

Rural Development Sub-Committee

Inquiry into Poverty and deprivation in Rural Wales

Response from Carmarthenshire County Council

Preface

Before responding to the questions raised it is worth considering what deprivation and poverty are.

Deprivation is valuable for its focus on the lack of goods, services or social relations or inadequate physical or social environment which results from a lack of financial resources. It is a relative measure where standards are defined in relation to social norms or expectations. Poverty and deprivation are inter-linked as one is the cause and the other is the outcome. Both financial resources and outcomes are therefore required to be captured in measures of multiple deprivation.

Deprivation and social exclusion are closely related concepts although some commentators do not consider poverty to be an essential feature of social exclusion, even so deprivation measures can provide direct measures of some forms of exclusion and indirect evidence of other forms.

1. What are the poverty/deprivation problems faced by rural areas? What are the specific needs of rural areas in relation to this issue?

In the past any economic downturn in rural areas has been cushioned by a strong and prosperous agricultural industry. However this is no longer the case as changes have taken place in both the social and economic mix of rural areas, creating a vulnerability that needs to be addressed.

Poverty and deprivation can increase the occurrence of social exclusion and vulnerability of rural communities. Limited access to services is a common factor in the definition of deprivation while poverty can result in disengagement from society in general. Both factors have a heavy influence on the shaping of the "rural community."

The specific obstacles faced by rural communities in Wales are detailed below:

- The general needs of service users and communities in rural areas are not being met or understood. Research has shown that the core services essential to maintain a sense of community in a rural area to include a shop, a primary school, a GP, a community hall and a post office. However, many rural areas are suffering a decline in such amenities which ultimately results in longer distances being travelled in order to access such services.

- Decision making structures and processes are far removed and inaccessible to those children, families and individuals who have the greatest need.
- Rural areas are sometimes not being highlighted as the worst deprived areas due to the nature of the deprivation indicators being used. Deprivation, in a rural context, includes interaction between factors such as income, social circumstance, access to services and opportunity. There are people experiencing poverty and deprivation throughout rural areas, however, they often live in close proximity to individuals with a far greater degree of affluence. This ultimately results in small pockets of deprivation within an area generally termed as prosperous and therefore, those individuals experiencing poverty and/or deprivation are often not considered as such.
- It is believed that rural areas experience particular forms of deprivation to a greater extent than urban areas. These include:
 - Household Deprivation including low income and lack of affordable housing
 - Resource/Opportunity Deprivation including an inability to access services and decline in employment
 - Mobility Deprivation including obstacles in accessing suitable jobs, services and resources.

Specific examples of these forms of deprivation can be seen below.

Household Deprivation

- The graph below indicates that of the nine Welsh rural areas, seven have a relatively high proportion of employees earning less than £7 per hour. The two exceptions are Anglesey and Monmouth which are counties that suffer “pockets” of poverty and deprivation amongst surrounding areas of affluence and therefore, average hourly earnings are greater.

The shortage of low cost housing in rural areas is an area for concern, with house prices inflated by immigrants and second home owners. The limited availability of low cost housing in combination with the need to run a car prevents young people from leaving the parental home or leads to migration out of the area. According to the Living and Working in Rural Wales Survey 2004, problems associated with accessing housing were reported by respondents. Slightly more than four out of ten (42%) people living in rural areas considered that ‘most’ people in their local area were experiencing problems accessing housing, with a further 37% indicating that ‘some’ local people were encountering such difficulties.

