

## Delting Community Council Area Statement

See Delting Proposals Map

### Background

**1.1** The Delting area is mainly hilly, punctuated by deep voes and valleys. Sullom is the longest and deepest voe in Shetland.

**1.2** Delting is unique within Shetland as it has the island's principal industrial site, Sullom Voe Oil Terminal, which is the focus of industrial and economic development. The terminal and associated developments, including an airfield, are concentrated around the north-east of Sullom Voe whilst the rest of the area is predominantly rural and consisting mostly of grazed moorland.

**1.3 Brae, Mossbank and Voe** are the principal settlements in the Delting Community Council area, Brae being the third largest settlement in Shetland. The area enjoys good road links to the rest of Shetland and Toft is the location for the ferry terminal serving the islands of Yell and, via Gutcher, Unst and Fetlar.

### Planning Context

**2.1** The previous Local Plan that covered the Delting Community Council area was the North Mainland Local Plan 1989, which also covered Northmaven. Local planning aims for Delting are:

- **To seek ways to diversify the local economy, bearing in mind that Sullom Voe oil terminal will eventually be decommissioned.**
- **To tackle Firth and Mossbank's acute socio-economic problems**
- **To conserve & enhance the natural and built environment**

### Natural and Built Environment

**3.1** The main landscape features of Delting (including Muckle Roe) are the hilly terrain and the deep, sheltered voes that penetrate the area. The western half of Muckle Roe is designated as part of the Shetland National Scenic Area.

**3.2** There are 7 SSSIs in the Delting area and a Marine Consultation Area at Swinister Voe. SSSIs are at: Burn of Valayre (trees), Dales Voe (salt marsh), Muckle Roe Meadows (flora), Quoys of Garth (geological), Ayres of Swinister (geological), Voxter Voe and Valayre Quarry SSSI (geological) and Yell Sound Coast. Yell Sound coast is also a cSAC with otters being an important part of the nature conservation interest. See *Yell Community Council Area statement*.



**Ayres of Swinister**

**3.3** Sullom Voe has also been recently designated as a cSAC.

#### • Local Protection Areas (LPAs)

**3.4** There are LPAs at Brae NW foreshore and Lower Voe to protect important landscapes and public amenity from harmful development. There is another LPA between Firth and Mossbank to prevent the communities from coalescing. Further details of the LPA requirements are set out in policy **LP NE11**.

**3.5 Brae** is the main service and shopping centre for Delting, as well as the North Mainland. Lerwick is some 25 miles to the south and Sullom Voe 6 miles to the north. The main development period of Brae was in the 1970s and 1980s when the commissioning of the oil terminal caused rapid expansion of housing, population and facilities.

**3.6** The village is scattered around the north and east shores of Busta Voe and as such lacks a focal point. Brae would benefit from a programme of environmental improvements, consolidation of the settlement and the creation of a central focal point.



Brae from Busta

**Recommendation 1**

**It is recommended that the Council, together with the local community and other relevant agencies, should identify a range of environmental improvements that could be implemented in Brae during the life of this Local Plan.**

**Built Heritage**

**3.7** There are 14 Listed Buildings in the Delting Area, 10 category B and 4 category C(s). Currently, there are 109 known archaeological sites in the area with 19 that are scheduled.

**3.8** The area at **Lower Voe** was suggested as a potential Conservation Area in the North Mainland Local Plan. Notable features include the listed Voe House and Sail Loft, a number of other traditional buildings with a distinctly Scandinavian flavour and scattered woodland.

**Proposal 2**

**It is proposed that formal designation of Lower Voe as a Conservation Area should be taken forward in consultation with the local community.**

**Coastal Management**

**4.1** Sullom Voe Terminal (including Sella Ness) is one of two areas classified as developed coast in Shetland, the other being Lerwick Waterfront. This area is the preferred site for further major oil and gas development in Shetland.

**Aquaculture**

**4.2** Aquaculture is now a very important industry in the Delting area, with many salmon and shellfish farms in the sheltered voes. Whilst the further development of this industry is welcomed, its impact on the amenity of local residents and the environment has to be carefully considered. Shore bases are required to service these farms, which themselves can make a big impact.

