Rural Scotland in Focus

Rural Policy Centre

SAC

Rural Scotland in Focus 2012
1. **Address a gap:**
   - Evidence with impartial commentary
   - Connecting across topics and sectors

2. **Inform dialogue on:**
   - Why and in what ways rural Scotland is changing
   - Persistent themes – “In Focus”

3. **Provide evidence in accessible format, with:**
   - Fast-track to key data and reports
   - Extensive compendium of resources
Who has written it?

1. Researchers from the Land Economy and Environment Research Group, SAC:
   – Associates of the Rural Policy Centre
   – Specialists in their fields
2. Co-authors from Dot.Rural, Aberdeen Uni.
3. Contributors from across UK
What themes does the Report cover?
Drivers of change:

Towns and Rural Scotland: Vibrant or Vulnerable?

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Key Points:
- Scotland’s towns are diverse in terms of their size and the functions they perform.
- Small towns (1000-10,000 population) are experiencing some outward shifts in economic activity, leading to declines in economic base and more vulnerability to economic change.
- Large towns (more than 10,000 population) have stronger economic bases with more sustainable retail, accommodation, and food services, and concentrated activity bases, reflecting their service centre functions. At the same time, some towns are facing depopulation issues. Some examples:
  - A Vulnerability Index identifies towns that are vulnerable. Defining vulnerable rural towns and other areas within a population of 10,000-100,000 are more vulnerable to change, while making areas vulnerable according to the index. The 'Cluster of Vulnerable Places' in the north-east of Scotland (e.g., Banff, Turriff) is identified as being particularly vulnerable.
  - There is a need to monitor the challenges and opportunities facing Scotland’s towns, taking into account the changing population and the potential for new businesses to emerge.
  - There are opportunities for growth in some areas, such as tourism, but the overall trend is towards economic decline in many towns.

A Vulnerability Index of Scotland:

- There are four main types of settlements - Centres, Outliers, Sprawls, and Suburbs.
- These factors are used to recommend policies for the future planning and development of these settlements.

Conclusions:
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What is the Role of the Private Sector in the Resilience of Rural Scotland?

Key Points:
- The private sector accounts for 93% of employment in rural Scotland, with 9% in agriculture and forestry.
- Rural areas have the highest density of businesses per head of population.
- The number of businesses in rural Scotland has increased in recent years, with a significant increase in the number of small businesses.
- Rural businesses in Scotland are more likely to have a sense of community and to be involved in local events.

A Vulnerability Index of Scotland:

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The Third Sector and Civil Society in Rural Scotland: Present and Future?

Key Points:
- The third sector has become an increasingly important part of the rural economy, providing a wide range of services to communities.
- The third sector in rural Scotland provides a range of services, including social care, education, and community support.
- The third sector in rural Scotland is becoming increasingly important, providing a range of services to communities.

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For more information on rural Scotland in Focus 2012, please see: www.sac.ac.uk
**Next Generation Broadband in Rural Scotland: Mobilising, Meeting and Anticipating Demand**

**State of Rural Broadband in Scotland and Why This Matters**

Broadband access and usage in rural Scotland is a matter of national importance, but it is only now that the digital economy is starting to provide the economic and social benefits enjoyed by urban areas.

**What has been done to address Rural Scotland’s Digital Capacity?**

The Government’s Digital Scotland Broadband Partnership has been delivering infrastructure projects to meet the needs of rural communities.

**Broadband as Infrastructure**

Despite the significant progress, digital infrastructure is still not as well developed in rural areas as it is in urban areas. This is because of the higher costs of laying fibre optic cables in rural areas, as well as the lack of investment by private companies.

**Metro Next?**

The aim is to provide a high-speed internet connection to as many rural communities as possible by 2020. This will be achieved through a combination of public and private investment.

**Why Does this Matter and Should Next Generation Broadband Access be Considered a “Metro” in Scotland?**

The value of internet access is multi-faceted, including educational, economic, social, and health benefits. For many rural communities, broadband access is essential for economic development and quality of life.

**Conclusions**

- Strategies for extending broadband access in rural areas should be developed, including partnerships between the public and private sectors.
- Research into the economics of delivering broadband in rural areas is needed to inform future policy decisions.