Resource/Opportunity Deprivation

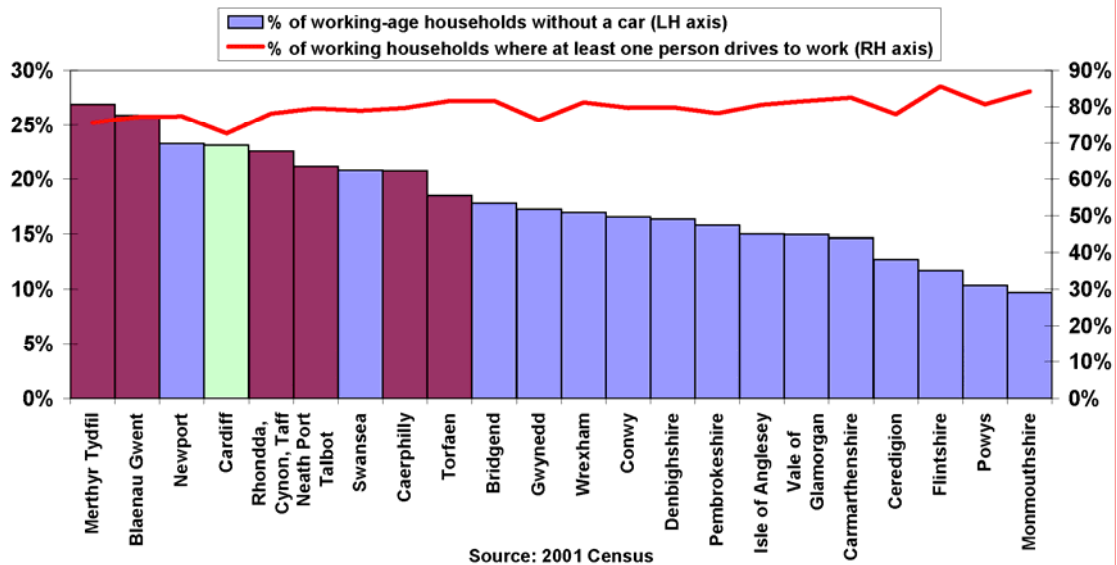
Having access to services in a rural community is critical to the sustainability of the rural community as a whole.

- Rural healthcare is not viewed as a separate policy to urban healthcare. Healthcare provision that works well in urban areas does not always translate well into rural areas, for example, the provision of large hospitals to cover large areas and populations. Such hospitals tend to be built in central, urban areas which then results in those individuals residing in rural areas travelling long distances to their nearest hospital as well as large areas for emergency services to cover. Access and transport are two major problems facing rural healthcare. In rural areas there are:
 - additional travel costs associated with providing services
 - additional travelling time for healthcare professionals and patients
 - difficulties faced by individuals in gaining access to health services.
- Rural areas are not viewed favourably by individuals in professional vocations. Professional and social isolation as well as a lack of opportunity for continuing professional development are seen as barriers to career progression.
- The inhabitants of rural areas suffer from a marked lack of affordable nursery education and childcare facilities, just as they are typically expected to travel further to access education and further education. Rural students do not have the same opportunities to live at home while studying, as others are increasingly doing.
- With regards to rural Carmarthenshire, the area is largely dependent on small and micro businesses and self employment with almost 95% employing fewer than 25 people. 16% of people living in rural areas are classed as being self employed. This emphasises the fact that the same job opportunities are not afforded to those living in rural areas compared to those in urban areas. The small nature of businesses means that although a similar quality of jobs may be available in rural areas, the volume of jobs is not.

Mobility Deprivation

- The lack of public transport in rural areas imposes a need for people living in such areas to own a car. The necessity of having private transport often results in families “going without” other provisions in order to maintain a car.
- The rise in car ownership in rural Carmarthenshire and the wide distribution of the rural population, services and employment means that rural public transport is not commercially viable in all parts of rural Carmarthenshire, with services heavily reliant on subsidy and the frequency of public transport services in parts of the County is a major issue.

Although the great majority of working households everywhere use a car to get to work, car ownership levels in the Valleys are much lower than in rural areas



- The above graph demonstrates the fact that the nine areas commonly agreed to be primarily rural in nature are at the top end of the scale in terms of car ownership. This emphasises the necessity of car ownership in rural areas. Local service providers (public, private and community-based) and communities should be involved in systematically identifying these transport needs.

The County of Carmarthenshire

As identified by the Local Development Strategy for Rural Carmarthenshire the key issues relating to poverty and deprivation in rural Carmarthenshire are as follows:

The Economy

- Over reliance on lower added value sectors such as agriculture which are particularly vulnerable to external factors
- Key drivers of prosperity such as high productivity, retention of talented, qualified young people, high economic activity still lag behind the UK
- Predominance of small and medium sized businesses with nearly 95% employing fewer than 25 people
- Tourism remains largely seasonal, experiencing difficulties in recruitment

Employment

- 13.5% of residents commute out of the County contributing to GVA elsewhere
- 27.8% of people aged 16-74 living in rural areas are economically inactive which is on a par with the percentage for Carmarthenshire at 30.6%. (Source: 2001 Census).

Demography

- Older age profile resulting from an in migration of the older generation to all parts of the County with greater proportional increases in the rural wards of Taf, Myrddin and Teifi
- Out migration of talented and skilled young people is a key issue for rural areas which exhibit a lower proportion of 20-39 yr olds (22.2% compared with County level of 23.2% (Source: 2001 Census).

