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**Rural Policy: New Directions and New  
Challenges - Appendix**

**D M Winter**

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**Rural Policy:  
New Directions and New  
Challenges - Appendix**

*Research to identify the policy context on rural issues  
in the South West*

**Report to the  
South West of England  
Regional Development Agency  
and the Regional Assembly**

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## **Appendix A: Components of Rural Policy: A Comparative Analysis of Some Key Rural Policy Documents**

**A sustainable future for the South West: the regional sustainable development framework for the South West of England.** South West Regional Assembly (2001).

**Aims.** To prepare an integrated strategic framework for the promotion of the sustainable economic, social and environmental well-being of the region.

**Rurality.** The report is not divided between rural and urban, but within the holistic approach there is much that has a clear rural dimension.

**History.** The first objective identified in the constitution of the Regional Assembly was the preparation of this strategy.

**Audiences.** Everyone: “The main purpose of the Framework is to set out an agreed agenda for everyone in the region to work towards, to improve the quality of life for ourselves and for future generations. As such it will be a valuable tool for a vast range of organisations.” [p13, para5].

**Partners.** “The Government Office for the South West will use the Framework to set the context for its own work as well as to assess the work of others.” [p13, para1] Sustainability South West will prepare progress reports and reviews.

**Europe.** No explicit European dimension.

**Mechanisms.** The Framework is set out as fifteen ‘Themes’ each with a set of objectives and indicators.

**Impacts.** No explicit targets or outcomes.

**Context.** The Framework “provides a common sustainable development context for other regional and local strategies, and a reference point from which they can identify their contribution to sustainability in the region.” [p13, para4].

**Countryside character, Vol. 8: South West.** Countryside Agency (1999).

**Aims.** The Countryside Agency has produced a Character Map of England dividing the country into 159 'Character Areas'. This and the supporting descriptive documents are intended to be an important educational and planning tool.

**Rurality.** This report covers the South West of England without distinction between rural and urban. The area described extends beyond the administrative SW region.

**History.** Unspecified.

**Audiences.** Unspecified.

**Partners.** None.

**Europe.** Unspecified.

**Mechanisms.** The report describes in detail 60 character areas making up the South West. Each area description comprises sections on:

Key characteristics.

Landscape character.

Physical influences.

Historical and cultural influences.

Historical and cultural influences.

Land cover.

Pressures on each area are also summarised together with the initiatives that are or should be addressing them.

**Impacts.** Not applicable.

**Context.** The series forms a background to the annual 'State of the Countryside' reports.

**Devon recovery plan: an integrated plan to help the economy and communities recover from the effects of foot and mouth disease.** Devon Recovery Unit (2001).

**Aims.** This is a detailed and costed response from the county worst affected by FMD in the South West. It also is a response to the Prime Minister's call for a debate on rural futures, and approaches this by:

“Recognising that farming is multi-functional.

Developing farm activities that deliver integrated economic, environmental and social benefits.

Putting the case for agriculture and rural policy reform, particularly so that public payments to businesses are tied to delivery of public benefits to communities, the environment and the wider business community.” [para1.14]

**Rurality.** Not discussed.

**History.** The background is a report by the University of Exeter estimating that the county would lose 1,500 jobs / £114m of income in the agricultural sector, 3,300 jobs / £108m of income in the agricultural sector, and 2,900 jobs / £95m of income in the agricultural sector. This equates to a decline of 2.9% of GDP.

**Audiences.** All agencies with an active involvement of delivering public funds to rural areas.

**Partners.** “Virtually all of the activities will require a partnership approach and delivery will be the responsibility of a range of partners including the County Council.” [para2.6] Each action point has its partners listed.

**Europe.** Not discussed, beyond being a potential funding source.

**Mechanisms.** The ‘Recovery Plan’ is over three timescales (short, medium and long terms), and covers ten issues: capacity to deliver (integration of delivery); marketing; business finance; business advice; health and welfare support; training; community regeneration; environment; agriculture; and access to the countryside. Within this there is framework for setting up, funding, implementing and monitoring performance:

Nature and timescale of initiative proposed.

Lobbying needed.

Scheme cost.

Possible funding sources.

Partners.

Outcomes / expected impacts.

**Impacts.** Assessed in detail for each of the 83 initiatives, albeit without much quantification (since these are proposals rather than firm projects).

**Context.** No particular reference is made to other agencies work - not least because Devon was quick to respond in suggesting practical policies.

**Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10).** Government Office for the South West / Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, 2001

- **Aims.** *“provides a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and Local Transport Plans (LTPs) in the South West should be prepared;*

*sets out a broad development strategy for the period to 2016 and beyond*

*provides the spatial framework for other strategies and programmes.” [p5, para 1.2]*

**Rurality.** Policy is divided spatially between ‘Principal Urban Areas’, ‘Other locations offering the prospect for balanced development’, ‘rural areas’ and ‘coastal areas’. There are also specific policies for the Objective 1 area and ‘other Areas of Special Economic and Social Need’.

- **History.** This replaces the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) published by the Government Office for the South West in July 1994. The new Guidance has been developed by the South West Regional Planning Conference.
- **Audiences.** All bodies concerned with land use and transport.
- **Partners.** Local Authorities, SWERDA, SWRA
- **Europe.** Incorporates the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP).
- **Mechanism** *“Policy SS 19: Rural Areas Market towns should be the focal points for development and service provision in the rural areas and this role should be supported and enhanced. Outside market towns, development should be small scale and take place primarily within or adjacent to existing settlements, avoiding scattered forms of development. Local authorities in their development plans should:*
  - *locate development to support the rural areas primarily in market towns, identified and designated in development plans through a balanced mix of homes, jobs, services and facilities suitable to the scale and location of such settlements;*
  - *adopt policies which support the restructuring of the rural economy and the provision of jobs to satisfy local needs;*
  - *set out policies for supporting sustainable farm diversification schemes which help to maintain the viability of the agriculture sector and rural economic vitality;*
  - *seek ways of providing for essential shops and services to serve the rural areas;*
  - *promote improved and integrated public transport, communications and service delivery and support innovative community based solutions to public transport and communications, in order to increase access to jobs, housing and facilities;*
  - *limit housing growth in market towns near larger urban areas where it would fuel commuting rather than meet local needs. [p39, para 3.74]*

- **Impacts.** The regional planning guidance sets the parameters for County Structure Plans, (district) Local Plans and Local Transport Plans.
- **Context.** The Regional Planning Guidance will be replaced with a Regional Spatial Strategy with statutory status under proposal in the Planning Green Paper.

**England LEADER+ programme 2000-2006;** also Annex F, **LEADER+ in the South West.** DEFRA (2001).

**Aims.** The regional aims are “To enable and facilitate the South West’s rural communities in developing programmes for action to retain and strengthen their cultural distinctiveness, economic viability and quality of life through integrated rural development which conserves and enhances the special character and diversity of the Region’s environmental assets.” [p11, para1]. Fourteen more detailed regional objectives are identified which fit within the themes outlined in the strategy for England. [p13], namely:

“To build capacity in local rural communities to encourage them to think about the longer-term potential of their area and to work together to address, in sustainable ways, the needs and issues identified.”

“To support local communities in developing and implementing integrated, high quality, innovative strategies for sustainable development.” In four respects: viable rural economies; enhanced quality of life; conserving the natural and cultural heritage; and improving the organisational skills of communities.

