

The Nature of Rural Development:

Towards a Sustainable Integrated Rural Policy in Europe

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**Actors, Institutions and  
Attitudes to Rural Development:  
The UK National Report**

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## **Preface**

### *About the Study*

The 1990s saw a series of incremental steps to reform rural and agricultural policies in Europe, including changes to the Common Agricultural Policy and the Structural Funds of the European Union (EU). However, serious concerns remain about the limited scope of policy reform and the continued difficulties in resolving the various economic, social and environmental problems experienced in Europe's rural areas. Further reforms are highly likely in the coming years, particularly given pressures from world trade negotiations and from the changing relationships between Central and Eastern European countries and the EU. There is, therefore, a need, as well as an important opportunity, to continue to develop new ways of promoting sustainable rural development in Europe that meet social, economic and environmental objectives.

To meet this challenge, the WWF – global environment network and its partners, the statutory countryside and nature conservation agencies of Great Britain, have commissioned a research project called 'The Nature of Rural Development' to run over a 3-year period. The Project is organised in two parts. First, a Scoping Phase ('Actors and Institutions') ran from May to December 2000 to map and analyse the institutional structures and different understandings of rural development issues. A second Phase I will be carried out during 2001-2002 to develop case studies of rural development in order to identify the ingredients of, and constraints upon, successful practice and to develop working recommendations for the promotion of sustainable rural development in Europe. The Scoping Phase of the project involves a consortium of researchers in 10 participating countries; Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The Scoping Phase was co-ordinated by David Baldock, Janet Dwyer and Jan-Erik Petersen (Institute for European Environmental Policy [IEEP], London) with Philip Lowe and Neil Ward, Centre for Rural Economy [CRE], University of Newcastle upon Tyne).

In each participating country, a national researcher worked with a WWF national officer to identify the main organisations and institutions with an interest in rural development issues. Key actors were interviewed using semi-structured personal interviews and telephone interviews during May, June & July 2000. The research also included analysis of published studies, position statements and policy reports on rural development issues. A national workshop was held in each participating country in September 2000. At the workshops, a draft national report was discussed amongst a grouping of key national actors involved in rural development. IEEP and CRE then produced a comparative report, analysing the overarching findings from the 10 participating countries, and comparing the various institutional structures and attitudes towards rural development. The comparative report formed the basis of a major seminar in Brussels in December 2000.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM THE UK SCOPING STUDY**

### **The rural and agricultural character of the UK**

- In European terms, the UK is a relatively highly urbanised country, with its more accessible rural areas notably experiencing population and employment growth. Its agricultural industry is well developed and productive, with relatively large farms that employ comparatively small proportions of the rural workforce. National trends can, however, conceal important differences in the rural and agricultural situations in the component countries of the UK.

### **The institutional and policy framework for rural development in the UK**

- The growth of the Structural Funds has drawn in a wider range of bodies into discussions about rural development since 1990. The rural policy framework is also changing as a result of devolution. In recent years, environmental and countryside groups have taken an increasing interest in 'rural development' policy issues because of the importance of agri-environmental programmes in the new Rural Development Regulation.
- Agriculture has not traditionally been a high profile political issue in the UK. However, the BSE crisis has been one major political issue recently. Also, devolution is raising the political profile of agricultural and rural issues in Scotland and Wales. Since the 1940s, agricultural policy has tended to be treated separately from rural development. A more market-oriented perspective has come to dominate national policy thinking in recent years, and key sectors of UK agriculture are believed by some to be internationally competitive. However, 'the countryside' is also widely seen as a national environmental asset and as an attractive place in which to live and enjoy recreation.
- In England, 'old-style' rural development — which focussed on grants for the generation of non-agricultural employment — was the responsibility of a fragmented and relatively small-scale policy community clustered around the work of the former Rural Development Commission. Institutional reforms in 1999 have meant that the national part of this work is now merged with the landscape and recreation functions of the former Countryside Commission while the regional delivery of programmes is now part of the new Regional Development Agencies. Statutory countryside bodies play an important role in advising government and local authorities on rural and environmental issues, although pollution control/resource protection authorities have generally had little influence upon the shaping of agricultural and rural development policies nationally.
- In Scotland and Wales, devolution has altered the legislating framework for rural development issues, which are now a devolved matter. A stronger social rationale for agricultural support in these two countries is reflected in the balance of agricultural and rural development supports there. The combination of devolution and EU CAP and Structural Fund reforms is resulting in an increasingly complex web of initiatives surrounding rural development in the UK.

