis to the views obtained, however there were observations and issues raised from the feedback that has emerged as themes, and has provided the basis for further consideration and action.
- 5.14. The most consistent of these is around the relationship between senior officers and Members. This is perhaps no more than the creative “tension” that may be inevitable in leadership relations. Equally it could be focused on a particular aspect of the consensus approach that defines the culture of Shetland Islands Council.
- 5.15. One difficulty with consensus is that it can tend to challenge and isolate those with new or different ideas, while they are attempting to convince the “majority” of their value. This can run the risk of being thought of as perceived discrimination, especially if the challenger has gender, race or other characteristics that differ from the majority.
- 5.16. However from the information gathered it would seem that this theme can exist for both male and female employees, Shetlanders and others. Therefore its attribution to gender or race in any individual situation may be difficult to sustain. The same concern is attributed a different cause by another individual, who cannot explain the problem by using that tag.
- 5.17. There is no doubt however that the statistical gender imbalance that can be observed in elected Members or chief officers could be daunting to a female or any other minority. It also creates a difficulty where the cultural norms, habits and communication techniques of the majority, men, have inherent values that could inadvertently inhibit the performance or potential of the minority, women.
- 5.18. This has been perceived as a problem when those, perhaps subconscious, behaviours are not modified by professionalism. A shortcoming levelled at Councillors, or is not felt to be robustly enough challenged by senior management, a further observation made by some.
- 5.19. The overall conclusion for this aspect of the investigation is that staff believe more equal gender balance would provide an improved and more open culture in itself. There is also a perception that Councillors, managers and the community can improve their awareness and value of diverse opinion at the same time.

6. Marine Staff

- 6.1. It did not require this investigation to confirm that there are fewest women employed by the Council in the Marine area. No senior staff and no sea staff are female. This has pretty much been the situation throughout the Councils

operation of Ferries, Launch Crews, Pilots and is the same situation with the Shetland Towage Tugs.

6.2. There have been occasional individual females who have been ferry crew members. There is currently one female relief crew member and a marine cadet. The preponderance of men employed by the Council in this area is not out of line with industry norms, there are few female marine staff in the private sector locally, nationally or even internationally.

6.3. As the majority of promoted positions, Masters, Mates, Pilots, Chief Engineers and most managers require certification dependant on sea time there is little opportunity for anyone to rise through the industry apart from through the traditional route.

6.4. Whether the Council could do more to encourage female recruits into the Marine Area is a subject that further thought and analysis could be applied to.

7. Actions currently in place / planned

7.1. Clearly set out our obligations and intent

- Equal Opportunities Strategy
- Ensuring Equalities Action Plan
- Equality Impact Assessments

7.2. Continue to implement fair and equal set of policies and practices

- Recruitment and Selection policy
- Training and Development Policy
- Management Development and Succession Planning Programme

7.3. Support opportunities for flexible working

- Flexible working guidance
- Job Share Policy
- Maternity Support / Parental Leave

7.4. Monitor impact

- Performance Indicators
- Organisational Development Service Plan

8. Interviews

8.1. Interviews were held with the following individuals to allow clarification or obtain further information, beyond that which can be provided by the Head of Organisational Development, to clarify points regarding the information gathered.

- Denise Bell - Personnel Manager – SIC staffing policies, development and implementation.
- Morgan Goodlad - Chief Executive – Overall staff development responsibility and officer / member relations.
- Ken Duerden - Senior Marine Manager – further input on situation regarding Marine staff.

8.2. Discussion of the overall findings of the investigation covered a range of topics including;

- Exit Interviews with an explanation provide by the Personnel Manager on the implementation of questionnaires across the Council.
- the best arrangements to ensure balanced views and appropriate follow up.
- The necessity for effective member induction which covered the full range of duties, responsibilities and expectations placed upon Councillors.
- Further consideration of the opportunities and options for improved balance in the Marine area concluded that encouraging a culture shift among women to at least consider this as a career option should continue.

9. Conclusions and Further Recommendations

9.1. I recommend the Scrutiny Committee consider the content of this report, and seek Council endorsement and implementation of its findings, in particular.

- Ensuring that staff development opportunities were fully accessible to all, through effective implementation of the Staff Review and Development appraisal system across all staff.
- The Exit interview arrangements recently introduced were carried out as often as possible and issues arising communicated and resolved.
- Efforts were made within schools and more widely to promote entry by women to marine cadet schemes so that greater equality in the Marine area would be promoted over time.
- Both staff and members to have induction support on the effective maintenance of professional working arrangements.

And endorse the Scrutiny Committee to continue to monitor this area through review of the periodic update to management and members on;

- Implementation of Staff Reviews and staff development arising,
- Implementation of Exit Interviews,
- overall gender balance reporting and;
- Induction development and feedback

John Smith

Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 07 February 2007
Agenda Item No. 01 - Public Appendix

November 2006

Scrutiny Committee Investigation Report – Housing Voids - September 2006

1. Introduction

This report seeks to provide a more detailed analysis of the main factors that have contributed to this Council's comparatively poor performance in re-letting void houses within 4 weeks (as measured in the annual Statutory Performance Indicators).

It has also sought to clarify the work being carried out in this area, compare the Council's practices with other organisations, wherever meaningful, and identify areas where improvements could be made.

The Terms of Reference for the Investigation are attached as Appendix 1.

2. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Vaila Simpson, Senior Housing Officer – Estate Management and Lynette Stewart, Research and Information Officer for their assistance in putting this report together.

3. Summary conclusions

- **Shetland Islands Council has performed comparatively poorly over the past few years in terms of the time it takes to re-let properties. It is well below the Scottish average, and has compared poorly with other island authorities. The indicator has shown signs of improving over the past year, and targets for further improvement have been set.**
- **An analysis of the reasons for delays in re-letting Council houses in the past 12 months has shown that there are many contributory factors, not all of which are within the control of the Housing Service. These include, the condition of the housing stock, houses being returned in poor condition (for various reasons), requirement to carry out major repairs or improvement works on some properties, time for relatives to clear a deceased tenant's house, houses having to be offered to more than one prospective tenant etc.**
- **The report has also shown that demand for Council houses in some rural areas is low, with the result that houses remain void for long periods. Reasons for this again vary, but when these properties are eventually let, it has the perverse effect of increasing the figure for average time taken to re-let properties.**
- **Comparisons with the Hjaltland Housing Association have been made, wherever possible. The low numbers of voids being managed makes any statistical comparisons difficult.**

- In some cases, improvements would require elected Members to alter current policy and practice through the implementation of a new Voids Management Policy. This will be submitted to Council in early 2007 for consideration.

4. Statistical analysis

Statutory Performance Indicator

The SPI included in the returns to the Scottish Executive measures the “Percentage of empty houses that were re-let within 4 weeks”. This includes all categories of housing, namely:

- General needs – currently approximately 1500 properties
- Sheltered housing/very sheltered housing – currently just under 300 units

It is also worth noting that the indicator makes no provision for Councils that have high numbers of “long-term” void properties (defined in this Council as properties that have been empty for longer than 2 years). As shown later, the inclusion of these lets in performance information for a Council with a proportionately high number of longer-term voids, can serve to skew the indicator.

The indicator also does not take into account the re-let times for temporary accommodation.