**Rurality.** Although concerned with aiding discrete and locally-coherent areas of rural deprivation, the programme avoids giving any rigid definition of rurality but rather is driven by the needs and priorities of rural areas recognising the interdependence of town and country.

**History.** This programme follows the original LEADER and its successor LEADER II, but these programmes were strictly geographically limited to benefiting people living or working in Objective 5b areas.

**Audiences.** At the regional level the programme recognises four priority target groups: women, young people, older population and rural businesses and workers affected by restructuring.

**Partners.** Overseen by DEFRA, with .

**Europe.** The Programme is an EU ‘Community Initiative’.

**Mechanisms.** Three areas of activity (‘Actions’) are identified:

“Action 1 - the development and implementation of integrated, pilot rural development strategies by local action groups;

Action 2 - co-operation projects between local action groups (or with other groups following the LEADER approach) within and outside the UK: and

Action 3 - networking.” [p35]

**Impacts.** Each LEADER operation has some flexibility in determining suitable impacts and outcomes.

**Context.** The policy has been design to meet objectives set out in the Rural White Paper, working alongside the England Rural Development Programme. “LEADER+, with its distinctive community and area-based approach and mechanisms allied to its emphasis on experimentation, will complement and add significant value to the other measures. It is at the cutting edge of rural development policy; and it has a crucial role in informing future mainstream rural development policies.” [pp35-36].



## **England Rural Development Programme 2000 - 2006.** MAFF (2000).

**Aims.** Twofold: the creation of a viable and sustainable rural economy, and the conservation and enhancement of the rural environment. These are broken down into eight aspects, and are cited in full here:

“Investment in agricultural holdings: to provide targeted assistance to support the development of more sustainable and competitive farming businesses with improved agricultural incomes, re-deployed production and diversified farm activities.

Training: to broaden the skills base of the agricultural and forestry workforce to enable it to meet the challenges of the re-orientation of agriculture and forestry and so contribute to the demands of the rural economy.

Improving processing and marketing of agricultural products: to encourage innovation and investment to achieve added value for English primary products and to enhance market opportunities.

Forestry: to improve the landscapes, habitats, wildlife and amenity value of agricultural and non-agricultural land by planting woodland, thereby creating employment and diversifying land use: to improve the ecological and social functions of existing forests: and to encourage the growth and collaborative production of short rotation coppice as a contribution to tackling climate change.

Adaptation and development of rural areas: to provide targeted assistance to support the development of more sustainable, diversified, enterprising rural economies and communities to assist their regeneration and adjustment to the declining importance of agriculture and to the new demands of the rural economy.” [Priority A, pp68-69]

“Agri-environment: to conserve and improve the landscape, wildlife and historic heritage of the countryside, thereby also contributing directly and indirectly to economic activity and social objectives in rural areas.

Less Favoured Areas: to help preserve the farmed upland environment by ensuring the land in the Less Favoured Areas (LFAs) is managed sustainably; and to contribute to the maintenance of the social fabric in upland communities, through support for continued agricultural land use.

Adaptation and development of rural areas: to provide targeted assistance to support the development of more sustainable, diversified, enterprising rural economies and communities to assist their regeneration and adjustment to the declining importance of agriculture and to the new demands of the rural economy.” [Priority B, pp70-71]

**Rurality.** In general the Programme covers the whole of ‘Rural England’ but some measures are not available in Objective 1 areas and some of the agri-environment schemes are targeted at specific geographical areas e.g. the ESAs or LFAs.

**History.** Although the Programme predates the Rural White Paper it was formed at about the same time and forms a key component of that statement of rural policy. Before the adoption of the programme some expenditure under the EAGGF was already directed at rural development through the Objective 2 and LEADER+ schemes both of which will continue to operate alongside the programme.

**Audiences.** Largely agricultural and forestry enterprises and associated agencies and advisors, but the Rural Enterprise Scheme does have some wider application.

**Partners.** Not discussed specifically in the document.

**Europe.** The importance of tying in with EU directives is stressed: “EU regulation

1257/1999 provides an opportunity for government to re-assess how measures co-financed through the Common Agricultural Policy can contribute to its wider vision for rural areas.” [p59, para1].

**Mechanisms.** The programme encompasses a number of pre-existing agri-environmental schemes together with some new measures. The new measures are the ‘Energy Crops Scheme’, the ‘Rural Enterprise Scheme’ and the ‘Vocational Training Scheme’. The last two of these and the ‘Processing and Marketing Grants Scheme’ will be operated under the direction of Regional Programming Committees, the other measures being wholly or mainly operated on a national basis.

**Impacts.** As the Programme will be partly funded through ‘modulation’ there will be a loss of farm revenue in the form of direct subsidy payments. However, as the funds obtained through modulation will be matched by new government funding and as the programme is very largely to be delivered through farm enterprises, the net impact will be an increase in overall support to the sector. Specific targets include:

Increasing farm revenues from diversified sources.

Rural Enterprise Scheme projects creating 4000-6000 FTE jobs.

Assisting businesses with Processing and Marketing Grants creating 2,200 FTE jobs.

48,000 training days for people in farming and forestry.

21,000 ha increase in woodland.

Additional 525,000 ha under Countryside Stewardship.

430,000 ha converted to organic farming.

**Context.** The two ‘priorities’ set out under ‘aims’ are drawn from key national priorities 1 and 3 of the Government’s five national objectives for rural and countryside policy:

NP1: “To facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside, tackling poverty in rural areas.”

NP2: “To conserve and enhance rural landscapes and the diversity and abundance of wildlife (including the habitats on which it depends)”. [p60, paras1&3]

**England Rural Development Programme 2000 - 2006. Appendix 9 - South West region.** MAFF (2000).

**Aims.** Regional Aspiration Statement: “To enable the South West’s rural communities to retain and strengthen their cultural distinctiveness, economic viability and quality of life through integrated rural development which conserves the special character and diversity of Region’s environmental assets.” [p3, para2]. Goals set by the Regional Partnership (although not necessarily to be funded through the ERDP): “Social: Rural Communities are enabled to identify mechanisms to address their local needs and empowered to implement solutions.

Access to essential services is enhanced through flexible and innovative delivery which meets the needs of the South West’s rural Communities.

Employment prospects are enhanced through provision of access to innovative and appropriate education and training to create a flexible and skilled workforce.

The building of social cohesiveness within rural communities and strengthened linkages between the urban and rural communities in the region.

Economic: Improvement in the economic contribution of South West produce through the encouragement of activity which adds value and delivers a greater proportion of the product end price to the primary producers.

Opportunities are developed for new rural enterprises, including tourism, both on and off farm.

Business competitiveness and employment prospects improved through skills development and by placing of innovation, creativity and technology at the heart of the rural economy.

The marketing and distribution of rural products is supported and developed through collaborative activity and enhanced accessibility to markets.

Environmental: Protection and enhancement of the character and diversity of the Region’s environment and cultural heritage.

The value of enhancing the environmental quality of the region is appreciated by all. Sustainable rural land use and the means to achieve this are promoted.

Support provided reflects and links the achievement of international, national and regional priorities, with care of the environment at the local, farm and woodland level.” [p141]

**Rurality.** Coverage is region-wide but rurality does not appear to be treated as a spatial phenomenon.

**History.** See main ERDP summary.

**Audiences.** See main ERDP summary.

**Partners.** See main ERDP summary.

**Europe.** See main ERDP summary.

**Mechanisms.** The Regional Planning Group identified a range of activities needed to realise the stated goals. Of these the following were thought to be deliverable through the ERDP:

Support for environmental land management.

