



Welcome to the first issue of 'Socio Economic Update'!

This e-bulletin has been created to provide you with a regular summary of recently released socio-economic statistics, which are of particular reference to policy and planning in the Western Isles. The aim is to present an overview of key findings with links through to the full reports. We hope you find this service useful, any feedback is appreciated.

2001 Census 'Report on Gaelic' launched

On 10th October 2005, the '2001 Gaelic Report' for Scotland was officially launched by the Registrar General for Scotland at the 'Gaelic Language and Culture Forum' in Stornoway. The report contains a full analysis of the answers to the Gaelic question in the 2001 census. Key findings are summarised below:

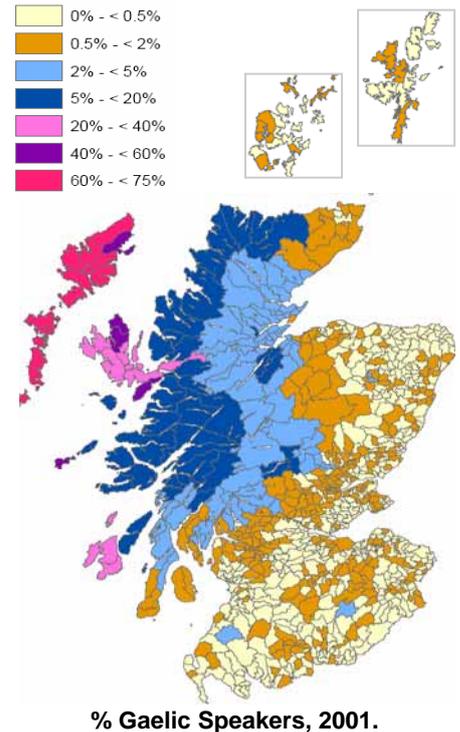
Gaelic in the Western Isles:

- in 2001, 72% of residents in the Western Isles had some Gaelic language ability – more than any other Local Authority area in Scotland;
- the number of Gaelic Speakers fell by a fifth between 1991-2001 and their was a dramatic drop of 53% in the number of 15-24 year old age group;
- the Barvas parish had the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers in all of Scotland (75% in 2001 and 87% in 1991);
- 49% of those with knowledge of Gaelic, could speak, read and write it;
- in marriages where both husband and wife spoke Gaelic, 78% of children would also speak the language (compared with 23% per just one parent spoke Gaelic - national average).

Other Interesting Facts:

- the non white proportion of Gaelic Speakers more than doubled between 1991 and 2001
- Gaels were much less likely to have no religion; a Gaelic Speaker is 5.8 yrs older than an average member of the population.

[Full Report](#)



% Gaelic Speakers, 2001.

2003 Western Isles Regional Accounts

The 2003 Western Isles Regional Accounts have now been published. This report provides detailed up-to-date information on the nature of the economy of the Western Isles in 2003.

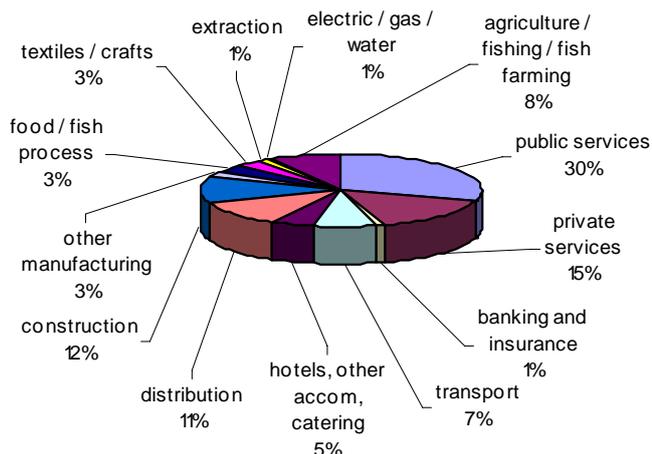
Commissioned in partnership with Western Isles Enterprise and Communities Scotland, it is a follow up to the 1988/89 and 1997 studies. The report contains detailed analysis of the purchasing and selling links between local sectors and transactions with the outside world. A section on scenario forecasting is included which predicts the impacts of: a decline in aquaculture; continued depopulation; and growth in the construction sector.

