

ORDNANCE SURVEY

# GAELIC NAMES POLICY





## Ownership

The Chair of NGD Board (Director of Operations) is the owner of this document.

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## 1 Introduction

**This Gaelic names policy document sits within the corporate Ordnance Survey (we, our) names policy which requires a consistent approach to be taken across all of our mapping products.**

Currently, the regular use of Gaelic as a traditional community language is generally restricted to the Western Isles (Na h-Eileanan an Iar). There are, in addition, significant concentrations of Gaelic speakers in the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness, and along the west Highland coast as well as smaller, though not insignificant, numbers throughout Scotland. Names derived from Gaelic or in Gaelic spelling are in use throughout Scotland (outwith Orkney and Shetland).

Ordnance Survey accepts that languages are dynamic and subject to change. Gaelic, one of Europe's oldest, has been influenced by several cultures. By carrying out extensive consultation with local authorities, key Scottish bodies, societies and academia, we have tried to remain impartial whilst trying to satisfy the majority of our varied customer base.

Our *names* archive has been built up over a long period of time using manually collected visual and authoritative evidence. In order to continue to maintain the credibility of the existing products and our ability to fully meet the needs of the gazetteer markets of the future, we need to ensure that our *names* collection and maintenance policy is responsive to changing orthography and local usage.

Customers are increasingly using combinations of our products. This has highlighted the frequency with which spelling and depiction of a name can vary. It is a reasonable customer expectation that *names* information should be presented consistently across our product range. The removal of name anomalies across our databases and the identification of authoritative sources will simplify maintenance and reduce costs.

To this end this policy document defines the rationale, processes and procedures to be taken when collecting and depicting Gaelic names, where these are in common usage, on our mapping and products.

## 2 Scope

This policy document covers the use and depiction of names using the Gaelic spelling system on our mapping and products.

The use of the term *names* within this document applies to *proper names* only, for example, Steòrnabhagh, not *descriptive names*, for example, cattle grid.

## 3 General principles for treatment of Gaelic names

### 3.1 Ordnance Survey will:

- support the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012–17, which sets out ‘to secure an increase in the number of people learning, speaking and using Gaelic in Scotland’ through the appropriate depiction of Gaelic names;
- endeavour to achieve consistency in the depiction of names within each mapping series and across its range of products;
- adopt the Gaelic orthographic conventions agreed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority;
- ensure that common usage and evidence provided by historical form are both considered when defining the spelling and/or depiction of a name; and
- seek to gain proper authority, through a broadly accepted standards-setting body, for the depiction of Gaelic names, but in the case of disagreement retain final editorship to ensure cartographically acceptable mapping and products.

### 3.2 Ordnance Survey will not:

- be the Authority for Gaelic names; or
- convert to Gaelic any existing anglicised names on the authority of any one individual.

## 4 Authoritative sources

### 4.1 Ordnance Survey will:

- gain consensus on the accepted form and spelling of Gaelic names through the Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (AÀA) partnership (Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland); and
- follow the modern realisation of Gaelic as accepted by the Scottish Qualifications Authority in the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions.

### 4.2 Ordnance Survey will not:

- accept any one individual’s interpretation when considering Gaelic names where there may be a conflict of spelling or version.

## 5 Collection and recording of information

### 5.1 Ordnance Survey will:

- collect and record Gaelic names, under the rules defined in Annexe A;
- where both English and Gaelic names are recorded under the rules in Annex A, give equal status to both English and Gaelic by depiction of the name in the same font type and point size. This may be subject to physical limitations of the cartographic process and map scale;<sup>1</sup>
- aim to achieve consistency of spelling where natural features share the same form of name, that is, river, loch and mountain;
- update its mapping in line with its stated revision policies; and
- aim to achieve consistency across all its mapping.

### 5.2 Ordnance Survey will not:

- apply bilingual names to features falling within the natural environment as defined within annexe A.1, other than for principal features; or
- translate Gaelic into English or English into Gaelic to contrive 100% bilingual naming cover.

<sup>1</sup> Text will usually be placed with Gaelic before the English, but this may vary from product to product and may vary within the product itself.

## Annexe A Hierarchy of names

All names within the National Geographic Database (NGD) fall into one of three main categories shown below:

### A.1 Natural environment

The intention should be to achieve consistency, and where natural features, for example river, loch and mountain, share the same name, the spelling should be the same.

**Normally, only one name will be shown, which will be the locally and/or historically accepted form, be it in Gaelic or English. Exceptions can be made for principal features.**

To include either English or Gaelic:

Feature	Examples	Authority for guidance	Exceptions
Landform	Islands Mountains Hills Headlands Rocks	Historical mapping and local usage and/or Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (AÀA)/Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland	Exceptions for principal features where there is an established use of the bilingual form, for example: Eilean Leodhais/Isle of Lewis Am Bràigh Riabhach/Braeriach
Water	Rivers Sea areas Inlets and lochs	Historical mapping and local usage and/or Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (AÀA)/Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland	Exceptions for principal features

### A.2 Man-made environment

Within the man-made environment, dual names will be shown where found at the location and where the versions have appropriate authority.

Where available, dual names will be collected for inclusion into the NGD. However, where for cartographic reasons space is limited, map preference will be given to the English only depiction.

