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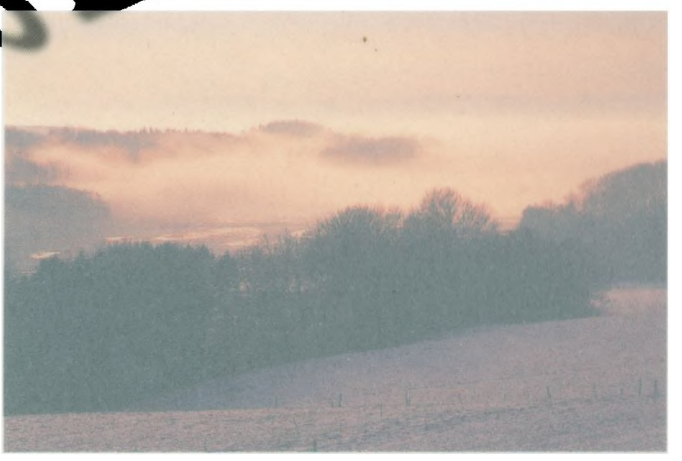
VEJLE AMT



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VEJLE AMT

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PREFACE



Undgå splittels

Handelsskc

The County Mayor Otto Herskind Jørgensen.

In Vejle County, we are fortunate in many ways. We are surrounded by beautiful, varied countryside with woodland, lakes and open country. This is an asset we really enjoy – as do the people who come to visit us.

At the same time, we are right near a national crossroads, where traffic travelling north–south meets that travelling east–west. This makes the region a natural meeting point, where many people choose to put down their roots. This applies equally to people and to businesses, and, in turn, results in the implementation of interesting initiatives and exciting activities. That is why we are a "region of opportunity" – in many ways.

As a public institution, it is our duty to know how to make the best possible use of the excellent cards we have been dealt. We in Vejle County Council do our utmost to ensure that the region continues to be a good place to settle for both private citizens and businesses. We do so by providing the best possible services in the areas for which the county authorities are responsible, and by setting up the best possible framework for development in the region.

Simply put, the county authorities take care of the public tasks that are too big for the local authorities and too small for the state. In order to ensure that these tasks can be carried out as closely as possible to the citizens they affect and in a manner that is responsible from both a demographic and economic point of view, it is both important and appropriate that they are dealt with at a regional level.

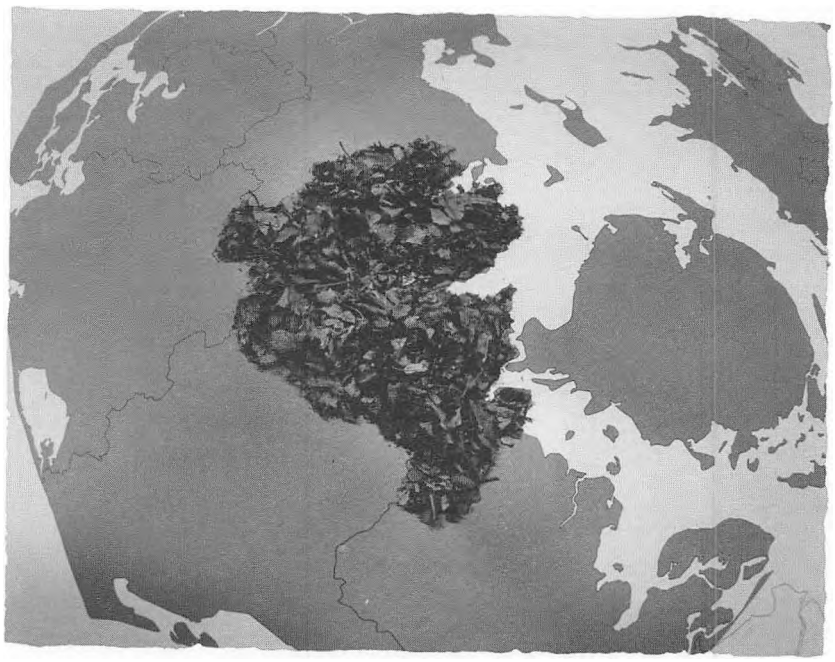
The county authorities' responsibilities include running the hospitals, secondary schools and a wide range of institutions for the disabled. Other tasks include environmental protection and maintaining and expanding the network of roads for which the county is responsible.

There is more information about all areas of responsibility on the following pages. If you would like further details about Vejle County, you are most welcome to ring or write to us.

Pleasant reading. Here is Vejle County – make use of it!

Otto Herskind Jørgensen
County Mayor

Vejle COUNTY



With almost 350,000 people living in an area of 3,000 km2, Vejle County is one of the most densely populated regions in Denmark outside the Greater Copenhagen Area.

Two-thirds of the population live in the four large east coast municipalities: Fredericia, Horsens, Kolding and Vejle. The westerly part of the county is more sparsely populated – consisting primarily of agricultural properties and small village communities.

In all areas of planning, the county authorities endeavour to achieve balanced development to give densely-populated urban environments, smaller towns and rural districts the same development opportunities.

Traffic

Vejle County is located at the point where national traffic travelling north–south meets that travelling east–west. This applies to both road and rail traffic.

Each of the four largest towns in the region has a well-developed commercial harbour. Measured in the volume of goods handled, Fredericia Harbour is the largest in Denmark.

Air traffic is also well represented. The county is one of the owners of Jutland's international airport in Billund, which is less than an hour's drive away from the vast majority of the towns and businesses in the county.