Council – internal Performance Management reports

The percentage of houses that are re-let within 4 weeks is monitored during the year through the Housing Service Performance reviews. Last year, updates were provided to Members on this indicator at 6-months (October), 9-months (January) and year-end (April).

As can be seen from Table 1, performance improved during the 6-month period to October 2005, but fell off during the remainder of the year. The Housing Service was restructured at this time, in order to integrate the homeless service provision into the Estate Management team. This resulted in all Officers having to learn new and additional duties to their previous job requirements.

In addition, there were some long-term absences from the section shortly after the restructuring took place. The workload of the team had to be prioritised to cover the statutory provision of a homeless service. This impacted on other work within Estate Management, such as allocations and void management. This also had a knock on effect on the teams’ ability to prevent homelessness occurring, which can result in an increase in the numbers of households requiring temporary accommodation, and therefore increase the workload in this area.

Table 1 - % of houses that were re-let within 4 weeks

Year	Review period	Target	Actual performance
2005-06	October	= or > 40%	34%
	January	= or > 40%	Figures unavailable*
	April	= or > 40%	22%

(Figures taken from quarterly Service Performance reports)

* January '06 figures were not available due to a reorganisation in Estate Management

Trend and comparison with other Islands Councils

The graph overleaf shows the Council's performance on the re-letting of houses within 4 weeks, since 1999-00. This shows that the gap between the Council's performance and the Scottish average has widened significantly in recent years, although it showed signs of reducing last year.

It also shows that this Council's performance has decreased since 1999/00, when 38.1% of houses were re-let within 4 weeks. Orkney Islands Council has also consistently performed much better than this Council over the years on this indicator. However, it must be emphasised that Orkney's housing stock is less than half that of the Shetland Islands Council (they have around 800) so statistical comparisons are not really valid.

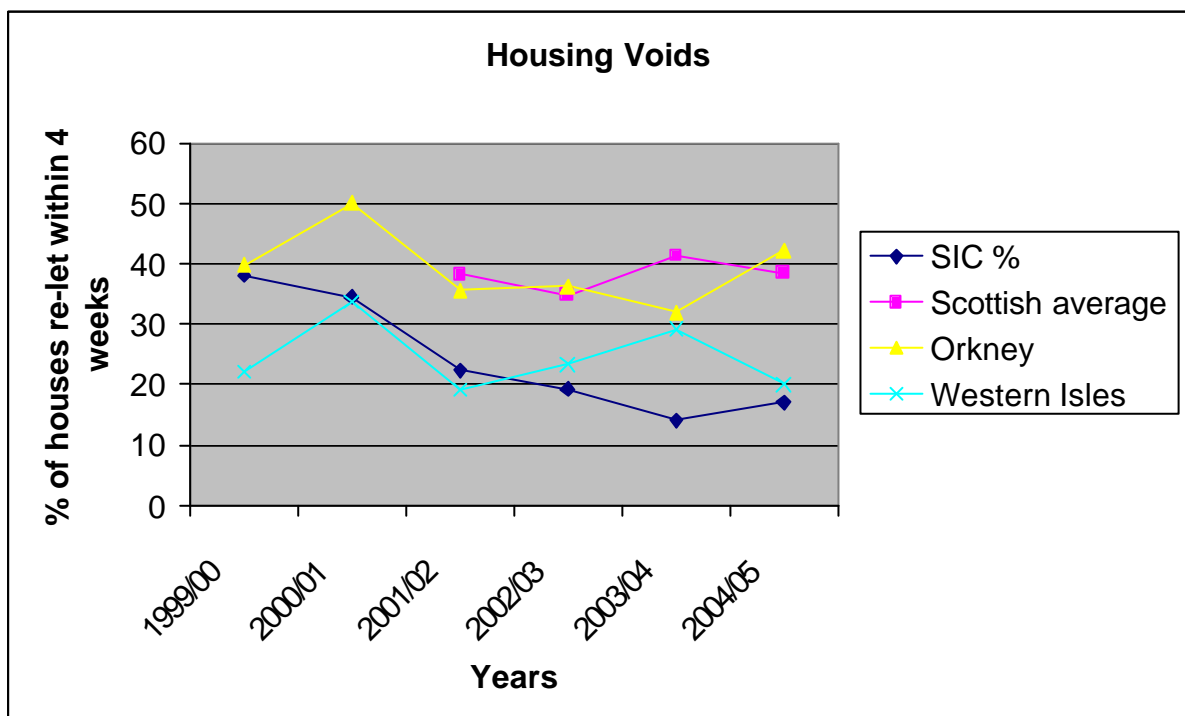


Table 2 provides a breakdown of re-letting times and shows the number of houses that the Housing Service has dealt with over the past 3 years.

Table 2

No. and % of all houses	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
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re-let that took	number	%	number	%	number	%
Less than 2 weeks	10	5	20	10	21	14
Between 2-4 weeks	16	9	14	7	13	8
More than 4 weeks	158	86	166	83	120	78
Total no. of houses re-let	184	100	200	83	154	100
Total no. of days to re-let houses	38,528 days	--	36,638 days	--	39,620	--
Average time to re-let houses	--	209 days	--	183 days	--	257 days

This shows that the total number of houses re-let has decreased by 30 since 2003/04. Factors to be taken into account include:

- More 'general needs' lets have had to be converted to 'temporary' to meet the Council's statutory requirements
- Right To Buy sales
- This is a variable number as it depends on how many tenants give notice, which depends on a number of external factors and may increase again in subsequent years

It also shows that the largest percentage (78%) of houses take 'more than 4 weeks' to re-let (most in actual fact take 5-15 weeks). The number being re-let within 2 weeks has improved from 5% in 2003-04 to 14% in 2005-06.

As noted above, the SPI figure includes long-term voids (defined in this Council as 'more than 2 years'). The point has been made that if Councils were entirely focused on ensuring that their Statutory Performance Indicator for re-let times remained low, they could be tempted to resist re-letting long-term voids to avoid a dramatic increase in their average re-let time. The policy in this Council has been to seek to re-let all houses, regardless of the length of time they have been vacant and the impact this might have on the statutory performance indicator. It is also interesting to note that if "long-term" voids are taken out of the statistics, the average time to re-let houses goes down from *257 days to 91 days* and the total number of days to re-let houses falls from *39,620 to 1344 days*.

Tables 3(a) and 3(b) provides data on the difference in performance between re-letting temporary accommodation and General needs/sheltered housing. As can be seen, 63% of temporary accommodation has been re-let within 4 weeks during the past year (not included in the SPI figure), as opposed to 22% of General Needs housing (which is measured in the SPI figure). This has been due to the increasing duties placed on the Council in relation to homelessness and the result that greater priority has to be given to turning around vacant temporary units in order to meet the Council's statutory requirements.