Transport

- Limited penetration of public transport provision in parts of rural Carmarthenshire and frequency of service
- Increases in fuel costs threaten business viability and threaten exclusion particularly in rural areas.

Infrastructure/ICT

- Limited high speed ICT connectivity
- Decline of market towns as service centres is having a detrimental effect on surrounding rural areas
- Lack of available development land due to a lack of drainage infrastructure and flood risk.
- Lack of social/leisure facilities which is a critical factor in retaining and attracting talented and qualified young people

Inclusion/access to services/equality

- Closure of village shops and post offices impacting on the quality of life of local residents in parts
- Increasing concentration of many services such as banks in larger urban areas
- Limited or no access to childcare facilities
- Benefit take up rates indicate that people in rural areas are less likely to claim their entitlements
- Older people unable to access already limited services available – contributes to increased isolation
- Needs of hard to reach groups e.g. ex offenders – more difficult to engage within rural areas

Skills

- 25.1% of rural Carmarthenshire are without qualifications compared with 27.6% in Carmarthenshire (Source: 2001 Census)
- 17% of 16-24 year olds in rural areas have no qualifications compared with which is similar to the County level of 19%

Environment

- Lack of adequate utilities and flooding hindering new developments in some areas
- Pressures to identify alternative waste disposal methods

Housing

- Significant gaps between income levels and house prices with a lack of affordable housing

- Hidden levels of homelessness particularly amongst young people

Health and Wellbeing

- Lack of Substance mis-use services
- Limited or no access to childcare facilities
- Pockets where access to doctors surgeries fall outside a 5 mile radius

2. Are anti-poverty/deprivation activities best dealt with by the Welsh Assembly Government or by the Local Authorities? Why?

Dealing with poverty and deprivation requires a collaborative approach between all organisations with a vested interest in tackling these issues. The wide remit of such an effort necessitates the joint-working of the Welsh Assembly, local authorities and the communities involved. An example of this is Grwp Cefn Gwlad which was established in 2001 to provide a strategic approach to the delivery of the Objective 1 programme in rural Carmarthenshire and sits beneath the wider Regeneration Partnership for Carmarthenshire. It has subsequently taken on a much broader role for rural development within the County.

Membership of Grwp Cefn Gwlad has been reviewed to reflect the needs and priorities identified within the local development strategy and is based on proportionate representation from the four sectors to ensure an integrated, bottom up approach to rural development.

These are not issues that can be dealt with single handed by any government organisation as this merely results in the needs of those individuals living in poverty or deprivation not being met or understood.

2. i) What anti-poverty/deprivation initiatives (Welsh Assembly Government or Local Authority) are you aware of?

National/Regional

- Tackling Child Poverty in Wales
- Monitoring Persistent and Severe Poverty
- Financial Support for the Local Authorities Tackling Child Poverty Pilot Project
- Rural Development Sub-Committee
- Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-13
- Home Energy Efficiency Scheme in Wales
- Wag Rural Development Plan
- Communities First
- Rural Community Action
- ObjectiveOne /Convergence Funding
- WAVE – Wales A Vibrant Economy
- Strategy for Older People in Wales
- Wales Spatial Plan
- WAG Farming for the Future

Local

- Rural Services and Thematics Programme
- PACT
- Local Development Strategy for Rural Carmarthenshire
- Local Transport Plan
- Local and Regional Bus Strategies
- Carmarthenshire Community Plan
- Children and Young People Framework Plan
- Young People's Partnership
- Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy
- Carmarthenshire Community Strategy
- Sport and Recreation Strategy
- Social Services Strategic Plan for Adults
- Care for Older People in Carmarthenshire
- Children and Family Strategy
- Leisure Facilities Development Plan
- 50+ Strategy (under development)

Although the majority of initiatives listed above are not solely centred around rural areas, they do make provision for individuals and communities within the rural setting.

ii) Do these anti-poverty/deprivation policies adequately address the needs of rural areas?

As stated earlier, rural areas are sometimes not classed as deprived areas as a result of the measures used to define poverty and deprivation. This has led to initiatives such as Communities First/Next not being specifically targeted at rural communities in need of such support. It is recognised that some rural areas have been included in Communities First/Next but these have tended to be based on other considerations.