Business

By Danish standards, Vejle County is home to a large number of industrial workplaces, and 40% of the workforce has a professional qualification. The region contains a particularly large number of businesses in the fields of comestibles, foodstuffs, electronics and mechanics.

Otherwise, as regards business, Vejle is a "miniature copy of Denmark", with numerous small and medium-sized companies as well as some large businesses operating in the fields of industry, transport, commerce and service. Not many people are employed in agriculture and fishery, although these areas contribute significantly to the economic basis of the region.

Attractions

Vejle County offers its visitors a wide range of historical, cultural and entertaining attractions.

The "historical" category includes the interesting remains of the seat of the Viking kingdom in Jelling. It was from this seat that the king ruled over both Denmark and Norway, and it was also from here that Christianity was introduced into Denmark.

The two great burial mounds in Jelling are included in Vejle County's coat of arms. Two crossed battle-axes symbolise the Viking kingdom, and a floating botonny symbolises the introduction of Christianity.

The countryside

Mother Nature has been very kind to Vejle County, which is rich in woodland and lakes. In fact, the county is known for its varied landscape, which provides the perfect setting for a wide range of activities.

The eastern part of the county is distinguished by fjords, beaches, cliffs and deciduous woods. From the ends of the fjords, you can follow the valleys as they wind their way to the west, where the countryside flattens out to moor and spruce woods.

To the north lie the attractive hills, surrounding numerous lakes that are ideal for angling, canoeing and a wide range of other activities.

Tinnet Krat (Coppice) forms the heart of the largest area of oak woods in Denmark.



Tinnet Krat.

The county – the REGIONAL problem-solver



Vejle County is more than just a name for the geographical area that constitutes the heart of Jutland. It is also a public organisation that carries out a wide range of very different tasks.

State, county and municipality

Denmark is divided up into 273 municipalities, which are grouped into a total of 14 counties. In addition, there are the Municipalities of Copenhagen and Frederiksberg, which, due to their large populations, are considered both counties and municipalities.

The public administration system is divided up into three levels. The guiding principle is that public tasks are to be carried out as closely as possible to the citizens they affect, with all due consideration to cost and quality.

The state is responsible for tasks that affect the whole country. The vast majority of the decentralised tasks are carried out via the local authority system, which is made up of the counties and municipalities.

The counties take care of tasks that are too small for the state but too big or too specialised for the municipalities.

Most public tasks are carried out by the municipalities, of which there are 16 in Vejle County. The largest has a population of just over 60,000, while the smallest is home to around 5,000 people.

Regional autonomy

Denmark has a long tradition for regional and local autonomy. In fact, this autonomy is protected by the Danish constitution.

One of the central tenets in the Danish system of municipal autonomy is the fact that the counties and municipalities are free to choose how they wish to carry out their respective tasks. The solutions they choose must, however, be practicable within a financial framework drawn up in collaboration with the state.

Tasks

Individual laws specify which tasks are to be carried out by the state, the counties and the municipalities.

The counties' tasks change regularly. This is due to the laws passed by the Danish Parliament that transfer responsibility for various tasks from the state or municipalities to the counties.

The counties' responsibilities include:

- The local health service, including running the hospitals.
- Health assurance, including subsidies for medicine and treatment by GPs, physiotherapists, etc.
- Day care centres for children and adults.
- Arrangements for children and adults with severe physical or mental disabilities.
- Secondary schools.
- Training within the social and health care sectors.
- Wide-ranging special education for the mentally disabled and others with special needs.
- Adult education.
- Subsidies for theatres, music and museums of local history.
- Public transport.
- The main road network.
- Environmental protection.
- Nature conservation and administration.
- Spatial planning.

31 ELECTED *decide*



The county is run by 31 elected officials who make up the county council.

The county council elects the county mayor from among its members. Since 1 January 1994, the Mayor of Vejle County has been Otto Herskind Jørgensen (Liberal). He is chairman of the county council and responsible for the day-to-day running of the county.

As the only full-time county politician, the county mayor's daily workplace is in the council offices. The other members of the county council have regular jobs alongside their political responsibilities.

Five permanent committees

A large proportion of the political work of the county is carried out by the county council's five permanent committees for:

- Financial affairs.
- Health.
- Social services.
- Environment and planing.
- Education and culture.

These permanent committees meet 2–4 times per month.

Since 1983, Vejle County has also run a Prevention Committee. This committee is responsible for planning and implementing campaigns and pilot projects aimed at preventing accidents and illness, in co-operation with the county's institutions and administration departments, the municipal and central authorities, as well as a variety of organisations, etc.

For example, a number of youth initiatives have been implemented with a view to preventing traffic accidents, work-related accidents, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Elected for four years

The members of the county council are elected for four years at a time via ordinary secret ballot. All residents of the county aged 18 years or more are entitled to vote.

Foreigners who are resident in the county also have the right to vote in the elections and to run for office. The only conditions are that they have had a permanent address in Denmark for at least three years or that they are citizens of an EU member state, Iceland or Norway.

In the elections to Vejle County Council in November 1997, voters could choose from 205 candidates divided between 11 political "lists".
There was a 68.8% turnout.

6 + 1

Six political parties and one non-politically affiliated citizens' interest group are represented on the county council:

The Social Democrats	11
The Social Liberals	1
The Conservative People's Party	3
The Socialist People's Party	2
The Independent County List	1
The Danish People's Party	2
"Venstre", the Danish Liberal Party	11
	31

Open meetings

The county council normally meets once a month. At these meetings, the council reaches decisions in cases put forward by the various committees.