Table 3(a)		
2005-06 – SPI statistics – includes all General Needs, Sheltered housing etc		
No. and % of all houses re-let that took	number	%
Less than 2 weeks	21	14
Between 2-4 weeks	13	8 (22%)
More than 4 weeks	120	78
Total no. of houses re-let	154	100

Table 3(b)		
2005-06 – <u>temporary accommodation only</u>		
No. and % of all houses re-let that took	number	%
Less than 2 weeks	69	47
Between 2-4 weeks	23	16 (63%)
More than 4 weeks	56	38
Total no. of houses re-let	148	100

5. Factors identified as having had an impact on the time taken to re-let houses

5.1 Properties are returned in poor condition

During the past 6 years, approximately:

- 5% of voids have needed 'Priority 1' repairs (Urgent / Emergency repairs)
- 23% have needed 'Priority 2' repairs (Void 2 weeks repairs)
- 32% have needed 'Priority 3' repairs (Void 4 weeks repairs)
- 40% require repairs on letting only (Routine / no further repairs)

This shows that there are a high number of properties (60%) that require some form of repair upon becoming void. An analysis of the data gathered for the past few years has shown that the reasons are often unavoidable:

- General condition of property e.g. deterioration due to wear and tear or older and due for refurbishment.

Any properties that will require major work are identified by the Technical Officers and notified to Senior Housing Officer – Asset Management for inclusion in a Planned Maintenance Programme. How quickly this work gets done is dependent on other priorities within the programme and the ability of other contractors to carry out the works.

- Major repair/renewal required. e.g. re-plumb, new kitchen, heating replacement.

The policy at present is to carry out these works while the house is void, thereby minimising the impact on tenants.

- Ability of tenant to manage tenancy e.g. mental health, addiction issues etc.

A Housing officer will carry out a pre-tenancy assessment and if support might be needed, a referral is made to another agency for support, or the Housing officer will carry out a post tenancy visit. The ability to provide this type of

service is largely dependent on staff numbers and workload in relation to statutory duties.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to compare the numbers of properties that are returned in poor condition with that of other local authorities as this information is not routinely reported. The Committee may wish to follow-up on this with the Housing Management team.

Other factors which have contributed to delays in re-letting Council houses

- 5.2 Mismatch between supply and demand – high demand in areas with low numbers of voids and vice versa;
- 5.3 Making the best use of the housing stock can result in delays e.g. it can often take time to find an applicant with needs that match the adaptations that have been made to a property;
- 5.4 Some houses can only be let on non-secure tenancies e.g. school houses;
- 5.5 Expectation levels and aspirations of applicants are possibly higher than in other Council areas – some tenants are not willing to accept a property until it meets standard (if a property is turned down, it can often lead to other potential tenants turning the same property down);
- 5.6 Dealing with applicants who have high levels of social as well as housing needs can result in delays while support packages are put in place or assistance is provided to enable moves to take place;
- 5.7 Turnover of officers – increased workload in other areas;
- 5.8 Staff absence e.g. staff absence from DLO can result in delays due to competing demands from emergency and urgent repairs
- 5.9 There are no time limits currently in place for a deceased tenant's relatives to return the key to the house after clearing it out;

6. Reasons for refusal of offer

There have been no multiple offers of housing made to homeless persons in the past 2 years. There are however occasions when the offer of a Council house is turned down. As noted by Audit Scotland in their pre-amble to the Statutory Performance Indicators, this will inevitably lead to delays in the re-letting process. Table 4 shows a breakdown of the reasons for these in the 2005-06 service planning year.

This shows that 41 offers of Council housing were turned down last year. The most common reason for refusing a property was “property unsuitable” (8), followed by “cannot move at this time”. These reasons for refusal would appear to be outwith the control of the Housing Service.

Table 4 – Reasons for refusing offer of Council house – 2005-06

Refusal reasons	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Tota
Condition of property				1		2							3
Dislike area				1	2						1	1	5
Property too large													0
Property too small					1		1				1		2
Too far from services												1	1
Cannot move at this time	2		1		1		1				1		6
Area unsuitable			2				1					1	4
Property unsuitable		2		1			1	1				3	8
Found alternative accommodation			1	1	1	2							5
Applicant withdrew application		1				1							2
No reply		1				1		1					3
Preference for other property		1											1
TOTAL	2	5	4	4	5	6	4	2	0	0	3	6	41

7. Areas with long-term voids

Table 5 – Long-term voids – 2005-06

Management area	Allocation area	Total weeks void
General needs		
	Firth	456
	Unst-Haroldswick	452
Sheltered Housing	Bressay	694
	Scalloway - village	596
	Skellister	111
	Whalsay - Brough	169
	Mid Yell	140

The demand for sheltered housing in these areas is undoubtedly affected by the provision of Care Centres, private sector housing grants and the provision of care at home. The demand for General Needs housing in these areas is affected by socio-economic factors, such as de-population, transport, availability of employment, amenities, remoteness etc. The Scrutiny Committee may wish to comment on this and follow-up with Housing Management Team/Spokesperson for Housing, on these issues.

Specifically, there is currently 'No demand' for the following properties

5 Grindibrek, Skeld	void since 17/01/98	(450 weeks)
Schoolhouse, North Roe	void since 18/07/98	(372 weeks)
4 Bayview, North Roe	void since 17/01/98	(268 weeks)

4 Steenbrae, Yell	void since 15/07/01	(268 weeks)
8 Stackafletts, Fetlar	void since 05/10/03	(152 weeks)
19 Meadowbank Rd, Burravoe	void since 05/09/04	(104 weeks)
43 Leaside, Firth	void since 07/11/04	(95 weeks)
2A Runnadale, Ollaberry	void since 19/11/04	(93 weeks)
7 Shendale Burn, Sandness	void since 27/02/05	(79 weeks)
Schoolhouse, Papa Stour	void since 28/08/05	(53 weeks)

8. Comparisons with Hjaltdland Housing Association

As mentioned above, meaningful statistical comparisons with the HHA have been difficult to make, owing to the different functions carried out by the two bodies and the difference in numbers of houses managed.

As can be seen from Appendix 2, the HHA's performance on voids management is better than the Council's. However, the HHA currently manages 385 units, compared to the Council's estate of almost 2000 units. The Council also re-lets an average of almost 13 general needs units a month (this number increases to 25 units when temporary accommodation is taken into account), whereas the HHA's average allocation per month for 2005-06 was 6 units.

The HHA's Voids Management Policy is attached as Appendix 3, for information. The Committee may wish to discuss this further with a member of the HHA management team.

9. Potential improvements

- As noted, the current policy is to carry out major refurbishments before the house is re-let, to avoid disruptions to the tenant. This could be altered so that more of these works is carried out after the tenant moves in, to reduce re-let times.
- Where a house has become vacant because the tenant has deceased, it is not current practice to put timescales on the family to hand the keys back. This could be changed so that a reasonable date is placed for return of keys, clearly being respectful to the family's circumstances.
- A review of the Allocations Policy is currently underway. This will take account of the possible implementation of a choice-based lettings scheme and progress made in relation to the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy.
- Work is also underway on the production of a void management policy. It is currently planned to submit this to Council in the January cycle. This will allow elected Members an opportunity to discuss the many issues of policy relating to Council house void management and resolve some of the issues that have been raised through this investigation report.

- An external review has recently been undertaken on the effectiveness of the Estate Management team. A draft report has been received – once the final report has been received it will allow an Action Plan to be developed. The Committee may wish to follow up on this with the Housing Management Team.

9. Customer Satisfaction levels

The comparatively low performance on this Statutory Performance Indicator must be read in conjunction with the extremely high customer satisfaction rates that are regularly recorded by the Housing Service. It is clear that although there may be delays in allocating the houses, when customers make an application for a house or have repairs carried out on their house, the quality of the service being experienced by the customer is high.

