



OUR VISION FOR NORTH UIST

- To have a clear and strong sense of identity
- To have confidence and believe in ourselves
- To value everybody in the community
- To provide the opportunity to earn a living
- To be positively engaged in creating our own destiny
- To be guardians of our surrounding natural and cultural inheritance
- To consider the effects of our actions on future generations
- To aim to deliver local needs locally

OUR COMMUNITY

North Uist, or Uibhist a Tuath as it is in Gaelic, lies at the centre of the chain of islands called the Outer Hebrides (Western Isles). People feel they belong here because there is such a strong community spirit, with friendly, helpful people who are welcoming to others. However one of the challenges facing the community of North Uist is a decline in population. To have a viable community in North Uist we need to ensure that we have a mix of people of all ages.

It would be impossible to live here and not recognise the strong local culture and sense of history that is such an important thread of the way of life. Although we are always looking for ways to go forward and to develop the island we must not forget that these aspects are an important part of life here and should be protected for the future.

Traditionally crofting and fishing have been the main industries on the island. However many people in the community feel that tourism and fishfarming are just as important nowadays. Diversification of these traditional industries is important for the future. The amount of voluntary time that is dedicated to community projects is also critical to the local economy.

North Uist has over 1,000 fresh water lochs, miles of white shell sand beaches, heather moor, hills and machair, and is surrounded by rich untainted inshore waters. Both agencies and members of the community feel that our environmental designations could be used to market North Uist nationally and internationally as a green tourism location.



Pelican Design Consultants 01478 612558
Photography by Caitriona MacCuish, Cairean Maclean, John MacKinnon



THE DUTHCHAS PROJECT

The Duthchas Project aimed to achieve grassroots sustainable development through the participation of local communities in planning their own future, and with the support of Partner agencies.

The Duthchas Project was co-funded by the EU LIFE Programme. The Project involved 22 Partner agencies and 3 Pilot Areas - North Uist, Trotternish in Skye and North Sutherland.

CONTACTS & FURTHER INFORMATION

The complete Strategy or further information is available from:
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North Uist Area Strategy 2001
Our Land, Our People and Our Place in the Future



TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTH UIST

“We would like to thank everybody in North Uist for helping to develop this Strategy. You welcomed Dùthchas into your homes and gave many useful ideas which have helped shape our understanding of North Uist’s strengths, challenges and opportunities. This Strategy could not have been completed without your help.”

*Le taing mhòr dhan a h-uile duine agaibh
Uisdean Robertson, North Uist Advisory Group,
Caitriona MacCuish, North Area Co-ordinator
And all the Dùthchas Staff and Partners*

What is the Strategy?

This Strategy has been created by the local groups and agencies, working with Dùthchas, and through extensive consultation with the whole community. It is intended to help us work together towards a successful and sustainable future for North Uist. It will help us to map out our long term goals and the actions we need to take to reach these.

Who is the Strategy for?

The Strategy is for all those who live and work in North Uist and who care about its future. It will help community groups, voluntary sector organisations, townships and individuals, as well as public agencies, to work together for the good of North Uist. The Strategy will also show the outside world what we are striving towards. If we are all committed to working in partnership then we can make it happen - therefore this Strategy is for you.

What is Sustainability?

This Strategy is all about ‘sustainability’. By this we mean looking after the future of our area in all respects, the people and the place. To do this we must include our local economy, natural environment and social needs in all of our plans. We have identified four goals which will help us to do this:

- **Making the most of natural and cultural resources without damaging them**
- **Retaining a viable and empowered community**
- **Reducing problems of remoteness by delivering local needs locally and reducing dependence on external inputs**
- **Avoiding harmful effects on other people, places and future generations**

SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

The extensive community and agency survey in North Uist revealed a wealth of ideas. The Advisory Group selected four topics, which were felt to be of greatest importance to the island now. A local Group, involving community and agency representatives, was set up to develop a plan for each topic. The main Objectives and Actions for each topic are set out below:

Marketing of Local Produce

Vision: “To produce healthy, good quality agricultural and horticultural produce, using environmentally friendly techniques, thereby providing local training and marketing opportunities, and minimising the problems of distance from markets”

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES:

- To encourage people to grow a wide range of horticultural produce
- To encourage organics and environmentally friendly techniques
- To investigate and pursue a locally based licensed slaughterhouse with full processing and packaging facilities (either as present set-up or as a limited company)
- To research and set up specific mechanisms to sell into defined markets for all local produce

Sustainable use of Marine Resources

Vision: “To establish locally managed, sustainable, long-term, diverse fisheries and aquaculture sectors of an appropriate scale to nurture and benefit from the quality marine environment.”

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES:

- To create a marine resource and development centre which will benefit marine producers as well as the wider community
- To develop local facilities for the marine industry
- To diversify marketing strategies

Renewable Energy

Vision: “To use proven and experimental renewable energy technology to the advantage of North Uist and make the island more energy efficient in the future without damaging the environment.”

Priority Objectives:

- To identify possible uses for renewable energy in North Uist which will not damage the environment
- To promote energy efficiency on North Uist

Tourism using our Unique Features

Vision: “ To attract visitors to come to North Uist and share our way of life, creating a memorable cultural experience, while protecting our inheritance.”

Over-riding Objective: “To increase the number of visitors closer to the capacity of the North Uist area, to lengthen the stay of visitors and to lengthen the tourist season.”

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES:

- To better protect and enhance and increase understanding of all of our unique features in an appropriate and sustainable manner, in light of our over-riding objective
- To know the customer market, and target accordingly using locally based packages, in light of our over-riding objective

Other topics of importance to North Uist

Many other issues were identified during the Initial Review that are of equal importance to the future of North Uist. These issues will be the subject of future work:

Transportation, Community, Recreation or Sporting Facilities, Essential Services, Making better use of our Natural Resources, Waste & Recycling, Health, Erosion, Young Returners, Employment Opportunities, Community Decision Making

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement the Strategy we will set up a framework showing who is responsible for doing what:

- **Urachadh Uibhist, will take on the main role in co-ordinating the implementation and review of the Strategy**
- **A Partnership Agreement will be drawn up between the community and agency Partners needed to support the implementation of the Strategy**
- **Uist 2000 taking on a linking and networking role between the North Uist Strategy and work being undertaken in other parts of Uist**

The work of implementing the Strategy will be undertaken on a phased basis, with regular reviews to allow for progress to be monitored and the Strategy to be updated. We will involve the community and the agencies in this work.

We will judge the success of our work against:

- **Its impact on our four sustainability goals**
- **The success of the Partnership in supporting the work**
- **The involvement and support of the local community**



1. SURVEY

An extensive survey of the community & Partner agencies was carried out



2. SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE

14 Sustainability Issues & 4 immediate priorities were identified



3. SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

Strategy Groups set up for each priority issue & each group developed a plan of action for its topic



4. ACTIONS

First Demonstration Projects started with the help of a Seedcorn grant



5. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

How the Partner Agencies will support the Strategies & how the actions will be taken forward & monitored