Selection of Key Findings:

- the total GRDP (gross regional domestic product) of the Western Isles in 2003 was estimated to be £263.02m; or £10,078 per capita which is 66% of the UK equivalent;
- the Western Isles economy has experienced a 2.5% growth in real terms since the 1997 study which is higher than that experienced by the Highlands and Islands area but lower than the UK as a whole;
- overall the economy has become slightly less specialised (please see graph below for sectoral employment contributions in 2003);
- the public sector accounts for 29% of employment and 30% of the total value of output in the Western Isles; in 2003, the Western Isles had an external trade deficit of £163.4m and island households spent a total of £100.1m on imported goods;
- as in 1997, the fish farming sector provided the greatest value of exports and contributed more than any other sector to the trade balance while sea fishing saw the largest percentage drop in real terms in the value of exports between 1997 and 2003;
- in 2003, tourism contributed an estimated £41.1m towards the Western Isles GRDP, a real increase of 12% since 1997 levels.

[Full Report](#)

Sectoral Contribution to Employment, 2003



Estimated Increase in Islands Population (2003/4)

On 27th April 2005 the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) released the mid-2004 population estimates for Scotland and its administrative areas. The main findings for the Western Isles are summarised below.

While 'deaths' have continued to exceed 'births' in the Western Isles and Scotland as a whole, there has been an overall increase in the population of both areas.

The estimated population of the Western Isles on 30th June 2004 was 26,260; an increase of 160 on the previous year (0.6%). The 2002 based projections anticipated this figure to have declined to 25,631 (-1%). The adjacent graph plots the mid-2002 based *projections* against the mid-2003/2004 population *estimates*.

The estimated increase in the population of the Western Isles from 2003-2004 can be attributed to positive net civilian migration (+315) and an increase in births (245) (in comparison with the projected number of births). Deaths however, continued to exceed births (400).

The next set of population estimates for mid-2005 will be released by the General Register Office for Scotland in March 2006 and the next set of sub-national projections will be released in Dec 2005.

[More Details](#)

2005 Scottish Visitor Attraction

The 'Visitor Attraction Barometer' is a monthly review of attractions performance data produced by Visit Scotland in association with Glasgow Caledonian University.



The 'July 2005' report shows that during this month in the Western Isles there was a -12% drop in visitors to attractions when compared to July 2004. Looking at the January - July season, there was an overall -7.1% drop in 2005 as compared to 2004.

[More Details](#)

Population Projections for Scotland

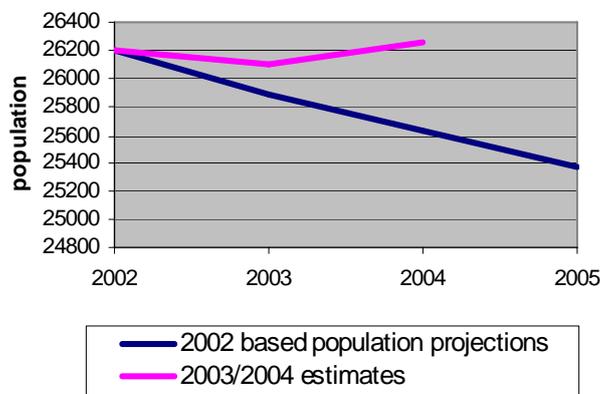
Scotland's population is projected to rise over the next 15 years before falling slowly, according to figures released by the General Register Office for Scotland on 20th October 2005.

In the report "Projected Population of Scotland (2004 based)", Scotland's population is not projected to fall below 5 million until 2036; instead of 2017 as the last (2002 based) projections suggested.

Levels are projected to rise, peaking at just over 5.1 million in 2019, where they will slowly decline falling below 5 million in 2036 and reaching 4.86 million by 2044.