Table 6 – Customer satisfaction levels

Description	Target - 2005-06	Actual
Standard of workmanship for repairs described as 'good' or 'very good'	= or >96%	96%
Standard of service when making an application described as 'good' or 'very good'	= or >91%	88%
Numbers satisfied with service when reporting a repair	= or >98%	96%

The Scrutiny Committee has already looked into customer satisfaction levels across the Council and whether these are being effectively measured and monitored. There could be a danger that by over-emphasising this Statutory Performance Indicator and radically altering the existing policies and approaches (e.g. refurbishments being carried out after the tenant moves in, time limits being put in place for relatives of a deceased tenant to return keys, prospective tenants being allocated housing in areas they do not wish to live in etc) quality is impacted upon and complaint levels rise.

10. Interviews that were carried out

Having set out the main issues relating to the re-letting of long-term voids in the Council, the Committee conducted interviews with the following officers on 3rd November to consider these in more detail.

- Chris Medley, Head of Housing and Capital Projects
- Vaila Simpson – Senior Housing Officer – Estate Management
- Fiona Robertson, Hjalmland Housing Association

11. Conclusions and further Recommendations

I recommend that the Scrutiny Committee consider the content of this report, and seeks Council endorsement and implementation of its findings, in particular,

- For Housing Management Team to review the existing Void Management policy and produce a void management manual – early 2007 – this will allow Members the chance to take a view on a number of the changes to policy that have been suggested in this investigation
- For Housing Management Team to carry out a review of the Allocation Policy to take account of possible implementation of choice-based lettings scheme and the Homelessness Policy Review
- For Hjaltland Housing Association to collaborate with Housing Management Team to advertise the Council houses that have been void for the longest time

and endorse the Scrutiny Committee to continue to monitor this area through ongoing review of (i) the annual Statutory Performance Indicators (ii) the Comparative Analysis report that seeks to put this Council's performance into context by comparing with Councils of a similar size and (iii) the performance review reports that are presented to senior management and Members at 6-months, 9-months and year-end.

Peter Peterson
November 2006



Shetland Islands Council

REPORT

To: **Executive Committee**
Scrutiny Committee

1 February 2007
7 February 2007

From: **Head of Organisational Development**
Executive Services

Report No: CE-53-F

2005-06 Statutory Performance Indicators – Comparative analysis

1 Introduction

Members and officers have acknowledged for some time that the Statutory Performance Indicators are not always an accurate reflection of a Council's performance and should be approached with caution. Therefore, when the comparative SPI data was made available for 2004-05, instead of releasing this, it was decided that it would be more meaningful to compare the performance of this Council with that of other island Councils.

This exercise has been repeated in the attached analysis sheet.

2 Link to Corporate Priorities

It is a Corporate Improvement Plan aim that 'Challenging target setting, frank and honest performance review and informed re-planning of how we deliver best value services, will become the normal business process of the Council'.

This report, which provides a comparative analysis of this Council's performance, in relation to the Western Isles and Orkney Islands Councils, contributes significantly to that aim.

3 Summary of issues arising

- 3.1 From the attached analysis sheet, it can be shown that the SIC is ranked in the top 8 Councils on 34 of the 79 indicators. This compares with Orkney (30) and Western Isles (26).
- 3.2 The SIC was ranked top Council in Scotland on 18 of the indicators (15 in 2004-05). Orkney (10) and Western Isles (9).

- 3.3 The SIC was ranked in the bottom 8 Councils in Scotland on 22 of the 79 indicators (20 in 2004-05). Orkney (21) and Western Isles (20).
- 3.4 The SIC was in the bottom 3 Councils on 13 indicators (9 in 2004-05) – these are outlined on the following page. Orkney (5) and Western Isles (12).
- 3.5 In terms of ranked position, the SIC has improved on 17 of the indicators since 2003-04, Orkney (21) and Western Isles (19). Performance has worsened on 15 indicators, Orkney (24) and Western Isles (21).
- 3.6 Orkney Islands Council is ranked higher than the SIC on 26 indicators (25 in 2004-05). The Western Isles is ranked higher than the SIC on 29 indicators (22 in 2004-05).

A few of the areas that indicate poor performance in the 2005-06 figures are outlined below. Where work has already been carried out into the reasons for the poor performance, this is noted.

<i>Indicator</i>	Reason
No. of clients aged 65+ receiving personal care	The Scrutiny Committee received a response on the reason for the poor performance on this indicator at its meeting on 8 May 2006.
No. of clients aged 65+ receiving care in evenings/overnight	The Scrutiny Committee received a response on the reason for the poor performance on this indicator at its meeting on 8 May 2006.
No. of clients aged 65+ receiving care at weekends	32.6 clients aged 65+ received care at the weekend (ranked 30 th). The Scrutiny Committee has not looked at this.
Equal Opps – women in top 2%	These indicators were the subject of a recently completed Scrutiny Investigation.
Equal Opps – women in top 5%	
Homelessness – time taken to deal with cases	It took 32.1 days to deal with homeless cases in 2005-06. (ranked 30 th). The Scrutiny Committee has not looked this.
Homelessness – assessment of cases	18.7% of cases were reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of previous case being completed. (ranked 30 th) The Scrutiny Committee has not looked this.
Food hygiene inspections	63.2% of premises with a minimum inspection frequency of 12 months or less were inspected on time (ranked 31 st). The Scrutiny Committee was informed in May 2006 that poor performance was largely due to staff absence and that now staffing was in place, performance would improve.

Business advice requests dealt with within 14 days (Trading Standards)	91.2% of requests were dealt with in 14 days (ranked 31 st) The Scrutiny Committee has not looked this, although 91.2% may be considered to be a fairly acceptable rate.
% of traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours	The Scrutiny Committee received a response on the reason for the poor performance on this indicator at its meeting on 8 May 2006. This stated that the issue regarding sourcing of spares had been largely resolved with the manufacturer. However, it was noted that there was a general lack of electricians to carry out the repairs.
Street light repairs within 7 days	The Scrutiny Committee received a response on the reason for the poor performance on this indicator at its meeting on 8 May 2006 This was followed up on at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 rd November 2006 – an assurance has been given that mechanisms are in place to report on this indicator.
% of municipal waste recycled by Council	10.8% of waste was recycled in 2005-06 year (ranked 31 st) The Scrutiny Committee has not looked this, although the poor performance on recycling is likely to be due to the fact that a high percentage of Shetland's waste is burned in the Waste to Energy Plant. An improvement in this figure would undoubtedly impact on the productiveness of the Plant, which is undesirable.

4 Other issues to note

- 4.1 The Council is now top authority in Scotland on the condition of the road network that should be considered for maintenance (Orkney is ranked 2nd and the Western Isles is 10th).
- 4.2 42.4% of primary schools in Shetland have a ratio of pupils to available places of between 61 and 100% (ranked 28th). (Orkney is ranked 17th – 66.7% and the Western Isles is 32nd - 26.3%)
- 4.3 The Council is ranked 22nd on the % of days lost through employee sickness absence (5.7%). (Orkney's data was unreliable, Western Isles was top Council in Scotland with 3.1%).