**4.3 Voe Pier** is an important facility for the local aquaculture industry that is need of replacement. There are proposals for this, but not all the necessary funds have been identified.



Lower Voe potential Conservation area

**Water and Drainage**

**5.1** The Sullom Voe II water treatment works, fed by Eela Water and Roer Water, serves 3600 people and runs at 55% of capacity. In mid 2003 Scottish Water carried out a programme of maintenance and rehabilitation to upgrade the water supply to Muckle Roe. The wastewater scheme at Brae is currently at full capacity while the one at Voe has spare capacity for over 50 additional houses. Scottish Water have scheduled replacement sewers for **Mossbank** in the 2002 programme and 4 new septic tanks/outfall extensions in **Mossbank (Post Office, Burreness, Firth and Hamar)** in the 2002-2006 programme.

**Waste Management**

**6.1** Rural skips are available on a rota basis at various locations throughout the area, giving residents convenient disposal

points for bulky refuse. There are collection points for used batteries at Brae Stores, Brae Charity Shop and Mossbank Community House. There are glass recycling points beside the Mid Brae Inn and beside the Mossbank Public Hall. There are licensed landfill sites at Vadill, Orka Voe and Calback Ness. The first two also include special waste.

## Energy

**7.1** Delting's extensive coastline and exposed topography provide plenty of scope for alternative energy resources, particularly aero-generators, one of which used to operate at Voe.

**7.2** Sullom Voe Terminal contributes significantly to the Shetland Grid. This role may be expanded if the option of utilising gas for the Lerwick power station is taken forward.

## Minerals

**8.1** Due to the geology of the Shetland Islands and the established criteria of the minerals industry, only a few sites in Shetland are likely to be acceptable for mineral extraction, whether in terms of an operator's requirements or the community's interest in protecting the environment. Present knowledge suggests that the area to the north east of the Sullom Voe Terminal might prove to contain sufficient reserves of rock suitable for a large-scale coastal aggregate quarry. Accordingly, it is important that the potential sites are not permanently sterilised or unduly restricted by other forms of development occurring on or in close proximity to the area. Safeguarding does not necessarily indicate acceptance of working or commercial viability.

**8.2** The Orka Voe site is potentially attractive from the quarrying point of view, as it is truly remote with no houses in the vicinity. However the area is close to nature sites of national and international importance. An additional attraction of the site from an operator's point of view is that use could possibly be made of the existing deep-water jetties at the oil terminal to transport the aggregate. This would reduce the amount of capital needed to develop a quarry here, although this may be offset to an extent by the costs of the long conveyor run from the quarry. However, while the oil terminal still

operates, the site is probably not a realistic option. Any future proposals would be subject to a full environmental assessment and public consultation exercise.

## Business and Industry



**Sullom Voe Terminal**

**9.1** Delting is one of the few areas of Shetland with significant industrial activity. The Sullom Voe Oil Terminal, which became operational in 1978, is situated on the southern side of Calback Ness at the entrance to the voe.

**9.2** The main employer in the Delting area is therefore the oil and gas industry, where currently around 800 people are employed at the Terminal, Scatsta Airport and Sella Ness. Sullom Voe is one of the most important ports in the UK and in 1998 it handled 16.7% of the total UK oil traffic in terms of tonnes of oil related cargo and 10% of all UK bulk fuel (oil & gas).

**9.3** Many people commute from outside Delting to work at the Terminal, particularly from Northmaven, Yell and Lerwick. The Terminal therefore plays a fundamental role in the current and future prosperity of not just Delting but also the whole of Shetland.

**9.4** The Terminal is currently undergoing another phase of development, which it is hoped will safeguard its future for at least the next 10 years. The Terminal occupies about 400ha. This is Europe's largest oil and liquefied gas terminal, with a throughput of 28,666,555 tonnes of oil in 2000, down from 40,569,604 tonnes in 1992 (but now stable) and over 275,000 tonnes of propane & butane gas in 2000, down from 600,000 tonnes in 1991. Oil is

delivered from off-shore installations via the Brent and Ninian pipelines and by shuttle tankers from the Schiehallion field.

