



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY AREAS OPERATIONAL DEFINITION: A SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the operational definition of Sustainable Community Areas (SCAs). The concept of the SCA was introduced in the Western Isles Structure Plan (approved in Dec 2003) and it is within the context of the Structure Plan that SCAs have been defined.

*“The Structure Plan has identified 13 areas that are **generally recognised as having a geographic and common identity**. The policies in the Structure Plan will strive to support the long-term sustainability of each of these areas. **Development and economic activity will be encouraged throughout the Western Isles based on investment in each of these Sustainable Community Areas, while recognising that the levels of service provision required will vary from area to area**”.*

PURPOSE

The purpose of SCAs therefore is not to divide the Western Isles into ‘equal’ areas in terms of size or population. There are other official geographies in existence that already do this. The purpose of SCAs is different. SCAs are an operational tool designed as a basis for informing investment and service provision in the Western Isles.

The SCA boundaries as detailed in this document have been developed to provide a level of statistical information of use to planning and the provision of public services within the particular context of identified ‘communities’ in the Western Isles.

SCAs will by no means and, nor is it intended that they should, replace existing geographies for which information is currently collated for a variety of different uses.

GEOGRAPHY

The 13 SCAs as detailed in the Structure Plan and the areas / main settlements ‘on the ground’ that they relate to are as follows:

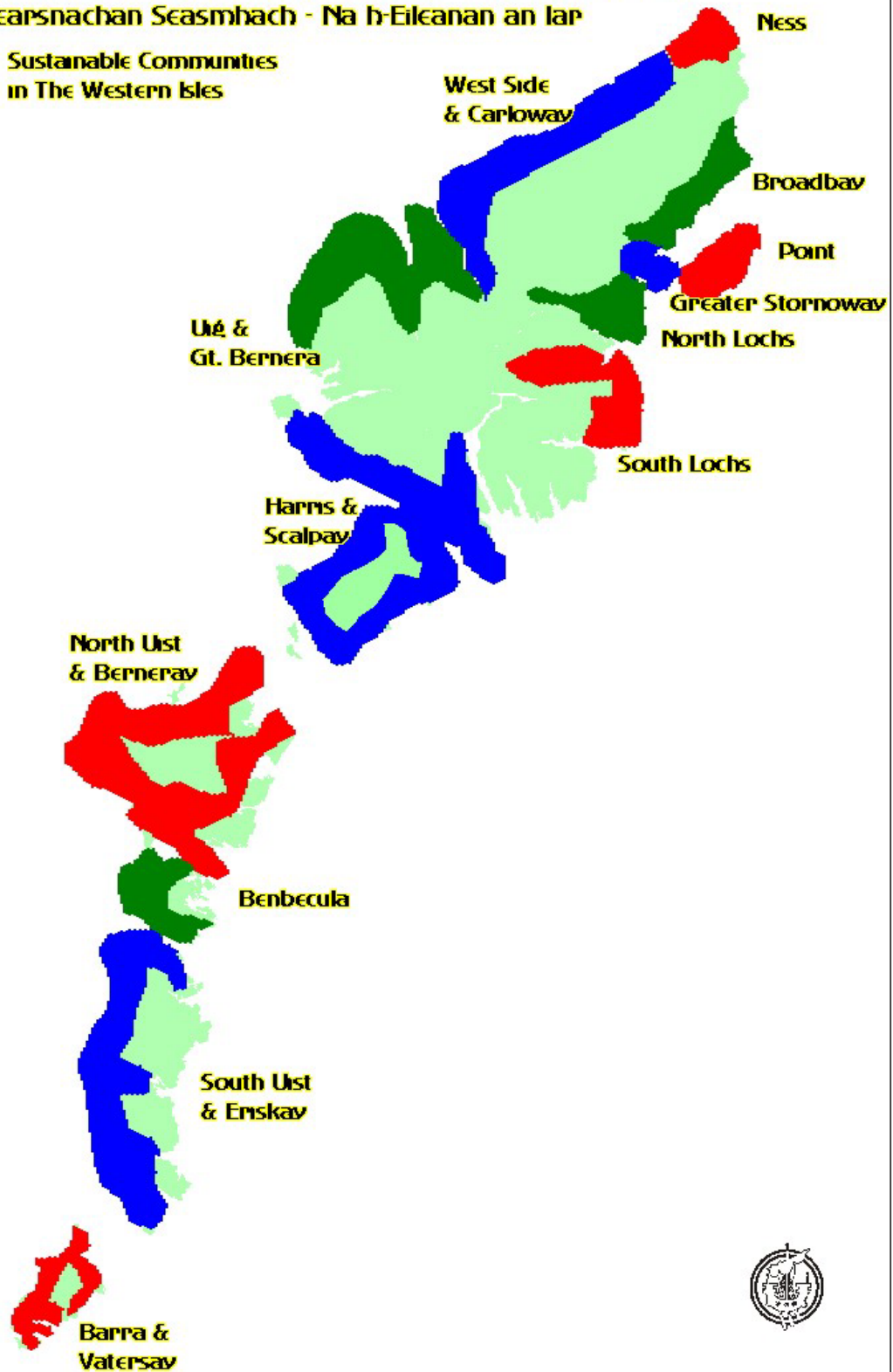
- ◆ Ness (South Dell to Port of Ness)
- ◆ Westside and Carloway (Galson to Barvas to Garynahine)
- ◆ Broadbay (Tolsta to Tong)
- ◆ Greater Stornoway (Newmarket to Laxdale to Stornoway to Braighe)
- ◆ Point (Eye Peninsula - Braighe to Tiumpán Head)
- ◆ Uig and Great Bernera (Great Bernera and Uig)
- ◆ North Lochs (Achmore to Leurbost to Ranish)
- ◆ South Lochs (Arivruaich to Marbhig to Gravir to Lemreway to Eisgen)
- ◆ Harris and Scalpay (Isle of Harris and the Isle of Scalpay)
- ◆ North Uist and Berneray (Isle of North Uist and the Isle of Berneray)
- ◆ Benbecula (Isle of Benbecula)
- ◆ South Uist and Eriskay (Isle of South Uist and the Isle of Eriskay)
- ◆ Barra and Vatersay (Isle of Barra and the Isle of Vatersay)