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. Policy and Delegated Authority

6.1 The remit of the Executive Committee includes the co-ordination of policy and planning, as well as service performance, evaluation and reviews. It is therefore within its remit to provide advice and guidance to the Council with regard to the Statutory Performance Indicators.

7. Conclusion

7.1 This report has sought to outline the Council's performance through the Statutory Performance indicators and compare this to the performance of the Orkney Islands and Western Isles Councils.

7.2 The analysis has shown that the SIC was ranked in the top 8 Councils on 34 of the 79 indicators and is top Council in Scotland on 18 of those indicators.

7.3 It has also shown that the SIC continues to be ranked in the bottom 8 Councils in Scotland on 22 of the 79 indicators.

8. Recommendations

8.1 I recommend that the Committee discusses the information in this report and considers referring any of the issues this raises to the Scrutiny Committee for more detailed analysis and investigation.

Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 07 February 2007
Agenda Item No. 02 - Public Appendix

Performance Measure	SIC performance and rank (1 st – 32 nd)	Better (✓) or worse (✗) since 2003/04	Orkney Islands Council performance and rank	Western Isles Council performance and rank
Adult Social Work				
Staff qualified – working with older people in care	57.9% 7 th	Not measured in 2003-04	15% 27 th	61.1% 5 th
Staff qualified – working with other adults in care	26.9% 19 th	Not measured in 2003-04	25% 20 th	65.2% 6 th
Older people in single rooms in residential care	100% 1 st	No change	93.1% 12 th	98.9% 3 rd
Older people with 1-suite rooms in residential care	100% 1 st	No change	53.4% 27 th	39.9% 31 st
Other adults in single rooms in residential care	100% 1 st	No change	100% 1 st	100% 1 st
Other adults with en-suite rooms in residential care	100% 1 st	✓	25% 25 th	0% 31 st
Total home care hours per 1000 population aged 65+	782.2hours 4 th	✓	643.1 hours 7 th	851.3 hours 1 st
No. of clients aged 65+ receiving personal care	32.3 clients 30 th	✗	44.2 clients 28 th	76.2 clients 13 th
No. of clients aged 65+ receiving care in evenings/overnight	16 clients 30 th	✗	23.1 clients 20 th	19.3 clients 23 rd
No. of clients aged 65+ receiving care at weekends	32.6 clients 30 th	✗	38.7 clients 27 th	65.3 clients 5 th
No. of respite nights provided per 1000 population aged 65+	1967.6 nights 1 st	New indicator	608.8 nights 3 rd	607.5 nights 4 th
% of respite nights provided in care home for clients aged 65+	0% 17 th	New indicator	9.8% 4 th	0% 17 th
total daytime respite hours per 1000 population aged 65+	1346.6 hours 16 th	New indicator	375.1 hours 25 th	2247.8 hours 14 th
% of daytime respite provided in daycentre for clients aged 65+	100% 1 st	New indicator	No Service provided	67.8% 14 th
total overnight respite nights provided per 1000 population for clients aged 18-64	162.5 nights 1 st	New indicator	66 nights 5 th	41.8 nights 17 th
% of respite nights provided in care home for clients aged 18-64	30 nights 9 th	New indicator	99.7 nights 1 st	0 23 rd
total daytime respite hours per 1000 population aged 18-64	209.4 hours 14 th	New indicator	63.5 hours 22 nd	50.2 hours 23 rd
% of daytime respite provided in daycentre for clients aged 18-64	35.3% 20 th	New indicator	0% 27 th	65.1% 13 th

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ents aged 18-64				
i. Social enquiry reports submitted to court by due date	100% 1 st	No change	100% 1 st	100% 1 st
J. New probationers seen by supervising officer within 1 week	97.4% 2 nd	X	96.2% 5 th	95.2% 6 th
i. Av hours per week to complete community service orders	5 hours 1 st	No change	4.3 hours 5 th	Unreliable data
Benefits Admin				
2. Council tax/housing benefit admin costs	£82.49 29 th	v	£64.14 23 rd	£91.86 32 nd
i. Time taken to process new claims	31.9 days 15 th	Not measured in 2003-04	27.5 days 4 th	38.4 days 32 nd
i. Accuracy and security processing	100% 1 st	v	97.6% 17 th	99% 6 th
Education & Children's Services				
i. % of schools, ratio of pupils to places between 80% and 100% (Primary)	42.4% 28 th	X	66.7% 17 th	26.3% 32 nd
i. % of schools, ratio of pupils to places between 80% and 100% (secondary)	88.9% 11 th	No change	66.7% 23 rd	36.4% 30 th
i. Supervision orders – of children seen by supervising officer within 5 days	100% 1 st	No change	100% 1 st	54.5 29 th
i. % of qualified staff in residential homes for children	56% 12 th	Not measured in 2003-04	33.3% 17 th	No service
i. % of children in single rooms in residential care	100% 1 st	No change	100% 1 st	100% 1 st
i. Children with en-suite rooms in residential care	0 30 th	No change	25% 11 th	100% 1 st
i. Total overnight respite nights per 1000 population	103.8 nights 6 th	New indicator	117 nights 4 th	697.7nights 1 st
i. % of respite nights spent in a care home	15.6% 19 th	New indicator	NS	0 27 th
i. total daytime respite hours for children per 1000 population	1446.3 hours 3 rd	New indicator	674.7 hours 11 th	472.8 17 th
i. % of daytime respite hours not in a care centre	1.1 hours 28 th	New indicator	39.7 hours 25 th	0 29 th
Corporate Management				
5. Sickness absence- Chief executives and other employees	5.7% 22 nd	No info	Unreliable data	3.1% 1 st
i. Sickness absence – staff operatives	7% 21 st	No info	Unreliable data	4.2% 6 th
i. Sickness absence - teachers	3.2% 6 th	v	Unreliable data	3.3% 8 th
3. Litigation claims	8.7 claims 2 nd	v	24.6 claims 14 th	17.1 claims 7 th