Also, policies that are developed using a blanket geographical approach, whilst addressing the needs of urban areas, do not adequately deal with the same issues in rural areas. Existing measures of deprivation can often be inappropriate for use in rural areas. This is to a certain extent because they may be more suitable for urban areas and partially because they do not allow for the diverse nature of rural areas. Rural areas would generally score highly in relation to access to services, which currently has a weighting of 10% (WIMD 2005). It is extremely difficult to substantiate the various weights which should be applied to the various domains, but, of course, a higher weighting with regards to the Access domain would benefit the more rural authorities. Small pockets of deprivation are therefore being overlooked as the focus is on deprived areas as opposed to deprived individuals which ultimately disadvantages the more homogenous rural authorities. It means that the more evenly and thinly distributed deprivation in rural authorities is not as well represented in the WIMD calculation as the more concentrated pockets of

deprivation in the more urban authorities. This would apply to all the domains and not just to the Access domain.

The fundamental problem with current anti-poverty/deprivation policies is that there is a general failure to understand the extent to which urban and rural deprivation differ.

3. What specific measures would you like to see implemented by the Welsh Assembly Government to deal with poverty/deprivation issues in rural Wales?

The establishment of a specialist development agency for rural Wales with a multi-agency membership would make a positive step towards a collaborative approach in dealing with poverty and deprivation in rural areas. Specific measures in dealing with the issues could include the following:

- Providing support as a result of a defined common need rather than geographical area; this would allow hidden rural poverty to be dealt with in the same way as larger urban areas.
- Improve the scope of services for individuals at a rural level, including childcare and other early years activities, cultural and leisure activities and family support services.
- Improved partnership working with the Community and Voluntary Sector in order to identify the exacting needs of communities in rural Wales.

4. What examples of good practice are you aware of in Wales/other parts of the UK/ overseas?

Nationally there are some good examples including :

- Cornwall Strategic Partnership – Breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation in Cornwall
- Tackling Rural Disadvantage – Citizens Advice Bureau
- Rural Proofing Project – Bristol University
- WAG Rural Development Plan

Locally there are some good examples that would provide a sound base for regenerating rural communities:

Local Development Strategy

The Local Development Strategy for Rural Carmarthenshire has been endorsed by WAG and will target the following key priorities:

- To increase the number and quality of jobs available to people in rural areas
- To assist people into jobs and reducing economic inactivity
- To increase the productivity and profitability of businesses in rural areas

- To retain and attract young people
- To develop sustainable, self reliant, communities

A number of innovative proposals in the Business Plan linked to the Strategy have been submitted to WAG, and a decision will be made shortly as part of the bidding to the Wales Rural Development Plan 2007-2013.

The eventual aim of the Strategy is to create an area of high innovation and opportunity combining a vibrant economy and a superb quality of life, an area which exhibits the following characteristics by 2015:

- Productive and profitable business
- Viable age structure
- Diversified economy
- Clean environment
- Improved access to rural services
- Area attractive to young people
- Strong, healthy communities
- A strengthened agricultural sector

One of the interventions proposed under Priority 5 of Carmarthenshire RDP (To develop sustainable, self reliant, communities) is to develop an acceptable blue print/model to ensure all rural communities have access to a range of services and facilities within a specific radius or via outreach systems and the Delivery model adopted by the Partnership (Grwp Cefn Gwlad) is the 'sustainable rural hub' model to ensure that the projects are delivered in an integrated manner within a particular spatial area.

The 'sustainable rural hub' model adopted by the Partnership is designed to ensure that maximum impact is gained within a spatial hub and that activities and services delivered by the projects are distributed in the most appropriate place to best service the needs of the rural hub and neighbouring communities. This approach will also encourage local communities to be more joined up in their thinking; to share local facilities and resources and to plan activity within a particular spatial area. 5 key hubs have been identified across rural Carmarthenshire.

50+ Strategy

The 50+ Strategy that is currently being developed by Carmarthenshire County Council is another example of good practice. The Strategy identifies the following initiatives that serving to improve the quality of life of older people in rural communities:

- The RSVP, or Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme, has been launched in Carmarthenshire, after success in other counties. Senior volunteers are going into schools to share their skills and experiences with the younger generations. Helpers are being recruited to listen to children read, and give them talks on anything from gardening to sport, cookery and local history.

- Transport and mobility in Carmarthenshire is a key element of the 50+’s quality of life. The Welsh Assembly Government document; ‘Living Longer, Living Better’ (March 2007), recognised that ‘in rural areas the need for private transport, particularly private cars, is acknowledged as the norm and a necessity. Half of all households without a car consist of individuals aged 60+’. Carmarthenshire have developed a number of schemes to ensure that we provide a variety of different transport methods such as Country Cars, Community Transport Project - Dolen Teifi and Milltir Sgwar which is being lead by Antur Teifi

Population Groups

The questions below focus on poverty and deprivation in relation to children and young people, the economically active, the economically inactive and older people.

