

Rural Futures Project:

**Scenario building for twenty
year and fifty year futures**

Prepared for Defra

Project SD0303

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1. Introduction to the Rural Futures Project

1.1 Background

The Future Foundation and the Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) at Newcastle University have been commissioned by Defra to conduct a 'Rural Futures: scenario creation and back-casting' project. The project is part of the DEFRA Horizon Scanning Programme — launched in the first half of 2002 — in collaboration with the Department's Rural Economies & Communities Directorate and under the heading of 'meeting people's future needs'.

Central to the project is the creation of a set of scenarios for the future of English rural life. Each scenario is strongly social in character, describing the likely or possible impacts on rural society according to a typology of rural areas. The 'Rural Futures' project will, thus, complement other projects looking at land use, food production and climate change in the future.

1.2 Objectives

There are four main objectives for this project:

1. To build a 'futures' knowledge base to support a participatory process of scenario building and predictive forecasts.
2. To conduct a backcasting process to discuss what policy interventions are required to make the desired scenarios (or aspects of a scenario) a reality.
3. To assimilate the learning into a set of clear insights and strategic recommendations.
4. To conduct an appraisal process to assess the success of the scenario-building and back-casting techniques.

1.3 20 year and 50 year scenarios

This paper is the third major document produced from the Rural Futures project (output 1.3). It describes seven scenarios – three for the twenty-year future of rural Britain and four for the fifty-year future – and the methodology used for creating them. The first two documents (Summary of the Knowledge base and Blue Skies inputs) are available from the Rural Futures website (www.futurefoundation.net/ruralfutures)

2. Purposes of the ‘Scenario Creation’ document

Scenarios can be described as a way of ‘telling stories about the future’ in order to help organisations think about how things might change and what can be done to promote or prevent possible future outcomes. The Government is interested in looking at how the countryside might develop in the future using this approach. The purpose of the project is to help Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in their ‘Horizon Scanning’ programme, develop new ideas and thinking that will help create a better countryside in the future that provides maximum benefit to the whole of society.

As a result of a process of analysis, forecasting and a workshop with some twenty experts, the Future Foundation, an independent think tank, working with the Centre of Rural Economy at Newcastle University has developed three potential scenarios for the twenty-year future of rural Britain and four for the fifty-year future.

These are described in this document in order to invite feedback and ideas about how the scenarios can be enriched and improved to make them more interesting and relevant to people today and make the different policy implications clearer to the Government. The scenarios are described as if mutually exclusive, but key to our approach is realising that there will be a mixture of different outcomes, just as there is today.

In creating these scenarios we have been struck by the range of issues and questions the process has raised about how we see the countryside, what we think it is for and who should be the beneficiaries of the way in which it is developed and used. Ultimately, we hope that the exercise helps promote a worthwhile and useful discussion about the real nature, purpose and value of the countryside to society now and in the future.

Following the initial workshop, the scenarios (in draft form) were presented to and discussed with members of the general public and at a stakeholder plenary consultation workshop. The process and responses gained from these events have been summarised in the appendix and encapsulated under each scenario heading.

Each scenario has been captured and represented by images developed in conjunction with an associate from the Royal College of Art. Part of the project process is to test and evaluate this method of summarising and communicating complex information as a stimulus and a tool.

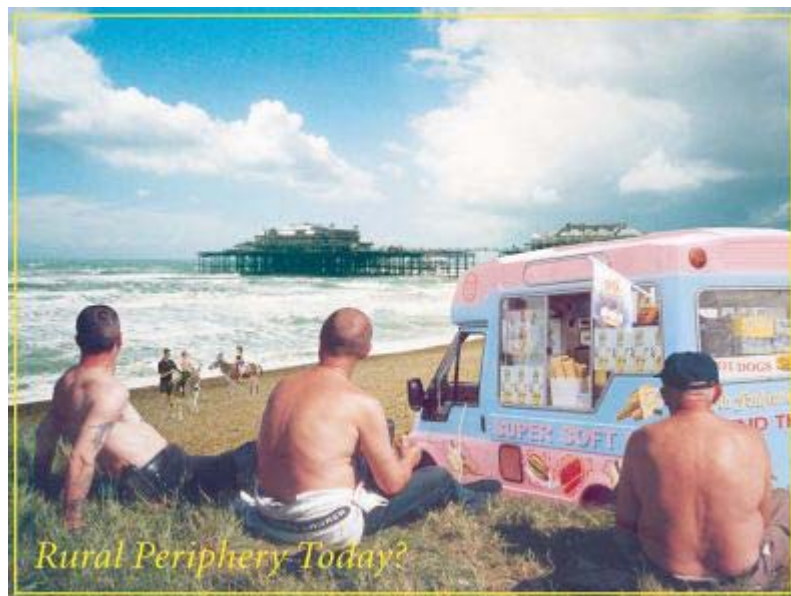
3. Developing the 20 year rural futures

3.1 Introduction

As a starting point for this exercise, a comprehensive statistical analysis of all the rural districts in the UK was conducted using the Census of 1991 and 2001 to see how things had changed over the past ten years. This was based on a number of measures: population density, employment types, income, car use, tourism and heritage sites, and how tranquil an area is. This was based on the Local Authority Districts and resulted in seven different types of countryside that can be identified today (at the LAD level – obviously there would be considerably more variation within each of these at a more local level). These are:

- **Peripheral amenity**

Rural/holiday areas located on the coast. Examples include: Carmarthenshire, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North Devon



- **Deep rural**

Least populated, most tranquil, highest agriculture employment. Examples include: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Mid Devon, Richmondshire



- **Retirement retreats**

Often based in (southern) coastal areas with relatively high population density, tourism employment and proportion of older people. Examples include: Dover, East Devon, Lancaster.



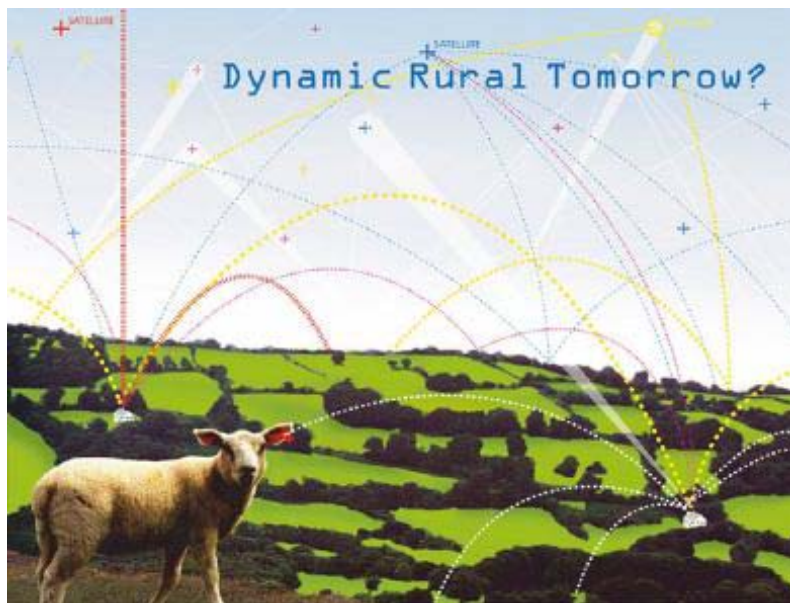
- **Transient rural**

Mainly located around provincial urban centres but with weak commuting influences, often adjacent to deep rural (but less agricultural) or dynamic rural (but less dynamic). Examples include East Riding of Yorkshire, South Norfolk, Taunton Deane



- **Dynamic rural**

Economically fast growing areas that have lower density, above average tranquility and agricultural employment. Mostly south of Avon/Wash line: e.g. Cotswold, Fenland, South Northamptonshire



- **Dynamic commuter**

Concentrated in a ring around South East urban spread. Dynamic, affluent with higher population density and youngest age profile: e.g. Aylesbury Vale, Mid Sussex, Tunbridge Wells



- **Settled commuter**

On borders of conurbations across the country. Similar to dynamic commuter but less dynamic and average population density: e.g. Castle Morpeth, Congleton, Stratford-on-Avon

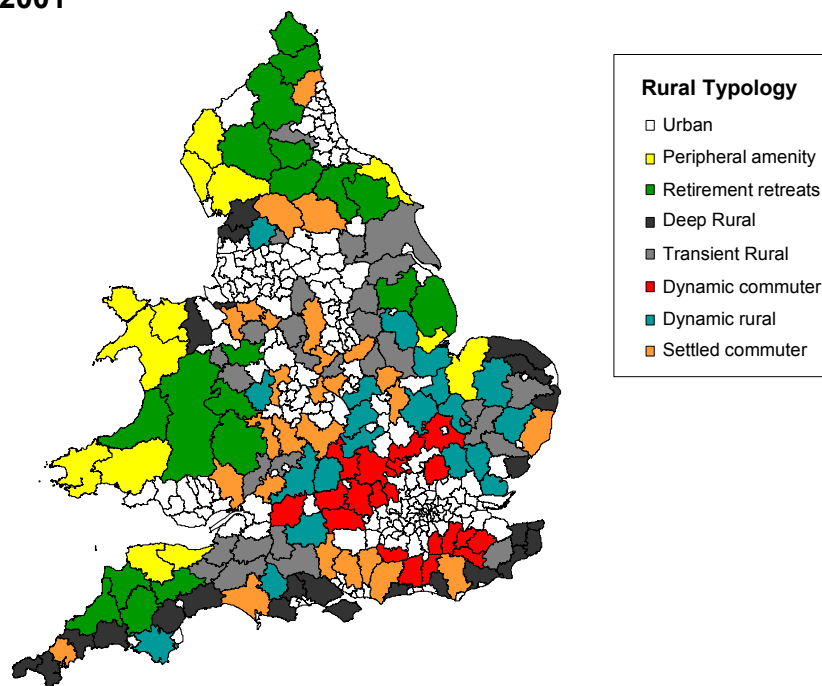


More detailed definitions of each of these typologies are appended (see appendix 1).

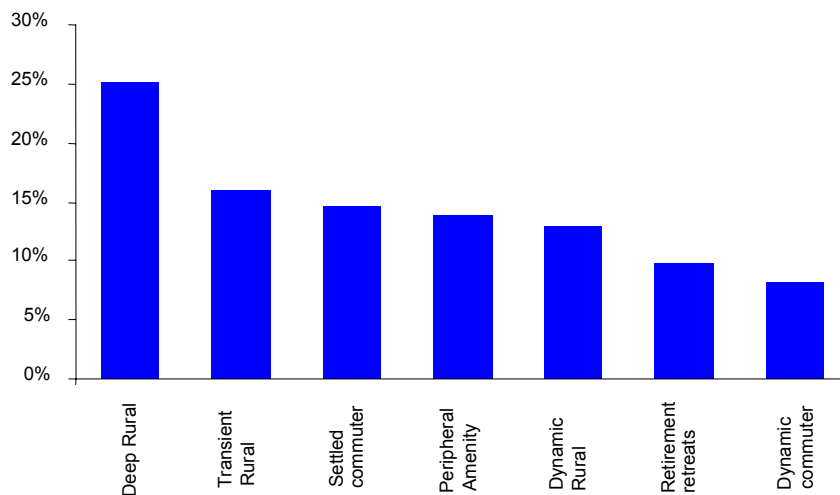
In order to provide a basis for describing how the countryside might look in 20 years time we built a model designed to project how the breakdown of the countryside into the different typologies might change over a twenty year time period. Our starting point was the breakdown in 2001, in terms of land area.

As can be seen in the two charts below, in 2001 the largest typology was deep rural - accounting for just over 25% of the land area - although as a result of its low population density it made up only 11% of the rural population. The smallest typology in terms of land mass was the dynamic commuter – accounting for 8% of the rural land area – but in this case as a result of its higher population density it accounted for around 16% of the rural population.

Rural Typology for local authorities in England and Wales - Base 2001



Proportion of rural land mass accounted for by each typology : 2001



3.2 The modelling process

Taking the land mass accounted for by each typology as the dependent variable for our model, on the basis of our understanding of economic, demographic, technological and political change we came up with a series of 'model drivers' which were felt to be key in determining the growth or decline in importance of the different typologies. It was important that these drivers could be described by the data collected for each of the typologies (e.g. economic growth, importance of agricultural employment, net commuting, average house prices, density of population etc). The key drivers were:

- Overall rural population growth
- Proportion of over 65s in the population
- The strictness of housing policy
- The quality of transport links
- The quality ICT provision and infrastructure
- The proportion of people working in agriculture
- The proportion of people working in the knowledge economy
- The proportion of people working in managerial and professional occupations
- The success of political initiatives towards rural areas
- The growth of leisure and tourism in rural areas
- Consumer attitudes and values towards the 'traditional' definition of rurality

For each driver we determined the relationship between it and each of the typologies and also assessed the likely quantitative impact between the driver and the land use accounted for by the typology. In generating the forecast we then assessed what would happen to each driver – at a national level.

So, for example for the driver ‘the proportion of people working in agriculture’ we gave three possible outcomes for 2024 – to increase, to stay the same or to decrease. If the proportion in agricultural employment decreased then we felt, in terms of the relative importance of the typologies, that deep rural, peripheral amenity and dynamic rural would decline while retirement retreats, transient rural, dynamic commuter, and settled commuter would all gain, in relative terms. The model ensured that the result was a zero sum game i.e. the gains and losses for the various typologies would be offset each other.

The table below shows the direction of impact that each of the drivers has on each of the typologies and an indication of the size of that impact (a scale running from –3 to +3).

Drivers and Relative Impact on typologies

	Peripheral Amenity	Deep Rural	Retirement retreats	Transient Rural	Dynamic commuter	Dynamic Rural	Settled commuter
1 Proportion of over 65s (with attention to 45-64s)	++	+	+++	-	---	--	0
2 Housing - laxer housing policy	-	-	-	--	+++	+	+++
3 Transport and comms - improved transport links	-	--	--	0	+++	+	+++
- improved ITC provision and infrastructure	---	+	---	-	+	+++	+
4 Political and economy - proportion of people in agriculture	+	+++	--	-	---	0	--
5 - proportion of people in knowledge economy	--	--	-	-	+++	+++	++
6 - proportion of people in managerial and professional	--	-	--	--	+++	++	+++
7 - successful political initiatives towards rural areas	+	+++	--	0	---	0	---
8 Leisure /tourism - authentic	++	+++	-	--	---	+	---
- allegoristic	--	-	++	+	+++	-	+
9 Positive attitudes and values towards the 'uses' of the typology	0	++	-	---	+	+	0

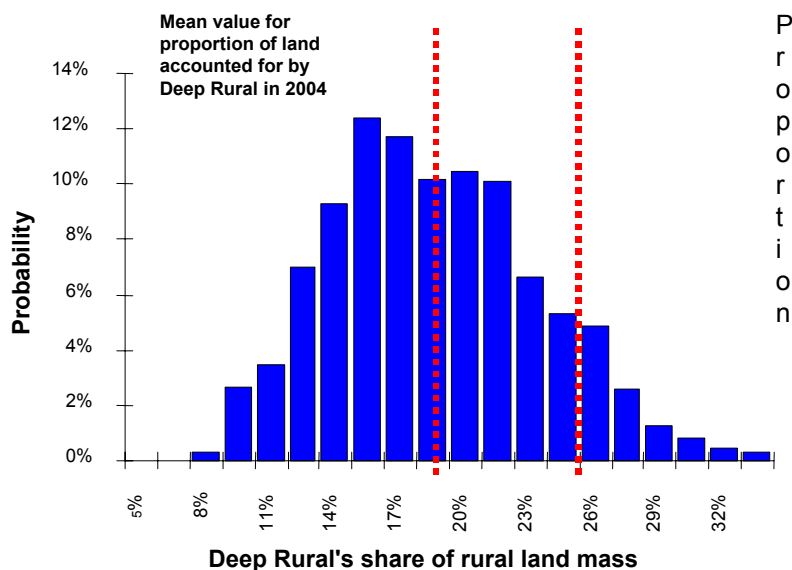
As we noted above for each driver we have a range of possible outcomes for 2024 e.g. for the driver ‘the proportion of people of people working in agriculture’ the outcomes were: to increase, to stay the same and to decrease. We then gave the probability of each outcome occurring. In this instance we said that across all rural areas there was a 2.5% probability that agricultural employment would be higher in 2024 than in 2001, a 7.5% probability that it would be broadly the same and a 90% probability that it would be lower.

A technique known as a ‘Monte Carlo simulation, was then used to allow us to run a large series of simulations of the model, with the drivers taking on different values dependent on the probabilities associated with that driver (so, for instance, if we were to make 1,000 runs of the model in 25 of those runs agricultural employment would increase, in 75 it would remain the same and in 900 it would decline).

The use of the ‘Monte Carlo’ approach therefore not only gives us a central (or most likely) forecast for the amount of land accounted for by each typology, but it also gives a probability distribution around that central view.

The chart below shows the outcome for the amount of land accounted for by the Deep Rural typology in 2024. In 2001 the LADs described as Deep Rural accounted for 25.1% of all rural land. Our model suggests that by 2024 anywhere between 8% and 34% of the land area might be made up of this typology, but that the mean level from all the simulations would be 19.4%. Using the distribution function shown below we are also able to make statements such as 'on the basis of the distribution functions for each of the drivers in the model we are 87% certain that the Deep Rural typology will account for less land in 2024 than it did in 2001'.

Distribution for the amount of rural land accounted for by the Deep Rural typology in 2024



3.3 Summary of 20 year workshop process

In order to arrive at the 20 year scenarios, the outputs from the typology creation process and the modelling exercise were used in two carefully constructed syndicate exercises as follows:

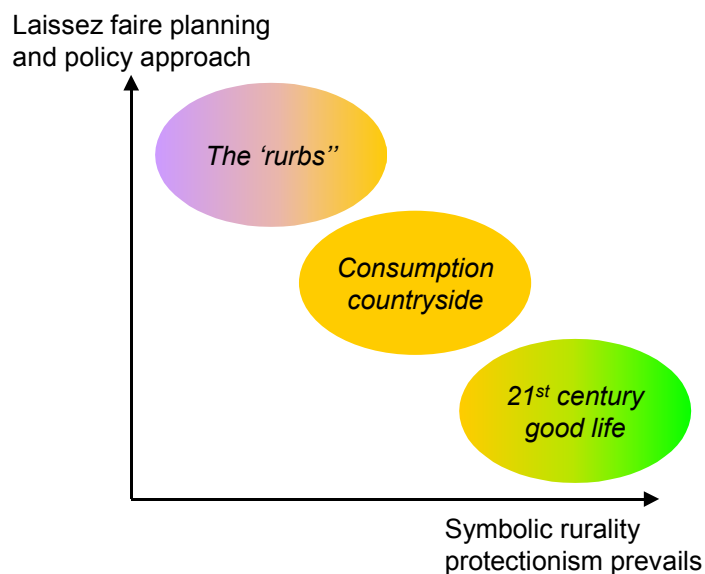
- Firstly, teams were allocated to review two of the typologies today and develop, with reference to the Rural Futures Knowledge Base summary, a view of how life within this typology will have developed in 20 years time. Teams were given an holistic schematic to work with to ensure that they thought about the future lives of people in the round and were asked to make a presentation to the plenary group using prepared visual materials and 'mood boards' to express the key aspects of how life would be. These outputs are summarised in the appendix in the 20 year typology descriptions (see appendix 2).
- Taking these as a starting point, following a presentation of the modelling process, three teams were assigned to work one of the three scenario outputs each. The task for the exercise was to review the relative weight of the typologies within the scenario, discuss what this would mean for rural society as a whole and to find ways of characterising and describing the resulting mix in a short hand and compelling way. These again were presented back to the plenary group and form the basis of the 20 year scenario descriptions below.

