

# **Coastal & Marine All Party Parliamentary Group: Inquiry into Deprivation & Disadvantage in Coastal Rural Areas**

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A response by the Royal Town Planning Institute to the group's  
inquiry into deprivation and disadvantage in coastal rural areas

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**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place

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# 1. Introduction

The Royal Town Planning Institute is a membership organisation representing over 22,000 spatial planners. It exists to advance the science and art of town planning for the benefit of the public.

This document responds to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Coastal and Marine Inquiry into deprivation and disadvantage in coastal rural areas.

This response has been formed drawing together internal consultations with members from within the RTPI's Rural Planning Network and from the RTPI's Marine Spatial Planning Task Group as well as broader responses from individual members of the RTPI. The Rural Planning Network is a multi-disciplinary body and contains non-planning professionals from beyond the RTPI with an interest in rural and coastal affairs as well as qualified (chartered) planners.

This document provides:

- a summary of key issues;
- an evidence base for the key issues; and
- RTPI suggestions for future APPG work, advancing the contribution that can be made through the planning system.

## 2. Summary of Key Issues

The purpose of this inquiry is to establish the **factual basis** regarding whether **coastal rural areas differ from inland rural areas**, or from the **general situation** in the UK, with regard to a range of measures of **deprivation and disadvantage**.

Rural areas and communities are diverse, with no two areas alike. They face a wide variety of pressures and challenges and have very different priorities. Deprivation and disadvantage in coastal rural areas is also by this nature, different across the UK. There cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach. Policies, development, activities and thinking needs to be tailored to take into account regional and local circumstances.

The following is an outline of the key issues which the RTPI considers to be important to the analysis of deprivation and disadvantage in rural areas, pertinent to planning. The RTPI suggests that the inquiry builds on the large amount of disparate work already undertaken from across the UK. This submission highlights a number of sources of information which will provide valuable evidence to inform this inquiry and future work of the APPG.

That being said, whilst the sources of information listed in this submission examine rural deprivation, not all necessarily use the same definition that the inquiry has proposed, so some care will be required in applying the evidence that emerges from them.

The following paragraphs consider issues around:

- sustainable development;
- geographic location and spatial relationships;
- socio/economic characteristics of areas; and
- environmental assets of areas.

### Sustainable Development

Deprivation and disadvantage are social issues which need to be considered in relation to economic and environmental issues and against the wider issue of achieving sustainable development. A sustainable community is (amongst other indicators) a community in which people are capable of realising their potential and where deprivation and disadvantage are minimised, as well as one where environmental and natural resource values and conditions are managed such that the needs of future generations can be met.

### Geographic location and spatial relationships

Coastal areas are typically more remote than inland areas. Having the sea to one side, they are by their nature on the periphery of land based society.

The 'East Riding Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan' (2002) refers to their largely sparsely populated rural coastal zone and states *"while many residents find the rural nature an attractive element of the area, with its unspoilt village character, it does provide problems too. While many of the issues faced by those living in rural communities on the coast are the same*

*as those found elsewhere, it should be stressed that coastal communities often face heightened problems. This is mainly due to the geography of the coast where settlements have only 180-degree hinterlands. These are mainly centered around isolation and poor access to services.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Matthew Taylor MP Review 'Living Working Countryside' touches on the desire that people have to move to "rural areas, and particularly the more attractive parts of the countryside (such as settlements on the coast or in areas of high landscape value)."<sup>2</sup> The seaside environment is often considered a healthier and generally better place to live and as a result can attract a range of migrants including the retired, unemployed etc.

The Commission for Rural Communities (England) report '[Rural Disadvantage – Reviewing the Evidence](#)' (2006) states that "*research on rural poverty in Britain over the last 25 years has consistently identified an average of around 20-25% of households living in poverty, with significantly higher percentages in certain areas. The most recent figures (Table 3.1) show that income poverty is experienced by people in all types of rural areas but is most prevalent in the sparse rural areas (in particular in town, fringe and village areas) and in coastal areas.*"<sup>3</sup>

There is a need to identify the specific geographical locations where deprivation is most severe and attempt to prioritise those areas for future action.

### ***Transport***

The geographic location and remoteness of coastal areas can increase car dependency and makes the provision of public and community transport an important issue.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognise this as an issue particularly in Pembrokeshire in South West Wales.