For each of the groups (or whichever is of relevance to you), please consider the following questions:

5. To what extent are these groups living in poverty/deprivation in rural Wales?

Children and Young People

Children and young people living in rural areas lack access to appropriate services. They do not have the same opportunities as those living in urban areas as they are excluded by the geographical context of the areas in which they live.

Economically Active

According to the Bevan Foundation Scoping Study on In-Work Poverty in Wales, low pay is not evenly distributed throughout the country and is more common in rural Wales, especially for men. However, the prevalence of low pay in Wales is downplayed by the reliance of official statistics on average earnings of full-timers. In six of the rural counties in Wales, the proportion of men earning less than £6 per hour was 25% or more.

The rate of economic activity is not significantly lower than other areas in Wales, however, there is a higher instance of individuals taking up more than one job due to the unavailability of appropriate jobs in rural areas. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is a larger concentration of higher paid jobs in urban areas, making the ownership of a car a basic need for many families; this, of course, results in the higher mileage and increased fuel costs. This outlines the fact that many people are paying a premium to live in rural areas.

Economically Inactive

Research undertaken by the Wales Rural Observatory identified that due to the ageing population of rural areas in Wales in low-income households, it is hardly surprising to discover that 71% of persons within such households were economically inactive. This figure is much higher than that recorded for all households (42%). The main reasons for economic inactivity amongst low-income households were retirement (accounting for 60% of household members), long-term sickness or disability (14%) and unemployment (10%).

Older People

According to the Living and Working in Rural Wales Survey 2004, low income households are most likely to be headed by an elderly person, with 36% of respondents in low income households aged 65 years or over compared with 21% for all households in rural Wales.

Access to services is another issue area which proves problematic for older people living in rural areas. The availability of services and activities appropriate to older people is often scarce and unless transport is provided through a community transport scheme, older people can find themselves excluded from social events, leisure activities and general day-to-day services such as post offices and banks.

7. What poverty/deprivation issues are experienced by these population groups that are specific to rural areas? Please highlight any relevant evidence or research that you are aware of.

Children and Young People

The provision of accessible childcare services in rural areas is of key importance given its role in allowing parents to gain employment. The Survey of Rural Services states that in terms of nursery and playgroup provision 74% of responding Town and Community Councils did not have a publicly run nursery and 78% were without a privately run nursery, however, only 38% did not have a playgroup.

The survey gathered information on levels of school provision in rural areas of Wales and found that 17% of Councils did not have access to a school for the 5-11 age group, 74% did not have a school for the 12-16 age group, and 78% did not have a school for the 17-18 age group. The costs of maintaining and insuring can be a problem for Community Council run playgrounds. Sports facilities are strongly correlated to population size and the closure of local schools and facilities takes away the opportunity to provide sports facilities at a local level. The provision of scouts, guides and general youth groups also correlates to the size of the population while groups like Urdd or the Young Farmers tend to be more concentrated in areas with lower populations.

Table : Youth Club Provision

Rural area population	0-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-1000	1000-2000	2000-4000	4000+	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Proportion with no youth club	71.1	68.2	77.5	67.9	65.7	57.0	23.8	22.3	56
One or more youth club	28.9	31.8	22.5	32.1	34.3	43.0	76.2	77.7	44

Source: Survey of Rural Services 2005

Economically Active

Analysis of local income data from CACI in the table below reveals that the mean annual household earned income for rural Wales was £29,382 in 2007, a figure that was below the averages for Wales as a whole (£30,231), Urban (£31,912) Other (£32,465) areas of Wales, but higher than that recorded for Valleys areas (£28,589). Monmouthshire had the highest mean annual household income (£30,510) of all the rural authorities and for Wales as whole in 2003. Household incomes for the other rural authority areas show relatively little variation in scale, ranging from £22,345 in Gwynedd to £24,268 in Denbighshire. In four rural authority areas - Carmarthenshire, Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Gwynedd - the mean annual household income in 2007 was below the average for Valleys authorities.