The meetings are open to the press and interested citizens. The meeting agendas are freely available – at libraries and electronically on the Internet, for example. The decisions taken by the council are also published.

Some cases are, however, dealt with behind closed doors if this is required by law.

Citizens can ask the council to answer questions of general interest concerning county matters. All it requires is for the questions to be submitted to the council prior to a council meeting.

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In the elections to Vejle County Council in November 2001, voters could choose from 197 candidates divided between 11 political "lists".
There was a 86,0% turnout.

Seven political parties are represented on the county council:

The Social Democrats	10
The Social Liberals	1
The Conservative People's Party	2
The Socialist People's Party	2
The Christian People's Party	1
The Danish People's Party	3
"Venstre", the Danish Liberal Party	12
	31

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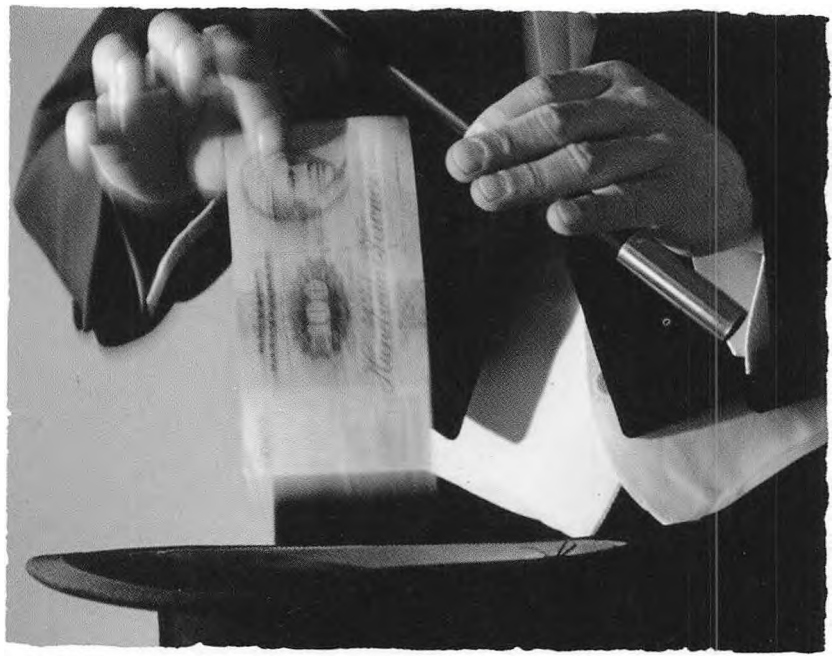
This is how we FINANCE our activities



The business of Vejle County is run according to the budgets that the county council is obliged to draw up every year.

The annual budget is the most detailed and is binding on all the various committees and administration departments.

In addition, the budget contains forecasts for income and expenditure for the following three years. These are not binding in the same way as the annual budget, but they are important for the long-term management of the county's finances.

Expenditure totalling DKK 6,4 billion

Vejle County's total expenses amount to DKK 6,4 billion (budgeted 2002).

The majority of these are paid for by personal income tax, which provides the county with around DKK 4,4 billion annually.

The county also collects land taxes. These will bring DKK 520 million in 2002.

Otherwise, the state is a major contributor, providing DKK 1 billion in subsidies. Operational income and repayments account for DKK 1.332 million (2002). These come in particular from the local authorities, which pay for the right to use the social institutions, etc.

The state is also involved

State, county and local authorities work closely together in running the local public finance system.

The framework for the county and local authorities' expenditure is laid down in annual agreements between the Government, the Association of County Councils and the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark.

In addition to regulating expenses, these agreements also cover the right to increase taxes, the raising of loans, construction activities, etc.

Local and regional income tax

In the same way as the state, the counties and local authorities levy personal income tax. In 2002, the level of municipal taxation in Vejle County varies from 18,8 per cent in the cheapest municipality to 22,7 per cent in the most expensive.

In 2002, Vejle's county tax of 11,4 per cent is the lowest in Denmark.

While state taxes are charged according to a progressive scale, county and municipal taxes are proportional, i.e. the tax percentage remains the same regardless of income. However, all citizens are entitled to a tax-free allowance of around DKK 30,000.

A mosaic of fields in the distinctive East Jutland landscape of moraine hills.



Arable land at Underup.



The county offices – popularly known as Red Snake because of their distinctive architecture – are the administrative headquarters of Vejle County and employ 560 people.

At the same time, the council offices are the political headquarters of the county. The council and committee meetings are held here. The chairmen of the political committees have offices in the administration departments in order to ensure close contact between the political and administrative functions.

Five sector administration departments

- Psychiatric department.
- Social services department.
- Health sector department.
- Environment and planning department.
- Department for education and culture.

Old areas of woodland on inaccessible slopes are allowed to grow naturally.



Toppled beech in Stenderup Woods.

The Economic Development Department is a staff service which operates across committee boundaries to deal with activities of importance to regional development.

Management

The administrative leadership is the responsibility of the management, which is responsible for ensuring a comprehensive approach and inter-departmental co-ordination of the tasks in hand.

The management is made up of the Chief executive and the heads of the five departments.

The members of the management team are responsible for a range of personnel and service assignments. These include IT, personnel development and training, internal and external communication, environmental control, budgets, accounts and wages.

