

Shetland Islands Council

*Our performance
matters 2013/14*

INTRODUCTION

This annual performance report gives you a snapshot of how we performed during the financial year 2013/14, focusing on some of the services you most likely use on a regular basis.

We've also included a double page centre feature on two of the key campaigns we've been involved in during the year – the Our Islands Our Future campaign and the work to resolve the historic housing debt issue.

We'd welcome any feedback on this report, including suggestions or comments for future issues. You can send these to communications@shetland.gov.uk, tel **01595 744504** or put your ideas in writing to:

**Communications Unit
Shetland Islands Council
8 North Ness Business Park
Lerwick
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Throughout this report you will see us highlighting graphs produced by the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. Benchmarking is a process that helps organisations understand and improve how they perform in comparison to other relevant organisations.

You can find out more about how we compare to other Scottish councils at: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/tool.html>.

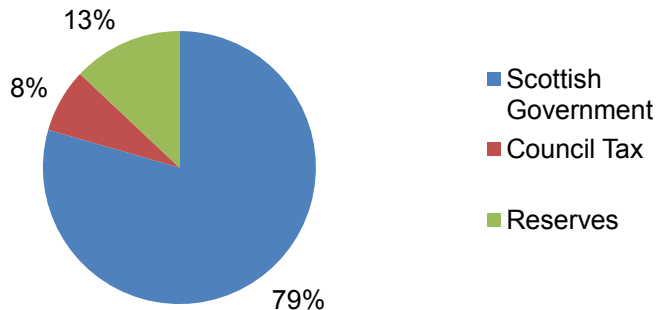
Please click on any of the page titles below to take you to the page you'd like to read:

3	Our finances
4	Looking after the elderly and vulnerable
5	Your schools
6	You and your communities
7	Supporting the economy
8	Our Islands Our Future
9	Housing debt success
10	Environment and transport
11	Housing
12	Planning
13	Our library
14	Things we've built
15	About us

OUR FINANCES

Our 'roadmap' to delivering sustainable services

Where our money comes from



Excludes capital funding and accounting adjustments

We published our new Corporate Plan in July 2013, which identifies our priorities, opportunities and challenges over the next four years.

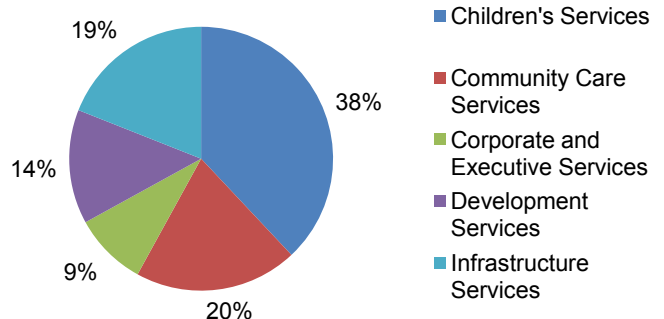
This is our 'roadmap' to delivering sustainable services for the future in the face of massive changes in national and global economies while getting to grips with our own budgetary pressures.

We also set a [Medium Term Financial Plan](#) to take us through to 2017 and, by that time, the aim is to have stabilised our finances, as well as developed services to make them more efficient and effective.

Leader Gary Robinson: "We've learned some tough lessons over the past couple of years, and we are working hard at balancing the books and living within our means. At the same time, we believe passionately in the value and importance of the services we provide to the people of Shetland, and our priority in the coming years is to continue to provide that high quality in the best and most cost-effective manner possible."



How the money is spent



We were the first local authority in Scotland to set our budget for the coming year (in December). Our [Budget Book](#) was also approved for 2014-15 which meant that, by the end of the next financial year, we would be almost 90% of the way to becoming financially sustainable, while maintaining our reserves at £150 million.

"We've come a long way towards getting the Council's spending back on track. There have been some very difficult decisions made - and there will be more to come - but we have to remember that our services are still the best funded in Scotland."

-- Gary Robinson, Leader

Budget underspends by service area in 2013-14:

Children's	£1.3m
Community Care	£0.1m
Executive & Corporate	£0.7m
Development	£1.4m
Infrastructure	£1.4m

Delivered within the 2013-14 Budget:

There was reduced spending of over £6m against the revised budget for 2013-14. Built into this budget was £12.5m of savings, which were either met from the original savings proposals or alternative savings identified in the year.



LOOKING AFTER THE ELDERLY & VULNERABLE

A good example of partnership working to improve service provision

Contributing to Your Support:

A new scheme of charges came into effect in September for some Community Care services, under the heading of the new 'Contributing to Your Support' policy. Some services now have a fixed charge and some are only charged for if a financial assessment shows that service users can afford to pay.

Staff were on hand to speak to anyone with questions or concerns at the various locations that the roadshow visited to explain how the charging would operate.

A new Independent Living Centre:

The new Independent Living Centre opened in July 2013, a joint initiative between us and NHS Shetland. The facility is a base for over 40 staff, including occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, as well as 'Care at Home' staff helping service users from across Shetland to live as independently as possible.

A community equipment store and equipment resource showroom means people can see and try out adaptations and equipment. The centre also provides training in moving and handling and wheelchair clinics, previously run by NHS Grampian.