Table: Mean Annual Household Earned Income : 2007

County	Mean Income
Isle of Anglesey	£29,024
Gwynedd	£27,555
Conwy	£29,146
Denbighshire	£29,492
Flintshire	£32,569
Wrexham	£30,720
Powys	£28,755
Ceredigion	£28,822
Pembrokeshire	£28,158
Carmarthenshire	£28,550
Swansea	£30,145
Neath Port Talbot	£28,984
Bridgend	£31,279
Vale of Glamorgan, The	£34,108
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	£28,690
Merthyr Tydfil	£27,106
Caerphilly	£29,248
Blaenau Gwent	£25,473
Torfaen	£29,344
Monmouthshire	£34,943
Newport	£32,033
Cardiff	£33,558
Rural	£29,382

Urban	£31,912
Other	£32,465
Valleys	£28,589
Wales	£30,231

Source CACI PayCheck Dataset 2007

Economically Inactive

The table below provides a geographical breakdown of benefit receipt for different spatial areas and rural local authorities in 2001. Four points can be made from this Table. First, the proportion of people in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit in rural areas is higher than that for urban areas. Second, the percentage of people receiving Job Seekers' Allowance is the same in Rural and Valleys areas of Wales. Third, levels of Income Support and Council Tax Benefit recipients are lower in rural Wales than in Valleys and Urban Wales. Fourth, there is a distinct geography to low income-based benefit receipt in rural Wales, with the eastern authority areas of Monmouthshire and Powys recording lowest rates, and highest proportions of benefit receipt evident in the westerly areas - Pembrokeshire, Anglesey, Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire – as well as Denbighshire.

Table : % Benefit Claimant Rates, 2001 Incorporating 2008

Jsa Data

	Job Seekers Allowance 2001	Job Seekers Allowance Jan 2008	Income Support 2001	Council Tax Benefit	Working Families Tax Credit
	%		%	%	%
Carmarthenshire	1.9	2.0	14.8	22.1	2.5
Ceredigion	1.6	1.3	9.6	15.7	2.2
Conwy	2.1	2.7	15.1	16.8	2.9
Denbighshire	1.9	2.6	15.5	19.1	2.7
Gwynedd	2.8	2.4	12.6	12.4	2.9
Anglesey	3.4	3.1	13.7	35.0	2.8
Monmouthshire	1.2	1.2	8.4	13.4	1.8
Pembrokeshire	2.2	1.7	13.7	20.8	3.1
Powys	1.4	1.5	9.8	14.2	2.5
Rural	2.0	2.0	12.7	18.5	2.6
Other	1.6	2.0	11.5	17.8	2.5
Valleys	2.0	2.9	16.4	26.2	2.7
Urban	2.3	2.4	14.8	23.0	2.4