The '[Wales Spatial Plan – People, Places, Futures](#)' (2008 update) states "*The provision of public and community transport, particularly in rural areas where car dependency to access goods and services is greatest, will always be financially challenging and priorities should maximise the beneficial impacts on people and the environment.*"<sup>4</sup>

The [Greenways Initiative](#) in Pembrokeshire is an initiative that has been set up to encourage local residents and visitors to access the countryside using sustainable modes of transport. This has opened up public transport services to coastal communities and provides an interesting example of a situation where tourist and local needs are mutually supportive.

Many rural coastal areas still have their railways. [West Cumbria](#) is an example of a line that is currently in use and plays an important role in bringing visitors into coastal areas particularly over the summer months. These rail networks could play a wider role in serving the rural communities.

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<sup>1</sup> East Riding Integrated Coastal Zone management Plan (2002) 'Towards a Sustainable Coast'

<sup>2</sup> Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008) 'Living Working Countryside'. Note the applicability of this work to England.

<sup>3</sup> Commission for Rural Communities (2006) 'Rural Disadvantage – Reviewing the Evidence'

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2008) 'The Wales Spatial Plan – People, Places, Futures' (update) at online pg. 115 / hard copy pg. 90.

## Socio/economic characteristics

There is a need to identify and understand the socio-economic characteristics of rural coastal areas, set against the fundamental framework of geographical location and environmental assets which must inevitably influence them. This will help to gain a greater understanding of the differences between coastal rural areas in the north and the south, and between those experiencing peripherality and isolation and those readily accessible and close to larger urban areas.

### *Ageing Population*

The Social & Spatial Inequalities Research Group at the University of Sheffield published a report in 2008 '[Changing UK: The Way we Live Now](#)'. The report states "*looking at the geographical patterns of people aged 45 and over, we can see that there are relatively higher concentrations in rural and coastal areas.*" In particular, the illustrations at page 14 of their report shows the "*distribution of people aged 75 years and over is dominated by the coastal areas, which is where people of retiring age tend to move.*"<sup>5</sup>

A large retired population can put a strain on public services in particular those services linked to health. BBC News published an article in 2005 titled '[Ageing population 'to strain NHS](#)' which sets out the concerns around the impacts of an aging population on health services.

The CRC publication 'Rural Disadvantage – Reviewing the Evidence' (2006) notes that the 2006 study 'Coastal Areas and Heart Disease Risk' "*found that some coastal and rural areas contained the highest proportions of people at risk of heart disease particularly South and East Dorset (13.6%), North Norfolk (13.2%), Bexhill and Rother (Sussex) (13%), East Devon (12.8%) and East Lincolnshire (12.7%). In comparison, the five areas with least risk were all in Greater London. It concluded the differences were due to the age profile of the population, access to health services and lifestyle, wealth and deprivation.*"<sup>6</sup> (For more details on this study see the CRC publication pg 85).

### *Housing*

The Matthew Taylor MP report noted the significant issues surrounding housing in rural areas, in particular the impact of second homes and the need for affordable housing. The review states "*in 2007 the cost of an average family home was over £8,000 more expensive in rural areas compared to urban areas, and first time buyer homes were £16,000 dearer. At the same time those working in rural areas earn significantly less than their urban counterparts. The average wage in the most rural areas is just £20,289 compared to £27,487 in urban areas. This destructive combination of high cost homes and low rural wages is putting rural housing out of the reach of many who work in the countryside.*"<sup>7</sup>

The Affordable Rural Housing Commission concluded that "*...across rural England as a whole, the impact of second homes is modest. But we acknowledge that the severity of the problem in*

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<sup>5</sup> University of Sheffield (2008) 'Changing UK: The Way we Live Now'

<sup>6</sup> Commission for Rural Communities (2006) 'Rural Disadvantage – Reviewing the Evidence'

<sup>7</sup> Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008) 'Living Working Countryside'

*some parts of the country requires measures aimed at offsetting those detrimental effects and securing a better supply of affordable housing.*"<sup>8</sup>

Pembrokeshire in Wales experiences a number of issues in relation to local housing. This is a popular area for people to retire to from other parts of the country. The Pembrokeshire County Council [Local Housing Market Assessment \(Draft\) June 2007](#) provides figures on vacant, second homes and occupied dwellings for the Pembrokeshire area and states that "*second and holiday homes are an issue in certain parts of the area, normally in coastal areas*"<sup>9</sup>

