



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Sustainable Communities

SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE

Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean Siar - Working Together For The Western Isles No. 8 (09/07)

This is the eight 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 Outer Hebrides. The socio-economic information is listed under topic headings.

Population and Migration

Positive Net Migration for 4th Year Running

The [2006 mid-year estimates](#) (05-06) from the General Register Office for Scotland were released in April 2007.

Key results for the Outer Hebrides include:

- Overall population estimated to be 26,350 (decline of 20 persons or 0.1% since 2005, & 7.9% since 1996)
- Net civilian migration was estimated to be +110 but natural change was -130 (245 births & 375 deaths)
- Average age for males in 2006 was 41 (national average 38) & 44 for females (national average 41).

Increase in Life Expectancy

The General Register Office for Scotland's [life expectancy figures](#) for 2004-06 were released this month.

Key results for the Outer Hebrides include:

- Life expectancy for 'all people' over the period was 76.3yrs (77.2 nationally), a 2.2% increase since 1994-96.
- For females it was 79.9 yrs (79.6 nationally) and males 73 yrs (74.6 nationally).

Migration Strategy Update

Following the publication of the [Outer Hebrides Migration Study](#) in Feb 2007, an inter-agency strategy group was formed to progress the recommendations of the report.

The strategy group has been working with the Community Planning Partnership to develop an action plan based on the key priority actions areas identified, and will be focusing initially on:

Developing Enterprise

Supporting Housing Requirements

Supporting Growth at UHI

Integrating In-migrants

Engaging Young People and Out-Migrants.

A web page will be developed in the near future to provide an update on the progress on the action plan.

Increase in Number of Households

The [2006 mid-year Household Estimates](#) from the General Register Office for Scotland were released in March 2007.

Key results for the Outer Hebrides include:

- In 2006, it is estimated that there were 11,597 households in the Outer Hebrides, a 1% increase on the previous year (111) and 2.8% since 2001.
- 13.4% dwellings were vacant or 2nd homes (highest in Scotland), a fall of -1.5% since 2005.

2nd Highest Fertility Rate in Scotland

The [2006 Vital Events](#) reference tables have been released by the General Register Office for Scotland:

Key results for the Outer Hebrides include:

- In 2006 there were 274 live births; a high since 1998, which also saw 274 births.
- The Outer Hebrides was second only to Shetland (65.7) with highest fertility rate in Scotland at 62.1 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 (Scotland 52.8)

Annual Review of Demographic Trends

The Registrar General's ['Annual Review of Demographic Trends'](#) 2006 was published in July 2007.

Key Results for the Outer Hebrides include:

- In the last ten years (1996-2006) the population declined by -7.9%; 'natural change' accounted for almost double the decline of net migration.
- A 0.4% decline between 2001 and 2006; and 20 years ago (1981-1986) it was higher at -1.8%.

Reference Data Updates

There have been a number of online data updates since the last socio economic update, key ones include:

- Census Tables for [2007 \(Multi Member\) Wards](#)
- Scottish [Neighbourhood Statistics Tables](#)

Labour Market

Lowest Unemployment Rate Since Records Began

The latest release from [NOMIS](#) (Office for National Statistics) gives the following unemployment rates for July 2007:

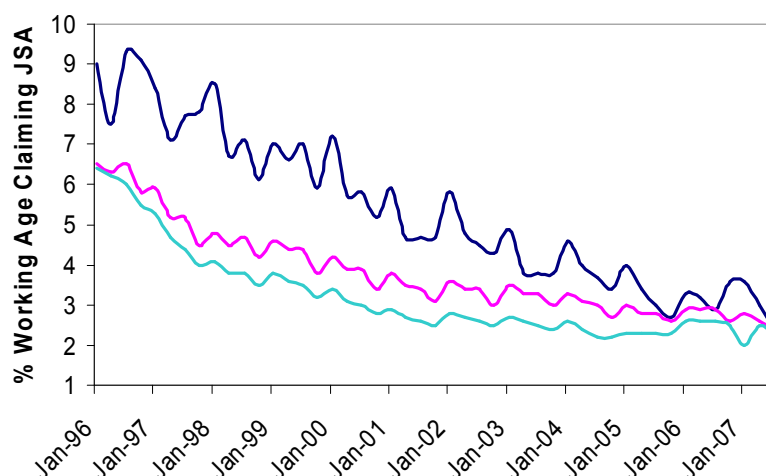
Outer Hebrides	2.4%
Scotland	2.4%
Great Britain	2.3%

As the adjacent graph indicates, over the last ten years the unemployment rate has fallen from a high of 9.3% in 1996 to a low of 2.4% (July 07), the lowest rate since records began.