[Full Report](#)

Western Isles Population Projections v Estimates



Outer Hebrides Migration Study

In partnership with Western Isles Enterprise and Communities Scotland; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has commissioned a £35,000 study to look into the process of 'migration' as it affects the Outer Hebrides.

The aim of the research is to offer a comprehensive analysis of the situation in the Outer Hebrides and a clear conclusion in regard to a policy of demographic sustainability for the future.

The Glasgow based consultancy firm 'Hall Aitken' has been contracted to undertake the 11 month research project and they will be working in partnership with 'I'onad Naiseanta na H-imrich'; the National Centre for Migration Studies (which is based at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye).

The report is anticipated to be released late next year.

Socio Economic Overview

The 'Socio-Economic Overview' is an online document which provides a summary of the current demographic and economic situation in the Western Isles. The overview is released every six months. The latest update was published on the 'Fact File' in September 2005 and can be accessed at the following link: [Socio Economic Overview](#)

Births, Deaths and Marriages in the 2nd Quarter 2005

The Registrar General's provisional figures for 'Vital Events' (registered during the period 1 April 2005 to 30 June 2005) were released on 22nd September 2005.

Results for the Western Isles show that in the 2nd quarter:

- there were 57 live births (25 male, 32 female) in the Western Isles; which gives the islands a birth rate of 8.7 per 1,000 of the population; this is the second (joint) lowest out of 32 local authority areas in Scotland; the national average was 10.7 per 1,000;
- correspondingly, there were 89 deaths over this period in the Western Isles (42 males and 47 females); which gives the islands a death rate of 13.6 per 1,000 of the population; the highest of any local authority in Scotland; the national average was 10.8 per 1,000;
- there were 26 marriages registered during the 2nd quarter of 2005. The 2001 census tells us that the Western Isles has a higher percentage of single and widowed residents than the Scottish average but a lower percentage of residents who are divorced, remarried or separated.

[More Details](#)

Life Expectancy Figures for the Western Isles 2002-2004

Life expectancy results for administrative areas within Scotland (2002-2004) were published by the Registrar General for Scotland on 6th October 2005. This is the first publication dedicated to life expectancy and it is intended to be produced annually.

Key findings include:

- life expectancy at birth for Scotland was 73.8 years for males and 79.0 years for females when averaged over the period 2002-2004;
- life expectancy in the Western Isles was 72.2 years for males (28th lowest out of 32 council areas) and 79.9 years for female (12th highest);
- Ten years previously in 1992-1994, life expectancy in the Western Isles was 71.3 yrs for males and 78.5 yrs for females. Although there has been a 1.3% and 1.8% increase respectively, the Western Isles experienced the lowest male life expectancy increase of any 'Health Board' area in Scotland and the second lowest increase in female life expectancy between '1992-1994' and '2002-2004'.
- The council area with the highest male life expectancy was East Dunbartonshire (77 yrs) and the lowest was Glasgow City (69.3 yrs).
- Aberdeenshire had the highest life expectancy for females (80.8 years) and Glasgow City occupied the lowest position (76.4 years).

[More Details](#)

Social Focus on Deprived Areas

A new, wide-ranging statistical analysis of Scotland's most deprived areas (using previously published social and environmental data sources) was released by the Scottish Executive on 29th September 2005. The 'Social Focus on Deprived Areas' is the latest publication in the Social Focus series.

This publication is the first to analyse statistics from across a range of policy areas on the official measure of area deprivation. The publication includes 134 charts and tables across ten chapters, which are listed below:

1. spread of area deprivation across Scotland;
2. population make up;
3. current income and financial inclusion;
4. the labour market;
5. education, skills and training;
6. health;
7. housing;
8. access and transport;
9. the physical environment;
10. neighbourhood perceptions and community involvement.