Service and quality

Vejle County has a long-standing tradition for closely targeting service, quality and simplification. The goal is to make the best possible use of the available resources and, at the same time, to provide citizens with the best possible service and quality.

A noteworthy decentralisation has taken place, with authority, responsibility and decision-making – including financial management – being transferred to individual institutions and departments.

The administration departments and institutions are obliged to establish measurable service targets. In addition, work is carried out continuously to increase the effectiveness of environmental control at all levels.

10,000 employees

With almost 10,000 employees, Vejle County is the largest single employer in the region. A number of these employees work part time. The 10,000 jobs are, in fact, roughly equal to 8,920 full time positions.

Around 95% of the county employees work with direct citizen service – at the hospitals, in social institutions and within the education system.



The health sector is the area of county responsibility that requires the highest expenditure. With costs amounting to more than DKK 2.5 billion per annum, this sector alone accounts for almost two-thirds of the county's total operating budget.

In the period 1993–97, Vejle County increased its health sector costs by 13.7% in fixed prices – i.e. over and above ordinary wage expenses and price increases.

The county's six hospitals account for the largest single expense item – the figure was DKK 2 billion in 1997.
The hospitals are divided into three zones:

- The North Zone: Horsens Hospital (approx. 300 beds) and Brædstrup Hospital (approx. 70 beds).
- The Middle Zone: Vejle Hospital (approx. 400 beds) and Give Hospital (approx. 100 beds).
- The South Zone: Kolding Hospital (approx. 360 beds) and Fredericia Hospital (approx. 150 beds).

Within the county council, there is a political wish to retain the region's two smallest hospitals in Brædstrup and Give. This is achieved by allowing these hospitals to concentrate on specialist areas and special assignments that suit their size and structure.

Health insurance
In Denmark, all citizens have access to free medical aid – both general and specialist. Medicines, dental treatment, physiotherapy, chiropractor treatment, etc. are also subsidised. These expenses are paid by the public health insurance system, which the county finances and administrates.

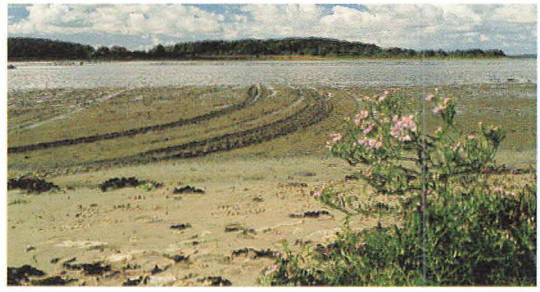
Health sector planning
The county is responsible for overall planning in three areas:
Primary health service – i.e. private general practitioners, specialist doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, etc.
Secondary health service – which includes the planning and operation of the county hospitals and the associated treatment institutions. This area also includes midwifery and natal services.
Preventative initiatives – which include vaccinations, health checks for children, health promotion campaigns, information about AIDS and family planning clinics.

In 1997, Vejle County approved its second health plan. This plan covers the period 1998–2001 and focuses on three general areas:

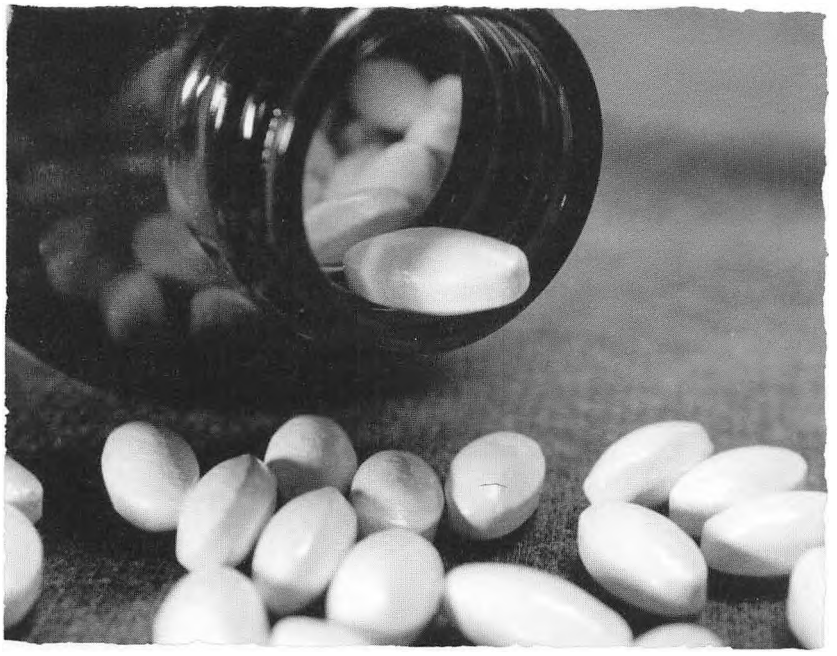
- Quality.
- Illness prevention and health promotion.
- Co-operation across professional and sectorial boundaries.

Patient counsellors
Patient counsellors help citizens to overcome the barriers that some people encounter when contacting the modern health service. Patient counsellors can also provide help and guidance with complaints procedures.

The island of Vorsø, which has been designated a nature reserve since 1928, is now home to a colony of cormorants.



Vorsø island in Horsens Fjord.



One of the county's tasks is to provide help to citizens suffering from mental illnesses. The central tenet of the service that Vejle County provides is the desire to provide treatment and care, and to create a basis for development.