### **Analysis of perceptions, perspectives, tensions and alliances**

- The priority attached to different rural problems differs according to individual organisations. Environmental groups point to continued losses in biodiversity and valued landscapes and press for stronger statutory measures and greater public resources to protect the environment. Agricultural organisations stress farming's sharply declining economic fortunes since 1996, and the threats posed to farm viability by future CAP reforms and the burden of regulations, including environmental regulations. Less well

represented are issues of economic hardship and social exclusion among those people in rural areas beyond the farming sector, who suffer as services are increasingly restructured around the needs and capacities of car owning households. However, rural service provision and rural transport have been two issues addressed by the recent Rural White Paper for England.

- One key challenge yet to be addressed is the establishment of a consensus around what should be the rationale for public financial support for agriculture. There are potential alliances here between farming and environmental interests should an environmental/land management rationale be agreed. A second key challenge is to move away from the overly sectoral outlook of agricultural interests and to move towards a more 'integrated rural development' approach. Such a move would also require a greater devolution of decision-making and policy capacity to the sub-national level, especially to the English regions.
- The Europeanisation of rural development policy through the Structural Funds has brought new ways of working and a wider range of actors into rural partnerships. Europeanisation has brought greater participation, at least notionally, in development programmes. Efforts to encourage greater public participation locally still meet with variable success.
- Tensions around the direction and priorities for rural development are often played out through the operation of the statutory town and country planning framework within which land development is regulated. Views differ over the extent to which the framework successfully protects valued landscape and environmental resources on the one hand or serves to constrain and inhibit economic development and restructuring on the other.

### **Challenges for sustainable rural development**

- No single definition of what constitutes 'Sustainable Rural Development' (SRD) commands a widespread consensus. This lack is sometimes viewed as a problem by policy-makers, although others are less concerned about the term's elasticity. There is general agreement that current rates of loss of biodiversity, development of green land and loss of soil through intensive farming are unsustainable in the longer term. Organisations disagree over whether enough is being done to address these issues in the short term. Water pollution from agriculture is currently on the wane as an issue of concern, although the implications of climate change for rural areas are only just beginning to be considered.
- Organic farming and the growth of energy crops are both widely pointed to as positive contributors to SRD. The scope for IT to assist in SRD often attracts much interest but the claim that new IT-based working practices reduce overall travel remains unproven. Future technological changes (such as GM & IT), along with the impacts of, and efforts to address, climate change, are likely to significantly alter the opportunities and constraints facing SRD in the medium to longer term.
- In the short term, one immediate challenge is to assist the new Rural Development Regulation to succeed as a new, devolved and integrated framework for funding of SRD. If successful, the RDR could serve as a viable long-term alternative to the mainstream CAP and help deliver more radical EU-wide reforms after 2003. Another immediate challenge is to raise the profile of environmental protection and resource management as a 'cross-cutting' issue across Government Departments and among sub-national institutions.

## Helping and hindering sustainable rural development

- The main constraints upon the SRD approach are a lack of sufficient resourcing, a lack of political will, a lack of leverage over 'non-environmental' institutions, and a lack of institutional capacity — particularly at the sub-national level and for cross-departmental working.
- None of these constraints are insurmountable, however. For bodies such as WWF and its partners, an effective means of assisting in the development of the SRD approach would be as follows:
  - i) to press for continued modulation of direct compensation payments and match-funding in order to increase the resourcing of the RDR;
  - ii) to help develop, support and publicise local examples of best practice in sustainable and integrated rural development programmes and projects and to learn lessons from successes and failures;
  - iii) to press for the increasing use, and purchase, of clear targets — based on sustainable development indicators — for government departments (and devolved and regional bodies);
  - iv) to press for greater institutional capacity for 'joined up' policies and greater partnership working at the regional level to deliver sustainable and integrated rural development.