Processing of primary agricultural commodities into products and their marketing and

distribution.

Establishment and management of forestry and woodlands.

Rural tourism initiatives.

Establishment of new enterprises and land uses (i.e. farm diversification).

Introduction, development, growing and use of new and novel crops.

Provision and promotion of training to enhance skills and competencies.

**Impacts.** There are no target outcomes listed in the Regional document.

**Context.** This is the regional programme for the ERDP designed to be compatible with the SW Regional Strategy and the SW Regional Planning Guidance.

**In search of chunky dunsters... a cultural strategy for the South West.** Culture South West (2001)

**Aims.** The overall objective is to promote the message that supporting culture is vital in all aspects of life, and that the purpose of CSW is to be the “something sitting in the centre of this web of seething activity... keeping an eye on the big picture across the whole region.” [p25]. Four ‘strategic themes’ are identified:

Encourage increased access to and participation in cultural activities, especially through taking advantage of developments in ICT.

Improve the quality and relevance of the region’s cultural facilities and activities.

Support and help develop cultural and creative industries.

Celebrate regional identity, diversity and traditional cultures.

**Rurality.** Aspects of culture and sport in rural areas are discussed, but without reference to the geographical origin of participants. Celebration of the distinctiveness and authenticity of local culture, at from village level upwards, is at the heart of the strategy.

**History.** Culture South West is a new consortium, and consciously set out to produce “...not just another strategy.”

**Audiences.** All agencies, businesses and individuals with an interest in cultural development.

**Partners.** 24 other agencies are listed as partners.

**Europe.** There is a gatekeeper role, including to EU funds.

**Mechanisms.** Research to identify the baseline position and changes that occur is put at the start of the process. The ‘Strategy Action Plan’ lists 25 themes in a matrix consisting of six components:

Area for action [non-geographical].

Lead responsibility.

Partners.

Potential resources.

Milestones.

Outcomes.

**Impacts.** Rather modestly, the general target is just a “measurable increase in the number of people who take part, enjoy and value a range of enhanced cultural activities across the region.” [p32]. The outcomes of the themes are similarly not quantified.

**Context.** The links with tourism, leisure and sport are strongly emphasised, along with co-operation with South West Arts, South West Museums Council and other culture-centred bodies.

### **Market and coastal towns initiative for the South West.** SW RDA 2002 - 2006

**Aims.** Initially a pilot scheme developed by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit, it is now running across the region for 5 years. The scheme gives substantial grants to rural towns which act as foci for providing services to the surrounding countryside; also to small resorts. The vision for the initiative is “To create healthy, vibrant and sustainable Market and Coastal Towns in the South West”. The aim is “To help communities across the region to plan their future and build their skills base. MCTi will provide a gateway to funding programmes to make things happen”.

**Rurality.** Although any town in the region can apply for the scheme, there are maps of ‘Rural Priority Areas’. These cover most of Cornwall, much of Devon and Dorset, and parts of Somerset and Wiltshire. MCTi is open to all Market and Coastal Towns in the South West. The towns are assessed on criteria of need and potential as published on Info Sheet 3. There are several levels of response to Expressions of Interest in the Initiative, ranging from offering the full resources available under the Initiative, through to access to the Learning Network and Best Practice Guides. Any community not supported through the Initiative at any level will be advised of more appropriate sources of help.

**History.** This is a new initiative.

**Audiences.** Organisations representing towns, particularly where a coalition of interests can be shown, preferably including an endorsement from the local authority.

**Partners.** SWERDA led, with other partners including GOSW, South West Network of Rural Community Councils, the Housing Corporation, CA, English Heritage and the SWRA.

**Europe.** None, directly (although it may help applicants to access EU funds).

**Mechanisms.** This scheme “will provide a ‘gateway’ to funding programmes to make things happen.” [Information sheet 1]. It offers resources to prepare ‘Community Strategic Plans’ to the point where they can be submitted to a Brokering Table for funding. This includes giving technical and professional advice where needed, training of local representatives (‘Community Agents’), sponsoring of networking events, and a certain amount of start-up funding. In addition there will be:

- A ‘learning network’ to share information and research findings.
- A ‘management group’ to provide a regional overview and coherence.
- Local Brokering Tables where the plans are presented for funding support from agencies, investors and business partners.
- Regional Brokering Table where Regional Partners provide a ‘regional steer’ on resources available through the local Brokering Tables.

**Impacts.** Not discussed.

**Context.** Not discussed, beyond indicating co-operation with Local Authorities and other statutory bodies.

**National Parks in England and Wales: approaching a model of sustainable rural development.** Association of National Parks (2000).

**Aims.** In essence, to take the lead in integrating all sustainable rural development projects in National Parks. “Our experience demonstrates that National Parks now need a special regime to integrate all forms of support to the rural economy, but especially those for agriculture, with their environmental and social needs.”  
[<http://www.anpa.gov.uk/papers/model.htm>]

**Rurality.** NPs are so designated because they contain the highest quality natural environments. The ten original parks were delineated by a small group of experts; much wider consultation and research has taken place for more recent designations.

**History.** This builds on the work of the NPAs over the last half century and seeks to address the growing calls for sustainability. “Starting in the 1970s, National Park Authorities have experimented with practical approaches to achieving environmental, social and economic goals through joined up thinking. Many techniques we now take for granted started life as National Park experiments.”

**Audiences.** Implicitly, all agencies whose remit covers NPs.

**Partners.** As appropriate to local conditions.

**Europe.** EU funding is seen as the cornerstone for funding developments: “The most immediate means of achieving the integration of the environment and social objectives with economic development would be through appropriate use of the Rural Development Regulation and where applicable, other EU structural and UK funds for rural development. These would fund integrated, composite projects.”

**Mechanisms.** Largely through demonstration of best practice and acting in a facilitator capacity. Much of the report is concerned with case studies: “The NPAs are prepared to play the fullest role in assisting this integration, including leading a partnership team.”

**Impacts.** Very project-orientated, with emphasis on integration, practicality community participation, and helping to find local solutions to local problems.

**Context.** NPAs from the start had to balance the needs of environment, leisure and communities, often addressing conflicts head on. As such they have the experience of many of the issues now having a wider resonance in the rural debate.

**Objective One programme for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly 2000 - 2006: Single Programming Document. GOSW (2000).**

**Aims.** To ensure that Objective 1 status is not required in the future. The 'Programme mission' is "To achieve a step change in the prosperity of Cornwall and Scilly, making it a place where people and communities have equal access to opportunities and to a quality of life which arise from the sustainable development of its economy and its environment and the enhancement of its distinctiveness." [p4, para2].

**Rurality.** Most measures will be applicable to rural areas and some are specifically targeted at rural areas.

**History.** Replaces the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's earlier Objective 5b status.

**Audiences.** All of the organisations involved in the social, economic and environmental development of the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

**Partners.** Not specified.

**Europe.** This is an EU programme bringing together funding from the ERDF, ESF and EAGGF targeted at areas in particular need of economic regeneration.

**Mechanisms.** Five priorities are identified, each with a set of targets and measures for achieving them:

SMEs & micro-businesses.

Strategic investment.

Developing people.

Community economic development and rural sectoral adjustment.

Regional distinctiveness.