John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth, said about the building: "This is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when local authorities and health boards design services jointly in the interests of individuals and families with care needs, helping them to live where and how they want to, at home."



Deep dive into Dementia Services:

We partnered with NHS Shetland to commission a review of dementia services in September. Professor June Andrews, Director of the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling, led the review.

Director of Community Health and Social Care, Simon Bokor-Ingram: "As the population in Shetland as a whole grows older, with the result that more people are likely to be living with dementia, we must review our services to ensure they are fit for purpose and can provide as much care as possible on-island and in people's own homes."

New health centre for Scalloway:

In March 2014 we set the wheels in motion with NHS Shetland to create a new health centre for Scalloway from the primary school, with pupils moving into the former secondary school wing.



Other key achievements during the year:

- We carried out a review of Mental Health services and are now implementing the action plan developed from the outcome of the review
- We expanded the Supported Living Model for Adult Learning Disability Services, and now have three more properties providing supported tenancies
- We progressed health and social care integration, and created a single management team for community health and social care, which is supporting staff to further joint working
- We worked with NHS Shetland and were successful in our bid for funding to extend the work to reduce health inequalities for people with learning disabilities

"We are now able to offer the delivery of therapy services for specialist needs from one building and where clients can see at first hand all the equipment that is available to assist them and allow them to remain in their own homes."

-- Cecil Smith, Chair of the Social Services Committee

Find out more:

Visit our [Community Care Services Performance](#) page

YOUR SCHOOLS

Five stars for Ollaberry – “a dynamic school that is continually improving”

New Anderson High School:

Plans were lodged with our Planning Service outlining the proposals for the location of the new Anderson High School and Halls of Residence in June.

As part of the process public events were held so people could find out more about the new school and halls of residence, meet with the project team and comment on the proposals.

The project took a significant step forward in September 2013 with the appointment of Hub North Scotland to develop the project. With this finalised, the development could move on to the design stage.



First class school results:

622 school pupils in Shetland received their exam results in August 2013 with another high performance achieved. The biggest improvement in passes was at Advanced Higher level with an increase of seven per cent on last year.

This was also the last year of Standard Grades; under 'Curriculum for Excellence' all SQA qualifications are being replaced or revised. Since Standard Grades were first introduced in 1984, Shetland students have consistently performed well above the national average every year.

- The number of students sitting SQA qualifications in Shetland rose from 609 in 2012 to 622 in 2013
- The percentage of Standard Grade Credit grades (1 or 2) remained high, down only very slightly from 61.8 per cent to 61.4 per cent
- At Higher level, the percentage of passes (A-C grade) in at least one subject held steady at 77.9 per cent (77.7 per cent last year)

Very good result for Lerwick Pre-School Group:

Lerwick Pre-School Group was inspected by HMI Education Scotland in May 2013 and rated as 'Very Good'. The particular strengths highlighted included: confident, enthusiastic children who are progressing very well in learning; the high level of care and welfare for all children; and motivated and committed staff.

Glowing school reports:

Ollaberry and Fetlar primary schools were both inspected by Education Scotland with glowing reports published in November 2013.

Ollaberry Primary School received the very highest accolade with all five quality indicators rated as 'excellent'. The inspection report described Ollaberry as "a dynamic school that is continually improving" and the head teacher as "an outstanding leader".

Key strengths included:

- Confident, happy children who are making excellent progress in learning
- A stimulating, well-planned curriculum which provides challenge for children
- Very effective support for learning which takes account of each child's specific needs

The inspector who visited Fetlar Primary School praised the school for providing "a high standard of education in a caring, family atmosphere" and recognised that "staff involve the local community well in developing children's skills and confidence". The school received a 'very good' rating across all five indicators.

"These latest reports underline the fact that our schools are of the highest standard and are testament to the hard work of teachers and staff, pupils and parents in both schools."

-- Vailla Wishart, Chair of the Education and Families Committee

Other key achievements during the year:

- A Youth Strategy for Shetland was agreed.
- The review of music instruction was completed.
- We successfully established Isles Haven Nursery, which merged Islesburgh Pre-School and Blydehaven Nursery, and moved into the refurbished former Old Infant School.
- 1,438 school pupils took part in our organised outdoor education programme.
- We saw improved rates of primary school pupils achieving the national target of two hours of physical education weekly (now 96.7 per cent) and secondary pupils achieving two periods of physical education per week (now 75 per cent).
- We successfully completed phase 1 of the refurbishment of the Sandwick Central Play Area

Find out more:

- Read our Standards and Quality Report at: www.shetland.gov.uk/education/documents/StandardsandQualityReport2013Final.pdf
- Visit our [Children's Services Performance](#) page

YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITIES

We shared advice and information with the wider Shetland community

More funding for youth employment:

We were successful in accessing more funding to support new opportunities for youth employment in the private sector and announced in February 2014 that the Youth Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme to Employers would be extended to March with 16 spaces available to new recruits.

The funding was provided by the Scottish Government and managed by Train Shetland Vocational Training. Manager Margaret Simpson: "We have already helped eight people get into work with a range of employers participating in the scheme."