To include dual names where used:

Feature	Authority for guidance	Examples
Towns	Local authority nameplate	Steòrnabhagh/Stornoway
Road and street names	Local authority nameplate	Rathad a' Mhaoir/Constable Road
Building names	Nameplate	
Forestry (man-made)	Forestry Commission/owner	
Other minor names	Nameplate/owner	

### A.3 Administrative environment

To include English or Gaelic as determined by the authority:

Feature	Authority	Examples
Scottish Parliament boundary names	Boundary Commission	Na h-Eileanan an Iar Co Const
EU boundary names	Boundary Commission	Highlands & Islands Euro Const
Other named administrative units	Owners/Scottish Executive	

## Annexe B Glossary

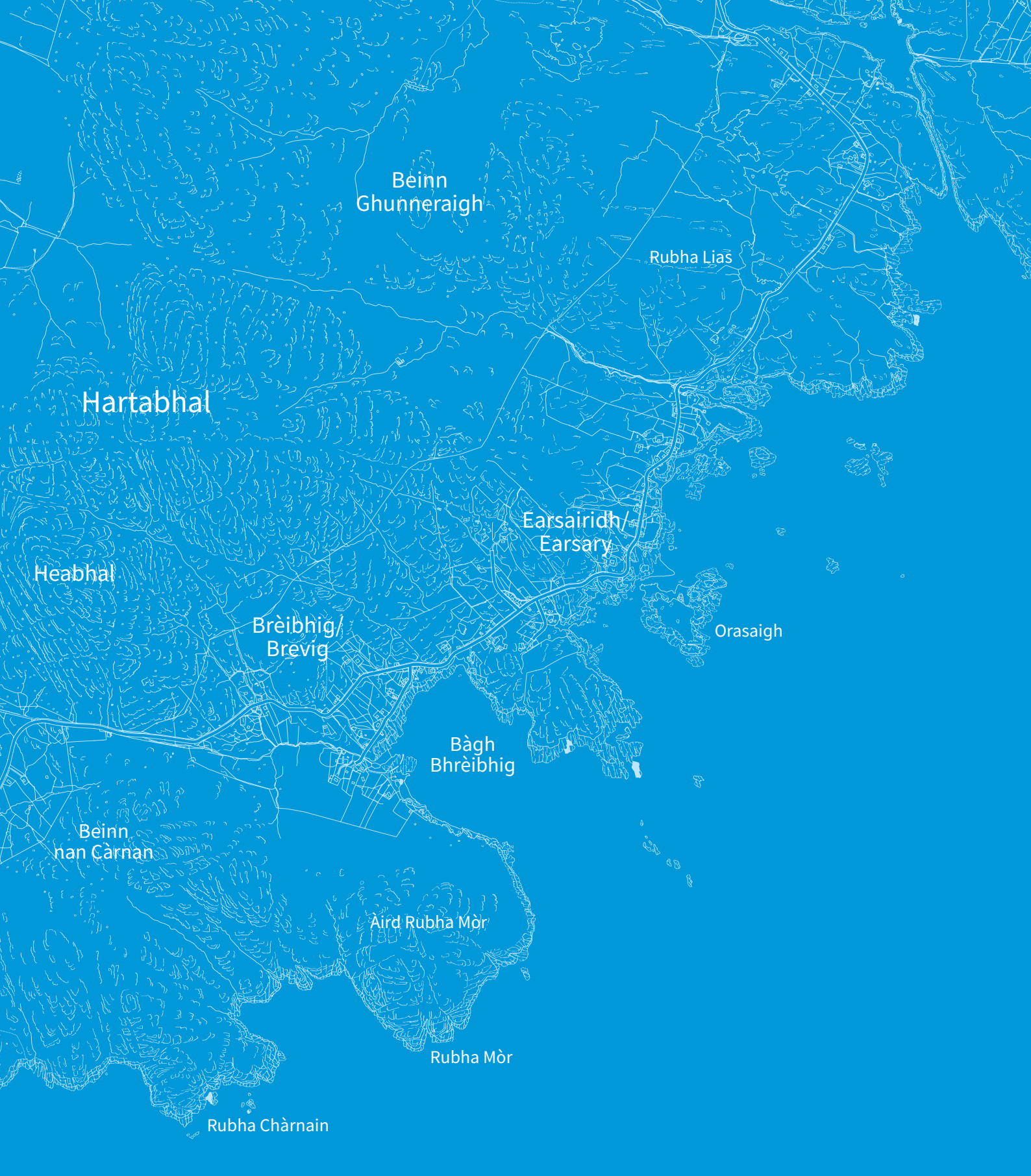
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<b>Proper name</b>	A proper name is that given to a feature, building or place to distinguish it from other features or places of a similar nature. For example, Stirling Castle.
<b>Descriptive name</b>	Name applied to a feature such as letterbox, milestone or telephone box that describes the nature of the feature.
<b>National Geographic Database (NGD)</b>	A database in which data relating to the physical features and boundaries on the nation's surface is held.
<b>Man-made environment</b>	Objects and features created by human activity, including the built environment.
<b>Natural environment</b>	Objects or features created as a result of natural (non-human) activity.

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## Annexe C Related documents

- Ordnance Survey Geobase-04 Data Capture Guide.



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