

Bressay Community Council Area Statement

See Bressay Proposals Map

Background

1.1 The island of Bressay is 7 miles (11 km) long by 3 miles (5 km) wide with a current population of approximately 400. The island lies off the east coast of the Shetland mainland, separated from Lerwick by Bressay Sound, a sheltered shipping channel that has provided safe anchorage for vessels for centuries. Bressay is reached from the Shetland mainland by a five-minute ferry crossing that runs at hourly intervals during the day and on a more frequent basis at peak times.

1.2 The Community Council area also includes the island of Noss, which lies to the east of Bressay. Noss is uninhabited, except in the summer months when Scottish Natural Heritage wardens monitor the island's wildlife and guide visitors.

1.3 The recent commitment by Shetland Islands Council to connect Bressay to Lerwick via a bridge will have a fundamental impact on the island's community and economy.

Planning Context

2.1 The previous Local Plan that covered the Bressay Community Council area was the Bressay Interim Local Plan, which was approved in October 1992. Local planning aims for Bressay are:

- **To plan for the proposed bridge link to the mainland and Lerwick.**
- **To seek ways to diversify the Bressay economy**
- **To help sustain and enhance the natural and built environment**
- **To maintain a viable rural community**



Kirkabister Head Lighthouse

Built and Natural Environment

3.1 The east and south-west coasts of Bressay and most of the coast of Noss are formed by steep cliffs with stacks, caves, arches and geos. The north west of the island is lower-lying with sandy beaches in bays on the north and east coasts. There are also a number of shingle beaches on the east side of Bressay Sound and at Aith Voe. Bressay primarily consists of rough grazing with some improved grassland on the west coast.

3.2 One of Bressay's most enduring assets is its natural environment. The quality of the physical environment has an important role to play in the community and the local economy.

3.3 There is a diverse range of habitats for wildlife: lochs, agricultural land, coastline, and moorland/bogs. Many seabird and wader species breed on the two islands. During the summer months a wide array of wild flowers grows along roadsides and in meadows. Noss Sound plays host to porpoises, whales and dolphins. Seals can also be seen around the coastline.

• Local Protection Areas (LPAs)

3.4 There are LPAs at Sand Garth (beach & arch), Leiraness (view), Aith (birdlife and arch), Cullingsburgh (archaeology), Noss Sound (view), Brough (archaeology), and the Kirkabister Head lighthouse (view).

- **Built Heritage**

3.5 There are 14 listed buildings on Bressay: 1 category A, 10 category B and 3 category C(s). The grade A listed building is Gardie House that occupies a prominent sea front location on Bressay. Gardie House is also included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland. Currently, there are 118 known archaeological sites with 8 that are scheduled.



Gardie House

- **Noss**

3.6 Noss, along with the east side of Bressay, provides one of the most attractive landscape areas in Shetland. Noss supports 60-70,000 breeding sea birds in summer, as well as over 350 sheep. Adjacent to Gungstie is a Shetland pony pond, restored by Shetland Amenity Trust.

- **Land Designations**

3.7 The Garth Estate and Scottish Natural Heritage jointly manage Noss. As well as being a National Nature Reserve for its sea bird colonies, it is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). Noss is uninhabited except for seasonal wardens.



Noss from Ander Hill

Water and Drainage

4.1 Bressay is in need of a wastewater collection scheme. Scottish Water have plans to construct a new septic tank and outfall extension at Voeseid before 2006. The construction of the bridge may necessitate the bringing forward of a scheme to tie Bressay into the Lerwick wastewater treatment scheme.

Recommendation 1

Bressay needs an upgraded wastewater scheme to cope with present and future demand.

Waste Management

5.1 A rural skip is available, providing residents with a disposal point for bulky refuse and there is a glass recycling collection point at the marina.

Minerals

6.1 Bressay has a long history of mineral workings. Rock was quarried for use in the construction of buildings and for flagstones. There is now only one small-scale sandstone quarry in operation. There may, however, be potential for new operations, especially when the bridge becomes operational and the transportation of stone becomes more economic.

Business and Industry

7.1 Employment opportunities on Bressay have been limited over recent decades.



Aquaculture is present at Aith Voe.

7.2 Agriculture and crofting are still important activities on the island which help sustain the local population

7.3 The Bressay fish-meal factory at Heogan is the main private employer on the island. Any new development nearby needs to be undertaken in such a way that the operational requirements of the factory are not compromised.



Fish Meal Factory

- **Industrial Estate**

7.4 The Industrial Estate on Bressay proved unattractive to industrial users and remained unoccupied.

7.5 The proposed bridge will make Bressay a feasible location for industrial development. The most likely place for an industrial zone is on the north-west coast, around the fish-meal factory, which will also be convenient for the bridge landfall. This area also has deep-water mooring and is a likely location for the dry-dock. This area will be allocated for industrial use in the Bressay proposals Map. Particular attention will be paid to the design and siting of industrial buildings at this location as it will become the gateway to Bressay and impact on people's perception of the island.