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j. Equal Opps – women top 2%	10.4% 32 nd	✓	13.9% 31 st	18.8% 30 th
k. Equal Opps – women top 5%	10.8% 32 nd	✗	28.7% 27 th	23.5% 31 st
l. Buildings accessible disabled people	60.6% 12 th	No info	41.9% 18 th	5% 31 st
m. Cost of collecting council tax	£13.26 15 th	No info	£18.58 29 th	£29.57 32 nd
n. % of Council tax come collected in year	96% 6 th	✓	97.6% 1 st	93.9% 22 nd
o. % of non-domestic rates collected	98.4% 3 rd	✓	99.2% 1 st	97.3% 12 th
p. % of invoices paid in 10 days	81.5% 22 nd	✗	78.2% 26 th	78.5% 25 th
Cultural and Community Services				
q. Attendances at swimming pools	15,626 1 st	✗	5510 2 nd	4841 5 th
r. Attendances at indoor facilities	19,171 1 st	✓	9448 3 rd	5197 7 th
s. Lending stock turnover - adults	142 1 st	Unreliable data	79.4 8 th	35.9 28 th
t. Lending stock turnover - children	272.1% 1 st	Unreliable data	97% 3 rd	51.9% 26 th
u. No of borrowers as % resident population	35.4% 2 nd	Unreliable data	34.7% 3 rd	46.3% 1 st
v. Av. no of issues per borrower	29.2 issues 7 th	Unreliable data	26.3 issues 15 th	17.1 issues 32 nd
w. No of learning centre access points users	21.1 2 nd	Unreliable data	13.4 5 th	11.7 8 th
x. No of times terminals used	1307 4 th	Unreliable data	912.3 11 th	1458.3 2 nd
Development Services				
y. Householder applications dealt with in months	Unreliable data	✗	36.8 31 st	75.8 21 st
z. All applications dealt with in 2 months	Unreliable data	✗	35.6 31 st	65.9 11 th
Housing				
aa. % rent loss due to voids	4% 26 th	✓	1.2% 9 th	1.8% 14 th
ab. % of houses that are not low demand re-let within 4 weeks	22.1% 25 th	No information	47.1% 12 th	22.9% 24 th
ac. Av time to re-let houses that were not low demand	257 days 29 th	No information	43 days 12 th	56 days 17 th
ad. Rent arrears as % of rent due	4.5% 8 th	No change	2.4% 1 st	7.8% 19 th
ae. % of tenants owing more than 13 weeks' rent	4.1% 12 th	✗	2.2% 6 th	9.3% 28 th
af. % of Council house leases completed in 26 weeks	28.6% 28 th	✗	20% 29 th	44.4% 24 th
ag. Homelessness – time taken to deal with cases	32.1 days 30 th	✗	24 days 25 th	19.8 days 21 st
ah. Homelessness – assessment of cases	18.7% 30 th	✗	6.3% 13 th	3.1% 6 th

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Protective Services				
i. Food hygiene inspections	63.2% 31 st	Unreliable data	90% 25 th	Unreliable data
ii. Noise complaints settled on day of receipt	Unreliable data	v	100% 1 st	80% 20 th
iii. Noise complaints settled within 14 days	Failed To Report	v	91.7% 4 th	75% 18 th
iv. Consumer complaints processed within 14 days	88.6% 3 rd	v	77.8% 13 th	71.7% 18 th
v. Business advice requests dealt with within 14 days	91.2% 31 st	v	99.4% 4 th	100% 1 st
vi. % of trading premises inspected on time	48.7% 28 th	No info	41.3% 30 th	86.9% 15 th
Roads & Lighting				
i. % of network considered for maintenance	26.9% 1 st	v	30.5% 2 nd	40.2% 10 th
ii. % of traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours	0 31 st	No change	No service provided	90.9% 23 rd
iii. Street light repairs within 7 days	50% 32 nd	X	84.9% 26 th	92.8% 16 th
iv. % of bridges that failed to meet European standard	Failed to report	Failed to report	0 1 st	10.5% 18 th
Waste Management				
i. Cost per property of refuse collection	£70.50 27 th	No info	£76.04 30 th	£46.03 10 th
ii. Cost per property of refuse disposal	£71.11 21 st	No info	£83.08 29 th	£76.15 25 th
iii. No. of refuse collection complaints	0.5 1 st	v	3.8 4 th	1.2 2 nd
iv. % of municipal waste recycled by Council	10.8% 31 st	No info	22.7% 20 th	14.1% 30 th
v. Overall cleanliness index achieved	75 3 rd	No info	73 4 th	77 2 nd



REPORT

To: Scrutiny Committee

7 February 2007

Good practice - Reporting performance to service users

CE-52-F

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is a requirement of the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) that all Councils must put in place arrangements to report their performance to the public. The main reasoning behind this is to encourage Councils to engage more effectively with service users, invigorate interest in local democracy and improve the public's understanding of the quality of services they are receiving.

1.2 The same Act actively encourages Councils to make use of a wide variety of communication tools and techniques to engage the widest range of service users in the ongoing performance of their local authority. In theory, if this is working well in a Council, the right people should get the right information at the right time and in the right format.

2. Council context

- 2.1 The report on the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning which was released on 31st March 2005, made the following comments on the Council's ability to meet this legal requirement.

"Underlying weaknesses in its performance management system mean that the Council is not yet meeting its duties on public performance reporting".

"It currently provides a limited range of public performance reporting".

"It is not able to provide a range of performance reports tailored to the needs of managers, councillors and the public".

- 2.2 As part of the work that was undertaken to try to address this point, a Public Performance Reporting Framework was drafted and agreed at the Executive Management Team in August 2005. This set out the

aims for developing the approach to reporting performance to service users and the public, including,

- the introduction of an annual Council Performance Calendar in place of the traditional report format/insert in the Shetland Times and
- support to be provided to services to develop mechanisms for reporting their performance direct to their service users.

This Framework is attached as Appendix 1, for information.

2.3 The introduction of the Framework was further supported by Management Development training (Phase 2) that was delivered to all Service Managers, Service Heads and Head Teachers during the winter of 2005-06. This included guidance on how to engage with service users more effectively and how to report performance to service users. It is now a requirement that all Services outline in their Service Plan how they report their performance to their service users.

3. Case Studies – good practice examples

- 3.1 Highlighting examples of good practice and communicating these to the wider Council is part of the established remit of the Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 Appendices 2 and 3 are therefore attached as examples of Services having made efforts to improve their performance reporting. The Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on these examples and the arrangements for reporting performance in general, with the view to further improving this area in the future.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Developing mechanisms for reporting performance to service users plays an important part in improving the Council's governance arrangements. It is also something that has been specifically highlighted by Audit Scotland as requiring improvement.
- 4.2 Progress in formalising the approach to reporting has been made, with the introduction of the Public Performance Reporting Framework. There is also evidence that some services are providing more effective information to service users through newsletters and use of the Council's Internet site. Appendices 2 and 3 set out examples of this, for the Scrutiny Committee's comment.

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PP
CE-52-F

9 January 2007



Shetland Islands Council APPENDIX 1

Public Performance Reporting Framework - 2005

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Aim

This document seeks to formalise the Council's approach to Public Performance Reporting (PPR) for the coming year, ensuring that this meets statutory requirements and reflects best practice.

Effective performance reporting is a vital element of the Council's Performance Management Framework, as agreed on 22 June 2004. As part of this, it is important that the Council provides information that is relevant, meaningful and in such a way that it allows the public to make a reasonable evaluation of how it has performed in the past year.

By doing so, it will ensure that the Council will be able to more effectively demonstrate accountability, thereby contributing towards the duty to secure Best Value.

Developing our approach to public performance reporting is also Priority 12 in the "Organising Our Business" section of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2005-06.

Section 1 Corporate Performance Reporting

1.1 Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs):

Under the Accountability of Local Authorities (Publication of Information about Finance and Performance) (Scotland) Regulations, the Council must (i) publish SPIs in such a way as to ensure that they are readily accessible to members of the public within Shetland and (ii) raise public awareness of the production of the report by effectively advertising its availability. These must be published by 30 September each year.

The SPIs are analysed and reported to the Executive Committee (Scrutiny) each year. Should the Council remain in the bottom 5 Councils in Scotland on any indicator for two consecutive years, Organisational Development will investigate the reasons for this and provide a report to a subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee (Scrutiny). This will provide an opportunity to request follow-up analysis of areas where the Council has not improved its performance.