4. Overview of the 20 year scenarios

As described above, these are derived from calculations of a range of probabilities as to the varied social geography and use of the countryside based on a set of projections of present social trends combined with a range of assumptions about the factors most likely to affect the future shape of the countryside. The most important of these assumptions are: the nature of future planning and building policies and the degree of attachment we have as a society to preserving and fostering the distinctiveness of the countryside.

The three scenarios can be summarised along these two axes as follows:

Three scenarios for 2024



The *Consumption Countryside* is effectively a 'central' scenario based upon what are considered to be the *most likely* outcomes in these regards. The two 'alternative' scenarios are those that would result from a divergence from anticipated trends in either direction – *The Rurbs* resulting from lax planning policies allowing these 'rural suburbs' to spread and the *21st Century Good Life* resulting from strong planning and investment in maintaining the countryside. These three scenarios are described in the sections that follow.

Within each of the scenarios for 2024, it is expected that there will continue to be a mix of community types and countryside typologies across England and Wales, just as there are today. However, the relative mix will be different according to the underlying drivers and assumptions. In order to 'tell the story' more clearly about the impact of such changes, each scenario focuses on the fastest growing countryside typology that will prevail (but not to the complete exclusion of the others) under its particular circumstances.

Each of these three scenarios had a series of assumptions underpinning them. Most of the assumptions were fed directly into the models (as discussed in section 3.2 above) while those that weren't could be implied directly by the nature of the scenario. In the table below we show the complete list of assumptions underpinning the three scenarios for 2024. For each assumption we show the possible outcome in 2024. So, for example we could describe economic growth being slow (less than 2%pa over the 20 year period), medium (between 2 and 3%pa) or being fast (more than 3%pa) or in terms of a policy assumption we could describe housing policy as being strict (significantly more restrictive than the current policy regime), no change (broadly in line with the current degree of restrictiveness) or lax (significantly less restrictive than the current policy regime). It should be pointed out that such assumptions are fairly general in nature (housing policy could indeed be described in many different ways or at many different levels e.g. national, regional or local) and are simply meant to provide an indication of the broad views underpinning the scenarios for the key drivers that have been identified. We also show, for each assumption, the outcome assumed for that particular scenario.

Key assumptions for the three scenarios for 2024

		2024		
Assumption	Description	Consumption countryside	Good Life	Rurbs
Economic				
1 Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Medium	Slow/medium	Medium/high
2 Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	No	Partial	No
3 Countryside as a place of production - manufacture	Yes, partial or no	No	No	Partial
4 Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises	Yes, partial or no	Yes	Partial/Yes	Yes
5 Countryside as a place of consumption	Yes, partial or no	Yes	Yes	Partial
6 Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Partially	Partially	Partially
Political				
7 General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire	Mixed	Laissez faire
8 General description of global political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire	Mixed	Laissez faire
9 Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	Mixed	Protectionist	Laissez faire
10 Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	National	Local	Regional/National
Policy				
11 Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Lax	Strict	Lax
12 Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	No change	No change	No change/successful
13 Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Neutral	Successful	Unsuccessful
14 Urban regeneration	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Neutral	Successful	Unsuccessful
Other				
15 Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
16 Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional
17 'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Positive	Positive	Negative
18 Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	Moderate	High	Low
19 Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Neutral	Exclusive	Neutral
20 Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Neutral	Passive	Neutral/active
21 Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	Moderate	Low	High

We now describe each scenario in turn.

5. 2024a: Central Scenario - Consumption Countryside



5.1 Summary of drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Medium
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	No
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises	Yes, partial or no	Yes
Countryside as a place of consumption		
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Partially solved
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire
General description of global political environment		Mixed
Description of rural policy regime		
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	National
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Lax
Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	No change
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Neutral
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Moderate
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Occasional
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Positive
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	Moderate
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Neutral
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	Moderate

Outcomes for agriculture: Under this scenario the importance of agriculture continues to decline, probably at a similar rate to recent years. The proportion of people employed in agriculture will continue to fall and we anticipate that quite large amounts of agricultural land will be turned over to other uses – particularly for leisure-based activities. Some of this will be run and managed by people currently within the agricultural sector.

5.2 Main features

‘From farming and fox hunting’ to ‘living and leisure spaces’

In the consumption countryside scenario we anticipate continued growth in the number of people living in the countryside - driven by strong preference for rural lifestyles. Some land will be freed up for new development but demand will continue to exceed supply, increasingly meaning that the option of a rural home will apply *mainly* to the affluent and wealthy professionals of the future. We anticipate that Britain’s long-term annual economic growth rate will continue at 2.5% pa.

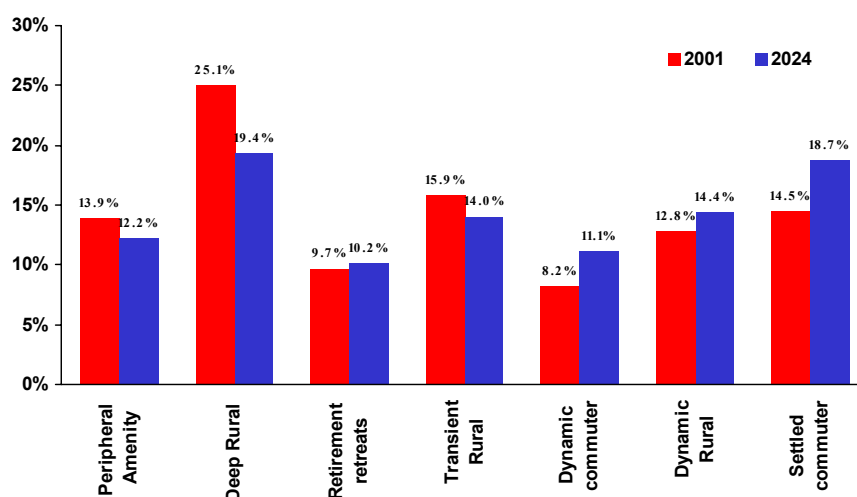
Under this scenario rural economic dependency on urban areas and policies continues. Employment continues to be *primarily* located in the town or city and a key rural-urban linkage consists of commuters travelling from their rural homes to urban employment (although not necessarily 5 days a week). There will also be a reverse commuting of service workers who cannot afford to live in rural areas, but who are required to fulfil the service and leisure needs of an expanding and largely affluent rural population.

The distinction between rural and urban lifestyles will become increasingly irrelevant, for there will no longer be any clear *social* distinction between where the suburbs end and the countryside begins.

5.3 Change in rural typologies

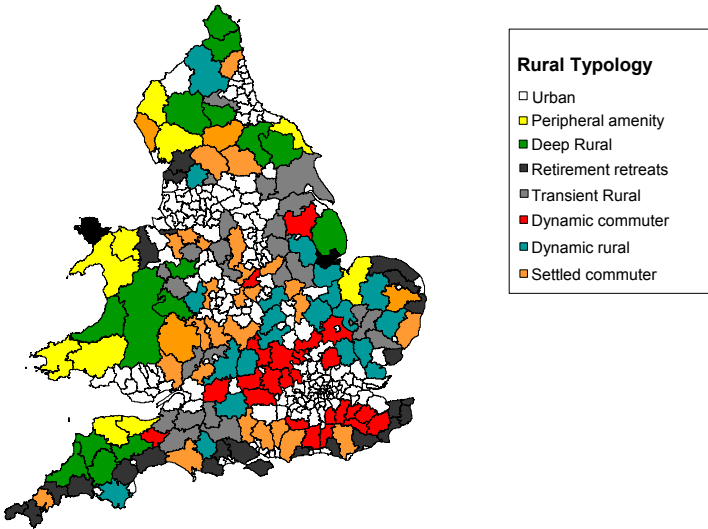
Under this scenario we see a sharp increase in the area covered by commuter zones (both settled and dynamic), a moderate increase in retirement retreats and dynamic rural, and a sharp decline in deep rural areas. There will also be some fall in transient rural and peripheral amenity areas. (See table below.)

Forecast of rural land use in 2024



The modelling process provides us with an aggregate picture of the change in land mass accounted for by each typology over the period 2001 to 2024. By looking at the characteristics of each individual LAD in 2001 we are then able to make an assessment as to which LADS are likely to change classification over the intervening years, and thus produce a mapping similar to the one shown above, but in this case for 2024

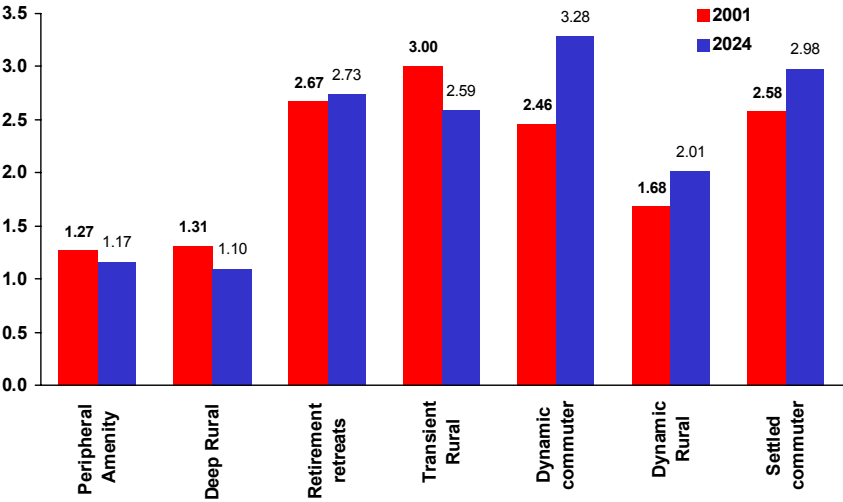
Rural Typology for local authorities in England and Wales - Central Scenario 2024



Using official ONS projections for population change in each LAD we are also able to show the implications for population change in each of the typologies.

Viewed by change in population, we can see that the sharpest increase is for dynamic commuter areas, with more moderate increases for dynamic rural and settled commuter areas, and declines for peripheral amenity, deep rural and transient rural areas. (See table below.)

Forecast of rural population in 2024 (million)



5.4 Life in the... dynamic commuter zones

Development pressures on rural areas will increase with high levels of housing demand from affluent commuters and the stimulation of the local service, leisure and small business economy from an expanding and largely prosperous population. There will also be strong counter pressures to maintain the outward 'country' appearance of the typology. There are constant battles therefore between residents and the planners.

The development that gets least opposition will be expensive housing units – certainly not social housing or dwellings that can be bought by less affluent people. The cheaper housing that does occur will be on brown field sites in the less affluent parts of the bigger towns.

Rural housing will be very expensive. The cost of housing means that it is very difficult for young people to get on to the housing ladder and many have to move away to find affordable accommodation. With increased social exclusiveness, security has become a much more significant issue – the inhabitants have something of a 'gated psychology' and much money is spent making dwellings 'safe' from outsiders.

Actual rates of social exclusion in these areas will be very low as marginal groups will have been 'priced out' of the area. However this will exacerbate social exclusion problems in other parts of the country. Regional polarisation will continue, leaving some rural areas in other parts of the country – notably in Wales and the North – suffering continued population outflow, low growth and prevalent social deprivation.

The lack of housing means that there is a shortage of labour for many of the local services and amenities. There is an increasing use of migrant labour that either live in poor accommodation or live in the more affluent households (nannies, au pairs, housekeepers, gardeners, personal assistants, drivers etc). There will also be local shortages of craftsmen, tradesmen and skilled service workers, stimulating peripatetic provision and reverse commuting.

Services will have been increasingly privatised and there will be significantly greater use of private health and education services, for instance.

With the 'gated psychology' of many of the inhabitants there will be very little traditional community atmosphere. Given the importance of commuting social networks will naturally be quite wide – but increasingly entered into in a virtual world via the Internet and other remote communications methods – and will be constructed around common leisure and lifestyle interests.

Transport infrastructure will be critical, although we do not see significant improvements having occurred as a result of planned investment. Indeed, rural congestion is bound to be a rising problem. Commuters will be prepared to continue to struggle into the cities at least for a couple of days but will also be enabled, through IT, to operate from home.

The predominant feature of this typology, however, will be the continuing flood of people from their homes in the countryside into the city for work.

Continued development will put significant pressure on key natural resources – particularly water. Metered water will be compulsory and water prices will rise significantly.

5.5 Probability rating from workshop attendees

The general consensus was that this scenario was plausible. In some respects, this is unsurprising, for this scenario essentially represents a continuation of many of the present trends affecting rural areas. It was therefore felt to represent the future that the countryside may face in the absence of any clear political initiative to build an alternative future.

5.6 Public response

Respondents felt that 'Consumption Countryside' had a close fit with their vision of the future of the countryside in 20 years time – a continuation of the sort of problems they felt were issues in 2004. This scenario reflected their key themes for the future of the countryside: population increase, no agriculture, increase in social inequality, high crime, failing infrastructure and public services and an increase in health problems (see appendix 4). They viewed this scenario as the most likely and least desirable of the 20 year 'expert' scenarios.

5.7 Plenary response

5.7.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario

People may view the consumption countryside as an inevitable, but not necessarily a desirable future outcome. It would be a continuation of the current trend towards disempowerment of local potential and character. People's entrepreneurship and creativity would be stifled rather than encouraged – failing to capitalise on the economic potential that can be linked to local identity and ownership of local business and land. One of the worst aspects of this scenario is the 'second homes' phenomena, as this pushes up property prices while adding nothing to the local community.

5.7.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

It was felt that the consumption countryside outcome would be the result of a 'laissez faire' attitude and the absence of any specific successful rural policy, instead being the result of a mere continuation of present trends and the domination of the urban interest.

What is needed: This team went further than the brief given for the exercise and added a list of imperatives:

- Government must articulate a clear value or social vision for the countryside.
- Government should stimulate and support local vision in order to maximise the economic and community potential of the local areas.
- Diversity and difference must be supported through attracting new people and helping to integrate them effectively.

6. 2024b: 21st Century 'Good Life'



6.1 Summary of drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Slow/ medium
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	Partial
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		No
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises		Partial/Yes
Countryside as a place of consumption		Yes
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Partially solved
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	Mixed
General description of global political environment		
Description of rural policy regime		Protectionist
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	Local
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Strict
Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	No change
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Successful
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Moderate
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Occasional
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Positive
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	High
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Exclusive
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Passive
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	Low

Assumptions for agriculture: Although under this scenario there may be a decline in the importance of agriculture it is likely to be one where the sector fares best (in terms of remaining a significant economic sector in its own right). However, in many areas the purpose of farming will be more for landscape gardening than for food production although there may be successful local initiatives to create local produce specialised fare. As in most scenarios an increasing share of the food consumed in the UK will be imported.

6.2 Main features

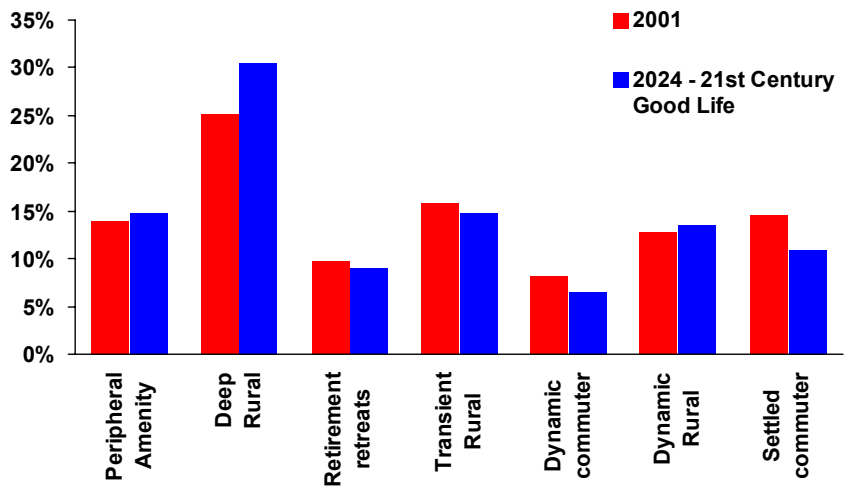
Due to political pressure from established rural in-migrants, their control over local and regional planning authorities and the effectiveness of the countryside lobby, there is a tighter land use policy. This policy shift is made demographically feasible by a ‘tailing-off’ of counterurbanisation: by 2024, many of the groups most attracted to the countryside are already there and the inflow of newcomers is balanced by the outflow of the rural young to city areas and the rising mortality of the baby-boom generation.

Under this scenario there is a cessation of many of the present trends which we associate with counterurbanisation, such as, the expansion of a local service and small business economy. In addition, international competition means that firms are led to move, not from the city to the countryside, but rather to outsource their operations to other countries. Rural manufacturing and back-office functions have gone the same way as their urban counterparts - overseas. The end of rural manufacturing - presently responsible for a fifth of all rural jobs - will lead to greater income polarisation as former workers move into low skilled service sector employment. Failure to attract new businesses to rural areas will mean that the most affluent in rural areas will be those that have made their money elsewhere.

6.3 Change in rural typologies

Under this scenario, commuter zones and retirement retreats shrink, and the deep rural areas expand considerably (in land area but not population) – see table below.

Alternative scenarios for rural land use in 2024



6.4 Life in the... deep rural zones

We have a composite image that typifies 'deep rural' today. Under this scenario, we will see more of this type of countryside – the question we addressed in the workshop is what life will be like in deep rural areas in 20 years time?

In the more scenic areas, the purpose of farming will be more for landscape gardening than for food production. Farmers will be paid by the European Union or central government to keep grazing animals on the land. They will also manage land for others. Indeed much of the land will be owned by others, including second homes, hobby farmers, conservation bodies, leisure organisations and water companies. Most farm families will run their own tourism enterprises.

During the summer, the area is busy with tourists, who stay in Scandinavian-style log cabins. The area is much quieter in winter.

There are highly mobile professional couples who regard deep rural areas as 'home' but they have second homes in the city which is still their 'economic' base. For this group (as with the farmers) there is no longer a clear distinction between the working week and the weekend. Rather, their week is structured by time in the country (thinking and relaxing) and time in the city (professional networking and socialising). Wherever they are, they access business, cultural and personal services globally. Their children are at boarding school.

The area is very dependent on the wealth of city-based people as occasional residents or visitors. There is still no ethnic diversity in the area – it is still very much white Anglo-Saxon.

The less scenic areas have been taken over by wind farms, and factory farming/poly tunnels for continuous food production.

The key drivers that have affected the lives of the people described above are: IT, economic growth, farming supports and the planning system.

Due to the lack of good local employment and the transitory nature of the incomer population, there is likely to be some resentment between long-established locals and the new arrivals.

