




Regional and National Context

17th October 2019

A large, light blue icon of three stylized human figures (two smaller, one larger) on a dark blue background, positioned at the top left of the slide.

ACRE - the national charity

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The ACRE Network

www.acre.org.uk




- 38 'County level' rural development charities, one national charity
- Reach: 11,000 rural communities in England
- Focus on **community solutions...**
- ... for our **beneficiaries:**
- “..those who are at risk of isolation and disadvantage and for whom rurality brings an additional challenge and cost to their daily lives.”

A blue square in the top left corner contains a white icon of three stylized human figures of varying heights, representing a family or community.

Living in rural England

- **17% of the population in a landscape influenced by man...**
- *But only 8% of the population work on the land*
- **A lifestyle choice for some...**
- *But a source of inequity for others*
- **The 'connectivity divide' with urban areas...**
- *But interdependent with urban areas, especially over climate change*
- **Settlements must be allowed to evolve, grow and develop to respond to the future...**
- *But will need sympathetic policy, resources, practical support and a focus on those most at risk of disadvantage*

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Some wide, and fast, questions!

- Kicking the carbon habit
- Regional? Rural? Or both?
- Land use – enough for everyone's needs?
- Economies of scale, risk and learned helplessness
- Is social mobility the rural question?

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The carbon habit

- The UK commitment is to be 'net-zero' by 2050
- For some this is over-ambitious, for others not ambitious enough
- It is not achievable unless it becomes central to all plans and strategies
- There is no room for special pleading!
- The challenge of becoming 'net-zero' needs a specific rural perspective that properly understands the science

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Regional and rural

- Despite the rhetoric, regional policy has been out of favour for 10 years
- The wheel will turn, and it will be the Core Cities with their feet on the pedals
- Any new accommodation must acknowledge the interdependence of urban and rural areas
- Rural areas are not supplicants at this table....
- ... they must be equal partners and their contribution recognized

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Land use

- “Planning is too important to be left to planners”
- Increasing competition for use:
 - Food, recreation, economy, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, energy crops, housing, PVs, flood mitigation, surrender to the sea.....
- Who decides? And how?
- What landscapes are really ‘of national importance’? Just some.....?
- A two tier landscape?

The graphic for 'Economies of scale' is a large blue rectangle on the left side of the slide. At the top of this rectangle is a white icon of three stylized human figures of varying sizes. Below the icon, the text 'Economies of scale' is written in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

Economies of scale

- Traditional economics still rule much of our public and commercial life
- To save money the instinct is to centralise and standardise
- Example: catchment pop. of a General Hospital has doubled in twenty years
- Integration, partnership, planning and engaging rural communities makes more sense
- Examples: Broadband and domiciliary care
- Have we come to learn that bigger and 'more expert' is always better? Eg. Medicine by letter writing?

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Social mobility

- The Social Mobility Commission has identified coastal and rural areas as the least 'socially mobile'.
- A problem correctly identified. But missing the real issue?
- Judgement based on a particular set of values?
- To improve yourself is to: get up (local education?), get on (£?), get away (to urban?)
- Is this the only thing we aspire to in rural areas? What does this say to rural young people?



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