Rural Scotland in Focus 2016: Informing Rural Policy in Scotland

RPLC Webinar
Wednesday 15th February 2017
Structure of the Webinar

- Introduction to rural Scotland
- The RSiF Reports, the Rural Policy Centre and SRUC
- Key messages from RSiF 2016
  - Changing Land Management
  - Rural Economies
  - Policies for Communities in Scotland
  - Conclusions – the need for a rural strategy
- The impact of the RSiF Reports
Rural Scotland is significant:

1. 98% of Scotland’s land mass (rural defined as less than 3,000 population)
2. Home to approx. 20% of population = 1 million people
3. Sectors: food and drink, tourism, renewables, forestry, agriculture and fisheries, IT, manufacturing, construction, professional and creative industries.
Rural Scotland in Focus
Reports give:

1. Fast-track to evidence
2. Commentary on key themes
3. Compendium of resources
4. Insight into changes over time
Rural Policy Centre Activities
RSiF supports SRUC in delivering:

SRUC Mission:
“committed to excellence in the advancement, communication and translation of knowledge throughout the rural sector”
Partnership is central...
Introduction: Key Points

1. Much has changed since our 2014 Report:
   a. UK Election (2015)
   b. Scottish Election (2016)
   c. Brexit vote (2016)
   d. Context of uncertainty

2. Wider policy landscape…

3. The centrality of evidence remains:
   a. what is known, what is not known, what we still need to know…
   b. what all this means for rural and national policy… which we explore at the end…
Report chapters: Key Messages

Changing Land Management

Scotland’s Rural Economies

Policies for Communities in Scotland: are they delivering national resilience outcomes?

Rural Scotland in Focus 2016

In our 2016 Report, we have examined agricultural sectors and their trends, the multiple outcomes of diverse estates, the viability of woodland and forest gates, the economic significance of rural businesses, and the policies surrounding community resilience.

We have highlighted challenges, trends, drivers, inhibitors and enablers. We have described initiatives of interest, exploring how and whether these have been delivered (or could be delivered) higher-order outcomes, together with the need for adaptation.

We have reflected on initiatives dating back many decades. These initiatives have enabled us to assess where real progress has been made, where trails and barriers have been encountered, and - by progressing forward - in some instances of heightened uncertainty - we have explored potential future options.

Based on our analysis, we can continue to see the need for a coherent, sensible rural strategy, aligned within a national policy framework, which builds on the innovation and creativity of these initiatives.

We propose that such a rural strategy would need to have three aims:

1. To set out the vision for rural Scotland, and how the different rural-specific interventions deliver to that vision.
2. To monitor, evaluate and review how national policies are supporting, or hampering, delivery of that rural vision, potentially using a type of ‘rural proofing’ approach.
3. To develop ways of measuring progress in order to track how rural is delivering to (i) its values and (ii) the Outcomes of the National Performance Framework.

Combining these three aims ensures that the rural strategy would not lead to rural becoming alienated or disconnected. Instead, the role of both national and specific interventions in supporting the vision of rural Scotland would be tracked, and the impact contribution of rural to Scotland’s Outcomes for ‘Innovation’ be measured.

Although we are entering a time of unprecedented uncertainty, this period also presents opportunities - which a confident and ambitious rural Scotland can seize by being innovative, forward-thinking and forward-thinking.
Agriculture – Time for Change?
  – Steven Thomson with
  – Andrew Barnes
  – Julian Bell
  – Gavin Hill
  – Robert Logan
  – David Keiley

Outcomes from different land ownership models
  – Dr Rob McMorran

What future for woodland and forestry in Scotland?
  – Prof Davy McCracken
Agriculture – time for change?

- Scottish agriculture is constantly **evolving** – using SRUC experts:
  - Provide an **overview**
  - **Drivers** of change
  - **Opportunities** and **Challenges** going forward
Changing Agriculture – Data Evidence
Agriculture – chapter structure
Agriculture – time for change?

