

DELIVERING A PRODUCTIVE RURAL ECONOMY – A CHALLENGE FOR THE SOUTH WEST

The role of planning and delivering a new model to unlock the potential contribution of the rural economy to regional health and wellbeing.

David Fursdon

September 2019

Informed by:

- Being a partner in a rural farming business
- Owning a rural business
- Board of SWRDA
- Chair of SWCORE and SWRFN
- Chair of SWRPC
- FFC Commission
- Role of traditional planning in the above

What is Rural?

- Based on 2011 local authority urban/rural definitions by DEFRA/ONS

A Productive South West Rural Economy

- Rural areas – 84% of land area (89% for England)
- Rural Authorities account for 58% of GVA (£45.4m)
- Productivity per job –
 - 8% lower than urban in same area
 - 10% lower than average for English rural areas
- 54% enterprises in rural areas
(C & 105 - £72.4%) (HOTSW 58.4%) (SWLEP 51.82)
(Dorset 32.6%)
- 29% rural business have no employees (14% in urban)
- Most categorisation of businesses are equal between rural and urban except agriculture (23% rural, 2% urban)

How to Measure Rural Productivity

1. Purely Economic
2. Social/Community (RSA inclusive Growth Communities and Social Value Act)
3. Environmental (Climate, health, wellbeing, lifestyle)

Key Rural Considerations

1. Smaller business. Fewer employees. Unable or unwilling to scale up
2. More dispersed. Communication needs. (transport and digital)
3. Dominant key sectors (agriculture, tourism, fishing, forestry, food and drink)
4. Different labour considerations and availability

Themes

1. Rural identity and sectors
2. Small and scale up businesses
3. Workforce and skills
4. Brexit
5. Transport Accessibility
6. Digital Connectivity
7. Housing, Planning, Communities and Workspace
8. Natural and Cultural Heritage
9. Geography, Hubs and Spheres of Influence
10. Science, Technology, Energy and Innovation

Consider

1. Trade
2. Identity and Brand
3. Responsibility for Rural

Planning Considerations

1. Flexibility in planning
2. Oversupply vs Under-provision
3. Collaboration and hubs
4. Relocation
5. Place making culture and landscape
6. Labour, skills, job types, needs and AI
7. Future of agriculture
8. Changing attitude to the car
9. Walking health and recreation
10. Innovation and technology.

Can Planning Deliver?

- Can we reconcile the different views of what rural South West is for?
- Who decides?
- How does that become clear to wealth generators?
- Where does that leave planners?