The current economic climate has raised a number of issues and uncertainties over the housing market and economy which will have an impact on rural housing including affordable housing. In July 2008 the CLG (England) announced "*measures designed to respond to the impact of the credit crunch on the housing market and maintain the delivery of new affordable housing*".<sup>10</sup>

### **Employment**

Historically coastal areas have primarily had a dominant employment focus such as fishing, tourism, agriculture etc and have therefore been susceptible to downturns in these often seasonal industries.

In 2007 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority held a series of consultation activities around the review of the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Plan. The need for local careers in the Pembrokeshire area, as opposed to seasonal jobs, has been a common theme from the feedback sessions with stakeholders, along with the protection and nurturing of small businesses rather than large scale proposals. For more information visit the [Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website](#) (Sixth Form Conference and Visitors and Residents Surveys 2006 -2007)

The Matthew Taylor MP report found that average incomes in rural areas can be artificially inflated by residents who commute outside those rural areas to work and also by the retired population that often have a disposable income. Taylor reported that "*the people who actually work in rural communities earn £4,655 less than the national average.*"<sup>11</sup>

Improvements in largely information technology can provide greater opportunities to work locally. However it is important to have a clear understanding of the working dynamics of rural communities and not make decisions based on assumptions.

The Commission for Rural Communities sets out a number of myths in the document '[The Big Picture](#)' (England) (2008) which provides an interesting insight into some of the false assumptions that are made in relation to rural areas.

It is also essential that the issues surrounding employment and the economy are considered as part of the wider issue of sustainability, not solely as an exercise in economic solutions - at the

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<sup>8</sup> Cited in Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008) 'Living Working Countryside'

<sup>9</sup> Pembrokeshire County Council Local Housing Market Assessment (Draft) June 2007

<sup>10</sup> CLG 'More support to deliver affordable housing announces Caroline Flint' -

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/869428>

<sup>11</sup> Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008) 'Living Working Countryside'

expense of social and environmental issues of acknowledged importance. It is important not to lose sight of this in the current economic climate.

### ***Regeneration***

Members have expressed concern regarding the impact of urban regeneration initiatives on rural areas. There can be significant impacts for the more rural coastal areas as they have not received the priority that urban coastal areas have.

Whilst art and the environment have been the focus of regeneration in some locations such as Morecombe in the North West, regeneration in other parts of the country has also been housing led. However it is essential that regeneration is considered in light of the impacts of climate change as many rural coastal areas will be threatened by rising sea levels etc in the future.

Regeneration can be driven by a variety of forms of development and activities that take into account the future likely impacts of climate change, it need not be housing or environment led. Future regeneration of rural communities needs to take into account the issues of sustainability and climate change whilst responding to the specific needs of the locality.

National planning policy throughout the UK will provide a useful insight into how flood risk is taken into account in the planning process. In England [Planning Policy Statement 25 'Development and Flood Risk'](#) (2006) sets out to "*avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, reducing flood risk overall.*"<sup>12</sup>

One emerging approach to rising sea levels is the use of "rollback" or "managed retreat" policies, allowing development in coastal communities to gradually move away from threatened areas onto land that has a more sustainable future but might not normally be allocated for new development (for example, because it is open countryside). This helps to reduce the impact of sea level rise on landowners and can be a more socially acceptable solution than complete relocation of a coastal village or town. Managed retreat needs to be managed with care, as the simple relocation of communities without for example their economic basis in the form of the capital embodied in their existing housing or the capital and income generation embodied in their existing business/employment could create or exacerbate deprivation. Consideration also needs to be given types of land uses that could help regenerate threatened coastal communities without placing lives and valuable property at risk from coastal inundation.