The county's services have been specifically designed for mentally ill people of different ages and with very different needs for support. They include:

- Psychiatric treatment.
- Residences in protected environments.
- Activities in the daytime.
- Employment.
- Counselling.

In all, at the end of 1998, Vejle County had 600 places at its disposal, including 160 beds. The county employs approximately 700 people to take care of citizens with mental illnesses.

A large area of heather which has survived 200 years of intensive agriculture.



Harrild Heath.

Initiatives in local areas

Horsens, Kolding and Vejle Hospitals all have ordinary adult psychiatric departments, and a District Psychiatric Centre has been established in Fredericia. In addition, Vejle Hospital also has a Department of Paediatric Psychiatry.

Residences, day centres and employment opportunities are spread throughout the region so that, as far as possible, relevant services are available to mentally ill patients in their local areas.

The county takes care of mentally ill patients who need professional medical psychiatric treatment, diagnosis and prescription of medication. Such help is provided via admission to the hospitals' psychiatric wards or as treatment in the community during the daytime.

The county is obliged to provide services for all mentally ill citizens whose special needs cannot be covered by their local authorities.

The county and the local authorities work closely together to co-ordinate the services they provide and to ensure that they are complete. These services are carried out within the framework of the county's psychiatric health plan which covers the services provided by the county and the local authorities.

Focus on the mentally ill

Since the middle of the 1990s, Vejle County has strengthened the development of the services on offer to citizens suffering from psychiatric illnesses.

The strategy for the psychiatric services provided by the hospitals in 1997 increased the number of available beds by 40 to around 200. In addition, support was given to the psychiatric management team and mobile groups were set up to help senior citizens with psychiatric problems.

On 1 September 1998, the field of psychiatry received its own special department. The running, planning and development of the county's services for the mentally ill are now gathered together in the Psychiatric Department which is responsible for both hospital psychiatry and social psychiatry.

When something special is NEEDED



Personal development, treatment and care are the key concepts for the county's services within the social sector.

To a large extent, it is the local authorities that provide the necessary help when citizens are faced with problems that threaten their social welfare. However, the county takes over when extraordinary assistance is needed.
Typically, this is the case when dealing with special tasks that require specialist knowledge or special measures, or which are targeted towards a relatively limited group of citizens – the severely disabled for example.

The county provides
services for:
- The mentally disabled who need special care.
- Certain groups of people with physical disabilities.
- Citizens who need special socio-psychiatric services.
- Citizens who need protected employment or rehabilitation.
- Children and young people with special social, psychological or behavioural problems.
- The homeless.
- Substance abusers.

Targeted services
The primary task is to provide disadvantaged citizens with a place to live and the relevant associated services. The services provided are adapted to suit the needs of the individual but typically include personal support as well as varying degrees of assistance with cooking, cleaning and transport.

All adults living in one of the county's special residences are also offered employment or various forms of activity.

Other important tasks include:
- Finding places for children and young people who have been removed from their homes.
- Counselling about children – providing guidance to families about children and young people.
- Dealing with cases concerning applications for adoption, abortion after the twelfth week of pregnancy, and sterilisation for people aged under 25.
- Approval of vehicles for the disabled on the recommendation of the local authorities.
- The aid centre – which provides information about domestic aids and adapting buildings and residences to make them suitable for the disabled.

Municipal co-operation
The county and the local authorities exchange experience and co-ordinate their tasks in order to make transfers within the social system easier and less noticeable for citizens.

Vejle County wishes to develop its social services in the following directions:
Individualisation: the residences and services provided are becoming increasingly tailored towards the individual users. This means that standardised packages are being replaced by tailor-made offers.

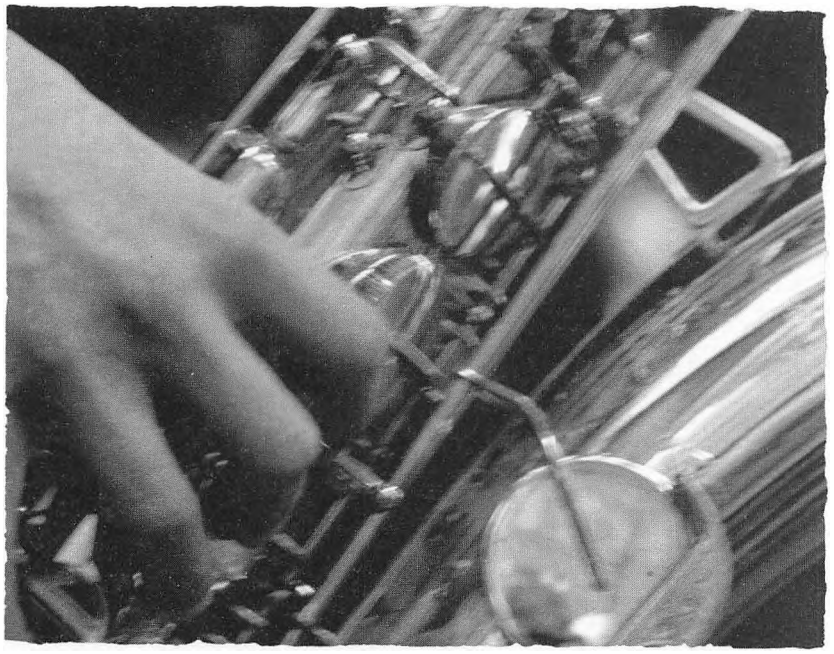
Joint empowerment: citizens who use the services provided by the county are to have a say in their own daily lives and in the planning of new service offers. User-influence also requires that citizens take more responsibility for their own lives.