(As shown overleaf in *Map 1: Sustainable Communities in the Western Isles*)

Sustainable Community Areas - Western Isles

Coimhearsnathan Seasmhach - Na h-Eileanan an Iar

Map 1 Sustainable Communities in The Western Isles



DEFINITION

SCAs attempt to reconcile some pre-existing geographies with the need to create areas for the purposes of future public service planning, infrastructure and service development. The aim has been to create areas which both fit with objective areas for which a range of current and historical data already exists but which also respect natural and subjective boundaries and the notion of communities with shared interests and history.

BUILDING SCAs

For the purposes of Census output, SCAs have been 'built up' from official Census Output Areas. Census Output Areas are made up from the amalgamation of a number of individual census returns within a defined (generally small) geographical area. It makes sense to use Output Areas as the basis for SCAs as they represent a **fixed geography for which census output is readily available**. Results from both the 1991 and 2001 Census are provided at the Output Area level.

In 2001 the Western Isles was divided into 229 Output Areas in the 1991 Census there were only 213 Output Areas. The difference between the number of 1991 and 2001 Output Areas is due to changes in Census methodology but the differences in geographical terms are very slight. This means that direct comparison between the years is actually possible when Output Areas are combined to create a higher-level geography such as the SCA.

The SCA definition ensures that postcode areas and Census Output Areas (both for 1991 and 2001) 'nest' within the boundaries of the SCA's. For more information please refer to *Sustainable Community Areas Operational Definition: A Technical Guide*.

PRESENTING INFORMATION

On the basis of SCAs as defined in this paper, statistical information can be gathered from the Censuses, both 1991 and 2001 and this allows comparison over time. Data for each of the Census Output Areas, which make up the larger SCA is identified and combined to provide data for the SCA as a whole.

As an example, the table below details the total population of the Western Isles in 2001 broken down by SCA.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY AREAS – TOTAL POPULATION 2001			
<u>Area</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Population</u>
Ness	1,179	South Lochs	965
Westside and Carloway	2,829	Harris and Scalpay	1,984
Broadbay	2,382	North Uist and Berneray	1,657
Greater Stornoway	7,653	Benbecula	1,249
Point	1,980	South Uist and Eriskay	1,951
Uig and Bernera	652	Barra and Vatersay	1,172
North Lochs	849	Western Isles Total	26,502

Source: 2001 Census SCROL website <http://www.scrol.gov.uk>