The [Sea Change Programme](#) is an example of a coastal regeneration programme. It "*runs for three years from 2008 to 2011, providing funding to seaside resorts in England. It is led by CABE working with the Regional Development Agencies, English Heritage, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund. The CABE Chief Executive Richard Simmons, commenting on behalf of the Sea Change partnership said: There is clearly a huge appetite for areas to use culture and good design as a starting point for regeneration. Very strong applications were received from some of the country's most deprived areas and this is exactly where we want the money to go.*"<sup>13</sup> For more information on the Sea Change programme visit the [CABE website](#)

<sup>12</sup> CLG Planning Policy Statement 25 'Development and Flood Risk (2006)

<sup>13</sup> DCMS article (November 2007) '£45 million cultural investment in seaside resorts'

### *Concealed deprivation*

Concealed deprivation is a serious problem within rural areas and can easily be left unnoticed and unaddressed. Pockets of deprivation are not necessarily easily visible within more “wealthy areas”. It is likely that in less affluent areas there is a mutual support network, whereas in a more “wealthy area” there is unlikely to be such support and deprivation can be concealed and overlooked. [‘Lancaster District 2010: A Regeneration Strategy’](#) identifies areas within its district where there are “*areas of significant deprivation, often masked by the relative prosperity of surrounding areas*”<sup>14</sup>

These pockets of deprivation need to be identified. Future work of the APPG could focus on achieving a means of identifying these.

### **Environmental assets**

#### *Unique Landscapes*

Large stretches of the UK coastline are protected for the quality of their landscapes and environment. In England, the Jurassic Coast between Portland Bill and Exmouth enjoys the highest level of protection and is a World Heritage Site. Extensive lengths are designated as Heritage Coasts, such as North Yorkshire, Devon and Cornwall. In many areas there are overlapping designations. In North Devon, the Exmoor National Park includes part of the coast; in East Sussex, the Seven Sisters are part of the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, now designated as England’s newest National Park. In addition, long stretches of the coast are owned and managed by the National Trust, following the Enterprise Neptune project.

In addition to the national designations referred to above, there are many local categories, which are shown in development plans. All of these areas are of intrinsic importance and contribute to the distinctiveness of the coastal environment, which is of great variety.

Looking at the rural expanses of coastline as a whole, there are few areas which are unprotected in some way. The planning system is central to the operation of all means of coastal landscape protection that do not rely on land ownership (such as the work of the National Trust). Planning policies must effectively balance public demand for landscape protection against the need to ensure equitable access to housing and economic activity in rural coastal areas – in short, delivering sustainable rural coastal communities.

The unique quality of the coastal landscape is undoubtedly of economic importance to the economy of rural communities along the coast. There is a direct relationship between landscape and tourism – traditionally, this has been centred on the South West, but this has generated challenges in terms of the nature of the labour and housing markets in such traditional tourism destinations.

There are many other areas, however, which are valued for their remoteness and solitude, such as Northumberland. Many coasts are centres of recreation, such as Norfolk and its connection with the Broads. Others are of emerging potential, such as the Durham Coast. The last-mentioned has benefited from public intervention and planning, in the form of the Durham

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<sup>14</sup> Lancaster District (2010) A Regeneration Strategy

Coast recovery programme of environmental improvements. Not only has this improved the environment, badly scarred by the legacy of coal-mining, but it has also brought economic benefits to communities. With effective coastal planning and management, there are opportunities to spread and diversify the economic benefits of tourism whilst managing the adverse impacts of tourism concentrations.

In terms of the future, short range economic prospects for UK coastal tourism and hence economic activity are apparently being boosted by recessionary impacts on overseas tourism and the reduced value of sterling attracting additional overseas visitors. Whether these trends would persist in times of global economic growth is hard to predict.

### *Shoreline Management Plans and Spatial Plans*

With the advent of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill currently in Parliament, there has been considerable debate about the need for better planning of coastal areas. The issues have been highlighted by DEFRA in its recent publication "A strategy for promoting an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas in England". Over the past 25 years, there have been a number of studies and plans concerning Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). Numerous Shoreline Management Plans have been prepared by local authorities – for the most part, these have tended to be engineering-based. The main issues tackled have been related to flooding and coastal erosion. A good summary of Shoreline Management Plans, and their relationship with other plans and strategies, has been prepared recently by the Planning Co-operative for the Environment Agency.

With the proposed formation of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill, there will now be a new generation of Marine Plans. These will need to be integrated with plans and documents prepared by the Regional Planning Bodies and coastal local authorities, as well as with Shoreline Management Plans (where they exist) and Sustainable Community Strategies.