Alanah Young from Scalloway was the first of a group of young people to benefit. She started work in July at Laurence Odie Knitwear Ltd in Hoswick, Sandwick.



Minimum Income Standard:

We held a conference in October 2013 to present the findings of the research published earlier in the summer which highlighted how much it cost householders in remote rural Scotland to achieve a minimum standard of living. The research was also able to estimate the minimum living costs for different households in Shetland which has helped to establish ways to reduce these costs.

"This is an extremely useful and robust piece of research, providing real evidence to support a number of issues we're facing in Shetland, such as high fuel bills, travel costs and delivery charges."

-- Gary Robinson, Leader

Trading Standards key campaigns:

More than 50 Shetland householders contacted us after being cold-called by a company from mainland Scotland offering Green Deal assessments. Colleagues provided advice on dealing with these calls, how to cancel unwanted contracts, and how to claim back money through the banks when the company ceased trading.

More than 60 Shetland residents got in touch with our Trading Standards team about scam inheritance letters which flooded the islands in the summer of 2013. We answered people's questions, got the scammer's email address shut down, and used the local media to alert the general public.

A new website to keep people safe:

In October 2013 Shetland Adult and Child Protection Committees launched their new website at www.safershetland.com. The site provides a central place for information about who to contact and what to do if you are concerned that a child or an adult may be at risk, including resources for people affected by domestic abuse, and is also kept up to date with news and events.



Other key achievements during the year:

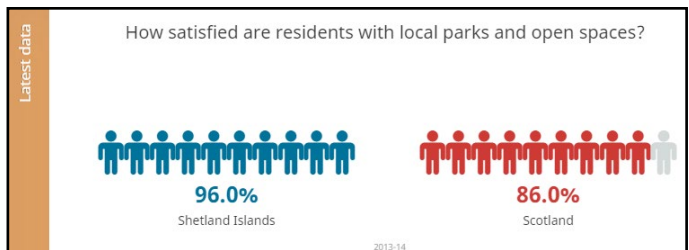
- We supported 46 community groups with external funding applications, securing £437,000 of external funding, with decisions pending on another 12 applications by the year end. The percentage of successful applications increased from 65 per cent in 2012/13 to 70 per cent in 2013/14.
- Shetland remained an excellent place to live, ranked as the 2nd best place to live in Scotland in the Bank of Scotland's annual Quality of Life survey
- Reported crimes in Shetland were down in 2013/14 with 96 per cent of people agreeing that they feel safe in their community
- Our employment rate is 85.5 per cent, 14 per cent higher than the rate for Scotland as a whole and up from 83 per cent in 2012

You can read more about the work of our Community Planning and Development Service and the Shetland Partnership's progress in achieving the aims of the Community Plan in their [2013/14 annual report](#) (PDF).

Shetland College inspection:

Shetland College was reviewed by HM Inspectors during October 2013 and assessed as 'effective' in all parts of the inspection, which is the highest assessment category available to the inspectors. Areas of positive practice, areas for development and an example of excellence were highlighted.

You can read our [Learners' Report](#) (PDF) – a short summary of the review findings, or visit www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/publications to read the full report.



SUPPORTING THE ECONOMY

Public input is essential as it will guide the kind of community projects which are supported

62 projects supported by LEADER funding:

Over the past five years, funding of £2.18 million has been awarded to 62 projects through the LEADER programme. This included the establishment of a local Credit Union and the set up of the Community Energy Efficiency Programme, a partnership between us and Community Energy Scotland, which supported 27 local groups and facilities with capital funding for a wide range of energy efficiency projects.

A series of workshops took place during February and March 2014 to find out how the public feel the next Shetland LEADER programme could best support rural community projects.

Executive Manager of Economic Development, Douglas Irvine: "Public input is essential as it will guide the kind of community projects which are supported through the 2014-2020 programme. We are very keen to build on the successes of the 2007-2013 programme."

Maintaining our Regional Aid status:

Shetland's status was under threat because some indicators used by the EU show Shetland to have higher levels of economic prosperity than other parts of the Highlands and Islands. So we lobbied the EU, UK and Scottish Governments to emphasise that it is completely wrong for the isles to have the same Regional Aid Status as places like London, Paris or Frankfurt.

In September 2013 we received news that the islands may be able to retain 'assisted area status' under changes to the European Regional Aid guidelines for 2014-20. A Regional Aid map that linked Shetland, Orkney and Inverness-shire using maritime zones was submitted by Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support the case for change (the first draft of the map that was issued earlier in the year had omitted Shetland, resulting in a period of extensive lobbying by the Council at all levels of government).

By December it looked as though Shetland would maintain its current Assisted Area status within the EU after being included in the final consultation on the UK draft Assisted Areas Map 2014-20.

Leader Gary Robinson: "Having the full ability to support new business start ups and growth projects is essential for the public sector in a remote economy like ours. Had we been reclassified, support for the local business sector would have been diminished and aid from some EU and Government funding schemes would have been restricted. I'm extremely glad that we've achieved this result."

