



# SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE

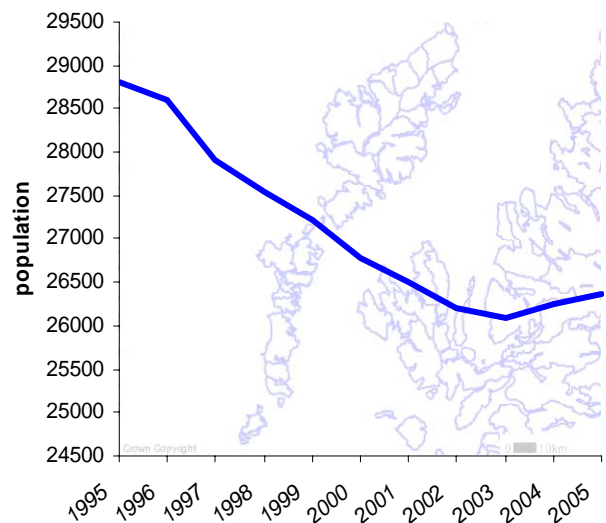
This is the fourth edition of the Socio Economic Update; a regular e-bulletin which has been designed to keep you up-to-date with recently released socio economic reports of reference to policy and planning in the Western Isles.

## Population Increase Estimated for the Western Isles

On 27th April, the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) released their 2005 mid-year estimates for Scotland and its administrative areas (*estimate period: 06/04 to 06/05*).

### Key findings for the Western Isles include:

- The population of the Western Isles in June 2005 was estimated to be **26,370**. This represents an increase of 110 persons (0.4%) since 2004. This is the second year running that the GROS have estimated a population increase in the Isles (which is contrary to the predicted long term trend of decline) in 2004 it was estimated to have increased by 160 persons (0.6%). The adjacent table plots population estimates over the last 10 years;
- From June 2004 to June 2005, GROS estimate net civilian migration (in migration minus out migration) to be 245 persons; with a natural change (births minus deaths) of -135 persons in the Western Isles;
- In 2005, the average age for males was estimated to be 41 years in the Western Isles and 44 yrs for females. Please contact the Research Officer for any further breakdown of figures. [click for full report](#)



Western Isles Population Estimates  
1995 - 2005

## Vital Statistics Preliminary Returns 2005

The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) have recently released the provisional figures for vital events registered during 2005 for Scotland and its administrative areas. [click for full report](#)

### Key Results for the Western Isles include:

- There has been a marginal increase in **births** in the Western Isles with 233 births recorded in 2005 (birth rate of 8.9 per 1,000 population). This represents an increase of 10 births since 2004 (when the birth rate was 8.5 per 1,000 population);
- The number of **deaths** has increased with 391 recorded in 2005 (death rate 14.9 per 1,000 population.), compared to 352 in 2004 (when the death rate was 13.4 per 1,000 of the population). In both years, this represented the highest death rate of any local authority area in Scotland;
- The change in number of **marriages** recorded was negligible with 102 recorded in 2005 and 104 in 2004. However, this represents a significant increase since 2001 when the number was 88.



### Key Results for Scotland include:

- More than 54,000 new Scots were born in 2005 (420 more than 2004), this represents the highest number of **births** in Scotland since 1999;
- Provisional figures for the full year show a slight decline in the number of **deaths** with particular decreases in two of Scotland's top three biggest causes of death: strokes & heart disease;
- There were 30,881 **marriages**: 4% cent fewer than in 2004. Divorces also fell by almost 4%.

## Unemployment Update

The latest release from NOMIS give the following unemployment rates for March 2006:

**Western Isles:** 3.6%    **Scotland:** 3.0%    **UK:** 2.7%

*Note: (percentages are for the number of JSA claimants as a proportion of the resident working age population).*

This represents 551 persons claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the Western Isles in March 06: 437 male (above nat. average) and 114 female (below nat. average).

Looking back over the past ten years we can see that the unemployment rate in the Western Isles has fallen from a high of 9.3% in July 1996 to a low of 2.7% in October 2005.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise publish a monthly unemployment digest on their website. They use 'travel to work areas' and estimate that the unemployment rates in the Western Isles in February 2006 was 3.4% in both the 'Uists and Barra' and 'Lewis and Harris' TTWAs.

[click for full report](#)

## House Price Update

The BBC publish a regular online House Price Index which ranks UK local authority average house prices against one another.

The listing source is the 'Registers of Scotland Executive Agency' and the figures are simple averages based on all residential properties between £20,000 and £1,000,000 in the four quarters of each year.

**The findings below refer to the period Oct-Dec 2005:**

- The average house price in the Western Isles was £82,393; the second lowest in Scotland; above Shetland at £80,127;
- This represents a 7.7% increase since the last quarter and a 19.7% increase in the last year (the highest annual increase of any Scottish LA area);
- Comparatively, the Scottish average was £125,934; with an annual increase of 6.6%.