Adaptation: the social services on offer are continuously adapted to accommodate new knowledge, new opportunities, and, in particular, new requirements from consumers and society in general.

One of the long and narrow lakes so typical of landscapes marked by river valleys.



Rørbæk Lake.



Vejle County operates an active culture policy, which is intended to accommodate both the professional and established cultural community and the numerous volunteers who choose to take part in cultural activities.

The financial support provided by the county is, to a large extent, allocated to individual projects and only to a limited extent to established institutions. Associations, local authorities and individuals can apply for funds from the "culture pool" to support cultural projects and events of regional or national interest.

The county itself also takes the initiative for major projects and events, such as the masterclass for young violinists from all over the world to be held in 1999.

The county's permanent cultural commitments include subsidising:

- Museums.
- Theatre.
- Music.

Museums

There are ten state-approved museums in Vejle County, and these receive a small subsidy towards their operation. The county also supports:

- Preservation of the cultural heritage – through media such as the Vejle County Conservation Workshop and the Vingsted Historical Workshop, which includes an Iron Age settlement.
- Special exhibitions, national and international projects and information about museum conditions, etc.

Theatre

As regards theatre, Danish legislation obliges the county to subsidise tickets for the nation-wide subscription arrangement and to support travelling theatre companies and the regional theatre in the city of Århus.

In addition, the county also supports:

- Children's theatre and fringe theatre – including the annual festival of children's theatre in Horsens.
- Amateur dramatics – via subsidies for courses and workshops and to major amateur performances with professional involvement.

Music

Musically, the county pulls out all the stops to inspire and develop the musical life of the region. In 1996, Vejle County became the first county in Denmark to set up a basic rhythmic ensemble of professional musicians.

In addition, the county also supports:

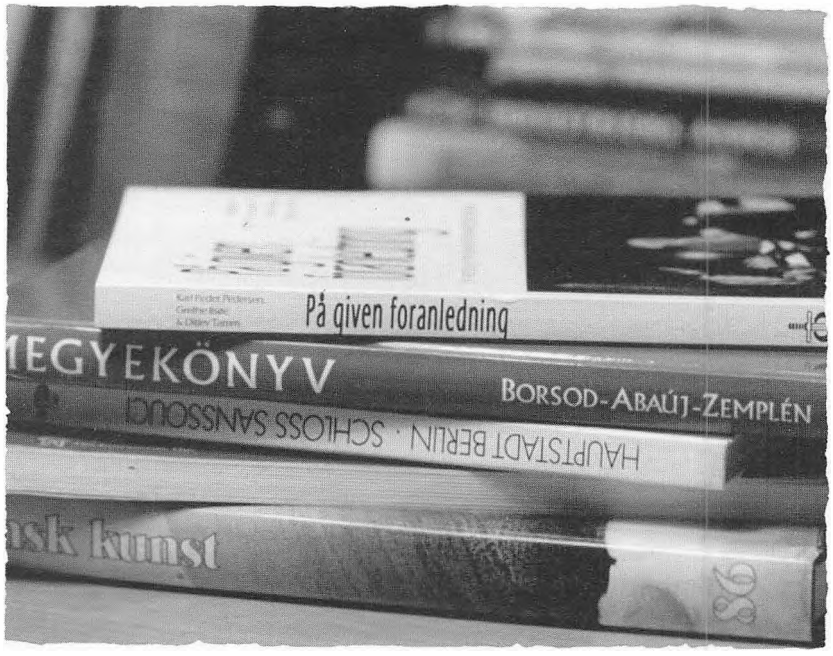
- Introductory musical courses – which can help young people to prepare for the entrance examinations for music conservatoires.
- Rhythmic and classical county choirs and the Vejle County Youth Big Band.
- The orchestral school of the Vejle County Symphony Orchestra.
- Music festivals, courses, workshops, compositions, etc.

Interaction with the state and the local authorities

Compared to other items on the county budget, the budget for culture is not very large. This is because the state and the local authorities cover most cultural expenses.

For the same reason, in most areas of culture, the county works closely with the state-run cultural institutions and the local authorities as regards operations, individual events, new initiatives and experiments.

A GREAT PROVIDER *of education*



While the local authorities are responsible for basic education in the primary schools, the county takes care of the broad general education of young people and adults.

The county is also responsible for individual professional training courses and the education of small groups of citizens with special needs.

The County Centre for Education advises, informs and provides guidance for teachers and educational institutions in the county in the areas of pedagogy, teaching aids, etc. In addition, the county lends educational materiels and organises courses for teachers.

General education

The county runs:

- Eight secondary schools, of which half also provide two-year Higher Preparatory Examination (HF) courses.
- Four adult education centres (VUCs) for general adult education.

The VUCs provide education courses for adults. The teaching available here is equivalent to that provided during the final years of secondary schools and on HF courses. In addition, these centres organise supplementary training courses for businesses and institutions.

Professional training

The basic training courses for the health sector and social services are run at the county's special health sector and social services schools. These schools also organise supplementary training courses.

The county runs:

- Schools providing basic training within the health sector and social services.
- Nursing schools – courses following on from basic training.
- The Fundamental Pedagogic Education – a one-year training course for young people.