Economic Development Grant Scheme:

Our Economic Development Grant Scheme was approved in September 2013 as a means of supporting local businesses and organisations to develop and grow, providing key economic benefits for Shetland. Projects supported in 2013/14 included Bigton Community Enterprise Ltd, Living Lerwick and the Local Visitor Information Points Service.

New whitefish trawler for Shetland:

A new whitefish trawler was commissioned after securing a £1,100,000 loan investment from us in March 2014, as part of a substantial funding package with the Clydesdale Bank. The Cullivoe-based Guardian Angell Fishing Company Ltd will have a new 26m vessel later in 2015 to replace their current 20-year-old Guardian Angell.



The new vessel at the shipyard

"I am pleased to see this successful business continue its strong commitment to whitefish catching by building a new vessel to join the Shetland fleet. Without reinvestments such as this the fleet cannot rejuvenate and be fit for purpose for the future."

-- Alastair Cooper, Chair of the Development Committee

Business Gateway round-up:

The Business Gateway service provides a range of measures aimed at people looking to start up in business or who want to grow their existing businesses. This includes access to free training courses, business information and time with a business adviser.

During 2013/14:

- We provided support to 24 new start ups
- We provided advice to 30 existing businesses and 102 clients
- 145 people accessed Business Gateway training courses

During the year we also:

- Helped local companies and individuals to get contracts and jobs at the new gas plant
- Completed the Shetland Visitor Survey 2012/13
- Established and convened the Fisheries and Aquaculture Working Group
- Approved the Digital Shetland Strategy
- Consulted and conducted research into the Shetland Textile Business Development Hub

OUR ISLANDS OUR FUTURE

The three island groups campaigned for additional powers and resources

Our Islands Our Future (OIOF) was launched in June 2013 – a joint campaign between the Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles to ensure the special position and needs of the UK's three largest island groups were fully taken into account whatever the outcome of the Scottish Referendum. Since then, the three have campaigned for additional powers and resources which could include control of the sea bed around the islands and new grid connections for renewable energy.

Click on the screen grab below to play the campaign video:



The three islands heard from Alex Salmond's 'Lerwick Declaration' in July that a Ministerial Working Group would be set up by the Scottish Government to look into the campaign and the proposals in the joint mission statement. The first meeting took place in August 2013 and addressed the important issue of the future of the Crown Estate.



Photo: (left to right) Steven Heddle, Convener, Orkney Islands Council; then Local Government Minister Derek Mackay; Gary Robinson, Leader, Shetland Islands Council; Angus Campbell, Leader, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

The group met again in October and discussed marine planning, energy and measures to 'island proof' Government policy and legislation.

In all, the group met six times to develop a prospectus outlining opportunities for island communities before and after the referendum.

The UK Government also engaged positively with the campaign, through Isles MP Alistair Carmichael.

A major conference was held in Orkney in September 2013, bringing together leading figures from the political, academic and business worlds to debate the issues raised.



Professor James Mitchell, author of "Devolution in the United Kingdom", praised the campaign at the event. "Without taking sides itself, OIOF is presenting challenges to both camps in the independence discussions. This will allow the wider public to have their choices informed by the debate OIOF generates.

"These islands have been quick off the mark. I like this initiative. It represents a lesson for other parts of Scotland."

COSLA vice president Michael Cook said: "Change is coming. The islands should be congratulated on their campaign. We have a duty to intrude a local dimension into the (referendum) debate. Locally delivered accountable services are far more sensitive to local needs, local people and local communities."



Download the conference brochure by clicking on its front cover

The three Council leaders took the campaign to London in October to engage with the Coalition Government – Ministers and senior government officials – and put forward the case for greater powers. The result of the various discussions saw a commitment to continued dialogue on the campaign.

In November, the three Council Leaders and the Secretary of State for Scotland agreed to work towards a Concordat (or agreement) to take forward the OIOF initiative, and it was confirmed that an Islands' Desk would be made available at the Scotland Office; a dedicated point of contact for working with the island Councils.

The three Leaders won The Herald's 'Scottish Politician of the Year' Awards in November 2013 in the 'Local Politician' category for their work on the OIOF campaign.

Find out more at www.shetland.gov.uk/OIOF

HOUSING DEBT CAMPAIGN

In a bid to resolve Shetland's housing debt situation once and for all

We put a new deal on the table in August 2013 to the then Minister for Local Government and Planning, Derek Mackay MSP, in a bid to resolve Shetland's housing debt situation, while at the same time clearing the way to support our tenants by maintaining affordable rents and building new homes in the community.

The proposal asked the UK Government for £10 million which we would match, taking the debt down to £20 million and allowing rents to be kept at an affordable level.

We also asked the Scottish Government for £10 million of housing grant for the period 2016-18 which, when matched by a similar sum from us in terms of land value and funding for housing development, would pave the way for new affordable homes to be built in Shetland.

"The position we have put forward is, in our minds, one that could settle the housing debt debate once and for all."

-- Gary Robinson, Leader

A long-awaited meeting with both the UK and Scottish Governments took place in November and was described as "productive, but that there's now a critical need for the issue to be resolved" by Chair of the Social Services Committee, Cecil Smith.