The RTPi Marine Spatial Planning Task Group has stressed the need for co-ordination and integration of plans. There will be an overlap of responsibilities and processes, particularly in the inter-tidal area and in tidal estuaries. This can be overcome formally, by having a reciprocal duty placed on the MMO and the terrestrial authorities to consult each other. At this level, planning must embrace the requirement to support coastal rural communities, many of which have been disadvantaged by their remoteness and by the decline of traditional economic activities.

Within the new coastal planning process, there will be need for some form of democratic accountability – this is already present in the Development Plan Regulations and their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which cover the preparation of land-based development plans. As yet there is no corresponding mechanism for Marine Plans. With Shoreline Management Plans, public consultation has not been extensive. It will be important for community fora to be set up in rural coastal communities, so that a dialogue is established on marine- and land-based planning. There are some existing types of organisations, e.g. the Flamborough Head Management Plan, which have community involvement.

With a degree of collaboration there are a number of opportunities and efficiencies that can arise:

- production and maintenance of a shared data and evidence base;
- better communication and public confidence in plan making processes;
- sharing of expertise;
- pooling of resources;
- better enforcement of and compliance with plan policies and decisions; and
- integrated development management decision making across the land/sea interface.

It is important therefore for there to be a clear relationship between statutory terrestrial development plan documents, Shoreline Management Plans, and new statutory Marine Plans. This will be essential for the future well-being of coastal rural communities, all of which depend to a greater or lesser extent on the sea and the continuing protection of coastal areas of quality. Above all, it is essential that the new regime does not prevent the coastal communities from earning a livelihood and sustaining themselves for the long term.

### 3. Evidence Base for Key Issues

Location specific information and links to sources of information that the RTPI has reviewed and that may assist the inquiry are set out below. These have been collated from region and nation contributions to this submission.

#### Scotland

[Scottish Coastal Socio-Economic Scoping Study](#), 2002

*"This report provides an understanding of the social and economic make-up of coastal areas, how the coastal population in regions of Scotland is changing and future directions for coastal communities".*

#### Wales

[Wales Rural Observatory](#)

[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)

#### *Pembrokeshire*

##### *Housing*

Impact of second and retirement home ownership on local housing markets is a particular issue in rural Pembrokeshire. (See Pembrokeshire County Council [Local Housing Market Assessment \(Draft\) June 2007](#))

##### *Employment*

The need for local careers in the Pembrokeshire area, as opposed to seasonal jobs, is an important issue, along with the protection and nurturing of small businesses rather than large scale proposals. For more information visit the [Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website](#) (Sixth Form Conference and Visitors and Residents Surveys 2006 -2007)

##### *Transport*

The Greenways Initiative in Pembrokeshire has helped in opening up public transport services to coastal communities that had lost them. This is an example of where tourist and local needs are mutually supportive. However the initiatives are dependent on public subsidy.

##### *Services and facilities*

The importance of local facilities, for example the post office, doctor, public transport, waste disposal and shops etc is highlight the [Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Visitors and Residents Survey, Background Paper, pages 29 to 30](#)

The [Community Plan for Pembrokeshire](#) highlights the need to increase the percentage of residents finding it easy to access key local services ( See A Community Plan for Pembrokeshire 2003/08, Version 2 November 2006, Pembrokeshire Community Planning & Leadership Partnership, pg 13)

#### England

##### *East of England*

[Deprivation in Rural Norfolk](#) December 2006

[Deprivation in Rural Suffolk: Highly-Deprived Areas and the Rural Share of Deprivation](#) February 2008

## **Yorkshire and Humber**

### [East Yorkshire Coastal Observatory website](#)

#### [East Riding Integrated Coastal Zone management Plan 'Towards a Sustainable Coast'](#)

June 2002

*"The Regional Economic Strategy for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, identifies the peripherality of the coast and rural deprivation as weaknesses for the region in economic development terms. This is heightened by coastal erosion. However, opportunities are also identified that have relevance to the coast, in particular in key high growth sectors such as environmental technologies and tourism and the assets of the natural environment."*

## **North West**

### [Lancaster District 2010: A Regeneration Strategy.](#)

*"Within the district are some areas of significant deprivation, often masked by the relative prosperity of surrounding areas"*

### [North West Coastal Forum.](#)

*"Regional partnership from public, private and voluntary sectors, working together to promote and deliver integrated coastal zone management in the North West, to secure long term sustainability."*

[Consultation draft: bridging the gap between land and sea: the North West Regional Coastal Strategy, 2008 -2032.](#) *Considers the improved wellbeing of coastal communities; the sustainable regeneration of coastal resorts, towns and smaller settlements, including rural and coastal.*

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), North West Region considers that coastal areas share good planning skills and practices with many adjacent inland areas; peripheral coastal settlements need to be identified; planning has a valuable contribution to make.