6.5 Probability rating by workshop participants

It was felt that this scenario had a fairly low probability. Rural in-migration seems driven by preference as much as practicality and there are limits to how far restrictive land-use policy can prevent further population inflows.

Therefore, despite some of the local political pressures that might arise from established rural groups seeking to preserve their rural idyll, and a possible slowdown in migration, we did not view it as especially plausible that commuter, retirement and dynamic rural areas would grow at this slow a rate.

Nonetheless, if several conditions were fulfilled this scenario could begin to emerge. Firstly, counterurbanisation would have to begin to tail off. Given consumer preference for rural lifestyles this was considered unlikely, though certainly not impossible. There would also need to be political initiatives (both national and local) towards preserving the countryside and preventing further 'encroachment'. The transformative impact of new ICTs, allowing greater long distance working, would have to be minimal. And finally, and quite importantly, urban regeneration would have to be successful, such that our towns and cities would have become safe and pleasant places to live with an abundant stock of new brown field housing.

6.6 Public response

For those living in the 'deep rural' area around Alnwick, this scenario represented the most 'desirable' vision of the countryside in 20 years time. These respondents wanted to see far tighter land use policy and a 'tailing off' of inward migration. They were keen to preserve a countryside that looked and felt traditional.

6.7 Plenary response

6.7.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario:

This scenario implies even greater polarisation and inequality at a local level with greater antipathy to community and erosion of networks and ties. The protected 'haves' are concerned about crime 'rich pickings' but there is no infrastructural support for the local 'have nots' and much of the local development is about tourism and rich residents not improving life for all. Positively, there is some care for sustainability and biodiversity – but not social inclusiveness. The preservation of the countryside in a nostalgic and protected form is the most important value.

6.7.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

In terms of policy, it was felt that strengthened local government and a protectionist ethos would push towards this scenario outcome. Strong planning restrictions would be necessary. It would be necessary to have financial support for farming from central or continued CAP policies, and possibly to allow cheap labour from an enlarged Europe in to the countryside to provide the necessary labour. Policies to integrate these migrants and prevent discrimination and isolation would be critical. Environmental protectionism and bio-diversity would be seen as the key values. However, it is unlikely that this would be possible as this would make the countryside less accessible and available to society and protect the country in the interests of a minority only.

Local services in the 21st century good life scenario would be thought to be inappropriate, e.g. consist in expensive private services for the affluent. It was felt that this scenario would be paradoxical insofar as it is driven by a commitment to sustainability, but is not sustainable for the entirety of the country. It could happen in some areas but not in the whole of the UK.

7. 2024c: The Rise of the 'Rurbs'



7.1 Summary of drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Medium/high
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	No
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		Partial
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises		Yes
Countryside as a place of consumption		Partial
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Partially solved
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire
General description of global political environment		
Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	Regional/ National
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Lax
Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	No change/ successful
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Moderate
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Occasional
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Negative
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	Low
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Neutral
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Neutral/ active
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	High

Assumptions for agriculture: With much of rural policy being directed toward economic growth agriculture will take even more of a back seat than it has done in the past few years. Under this scenario the importance of the agricultural sector will decline more rapidly than in the recent past such that by 2024 large scale food production will be limited to a very few areas but there will be opportunities for small scale production of high quality specialist produce to be sold in farmers' market stores.

7.2 Main features

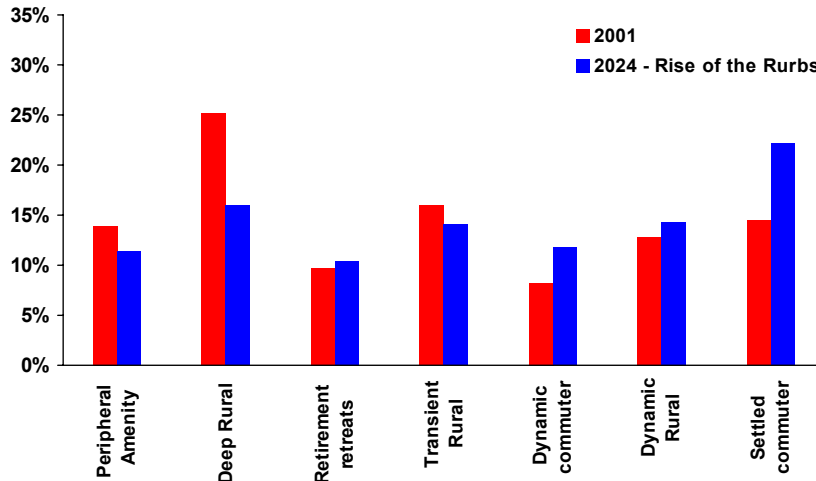
In this scenario the nature of rural policy is driven more by the need to promote economic growth than environmental concerns. There is a laxer land-use policy that has to be imposed from central/regional government to overcome the resistance of local councils and conservation, which allows for the building of new transport infrastructure and housing developments. As a result there are substantially more of what might be called 'rural suburbs' or 'rurbs' – growing stretches of relatively settled commuter belts sprawling across large tracts of the countryside.

This scenario assumes substantial new investment in transport infrastructure, and a rise in technology for work purposes. Partly due to the growth in the knowledge economy, with people mostly increasingly working in knowledge based and creative sectors, this results in greater use of the countryside for teleworking and commuting. This leads to a rising 'creative class' who telework for some days each week and long-distance commute for the rest.

Central government in London determines the main economic priorities for the nation as a whole and is strongly oriented towards developing the countryside as an attractive place to live via improved transport links and house-building policy. This will be increasingly 'devolved' through the growing regional government structure, and the British regions will be experiencing strong growth, leading to the development of regional hubs.

7.3 Change in rural typologies

Alternative scenarios for rural land use in 2024



Under the 'rise of the rurbs' scenario there is a substantial growth in the settled commuter population around regional hubs, especially in the Midlands. There is also some growth in dynamic commuter territories stretching out of the London sprawl.

7.4 Life in the... settled commuter zones?

Settled commuter areas are likely to be moderately affluent, mobile, and multicultural. Politically there will be a strong sense of NIMBYism among established groups that have 'bought in' to the rural lifestyle and may seek to prevent further development in their areas. This creates tension throughout with government policy which actively seeks to increase house building in the countryside.

Settled commuter areas will benefit from strong infrastructure links, whether with respect to transport, education, childcare, healthcare or ICT. This is already largely the case and will continue to be influenced by their proximity to large urban areas and their reasonable level of affluence.

The social dynamic of settled commuter areas will tend towards highly dispersed communities due to extensive use of the car. There will be concomitant losses of local services and high use of urban and major out-of-town services.

The status of settled commuter areas in 2024 will be influenced by the status of regional policy: settled commuter areas are predominantly located in the regions and stronger regional policy, with the effect of creating regional 'hubs' around England, will boost the prevalence and the affluence of settled commuter areas.

7.5 Probability rating by workshop attendees

The model is plausible provided that a) English preference for rural-living continues (likely) b) the knowledge-economy grows (likely) c) land-use policy is favourable to new construction (possible) and d) there is a new round of rural infrastructure development (not impossible).

7.6 Public response

For those living in the 'transient rural'/'dynamic commuter' area around Ashford, this scenario represented the most 'desirable' vision of the countryside in 20 years time. They liked the idea of a future where everyone had equal access to the countryside but where problems associated with a growing population had been avoided through a carefully planned and well developed infrastructure.

7.7 Plenary response

7.7.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario

This was seen as an attractive scenario by the team looking at it. Greater work mobility within each week with teleworking and commuting combined as the norm will reduce transience and movement overall. Thus there will be less work-related migration away from home and to other areas. In other words, it becomes easier for those born in the regions to find work in their locality. More economic clusters mean better services. In addition, there may be better local communities enabled in a positive way by the spread of technologies and the more settled communities.

However, on the flipside there will be a loss of countryside, a loss of tourism, the price of demographic homogeneity (largely family driven) and delocalisation, which may negatively affect some market towns. Additionally it could foster a greater sense of insecurity and result in energy inefficiency due to the amount of travelling and movement.

7.7.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

This team provided three headings:

i) Policies needed:

These would need to encourage localism in engagement and production.

More flexible planning regimes would be required to adapt to local conditions and encourage variety. Policy would have to encourage housing development, planning, with a combination of private sector investment and public support.

Respect for local difference and the rates of change would be vital.

ii) Political philosophy

This scenario is based on a liberal market model with intervention to ensure that services are provided across the social spectrum.

iii) Political enthusiasm

Local authorities and RDAs are self interested, but are able to engage the support of local voluntary groups and civil society due to common goals of community strengthening and support.

This vision would appeal greatly to small businesses but not to preservationists. More support for enterprise and small business start up is required and Defra must work in a 'joined up' way with other government departments.

8. Developing the 50 year rural futures

8.1 Overview

It was decided to approach the creation of the 50-year scenarios in a very different way to that used in developing our 20-year scenarios. The reasons for this were:

- To ensure that they provided enough contrast from the 20 year picture
- To test out different methodologies in terms of usefulness for rural futures projects – specifically to use an outcome based approach
- To bring in a stronger ‘horizon scanning’ component for the longer time frame and consider a wide range of possible influences on the future

Therefore the following steps were undertaken during the course of the workshop designed to result in the 50-year scenarios.

8.2 Blue skies expert inputs

Nine experts were briefed to provide a twenty minute presentation to the workshop attendees that fulfilled the following criteria:

- Demonstrate the principles of horizon scanning in practice
- Covering the long term
- Challenging to received wisdoms
- Broadening the 20 year perspective
- Thought provoking and stimulating
- Visually orientated to maximise impact

Where possible, presentations were reviewed in advance by the Future Foundation team. The experts agreed to provide a short written summary of their key points. Both the material presented and a short summary have been integrated as part of the project ‘evidence base’ in a Blue Skies summary document, in order to provide a flavour of the main points made by the contributors. The presentations covered the following subjects:

- Political, economic and global trends
- Climate, environmental and value changes
- Application of machine consciousness
- Infrastructure planning issues
- Housing in the future
- Work in the future
- Future developments of rural communities
- Use of technology
- Bio-security futures and the impact of ‘alien species’

8.3 Brainstorming outcomes

Following the presentations, the participants were divided into five working teams, each of which was charged with devising scenarios that met certain criteria for the fifty year time horizon. This approach was adapted from the latest methods now being used by the Global Business Network in the US as reported to us by a recent participant and one of our blue sky experts – Professor Jeremy Myerson from the Royal College of Art. This specifically recognises the limitations that a two-way matrix approach can impose and encourages a more open approach – starting with the end results rather than the underlying drivers.

The groups were given the following basis for brainstorming a minimum of two scenario options each:

- Desirable or utopian
- Undesirable or distopian
- Technologically led
- Socially led
- Free range (with reference to developments in cities)

This process generated 12 possible scenarios. Teams were required to summarise these on a flip chart sheet and present each one to the plenary group.

8.4 Selecting scenarios to work on in detail

The whole group were then given three red dots to use in ‘voting’ for their favoured scenarios. The criteria for selection were given as:

- Different from each other – to ensure a contrast
- Interesting and stimulating to think about
- With some clear policy implications

This process generated four clear winners, however, there were some overlaps between these and some of the unsuccessful scenario options, and certain elements were then merged together to enrich the four starting points.

8.5 Developing scenario descriptions

Four teams were created to address these four outline scenarios and were given 90 minutes to work on the following tasks, supported by a range of visual materials and the help of the project visualiser:

- To develop a description of a ‘day in the life’ of an individual living within the scenario on a 24 hour clock
- To use this to dramatise the way in which the future world would operate and the impact of this on society and the life of individuals within it
- To highlight the underlying assumptions that would make the scenario logically consistent

The outputs of this exercise were presented back to the plenary session.

8.6 Write up and visualisation development

Following the workshop, the team leaders and/or Future Foundation team members from the final exercise provided a short summary of the outputs from their group. This, with notes taken by the moderator, were taken as the basis for the draft scenario descriptions.

A subsequent briefing meeting with the Project Visualiser, Gero Grundman (who had attended the entire workshop and provided materials to work with) and Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam from the Royal College of Art resulted in a range of visualisations of the scenarios from the 20 year and 50 year time horizons.

All seven resulting scenarios have been exposed to the a range of different groups in the consultation phase:

- The general public in focus groups (see appendix 4)
- Wider stakeholder groups in the Plenary Session (see appendix 5)
- On-line participants via the Future Foundation website

8.7 Summary of drivers

Whilst these scenarios were deliberately created in a different way, the drivers and assumptions underlying each one have been reviewed and recorded in a consistent way to those used in the 20 year scenarios.

A table, similar to the one shown in section 4 above, has been produced for the four fifty year scenarios. Whilst not used directly in the generation of the scenarios it was thought important to show the assumptions underlying them in a way consistent with the twenty year scenarios.

Key assumptions for the four scenarios for 2054

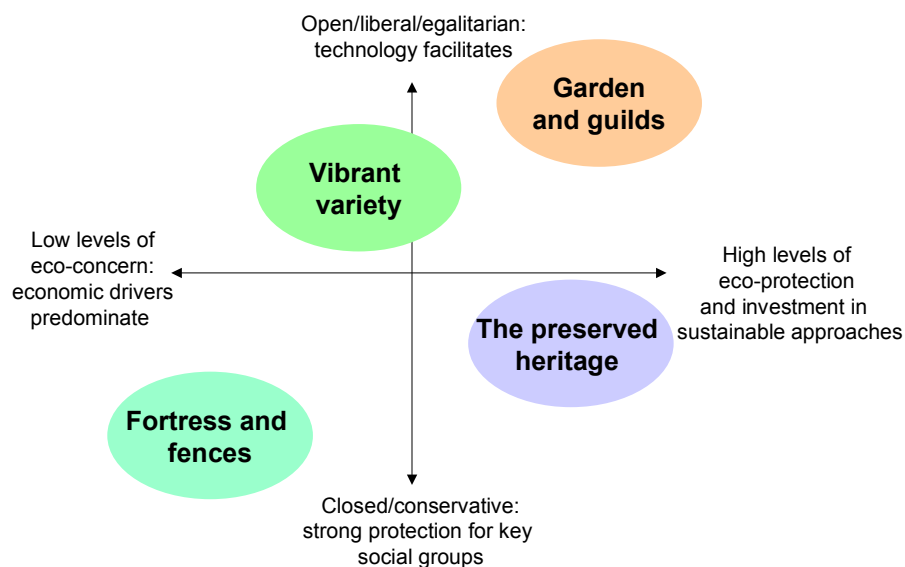
Assumption	Description	2054			
		Fortress and Fences	Preserved heritage	Vibrant variety	Garden and guilds
Economic					
1 Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Slow	Slow/medium	Slow/medium	Medium/high
2 Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	No	Partial	No	Partial
3 Countryside as a place of production - manufacture	Yes, partial or no	Partial	No	Partial	Partial
4 Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises	Yes, partial or no	Partial	Partial	Yes	Yes
5 Countryside as a place of consumption	Yes, partial or no	Yes	Yes	Partial	Partial
6 Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Not solved	Partially	Solved	Partially
Political					
7 General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire	Interventionist	Laissez faire	Mixed
8 General description of global political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire	Mixed	Laissez faire	Mixed
9 Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	Laissez faire	Protectionist	Laissez faire	Mixed
10 Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	Local/ international	Local/national	None	All
Policy					
11 Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Neutral	Strict	Lax	Neutral
12 Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	No change	Succssful	Succssful
13 Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Succssful	Neutral	Succssful
14 Urban regeneration	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Succssful	Neutral	Succssful
Other					
15 Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	High	Moderate/high	Low/moderate	Moderate
16 Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occassional or not frequent	Frequent	Occassional	Not frequent	Not frequent/ occassional
17 'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside	Positive, neutral or negative	Positive	Positive	Neutral	Neutral
18 Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	Low	High	Moderate	High
19 Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Exclusive	Exclusive	Inclusive	Neutral
20 Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Passive	Neutral	Active	Active
21 Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	High	Low	High	Moderate

Additionally, as an explanatory tool to show the main dimensions of difference, it was clear that they did fit in a two-way matrix along two dimensions – to do with inclusivity and planned development of technology on one dimension and environmental protectionism or free market development on the other. This was retro-fitted to the outputs, and works well to give the scenarios a framework – although we are at pains to emphasise that we do not necessarily see the scenarios as mutually exclusive – or neatly fitting into these dimensions.

9. Overview of the 50 year rural futures scenarios

The four scenarios have been placed on a two-way matrix to show the strongest underlying drivers that separate them. However it is worth noting that they, like the 20 year scenarios are not mutually exclusive.

Four scenarios for 2054



Here follows a description of each of these four scenarios in three parts: summary of drivers and assumptions, main features, and the outputs of the 'day in the life' exercise.

With the 50 year scenarios as with those for 2024, we anticipate that there will continue to be a mix of community types and countryside typologies across England and Wales, just as there are today. However, in each of the scenario descriptions that follows we have tried to make the changes clearer by focussing on the type of countryside which we anticipate will come to predominate in that particular possible future.

10. 2054a: Vibrant Variety



10.1 Summary of drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Slow/medium
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	No
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		Partial
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises		Yes
Countryside as a place of consumption		Partial
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Solved
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire
General description of global political environment		
Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	None
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Lax
Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	Successful
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Neutral
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Low/moderate
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Not frequent
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Neutral
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	Moderate
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Inclusive
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Active
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	High

Assumptions for agriculture: Under this scenario, given that the country is primarily a place of consumption, agriculture will fare badly. The majority of food consumed within the UK will be imported and significant amounts of land currently used for agricultural production will be switched to other uses. This scenario can be looked at as an extension of the 'Rise of the Rurbs' and consequently land used for serious agricultural usage will be quite limited.

10.2 Main features

The essence of the vibrant variety scenario is the emphasis on the countryside as a site of consumption and leisure activities, rather than production (whether agricultural, manufactures, or knowledge-industry related). The prime drivers of rural economic growth will be: tourism, retirement-related services, and leisure and sports activities, rather than as a home for urban commuters or a site for knowledge-industries to establish themselves.



Under this scenario, more open rural development means that the average family is able to purchase a country cottage, trailer, or bungalow, and many do indeed do so. Transport and planning policy favours mobility and movement around the country. There is a rise in low-impact/temporary housing, pioneered by Asian and American firms skilled in providing highly customised, affordable, prefabricated lodging solutions.

There is less agricultural land-use and more dwelling sites. Instead rural land is used for recreational and leisure activities, including sports, festivals, walkways etc.

Thanks to a pro-active social exclusion policy, there is less income inequality in the nation as a whole and most working families have a decent household income. Much of the population has access to a rural home as well/instead of an urban/suburban dwelling. There is constant rural/urban mobility. In this future we assume that individuals will be increasingly mobile: between the location of work and leisure, holidays, meetings with friends and associates. Many people will be able to afford second homes and will split time between rural and urban life.