**9.5** The only licensed trade effluent outfall in Shetland is located off Calback Ness. This discharges treated ballast water with a maximum consented daily effluent volume of 60,000m<sup>3</sup>.

**9.6** Notwithstanding the benefits that flow from the presence of the terminal, dependency on one industry is unwise and there is therefore a great need to diversify the economy of Delting.

**9.7 Scatsta Airport** has recently been expanded to accommodate larger planes.

**9.8 Industrial Sites:** as well as the Oil Terminal, there are industrial sites at Wethersta and Sella Ness on which there are several small businesses.

**9.9 Marine Sites:** there are numerous aquaculture sites around the Delting coast.

**9.10** Agriculture and in particular crofting, is limited within Delting due to the poor soil and hilly nature of the terrain.

**9.11** There are 1,476 jobs within the Delting area (13.3% of the Shetland total) and 30 people registered unemployed [figures for year 2000].

### Tourism

**10.1** The tourism potential of Delting is somewhat limited, the natural environment of Muckle Roe, Sullom Voe Terminal and Busta House Hotel being the main draws.

**10.2** More advantage should be taken of the fact that tourists have to travel via Toft to sail to the Northern Isles and via Mavis Grind to reach Northmaven.

**10.3** There are hotels at Busta and Brae. There is a campsite/cafe at Valleyfield and a Camping Böd and pub/restaurant in Voe. There are B&Bs in Brae and Voe.



**Busta House Hotel ▲ ▼**



**10.4 Mavis Grind** is another natural tourist attraction that requires environmental improvements, including the possible relocation of the DLO base and the restoration of its site.

#### Recommendation 3

**The Mavis Grind area is in need of environmental improvements and increased interpretation for visitors.**

**10.5** For many people visiting Shetland, Sullom Voe Oil Terminal is a tourist attraction but there are no visitor facilities. In general, Delting has a lack of wet weather tourist facilities and attractions. One possibility for improving this situation is the development of an Oil Interpretation Centre in the area, to interpret and exhibit the processes, technology and history of the industry. A variety of proposals is being developed by a Steering Group in consultation with the local community and the oil industry.

#### Recommendation 4

**The Council will work with the local community, Sullom Voe Oil Terminal and all other relevant funding agencies to bring forward the Oil Interpretation Centre.**

**10.6 Vaxter Outdoor Centre**, near Scatsta, serves as a base for a variety of

outdoor pursuits for tourists and locals alike.



Vaxter Centre

### Commercial Development

**11.1** The majority of shops and services in the Delting area are located in Brae, spread out along the main road. There are local shops at Voe and Mossbank, which also has a Post Office. There is no Post Office in Voe, but pensioners are taken once a week by community bus to the Brae Post Office. Such local shops are vital to the local community but some may struggle to survive. Where it can, the Council will continue to support such local services by offering grants through the rural shops grants scheme and rate relief.

**11.2** There are also offices located at Sella Ness and at the Sullom Voe Terminal.

### Transport

#### • Public Transport

**12.1** There is a daily bus service from Brae to Lerwick with a daily feeder service from Muckle Roe to Brae. There are 5 daily services from Mossbank to Lerwick and 4 from Toft, all via Voe.

**12.2** The airport at Scatsta predominantly serves the oil industry. It has recently been expanded to accommodate larger planes.

#### • Road Improvements

**12.3** The roads in Delting are of a generally high standard. The following road improvements are proposed: **Muckle Roe** passing places improvements (2002/03); widening of the **Moorfields**

**B9076 junction** in **Brae** (2002); reconstruction of the A970 in Brae from the Moorfield to Muckle Roe junctions with widening of the footpath (2003/4); **A970 Tagon to Lower Voe** footpath (underway); and works to the **Kirkhouse Brig** in **Voe** (now complete). There is a perceived need to extend the pedestrian footpath from the Muckle Roe junction into Brae. The Community Council have requested a lowering of the speed limit from 40 to 30 on this stretch of road.