## 1. Introduction: the rural and agricultural character of the UK

In European terms, the UK is a relatively urbanised country, with a small agricultural workforce and a farm structure dominated by larger farms. Four-fifths of the UK population live in urban areas,<sup>i</sup> and the UK's overall population density is 242 persons per km<sup>2</sup> (and 376 for England). However, population density falls below 30 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in those most isolated rural districts of northern England (e.g. Tynedale in Northumberland) and in mid-Wales (Powys) and below 10 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in the Scottish Highlands.<sup>ii</sup> Methods of defining 'rural areas' vary between institutions, and there is no single and agreed definition. One common convention in England is to use the 150 local district authorities that exhibit the 'most rural' characteristics to represent 'rural England'.

Agriculture is by far the largest UK land use, covering 75% of land.<sup>iii</sup> (Forestry covers about 10%, with the proportion ranging between 15% for Scotland and 8% for England). British agriculture has long been commercial in its orientation. Average farm size (in terms of land area) is four times the EU average, with the largest farms concentrated in southern and eastern England. Only a small proportion of the national working population works in agriculture (under 2%), and even in England's 150 most rural districts, agricultural employment amounts to under 5% of the workforce in total. However, in a small number of rural districts in England, agricultural employment can be much higher, and in much of rural Wales farming represents 15-20% of the workforce, while the proportion is over a third in Scotland's Western Isles.<sup>iv</sup>

Many parts of rural Britain, especially in England, are experiencing population growth. Since the 1960s, the dominant trend has been a significant net migration of people from larger towns and cities towards more rural areas. The population of the rural districts of England grew by 21% between 1971 and 1995, with growth being most marked in the more accessible parts of southern and central England, and less so in the English uplands. This trend has fuelled concerns about the rate of 'urban' development, particularly for housing, in 'accessible rural areas', but has been much less marked in the more rural parts of Scotland and Wales. As a general rule, rural areas experiencing greater population growth and social change are more likely to be dominated by preservationist concerns locally, as people seek to protect their 'positional goods' (such as attractive local landscapes) through the planning system. This is sometimes termed the 'NIMBY' ('Not In My Back-Yard') phenomenon.

Rural policy issues in the UK have to be understood in the context of a dynamic system of constitutional change. Recent years have seen the devolution of political power in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Devolution has been most pronounced in Scotland, followed by Wales. In Northern Ireland, devolution represents a special case because of the sensitivities of the 'peace process', but the new Northern Ireland Assembly resumed its work in May 2000.<sup>v</sup> In England, a process of *decentralisation* to the regions has been underway and new regional structures have been set up. However, this decentralisation of administrative structures and processes has not been matched by any significant devolution of political power. Because rural development issues differ across the component parts of the UK, an important result of devolution and decentralisation has been the expectation of an increasing capacity for rural policies to be tailored to address sub-national priorities.

Rural development policy has a long history in the UK, although it has traditionally been more narrowly defined than at present. The work of the Development Commission, established in 1909, and its successor bodies was dominated by concerns about the social and economic development of the more geographically peripheral and agriculturally dependent rural areas.<sup>vi</sup> Policies were either small-scale or strategic. The former tended to focus on employment creation through grant aid for the establishment of rural industries (craft and small-scale manufacturing), and social and community development (through support for village halls and services). This type of rural development was therefore

implicitly oriented towards 'sweeping up' the *socio-economic* problems that agricultural policy left in its wake.

A second, and more strategic, strand to rural development was also represented in the early work of the Development Commission. This focused on depressed and peripheral rural regions where historically the principal concern had been about rural depopulation. Forestry policy shared this focus with rural development policy (but was also driven by a strategic need to boost timber production). This strand of rural development policy saw the establishment of the Mid-Wales Industrial Development Association in 1957 (which later became the Development Board for Rural Wales) and, in 1965, the Highlands and Islands Development Board in Scotland. These bodies took a more strategic and dirigiste approach to 'rural regional development'.<sup>vii</sup>

Over the last few years, what constitutes 'rural development' has widened in two directions. First, the historical separation of rural development policy from the agricultural sector has gradually changed as rural development has begun to embrace farming, particularly through the promotion of farm diversification. For much of the twentieth century, agricultural policy was not really seen as part of rural development policy. (Instead, it was a national, sectoral policy). Only recently has rural development policy had to engage more fully with what happens on farms. Second, rural development has also widened to embrace 'countryside management' issues. The British approach to financially supporting agriculture's land management and conservation functions dates back to the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, but has grown since the mid-1990s as agri-environmental policy has evolved as a strand of the Common Agricultural Policy. As the definition of 'rural development' has broadened to embrace agri-environmental concerns, so the 'problem-solving' rationale continues but in a new form. Rural development can now be characterised as 'sweeping up' the socio-economic *and environmental* problems created by past agricultural policy.