Individuals will have more desire to spend time engaged in leisure pursuits, including more outdoor sports. The countryside will become a site where time-pressed citizens can sample the 'rural experience'. Thanks to steadily increasing tourism, it becomes feasible to establish more and more rural museums, activity centres, and festivals. The incorporation of new areas of the world into the global economy (China, India) leads to a massive increase in the number of tourists circulating around the country. The combined population of China and India is equal to 8 Americas or 18 Japans – and put in this light we can begin to appreciate the scale of the impact that it will have upon the global tourism industry.

Consumer affluence – in another 50 years, with average real incomes rising at 2.5% per annum (making no assumptions with respect to distribution, which in the last 50 years has shown no consistent trend), it will be reasonable for the average UK citizen to own not only multiple cars but also multiple homes. Pro-active social policy – government remains committed to tackling social exclusion and employment remains at or near full-employment level.

10.3 A day in the life of... Irene Jones

Our sample character from the 'vibrant variety' countryside is Irene, a woman aged 55 with two children aged 9 and 15. Her current boyfriend – there have been a few – works 3.4 days in Birmingham and visits, occasionally.

Irene lives in low-impact housing on plot land – it is one of the latest prefab bungalow-cottages that the *Jinbei Housing Corporation* have designed, with customised white panel boarding and stilts to raise the structure above the land to prevent against flood damage. She has another flat in a murpie (Mid-life Urban-Rural Professional) apartment complex in Birmingham, near the business park where many corporations are based.

Irene's 95 year old mother Anita lives next door in another prefab bungalow – this design has become very popular among the more elderly and infirm population. Dorothy however is in fighting shape, and is enjoying her long retirement by engaging in sports and painting classes.

In Irene's spare time she enjoys riding, city breaks, and eating out, and organises an annual arts festival in a village in Cornwall, where enthusiasts from around the globe get together for a summer weekend to meet personally and watch performances.

10.4 Public response

Respondents saw this scenario as being very much a continuation of 'Rise of the Rurbs'. It appealed more to the 'transient rural'/'dynamic commuter' respondents around Ashford than to the 'deep rural' respondents around Alnwick.

10.5 Plenary response

10.5.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario

This scenario is driven market-led policies and a focus on leisure and retirement, rather than production. As a result there is great entrepreneurship and imagination in the ways that services are developed. The public would be offered services by a range of new 'hybrid' brands: "National Trust Sunsets": "RSPB Wilderness"; "Tesco Leisure".

There may be some conflict between groups over land use and land management. Countryside users would come together to form interest groups and coalesce around slogans "Global mountain bikers rule OK!"

10.5.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

The scenario assumes that globalisation will continue and that cheap travel will become even more widespread, resulting in an international tourism explosion.

In terms of policy, Defra effectively becomes the 'DTI' of the countryside. Subsidies are ended, public services are privatised and everything that can be, is marketed. Even further education is for sale with sponsoring organisations taking control of the curriculum.

New technology is deployed to provide easy charging as people move through the countryside using the facilities with smart cards and global satellite systems deducting payment automatically.



11. 2054b: Preserved Heritage



11.1 Summary of drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Slow/medium
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	Partial
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		No
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises		Partial
Countryside as a place of consumption		Yes
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Partially solved
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Interventionist
General description of global political environment		Mixed
Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	Protectionist
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	Local/national
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Strict
Transport policy	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	No change
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)		Successful
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Moderate/high
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Occasional
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Positive
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	High
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Exclusive
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Neutral
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	Low

Assumptions for agriculture: This scenario can be thought of as an extension of the 2024 'Good Life' and consequently compared to the other scenarios the countryside will do relatively well. The protectionist policies adopted by the government will extend to farming and will support a reasonable level of agricultural activity. English farms, though, which will effectively be 'museums' of a now obsolete way of life, although a select few farms will have survived as a rising demand for 'Englishness' gives rise to a niche market for branded local products, such as authentic Cheddar cheese and organic Cumberland sausages etc. Recognising the importance of agriculture in

maintaining the spirit of the countryside, government initiatives have helped farmers to make this transition.

11.2 Main features

In this scenario countryside is treated, to all extents and purposes, as a protected remnant of English heritage – resulting in a huge effort to ensure its preservation, including traditional English flora and fauna, which will have difficulties surviving due to climate change and the effects of ‘alien’ species taking over key habitats.



The countryside is recognised as a piece of British cultural inheritance and therefore efforts are made to restore it to an ideal condition. Britain has left the European Union, and national identity issues are very high up among voter concerns. There is a resurgent English (and Welsh) sense of nationalism/patriotism. English and Welsh identity politics are therefore foremost among political concerns. Socio-economic issues have very much faded from the political agenda and instead politics revolves around ‘post-material’ concerns such as identity politics – expressing who you are by your attachment to place or origin. This incorporates both the politics of national identity, the politics of regional identity and of countryside identity.

Planning controls are very strict and do not allow any inward migration. Inward flows are primarily now from the wealthy retired, rather than those in working life. There is therefore a renewed life-cycle element to rural population movements, with the young moving to the city to find work, who then ‘cascade out’ to the countryside in later life.

Strict planning controls are the result of political pressure on the part of established rural residents. Regionalisation of political structures gives rural areas stronger control over land use policy. There is a strong upsurge in the political salience of rural issues, with the consequence both that there is political support for rural interest parties (e.g. the Countryside Alliance) and recognition of the importance of rural issues among established political parties. Local politics are driven by a strong sense of ‘NIMBY’-ism. There are relatively vibrant communities among those that have bought into rural life, in particular among the affluent, mobile and sometimes single elderly population. These communities however tend to be ‘communities of choice’ – often with members from far and wide across rural Britain, who happen simply to share certain interests.

The key industries in the countryside are therefore tourism and retirement-related services. A massive increase in global travel and demand for experience-related services leads to a substantial growth in tourism, in all nations. Tourists will include not only Americans and Japanese, but also Chinese and Indians. Tourism in the countryside means that there is a great deal of rural 'reconstruction' to make the countryside into a showpiece of a bygone 'traditional England'. This will include 'mock' English farms which will effectively be 'museums' of a now obsolete way of life. However, a select few farms will have survived as a rising demand for 'Englishness' gives rise to a niche market for branded local products, such as authentic Cheddar cheese and organic Cumberland sausages. Recognising the importance of agriculture in maintaining the spirit of the countryside, government initiatives have helped farmers to make this transition.

An ageing population will result such that rural Britain is primarily composed of retired individuals and couples. Advances in genetics technology have generated a situation in which average life expectancies have reached well into the 100s, and the healthcare industry is one of the largest rural sectors, with retired individuals benefiting from extensive forms of new health treatments, e.g. gene therapy, etc.

11.3 A day in the life of... Atul Singh

Atul is a gene therapy specialist previously based in Bangalore, who has arrived in the UK with his family on a special work permit. His main service is in providing treatment that delays the ageing process, and his client base in England lie in the wealthy retirement village of Kidlington, set in the heart of Oxfordshire. He lives in a mobile home, which he uses to travel from village to village, providing his services across the broad remit of the local county.

The county has a strong degree of political autonomy and has granted him residency permission to work there. The local population are largely white, elderly, and highly affluent. During his day he gets up, sets his kids up on their long-distance learning, begins his rounds to all his health clients.

Atul travels frequently to visit friends and professional contacts both domestically and abroad. The local people of Dimlington value his services and he is well remunerated – but has difficulty being accepted as a member of the community.

11.4 Public response

Respondents saw this scenario as being very much a continuation of '21st Century Good Life'. It appealed more to the 'deep rural' respondents around Alnwick than to the 'transient rural'/dynamic commuter' respondents around Ashford.

11.5 Plenary response

11.5.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario

The group assigned to this scenario felt that it reflected the accomplishment of the 1995 Rural White Paper that emphasised protectionism and maintenance of the status quo in the countryside. Really it would be like the whole of England becoming the National Trust – effectively a living museum or a performance of ‘heritage’ which will have become a powerful cultural and economic artefact.



Heritage is central to community objectives, and ‘heritage’ is assumed to be static. Rurality has become a representation of people’s ideas and effectively a simulation of what it should be. However, there are conflicts in deciding whose image prevails, who decides and how controlled and manicured it should be. Just as we argue today about the precise nature of culture so there will be a debate about rural heritage.

This is an exclusive countryside in ownership terms but inclusive in that it has become a playground and performance space for everyone to enjoy. All authentic countryside is lost.

11.5.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

This scenario requires a heavy policy intervention in all aspects of life in the countryside since the country has become central to national identity and is seen as a public good. Therefore Defra has become more like the DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) encouraging and controlling the enterprise of culture.

There are many issues for policy makers to think through:

- Governance questions – local or top down?
- Integration – including biodiversity; real heritage; the economic rationale and benefits; inclusion

12. 2054c: Fortress and Fences



12.1 Summary of drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Slow
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	No
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		Partial
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises		Partial
Countryside as a place of consumption		Yes
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Not solved
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Laissez faire
General description of global political environment		
Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	Local
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Neutral
Transport policy	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)		
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	High
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Frequent
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Positive
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	Low
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Exclusive
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Passive
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	High

Assumptions for agriculture: Agricultural production and the sector overall will have declined in this scenario and the impact of climate change will mean that what agriculture remains will have quite a different complexion to today. Again the majority of foodstuffs consumed will be imported.

12.2 Main features

In the gated countryside model there has been a continuation towards the trend for the 'privatisation' of public space – wealthy members of society have now purchased their way out of the social system by withdrawing to gated communities and private drives, enabled by the latest innovations in surveillance and security. This elite of individuals – which now comprises some 20-30% of the population – are no longer dependent upon most publicly provided goods, as they are fully able to supply their own private healthcare, schooling, and even security/policing requirements.

In line with the globalisation of the world economy and the increasing development of a knowledge-based economy, there is increasing income polarity between skilled knowledge workers, managers, executives, and non-skilled routine manual occupations. The extrapolation of this income polarisation, together with the globalisation of the world economy, results such that there is often far greater inequality *within* nations than between them. Though the English countryside is generally quite affluent, even here there are deep regional disparities.

Global trends have hugely impacted upon the nature of British economy and society. Security threats such as bioterrorism, with the potential of small groups to effect massive disruptions upon large urban concentrations, have not been effectively thwarted, whilst insecurity in many parts of the globe (including Africa and, to a lesser extent, the Middle East) means that attempts at such disruptions are not uncommon. The rise in a general climate of uncertainty and a *culture of fear* generated by sensationalist media reporting have increased the desire among individual citizens to retract away from society and towards a distanced, secure haven.

While Britain remains a functional state, it does share a number of the characteristics associated with failing states. Political power resides at the local level, where influential local figures determine the allocation of resources and are responsible for public infrastructure, such as it exists. Social policy is extremely patchwork: there is little central government funding for tackling social exclusion and instead the underprivileged have to rely on support from the charities and social aid organisations that exist.

Within the UK, the countryside has become the preserve of wealthier groups. Urban areas, by contrast, have experienced a degenerating security situation and, with the exception of a few central business districts, have experienced increased social deprivation. Interspersed, however, within the otherwise affluent rural geography, there are also pockets of low-income workers who service the requirements of the rich individuals who live there.



12.3 A day in the lives of... John Brown and Janet Dimbeyard

John Brown

John wakes up at 2am to begin his work (his day is oriented toward East Asian time as he works for a Chinese company).

He lives in a 19th century farmhouse style house in a small village. The village is clearly split into the more affluent part (which in fact is gated and walled with sophisticated security devices to keep out unwanted people). There are only two entry/exit points into this part of the village, which is always held in check by an electronic security perimeter. His house is luxurious, hi-tech and has extensive security features.



John has a partner, but isn't married.

They have breakfast outside the house overlooking a protected and managed environment – it looks quite rural in a traditional sense. The countryside further afield has been seriously impacted by the effects of global warming – average temperatures having risen at the top end of projections, or about 3-4 degrees since the start of the century, which has led to the disappearance of some species and the arrival of others. The UK now experiences scorching summers and rainswept winters.

John works from home for a company whose HQ is in Shanghai. He travels there once every month, and if necessary can do the return journey in just over a day.

He has a housekeeper called Jane who lives in the less affluent part of the village outside the walled area. He also employs a number of other people from the village to help run manage his life. Residents of the walled community provide a significant amount of employment in the village.

John drives a Ferrari even though fuel is extremely expensive (£25 per gallon in 2004 prices). It has not been possible to develop alternative fuel sources that are also economical. The car has a self-drive option which means that John doesn't ever need to actually drive, although he usually does. He uses his car quite a bit and the roads are reasonably uncongested as the cost of motoring, in conjunction with the development of new methods of acquiring services via information networks and digital TV, has reduced overall driving quite considerably – especially amongst the poor.

Much of John's leisure time is carried out in the country and he often travels to see his friends in neighbouring villages and towns. Many of his interests could be described as 'gentrified' – he regularly plays golf with his colleagues and business partners on a private course in the next county.

Janet Dimbleyard

Janet is in her mid 40s and lives in the village. She gets up at 6am in order to start work at John's house at 6.30.

Her house is a cheap pre fabricated unit on the outskirts of the village. Although the house was quite cheap it has basic amenities, such as food dispenser and self-cleaning surfaces.

Janet lives in her house with her husband, her parents (70 and 74) and her grandparents (103 and 107). Her parent and her grandparents are still in very good health. Much of her food is highly processed (which contains a number of toxins and GM components) and she has very little fresh vegetables or fruit, however her food intake contains nutritional supplements.

Her husband is a land manager working on the land surrounding the village while her grandfather is the local neighbourhood watch coordinator (an extensive and important service, particularly for the walled community).

Janet doesn't have a car and doesn't really travel much given the relatively high cost of travel. She does have a moped and part of her income from John is a 'fuel card', which provides special access to fuel – when there are problems with fuel supply.

Much of Janet's entertainment is provided at home and most of her friends are from the village. She doesn't know many people outside the village.

There is a lot of petty (and some more serious) crime in the village and many of the perpetrators are from the nearby market town.

There are quite a lot of tourists that come through the village – a lot of them from either India or China – the source of many UK tourists these days.

12.4 Public response

Respondents perceived 'Fortress and Fences' as having a close fit with one of their scenarios for 2054 – a continuation of 'Consumption Countryside' with increased social inequality, high crime, poor health and frequent natural disasters (see appendix 4). However, while most respondents perceived Consumption Countryside as being the most likely scenario for 2024, views about the likelihood of 'Fortress and Fences' were more mixed – depending on their optimism for the longer term future.

12.5 Plenary response

12.5.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario

This would not be a nice place to live – characterised by hostility, conflict and lack of community spirit if not outright xenophobia extreme ‘culture of fear’ mentality.

The group assigned to assess this scenario felt on the whole that it was unsustainable in the long term. The scenario was felt to be similar to other areas in the globe where there has been a breakdown of social trust and failure to overcome social polarisation – comparisons were made with South Africa.

Freedom of movement would be restricted and opportunity would be very limited for most people except the most wealthy – who would live like the medieval rulers in protected fortresses.

There was some suggestion that there could be different versions of this scenario based on how extreme it is seen as being.

12.5.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

In terms of policy outcomes the key factors are the arrival of multiple shocks that the system has failed to address effectively – such as extreme climate change, bioterrorism, or persistent state failure in other parts of the globe. This would represent a future in which government has failed to anticipate threats and protect rural society’s interests effectively.

UK would have opted out of the new Europe and national government will be strengthened as a result with a consequent weakening of local/regional policy delivery and failure to nurture local interests.

13. 2054d: Garden and guilds



13.1 Drivers and assumptions for this scenario

Economic	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Economic growth	Fast, medium or slow	Medium/high
Countryside as a place of production - agriculture	Yes, partial or no	Partial
Countryside as a place of production - manufacture		Partial
Countryside as a place of production - new enterprises		Yes
Countryside as a place of consumption		Partial
Energy Issues	Solved, partially solved, not solved	Partially
Political	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
General description of UK political environment	Laissez faire, mixed or interventionist	Mixed
General description of global political environment		
Description of rural policy regime	Laissez faire, mixed or protectionist	
Centres of political power	Local, regional, national or international	All
Policy	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Housing policy	Strict, no change or lax	Neutral
Transport policy	Successful, no change or unsuccessful	Successful
Political initiatives toward the countryside (promotion of...)	Successful, neutral or unsuccessful	
Urban regeneration		
Other	Possible Degrees	Actual Degrees
Effects of climate change	High, moderate or low	Moderate
Occurrence of one-off events - terrorism, bio terrorism etc	Frequent, occasional or not frequent	Not frequent/ occasional
'Consumer' attitudes toward the countryside (symbolic rurality)	Positive, neutral or negative	Neutral
Degree of eco - protection	High, moderate or low	High
Social Policy	Inclusive, neutral or exclusive	Neutral
Technology	Active, neutral or passive	Active
Rural population growth	High, moderate or low	Moderate

Assumptions for agriculture: Under this scenario agriculture will see declines in its relative importance and a much lower proportion of the workforce will be employed within the sector. As in most of the other scenarios most food will be imported, but having said this within certain niche areas there will be a vibrant market and employment and business in these parts of the sector will be quite lucrative.

13.2 Main features

Under this scenario the countryside is an active and vital place – there are still planning regulations but they have been re-shaped, such that people are allowed to build where they like so long as they utilise approved designs that do not interfere with the rural landscape.

For example, there are now dwellings built into the landscape, and ‘deep-fall’ (building into the ground) is being encouraged as an alternative to ‘high-rise’. The countryside is a place of work, of creation and of vibrant social networks. It is a place of culture and innovation and not just a venue for agribusiness and tourism.

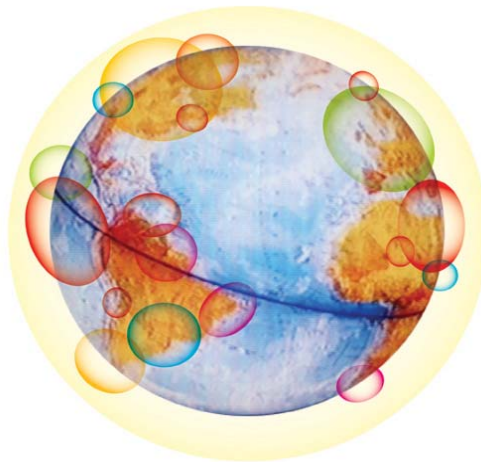
The flow of rural entrepreneurs to the countryside has given rural Britain a ‘silicon-valley’ type-quality. Jobs in 2054 are very often short-contract and project-oriented, lasting little more than a year or less. As a result, many individuals are self-employed and contract their services out to the highest bidder. A strong ‘guild’ culture has developed, whereby key workers in particular knowledge-sectors set aside money to a common organisation that provides them with facilities (usually a business park) in which they can meet, network, and has work booths in which they can do long-distance work via ICT. These guilds also often provide common health and pension schemes.

There is still a skills gap between workers at various levels and this translates into income inequality - however, pro-active government policy aimed at targetting social exclusion means that most rural dwellers have access to a reasonable income.



Rural workers are highly mobile and there are many rural airports from which short flights to other parts of the world depart. As well as near-universal car ownership there is some aeroplane ownership among affluent groups.

Under this scenario there are few real security concerns – domestic or international. A form of welfare society continues to exist, and almost all countries have begun the entry into a prosperous global economy.