[click for full report](#)

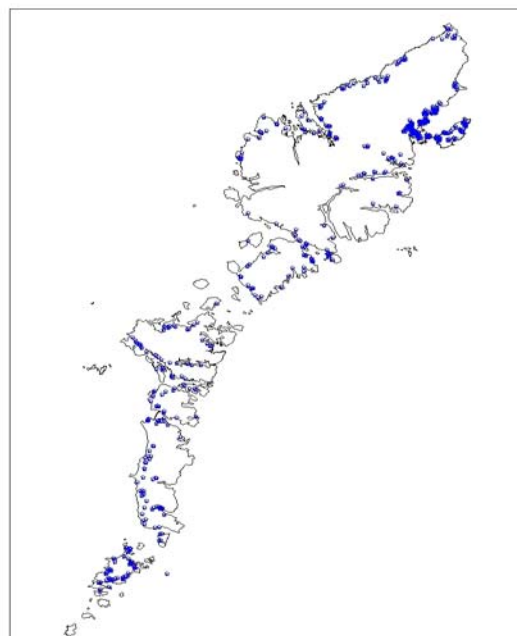
## New Builds Applications

There were over 470 new build applications (for residential properties) to the Comhairle's Development Services section during the period 2000-2005.

The adjacent map illustrates the location of these applications. The patterns shows a spread of sites around existing settlements throughout the island chain; with a concentration around the Broadbay area of Lewis.

The Comhairle are currently undertaking a Housing Needs Assessment Survey as part of the Local Housing Strategy. This will assess the requirements of current and future housing provision and related services.

There has been a good return on the survey so far but every response does count, so if you have received a questionnaire, and it is still waiting to be completed, please do so in the next few days; and encourage any neighbours or family to do so also.



## Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics - Updates and Guidelines

### April 2006 Update

The latest quarterly update of the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) Internet site has been published online this month. The main highlights of the April update include:

- 1999 to 2005 quarterly benefits indicators at the data zone level;
- Updates for existing indicators include immunisations at the DZ level for 2005; drug usage from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database at the LA level for 2003/04 & 2004/05; Social Enquiry Reports, Community Orders, Probation Orders, and Supervised Attendance Orders at the LA level for 2004/05;
- Recorded crime indicators are now shown by financial years to ensure consistency with other sources.

### Multi Member Wards

When the new ward boundaries have been finalised it is proposed to create appropriate look up tables which will include a data zone to multi-member ward look up. This will be made widely available to interested parties. Users will then be able to use SNS 'Area Reporter' to produce best fit statistics for multi member wards. An analysis of the quality of the 'best fit' of data zones within the new ward boundaries will be undertaken: a decision will then be made as to whether or not the new geography should be included into the family of 'standard geographies' available.

[click to go to SNS website](#)

## Scottish Environment Statistics Online

The Scottish Executive have re-launched their Scottish Environment Statistics Online (SESO) website.

The website is arranged in a similar fashion to the previous version, however a sort function has been added to aid data analysis online.

The website contains links to information on: Climatic Change; Air Quality; Noise Pollution; Water Resources and Water Supply; Coastal and Marine Waters; Waste and Recycling; Land Cover and Land Use; Agriculture; Forestry; Conservation and Wildlife.

[click for SESO website](#)



### Scotland's Care Homes 2005

The Scottish Executive have released national figures for Care Homes (adults). This release includes details of long stay residents in Care Homes for older people for censuses dating back to March 2003. This is the first time such information has been published since the introduction of the current form of census in March 2003.

Key results for the Western Isles as at September 2005 (according to this release) are:

- There were: 9 older persons care homes (219 places) and 1 learning disability centre (16 places);
- There has been a fall of -6% in the number of care home places for older people in the Western Isles between 2000 (233 places) and 2005 (219 places);
- There has been one care home closure since 2000.

[click for full report](#)

### IDOX

The Comhairle is a corporate member of the IDOX information service. IDOX collects essential information on a wide range of subject areas, such as:

Urban and Rural Regeneration; Planning and Environment; Social Work Services; Transportation and Roads Infrastructure; Recreation and Leisure; Local Economic Development; Housing; Education; Skills and Lifelong Learning; Estates; Property and Facilities Management and Public Sector Management issues.

The information collected includes: journal articles; books; documents and official reports.

The benefits of joining include a weekly bulletin highlighting recent additions to the collection; a choice of up to 30 topic updates delivered fortnightly; an option to borrow books and get copies of journal articles downloaded to your desktop; and a personalised enquiry service.

For more information about how to start receiving the bulletins please contact:

[Iain Morrison](#) Sustainable Communities

### Migrant Workers Study

A new study which highlights the recent increase in the number of migrant workers in the Highlands and Islands has been released. The study calls for a co-ordinated approach to helping them integrate into life in the area. *Note: NINo= National Insurance Number.*

Commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the aim of the research was to provide fresh information and understanding of the growing role overseas nationals are playing in the Highlands and Islands' labour market. The study also sought to establish the distinctive needs of migrant workers and their employers and to identify ways to meet them.

Over the four-year period, from tax year 2001/02 to 2004/05, NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the Western Isles accounted for three percent of registrations in the Highlands & Islands area as a whole, with a total of 150 overseas nationals registering in Western Isles over this period.

The registration rate in the Western Isles was relatively low over the first three years, increasing from about 10 individuals in 2001/02 to around 30 in 2003/04. However, NINo registrations increased three-fold in 2004/05, with a total of 85 registrations.

[click for more info](#)

### Contact

If you have any queries or suggestions regarding this bulletin or would like to unsubscribe, please contact:

**Isla Macdonald**  
Research Officer  
Sustainable Communities  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Sandwick Road  
Stornoway  
Isle of Lewis  
HS1 2BW

[isla.macdonald@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:isla.macdonald@cne-siar.gov.uk)

This e-bulletin is also available on the Comhairle's intranet along with past issues in the 'Fact File'.