Viable, Vibrant and Resilient Agriculture
Agriculture – time for change

- Policy **uncertainty**
  - drop in investment;
  - long-term system changes are postponed
- Farmers & crofters need to drive **changes** to improve:
  - technical **efficiency**,
  - business **viability**,
  - **vibrancy** of the sector
- Support the **younger generation**
  - implement **new ideas** and take **new approaches** to farming
- Unprecedented period of **policy transition**
  - Need to take stock and create a **roadmap for success** for Scottish agriculture
Outcomes from different land ownership models

- Some diversification of landownership types has occurred, with different outcomes.
  - **Private estate owners** emphasise long-term estate viability and deliver economic impacts.
  - **NGO landowners** play a key role in conservation, delivering economic and social outcomes.
  - **Community landownership** rebuilds community capacity, confidence, increases employment, investment, housing and reduces out-migration.
Land ownership continued

- Policy shifts have increased pressure on landowners to deliver **public benefits** and involve **communities**.

- All landowners face **challenges**: financial pressures, public and political perceptions and expectations, uncertainty and conflict.

- ‘New’ landownership models can increase **rural resilience**.

- Pro-active **community engagement** and **partnership** by private landowners can enhance community outcomes.
What future for woodland and forestry in Scotland?
What future for woodland and forestry in Scotland?

Attitudes & Perceptions

Leadership

Partnerships
Scotland’s Rural Economies – looking beyond the land-based sector

- There are 51,000 businesses in rural Scotland. This is one third of Scotland’s registered small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Over 70% of these - nearly 37,000 businesses - operate outside the primary sector.
- While the evidence base about primary sector businesses is relatively good, evidence about the characteristics, needs and contributions of businesses operating outside the primary sector is more limited. This has led to two false assumptions: (1) that the rural economy = agriculture and (2) that cities are the only engines of growth with rural areas dependent on them.
- Evidence shows that rural businesses are different to those in urban Scotland, in terms of size, ownership structure and growth plans. They may therefore need different support.
- Rural businesses generally have good survival rates. Business registration rates vary – higher in Aberdeenshire and Stirling, lower in Dumfries and Galloway and East Ayrshire.
- We need to know much more about: business productivity, innovation and connectivity, the numbers of unregistered businesses, the routes that individuals take into setting up their businesses and their future plans.
- Improving the evidence base is now more important than ever. We need to understand: the impacts of Brexit and associated uncertainty for businesses; the role of new actors (particularly LEADER) in providing support for rural enterprises; the impacts of Scotland’s changing financial powers and of new support for businesses announced in the Programme for Government 2016-17; and the increasing diversity of businesses across rural Scotland.
- We need much better evidence about all of Scotland’s businesses, to challenge assumptions and to ensure appropriate support is available to all businesses in order to fulfill the Scottish Government’s purpose of building a dynamic, inclusive and sustainable economy across Scotland.
The shape of wider rural economies

- There are **51,000 registered SMEs** in rural Scotland; **one third** of Scotland’s total.

- **Over 70%** of these - nearly **37,000 businesses** - operate outside the primary sector.

- **Evidence** about the characteristics, needs and contributions of non-primary sector businesses is relatively limited.

- This has led to two **false assumptions**:
  - that the rural economy = agriculture, and
  - that cities are the only engines of growth.
Evidence of differences:

- Evidence shows that rural businesses are **different** to urban businesses:
  - e.g. over 42% of businesses in both accessible and remote rural Scotland have no employees, compared to 30-34% in urban Scotland.
  - e.g. business survival and reg./dereg. rates
  - e.g. greater importance of home-based and family-owned businesses

- They may therefore need **different** (type, delivery, etc.) support.
The need to know more…

What more do we need to know about rural businesses?

What more do we need to know about the context they are operating in?

This evidence will:

- Challenge false assumptions
- Lead to more appropriate rural business support
- Fulfil the Scottish Government’s purpose
Since 1999, there have been many policies, programmes and funds to support community resilience.

When the original Social Justice Strategy was launched, data was seen as essential, so that “Scotland will know if we are moving towards a fairer, more just nation”.

However, 17 years later, we do not know whether all these policies have changed outcomes for communities across Scotland.

This is because: (1) policies and programmes do not feed into each other; (2) indicators change significantly with each new policy; and (3) local-level evidence is not pulled together to assess progress towards national community outcomes.

In rural areas, lack of evidence is particularly concerning, especially coupled with over-reliance on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). But it is no longer acceptable to say that it is “too difficult” to collect data in and for rural areas.