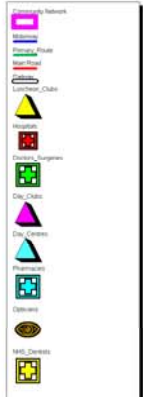
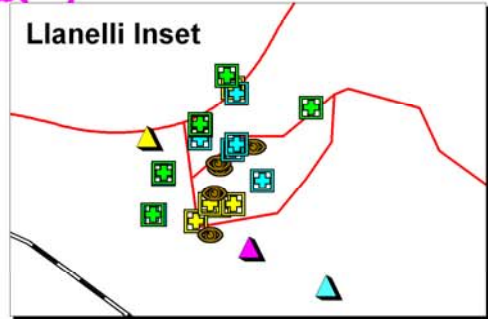
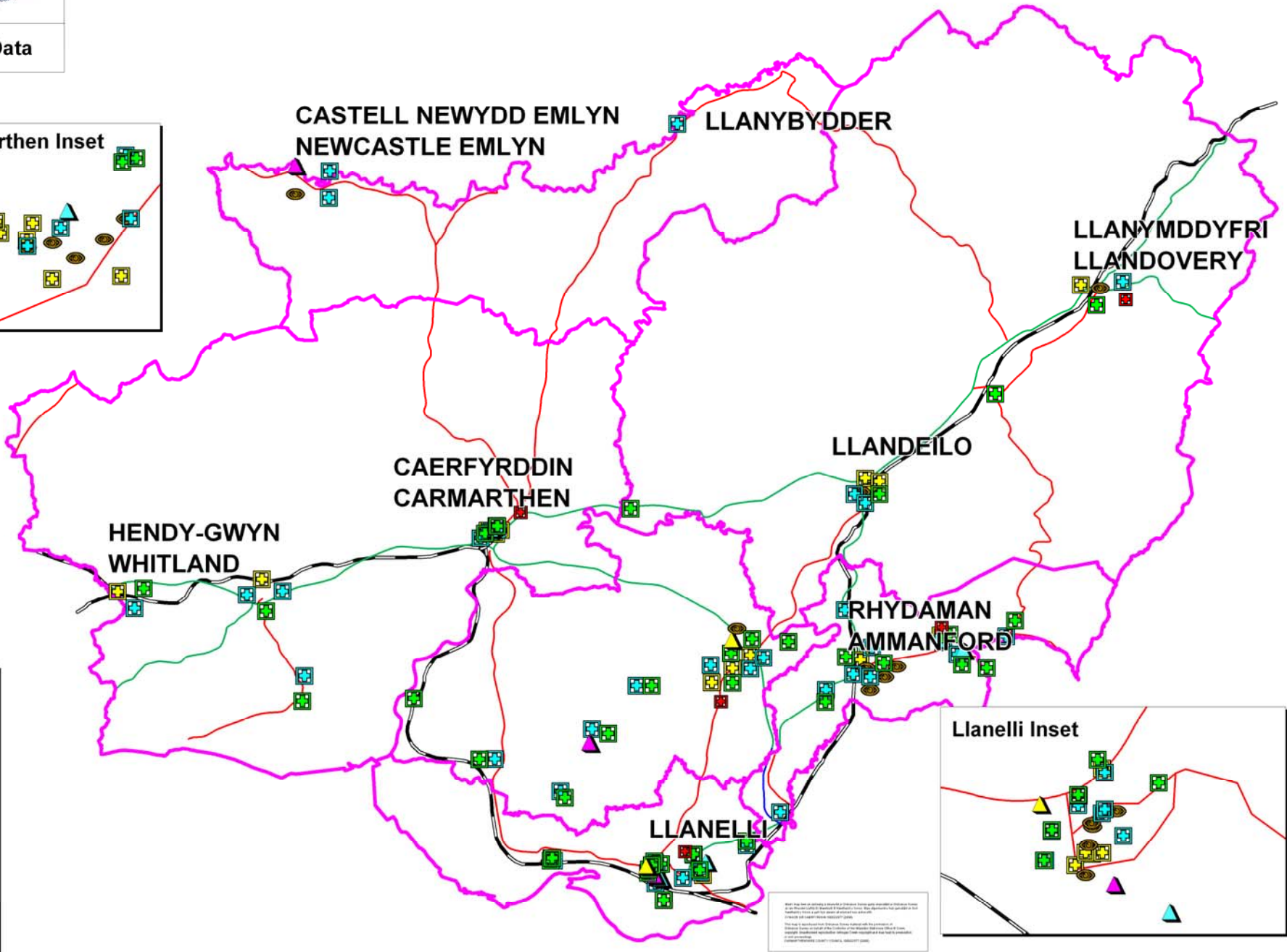
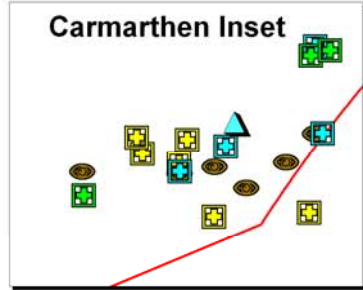
(Department for Work and Pensions)

Older People

The Survey of Rural Services 2005 provided information on levels of provision of day-care services for the elderly and the disabled. Of all responding

Councils, 74% did not have day-care facilities for the elderly and 89% did not have day-care provision for the disabled. Simple day care provision such as meals on wheels and luncheon clubs were also found to be sparse in rural areas. Given the high numbers of elderly people living in rural areas, the provision of such facilities is important to the social inclusion of older people in general. The map shown on the subsequent page demonstrates the primary services that are available to older people in Carmarthenshire, as identified the 50+ strategy currently under development.

Health Data



This map has been prepared by the County Council's Planning and Development Department. It is for information only and does not constitute a contract. The County Council is not responsible for any loss or damage arising from its use. The County Council is not responsible for any loss or damage arising from its use. The County Council is not responsible for any loss or damage arising from its use.

9. How do the problems of the 4 population groups differ across rural Wales (for example between areas in West Wales and East Wales)?

Children and Young People

Children and young people living in rural areas in East Wales tend to have better access to services than those living in the West. This is due to the fact that the eastern side of Wales includes Cardiff as well as other major cities and towns such as Newport and Bridgend. The fundamental result of this geographical issue is that the eastern area contains a number of regional centres, lending itself to having an increased number of services for children and young people within a shorter travelling distance.