7.6 The Ward of Bressay, the island's highest hill (226m), has one of Shetland's main TV and radio communication stations on its summit.

Tourism

8.1 Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) acquired the Bressay Lighthouse buildings with the help of Lottery funding. SAT propose to refurbish the lighthouse building to contain a small interpretative museum on the history of Shetland lighthouses.

8.2 The natural wonders of Noss are the principal tourist attraction in the Bressay Community Council area.

8.3 Scottish Natural Heritage offers a summer passenger service from the east coast of Bressay to the landing point on the island.



Noss Sound and Visitor Centre

8.4 The motor vessel 'Dunter' offers seasonal boat trips around Noss from the Small Boat Harbour in Lerwick .

Commercial Development

9.1 Bressay has one shop and Post Office and one hotel/pub. There is limited scope for anything else at present, but this may change when the bridge is built. The shop also sells petrol and diesel.



Bressay Shop and Post Office

Transport

10.1 Bressay has an extensive network of minor roads that penetrate most corners of the island. At present there is a limited public bus service two days a week and a post-bus/car service.

10.2 Bressay has a Ro-Ro pier for the Lerwick ferry on the west coast of the Island, which currently provides an essential and very good service. This pier will become redundant when the bridge is

completed and a new use will have to be found for this facility.

10.3 The proposed **bridge** is the biggest transport issue facing the island. Road improvements will be required on Bressay when the bridge is being constructed, between where the bridge connects on the island at Heogan and the Maryfield Junction. A bus service to the mainland will then become feasible. The specific area of land required for the bridge will be safeguarded in this Local Plan.

Development Opportunities

The development of the **Bressay Bridge** is the most important factor affecting development opportunities over the next decade. A number of factors must be addressed:

- 1. Control of development.** Land-use zoning policies must be agreed with the local community with regard to housing and industrial areas. Housing will be contained and controlled within the existing settled areas. Industrial development will be concentrated around the existing factory site at Heogan, which will also be adjacent to the new bridge and Bressay Sound.
- 2. Infrastructure.** The road network on the north-east of Bressay will need to be upgraded to cope with the bridge traffic.
- 3. Public Transport.** The bridge will allow a bus link into Lerwick and onwards to the rest of Shetland.
- 4. Employment of the ferrymen.** A number of jobs will be lost by the bridge development, which will hopefully be offset by further development of business and industry on the Island and elsewhere within the inter-island ferry service.

Proposal 2

The Council proposes to construct a bridge connecting Bressay to the Shetland Mainland at Lerwick. The land required for the construction of the bridge and improved approach roads will be safeguarded in the Bressay and Lerwick Proposals Maps.



The proposed bridge to Bressay.



Proposed Bressay Bridge

Population and Housing

11.1 The population of Bressay is increasing steadily from 352 in 1991 to 384 in 2001, with a projection of 385 for 2011. The latter figure, however, does not take into account the potential impact of the proposed Bressay Bridge.

11.2 New house building in Bressay has been slow but steady over the past decade, with an average of 2 completions per annum.

11.3 From a total housing stock of 177, 162 are occupied (92%). 130 houses are



private/owner occupied and 47 are public rented. 28 are Local Authority general needs, 11 are Local Authority special needs (sheltered) and 8 are Hjaltnland Housing Association.

11.4 The Council's Housing Department has programmed environmental

improvements to the housing schemes at **Fullaburn** (£50,000 for completion by 2004/5) and the **Glebe** (£10,000 for completion by 2003/4).

11.5 There are two holiday rental units, refurbished by SAT, available at the Bressay lighthouse

- **Housing Zones**

11.6 In the light of the proposed new bridge, the zoning map of Bressay has been re-assessed by the Community Council Planning and Development Forum. The housing estate at Foulaburn has been designated as Zone 2, where development will be favourably considered. All other established settled areas are designated as Zone 3, where consent may be granted if the development will be part of an existing building group. All other areas are designated as Zone 4, where housing development will be strictly controlled. See policy **LP NE11** for further details.

Community Services and Facilities

12.1 There is a primary school, community hall, shop, Post Office, marina, church and burial ground at Mel. The primary school roll is 49 in January 2001, up from 34 in 1991, with an additional 8 nursery places.

12.2 There are also burial grounds at Cullingsburgh and Gunnista.

12.3 There is a Heritage Centre at Leiraness and a hotel/bar at Maryfield.

12.4 There are public toilets at Maryfield ferry terminal and the Mail pier.



Fullaburn Play-Park

12.5 A new play-park in Fullaburn was completed in 2000.

12.6 The community is served by the Bressay Public Hall, for which there are plans to enhance the existing facilities.

Proposal 3

The Community Services Committee Priority Programme for 2001/2002-2002/2003 allocates £165,000 to Bressay Public Hall to extend the kitchen, build on a committee room and disabled toilet, provide storage and upgrade the heating system.

12.7 SAT are planning to convert some of the buildings at the Bressay Lighthouse into a small museum, charting the history of lighthouses in Shetland.

12.8 The Council are proposing to build a new multi court adjacent to the school on the site of the old one.