He said: "We're aware that time is simply running out to get any meaningful solution to this historic debt problem. The Housing Support Grant has been abolished and, if we can't find a sustainable solution to settling the debt, it is very likely that tenants are going to feel the impact from next year. Shetland already has one of the highest council house rents in Scotland, so any further increases will make a bad situation even worse."

Leader Gary Robinson: "These talks were our attempt to press both Governments for an agreement on our proposal for a way forward. The Scottish Ministers were very supportive of our proposal and their role in enabling future affordable housing for Shetland. We now need to press Westminster to agree to provide their assistance, and we might be able to jointly resolve this long-standing problem."

In December, the UK Government confirmed their £10 million allocation which meant that housing rents could be kept to a 5 per cent increase in the coming year, while reviewing the following year's proposed 5 per cent increase, rather than the potential 35 per cent increase the Council had been facing to fund the Housing Revenue Account.

Final arrangements were discussed in February 2014 which will unlock a total package from Westminster and Holyrood worth £20 million to provide debt relief and support for future house building projects.



Photo: (left to right) Alistair Carmichael, MP for Orkney and Shetland; Malcolm Bell, Convener, Shetland Islands Council; Mark Boden, Chief Executive, Shetland Islands Council; Anita Jamieson, Executive Manager - Housing, Shetland Islands Council; Cecil Smith, Chair of the Social Services Committee, Shetland Islands Council; Allison Duncan, Councillor, Shetland Islands Council; and Gary Robinson, Leader, Shetland Islands Council

Housing Debt tenant survey:

Shetland Tenants Forum carried out a survey on housing debt with our council house tenants in May 2013. The results, presented to the Minister when the Cabinet were in Lerwick in July, indicated awareness of the origins of the historic debt. It was also clear from this that tenants didn't feel that likely rent increases were affordable.

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

£400,000 was allocated to 50 households to provide a range of energy measures

Green Deal assessors qualify:

The first fully trained local 'Green Deal' assessors qualified in June 2013 and are now equipped to give independent advice on funding for energy efficiency work in people's homes. They can survey homes and give recommended measures for each property that form the basis of any bid for energy efficiency funding.

Apprentice of the Year:

Plasterer Graham Nicol was awarded 'Plastering 2nd Year – Apprentice of the Year' in June 2013 by City of Glasgow College. An adult apprentice, Graham started his qualifications in August 2010 and completed his SVQ Level 2 Plastering through workplace assessment. He started his Level 3 in August 2012.

New contracts for bus services:

A public consultation exercise to inform the shape of bus services in Shetland was carried out in September 2012, with a follow up on-bus and electronic survey in August 2013.

The final decision on the procurement of school and public bus services was delayed in September 2013 so that further work could be carried out to ensure that the new contracts met the established economic and social needs throughout the isles, as far as possible within the budgets available.

The retendering exercise began in March 2014 with the new network of services planned to start later in the year.

The combined budget for public and school bus services in the financial year 2012/13 was £3.72 million. In 2013/14 the budget is £3.61 million and for the next financial year £2.89 million. This is an overall reduction in budget of 22.3 per cent.

Find out more:

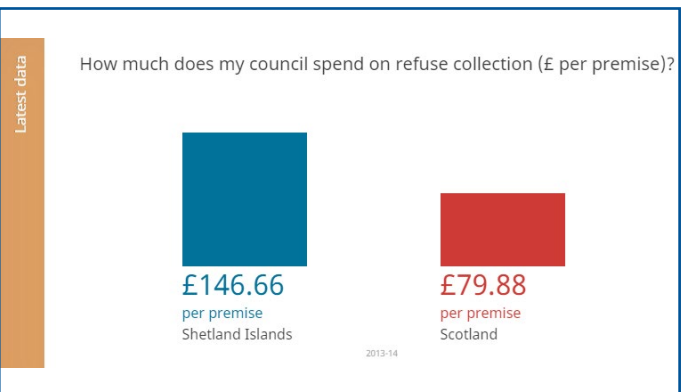
- Visit our [Environmental Health Performance](#) page
- Visit our [Trading Standards Performance](#) page
- Visit our [Waste Performance](#) page

What we achieved during 2013/14:

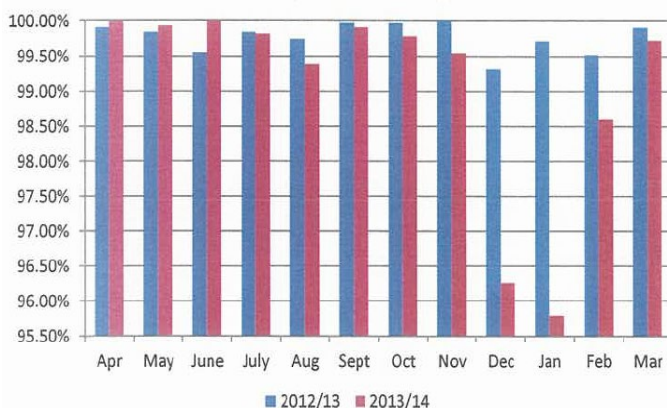
- Implemented the outcome of the Ferries Review
- Promoted the home energy efficiency programme and arranged energy efficiency works in 40 homes of the fuel poor or most vulnerable households; at 31 March 2014 £400,000 had been allocated to 50 households to provide a range of energy measures.
- Implemented the Public Toilets review, the Viking Bus Station review and the review of Tingwall Airport
- Completed and implemented the Fleet review
- Implemented the Bulky Uplift scheme with 83 uplifts during the year
- Replaced the Effirth bridge
- Maintained the very valuable roads network we have with better targeting of the reduced maintenance budget
- Worked with Zero Waste Scotland to review waste collection, disposal and recycling

Did you know?