[Full Report](#)

Scottish Fisheries Statistics 2004

The Scottish Executive released their 'Scottish Fisheries Statistics for 2004' on 6th October 2005. This document provides an overview of the Scottish fishing fleet, fishermen employed, catches and landing data. Key findings include:



- The Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland had a combined value of £51 million in landings in 2004 and the fishing industry represented 3.86% of the labour force (which amounts to 1,273 fishermen) - a figure much higher than all other areas in Scotland;
- In 2004, the Stornoway District has 225 regularly employed and 220 irregularly employed fishermen;
- In 2004, there were 7032 voyages made which ended in the district of 'Stornoway' (up from 6775 voyages in 2003). However, total tonnage landed from these voyages decreased from 4,178 in 2003 to 4,002 in 2004 while the value of these landings increased from £8.63m in 2003 to £9.37m in 2004.

[Full Report](#)

Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey 2004/5

The Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey (LFS) for 2004 was published on 28 July 2005. This forms part of the Annual Local Area LFS, which cover the whole of the UK.

The LFS is the official source of labour market statistics such as employment, economic activity and unemployment.

A selection of findings include:

Employment and Unemployment and Economic Inactivity

- While Scotland's employment rate increased by 1.4% between 2003 & 2004, over the same period the employment rate of the Western Isles fell by 3.8% (still 2.5% above the national average).
- The Western Isles was one of only two local authorities in Scotland whose female employment rate (78.8%) was higher than the male employment rate (75.9%) in 2004.
- The Western Isles experienced an increase of 0.2% in its unemployment rate from 2003 (4.3%) to 2004 (4.5%), although this is still below the national average of 5.2% in 2004.
- Shetland had the lowest 'economically inactive' rate of any Local Authority in 2004 at 13.6% of the working population. In comparison, the Western Isles was 18.9% and Scotland 21%.

Skills and Training

- The proportion of those aged 25 - 59/64 in employment in the Western Isles who were graduates was below the national average of 21.8% in 2004 at 13.6%. A drop of 6.8% since 2003.
- In 2004 the Western Isles had the 3rd lowest rate of 'working age people in employment who received job related training in the last 3 months' in 2004 at 26.7%. A substantial drop from 2003, when the Western Isles occupied the 2nd highest position at 36.1%.

[Full Report](#)

Impact of 2nd Homes on Rural Communities

Communities Scotland have published the results of a report they commissioned into 'The impact of second and holiday homes on rural communities in Scotland', key findings include:

- Second and holiday homes were highly localised in rural areas of Scotland with the more remote rural areas having the highest concentration. Approaching one half of all Scottish second homes (47%) were within these very remote areas;
- Census figures from 2001 reveal that socially rented accommodation tended to be more limited in those areas of rural Scotland where there were higher proportions of second homes; this has implications for the housing opportunities of people who live or want to move to these areas.

[More Details](#)

Lowest Average House Price in Scotland 04

The average house price in Scotland broke through the £100,000 barrier for the first time in the opening quarter of 2005 - *the last region of the UK to reach this landmark.*

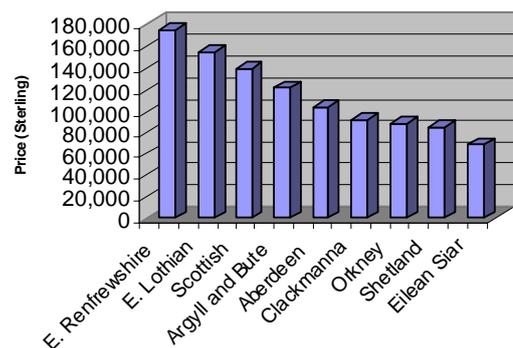
However, as the graph below illustrates, within Scotland itself there remains considerable variation. 12 regions of Scotland are achieving house prices above the national average while 20 local authority districts are falling below that value.

The Western Isles occupies the lowest position with an average house price of £68,849. This is almost £20,000 below the next lowest LA which is Shetland at £84,490.

The Scottish Executive plans to address the issues which lead to such large variations and encourage regeneration in the poorest performing regions to attract inward investment and make these places more attractive to live.

(Source: Colliers Summer 05 Research Newsletter)
[More Details](#)

Selected House Prices in Scotland- 2004



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