An added factor has been the growth during the 1990s of the use of the European Structural Funds — a *regional development* policy — for rural development purposes. The Structural Funds have brought with them a new model of 'Integrated Rural Development', which combines social, economic and community development measures with those aimed at landscape and nature conservation in rural areas. However, the degree of integration across the agricultural/non-agricultural divide has been limited. This is, in part, because of the poorly developed relationship between agricultural policy and rural development policy in the context of regional development, particularly in England. It has been a relatively novel phenomenon in the UK for the Structural Fund programmes to require that a view be taken on the contribution of agriculture to regional economic development. As a result, since the mid-1990s in particular, the Structural Funds have stimulated the gradual — if patchy — development of the relationship between rural and regional development policies in Britain.<sup>viii</sup>

Britain has a long tradition of landscape and nature protection policies, although protective measures have traditionally tended to be taken outside of mainstream agricultural activity (e.g. National Nature Reserves) or on the most marginal agricultural lands (e.g. National Parks). Since the 1970s, however, an increasing concern in British rural policy has been the loss of valued landscapes and environmental resources as a result of changing agricultural practices. A relatively strong countryside conservation lobby has had some success in pressing the case for the 'greening' of agricultural policy. Initially, this was through spatial designations (zoning) of areas of greater landscape or nature conservation value, with stricter planning controls on development and voluntary agri-environment schemes for farmers. Environmental pressures have long been most acute in the arable sector in the lowlands concentrated in eastern and southern England. In the hills, livestock farmers have suffered the lowest farming incomes, although there are also environmental pressures there through over-stocking. In Wales, a set of social and community objectives, less evident in much of England, underpins support for the agricultural sector. There is an associated

concern for the Welsh language and Welsh cultural heritage, and an effort to maintain population levels in peripheral rural areas. Also distinctive to the UK are concerns about public access to the countryside.<sup>ix</sup> A long-standing campaign, involving organisations such as the Ramblers' Association, has culminated in recent legislation in the UK and Scottish Parliaments to establish a 'right to roam' over open country.

Since 1996/97 new issues have emerged about the rate and scale of agricultural restructuring as a result of sharply declining farm incomes, brought on by falling commodity prices and the BSE crisis and compounded by the strength of the pound compared to the weak Euro. Economic pressures are particularly acute among livestock producers, who are concentrated more in Wales and Scotland, and in the north and west of England. Some relatively new organisations (such as the Countryside Alliance) have claimed there to be a general 'crisis' in the rural economy.<sup>x</sup> However, such claims are not borne out by the economic evidence. Aggregate, UK-wide employment in rural areas is rising, and, with the exception of the agricultural sector, economic conditions are currently generally favourable. Net employment growth has been such that some 600,000 extra jobs have been created in rural areas in England in the last decade, for example.<sup>xi</sup>

Indeed, one public concern relating to rural areas can be said to be a symptom of the economic success of many, particularly more accessible, rural areas. National opinion polling continues to reveal that a majority of people would prefer to live in rural areas because of the perceived quality of life there, and demand is fuelling development pressures. There have long been major public and political concerns about the rate of new development in the more accessible rural areas, especially in the south of England. The buoyant regional economy of the South East is also increasing the demand for land for housing and economic development on greenfield sites that some countryside organisations (e.g. Council for the Protection of Rural England) prioritise as among the most serious threats to 'the countryside'.

The movement of relatively more affluent people to more accessible rural areas has helped propagate a view of the countryside as a place of affluence. However, the image of many rural areas as 'affluent' and 'problem-free' can accentuate the social and economic problems faced by more marginal groups. In some parts of Britain, a concern with the 'under-development' of areas and regions has, in recent years, been replaced with a new rural development concern about the experience of social exclusion in rural areas where poverty exists amidst affluence.<sup>xii</sup> Tackling social exclusion in rural areas has been a major theme of recent rural initiatives from government. These include a new Rural White Paper for England<sup>xiii</sup>, published in November 2000 after two years of preparation, and a new policy paper on rural Scotland published in May 2000.<sup>xiv</sup>