1.2 Financial Performance Reporting

Under the Accountability of Local Authorities (Publication of Information about Finance and Performance) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations, the Council must produce:

- A summary of its tangible assets and their value at the end of the financial year, sources of income, the amounts derived from these sources and the Council's expenditure during the financial year
- Its trading accounts for significant trading operations in the financial year or an abstract of these
- A summary of its expenditure under significant works contracts

Again, these must be published in such a way as to ensure that they are readily accessible to members of the public within Shetland.

Finance Services publish the Annual Accounts to meet these statutory requirements by 31 October each year.

1.3 Method for reporting SPIs and Annual Accounts

The Annual Financial Accounts have traditionally been sent to partner organisations, senior management in the Council and have been made available in the library. It is felt that this method is the most effective way of publishing the report as it is specifically targeted to meet the needs of individuals/organisations most likely to require the information. This has also proven to be a cost effective method, so will be repeated this year.

Statutory Performance Indicators have been circulated in the Shetland Times, although more recently, these have been made available in the library, schools, Council premises, leisure centres and has been posted on the Council's internet site. No feedback has been received as to which of these reporting methods are the most effective or that the public has been engaged in the reporting process. This will have to be addressed as the Council's approach to performance management develops.

Section 2 Service-level reporting

2.1 Current position

In order to gauge the current position with regard to performance reporting, all Heads of Service and Service Managers were asked if they produced reports to the public/newsletters. The responses received are attached as Appendix 1. It is clear from this that engagement with stakeholders on performance is something that will have to be developed with Services.

2.2 Options

Customer reporting

Performance information can be specifically directed to service users through the use of "transactional point" reporting. This means that key performance information is reported to service users at the point of service use. E.g. on a ferry, in a public toilet, in a bus waiting room/bus shelter etc. The advantage of this approach is that you often have a captive audience who have time to read information and it targets the people who are most likely to be interested in the quality of the service being provided.

Stickers/posters could be produced for public toilets, ferries, waiting rooms etc and/or leaflets produced for circulation with bin bags/Council tax leaflets. This is something which Services will be encouraged to develop for publication during the year, although the fact that no specific budget will have been allocated for this function may restrict progress in the coming year.

Employee reporting

In order to engage staff in the Council's performance and emphasise their role in achieving improvement, employee information bulletins could be produced by the Policy Unit and e-mailed to all Council computer users/notice boards. This would publicise the Service Plan and how the Service has performed against the targets that were set. It could also link to the Corporate Implementation Plan 2004-05 out-turn, to show where the Service contributed to the achievement of corporate goals.

Section 3

Public Performance Reporting

3.1 Performance Reporting

Under the same Regulations as outlined in para 1.2 above, the Council must produce:

- a summary statement setting out the strategic arrangements it had in place under section 1 of the 2003 Act during the financial year immediately preceding that in which the statement is made,
- what it did under those arrangements and to what effect, including an account of how it has had regard to the need to meet the equal opportunity requirements and how what it did contributed to the achievement of sustainable development.

This must also be produced by 31 October each year in such a way as to ensure that it is readily accessible to members of the public within Shetland.

Since 2000, the Council has produced an annual summary performance report which has been distributed to households and businesses across Shetland, either directly through mailing, or as a supplement in the Shetland Times. The rest of this document will deal with the approach to Public Performance reporting for the coming year.

3.2 Stakeholders

Before performance reporting can be truly effective, the Council must be aware of its stakeholders and their needs and interests in performance information.

The Council's stakeholders can be defined as;

- Council Tax payers
- Citizens
- Service users
- Local Businesses
- Community Planning Partners – NHS Shetland, Northern Constabulary, Shetland Enterprise, Association of Shetland Community Councils
- Individual Community Councils
- Shetland Arts Trust and Shetland Recreational Trust

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- Elected members
- Shetland Council of Social Service
- Voluntary Organisations
- Employees

Although detailed analysis of stakeholder performance information requirements has not been carried out, the second 'Your Voice' survey, carried out in 2004, showed that over 75% of respondents wanted information on the type of services that were provided by the Council and the services they could request. Of less importance was knowing the standard and improvement in services during the year. This information was taken on board and directly contributed to the format of the 2004 Public Performance Report.

However, it is not clear that this type of information improves engagement with stakeholders on the Council's performance. In the past, no more than 6 comments have been received from the public after the PPR was circulated – indicating a fairly low level of engagement/interest in the document. This was something which Audit Scotland commented on in their Best Value report:

“Shetland Islands Council currently provides a limited range of public performance reporting. Its “Performance Report for 2003-04” has recently been published and provides a readable overview of the Council’s departments and their work. It does not, however, provide performance measures or comparative information to allow the reader to assess service quality or cost. In addition, few of its departments produce public performance reports”.

3.3 Information to be reported

Guidance suggests that stakeholders want the following information:

- (i) How the authority is taking into account their needs and views in service delivery
- (ii) That they are receiving, or have access to, the same levels and quality of service regardless of where they live
- (iii) How the authority is spending its money, whether they are achieving value for money and whether quality is being considered
- (iv) Information which provides a balanced view of local authority performance
- (v) What progress is being made against achieving specified service targets
- (vi) Where they can find out further performance information if required
- (vii) Where to go and what to do if things are going wrong
- (viii) How they can feed back their views about any aspect of the performance information

The information which now flows from the Council's Performance Management Framework, (ie. Service Plans and end of year out-turn reports) will form the basis of the information to be reported annually in the Public Performance Report, with the final content to be agreed through consultation with the Executive Management Team. This provides information on the cost of services and whether they met the targets set for the previous year.

3.4 Accessibility

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In order to ensure that the information provided in the PPR is accessible to as many stakeholders as possible, the document will be checked to ensure it is written in Plan English, avoids jargon and statistical/technical vocabulary wherever possible. It will also be made available in a variety of formats, to take into account the needs of ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities, in line with the standards set by the Scottish Accessible Information Forum.

3.5 Medium for reporting

In the past, the Council has favoured a 'push' method of communicating its annual report. The information was gathered from Services, collated into a booklet format and then sent out to households across Shetland. No feedback has been gathered from stakeholders as to whether the booklet-type format that has been used is considered to be effective or meets their needs. It is also not clear whether stakeholders retain the booklet-type report or find this format interesting/attractive. This will have to be assessed, as the Council's approach to performance reporting develops.

Guidance would suggest that Councils should be innovative in the way performance information is reported to the public in an effort to develop awareness/interest in Council performance and increase demand for performance information in future years. In fact, the Best Value guidance states that "the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 empowers and actively encourages local authorities to make use of a wide range of communication tools and techniques to enable and engage the widest range of stakeholders in the ongoing performance of their local authority".

For this year's report, it is considered important to find a medium which maximises the opportunity for stakeholders to engage with the Council. As a result, the aims for this year's PPR are that it will:

- Be eye-catching
- Accessible
- Generate interest and discussion about the Council's performance
- Be easy to understand, containing short, interesting facts about performance
- Avoid overuse of statistics
- Be retained by households throughout the year and not disposed of shortly after receiving it
- Include information on where more detailed performance information can be found
- Include information on contacts in Service areas, including services' web addresses – the report being a vehicle for publicising the fact that a more detailed set of performance information exists which can be accessed.