**Impacts.** In line with current EU thinking, these are largely quantified targets directly linked to the aims. The outputs and impacts for each measure are described in Annex1 of the report.

**Context.** The Objective 1 Programme has been designed to fit within and contribute towards the objectives of the SWERDA regional strategy. The Priorities and their accompanying measures have been comprehensively cross-linked to EU, national and regional policies.



**Objective Two: South West of England Single Programming Document 2000 - 2006.** GOSW (2001).

**Aims.** The vision for the South West Objective 2 Area: “The vision is one of a prosperous area, with a quality of life that matches the best regions in Europe”. The Programme mission is “To achieve significant change in the prosperity of people, businesses and communities within the South West Objective 2 area and to do so in ways which deliver economic growth and greater social inclusion and which enhance the natural and built environment.” [p204, paras 4 and 5].

**Rurality.** The rural areas covered by the programme are strictly defined and largely consist of the areas of Devon and West Somerset previously designated as having Objective 5b status. These were designated as parishes meeting a qualifying threshold of population density by county.

**History.** The initiative replaces the former Objective 2 (urban) and 5b (rural) programmes.

**Audiences.** All of the organisations involved in the social, economic and environmental development of the programme area.

**Partners.** Not specified.

**Europe.** This is an EU Programme funded under the ERDF and ESF targeted towards areas confronting restructuring problems.

**Mechanisms.** Three areas for action are identified, accompanied by specified measures:

Neighbourhood Renewal: “To create sustainable urban and rural communities through providing support to those communities suffering from high level of multiple deprivation with a view to helping local residents take up new employment and training opportunities and supporting efforts to strengthen the local economies of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.”

SME development, technology and innovation: “To generate income and employment by supporting the growth and competitiveness of the SME sector, through the provision of services and facilities which assist companies to adapt to and exploit changing changes in the marketplace, including the up-skilling of their workforce. This Priority will place an emphasis on the expansion and establishment of knowledge based industries providing higher skilled and higher paid jobs for the people of the area.”

A better future for traditional economies: “To address the problems facing traditional economies dependent on the fishing and tourism sectors and those in rural areas, through increasing the competitiveness of the existing industry and assisting the economic diversification of local economies.” [pp208-9]

**Impacts.** As per Objective 1 [pages 262-4 for details].

**Context.** As per Objective 1.

**Objective Three: South West regional development plan 2000 - 2006. GOSW (2000).**

**Aims.** Vision: “A South West of England recognised as an exemplar European region for using the commitment of its people, communities and business to lifelong learning as a key tool in securing sustainable economic growth.” Mission: “To ensure that every training and learning experience positively reinforces the benefits of learning and contributes to developing an on-going commitment to continuous learning from individuals, communities and business in the South West.” [pp43-4].

**Rurality.** Not specifically aimed at rural areas, covering all of the South West except for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

**History.** Succeeds the 1994-99 (national) Objective 3 Programme.

**Audiences.** All of the organisations involved delivering training.

**Partners.** Learning and Skills Council.

**Europe.** This is an EU Programme funded by the ESF.

**Mechanisms.** Five ‘Policy Fields’ are identified each with ‘Priority Areas which are to be delivered through ‘Priority Actions’:

Active labour market policies.

Equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion.

Lifelong learning.

Adaptability and entrepreneurship.

Improving the participation of women in the labour market.

**Impacts.** Detailed target outcomes are given for each Policy Field [pp68-71].

**Context.** The programme reflects the objectives and drivers of the SW Regional Strategy and is closely linked to the Skills and Learning Framework for Action.

**Our countryside: the future - a fair deal for rural England. Rural White Paper.** HMG (2000).

**Aims.** This is the foundation policy upon which many of the reports analysed here are based, directly or indirectly. It aims to give a 'Fair Deal' to rural communities through the use of a 'Rural services Standard'. There are 'ten ways we will make a difference':

"A living countryside. 1: Support vital village services.

2: Modernise rural services.

3: Provide affordable homes.

4: Deliver local transport solutions.

A working countryside. 5: Rejuvenate market towns and a thriving economy.

6: Set a new direction for farming.

A protected countryside. 7: Preserve what makes rural England special.

8: Ensure everyone can enjoy an accessible countryside.

A working countryside. 9: Give local power to country towns and villages.

10: Think rural." [p6-7]

**Rurality.** On the one hand, the urban/rural divide is played down: "Some people want to drive between town and country. While we recognise what makes our countryside special, we also believe that rural and urban areas are interdependent." [Foreword] But by definition the issues in rural areas are sufficiently distinctive to warrant this high-profile strategy.

**History.** This is a milestone in central government's commitment to rurality as a unifying policy theme. It is notable for the way in which it attempts to synthesise all aspects of rural development, and puts communities at centre stage. Much of the thinking that underpins the White Paper is contained in the PIU *Rural Economies Report*.

**Audiences.** Agencies with a statutory rural-related function, but also any interested parties. It is, by definition, *political* policy. The published document is a prime example of the public face of a strategy.

**Partners.** Partners is not the best term, in that public-sector agencies will have to follow the framework laid down. However, there is very much a sense of engaging in the democratic debate for 'hearts and minds' about the whole direction of policy, and the limits to government action are made clear. Indeed, the approach is characterised by joint working and mutually agreed ways forward - hard to disagree with at this broad-brush level.

**Europe.** Only on the funding page for each objective is it visible the extent to which EU funds underpin much of the funding, especially in the 'working countryside' section.

**Mechanisms.** An annual independent audit is part of the transparency and continuous monitoring process. Mechanisms are not discussed in any detail in the public document; instead, the system of sticks and carrots for others to administer is explained. Nevertheless, the White Paper is very comprehensive in its coverage, and beyond the scope of précising here. The separate 'Implementation Plan' document provides detail on key stages of implementation of the 260 separate initiatives.

**Impacts.** Broad targets are ubiquitous, but detailed impacts are not referred to - these are likely to be discussed in the individual policy instruments.

**Context.** The White Paper in effects sets the context for future discussion. Its populist, consensus-building style hides the underlying land use and funding priority conflicts, also the extent to which the decisions which need to be made have a strong political dimension.

**Regional Development Agencies and rural development.** Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle with Arup Economics and Planning (2001). Unpublished report for the Regional Development Agencies of England.

**Aims.** “To examine key issues currently affecting rural areas, identify future scenarios and the challenges they pose, and suggest priority actions for practical delivery by RDAs.” [pii].

**Rurality.** The need for clear definitions is stressed as fundamental to effective delivery.

**History.** This is a new initiative.

**Audiences.** RDAs only.

**Partners.** None, although links with other agencies are a central part of the analysis.

**Europe.** The role of the EU in terms of both funding and setting the policy agenda is fully recognised. For the South West, the future of the Structural Funds, CAP reform and ‘Single Pot funding’ are seen as more important than at the national level.

**Mechanisms.** ‘Ten headline priorities for practical action’ are recommended [pv-vi]:.

“1. Help reform farming by influencing the UK and EU approaches to CAP reform: RDAs should establish a National Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development;

they should commission studies of the extent and impacts of CAP expenditure in each region;

they should formulate shared priorities for CAP reform to submit to the Policy Commission on Food and Farming, DEFRA and the EC.

2. Strengthen RDAs’ role in ‘re-integrating’ agriculture and land management into regional economies:

RDAs should use Rural Action Plans to steer regional programmes for land-based industries to accord with regional economic priorities;

they should focus support on regionally-embedded supply chains involving agriculture;

they should consider the strategic coordination and rationalisation of food marketing initiatives within their regions.