Annual Population Survey 2006 [Link](#)

NOMIS Labour Market Statistics [Link](#)

Unemployment Rate 1996-2007



Economy

Significant Rise in Tourism Expenditure

Review of Outer Hebrides 2006 Tourism season

The 2003 Macpherson Update Report on Tourism in the Outer Hebrides has been refreshed by Sneddon Economics Consultancy for the [2006 season](#), and findings were published in June 2007.

Key Results for the Outer Hebrides include:

- The tourism sector is of significant importance to the local economy, contributing around 15.6% to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP);
- Tourism accounts for 9% of all jobs in the area (on a par with the industry in Scotland as a whole) and many self-employed posts.
- Visitor numbers to the Outer Hebrides are estimated to have increased by 8.9% since 2002, with an overall 27% increase in tourism expenditure (£49.5 million).
- Additional air routes from the mainland and improvements to flight scheduling have had a positive impact on numbers of air passengers.

HIE-Innse Gall Economic Update

This [2007 update](#) provides information and analysis on the socio-economic profile of the Outer Hebrides, e.g.:

- The female dominated sector of public admin, education and health is the largest employment sector at 43% of jobs in 2005.
- Business start ups are slightly lower than in the Highlands and Islands overall.
- Educational attainment level in secondary schools was above the Scottish average in 2005/06.

2007 Scottish Economic Statistics [Link](#)

Western Isles Tourism Fact Sheet [Link](#)

Corporate Sector Statistics 2006 [Link](#)

2003 Western Isles Regional Accounts [Link](#)

Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics [Link](#)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Annual Report [Link](#)

Rural Scotland Price Survey [Link](#)

Agricultural, Fisheries and Forestry

Scottish Agricultural Facts and Figures 2007 [Link](#)

Economic Report on Scottish Agriculture 2007 [Link](#)

Scottish Fish Landings 2006 [Link](#)

2006 June Agricultural Census [Link](#)

Scottish Fisheries Statistics [Link](#)

Education and Training

Students in Higher Education 2006 [Link](#)

SQA Examinations Results 2005/06 [Link](#)

School Level Pupil Numbers at Sept 2005 [Link](#)

Attendance & Absences in Scottish Schools [Link](#)

Scottish Executive Education Statistics [Link](#)

Built Environment

10% Rise in House Prices in Outer Hebrides 2006-2007

The Bank of Scotland, [Scottish HPI 2nd Quarter 2007](#), reports the following findings:

- The average house price in the Outer Hebrides is estimated to be £110,015 in 2007, a 10% increase since Q2 2006 when the average price was £99,668.
- The annual rate of house price inflation in Scotland is now 15.9% (Q2 2006-2007), above the UK average of 10.7%.
- The average price of a house in Scotland is currently £140,262. This is 29% less than the UK average of £196,525.
- The average house price in Scotland is forecast to increase by 10% in 2007, above the anticipated UK average increase of 6%.



New Comhairle Planning Service Home Page

The Comhairle has launched a new portal web page for the [“Planning Service”](#) and its associated services and information.

This web page provides access to information on:

- The Development Plan,
- Supplementary Planning Guidance,
- Development Management (planning applications),
- Online Planning Information,
- Related Projects and Initiatives,
- Wind farm Developments and Related Services & Links.



Planning Public Access Portal launch

The Comhairle will also be launching its new Public Access Planning Portal on 1st October.

This new facility will allow users to view on-line all submitted planning applications wherever they are. Full details of all planning applications submitted since January 2007 will be available online for viewing.

The system allows you to view application details, submit comments on-line and track progress of applications. This new function will be available through the Comhairle’s Planning Service home page, link as above.

[Scottish Housing Market Review 2007](#) [Link](#)

[Housing Statistics](#) [Link](#)

[Local Housing Strategy](#) [Link](#)

Contact

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