Special education

Citizens with special educational needs are principally taught at special schools.

The county runs:

- Two special schools for children and young people.
- One boarding school for young people.
- A special school for children with impaired hearing.
- Three special schools for adults.
- One communication centre for adults.

Education of this kind is based on the individual pupils' circumstances, opportunities and wishes. Education encompasses both functional skills and personal development. The schools also provide advice and guidance for pupils, their relatives, institutions, local authorities, etc.

Higher education

The state finances higher education in Denmark. However, distribution is uneven, so young people in Vejle are currently obliged to study outside the region.

The county has therefore been actively involved in the creation of the University of South Denmark via an amalgamation of Odense University, The South Denmark School of Commerce, The South Denmark School of Engineering and The South Jutland University Centre.

This amalgamation has considerably improved the opportunities available for education and research. Vejle County supports the university financially by providing DKK 3 million per year during the three-year start-up phase.

River valley landscape where traces of some of the oldest of settlements in Denmark have been unearthed.



Vejle River Valley at Tørskind.

The county's ADVANCED force



Sixty per cent of Denmark's gross national product is redistributed via the public sector. This gives the public authorities a special responsibility for the development of society and makes it especially important that the interaction between the public and private sectors functions appropriately.

Vejle County works actively to support development in the region and to promote inter-sectorial co-operation – regionally, across county and regional borders and between the private and public sectors.

The aim is to make sure that the citizens of the county enjoy good living conditions and to provide them with employment. This is achieved in part by giving businesses the best possible conditions to grow, develop and create jobs.

Focus on three areas

The Department for Economic Development was set up especially to deal with these tasks. It takes care of activities that are of importance to regional development, and is particularly concerned with:

- Labour market conditions.
- Business development.
- Education and training.

The Department for Economic Development is a task force that can be called upon when initiatives of importance to the region require a rapid response. Other tasks include:

- Analysis of areas that are important to the development of the region.
- Proposals for development plans across the boundaries of the county's administration departments.
- Development projects that can promote co-operation and initiate the desired development.
- Establishment and co-ordination of networks.
- International co-operation – including consultancy about EU programmes, initiatives, etc.

The Department for Economic Development also provides the administrative service for organisations including the Vejle County Development Council, Green Network, The Regional Social Fund Committee, the public sector members of The Regional Labour Market Council, and The Retail Trade Council.

Vejle County Development Council

The Development Council is a forum for dialogue and ideas, where representatives from the public sector, private businesses, unions of employers and employees and others can exchange experience and draw inspiration for new initiatives.

The goal is to promote the development of the region's business community, infrastructure, culture, education and training, international co-operation, etc.

The council consists of 54 members who represent the county council, the local authorities, the business community, the various parties on the labour market, educational institutions, etc. Some members are appointed as individuals.

Environmental watchdog and **PLANNER**



Nature sometimes needs a helping hand to preserve its special characteristics. This is where Vejle County comes into the picture. The county has overall responsibility for nature conservation and environmental protection.

The county's responsibilities in this area include:

- Monitoring the water quality in fish farms and municipal water treatment plants.
- Monitoring watercourses, lakes and coastal waters.
- Nature restoration, including taking care of lakes and watercourses.
- Protection of groundwater quality – including responsibility for the recovery of water and monitoring chemical depots.
- Approving and monitoring high-pollution businesses.
- Taking care of nature and recreational paths.
- Monitoring and regulating the use of particularly environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and heaths.
- Administration of laws concerning planning, agriculture, raw materials, nature preservation, environmental protection, etc.
- Providing advice and guidance to local authorities, businesses and individuals.

Some areas are under the direct control of the county, while others are shared with the local authorities. That is why the county and local authorities often work closely together when solving their respective and joint assignments.

The county runs an emergency environmental response service, which can be called out 24 hours a day in the event of the pollution of lakes, watercourses or coastal areas.

Spatial planning

Consideration for nature and the environment plays an important part when the county draws up the general framework for residential development, business, transport, energy, the use of specific areas, etc.

This is carried out via the regional plan, which lays out the guidelines for the local authorities' physical planning for the coming 12 years. Its aim is to ensure balanced exploitation of space and natural resources, and is supplemented by annexes, background reports, etc.

During the planning process, citizens, local authorities, businesses and other interested parties have the opportunity to comment on the proposals and to put forward suggestions for changes.

Inland dunes formed by the displacement of sand 10,000 years ago.



Inland dunes on Randbøl Heath.



A good transport system is important to the mobility of society and the competitiveness of businesses. The expansion and maintenance of roads is therefore very important to general development in the county.

The county is responsible for 680 km of main roads. The Roads Department's tasks include:

- The planning and construction of new roads and paths.
- The enlargement of existing roads – including the establishment of cycle paths.
- Traffic safety, including straightening bends in the roads, redesigning crossroads, setting up traffic calming measures, organising campaigns, etc.
- The running, maintenance and administration of the main roads.

The county has an independent construction department which works under conditions that closely resemble those that apply to private companies of this kind.

Public transport

Public transport is another important area. While the running of the railways and long-distance coach services is the responsibility of the state, the Vejle County Traffic Company (V.A.T.) takes care of bus routes to all areas of the county and local buses in the four major towns.