There is an urgent need to develop a framework for further evidence-gathering plus smarter use of what we already know.

If this does not happen soon, we will have no clear picture of what has changed and why. It will also be impossible to know what to stop and what to continue.
Since 1999, there have been many policies, programmes and funds to support community resilience.

17 years later, we do not know whether all these policies have changed the national-level picture of outcomes for communities.

This is because:

a. policies and programmes do not feed into each other;

b. Indicators change significantly with each new policy;

c. local-level evidence is not pulled together to assess progress towards national community outcomes.
The evidence shows:

- **Urgent need to:**
  - develop a framework;
  - smarter use of what we already know;
  - identify **gaps** for further evidence-gathering.

- **Then:**
  - clear picture of **what has changed and why**;
  - **know** what to stop and what to continue.

- **It is no longer acceptable to say** that it is “too difficult” to collect data in and for **rural areas** (e.g. for Indicators).
Rural Scotland in Focus

2016

In our 2016 Report, we have examined agricultural sectors and their trends, the multiple outcomes of diverse estates, the feasibility of woodland and forestry goals, the economic significance of wider rural businesses, and the policy landscape surrounding community resilience.

We have highlighted complexities, trends, drivers, inhibitors and enablers. We have described directions of travel, exploring how and whether these have delivered (or could deliver) higher-level outcomes, together with the need for adaptation.

We have reflected on timelines dating back many decades. These reflections have enabled us to assess where rural has come from, where and how drivers and priorities have changed over time, and – by projecting forward, even in these times of heightened uncertainty – we have explored potential future options.

Based on our analysis, we continue to see the need for a coherent, measurable rural strategy situated within a national policy framework, which builds on the innovation and creativity of those in rural Scotland. Such a strategy would bring together the resources, needs, opportunities, conflicts, threats, drivers and wider policy context within a collective, single frame of reference.

We propose that such a rural strategy would need to have three aims:

1. To set out the vision for rural Scotland, and how the different rural-specific interventions deliver to that vision;
2. To monitor, evaluate and review how national policies are supporting, or hampering, delivery of that rural vision, potentially using a type of “rural proofing” approach;
3. To develop ways of measuring progress in order to track how rural is delivering to (a) its vision and (b) the Outcomes of the National Performance Framework.

Combining these three aims ensures that the rural strategy would not lead to rural becoming siloed or separated. Instead, the role of both national and rural-specific interventions in supporting (or hindering) the vision of rural Scotland would be tracked, and the integral contribution of rural to Scotland’s National Outcomes would be “mapped”.

Although we are entering a time of unprecedented uncertainty, this period also presents opportunity – one which a confident and ambitious rural Scotland can seize by being inclusive, innovative and forward-thinking.
What next for rural Scotland?

1. We have taken you through the drivers and directions-of-travel of Scotland’s multiple agricultural and land-use sectors, rural businesses and communities.

2. The evidence points to the need for a rural strategy which is:
   a. Coherent, inclusive and measurable;
   b. builds on the innovation and creativity of those in rural Scotland.
Three Aims of the Strategy:

1. To set out the vision for rural Scotland, and how the different rural-specific interventions deliver to that vision;

2. To monitor, evaluate and review how national policies are supporting, or hampering, delivery of that rural vision, potentially using a type of “rural proofing” approach;

3. To develop ways of measuring progress in order to track how rural is delivering to (a) its vision and (b) the Outcomes of the National Performance Framework.
Vision and progress underpinned by evidence...

1. **1999**: Social Justice Strategy:
   a. *evidence* is critical because "Scotland will know if we are moving towards a fairer, more just nation".

2. "Scotland knows" is a compelling phrase – one worth reaching for.
Impact through Engagement

1. Scottish Parliament:
   a. Parliamentary Reception
   b. Parliamentary Committees
   c. Launch Events: MSPs on Panel

2. Scottish Government:
   • Informing Government Policy Analysts and Researchers

3. Scottish Stakeholders:
   • NGOs, land management, development trusts, academics

4. UK Stakeholders:
   • e.g. UK Rural Policy and Practitioners’ Research Group

5. International Stakeholders:
   • Sweden, Finland, Australia, Canada – economic and regional development bodies, Parliaments.
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