### ['Visuality, Mobility and the Cosmopolitan: Inhabiting the World from Afar'](#)

*Research on West Cumbria from Lancaster University provided some interesting perspectives that covered landscapes and deprivation issues.*

## **South East**

Members expressed concern around concealed deprivation within rural areas. In a more deprived area there is likely to be a mutual support network, whereas in a more "wealthy area" it is unlikely to have this support and deprivation can be concealed and overlooked.

After the last recession in the early 1990s many people become homeless after their businesses failed etc. Could this be an issue for the future given the current economic climate? The churches are aware of these problems and are a good source of evidence on this issue.

Members expressed concern around the significant decline over the past 40 years in the South East of the basic industries of tourism, ferries and fishing as well as the decline in agricultural employment in their rural hinterlands.

Kent also suffered from poor road and rail communications which acted as a disincentive to new employment. It is only relatively recently that Sheppey has had a good road connection with the mainland and Thanet has had an improved connection to the A2/M2. It is only since the construction of the Channel Tunnel/CTRL that Dover and Folkestone have had had road links of motorway/dual carriageway standard.

**Background Reference Sources:**

[Indices of Deprivation 2007 & Rural Analysis of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007](#)

[Changing UK: The Way We Live Now Report](#) December 2008

[CRC Rural Disadvantage: Reviewing the Evidence](#) 2006

[CRC State of the Countryside](#) 2008

[Understanding the Different Roles of Deprived Neighbourhoods: A Typology - Research Summary](#)

[Royal College of General Practitioners \(RCGP\) Rural General Practice in Northern Ireland, 2004.](#)

[Government Offices for the English Regions: Public Health: the National Picture \(England\)](#)

Trevor Cherrett (June 2008) Bura Journal "[Rural Areas need Regenerating Too](#)"

National Planning Policy across the UK can be accessed from the following links:

England – [Planning Policy Statements](#)

Wales – [Technical Advice Notes](#)

Scotland – [Planning Policy](#)

Northern Ireland – [Planning Policy](#)

### 3. RTPI Conclusions

The Matthew Taylor MP report sets out the importance of the planning process as an “engine of regeneration.”<sup>15</sup> It is a vitally important tool in identifying and helping to solve many of the issues affecting rural coastal areas.

Good spatial planning can encourage sustainable development that brings real benefits to rural coastal areas, taking into account local character and distinctiveness.

Local planning authorities need to base their policies and decisions on a sound evidence base and a clear understanding of the economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area. It should be recognised that coastal areas share many social, economic and environmental features of inland areas and can benefit from the planning skills and practices applied in these areas. However, they also have their own special and indeed unique issues and pressures. Better dialogue between those responsible for planning in these areas can be fostered to support the exchange of skills, practices and innovation.

Providing and maintaining a sustainable, high quality natural and built coastal environment, that responds to climate change as a fundamental concern, should help improve both the well being and economic potential, including recreational opportunities of rural coastal communities. Improving the integration of planning and management along the coast will help raise appreciation of its future value.

It is vital that through the work of the APPG a clear definition of 'coastal rural areas' is provided and that the social and economic condition of these areas are mapped and their differences are noted and where necessary, acted upon. Differences between accessible and more remote coastal rural areas and further differences between the north and south and between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales need to be identified. This will help to identify the specific geographical locations where deprivation is most severe and therefore allow those areas to be prioritised for future action.

Action on climate change, particularly on coasts vulnerable to inundation is a very important priority around which other priorities should be assessed and grouped. Many rural coastal areas will be on the 'front line' when it comes to dealing with the impacts of climate change. A regional/national identification of climate change threats and opportunities and options for coastal action would be a useful resource for the guiding of development and activities and would help in the future planning of rural coastal areas.

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008) 'Living Working Countryside'