3.6 Feedback from Service Users

As part of seeking to actively engage with stakeholders, it will be important to demonstrate that the Council values any feedback that is provided on the PPR and to show that feedback has been taken on board from previous years. Feedback will therefore be collated by Organisational Development each year and reference made to this in the PPR.

A feedback facility has been included in all of the PPRs to date, and this will be continued in the 2005 report.

3.7 Evaluation of PPR for future years

This Framework has been developed for the 2005 PPR. In order to ensure that the arrangements for performance reporting are reviewed at least annually, it is anticipated that this framework will be refreshed each year, prior to production of the PPR.

Section 4 Public Performance Report - 2005

4.1 Recommended format

The formats used in previous years by this Council have been analysed and examples of PPRs have been gathered from other Scottish Councils. Although the most popular method is a bound report, it is not clear that this format would achieve the aims set out in Section 3.5 above. It is therefore proposed to present the PPR in the format of a calendar, similar to that produced by South Ayrshire Council. The calendar would include colour photos of Shetland views, with a featured service area each month.

Performance would be summarised in bullet points, including comparison with other Scottish Councils, where available. Smaller photos showing services in action/new developments e.g. Daggrì, Landfill site, Island Games etc would also be included each month.

The opportunity should be taken to focus on a Service at a time of the year when the information will be particularly relevant. i.e. Roads in a month when the Winter Maintenance Programme is beginning.

Month	Service
January	Education
February	Planning
March	Environmental Services
April	Ferries
May	Ports & Harbour Operations
June	Community Development
July	Your Council
August	Economic Development
September	Housing
October	Roads
November	Finance
December	Social Work

Useful dates of local significance could also be included – School term dates, Public Holidays, Religious festivals, Up Helly Aa, any Service-related info (to be confirmed with Services) etc.

4.2 Timing of distribution

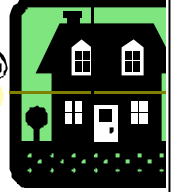
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The recommended date for publishing the PPR is 31 October each year. However, in order to avoid criticism from voluntary groups who produce calendars for fund-raising purposes, it is proposed to circulate the calendar in late November/early December.

SIC HOUSING NEWSLETTER

Issue 6, October 2006



Welcome



Welcome to the Autumn issue of the Housing Newsletter. This edition contains news on progress, updates and changes from sections across SIC Housing.

Head of Housing

Housing Revenue



The outturn figures for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed that the service contributed far more than expected to reserves. This will continue to help us maintain low level rent increases into the future. It also allows the freedom to use some of these funds for building new houses. Also the Housing DLO made the required return on their trading account. There is still a lot of work to be done but at least we are heading in the right direction.

Housing Service Plan April-September 2006

Some key achievements of the April-September Housing Service Plan this year include the identification of properties suitable for conversion/adaptation to provide homes that meet disability needs in all housing tenures. The Schedule of Rates review is being carried out and the end of tenancy customer satisfaction surveys implemented. The Housing Service achieved ISO 9001 re-accreditation, a system of internal quality auditing in place. A six-month review of the restructuring that took place in Autumn 2005 has been completed, with two external reports being commissioned on the Council's Homeless Service provision and the effectiveness of the Estate Management Team. The final report is due to be presented to the Housing Management Team at the end of November. A draft Homeless Policy is also under development.

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Some key improvements to year end will be the establishment of a multi-agency group to take forward the Shetland Local Housing Systems analysis. A Fuel Poverty Strategy Group with Councillor Jim Henry appointed as chair is to be established. The SIC Tenants Handbook is being updated, along with an improved system for tenants wishing to mutually exchange their homes. This system will aim to allow greater movement within housing stock with the service becoming more involved in the process. A Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Plan for Housing have been developed.

Housing Restructure



The Head of Service proposed a Housing Service Restructure in September, with the aim being to provide a better focus for services to meet the demands of a changing sector and to address the changes brought about by the dual role which the Head of Service is now undertaking. The main changes proposed are to appoint a new Service Manager – Housing and Property, a fixed term Project Manager for the New Build development and a realignment of responsibilities within Business Support as the SHO Information and Systems post has not been permanently filled for three years now, since Jim MacLeod was seconded to the Single Status Project. The changes in Business Support will see the creation of two teams covering Policy and Information and Finance and Administration. A new post of Information Technician will be appointed as part of the Policy and Information team specifically to take forward Orchard and other systems in Housing.

The revisions to job profiles and person specifications have been submitted to the Interim Job Evaluation Panel, recruitment will begin following confirmation from the Panel via Personnel.

² The report is still in the Consultation period at present.

Where are we at? (emailed CMA)



Housing Service Annual Report 2005/2006

SIC Housing's Annual Report is due to be published before the end of the Year. This will be delivered to all Council Tenants and Applicants and will provide information on the Housing Service's performance over the financial year 2005/2006.

Housing Business Support - Training Materials

There are some CD roms available to help us through our daily tasks at Housing.

For Team Meetings:

- The Essential Learning Team Coaching Essentials
- Telephone Techniques
- Dealing with Difficult People



For Individual Use:

- It's about time - A Practical Guide to Achieving More in Less Time and with Less Stress (Time Management)
- Assert Yourself - A Practical Step by Step guide to communicating effectively by work

?

If you would like to borrow any of these CD Roms, please speak to Anita Jamieson.

Estate Management

Neighbourhood Support Workers

Over the last few months we have been continuing to improve our service and make sure we are having the best impact with the resources we have available. At the moment we are trying to increase our engagement with members of the community in Lerwick by attending community groups, youth clubs and community events. We are also striving to work closer with other services and agencies to prevent and tackle issues that are a concern to the public i.e. Dog Fouling, Street Lighting, Fly Tipping and Nuisance problems.

With this in mind we are still trying to get out and about in the community as much as possible and carried out a total of 138 patrols in September. Each patrol lasts up to an hour with only a few exceeding that. This means that every public space in Lerwick was patrolled at least once last month with the majority of streets being patrolled at least 4 times.

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Supported Accommodation

Annsbrae -Polytunnel

Annsbrae House have purchased a Polytunnel which was financed through a housing bid for Quality of Life funding.



Gardening is run as a therapeutic activity at Annsbrae and it is hoped that next year there will be 2 gardening classes with the aim of growing both vegetables and flowers. Annsbrae hope to be selling some of these plants to the public. They also hope to have raised beds, to make it easier for clients to work at, if they have a disability.



Housing Team Building



Clay Pigeon Shooting

Housing held a Team Building Clay Pigeon Shooting session on 8 September. Take a look at our top clay shooters below:







Staff Changes

There have been quite a few staff changes since the summer. We welcome 6 new members of staff to Housing. Marie Jamieson and Ronnie Calderwood join as new Housing Assistants in Fort Road. Janet Seery was appointed as Outreach Support Manager.

Diane Thomson and Lorraine Morgan join us at Fort Road as Temporary Housing Officer and Temporary Housing Assistant, and Louise McIvor joins the Housing DLO Team as Temporary Housing Assistant. Meanwhile Kristina Leask has been seconded to Technical Officer for six months.

Feedback

What do you think of this new ? Is it useful? Is it informative? Is there anything that has been ed out that could have been in it?

Please forward them to:

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