Economically Active

Rural wards with highest annual household incomes tend to be located in the north east and south east and in the Vale of Glamorgan, with pockets of high income households also evident in the Gower and parts of Pembrokeshire and Gwynedd. According to PayCheck data, lowest annual household income rural wards are mainly found in Gwynedd, although smaller clusters of low-income wards can be seen in Anglesey and Pembrokeshire.

Economically Inactive

The 2001 Census of Population reveals that 3% of households contained at least one person who was unemployed in rural Wales in 2001, the same rate recorded for Wales as a whole. As with benefit and income levels, there is a clear west – east divide evident in relation to unemployment rates, with Gwynedd, Anglesey and Pembrokeshire being the authority areas recording highest, and Monmouthshire and Powys having the lowest rates. There is also a clear east – west division within rural Wales in respect to the receipt of state benefits, with levels of receipt generally highest in the north-west and lowest in eastern areas.

Older People

As with children and young people, the issue that separates the east and west of Wales with regards to Older People is access to services. The availability of public transport is another issue which causes a gap between rural areas in the east and west of Wales. Older people are significantly more likely to travel by bus than younger residents, however, the larger the village/town in which they live, the more public transport services are available. This again comes down to a geographical issue with far greater public transport services being provided in the east due to their proximity to the large towns and cities located in eastern Wales.

10. In what ways are any sub-groups within the four population groups particularly affected by rural poverty/deprivation, for example, disabled economically inactive people or female older people?

The Survey of Rural Services 2005 revealed that in more than nine out of ten communities in rural Wales no local support services are available for the unemployed, homeless groups, people with drug problems or women suffering domestic violence. In addition, 76% of rural communities have no provision for vulnerable young people and 58% lack any support services for vulnerable elderly groups. Moreover, where welfare services do exist they are mainly concentrated in the towns of rural Wales. The table below identifies the lack of services available to sub-groups of rural populations.

Table: Service Support By Population Size

Population of rural area	Elderly Support %	Young People Support %	Disabled Support %	Unemployed Support %	Homeless Support %	Drug Problem Support %	Domestic Violence Support %
0-400	15.78	7.89	7.89	5.26	5.26	5.26	5.26
400-500	27.27	11.36	11.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
500-600	35.48	12.90	6.45	3.22	6.45	6.45	6.45
600-700	32.14	21.42	17.85	7.14	7.14	7.14	3.57
700-1000	41.79	22.38	19.40	2.98	4.47	2.98	2.98
1000-2000	61.19	19.35	13.97	3.22	2.15	2.15	1.07
2000-4000	57.14	38.09	23.80	4.76	2.38	11.90	9.52
4000+	75.55	57.77	53.33	42.22	35.55	40.00	40.00
Average	42.20	24.00	19.10	7.70	7.20	8.50	7.70

Source: Survey of Rural Services 2005

11. What are the most effective ways of tackling poverty/deprivation for individuals from these groups living in rural parts of Wales?

A blanket approach to dealing with the separate issues for each of these groups will only serve to worsen the current problems experienced by communities living in rural areas. The differing needs of each of the groups necessitates a different approach to dealing with each one, therefore direct communication with communities is essential for tackling poverty/deprivation in rural areas.

12. How can these problems be addressed by the Welsh Assembly Government?

There are three main issues that need to be addressed by the Welsh Assembly Government in order to improve the standard of living for those living in poverty/deprivation in rural Wales.

- Firstly, existing measures of deprivation used in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation do not adequately reflect the problems of rural areas in Wales. There should therefore be a specific rural index developed that assists in addressing rural poverty.
- Secondly, identifying need at local level rather than applying a blanket approach is imperative in addressing real issues.

- Thirdly, improved planning and co-ordination of schemes in rural areas is essential to their success.

Significant resources have also been channelled into the preparation of the Wales Spatial Plan, with multi agency representation a key feature of the Spatial Planning Groups. WAG need to consider very closely whether the Spatial Plan and the Spatial Planning Groups covering rural areas of Wales are appropriate for taking forward the rural deprivation/poverty agenda.

Additionally, in England the Rural Evidence Research Centre (RERC) has been established by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to provide innovative, multi-disciplinary research to support the development of policy for the social and economic regeneration of rural England. The Wales Rural Observatory to some extent can assist with this type of role in Rural Wales but as stated earlier, the establishment of a specialist development agency for rural Wales would allow the above issues to be explored at a more in-depth level than has currently been considered. This would subsequently allow for the appropriate allocation of resources to support levels of service activity by central government, local authorities and other bodies and agencies in rural communities.