Technology plays an important role in this scenario:

- Technology is available for all and works in all areas of the country
- Technology is valued for its ability to create/support social networks as well as its technological capabilities
- Technology developed to support health programmes and regular diagnostics and wellbeing programmes
- Planning regulations have been changed to allow/encourage mobile and low impact housing – particularly when it is used for live/work space
- Technology becomes everyday and taken for granted – there is universal access – but it does not replace face to face contact. People still want to meet and socialise – there will be a need for places to meet and reasons to meet
- More people will be working for themselves – they will be looking for support systems in terms of professional development and skills as well as social support. The old guild system will be re-created.

Policy implications

Changes in housing policy to encourage live/work development in rural areas. More tolerance of low impact and mobile housing (and work space)

Need for technologically connected society – remote areas as well as urban areas

- connected for learning
- connected for socialising
- connected for support systems (GPS tracking, able to keep an eye on those you care about)
 - likely need to consider data privacy and protection

Transport infrastructure and support – need for real community/interaction as well as online. Therefore people need to be able to travel easily (whether by car or exoskeleton)

Health policy switches from cure to prevention.

Education policy supports remote learning and development – understands importance of lifetime learning and development. Kids able to spend more time in balance of learning and socialising – less results oriented.

13.3 A day in the life of... Isabella Furst

Isabella is a high-tech ceramicist working with refractory materials. She lives in Cumberland (renamed with regional re-organisation) with her 8-year old son Hugo (who has learning difficulties).

Her remaining grandmother is 120 and lives close by; as do her two lovers.

She lives in a Norman Foster designed pre-constructed home – a Mitsubishi Gherkin model 53.

- 6am Isabel wakes – the windows de-cloud automatically to reveal the view. The pulseometer notes that her heart rate is high, she is excited because she is taking delivery of a new inflatable studio today and is planning a celebration party
- 7am Isabel retrieves her overnight messages from the embedded chip – one is from the party providers checking her order for tonight
- 8am Hugo is taken to a giant local playground – a special needs site where his dyslexia is explored and appreciated. (Toys R Us run the franchise globally – the playground is linked to children around the world)
- 9am Isabel delivers a lecture on her new designs to her global class via the webcam. Many of her students are based in Japan and Korea – where her development work with new materials is appreciated
- 10am Excited at the prospect of her new studio arriving, Isabel checks its progress and can see it on the motorway by using GPS tracking system
- 11am The pre-constructed inflatable studio with clips arrives at Isabel's home. The reality is even better than the digital walkthrough
- noon Gran drops in using her powered speedwalk exoskeleton (takes the strain from her hips and encourages her to get adequate daily exercise and thus reduces need for car) – she too is excited at the arrival of the new studio
- 1pm Isabel sets up the Gran-o-scan to check her grandmother's vital signs – this is a condition of her health care programme – costs have been reduced by continuous monitoring and wellbeing checks. The system checks the results and automatically modifies her medications.

- 2pm They sit down to a late lunch. The fridge automatically adds to its weekly shopping list. It recognises that a party is planned and decides to order a hangover remedy for Isabel. Despite its sophisticated programming it still doesn't understand why people choose to drink so much.
- 3pm The Vietnam production house contacts Isabel to discuss the production of new shapes of ceramics. They have already done initial prototypes – new data is sent through to them from the nano-3D-printer installed in the sofa
- 5pm Hugo walks home from his playground – Isabel can track his progress constantly and see him as he walks (via GPS) – Hugo has a constantly open line to his mum via his mobile and any conversation can be broadcast via the home's inbuilt speaker system so he knows that he will be able to get her attention wherever she is in the home.
- 6pm Rural party planners arrive with everything needed for the party – the food, drink, e-connections and cameras so that Isabel's global students can join in the party and look at the new studio
- 7pm Two walkers turn up and ask for directions. Isabel invites them to join the celebration of the new studio
- 9pm Members of the global ceramics guild start to arrive – some in Cumberland and some virtually via VR webcams
The party hots up and carries on until the small hours and the drinks run out ...

13.4 Public response

The majority of respondents viewed 'Garden and Guilds' as the most desirable of the 'expert' scenarios. There was more universal agreement about the desirability of Garden and Guilds than about any of the 20 year scenarios. One of the keys to this may be that this scenario depicted a crime free future. In relation to the countryside, the definition of a 'bright' future is clearly influenced by personal preference. However, personal safety and lack of crime are a common theme.

13.5 Plenary response

13.5.1 Community/public response to living in the scenario

There are many positive aspects for living in this scenario including a general improvement in living conditions, access to services, increases in leisure time. Overall life would be good and more egalitarian.

However, life seems more communal and less private – not sure whether this is an issue as young people will have grown up with the Big Brother ethos.

The group felt that in this scenario the status of the underclass needed clarifying. In what sense would the 'have-nots' of this technopia be deprived – e.g. informational rather than financial deprivation.

13.5.2 Implications for Defra/policy making

The policies required to achieve this outcome in a fair and beneficial way will include meticulous local planning – allowing new building but only where it meets planning regulations.

In addition, active government will be required to spread ICT access evenly across society. This and the infrastructure developments will be privatised, but government will play a large part in managing standards and infrastructure.

Contributors

Scenario Workshop Attendees – Tuesday 18th May 2004 (Day)

Attendee	Organisation
Alan Baxter	Alan Baxter & Associates
Alastair Rutherford	English Nature
Alex McKie	Social Analyst and Forecaster
Anna Grey	The Future Foundation
Chris Farmelo	The Future Foundation
David Darton	Equal Opportunities Commission
Fiona Lickorish	DEFRA
Gero Grundman	RCA
Helen Townsend	Forestry Commission
Ian Christie	Surrey County Council Officer
John Fisher	Local Futures Group
John Joseph	DEFRA
John Shepherd	Birbeck College
Melanie Howard	The Future Foundation
Michael Willmott	The Future Foundation
Neil Ward	CRE – The University of Leeds
Nigel Curry	University of Gloucester
Philip Lowe	CRE – The University of Newcastle
Roberto Foa	The Future Foundation
Rohit Talwar	DEFRA
Sarah Skerratt	University of Newcastle
Tim Allen	DEFRA

Scenario Workshop Attendees – Tuesday 18th May 2004 (Dinner)

Attendee	Organisation
Michael Willmott	The Future Foundation
Chris Farmelo	The Future Foundation
Anna Grey	The Future Foundation
Melanie Howard	The Future Foundation
Roberto Foa	The Future Foundation
Carolyn MacLeish	The Future Foundation
Philip Lowe	CRE – The University of Newcastle
Neil Ward	CRE – The University of Leeds
Rohit Talwar	DEFRA
Gero Grundman	RCA
David Darton	Equal Opportunities Commission
John Fisher	Local Futures Group
Alan Baxter	Alan Baxter & Associates
Sarah Skerratt	University of Newcastle
Fiona Lickorish	DEFRA
Tim Allen	DEFRA
Alastair Rutherford	English Nature
John Shepherd	Birbeck College
Alex McKie	Social Analyst and Forecaster
Jeff Waage	Imperial College
Irene McAra-McWilliam	RCA
Jeremy Myerson	RCA
James Woudhuysen	De Montfort University
Andrew Lyon	International Futures Forum
Igor Aleksander	Imperial College

Scenario Workshop Attendees – Wednesday 19th May 2004

Attendee	Organisation
Alan Baxter	Alan Baxter & Associates
Alex McKie	Social Analyst and Forecaster
Andrew Lyon	International Futures Forum
Anna Grey	The Future Foundation
Chris Farmelo	The Future Foundation
Chris Ray	CRE – The University of Newcastle
David Darton	Equal Opportunities Commission
Fiona Lickorish	DEFRA
Gero Grundman	RCA
Helen Townsend	Forestry Commission
Igor Aleksander	Imperial College
James Shorten	Land Use Consultants
James Woudhuysen	De Montfort University
Jeremy Myerson	RCA
John Fisher	Local Futures Group
John Joseph	DEFRA
John Shepherd	Birbeck College
Melanie Howard	The Future Foundation
Michael Willmott	The Future Foundation
Neil Ward	CRE – The University of Leeds
Philip Lowe	CRE – The University of Newcastle
Roberto Foa	The Future Foundation
Rohit Talwar	DEFRA
Sarah Skerratt	University of Newcastle

Plenary Session Attendees – Tuesday 15th June 2004

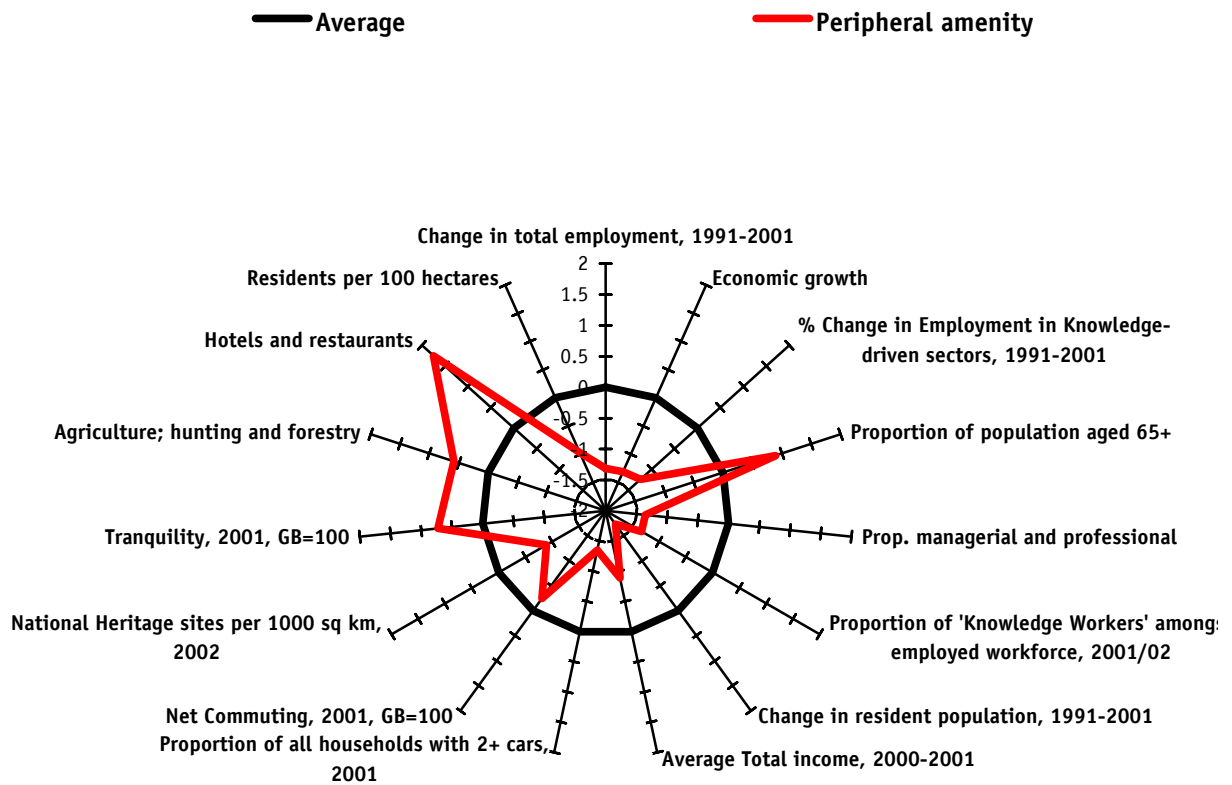
Attendee	Organisation
Alan Baxter	Alan Baxter & Associates
Alastair Rutherford	English Nature
Andrew Lyon	International Futures Forum
Anna Grey	The Future Foundation
Anthony Williamson	Environment Agency
Canon J Brown	ACRE
Catherine Lambert	Countryside Agency
Chris Farmelo	The Future Foundation
Chris Ray	CRE Team University of Newcastle
Chris Wright	Snowdonia Active
Daniel Burne	DEFRA
David Darton	Equal Opportunities Commission
Donald Mitchell	CPRE
Emma Bevis	DEFRA
Eric Holding	John Thompson & Partners
Fiona Bryant	East of England RDA
Fiona Lickorish	DEFRA
G A Fagan	Welsh Assembly
Gwyn Williams	RSPB
Jo O'Neill	League Against Cruel Sports
John Fisher	Local Futures Group
John Gordon	CPRE
John Powderly	Derbyshire Council
Judy Ling Wong	Black Environmental Network
Malcom Eames	Policy Studies Institute
Malcom Moseley	University of Gloucester
Marcus Sangster	Forestry Commission
Martin Owen	Nesta Futurelab
Melanie Howard	The Future Foundation
Michael Willmott	The Future Foundation
Neil Blackshaw	CPRE
Neil Ward	CRE Team University of Leeds
Nick Birks	Inland Revenue
Nigel Heriz-Smith	DTI
Pam Berry	Environmental Change Institute
Pam Warhurst	Countryside Agency
Patricia Mandeville	Department of Culture, Media & Sport
Pauline Bradshaw	DEFRA
Philip Lowe	CRE Team University of Newcastle
Rachel Wells	Royal Mail
Richard Fernandes	London Borough of Havering
Roberto Foa	The Future Foundation
Robert Forsyth	Postwatch
Rohit Talwar	DEFRA
Rupert Lewis	DEFRA
Sonia Davies	Peak District National Park
Tim Allen	DEFRA
Tom Oliver	CPRE

Appendices

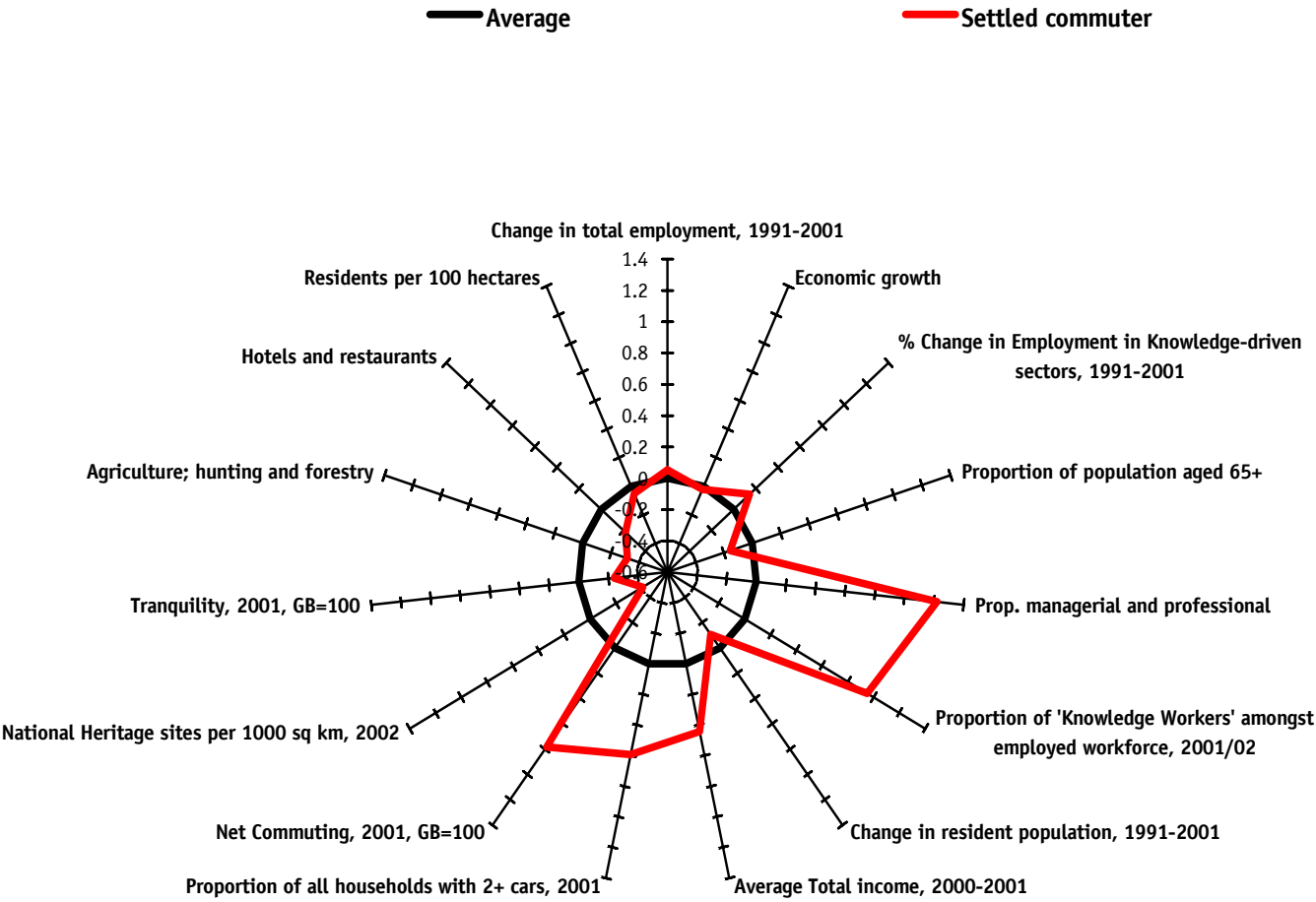
- 1. Typology definitions**
- 2. Life in the typologies in 2024**
- 3. Further questions raised at the scenario creation workshop**
- 4. Summary of public attitudes research**
- 5. Summary of plenary session**
- 6. Why is there no productive rural scenario?**

Appendix 1: Typology definitions

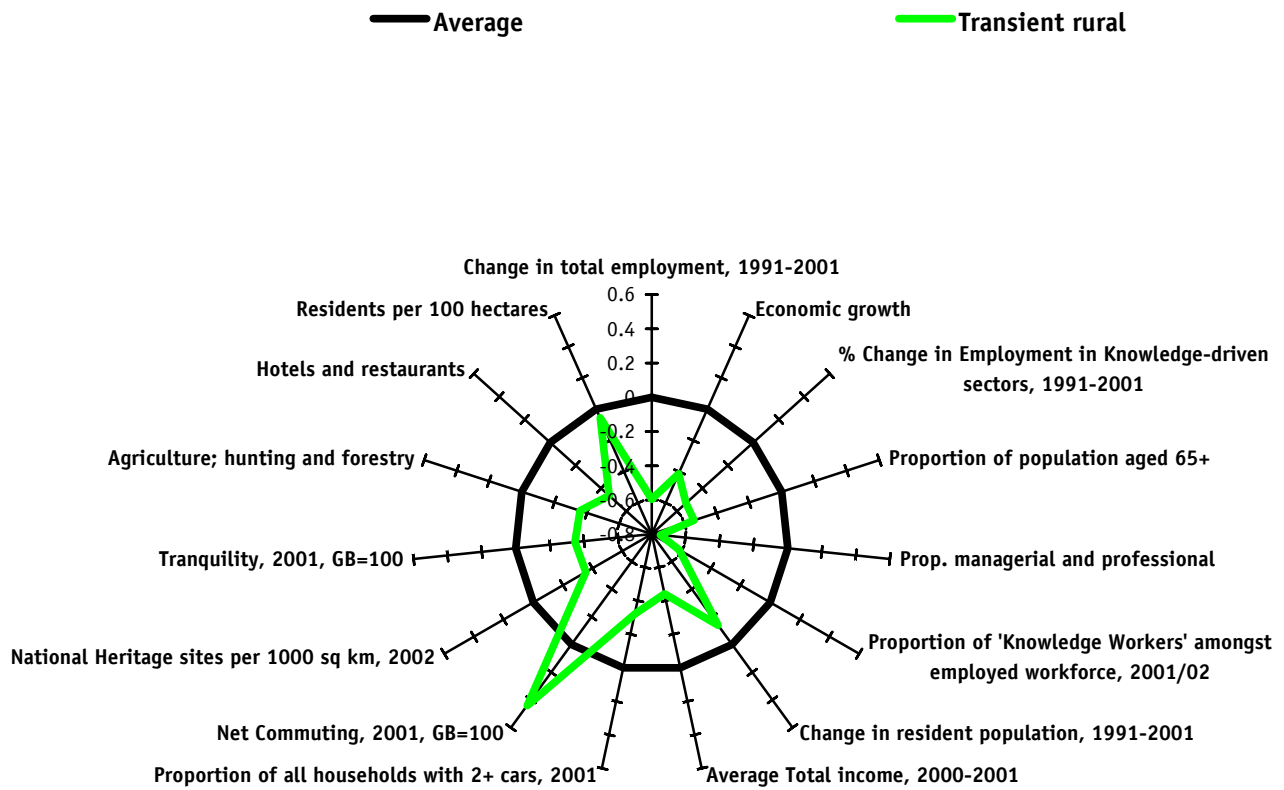
A. 'Peripheral Amenity'