New Muckle Roe Bridge.

**12.4** The new Muckle Roe bridge substantially improved the link between the island and the mainland in 1999.

### Population and Housing

**13.1** The population of the Delting area is in a slow decline from 1,935 in 1991 to 1,826 in 2001, with a projection of 1,605 for 2011.

**13.2** New house building in the Delting area has been steady over the past decade, with an average of 5 completions per annum since 1994.

**13.3 Brae, Firth and Mossbank** were the focus of intensive housing development in the 1970s and 1980s, directly related to the Sullom Voe oil terminal. Approximately 30% of the 210 houses at **Firth** and **Mossbank** are now vacant. Some of these houses will possibly be demolished in the near future as part of a programme of environmental improvements. **Moorfield** (phase 2, now complete) **Brae** and the Council owned properties in **Voe** were programmed for environmental improvement in 2001/02, Voe now complete.

**Grindahoull/Skelladale, and Gallowburn, Brae** are included in the rolling programme of environmental improvement works for 2003.

**13.4** From a total housing stock of 810, 685 (85%) are occupied. 473 (58%) are private/owner occupied, 336 are Local Authority (16 special needs sheltered) and 2 are Hjaltland Housing Association (1 for rent and 1 in shared ownership in Brae).



Firth

- **Housing Zones**

**13.5** Brae, Voe and Firth and Mossbank are all designated as Zone 1, where new housing development is actively encouraged.

**13.6** Toft, Graven, Voxter, Dale, Muckle Roe (settled area), South Voe and Gonfirth are all designated as Zone 2 areas where new housing development will be favourably considered. Wethersta is a Zone 3 area where permission may be granted if the development is part of an established building group. Sella Ness has been re-zoned from 2 to 4.

**13.7** Open countryside in all other areas is designated as Zone 4 where housing development will be strictly controlled. Further details of the housing zone requirements are set out in policy **LP HOU4**.

#### **Community Services and Facilities**

**14.1** There are community halls at Brae, Mossbank, Muckle Roe and Voe.

**14.2** There are Primary Schools at Brae, Mossbank and Olnafirth (Voe). Brae also has a secondary school and there are nursery schools at Brae and Mossbank.

**14.3** Brae has a total school roll of 419 in 2001. The Primary roll has fallen from 142 in 1991 to 110 in 2001. The school at Brae has been designated (February 2001) as one of 15 'community schools' within Scotland, combining education, social work, family support and health education services under one roof. Funding of up to £600,000 will be available over 3 years for the pilot project, which will involve the 6 primary schools in Northmaven and Delting, putting the school back at the heart of the community.

**14.4** The roll at Mossbank Primary has risen from 72 in 1991 to 76 in 2001. Olnafirth Primary's roll has fallen from 33 in 1991 to 24 in 2001.

**14.5** Firth and Mossbank Community House is discussed in the following Development Opportunities section.

**14.6** The Health Centre at Brae serves Delting, Nesting and Lunnasting and also runs a clinic in the Firth and Mossbank Community House. There are 2 doctors and facilities for a dentist. A new health centre is going to be developed in Brae by Shetland Health Board in 2002/3. The Health Board is making a major investment in this project (£1,000,000) and the improved centre will accommodate a third doctor and dental facilities.

Brae also has a Care Centre that has 15 beds, 13 currently for residential patients and 2 for respite care. The Centre employs 30 full and part-time staff.

#### **Proposal 5**

**A new health centre will be developed in Brae in 2002/3 to replace the existing building and improve patient facilities and services.**

**14.7** In 1998 the area received a blow when the Fraser Peterson Centre closed down at Firth. In order to help compensate for the loss of this facility the Recreational Trust is proposing to extend in 2001/2 the existing North Mainland swimming pool at Brae. This will provide better leisure facilities, a fitness room, squash court and changing facilities. The facility will become a Sports Centre.