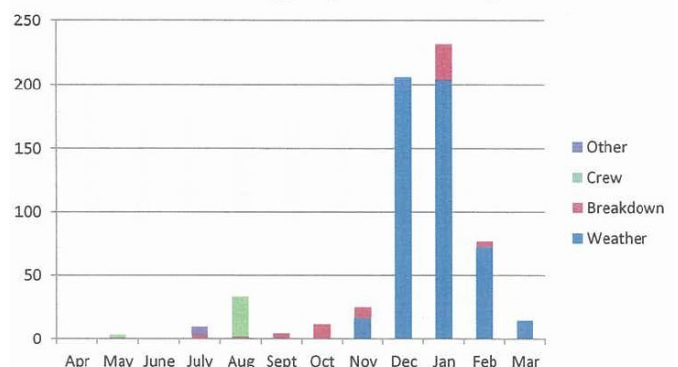
- Our Environmental Health service provides advice to new business startups. In 2013/14 there were 52 new food businesses. The service also provides free advice on health and safety for businesses on request.
- We collected 9,793 tonnes of household waste last year
- 10,814 households received a total of 562,328 waste collections with ten complaints about missed collections
- The Energy Recovery Plant operated for 8,062 hours with 50,994 mega watts of heat produced from burning waste that year



SIC Ferry Availability



Lost Sailings By Cause 2013/14



HOUSING

171 properties were let in Shetland including 23 new properties in Lerwick

Did you know?

The Scottish Housing Charter was first used by the Scottish Housing Regulator to gather landlord performance information for 2013/14 and we now submit performance information on our service every year. Here's a snapshot from our submission:

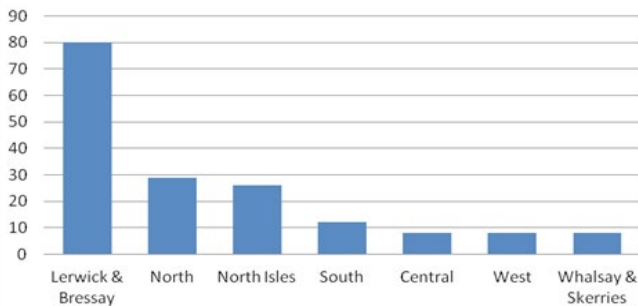
- Last year there were 12 cases of anti-social behaviour involving our tenants with ten being resolved within the targets we set. This was higher than the Scottish average.
- The total amount of arrears from people who are no longer tenants at the end of last year was £143,739
- We evicted two tenants and 23 Notices of Proceedings were raised all linked to rent arrears
- Six properties were abandoned during the year
- At March 2014 there were 815 housing applicants on the list, slightly lower than at March 2013 when there were 832 applications. During 2013/14 628 new applications were added to the list.
- 283 offers were made for tenancies during the year with 82 (29 per cent) being refused
- 171 properties were let in Shetland including 23 new properties in Lerwick. 100 were allocated to waiting list applicants, 50 to homeless applications and 21 were let to transfer applicants.



- 687 emergency repairs and 5,289 non-emergency repairs were carried out. The average time to complete emergency repairs was 5.56 hours; for non-emergency repairs it was 12.32 days.
- During the year 145 people presented themselves as homeless.
- Our satisfaction survey carried out in March 2013 showed that 78 per cent of tenants were satisfied with the overall service we provide as landlords; 74 per cent were satisfied with the quality of their home; and 85 per cent of the people who used our repairs and maintenance service were happy with the service we provide.

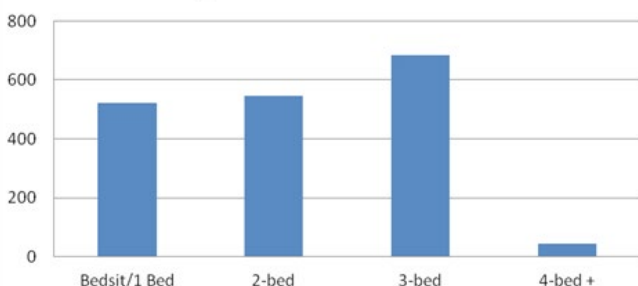
Our lowest satisfaction rate was for the percentage of tenants who were satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in the landlord's decision-making process. Our new Tenant Participation Strategy should improve this.

2013/2014 - Lets by Area



- 722 households received housing benefit last year
- The amount of rent gathered in the year was just over £6 million. The gross rent arrears for 2013/14 was just over 5.04 per cent. The cost of 'void' properties not being let was £111,473. We try our best to re-let our properties as quickly as possible but it can be difficult to re-let properties when there is no demand for them i.e. no applicants on the housing register for the area or size of a property. We are working to improve our re-let times.
- At March our housing stock comprised 1,794 self-contained units

SIC Housing Stock by Size at March 2014



Latest data

How much rent was lost due to empty properties?