3. Reinvigorate the development and promotion of rural tourism:

RDAs should strengthen their own role in tourism development;

they should press for a review of the institutional arrangements and central funding for the promotion and strategic development of English and regional tourism;

they should fully integrate tourism development into their own strategies and programmes.

4. Encourage an enabling planning system that promotes sensitive economic development:

RDAs should convene regional seminars on planning and rural economy issues;

they should consider appointing, or part-funding Rural Planning Facilitators;

they should promote demonstration projects with local authorities to show how community planning could effectively mesh with economic development.

5. Ensure that rural locations and businesses are integral to RDA strategies and action on regional competitiveness, innovation, entrepreneurship, skills development and business growth:

RDAs should coordinate a systematic improvement in the provision of support, advice and skills development to all businesses in rural areas;  
they should launch initiatives to foster innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, and cluster development for firms in rural areas;  
they should press for the rationalisation of the Farm Business Advisory Service and the Rural Development Service into a single support service for rural firms.

6. Address economic and service decline through a focus on innovation in market towns:

RDAs should convene meetings in their regions of service providers and market town representatives to consider how to improve service delivery;

they should ensure effective coverage across their regions of broadband access and IT Learning Centres;

they should consider pilot Business Improvement Districts in market towns.

7. Take the lead in new institutional arrangements and influence effectively the development of rural policy:

RDAs should strengthen their capacity, mechanisms and resources to act collectively on rural policy issues;

they should seek clarification from Government on the detailed rural development roles and responsibilities of different regional and rural organisations;

they should take a lead in building partnerships with relevant regional and rural organisations for joint action, coordination of programmes and common staff training in the rural development field.

8. ‘Think Rural’ by improving rural coordination and ‘proofing’ at the regional level:

RDAs should use post-FMD recovery efforts to ensure that rural development becomes strategy-driven rather than project-led;

they should ‘rural proof’ their own regional strategies and policy development work;

they should play a full part in shaping the proposed Regional Rural Sounding Boards.

9. Promote rural recovery and regeneration as an integral part of regional economic development:

RDAs should press the Government to designate Rural Action Zones in areas of particular need where partners could work together in a flexible way;

they should closely monitor the extent of job losses in rural areas post-FMD, seeking rural versions of the Jobs Transition Service where appropriate;

they should take a strategic approach to ensuring mainstream regeneration programmes are sufficiently focussed on rural areas.

10. Understand rural: improve rural indicators, data collection and intelligence gathering:

RDAs should ensure that appropriate indicators are used to target initiatives and resources in rural areas, and not simply rely upon those produced for urban purposes;

they should promote a coordinated approach at the regional level to collecting and collating relevant rural data;

they should, with partners, establish Regional Rural Foresight exercises.”

**Impacts.** Consideration of future scenarios involves evaluating the main policy directions and their consequences. For each sector a matrix of the two most important dimensions is presented, and the consequences discussed:

Agriculture:

‘Agricultural approach’ with low national discretion;

‘Agricultural approach’ with high national discretion;

‘Rural approach’ with low national discretion;

‘Rural approach’ with high national discretion;

Tourism:

Weak FMD recovery with weak strategic development;

Weak FMD recovery with strong strategic development;

Strong FMD recovery with weak strategic development;

Strong FMD recovery with strong strategic development;

Other rural businesses:

Unreformed planning system with inappropriate business support;

Unreformed planning system with appropriate business support;

Reformed planning system with inappropriate business support;

Reformed planning system with appropriate business support;

Public and private services in rural areas:

Low geographical concentration with low innovation in delivery;

Low geographical concentration with high innovation in delivery;

High geographical concentration with low innovation in delivery;

High geographical concentration with high innovation in delivery;

**Context.** This is discussed in depth, including a separate annex on the South West region. 14 ‘key processes of restructuring’ are identified, then ‘future scenarios’ for the four main sectors (see above). An examination of strengths and weaknesses leads to the conclusion that: “There can be no single template for improving the means of supporting rural development in the English regions. However, common elements of the rural development challenge facing all RDAs include the coming reforms to the CAP and the Structural Funds, the need to improve the development of rural tourism and business support to rural firms, the requirement to find innovative ways to tackle service decline and the imperative to make the most of new institutional arrangements.” [piv]

**Reinvesting in our countryside - the next steps.** Countryside Agency (2001).

**Aims.** To identify top-level priorities for Government in responding to the impact of FMD on the rural economy. However, it is much more than simply reactive to the immediate problem: it suggests that regeneration programmes have not always been successful in reaching the most deprived rural economies. A central issue is that broadening the economic base of rural areas is difficult because dispersed, small-scale demand brings high cost of delivery. Thus: “Where there is market failure in delivering the infrastructure required for economic prosperity, what interventions should be made on behalf of the public to redress the balance?” [para5.3]

**Rurality.** The link between rurality and low population density is stressed.

**History.** One of the first policy reports arising out of FMD.

**Audiences.** This is designed to shape the agenda within which government agencies having a rural remit will work.

**Partners.** None.

**Europe.** Funding issues are not considered, and neither are EU policy directions.

**Mechanisms.** The report presents a series of ‘Facts’ each with ‘Issues to answer’ - a succinct and effective method of considering the choices and priorities that must be made. The headings are:

“Creating economic diversity. We want to see encouragement for the diversification of the business base in all rural areas which includes businesses making more of the natural asset that the countryside provides and the technological advances which overcome the disadvantage of distance.” [section 5]

“Agriculture. We want to ensure the long-term viability of farming but also ensure that it contributes positively to the environmental, community and wider economic objectives. To do so we must see farming diversify from profitability on the basis of cost alone to one based on value.” [section 6]

“Recreation and tourism. We need to recognise that securing the future of rural tourism is dependant upon securing a healthy environment and farmed landscape. We also want a rapidly growing tourism sector to develop in harmony with the environment it is promoting.” [section 7]

“Consumption. We need to reconnect the consumer with the produce they buy and the countryside they value.” [section 8]

“Market towns. Market towns are seen as the hub for rural prosperity and service delivery.” [section 9]

“Supporting rural communities. We want to see thriving communities supported to rebuild and contribute to their own futures.” [section 10]

**Impacts.** None - this raises the questions, not provides the answers.

**Context.** This draws particularly on the work of the Rural Task Force (see below). It is accepted that some parts of the countryside are “too reliant” [para5.1] on agriculture and tourism, and the interdependence of these sectors is not properly recognised.



**Report of the Rural Task Force.** Rural Task Force (2001).

**Aims.** FMD has served as a reminder that the countryside is not unchanging, and so “the task is now to use that jolt to set out a new timetable for change in England’s rural acres.” [para1]. The main focus is on responding to FMD, to ensure that rural business survive in the short term, revive in the medium term and thrive in the longer term. The agricultural sector needs to move more towards adding value and diversification, while tourism needs to be more demand-led and make rural tourism a viable brand.

**Rurality.** Not discussed.

**History.** The RTF was set up as a response to FMD (?).

**Audiences.** Not designed for publication, this is an internal report aimed ultimately at influencing all agencies concerned with rural development.