For more information on Rural Scotland in Focus 2012, please see: www.sac.ac.uk/ruralpolicyrefbg

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**What are the Implications for Rural Scotland of a Low Carbon Future?**

**Introduction**

There is a growing consensus that the transition to a low carbon economy is necessary to address climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve energy efficiency. This transition has implications for rural Scotland, particularly in terms of land use and transport.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

The transition to a low carbon economy presents both challenges and opportunities for rural Scotland. On the one hand, it will require significant investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency. On the other hand, it will create new opportunities for rural communities to develop new economic activities.

**Energy**

The use of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, is expected to increase in rural areas. This will require investment in infrastructure, such as grids and storage systems.

**Transport**

The reduction in carbon emissions from transport will require significant changes, such as the development of electric vehicles and the expansion of public transport services.

**Land Use**

The use of land for agriculture and bioenergy is likely to increase in a low carbon future. However, this will require careful planning to ensure that it does not conflict with other land use priorities.

**Conclusions**

- The transition to a low carbon economy presents both challenges and opportunities for rural Scotland.
- Planning for the transition should be based on evidence and informed by the needs and aspirations of rural communities.
- Further research is needed to understand the implications of the transition for rural Scotland.

For more information on Rural Scotland in Focus 2013, please see: www.sac.ac.uk/ruralpolicyrefbg
Index of Predicted Population Change by Rural Local Authority (2010-35) (Fig. 1, p. 10)
Predicted changes in working age population (2010-35) (Fig. 3, p. 11)
### Table 1, p. 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Proportion of Housing Stock that is:</th>
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Scotland’s Environment

(Fig. 20, p. 25)
Towns and rural Scotland: vibrant or vulnerable?

The Vulnerability Index

• Data analysis done by Rural Services Network and Rose Regeneration

• 90 settlements across Scotland

• Based on four indicators (2011-12 data)
  – The proportion of the local population of working age
  – the proportion of the local population claiming JSA
  – the proportion of the local population working in the public sector
  – a measure of income deprivation derived from the SIMD
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlements*</th>
<th>Sixfold Urban Classification</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Rank (1 is most vulnerable)</th>
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What is the role of the private sector in the resilience of rural Scotland?

Employment by Industry Size and in the Public Sector by Geographic Area (Fig. 3, p. 46)
Charities per 10,000 population in Scotland (Fig. 1, p. 59)
The third sector and civil society in rural Scotland: present and future?

Scale of operation of rural and urban charities carrying out services (Fig. 4, p. 61)
Community Land Scotland members: January 2012 (Fig. 5, p. 63)
– Much of rural Scotland remains in the ‘final third’ with ‘not-spots’ and ‘twilight zones’; urban Scotland’s connectivity is getting faster, faster

– Significant investment is required, including by communities themselves, even to maintain the digital divide

– NGB enables the realisation of commonly-accepted ‘rights’ for Scotland’s citizens
Next generation broadband in rural Scotland: mobilising, meeting and anticipating demand

(Figs. 2-4, p. 80)
What are the implications for rural Scotland of a low carbon future?

Per capita CO2 emissions by local authority, 2009 (Fig. 3, p. 91)
What are the implications for rural Scotland of a low carbon future?

**CO₂ emissions by local authority 2009 (kt CO₂)**

- Rural Local Authority
- Urban Local Authority

Total CO₂ emissions by local authority, 2009 (kt CO₂) (Fig. 3, p. 91)
What are the implications for rural Scotland of a low carbon future?

Average National Home Energy Rating by local authority (Fig. 6, p. 92)
What are the implications for rural Scotland of a low carbon future?

Per capita CO2 emissions for the land use sector by local authority (Fig. 9, p. 98)
Policy: where next?

1. Evidence from Report supports claim that **specific characteristics** make rural Scotland different from urban:
   - Not privileged, not separate: different

2. National policies must be **tailored to rural** and to **diversity of rural**

3. Precedents:
   - National Performance Framework through LAs
   - Client groups

4. “Fit for purpose”: necessity not luxury
For more information on the work of the Rural Policy Centre please email: 
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