Demand for affordable housing continues:

The pattern of demand is concentrated on smaller sized properties and most demand pressure is for the Lerwick, Scalloway and central mainland areas. Joint working with Hjaltland Housing Association is helping to maintain a programme of new build housing.

PLANNING

Our approval rate of 98 per cent was once again above the national average

The project that regenerated Lerwick's waterfront was shortlisted in the Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland's search for Scotland's Best Places in March 2014.

"We're delighted that the Lerwick Waterfront regeneration project has been shortlisted for such a prestigious award. It was a very exciting project to be involved in, developing the original brief and supporting a series of developments for the area."

-- Iain McDiarmid,
Executive Manager - Planning

The project aimed to create an extension to the town centre by introducing a wide range of cultural and commercial activities and amenities to the area. We worked with a number of partners on key developments including the North Ness Business Park, the start of the coastal walk, the refurbishment of the old ice factory into Shetland Amenity Trust offices and the new Museum and Archives.

The project came 4th out of a total of 55 nominations.

We submitted our annual Planning Performance Framework to the Scottish Government. We've highlighted some of the feedback below and you can read the full version at:
www.shetland.gov.uk/planningcontrol/documents/PlanningPerformanceFrameworkGuidance-300914.pdf

- Our average decision making timescale on major developments was 14 weeks; much better than the Scottish average of 53.8 weeks.
- Our Local Development Plan (LDP) was over nine years old at the end of the reporting period; the new LDP has since been adopted in September 2014.
- The average time to process householder applications has improved slightly from 7.9 to 7.8 weeks but is slightly worse than the national average of 7.7 weeks.

Our approval rate of 98 per cent was once again above the national average. We have seen a significant increase in the number of applications while dealing with some of the most significant developments in the country, including two major developments at Sullom Voe, a new power station, the new Anderson High School and development at Scatsta Airport.

We took the lead on the Knab Visioning exercise, the first step to redevelop the existing Anderson High School site. This site is approximately a quarter of Lerwick's total area and could have a significant contribution to the long term vitality and viability of the town.

We continue to offer a free pre-application service for all developments. On major projects like the BP Gas Sweetening Plant we meet regularly with the project team to ensure applications are progressed as smoothly as possible.



OUR LIBRARY

Our public and school libraries loaned 161,975 items during the year

New free eMagazine lending service launched:

We introduced free eMagazine lending through Zinio, a digital magazine download service. By signing up through the Library, members can read a selection of digital magazines for free.



Photo: (left to right) Library Systems Officer David Thomson; Shetland Islands Council Leader Gary Robinson; Executive Manager of Shetland Library Karen Fraser

Young people help to write book:

The Chatterbooks Junior Book Group helped to write a book. The group of Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils met weekly at the Old Library to contribute to Fleur Hitchcock's latest book "Shrunk: Mayhem & Meteorites". Each week, the author would post a chapter of the book on The Story Adventure website and ask children for their help and ideas for the next chapter. Everyone is very proud that the group had their ideas included in the final publication.



Photo: (left to right) Senior Library Assistant Catherine Jeromson with members of the Chatterbooks Book Group and the book they helped write

Bards on the Street returned:

Shetland Library joined with Living Lerwick and Shetland Forwards to launch the latest poems for its popular Bards project. This time the poems were all in dialect – to celebrate the Year of Dialect – and were displayed on Commercial Street.

“Bards is much appreciated by poets and the public. I think a project like this is a very good way to bring poetry out into public spaces and grab folk’s attention. It’s good to see that dialect writing is so popular and of such a high standard.”

-- Morag Nicolson,
Shetland Library

Did you know?

- Our public and school libraries loaned 161,975 items (while borrowing is down visitor numbers remained high)
- We had over 100,000 ‘virtual visits’ to our website and online catalogue – a record for us
- There were 14,979 log ins to our computers
- We ran 153 events attended by 2,442 people
- Our customer service scored highly (83 per cent excellent, 16 per cent good and 1 per cent fair), as did our requests service and the help we give using computers. With so much information now digital, helping people get online is an increasingly important part of our work. Our weekly ‘Click Shetland’ sessions and special eBook drop-ins attract growing numbers of people.

Customer Satisfaction Survey:

In December 2013, we carried out our annual customer satisfaction survey. The majority of customers rated us ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ in all areas.

The overall customer satisfaction rating was 91 per cent. It is particularly pleasing that this rating is as high as last year because we cut opening hours during 2013.

The area most criticised was ‘space and layout’. One improvement we’ve made this year is to set ‘Basement Browsing’ as a monthly event, which opens up more stock to customers.

THINGS WE'VE BUILT

A snapshot of the projects we've been involved in during the year

Edward Thomason House and Taing House – Extension and Link:

The new six-bedroom extension to Edward Thomason House and link connecting it to Taing House started on site in June 2013. The project was completed within budget and occupied in August 2014. Linking the care homes will mean only one kitchen and laundry will need to operate.