**Partners.** Partnerships are seen as not longer simply desirable, but essential: “The need to promote interdependence leads to our firm belief that public policy and practical activity should be based on the need for all aspects of rural economies to move forward together. Independent sectoral approaches will perpetuate the current structural fragility; integration will lead to strength.” [para6].

**Europe.** Change to the Common Agricultural Policy is given a high priority: “The Government and agencies should continue to press for CAP to be reformed quickly enough and radically enough to meet the needs of agriculture and those of wider social, economic and environmental well-being.” [para7].

**Mechanisms.** A large number of recommendations are made, albeit still at the draft stage of the version studied here. These are at three timescales, and while the detail is not relevant here, it is not clear how the called-for greater integration is to be achieved.

**Impacts.** This a scoping document concerned with adjusting the direction of policy, rather than considering detailed outputs.

**Context.** The principal context is the principles and directions laid down in the Rural White Paper. However, the farming / tourism debate is highlighted as causing three sets of problems:

The two sectors not working together on supply and demand studies, marketing and quality standards.

Concentration on these two sectors is economically risky, when their common resource is affected (as demonstrated by FMD).

Other sectors receive inadequate attention and support.

**Rural action plan for the South West region.** SWERDA (2001). Draft Plan (Second Draft), unpublished.

**Aims.** A part of the regional economic strategy, this aim to ensure that rural areas do not lose out, and can ‘share the benefits of prosperity’.

**Rurality.** This is raised directly, but although reference is made to the Cabinet Office paper ‘Sharing the Nation’s Prosperity’, which estimates that approximately 80% of the land area of the UK and a quarter of its population live in rural areas, it is recognised that “there is no exact definition of ‘rural’ areas.” [para1.7]

**History.** Not discussed (but see context below).

**Audiences.** As this is an internal draft, the final audience is not stated.

**Partners.** Collaborative measures are at the heart of sustainable development.

**Europe.** The role of structural funds and other EU initiatives are considered to a limited extent.

**Mechanisms.** ‘Actions’ for the RDA alone, the RDA with partners, and in terms of influencing others are considered under the headings of:

Environment and climate change.

Agriculture and land-based industries.

Rural transport.

Rural tourism.

Market and coastal towns.

Learning and skills.

Enterprise and innovation

Supporting young people.

Supporting rural economic growth.

**Impacts.** Whilst there is considerable depth on the rationale and value of the policy directions proposed, impacts are taken as being axiomatic with the policy aims.

**Context.** This strategy is unusual in the depth of attention given to the context of rural change. A good example of this is consideration of climate change, following on from the recognition that it is the environment which is the key driver for ensuring the region’s prosperity. The consequences soon become all inclusive: power generation, transport, telecommunications, biodiversity - all some under the sustainable rural development agenda.

**Rural recovery.** CPRE (2001).

**Aims.** The overall objective is to influence government policy. It aims to direct rural policy more firmly towards the protection and enhancement of the rural environment and quality of life. Five principles are identified:

“1. Unlocking the potential. Rural areas have the potential to develop from within and should not be dependent upon external factors for their future success and prosperity. The challenge is to identify and unlock these opportunities by gaining a better understanding of local circumstances and refining policy and practice to reflect this.” [p14, para1]

“2. Tailoring solutions. The differences between rural areas are often as great as the differences between town and country. Policies and programmes need to recognise this diversity and be sufficiently flexible to reflect local circumstances. Existing mechanisms such as the ERDP and RDA strategies are beginning to provide a more refined support framework that better reflects the diversity of the countryside. We need to build on this new flexibility and increasingly develop local solutions that better fit local circumstances.” [p15, para5]

“3. Enabling communities. Local communities are often best placed to identify solutions that will best address local problems. The challenge is twofold. First to identify local needs and capabilities and, secondly, to break down any barriers inhibiting meeting those needs or maximising local opportunities.” [p17, para2]

“4. Environment as an asset. The quality of the rural environment is one of the few characteristics that distinguishes town and country. It is increasingly recognised as a business opportunity and a high quality environment can contribute productivity and general well-being.” [p18, para5]

“5. Economic strengthening. The challenge facing rural policy makers and practitioners is not to encourage further growth of the economy of the countryside per se but finding ways of strengthening existing local economies that build on existing and new opportunities.” [p19, para3]

**Rurality.** All of rural England (not defined).

**History.** This report updates *Rural Renaissance* (1999) in the context of FMD.

**Audiences.** All rural policy makers and practitioners (unspecified).

**Partners.** Not applicable.

**Europe.** Not applicable.

**Mechanisms.** Not applicable.

**Impacts.** Not applicable.

**Context.** Implicitly part of the political debate on rural futures, and as such more about ‘hearts and minds’ than detailed policy mechanisms.

**South West Forest development plan.** South West Forest (2001).

**Aims.** This is much more than doubling the acreage planted with trees in two generations. Replanting is seen as a catalyst for regeneration, and for delivering a wide range of benefits through an integrated approach. The vision is “to revitalise the rural economy and environment of the area for the benefit of local people, by focussing on land-based policies and activities.” [p3]

**Rurality.** Geographical coverage is 280,000 ha of North Cornwall and Northwest Devon, selected due to remoteness and low population density. The boundaries are regarded as likely to expand.

**History.** A new scheme, but borne out of a long line of match-funded Europe-sponsored initiatives focussing on discrete geographical areas.

**Audiences.** Potentially anyone, from individuals to businesses to public agencies.

**Partners.** As with other local-area initiatives, it acts as a conduit for getting going bottom-up projects which otherwise may not have been able to start:

“South West Forest is a facilitating body that works with a wide range of partners to deliver integrated solutions through various processes and mechanisms. It is driven by the needs of geographically defined areas with unique combinations of environmental, social and economic capital.” [p6]

**Europe.** The initiative is EU and MAFF/DEFRA funded, leveraged by match funding the public and private sectors.

**Mechanisms.** Cited in the Rural White Paper as ‘pioneering a new approach to integrated rural development’, the plan consists of six ‘Building Blocks’ “within which future decisions will be taken and resources allocated”:

- 1: Agricultural restructuring and woodland potential.
- 2: Development of the forestry industry.
- 3: Training and business development.
- 4: Protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
- 5: recreation and tourism promotion.
- 6: Community networks, education and sustainable development.

**Impacts.** Text.

**Context.** This is specifically addressed: “The vision of South West Forest fully accords with EU and national policy which now, for the first time, sees forestry as an integral part of rural development policy.” [p4] Furthermore, the plan is to ensure integration with other agencies for longer term rural development objectives:

“To facilitate integrated rural development and to influence, positively, structural changes occurring within the land-use sectors.

To create new and enhance existing and complementary rural resources.

To protect and enhance the environment.

To increase retention of money in the local economy, increase local economic multipliers, and encourage community and business enterprise.

To create new economic opportunities for the use of traditional skills and encourage skills transfer between local people, incomers and the young.

To enable rural communities to thrive through capacity building, the revitalisation of rural networks and the support of nascent ones.

To encourage the retention of local identity.

To encourage the self-realisation of individuals.

To facilitate the transfer of successful ideas and mechanism to other situations and areas.” [p4]

**SWARD: South West agricultural and rural development project.** Website.

**Aims.** To facilitate adaptation to the changing scientific, technical and business environment now challenging the rural sectors.

