



**COMHAIRLE NAN
EILEAN SIAR**

CORPORATE STRATEGY

2007-11

INTRODUCTION

MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENER

The Outer Hebrides are an excellent place to live; work and to do business. Our population is, however, in decline. Our islands have now reached a crossroads. Will the population age imbalance continue to grow or will more families make their homes in the islands and rebalance the population?

Local, high quality public services play a vital role in attracting families to the Outer Hebrides and this is why we aspire to be one of the best performing councils in Scotland.

By focusing the future development of services, projects and programmes on strategic objectives linked to promoting population balance the Comhairle has given a clear commitment to making a difference to the future of the islands.

This Corporate Strategy provides the basis for planning the future delivery of services, projects and programmes over the next four years. Although this Strategy is mainly concerned with Comhairle services, we have a statutory duty to lead Community Planning and we will work with our partners and use the community planning process to maximise resources to help us improve the quality of life of people living and working within the Outer Hebrides.

We will monitor our performance as we progress towards achieving the Strategy and will regularly report back to the community.

Cllr Alex MacDonald
Convener

THE CONTEXT

A SHARED VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ISLANDS

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, is the public, private and voluntary sectors working together to meet the needs of island communities.

The Partnership has agreed a shared vision to guide the development of policies and services in the islands.

The Partnership's aim is:

The creation of a prosperous and healthy community living in a quality environment with improved transport links and access to good facilities based on the principles of sustainable development through respect for the natural environment and the cultural traditions of the Outer Hebrides.

This Corporate Strategy demonstrates the Comhairle's commitment to the delivery of this vision.

The Partnership has also signed up to 15 Themes of Sustainability and the Comhairle continues to support the principles of sustainable development and equality.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE

Long term population decline and demographic change is a continuing concern for the Partnership. In 2005, consultants carried out in-depth research into the issues around migration and found that there could be:

- A 23% drop in the number of women of child bearing age by 2019
- A potential significant gender imbalance with the number of males overtaking the number of females by 2009
- A 50% decline in annual births over the next 20 years
- A significant increase in the number of elderly residents in our population
- An increase in the average age of islanders from an already aged 42.4 in 2004 to 45.3 in 2009.

The social and economic impacts of these projections are numerous and wide ranging. Service rationalisation and labour shortages in key employment sectors are just some of the anticipated effects of the reduced numbers and increasing age profile.

To achieve a healthier balance of population in terms of age and gender steps must be taken to:

- increase the number of young workers
- increase the number of women
- reduce the average working age
- contribute to natural population growth (by increasing the population of child bearing age)

When considering outcomes, objectives and priorities for this Corporate Strategy, the Comhairle focussed on the issues and challenges of achieving a stable and balanced population.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES

The Comhairle's mission statement is:

To provide excellent public services throughout the Outer Hebrides

Our corporate values are:

- Our customers and communities are at the heart of all we do
- We provide strong and effective community leadership
- We are proud of our islands and promote a positive and professional image of them
- We take pride in delivering quality and value for money and look constantly for improvement and efficiency
- We strive to involve our colleagues and partners in our work recognising that true partnership can achieve great things
- We provide integrated services whenever we can as we recognise that this can only strengthen the retention of public services in the islands
- We endeavour to make the Comhairle the place where people choose to come and work
- We manage our assets to ensure that they match our service delivery plans and are fit for purpose

**BY THE END OF THE COMHAIRLE TERM WE WILL BE ABLE TO
DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR SERVICE PERFORMANCE HAS
IMPROVED**

OUR PRIORITY FOR ACTION

BY THE END OF THIS COMHAIRLE TERM WE WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE IMPROVED POPULATION RETENTION AND IN-MIGRATION

This is an ambitious strategic objective and to achieve it we have set the following objectives:

Growing Prosperity in a Growing Economy

Our Objectives for 2007-11	How we will measure success
<p>We will lead the delivery of the “Creating Communities of the Future” Regeneration Strategy.</p> <p>We will support or lobby for measures that support business growth and competitive advantage.</p>	<p>Increased Gross Regional Domestic Product</p> <p>Increased average wage levels in the economy</p> <p>Growth in the private sector</p> <p>Growth in emerging sectors</p> <p>Increased land resources in community ownership</p>

Strong Communities, Strong Roots, Strong Culture

Our Objectives for 2007-11	How we will measure success
<p>We will direct investment to maintain and improve local infrastructure and the built environment.</p> <p>We will support communities to deliver an accessible, affordable and sustainable range of community amenities.</p> <p>We will support the strengthening of Gaelic as a language in the family and community</p> <p>We will lead support for culture and heritage</p>	<p>Improved appearance of settlements</p> <p>Increased range and usage of facilities</p> <p>Increased attendance at events and activities</p> <p>Increased number of Gaelic speakers in the Outer Hebrides</p> <p>Increased number of non Gaelic speaking new employees who undertake classes</p> <p>Increased number of events and activities</p> <p>Increased support for voluntary organisations involved in culture and heritage</p>

Quality Education in Quality Buildings

Our Objectives for 2007-11	How we will measure success
<p>We will deliver a sustainable education service throughout the Outer Hebrides.</p> <p>We will lead and support the delivery of lifelong learning opportunities for all ages and throughout the islands.</p>	<p>Improved attainment and examination results</p> <p>Improved accreditation rates in the context of school/college partnerships</p> <p>Improved attainment in literacy and numeracy in Gaelic and English</p> <p>Maintained or improved levels of attendance and inclusion</p> <p>Improved annual condition and suitability ratings for the school estate</p> <p>Increased participation in lifelong learning opportunities</p>

Green Council, Green Islands

Our Objectives for 2007-11	How we will measure success
We will lead the development and delivery of a strategy to ensure that the Outer Hebrides, and the Comhairle, are carbon neutral.	A reduction in the Comhairle's carbon footprint Reduced consumption of carbon based resources A reduction in the percentage of total waste that is landfilled
We will procure goods and services in the most sustainable way	Increasing the number of local suppliers who win contracts awarded through competitive tender.

Strengthening Connections, Strengthening Communities

Our Objectives for 2007-11	How we will measure success
We will lead the delivery of a road and transport network within and between the islands that allows affordable access to jobs, services and facilities.	Increased length of the spinal route that is double track Improved annual condition and suitability ratings of the road network
We will lobby for the continued development of affordable and accessible transport links to the mainland.	Maintained or increased affordability and availability of bus, air and ferry services

MONITORING AND REPORTING ON PROGRESS

Delivering the Strategy

The Comhairle will approve a work plan for each Committee to be delivered over the next four years. Departments will incorporate these plans and priorities into a three year business plan that will ensure resources follow the priorities identified and agreed.

Reporting on progress

The Comhairle will monitor progress on achieving the targets outlined in this Strategy annually and will publish this information on the internet site and in the local press.