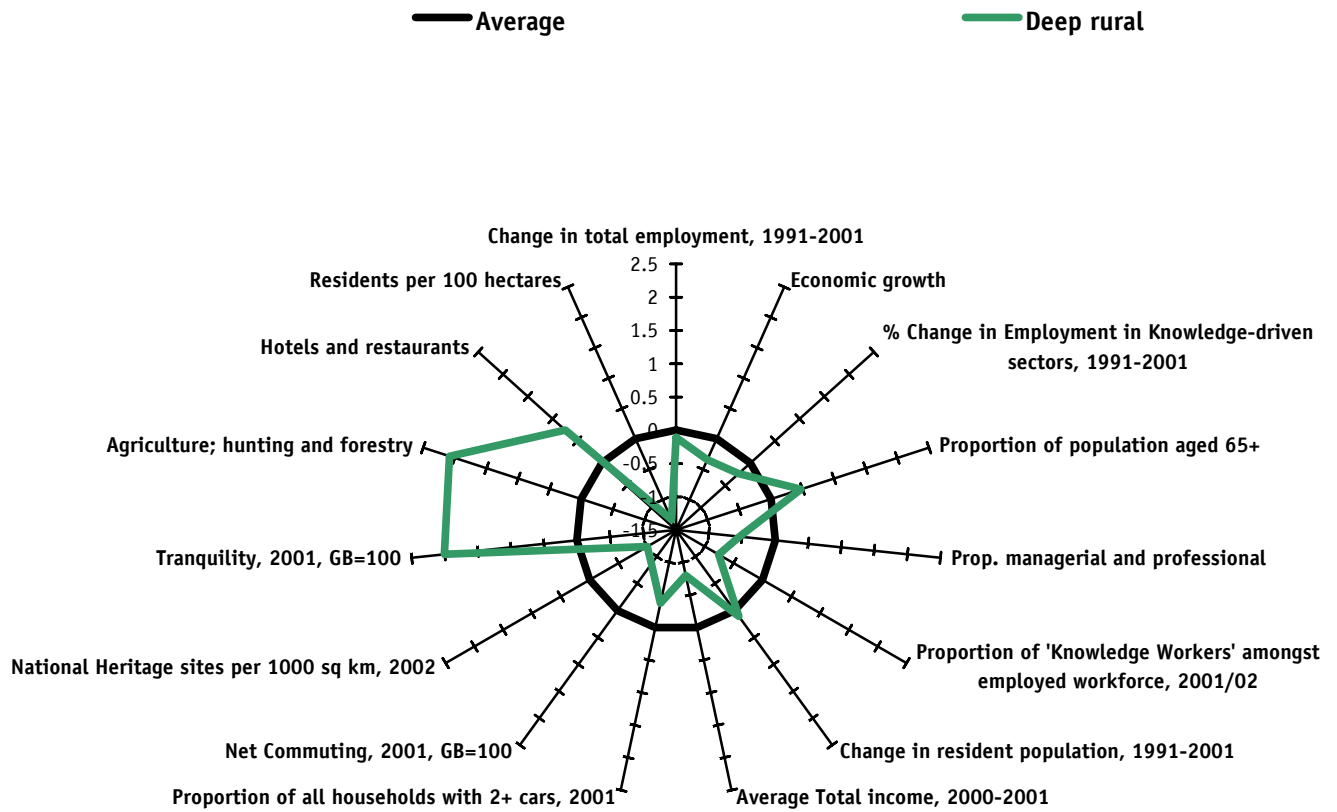
B. Settled Commuter



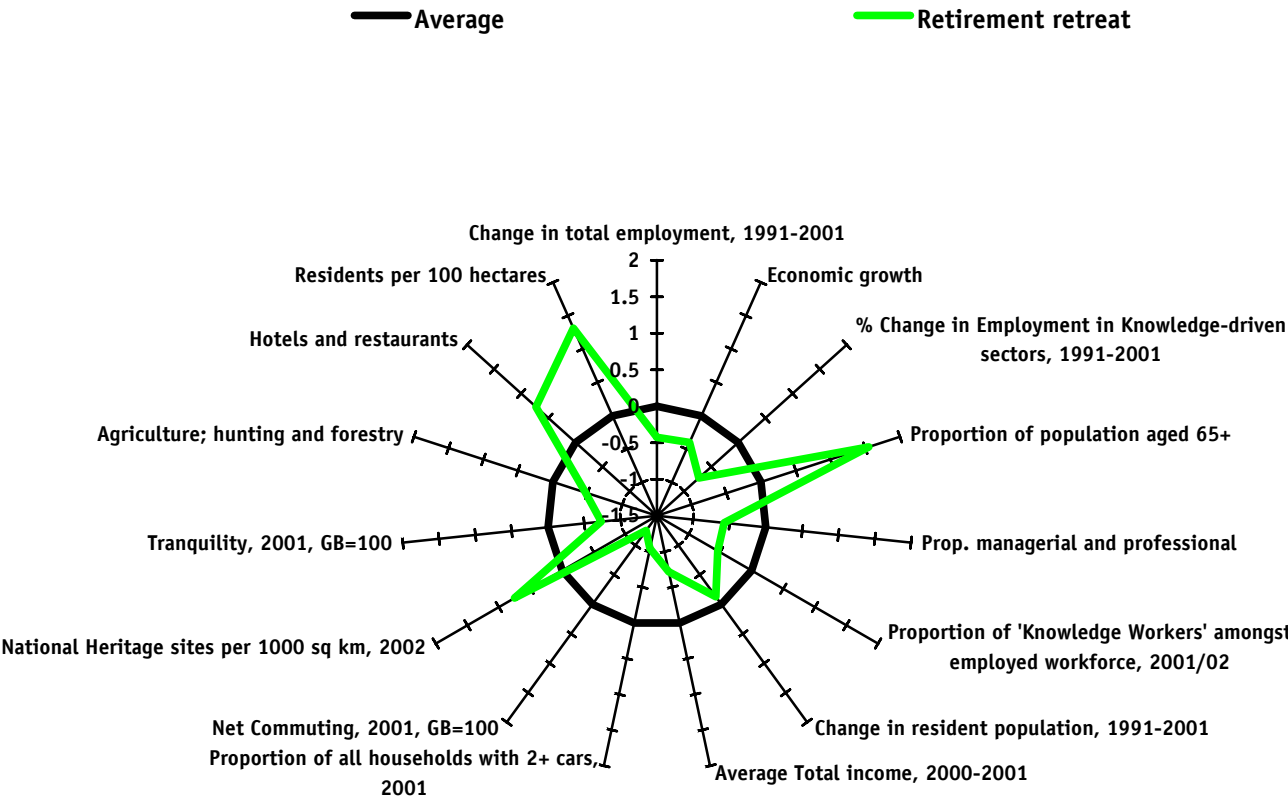
C. 'Transient Rural'



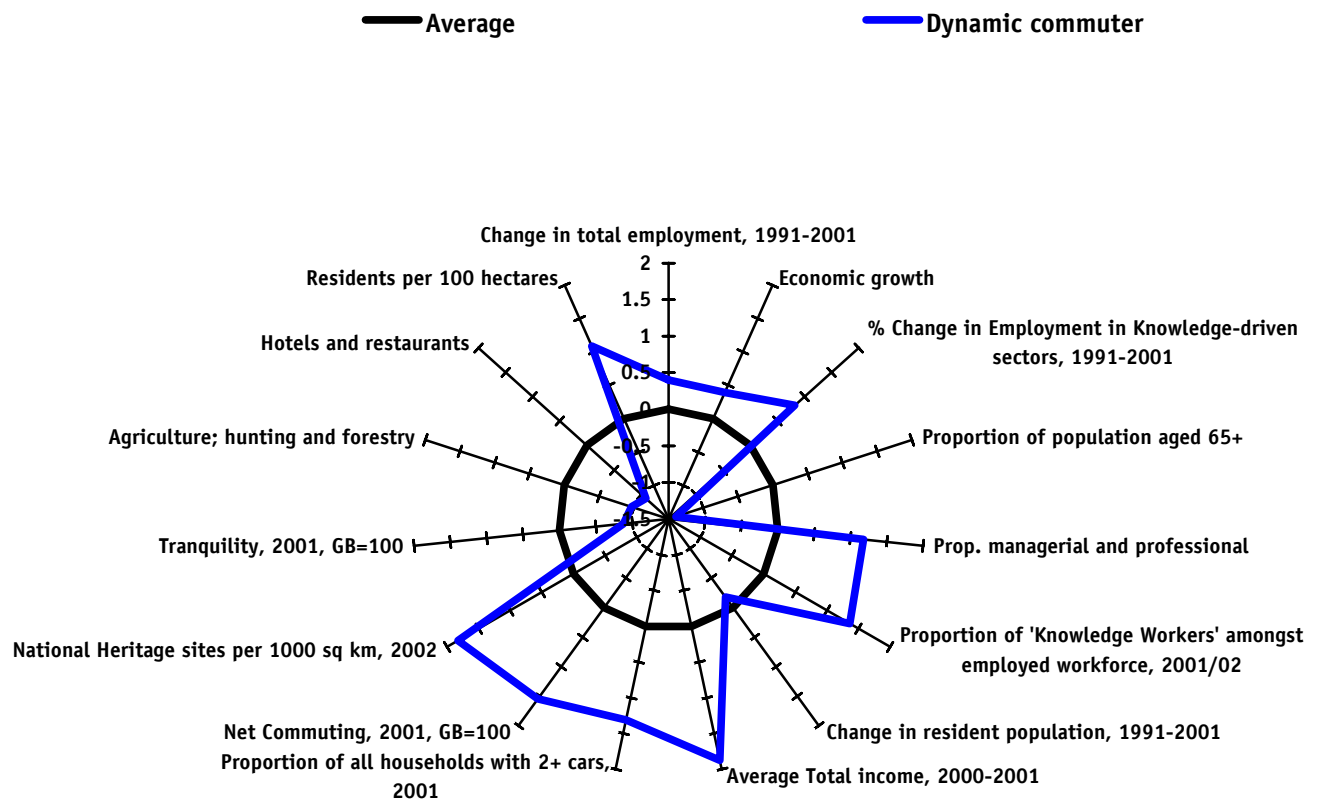
D. 'Deep rural'



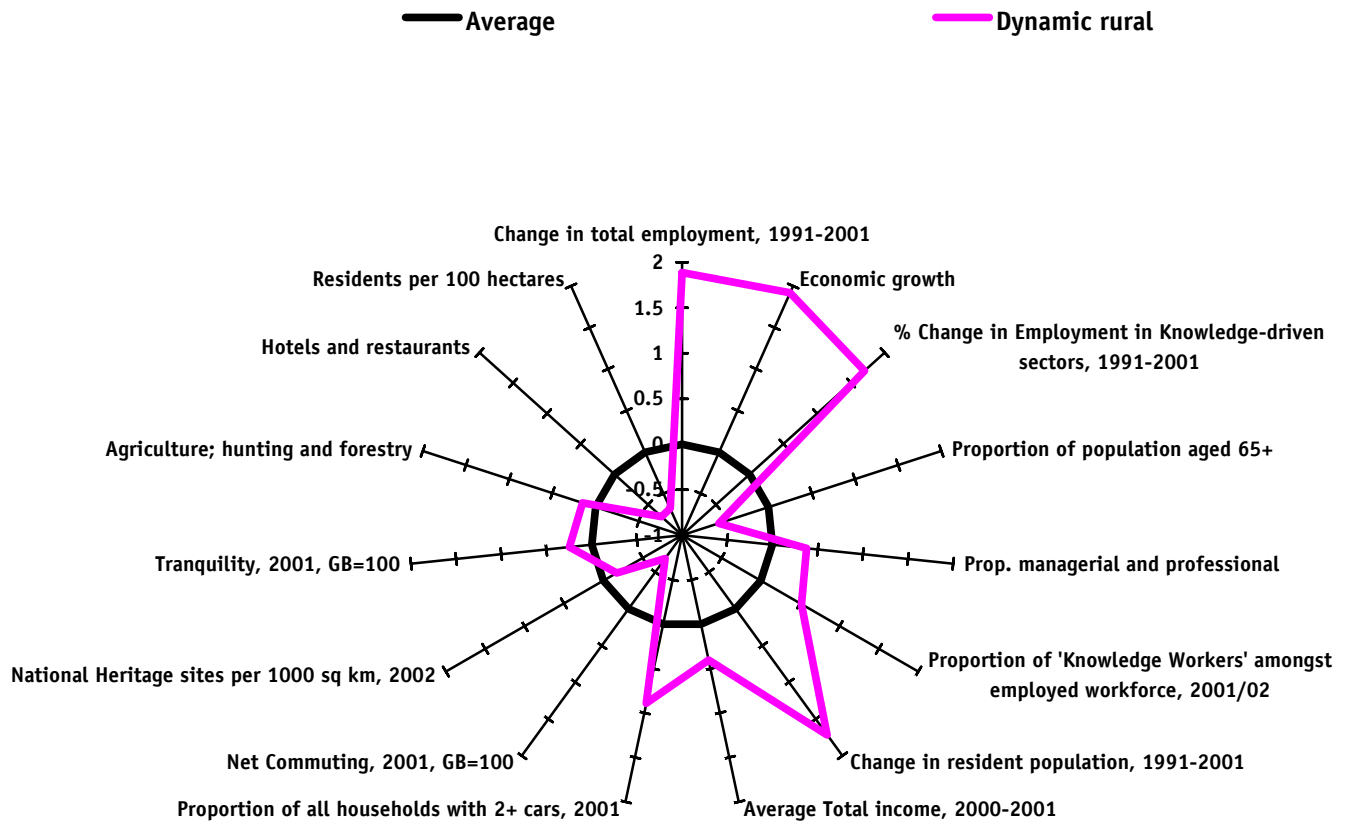
E. 'Retirement retreats' ('Sea scape Britain')



F. 'Dynamic Commuter'



G. 'Dynamic Rural'



Appendix 2: Life in the typologies in 2024

A. 'Peripheral Amenity'

Overview

Peripheral amenity areas are economically depressed, marginal zones in which the key sectors are and will remain tourism and retirement-related services. Agriculture is more important to the structure of the peripheral amenity economy than in other rural typologies. This will continue to hold true in 2024, though the amount of rural employment accounted for by agriculture in peripheral amenity areas will have continued to fall in line with long-term trends.

Peripheral amenity areas have the advantage of being located largely in seaside areas: however, as these are frequently less attractive destinations with poorer quality coastlines and underdeveloped transport links they are not among the first choice of locations for retiring individuals seeking a new home. They also suffer from poorly developed infrastructure to deal with the elderly (e.g. care) and much of their housing stock is located in geographically remote areas. For both practical and social reasons, retirees prefer to relocate to areas with existing retiree populations. We therefore anticipate that peripheral amenity areas in 2024 will not have benefited from the bulk of the retiree migration flow, and those retirees that they do attract will be low-income pensioners. To the extent to which they succeed in attracting newcomers it will be due to the lower property prices in these areas, and this will reflect in the socio-economic status of those choosing to relocate here.

Socially, peripheral amenity areas will consist largely of poorer pensioner households, dependent upon social and health services. An increased proportion of these will be single pensioner households. Steady counter urbanisation will exert only a small 'trickle' effect in these areas: not substantial enough to lead to a broad 'gentrification' effect.

A lack of infrastructural investment to aid peripheral amenity areas attract new businesses results such that new firms do not by and large move to these areas. As a result of weakly developed regional policy, we anticipate that peripheral amenity areas will remain effectively 'off the map'.

There may be creeping social exclusion due to economic inactivity, caused by the lack of new business start-ups. These areas will also have failed to deal with the problem of rural burglary.

Key Trends

Political: There are three possible futures with respect to regional/local policy – central government control, devolution to regional assemblies, and increased transfer of power to local authorities. In any scenario we anticipate that the impact upon peripheral amenity areas will be slight.

Economic: Peripheral amenity areas have some of the features that tend to attract rural entrepreneurs – such as population sparsity, and low property prices. However, they suffer from such poor transport links, and tend to be distant from major economic hubs. We anticipate that this will continue to hinder rural business relocation to peripheral amenity areas in future decades.

Social: As coastal areas, peripheral amenity areas are attractive locations for sports and leisure activities. Increasing levels of tourism (domestic and international) and take-up of outdoor sports (e.g. surfing) will bring some economic activity to these areas. However, the main benefits will accrue to those areas in 'Retirement Retreat' zones (see below), which are more attractive destinations for these activities (e.g. the South Coast and Cornwall).

Peripheral amenity areas are composed of a predominantly elderly population. In part this is due to out-migration among younger individuals seeking first employment as well as in-migration of elderly retirees. The ageing of the UK population will polarise this effect in peripheral amenity areas. As the proportion of elderly retirees among the population grows it is possible that the, at present sparsely populated, peripheral amenity areas will attract initial retirees. At present they suffer from poor infrastructure, however sufficient population inflow over a twenty-year period may alter this fact.

Peripheral amenity areas are also at greatest risk of social exclusion. Incomes in these areas are well below national average and service-provision is frequently below par. Without new economic activity due to tourism, leisure services, inflow of wealthier in-migrants, or new business relocation, we do not anticipate this to change radically.

Technological: Social groups in peripheral amenity areas will continue to experience a digital divide. They fall into most of the categories that we correlate with late ICT take-up, with respect to: age; social class; and population density. We anticipate that new ICTs will continue to arrive over the course of the next 20 years and that they will play a key role in new service provision. The digital divide will therefore persist in these areas.

