

Sutherland Community Partnership – About Our Area

Sutherland is situated in the far northern Highlands of Scotland and borders Caithness to the North East, Ross-shire to the South and the Atlantic to the North and West. It has a population of approximately 13,800 people living in an area covering 2,300 square miles. Sutherland is one of the remotest and most sparsely populated counties with stunning scenery. Sutherland's transport and communication links are sporadic. The main A9 trunk road links Sutherland to the South as does the railway line and access to airports is either to Wick or Inverness at a very minimum of an hour's drive for some residents.

The average house price in Sutherland is in the region of £158,000 compared to the average house price in Highland being nearer to £173,000. Whilst house prices are lower than the national average, there is considered to be a lack of affordable houses. In North West Sutherland there are a relatively high number of homes which are for holiday let. It is reported that over 40% of the households in Sutherland are said to be in fuel poverty. The perception of remoteness, shortages of affordable housing and the declining and aging populations present significant challenges in attracting new people to the area.

North and West Sutherland remains a largely fragile area, sparsely populated, with the local economy dependent on primary industries supplemented by tourism. The development of the North Coast 500 route has already had a significant impact in this area.

The area covered by the Sutherland Community Partnership is made up of two administrative Highland Council Wards: North, West and Central Sutherland and East Sutherland and Edderton. There are 17 Community Councils in Sutherland.