**Rurality.** The project is limited to Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset.

**History.** New project based on research carried out by the University of Plymouth.

**Audiences.** Networked groups of businesses in the agricultural and rural land-based sectors.

**Partners.** Bicton College, Business Link, Cornwall County Council, Devon County Council, Duchy College, European Social Fund, meat and Livestock Commission, DEFRA, Prosper, RASE, SWRDA, University of Industry, University of Plymouth. Part of Business Link.

**Europe.** Part funded under the European Social Fund.

**Mechanisms.** Enabling networked groups of businesses to access training and information. The project provides advice and some financial support.

**Impacts.** Development of land-based rural enterprises and establishment of extensive networks. The targets are not openly stated on the website, which is geared for end-users

**Context.** This is an example of one of the many projects which are more the outcome of policy than the source of it, but where best practice is likely to influence future policy.

**Towards 2020: a tourism strategy for the South West.** West Country Tourist Board (1999).

**Aims.** The overall aim is to “maximise the overall contribution of tourism to the wider economic, social and environmental well-being of the region.” [p10].

**Rurality.** Covers the entire region, with rural tourism per se not being a specific focus.

**History.** Succeeds the previous 5-year strategy.

**Audiences.** Agencies with an interest in tourism development.

**Partners.** 11 types of ‘main player’ are identified, whose support is seen as necessary

**Europe.** Only mentioned in passing in the Executive Summary.

**Mechanisms.** Local, sub-regional and regional action plans are proposed, along with a series of measures for helping businesses directly and indirectly through the activities of South West Tourism itself (such as market segmentation).

**Impacts.** Many of the objectives are not readily quantifiable, and the report is mainly about establishing a direction.

**Context.** Strongly focussing on sustainability and integration, this report predates the crises of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which have given a sharper edge to more recent strategies.

**Towards tomorrow's countryside: a strategy for the Countryside Agency.**  
Countryside Agency (2001).

**Aims.** “Our vision is of a countryside that is environmentally healthier, economically more successful and socially stronger.” [p3]

**Rurality.** No definition of the countryside is provided.

**History.** A follow-up to the ‘2020 Vision: Towards Tomorrow’s Countryside’, which launched the CA in 1999.

**Audiences.** This is a general strategy document rather than a policy blueprint, hence specific partners are not discussed in any detail.

**Partners.** Not specified.

**Europe.** Not specified.

**Mechanisms.** “We will work by influencing and implementing.” [p7] There are eight priorities for action, each based on a set of principles:

- 1: Rural assurance - influencing the quality of rural life [awareness].
- 2: Countryside capital - making the most of the natural asset [lobbying].
- 3: Market towns - revitalising rural service centres for the wider countryside.
- 4: Vital villages - equipping communities to shape their futures.
- 5: Wider welcome - opening up more of the countryside for more people, from all backgrounds, to enjoy.
- 6: Countryside on your doorstep - creating attractive, accessible greenspace close to home.
- 7: Finest countryside - securing the quality of our best landscapes.
- 8: Local heritage initiative - helping people to care for their landscapes, landmarks and traditions.

**Impacts.** Not discussed in any detail.

**Context.** The CA is demonstrating its role as a lead agency promoting rural development in conjunction with a range of other organisations.



**Vital villages: equipping communities to shape their futures.** Countryside Agency (2001).

**Aims.** This is a specific programme for rural settlements. The aims are:

“To help small rural communities to take stock of their village; to identify what they need to revitalise it; to ensure local people have a voice in their future; and to provide support to enable each village to make its own decisions and to implement some of the improvements needed locally.” [inside cover]

**Rurality.** What is meant by a rural community in England is not defined.

**History.** None stated.

**Audiences.** Village communities. Grants are only available to local bidders, specifically in the case of the Community Services grant: “parish councils, community groups, independent commercial retailers and service providers, anyone proposing to improve or establish a local service for a rural community in England.” [application guidance note]

Parish plans grant.

Community services grant.

Parish transport grant.

Rural transport partnership.

**Partners.** None.

**Europe.** The origin of the grant aid is not specified.

**Mechanisms.** Match-funded grants of four types:

**Impacts.** No information given.

**Context.** No information given, although its establishment must reflect a concern that village communities were missing out on other development mechanisms.

**Working for the countryside: a strategy for rural tourism in England 2001-2005.**  
Countryside Agency with English Tourism Council (2001).

**Aims.** Grounded in the concept of sustainable development. The aims are examined in considerable depth, and summarised as:

“To maintain and increase the availability and quality of employment in rural tourism enterprises

To ensure that a high quality of visitor experience in the countryside is available to everyone

To maintain and enhance the quality of the rural environment

To spread the benefits of tourism throughout rural communities” [p5]

**Rurality.** Not discussed, although the distinctiveness of rural tourism is strong enough to be considered worth of branded development, and a range of statistics are presented.

**History.** The strategy was informed by the results of a public consultation paper issued in March 2000, coupled with extensive discussions with the private and public sectors.

**Audiences.** All agencies concerned with tourism and rural affairs.

**Partners.** At national level a Rural Tourism Panel is being established. At regional level Regional Tourist Boards and the regional offices of the Countryside Agency will work together and help co-ordinate the regional tourism activity of the RDAs, DEFRA, the EU and others.

**Europe.** No specific European dimension.

**Mechanisms.** The function is primarily advisory, backed up with market research and marketing development. Sustainability indicators for monitoring progress are being developed. The approach is summarised as “supporting research, identifying and disseminating good practice, supporting pilot projects, strengthening advisory material, services and training, and encouraging better communication and networks.” [summary p4, para5]

**Impacts.** Priorities for action are grouped under four headings which give an indication of intended impacts of the strategy:

Influencing and enabling visits

Enriching the tourism experience

Fostering rural tourism enterprises

Improving the management of rural destinations

**Context.** Improved liaison and co-ordination is very much of the sustainability message, with the direct context being the Rural White Paper’s requirement for a “clear focus for national, regional and local action”. This strategy deliberately takes a broad view, for example in recognising the roles of others, taking a systematic approach to linking supply and demand, and putting visitor (end-user) at the heart of policy-making.

**The Planning Green Paper, Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change.**  
Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions (2001)

- **Aims.** Sets out proposals designed to address weaknesses in the planning / development control system in England. Consultation period runs to 18 March 2002.
- **Rurality.** The proposals do not specifically address any rural policy areas although there is a commitment to review PPG7 (The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development).
- **History.** Further development of the frameworks set out in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, last modified in 1991
- **Audiences.** Regional planning bodies, Local Authorities, communities, businesses, and individuals.
- **Partners.** The Regional Spatial Strategies “*should provide the longer term planning framework for the Regional Development Agencies’ strategies*”. [para 4.42] District and Unitary Authorities will have to develop the new area plans. The role of County Councils is greatly diminished.
- **Europe.** No European dimension.
- **Mechanism.** Would replace present two-tier (county) structure plan / (district) local plan system with a single ‘Local Development Framework’ which will, among other things, state how each authority’s ‘Community Strategy’ will be delivered. Would replace the current Regional Planning Guidance with Region Spatial Strategies which would have statutory status. Commitment to review the PPGs.
- **Impacts.** Remove inconsistencies between area plans at different levels. Make area plans reliable and up to date to give a much clearer picture to developers and make the planning system much more responsive to business needs. There is a commitment to a higher level of community involvement in preparing the Local Development Frameworks.
- **Context.** If directly elected regional assemblies are established these would take over the regional planning role.