B. 'Settled Commuter '

Overview

Settled commuter areas are likely to be moderately affluent, mobile, and multicultural. Politically there will be a strong sense of NIMBYism among established groups that have 'bought in' to the rural lifestyle and may seek to prevent further development in their areas.

Settled commuter areas will benefit from strong infrastructure links, whether with respect to transport, education, childcare, healthcare or ICT. This is already largely the case and will continue to be influenced by their proximity to large urban areas and their reasonable level of affluence.

The social dynamic of settled commuter areas will tend towards highly delocalised communities. Their proximity to urban areas, combined with widespread car ownership, means that most major services can be obtained outside of the local community.

The status of settled commuter areas in 2024 will be influenced by the status of regional policy: settled commuter areas are predominantly located in the regions and stronger regional policy, with the effect of creating regional 'hubs' around England, will boost the prevalence and the affluence of settled commuter areas.

Key Trends

Political: The development of regional government will have a radical effect upon the affluence and degree of prevalence of settled commuter areas. Regional government, if backed with the appropriate fiscal mechanisms, would help strengthen Britain's regional hubs. Given the proximity of settled commuter areas to England's major regional cities (in particular to Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield and Newcastle), and the tendency for commuter areas to develop around established economic hubs, this would have the effect of providing further affluence and in-migration pressure upon such areas, making them more similar in form to the dynamic commuter model (see below). However in our workshop exercise it was considered unlikely that a full-muscled regional policy would develop.

Economic: In recent years there has been a resurgence of economic activity in the British regions. Whether this will continue into the future decades, however, remains to be seen. The established centre for Britain's most dynamic sectors, including finance and hi-tech, are either in London or in the South East (e.g. along the M4 corridor) and the historical tendency is for such sectors to continue to attract people to those areas until new sectors develop elsewhere. In a twenty-year timeframe it is plausible to suppose some new sectoral activity elsewhere in the country, and if this were to be the case then there would be some growth of

Social: Given their proximity to urban settlements, settled commuter areas are fairly delocalised. Car ownership is fairly widespread at present, but will encompass nearly all of the settled commuter population who are able to drive in 2024, thus making them fairly similar in 2024 to the dynamic commuter areas of today (see below). To the extent that they do not already do so, settled commuter areas will exhibit many of the characteristics of today's dynamic commuter areas – extensive travel to access long-distance services (supermarket, local town amenities, schools, work etc), affluence, and relatively mobile communities.

The average settled commuter resident will be middle-aged rather than elderly, someone who works in a nearby town or city, and who is moderately affluent.

Technological: Given the reasonable concentration of rural businesses and knowledge workers in settled commuter areas, they are likely to have access to the most recent ICT infrastructure by 2024 (which may include not only present innovations such as broadband enabled exchanges, wi-fi services, and 3G-enabled phone masts but also further developments that have not arrived yet). Settled commuter areas do however have only 'average' population concentrations and we have seen in the case of broadband development that lower population density blocks faster installation of the new infrastructure.

C. 'Transient Rural'

Overview

Transient or 'stagnant' rural areas will have failed to take advantage of any of the key sectors or trends that can help countryside areas: they are unattractive for pensioners due to their remoteness; they are unattractive to rural enterprises due to their poor transport connections; and they are unattractive to tourists due to their lack of heritage sites. The only group who might show some interest in the transient rural area are certain self-employed individuals for who distance is not an issue; those seeking second homes or 'rural retreats' but who do not possess great means, and (which may be same thing) long distance commuters who are attracted to the prospect of having a rural residence.

Like all rural areas there will be some new in-migration, but not very much. There may be some tension between established, poor and excluded local groups and the marginally more affluent newcomer population, especially with respect to those with alternative lifestyles. However the newcomer inflow is expected to be slight.

Key Trends

Political: Transient rural areas are at extreme risk of social exclusion, with a combination of low incomes, low growth, a working age population with poor employment prospects, and relatively low population density. Stronger governmental initiative in tackling social exclusion (as is arguably the case today) may help these areas in some capacity. We therefore anticipate that with respect to social exclusion, transient areas will not get worse than from their present situation.

Economic: Transient rural areas face grave economic difficulties. We have identified the main growth prospects for rural areas in the coming 20 years to lie in tourism, leisure services, rural enterprise, retirement services and positive multiplier effects arising from affluent in-migration. Transient rural areas face poor projections on all these counts.

Social: The socio-economic structure of transient rural areas is particularly adversely affected by the process of **rural de-industrialisation** that is presently taking place. As stated transient rural areas will continue to face difficulties with respect to social exclusion in future years.

Technological: Technological changes will neither bring rapid improvement to transient rural areas, nor will it indeed affect them in any major way. Transient rural areas fare extremely badly on all the indicators of ICT take-up, with the sole exception of age (transient rural populations tend to be of working age). They are likely to continue to have poor infrastructure and this will deter what few rural entrepreneurs they might otherwise have succeeded in attracting.

D. 'Deep rural'

Overview

In the more scenic areas, the **'farmer'** owns a few sheep and a sheep dog for 'maintaining' the countryside – keeping the grass down. For this he gets a subsidy from Europe or central government because there is value in cared for uplands. However, the rest of the time he is working for the professional couple that now live (for most of the week) nearby. His wife runs a B&B.

The **professional couple** nearby regard the area as their 'home' but their 'intellectual and economic' base is still the city, and they maintain a second home there where they use their time to socialize with friends and colleagues. There is no longer a clear distinction between the working week and the weekend. Rather, their week is structured by time in the country and time in the city and they work for about two thirds of every day (internationally). During the summer they spend more time in the country and less in the city (they have an outdoor swimming pool and a separate (up-market) self catering annex for housing paying guests as well as friends and family). During the winter, they spend more time in the city. Their children are at boarding school.

During the summer, the area is busy with tourists, who stay in Germanic log cabins. The area is much quieter in winter. The National Trust has bought up one or two farms in the area, which are very popular with the tourists.

The area is very dependent on the wealth of city based people. There is still no ethnic diversity in the area – it is still very much white Anglo-Saxon.

The less scenic areas have been taken over by wind farms, and factory farming/poly tunnels for continuous food production.

The key drivers that have affected the lives of the people described above are: IT, economic growth, farming supports and the planning system.

Key Trends

Political: Over a twenty-year time frame, deep rural areas are unlikely to be affected by many of the salient political changes that we might foresee (e.g. regional devolution). A looser planning policy will aid in-migration to these areas; however local political pressures to restrict new development are weakened by the relative absence of politically active groups in these areas.

Economic: Deep rural areas are surprisingly economically vibrant given their low population densities. This is in part due to their success in attracting tourists and 'day/weekend breakers', as evinced from the high number of hotels and restaurants in these areas. In an ever more complicated world deep rural areas offer the prospect of tranquillity that even other rural areas do not. In addition, deep rural areas are attractive to rural entrepreneurs, and can potentially become 'dynamic rural' areas (see below) – as Cambridgeshire has become.

Social: The social structure of deep rural areas is likely to 'gentrify' in future years; there will be greater delocalisation due to widened car ownership and the mobility of newcomer groups.

Technological: The lack of technological infrastructure in deep rural areas is a substantial barrier to the relocation of more rural enterprises into these areas. However it will not inhibit the attraction of these areas to domestic and international tourists.

E. 'Retirement retreats' ('Sea scape Britain')

Overview

Within this typology there is a complex relationship between the asset rich/asset poor and the active/inactive. This produces quite different trajectories for different areas – some have become depressed and isolated, while others have become more energetic and politically active.

The wealthier areas have become more welcoming to migrant workers to fill the big service gap. The migrant workers are attracted by the economic opportunity. There are also many gay couples and 'young fogies' in the area, drawn by the kid free nature of the area and the appeal of the sea air/view. The bulk of the population consists of retired pensioners of the baby boom generation.

In the less wealthy areas, there are increasing problems of social exclusion, caused by lack of personal income and lack of public services.

The key drivers that have affected the lives of the people described above are: service access etc.

Political: Pensions policy is the one area that will substantially impact upon incomes of the inhabitants of this typology. Present policy is oriented towards marginalizing the role of state pension as a pillar of pension support. Future retirees in 2024 may however possess adequate private pension savings as well as assets (e.g. stored in the value of their homes) that will tide them through their retirement years.

Economic: The economic structure of these areas is and in future will even more so be driven by retirement-related services such as health services and social care. This, obviously, is due to the high proportion of retirees among the population of this typology. Average incomes in retirement retreat areas are low but may rise in future, given that demand for coastal retirement destinations will increase as the baby-boom generation enters retirement and this will push up prices along the Southern coast, making them more socio-economically exclusive.

Social: The community capacity in retirement retreat areas is relatively vibrant due to the composition of its inhabitants, who have greater time to devote to community and social activities. Retirement retreat areas have fairly high population densities and this will help to maintain the viability of local services. In addition, present social trends indicate that there will be more single-elderly households in 20 years time. However this fact may equally increase, rather than decrease, the strength of civil society in these areas.

As the baby-boom generation enters retirement over the course of the coming decade the number of retirees in the UK will increase and of those a sizeable number can be expected to relocate to coastal areas.

Rural burglary rates are already higher than in urban areas and these areas are likely to be particularly at risk.

Technological: Technological change may not impact radically upon retirement retreat areas.

F. 'Dynamic Commuter'

Overview

Housing in this typology will be very expensive and security has become a much more significant issue. Much money is spent making dwellings 'safe'. The inhabitants have something of a 'gated psychology' wanting to keep 'safe' from outsiders. The typology will become more socially exclusive. Actual rates of social exclusion in these areas will be very low, as marginal groups will have been 'priced out' of the area.

The cost of housing means that it is very difficult for young people to get on to the housing ladder and as a consequence the typology is getting a much older age profile than previously, though will continue to have only a smaller proportion of retirees, as those of retirement age will be sufficiently affluent to consider relocating elsewhere. Many young people who were bought up have to move away to find affordable accommodation – often to urban areas.

There is housing development in the areas but there are constant battles between the residents and the planners. The development that does occur can be thought of as 'non affordable' housing development. The development that gets less opposition will be expensive housing units – certainly not social housing or dwellings that can be bought by poorer people. Cheaper housing that does occur will almost exclusively be on brown field sites in the less affluent parts of the bigger towns.

There will be significant pressure to keep the outward 'country' nature of the typology, which will increase the opposition to housing development.

The lack of housing means that there is a shortage of labour for many of the local services and amenities. Where possible there is an increasing use of migrant labour that either live in very poor accommodation or live in the more affluent households (nannies, au pairs, housekeepers, gardeners, personal assistants, drivers etc).

Also there will be a return of the skilled journeyman – craftsman coming to the area from cheaper areas to carry out work.

Services will have been increasingly privatised and there will be significant more use of private health and education services, for instance.

With the 'gated psychology' of many of the inhabitants there will be very little traditional community atmosphere. Given the importance of commuting then social networks will be naturally quite wide – increasingly entered into in a virtual world.

Transport infrastructure will be critical, although we do not see significant improvements having occurred. Its character will largely determine the nature of the typology.

High living costs and difficult travel will add to the stress of most inhabitants and there will be high levels of divorce and depression. For many a difficult life – whether well off or poor.

Significant pressure on natural resources – particularly water. Metered water will be compulsory and water prices will rise significantly.

Key Trends

Political: A key political trend here will be the balance of power between central/regional government and local authorities. Dynamic commuter areas are populated by articulate social groups who are well connected and have a strong interest in preventing further 'encroachment' upon the rural idyll that they have bought into. If land-use decisions lie within the scope of the local authorities there is likely to be substantial opposition to further development. On the other hand, regional or central government would be in a position to override local interests in favour of broader objectives.

Economic: The growing trend towards a **'knowledge-driven economy'** will mean more affluent knowledge workers who are capable of dividing their time between work in the city and working from home. Improvements in ICT will accentuate this trend. Dynamic commuter areas are likely to house more and more of these ex-urban professionals.

Social: Dynamic commuter areas are highly delocalised, and this will increase. Commuters spend much of their day away from the local area, and in the case of dynamic commuter areas this may involve traversing a substantial distance. Residents are affluent and multiple car ownership is common. Services are sought from far away from the local area. Residents are 'e-aware' and likely to be among the first to take advantage of new ITC-enabled methods for getting goods, services and information.

In terms of their social structure they may be considered as a kind of extension of the wealthy suburbs of the South East into surrounding rural areas. There are very few pensioners, and instead a population of mainly middle age, high-income professionals who may own not only more than one car but also more than one property. This tendency for dual home ownership is bound to increase as a consequence of a) the rise in income and wealth inequalities and b) the increase in long-distance working (i.e. for high-income city workers to take a city flat and a rural retreat).

The ageing of the UK population may lead to some increase in the number of retirees in dynamic commuter areas. However, we should also take into account the relative unattractiveness of these areas as retirement destinations – they are expensive, contain very few existing pensioners and have fairly patchy local community structures due to the delocalised nature of the inhabitant's lifestyles. Therefore a number of the present occupants of dynamic commuter areas in 2004 may decide to move elsewhere for their retirement preceding 2024, making way for a new generation of rural-urban commuters.

Technological: Dynamic rural areas are likely to be among the first to capitalise on new innovations in ICT. Infrastructurally they are likely to be among the first rural areas to benefit from new developments (e.g. broadband) due to the density of their populations, their affluence, their willingness to take action to achieve desired results (e.g. petitioning BT to broadband enable call centres) and their relative proximity to urban areas. In addition, dynamic rural residents are highly time-pressured and likely to among the first to take advantage of new methods of home shopping and service delivery via ICT.

G. Dynamic Rural

Overview

Technology will be a key driver. We assume that rural IT issues will be sorted out by 2024 (i.e. proper broadband, and proper whatever comes next).

The typology is still very 'rural' but there will be extensive pressure on housing development due to high inward movement of population. This will obviously include affordable housing. There will rather less opposition to housing development than in the dynamic commuter typology.

Farming will still remain relatively important – partly as a buffer against development.

The typology will continue to attract 'new entrepreneurs' often working in small businesses. By and large there will significant flexibility in working practices and quite a lot of working from home. Often people who are 'opting' out from urban life. Quite a few 'downshifTERS' will be attracted to the typology.

Given the influx of population there will be a loss of village life, although there will be a strong desire for communities.

Quite a lot of the incoming population will be middle-aged people from urban areas.

There will be increasing pressures on the tranquillity of the typology and also a significant strain on the natural resources – particularly water (especially in light of the fact that many of the typology LADs are in the eastern part of England).

Increased links between business and universities.

Given the nature of a lot of the work carried out in the typology then part of the influx of population will be skilled workers from abroad.

The 'Linda Snell' factor

The typology will attract country head offices of multinationals and some of these will be persuaded to fund (or partially fund) infrastructural development. 'The Microsoft M11 extension'.

Key Trends

Political: The political dynamic of these areas is likely to favour development and growth. Without established rural populations in favour of preserving the 'rural idyll' dynamic rural areas are likely to face few political currents against proposals for new building and transport developments. Indeed, local businesses are likely to gravitate in favour of such schemes in order to help their supply connections and house their labour requirements.

The decision to enable greater university funding (either publicly, via fees, or a combination of the two) may play a role in energising those rural areas that surround a prominent university. We have seen in the case of the University of Cambridge the effect that this supply of international talent has had in allowing for the establishment of biotechnology and pharmaceuticals firms around the Cambridgeshire region. This effect *could* be duplicated elsewhere, provided that other higher educational institutions are capable of emulating the same success in attracting top students to a particular region. Over a twenty-year timeframe it is not especially plausible that any major effect would be discerned, though this will remain to be seen.

Economic: The trend for a new species of ‘**rural entrepreneur**’, often mobile, well educated and specialising in new technology industries is particularly relevant to dynamic rural areas. We consider that the phenomenon of rural enterprise is related to the preferences of rural entrepreneurs themselves and therefore that this phenomenon will not only continue, but accelerate in future years as the number of new knowledge-based industries increases. In particular rural entrepreneurs are attracted to the low-density, yet accessible rural areas that are represented in the existing dynamic rural set and potentially some of the present deep rural areas.

Dynamic rural areas will continue to be affluent and will continue to attract newcomer inflows.

Social: the social structure of dynamic rural areas is likely to be the most diversified of all rural typologies. The generation of new employment and the rise of new technology industries, often attracting labour from abroad, will bring ethnic diversity and more alternative lifestyles to the countryside. Dynamic rural areas will be radically delocalised – individuals living here are likely to spend only a portion of their time in the area and may travel frequently both domestically and internationally.

Technological: On the one hand dynamic rural areas are likely to face infrastructural problems caused by the low population density of the areas. However the inhabitants of dynamic rural areas are the most ‘e-aware’ in society and if larger companies are attracted to rural relocation here then they may even help provide funding for the infrastructure provision.

Appendix 3: Further questions raised at the scenario creation workshop

As well as these three scenarios based on modelling drivers and their outcomes in different combinations, other ways of thinking about the future emerged from the workshop. Specifically, by thinking about the nature of life in the different typologies and how these might change over the next twenty years, it is possible to question what can be done actively to promote the growth of one typology over another, if it represents an attractive and interesting outcome for society. Similarly the question of how to transform the less dynamic and vibrant communities types could point the need for a raft of targeted and specific policies.

A. Encouraging faster growth of the dynamic rural typology

Whilst the 'dynamic rural' typology would grow in both the central scenario and the rise of the rurbs, it would be less influential than either of the commuter-based typologies. Dynamic rural represents a very interesting and attractive typology **today** with good levels of entrepreneurship resulting in the highest rates of employment growth, economic growth, and growth in resident population. Despite this it is still sparsely populated and has higher than average employment in agriculture and tranquillity measures. The future view of life within these areas that emerged from the workshop is generally positive and suggests the need for a major investment in technology and the possibility of attracting major enterprises to establish operations in these areas.

B. Key features of dynamic rural areas in 2024

Technology will be a key driver. We assume that rural ICT infrastructure will be fully comprehensive by 2024, both with respect to broadband and successor technologies.

The typology is still very 'rural' but there will be extensive pressure on housing development due to high inward movement of population. This will obviously include affordable housing. There will rather less opposition to housing development than in the dynamic commuter typology.

Farming will still remain relatively important – partly as a buffer against development.

Most importantly, these areas will continue to attract 'new entrepreneurs' often working in small businesses. By and large there will significant flexibility in working practices and quite a lot of working from home – attracting people who are 'opting' out from urban life or 'downshifbers'. Quite a lot of the incoming population will be middle-aged people from urban areas. And due to the growth in the knowledge economy employment, it is likely that these areas will see increased links between business and universities and with this an inflow of skilled workers from abroad.

It is also possible that such areas will be able attract country head offices of multinationals and some of these will be persuaded to fund (or partially fund) infrastructural development - for example, 'The Microsoft M11 extension'.

Given continuing expansion of population there will be a loss of village life, although there will be a strong desire for communities and these will be facilitated by new forms of interactive, electronic communications.

There will be increasing pressures on the high tranquillity of the typology and also a significant strain on the natural resources – particularly water (especially in light of the fact that many of the typology LADs are in the eastern part of England).

Revitalising more stagnant areas – how to transform transient rural and peripheral amenity (see below) in the future?