**14.8** Brae also has an synthetic all-weather sports pitch that is suitable for

football and hockey. There are play areas at Brae, Mossbank and Voe.

**14.9** Brae has the local Police station. Brae and Mossbank have fire stations. There are restaurants in Voe and Valleyfield and pubs in Brae and Mossbank. Brae also has a Boating Club.

**14.10** There are churches at Brae, Voe, Mossbank, Muckle Røe and Gonfirth and burial grounds at Voe, Laxobiggin, Graven, Brae, Muckle Røe and Mossbank. Subject to capital money being available an extension to the Voe burial ground is currently programmed for 2009/2010.

**Proposal 6**

**Subject to the availability of funding, the burial ground at Voe will be extended in 2009/10.**

**14.11** Public toilets are located at Voe, Brae and Toft.



**Delting Fishing Disaster Memorial**

**Development Opportunities**

**15.1 Firth and Mossbank Enterprise (FAME)** was set up in 1996 and registered as a company in March 2001. Through it, the local community intends to tackle the high levels of social exclusion. One very positive result of this initiative is the establishment of the Firth and Mossbank Community House at 43 Sandside. This is now the Learning Centre and is run by FMTRA (Firth and Mossbank Tenants and Residents Association). A new community Family Centre was opened in June 2001, utilising 3 houses that had been vacant for some time at 21-23 Leaside. This project offers the community childcare, social and health services.

**15.2** FAME has also attracted funding for a Community mini-bus. Above Firth is the Old School Centre, which is a youth club jointly run by the community and the Council.

• **Voe Pier Initiative**



**Voe Pier**



**15.3** The local community of Voe is very concerned with the condition of Voe Pier, a grade B Listed Structure located in the heart of the picturesque village. The local fishing and aquaculture industries and leisure craft currently use this pier. In 2001 a feasibility study was carried out that confirmed the poor condition of the Pier and the need for a replacement. Proposals were then put forward showing a new pier and breakwater, and a marina with associated parking. Funding has been secured for detailed design work to be undertaken by the Voe Pier Trust. It is hoped that, providing sufficient funding is found this important, new development could be completed by 2004.

**Recommendation 7**

**The Council will work with the Voe Pier Trust and all other relevant funding agencies to bring forward the Voe Pier Initiative. See Inset Map of Voe Pier**

**15.4 Toft Marina** is another community facility and possible tourist attraction that is being taken forward by a local steering group. The project involves the proposed construction of a small boat marina, breakwater, berths and clubhouse.

**15.5 Toft Camp and Firth Camp** are both in need of environmental improvements and both could house commercial/industrial developments (particularly in light of the available housing stock at Firth).

**15.6 Toft ferry terminal** is shortly to be redeveloped by the Council. There is also a longer-term possibility of a future bridge/tunnel link to Yell. Land for both of these proposals will be safeguarded in the Local Plan.

**Proposal 8**

**The Council will safeguard land for the proposed new Toft Ferry Terminal in the Delting Proposals map, see inset map of Toft.**

**Recommendation 9**

**The Council will support the development of Toft Marina and the environmental enhancement of the Toft and Firth Camps. See Inset Map of Toft.**

**15.7** The serviced site at Upper Leaside formerly used for chalet accommodation has potential to be redeveloped for other uses.

**15.8** Following the building of the new Health Centre in Brae (see Proposal 5) there may be scope for the existing building to be redeveloped/refurbished. There is a perceived need for a community centre in Brae, for which the existing health centre would provide the ideal building and location. This could house a café, accommodate decentralised SIC services and provide 'out-of-school'/childcare facilities. The centre

would give Brae a social focus, and could also be used as an Adult Learning Centre, with links to the new Community School.

**15.9 Industrial Sites:** The existing industrial site at Wethersta is considered as being somewhat remote from Brae, and that something more central to the settlement would be more successful & popular. Business start-up units, or a business innovation centre (along the lines of the Lerwick one) could also benefit economic growth and diversity. Provision of business training would also be beneficial.