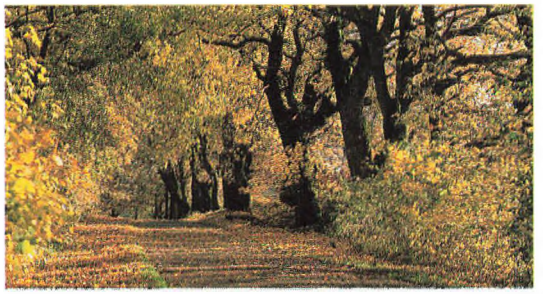
V. A.T. is a jointly-owned municipal company that is run by Vejle County and all the local authorities in the county. All routes are put out to tender and operated by private transport firms and bus companies.

Together with the traffic companies in the neighbouring counties, V.A.T. runs three express bus routes to the towns of Ringkøbing, Hanstholm and Sønderborg.

V.A.T. also operates special transport schemes for the severely disabled.

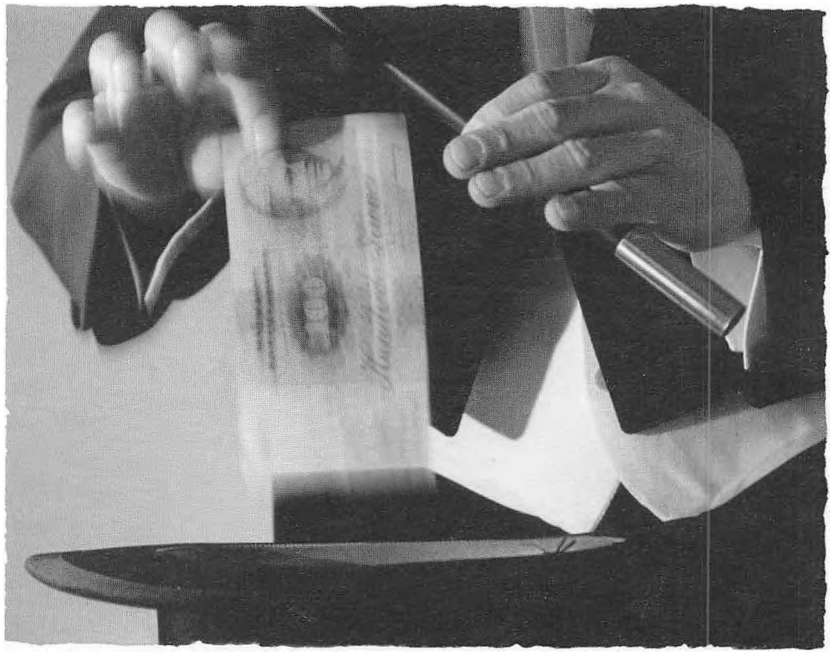
Vejle County is a major shareholder in Billund International Airport – the only international airport in Denmark outside Copenhagen – which is located just a few kilometres west of the county line. The airport means a great deal to the business development of the region and is also an important employer.

These beech woods constitute a considerable part of the region's woodland.



Beech woods at Engelsholm.

This is how we **FINANCE** our activities



The business of Vejle County is run according to the budgets that the county council is obliged to draw up every year.

The annual budget is the most detailed and is binding on all the various committees and administration departments.

In addition, the budget contains forecasts for income and expenditure for the following three years. These are not binding in the same way as the annual budget, but they are important for the long-term management of the county's finances.

Expenditure totalling DKK 5.8 billion

Vejle County's total expenses amount to DKK 5.8 billion (budgeted 1999).

The majority of these are paid for by personal income tax, which provides the county with around DKK 3.8 billion annually.

The county also collects a ground tax. This is currently set at 10 per thousend, and will provide the county with DKK 232 million in 1999.

Otherwise, the state is a major contributor, providing DKK 1 billion in subsidies. Operational income and repayments account for DKK 944 million (1999). These come in particular from the local authorities, which pay for the right to use the social institutions, etc.

The state is also involved

State, county and local authorities work closely together in running the local public finance system.

The framework for the county and local authorities' expenditure is laid down in annual agreements between the Government, the Association of County Councils and the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark.

In addition to regulating expenses, these agreements also cover the right to increase taxes, the raising of loans, construction activities, etc.

Local and regional income tax

In the same way as the state, the counties and local authorities levy personal income tax. In 1999, the level of municipal taxation in Vejle County varies from 18.1 per cent in the cheapest municipality to 21.9 per cent in the most expensive.

In 1999, Vejle's county tax of 10.9 per cent is the lowest in Denmark.

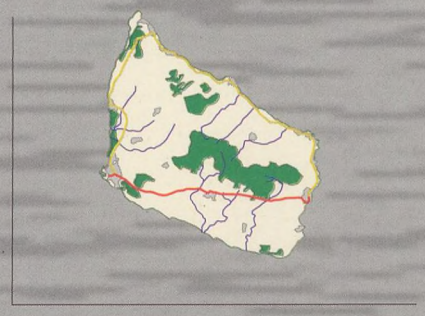
While state taxes are charged according to a progressive scale, county and municipal taxes are proportional, i.e. the tax percentage remains the same regardless of income. However, all citizens are entitled to a tax-free allowance of around DKK 30,000.

A mosaic of fields in the distinctive East Jutland landscape of moraine hills.



Arable land at Underup.





Ålborg

Århus

Brædstrup
Nørre-Snede
Gedved
Give
Tørring-Uldum
Horsens
Jelling
Hedensted
Billund
Juelsminde
Vejle
Vejle Amt
Egtved
Børkop
Fredericia
Esbjerg
Lunderskov
Kolding
Vamdrup
Odense
København