The other side of this approach is to focus on the less desirable areas that exist today and look at ways of reversing their fortunes. In terms of economic dynamism and general vibrancy both peripheral amenity and transient rural typologies are well below average and present some important questions for national, regional and local government. How can these areas be revitalised and transformed to make them more attractive and economically active in the future?

- **Peripheral amenity** is largely seaside areas with high levels of tourism, retirement population and tranquillity, but low on population growth and well-educated professional residents.
- **Transient rural** areas are typified by sleepy market towns where commuting is higher than average but every other indicator is lower than average. Nothing much is happening in terms of job and wealth creation, or tourism and agriculture and even the tranquillity rating is low!

Appendix 4: Summary of public attitudes research

A. Objectives

Overall, the objectives of the public attitudes research were to add depth and colour to the 20 and 50-year scenarios created at the workshop.

More specifically, the objectives of this stage of the project were to:

- Explore a 'layman' vision of the countryside in 20 and 50 years;
- Explore the general public's reaction to the 'expert' 20 and 50 year scenarios;
- Compare and contrast the 'layman' and 'expert' scenarios;
- Use the general public's ideas and feedback to make the 20 and 50-year scenarios more plausible and more interesting.

B. Methodology

Four extended group discussions were conducted with members of the public. Each group lasted two hours and was made up of six to eight respondents. The groups were split by:

- Social class and length of time in the area: two of the groups were with ABC1s who had moved from an urban to a rural area within the last two years; two were with C2DEs who had always lived in a rural area.
- Lifestage: two of the groups were with pre-family/young family (defined as those whose eldest child was under 12); two were with older family/empty nester (defined as those whose youngest child was 12 or over).
- Location: two of the groups were in a rural location in the South (the area around Ashford, Kent), and two were in a deep rural location in the North (the area around Alnwick, Northumberland).

C. Procedure

After an initial warm-up, respondents were asked how they viewed their area, and the countryside in general in 2004. They were then asked to think about how the countryside might change over the next 20 years. Images and key words were used to stimulate ideas and to help create a 2024 'layman' image board/scenario. Respondents were then given a brief summary of the 'expert' 20 year scenarios, and were asked what they thought about these scenarios in terms of likelihood, desirability, and fit with their own vision of the future.

This exercise was repeated for the 50 year scenarios – using images and key words to create a 2054 image board/scenario and then exploring respondents' reaction to the 'expert' 50 year scenarios. Finally, respondents were asked what implications they felt that these scenarios had for local and national policy.

D. Background

The areas around Alnwick and Ashford represent very different types of countryside. In terms of typology, Alnwick is deep rural, whereas Ashford is transient rural, on the borders of dynamic commuter.

All the respondents said that they loved living in the countryside. They enjoyed the peace and quiet, the feeling of space, the 'sense of community', and feelings of safety and security. The C2DE born and bred respondents in Alnwick were, however, rather more negative than respondents in the other groups. They complained that there was 'nothing to do' and felt that their area was being spoilt by tourists and incomers.

In the box below are two case studies of respondents who took part in this research, chosen not because they were typical, but because they give some insight into the sort of things that are happening now and that may (or may not) be happening more in 2024.

Box 1: Case studies 2004 or 2024?

Kathy is 56 and lives in a 'remote' converted barn next to the farmhouse where she was born. Her parents, who are in their 80s, have moved to Ashford to be nearer emergency and secondary healthcare. They still live independently. Before they moved, her dad had a heart attack and it took 'hours' before the ambulance came. Since moving to Ashford, her mum broke her leg and the ambulance was with her in 10 minutes. Kathy believes that it is only because her parents have moved to an urban area that they are still alive today.

Dave is 31 and lives in a bungalow in Kings North; a village 15 minutes drive from Ashford. He bought the bungalow from his parents when they retired to Newcastle to be nearer relatives. He loves the area because it is quiet, there are lots of field around him where he takes his dogs for walks, but he has all the advantages that being a short drive from an urban area brings (e.g. not too far from shops, clubs etc.) When he bought his parents house, he turned it from a three bedroom to a four bedroom house by converting the living room, and lets the spare rooms out to 5 tenants. His tenants are young builders and council workers who cannot afford to get on the property ladder at the moment. He lives mainly off the rental income, though does the occasional odd job driving machinery.

E. Layman scenario 2024

Respondents' views of what would be happening in the countryside in 2024 were all fairly grim – based on a continuation of the sort of problems they felt were issues in 2004. These views are illustrated by the image boards created during the group discussions. In summary, the key themes were:

- **Population increase:** More people have moved to the countryside from the city and from Europe. They have bought up rural homes and priced the locals out, many of whom have moved abroad. Lots of new housing has been built to accommodate the population increase, and there is far less green belt.
- **No agriculture:** The former farmer is focusing on tourism – running a B&B and/or a farm museum.

- **Increase in social inequality:** There is more private health and education, and an increase in begging and homelessness, particularly amongst young people.
- **High crime:** The increasing social divide has led to an increase in crime and disorder.
- **Failing infrastructure and public services:** The NHS and state education is in decline – now only available in urban areas. Numbers of police haven't increased, although rates of crime have. The existing infrastructure is unable to cope with the population increase and there are problems with drainage, water supply and rubbish disposal.
- **Increase in health problems:** The immigrant population has contributed to a spread in AIDS/HIV and other new diseases; 'old' diseases (measles, small pox) have reappeared because of a severe drop in immunization rates; disease has spread rapidly amongst the socially excluded due to poor living conditions and limited access to health care.
- **Decline in heritage:** The UK is 'entirely dominated by Europe' and the euro has replaced the pound.

Despite the doom and gloom, there were some glimmers of hope. Most respondents thought that developing technology and new sources of energy might have led to better housing and transport solutions. They thought that by 2024, there would be 'new', more environmentally friendly transport solutions, and that, in terms of energy, individual homes would be more self-sufficient.

F. Reaction to 20 year scenarios

Respondents felt that 'Consumption Countryside' had a close fit with their vision of the future of the countryside in 20 years time. They viewed this scenario as the most likely and least desirable of the 20 year 'expert' scenarios. However, there was less agreement over which scenario represented the most 'desirable' vision of the countryside in 20 years time. Here there was a clear split between those living in the deep rural area around Alnwick, and those living in the rural area around Ashford. The former preferred the idea of a '21st Century Good Life', while the latter preferred the 'Rise of the Rurbs'. Interestingly, these preferences had a clear fit with the 'typology' of their area, with respondents showing a clear preference for the scenario that depicted an increase in their typology.

G. 'Layman scenario' 2054

Respondents generally had one of three different views about what would be happening to the countryside in 2054. These were...

Scenario 1: There is no 2054.

"The third world war started in 2028 and wiped out the human race."
C2DE born and bred, Ashford

Scenario 2: There is no countryside in 2054.

"England will be covered in concrete."
C2DE born and bred, Alnwick

Some respondents felt that in 2054, all the problems of 2024 would have magnified. They saw this very much as 'Consumption Countryside' continued resulting in a loss of distinction between town and countryside. Under this scenario, the key themes were:

- **Increased social inequality:** There is now no NHS or state education; everything is privatised; millions of people are without homes.
- **High crime:** Crime has got even worse and people now live in gated communities.
- **Poor health:** People now have a shorter lifespan due to poorer health (caused by unresolved environmental problems); voluntary euthanasia is legal and commonplace.
- **Frequent natural disasters** caused by climate change and leading to droughts and famine.
- **No English Heritage:** a European or international government and no royal family.

Scenario 3: 'The future is bright'

"I think we will have learnt our lesson in 50 years. Things might be getting better."
ABC1 incomer, Alnwick

Other respondents felt more optimistic about the longer term future. They felt that all the problems that were appearing now would have come to a head in 2024 and would begin to be resolved in the years that followed. Once again, their hope lay primarily in housing and transport. In this scenario, the large elderly population was active and healthy.

These respondents felt that, in 2054, some sense of 'countryside' would have been maintained. However, in relation to the countryside, the definition of a 'bright' future was clearly influenced by personal preference. Some talked in terms of preserved heritage (in particular, the Royal Family and the pound), while others talked in terms of social inclusion (greater acceptance of 'alternative' lifestyles and ethnic minorities). However, there appeared to be one common theme – personal safety and lack of crime.

[How would you define a bright future?]

"Not having to lock your door. Not having to worry about the security of your home, or the safety of your kids."
C2DE older Ashford

Respondents in Alnwick said that a sense of security and not having to worry about crime was a prime reason for living in the area. Respondents in Ashford saw an increase in crime as the main downside of the increased population/urban sprawl.

H. Reaction to 50 year scenarios

Fortress and Fences

Respondents perceived 'Fortress and Fences' as having a close fit with the 'layman' scenario 2 – a continuation of 'Consumption Countryside'. All rated it as the least desirable of the 'expert' scenarios. However, the likelihood rating was more mixed than for 'Consumption Countryside'. How likely respondents viewed this scenario depended on their optimism for the longer term future.

Garden and Guilds

Respondents in three out of four of the groups viewed 'Garden and Guilds' as the most desirable of the 'expert' 50 year scenarios. There was more universal agreement about the desirability of Garden and Guilds than about any of the 20 year scenarios. One of the keys to this may be that this scenario depicted a crime free future.

C2DE born and bred respondents in Alnwick were split between 'Garden and Guilds' and 'Preserved Heritage'. Like '21st Century Good Life', 'Preserved Heritage' very much reflected the 'deep rural' typology of the area.

I. Policy implications

Respondents were asked to consider what policy measures might help achieve the more desirable futures (Garden and Guilds) and avoid the less desirable ones (Fortress and Fences). Many felt that the solution was in crime prevention, requiring harsh policy measures. These included:

- Clamping down on drugs ('the source of all evil');
- The re-introduction of capital punishment (justified since by 2054 there would be techniques to ensure absolute certainty over whether or not someone has committed a crime);
- Tighter immigration policy (since 'it is the immigrants that murder and rape our children').

Some more constructive suggestions included:

- A need to focus on housing and transport infrastructure;
- Measures to address social inequality (focusing on the NHS and state education).

J. Conclusions

On this evidence, the 20 and 50 year scenarios created at the workshop are:

- Comprehensible: an 'unskilled' audience can grasp and distinguish between key themes.
- Plausible: there is a close fit between the 'layman' and 'expert' scenarios
- Comprehensive (at this level): the 'expert' scenarios cover the range of 'layman' scenarios.

There appears to be a clear progression from:

- Consumption Countryside to Fortress and Fences;
- 21st Century Good Life to Preserved Heritage;
- Rise of the Rurbs to Vibrant Variety.

The first scenario is universally perceived as least desirable – a vision of what the future will be like if current trends continue unchecked. The two alternatives divide opinion according to how people see and value the countryside today and how they would like to see it develop in the future. This research suggests there is perhaps a need for a 'middle way' scenario in 2024 that leads on to Garden and Guilds in 2054.

Appendix 5: Summary of Plenary Session

A. Introductory sessions

The plenary session was convened one month after the scenario generation workshop. Over 50 participants from a wide range of organisations with an interest in the future of the countryside attended the day. (The full list is attached in the appendix.) The objectives of the day were as follows:

- To check that the 20 year and 50 year scenarios stood up to scrutiny from a wider group of potential stakeholders
- To use the collected expertise and input of the group to improve and enhance the scenarios
- To ensure that the scenarios can be effectively summarised and communicated to a wider audience
- To test the value of the visualisations in the communications process
- To further develop their usefulness and increase relevance to the policy making community and all rural stakeholders

The day was structured around a number of key sessions with a combination of open plenary discussion and feedback and some group exercise work.

Following an introduction to the Horizon Scanning programme in DEFRA and a general introduction to the project objectives and process, the 7 scenarios were presented to the plenary in a simplified visual form by Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam, the workshop moderator.

B. Panel Session

Following this, a panel session was conducted at which 4 experts were invited to provide their feedback and input into the scenario building process. They were:

Pam Warhurst, Deputy Chairman, the Countryside Agency
David Darton, Head of Strategy, Equal Opportunities Commission
Philip Lowe, Duke of Northumberland Professor of Rural Economy
Alan Baxter, Engineer and owner, Alan Baxter Associates

Their comments were as follows.

Pam Warhurst: highlighted the need to pick up on the public concerns that were revealed in our focus group research, and in particular issues of inequality and within that, rural-urban inequality. Social exclusion is one key dimension of this. In addition, the importance of community to the rural lifestyle is of key concern and the relationship between community and landscape must be appreciated. The growth of regionalism may present more of a threat than an opportunity to rural communities, if power is drawn up from the local level and placed in the hands of regional assemblies.

David Darton: followed by posing what he felt to be the key ethical question for the future: *what is the countryside for?* There is no consensus among either the general population nor within Government on this issue, yet it is central, both to the development of possible and desirable scenarios, and to the development of policy that could make such scenarios a reality.

David went on to stress that in any case, we should not seek a universal outcome. Today's countryside is differentiated, and in some sense this suits the public, who are likewise in disagreement about what kind of countryside is to be desired. In future we should strive to maintain this diversity or 'plural rurality'. On the issue of rural social exclusion, the issue is much simpler than in cities – the rural poor lack infrastructure and they lack necessary purchasing power. The lack of purchasing power is due, firstly, to the relationship that rural areas have with towns and cities, whereby the urban rich are exported to the country while the rural poor are exported to the city, secondly, the development of closed rural networks.

Finally, David reiterated the need for joined-up policy solutions to enable the right rural scenario outcome. It is clear that the policies required in many instances go beyond the capabilities of DEFRA alone.

Philip Lowe: added that the countryside is dominated by nostalgia and 'backward looking' – and welcomed the chance to 'think forward'. While some scenarios – in particular, the 'fortress and fences' scenario – **look** like something out the past (as much as something out of the future), this in many ways represents the enduring **symbolism** of history for the British rurality – it is very much part of its accumulated meaning.

How can we empower rural communities? From the focus groups it is clear that local people are concerned about 'Community, Identity, Stability'. In a rapidly globalising world, rural peoples continue to seek the local as their desired reference point, and policy needs to recognise that.

Alan Baxter: picked up on earlier discussions of the differentiated countryside, stressed that *all* of the scenarios will begin to emerge in some form in different areas of the country.

On a different issue, the role of technology needs to be considered more fully. The technological changes of the last 20 years have empowered us immensely: what effects could further innovations have over a 50 year period? The **raison d'être** for urban areas in many ways no longer exists. We no longer need to live in cities to work, to communicate with people, to purchase or sell goods. In the future, human beings will do what they **want** to do, not what they **have** to do, and their behaviour may be difficult to predict. Yet it is precisely these behaviours that will determine the future evolution of British society and also the nature of the British countryside.

C. Audience feedback session

In the subsequent audience feedback session participants were invited to offer their comments and suggestions on the scenario outcomes. The main points noted were as follows:

- Several respondents stressed the importance of explaining with greater clarity the drivers involved in producing the scenario outcomes
- Particular reference was made to the need to factor in the effects of possible international and global change over the 50 year time period – as it was felt this could have extreme consequences on the future of the countryside – for example pressure on oil and fossil fuels transforming the world economy or the growth of a Chinese middle class as tourists and entrepreneurs
- The impact of significant environmental shifts should also be clarified – particularly whether global warming was felt to be a potential driver of change or not
- Generally the scenarios lacked enough reference to the underlying biological and environmental changes that could have occurred including the issue of environmental stress caused by over-development and lack of sustainability in planning such as flooding or droughts
- It was felt that more emphasis needed to be placed on how civil society, and not just government, could contribute to the future of rural England and Wales
- In addition, regional differentiation was highlighted as an important aspect that needed to be considered in greater detail, especially with respect to Wales. Wales could present an interesting test case but hasn't been specifically included in the project outputs
- There was a danger that the perspective adopted by the scenarios was too London-centric and South East focussed. It was pointed out that the counterurbanisation phenomenon, so widespread in the South of England, was less of a factor in these regions and that there were even areas where a reverse trend still operates.

D. Team exercise

Following this discussion participants were divided into teams – based on tables in the room. Each team took one scenario and were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What would be the main implications of the scenario for people and communities? How would they respond to the situation if it existed in a future world?
2. What are the political assumptions behind the scenarios? And what could this mean for Government and DEFRA?

E. Team outputs: comments on individual scenarios

(See relevant sections under each of the scenarios in the main document)

F. Final discussion session

Following the feedback by the teams, a final discussion session was held, firstly for table teams to review and summarise their comments on the scenarios overall and secondly to suggest any additions or amendments that seemed necessary.

The main comments that were recorded as a result of this final session, which differed substantially from comments received earlier in the day, were as follows:

- Could there be another scenario based on a return to agriculture and productivity – driven by a greater need for self-sufficiency? Could this be based on a major economic decline or the end of international trading arrangements or a global energy crisis?
- There is too much value placed on economic prosperity over other values which might steer a different course
- More clarification of governance issues is required – specifically the degree to which power is devolved from a national to a local level
- Greater involvement with country-led groups should be sought such as the Country Landowners Association or the Countryside Alliance to counter any urban bias
- It would be wise to consider ways in which a more harmonious relationship between settled residents and incomers could be created – too often tension is envisaged between ‘competing’ groups
- Visual representations tend to foreground people and technology and push landscape into the background. Ideally they would show more of the settlement types and land use too.
- A more integrated vision incorporating the environment and biodiversity issues would be good.
- The question of which scenarios DEFRA would want to choose for the future is key – without this guidance it is difficult to determine the key policies required
- The desirability of each scenario must be weighed against the reality that in fact all the scenarios are likely to develop together and co-exist in different areas of the country
- Should there be more radical scenarios – perhaps further ‘stretching’ is required to dramatise the most extreme outcomes
- Perhaps a matrix of settlements should be drawn up with a view of which types of areas will form into which scenarios in the future
- Drivers should be subject to a risk assessment process
- Governance options inherent in the scenarios must be explained

Scenarios should be open – not deterministic or closed in any way – allowing for fluidity and flexibility in how they are used and described.

Appendix 6: Why is there no 'Productive Rural' Scenario?

In a number of our consultations with stakeholders, it was observed that there is no scenario which forecasts a return to a 'productive' countryside, 'productive' here being understood in terms of agriculture, rather than rural manufacturing, services, or the knowledge sector. Strictly speaking this is not quite correct: we do anticipate, in all of our scenarios, that some proportion of rural employment and a substantial amount of its land use will be devoted to agricultural production. However, in an era of globalisation, where trade agreements are increasingly requiring us to reduce agricultural subsidies, and in an era of EU Enlargement and CAP reform, simply to maintain the status quo will prove a substantial challenge. We do envisage that some farmers will succeed in capitalising on niche markets, such as branded local products, and that others may be able to take advantage of emerging technologies (such as biotechnology) to maintain the competitiveness of their business. Nonetheless, the fact remains that under any scenario the future role of agriculture *per se* within the English and Welsh rural landscape is likely to diminish in terms of its share of employment and GDP. There is a broader sense in which this has, of course, been the trend for the past two hundred years, and is reflective of Engel's Law – the tendency for people to spend, as they become more and more affluent, a decreasing proportion of their incomes on food, and a rising proportion on goods and services.