**Rural Economies.** Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU), 1999

- **Aims.** To define the Government's overall objectives for rural economies, to review the underlying rationale for government intervention and to assess the adequacy of the (then) existing policy framework.
- **Rurality.** Uses a classification of Local Authority districts into 63 remote rural areas, 108 accessible rural areas and 10 former coalfield areas.
- **History.** Issued after the consultation document on Rural England.
- **Audiences.** Not widely publicised, primarily of interest to policy makers but inviting responses from readers with a professional or personal interest.
- **Partners.** Not applicable.
- **Europe.** The report acknowledges that "*a large proportion of the change to rural policy in Britain has been driven by European-wide processes of policy reform.*" [para 4.17] and sees reform of the CAP as essential to bring about change in agriculture [paras 9.71-77].
- **Mechanism.** The analysis and conclusions of the report together with a set of key issues for discussion [pages 14-16] were to feed into the development work on the Rural White Paper.
- **Impacts.** Most of the ideas in the PIU report are found in the Rural White Paper.
- **Context.** The PIU report was an interim step in developing government rural policy and was the precursor of the Rural White Paper: Our Countryside: the Future, A fair deal for rural England

**Farming and Food : a sustainable future.** Report of the Policy Commission chaired by Sir Donald Curry (2002)

- **Aims.** Text.
- **Rurality.** Not discussed as such.
- **History.** One of three reports commissioned by Government in August 2001 as a response to the Foot & Mouth Disease epidemic. However, in contrast to the other two enquiries this one was not asked to reflect on FMD per se. Instead its brief was forward-looking to: “advise the Government on how we can create a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector which contributes to a thriving and sustainable rural economy, advances environmental, economic, health and animal welfare goals, and is consistent with the Government’s aims for Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform, enlargement of the EU and increased trade liberalisation.”
- **Audiences.** Government and wide publicity within the farming and food sectors. The report applies to England only.
- **Partners.** Not applicable.
- **Europe.** The report acknowledges the importance of the CAP and various EU environmental regulations. It works within its terms of reference regarding the reality of the CAP and therefore directs itself to possibilities under current CAP rules and to prospects for future reform.
- **Mechanism.** A wide range of recommendations to Government. Some of the key ones are summarised as follows:

We urge the Government to press for substantial reform of the CAP as soon as possible, establishing a clear timetable for reform and encouraging and supporting the farming and food industry to adapt to change. The guiding principle must be that public money should be used to pay for public goods that the public wants and needs:

- remaining price supports and associated production controls must go;
- direct payments should be phased out as quickly as possible;
- they should be decoupled from production and be subject to base environmental conditions for as long as they do exist;
- resources should progressively transfer to the so-called Pillar II of the CAP to pay for rural development and environmental protection schemes;
- the UK’s share of the Pillar II budget should increase at the same time, and rules on eligibility and administration should be made more flexible.

We recommend the establishment of a permanent Food Chain Centre to bring together people from each part of the food chain. It should be facilitated by the Institute of Grocery Distribution. The Centre and the IGD will need to resolve how to bring the food service sector fully into this process. The Government should part-fund the Centre’s work.

The Centre should, as a priority:

- develop (in conjunction with the relevant levy bodies) a number of supply chain analyses, from producer to the final point of sale, starting in the red meat and fresh produce sectors, to identify how efficiency savings can be achieved to the benefit of all players. These should be preceded by rigorous, transparent benchmarking of all stages in the chain, so other studies can go forward on the basis of a sound understanding of costs;
- draw on the results of those studies and, working with experts from industry and other research bodies, prepare best practice reports which can be published, identifying the steps that will improve efficiency in each sector;
- identify and publish best practice reports on collaboration and planning in existence between world class retailers and manufacturers so that they can be taken up more widely in order to improve efficiency and consumer value; and
- act as a champion for benchmarking and dissemination of best practice data in the sector as a whole.

We recommend the establishment of an English Collaborative Board, with a small secretariat. This Board would be responsible for encouraging and supporting collaborative activity. Membership of the Board should include people with industry, financial service and business experience. This Board should advise Government on the direction of Government grants available to collaborative ventures.

A whole supply chain approach to improving competitiveness in the [red meat] sector will be needed. We are convinced that the long supply chain in red meat is one of the reasons why competitiveness is slipping, and market messages and signals are being diffused before they reach the primary producer. We recommend elsewhere (p32) that the red meat chain should, with fresh produce, be the first to be examined by the new Food Chain Centre. The Centre and the MLC will need to work closely together to agree and act on the results of this work.

We recommend that funding for Processing and Marketing Grants should be expanded by £5 million per year for the next three years to assist collaborative enterprises with the investment needed to establish themselves in processing and marketing their products. The upper threshold on grants should be removed to allow larger projects to be funded if this offers best value for money. At the same time the lower threshold should also be reduced to allow smaller enterprises access to funds.

We would recommend that the Rural Enterprise Scheme budget should be substantially increased at the Mid-Term Review.

RDAS should consider how to overcome problems of distribution and availability of processing within their regional economic strategies and seek to encourage the networking and planning that are necessary for the development of these local initiatives. Where third-party processing facilities are available, every effort should be made to work with existing business.

We think that the time has come for locality food marketing to become mainstream in Britain as it already has in France and elsewhere. The

Countryside Agency has done excellent work in pump-priming some schemes, but we think that management of regional food should now transfer to a specialist body such as Food From Britain and its Regional Food Groups. FFB itself should be given a new remit and terms of reference to reflect its new role, as well as additional funding if this is needed.

Each RDA should work with Food From Britain and other partners to devise a regional food component to their regional economic strategies. The Countryside Agency should hand its work in this area on to FFB and the RDAS.

Industry bodies should do more, with the help of FFB and the Regional Food Groups, to ensure that English producers take part in the Protected Food Names scheme.

Regulation should move towards whole farm approaches, with flexible management of environmental risks and basing enforcement of regulation on risk assessments.

We also think that planning guidance must strongly support development of local Combined Heat and Power and gasification plants, in the context of developing new energy markets. DTLR should encourage this as part of the current overall planning review, and the revision of Planning Policy Guidance being undertaken by the Government. Given the environmental rationale for growing these crops, care must be taken to ensure that they are grown and transported by energy-efficient and ecologically sound means.

We urge the Government to ensure in the forthcoming trade round that payments to create a market for environmental goods are not struck down by WTO rules. We believe that they will be a key tool in rural development policy.

As production subsidies decline, the Government's objective should be instead to secure a progressive transfer of resources in Europe towards wider social and environmental objectives under the so-called Pillar II of the CAP. Public funds should be refocused on public goods, rather than subsidising overproduction.

We recommend that the Government should increase rates of modulation to 10% from 2004.

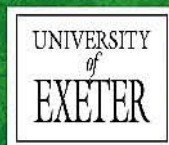
If substantial CAP reform is not delivered in 2006-07 we believe the Government should give serious consideration to a further increase in modulation at that point to the maximum 20%.

The bulk of the new resources made available for agri-environment programmes by further modulation should be spent on a new, broad and shallow 'entry level' stewardship tier, open to as many farms in England as possible, and accessed through a whole farm plan.

We recommend that the new cross-Government group which has been set up to examine how Government procurement can support environmental outcomes should look at the area of food sourcing and public procurement rules.

- **Impacts.** It is too soon to say what impact the report will have. Its initial impact in the media and elsewhere suggests that it will have an important influence on rural policy debate for some time to come.
- **Context.** The report seeks to identify opportunities for policy integration.





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