Shetland College – Phase 3:

The two existing college buildings were both extended and connected via a new central core building, containing a new reception, admin office and library. The main project works were completed in March 2014. Further alteration works packages within the existing buildings were completed over the summer holiday period in time for the start of the 2014/15 academic year.



New pier at Walls:

The new pier at Walls was completed in May 2014 providing a new pontoon and walkway together with a store, waiting room/ toilet building and outdoor storage compound for the Foula ferry service.

The pier has also provided a sheltered harbour from southerly weather conditions with a water depth of 3m below chart datum in the area enclosed by the piers southern and eastern finger. The structure has 156m of new berthing face and has created a pier deck and backup area of 2500 square metres.

The ferry-related part of the pier was partially funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



New homes at Burnbank:

Our new homes at Burnbank in the north end of Lerwick were opened in July 2013. These properties were built and completed by DITT and managed by our Capital Programme Service. The 22 new houses are a mix of one-bedroom houses and flats, as well as two- and three-bedroomed homes, designed to match the need for smaller properties across Shetland; something that is particularly important in light of recent housing benefit changes and the 'bedroom tax'.

The construction of the houses cost £2.2 million and attracted Scottish Government grant funding of £600,000.



ABOUT US

We kept challenging everyone across the whole Council to make further savings

For the first time, we published basic attendance rates at SIC meetings for each Member. In future years, Councillors' reasons for non-attendance will also be logged and published.

Further details, together with information on elected members' pay, allowances and expenses can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk/about_your_councillors/Expenses.asp

Members of the Scottish Cabinet visited Shetland at the end of July which gave Councillors the opportunity to present a number of key points on issues important to Shetland, which included:

- Our position on housing debt
- The Aberdeen ferry contract, including future involvement in specifying the service and ongoing issues including discounts for community groups
- The general impact the current oil and gas boom is having on the Shetland economy in terms of the lack of affordable housing

Figures released in October showed that we reduced the number of staff we employed by 441 full-time equivalents (FTE) over the last three years; with 135 full-time equivalent positions deleted since April 2013.

At the time Leader Gary Robinson said: "We have managed a 15 per cent reduction in our staffing levels since we started our improvement work in December 2010. With the efforts being made this year, it will mean that we have shed about 600 FTE posts since then, and we are now saving over £15 million a year."

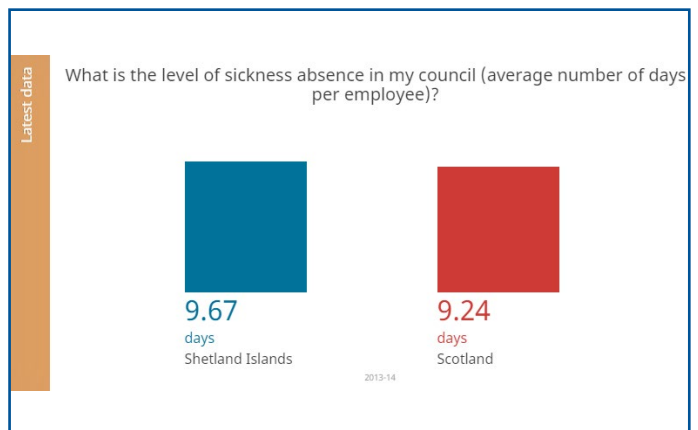
"The number of Council staff is a subject of much discussion when it comes to identifying ways to save money. But these latest figures clearly show we are taking the job of reducing staff numbers very seriously."

-- Gary Robinson, Leader

We have already:

- Had our accounts approved by Audit Scotland without any qualification
- The Accounts Commission released us from special measures
- Seen all Councillors, the Chief Executive and the corporate management team take the lead in developing the Corporate Plan.
- Agreed a Medium Term Financial Plan that will give ongoing financial strength by 2017
- Reduced our spending from reserves (it reached £36m in 2011/12 but has reduced to £14.8m in 2013/14)
- Met our 2013/14 budget targets set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan
- Put in place all the internal efficiencies we have identified

- Kept challenging everyone across the whole Council to make further savings
- Disposed of a further seven buildings, raising a further £750,000
- Updated our standing orders about contracts and buying goods and services to provide best practice
- Renegotiated contracts with our biggest suppliers to achieve savings
- Worked with public sector partners to buy things cheaper together



Top five most frequently visited web pages:

- Ferries timetable - 58,164 unique visits in 2013/14
- Ferries main service page - 24,651
- Planning - 18,740
- Ferries routes and destinations - 11,623
- A to Z - 11,811

On any week day during the year the website tended to average around 2,000 unique page views. On Thursday 5 December 2013 we saw 6,635 unique page views – a day with much disruption due to the weather.

 @ShetIslandsCll

“Our main reflection is admiration for the businesslike and professional way members, staff and the community have tackled things.

“We have cut our draw on reserves by 60% from 2011/12 levels to the agreed budget for 2014/15. We have delivered £10 million plus revenue savings for each of the last three years and we have done that in the context of a reducing Scottish Government grant and continual cost pressures on services.”

-- Gary Robinson, Leader

For further information on how we're performing and to download all the latest data, please visit: www.shetland.gov.uk/about_performance/



**Shetland
Islands
Council**