## **2. The institutional and policy framework for rural development in the UK**

Rural policy in the UK involves a wide range of institutions. They include the different tiers of government (UK central government, devolved institutions, and local authorities), and a series of quasi-autonomous statutory bodies (or 'agencies') that advise government. Economic interests are represented by various producer organisations, most notably the farming unions, and there are many non-governmental organisations, particularly the environmental pressure groups, but also rural community groups and other voluntary sector bodies. Since 1999, the institutional framework for rural development in the UK has altered as a result of devolution. The Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, and the Northern Ireland Assembly started work in 1999. In England there has been a process of decentralisation (of administrative structures) rather than political devolution. This process has involved the creation of new Regional Development Agencies in the English regions, for example. At the same time as this reform, a new Countryside Agency for England was also established. These reforms mean that the institutional structures and framework are in a state of evolution, as the new institutions 'find their feet' and develop their own policies and programmes. Moreover, 1999-2000 has also been a period of significant policy change, with the implementation of the new CAP arrangements, the Rural Development Plans, and the Structural Fund and LEADER programmes. In addition, a new Rural White Paper for England was prepared and published, along with new strategic policy documents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **2.1 Institutions**

The UK Government has over-arching responsibilities for public policies affecting rural areas, and sole responsibility for foreign and defence policy and EU relations. However, aspects of public policy are now 'devolved matters', which are the responsibility of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Such matters include agriculture, environmental policy and rural development.

#### *UK Central Government*

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has overall UK responsibility for the agricultural, fishing and food industries and aspects of land and coastal management. It is responsible for the implementation of the CAP and Common Fisheries Policy and the EAGGF parts of the Structural Funds,<sup>xv</sup> is responsible for the drawing up and implementing of the England Rural Development Plan (ERDP) and is now the lead government body with responsibility for the LEADER+ programme in England.<sup>xvi</sup> The Ministry's Rural Division co-ordinates work on the RDR, although a number of other divisions are involved in ERDP schemes or sustainable rural development issues. Some commentators, including the Countryside Agency, have criticised the low level of influence conservation and rural development divisions within the Ministry's overall work.<sup>xvii</sup> However, the production of the ERDP has helped generate new links between different divisions of MAFF.<sup>xviii</sup>

A second central government department with important responsibilities for rural issues is the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR). The DETR is a large 'super-Ministry', created in 1997 by merging the former Department of the Environment with the Department of Transport. It is also responsible for local authority, housing and planning matters. It has over 15,000 staff and spends around £13 billion each year, over half of which is on housing and regeneration. Its countryside budget amounts to £130 million (DETR, 1999). The DETR's 'Wildlife and Countryside Directorate' is within its Housing, Construction, Regeneration and Countryside Group. The Directorate is responsible for the conservation and enhancement of England's countryside; the economic and social development of rural areas; environmental aspects of forestry and agricultural policy;

countryside recreation; National Parks; and coastal policy. This is, however, a small Directorate within a very large Department.

Of course, the work and responsibilities of most government departments have some bearing on the development of rural areas. However, the most important other central government departments are the Treasury (HMT) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). HMT oversees, and has long acted as a critical brake on, public spending. It is, therefore, an important actor in determining national discretionary spending on rural development programmes, for example. The Treasury's role has become increasingly visible in recent years. It now plays an increasing role in agreeing the content of departmental spending plans and, as a result, in shaping policy priorities. This has been particularly so since the introduction of the new 3-yearly Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) process in 1997. The CSR sets the Government's overall spending limits and spending programmes. Since 1998, spending has also been tied to a system of Public Service Agreements, which set out the objectives of public spending and the output targets to be achieved.

DTI is the Government department with overall responsibility for the Structural Funds. Although it is responsible for economic competitiveness, the DTI does not have an explicit rural dimension to its work, and so is sometimes accused of failing sufficiently to grasp the distinctiveness of rural economy issues. It is a general complaint among rural development and environmental interest groups that, more often than not, DTI and other central government departments are content to leave rural/environmental issues to what they see as the 'lead' department (MAFF or DETR). The Department of Health and the Department for Education and Employment do not have explicit rural policy remits, but are responsible for hospitals and schools that, in many rural areas, will be important local employers.

In England, the work of several central government departments is co-ordinated at the regional level by the Government Regional Offices (GROs) in each of the English regions. In particular, DETR and DTI work within the GRO structure, although other Departments have some representation in GROs. In July 2000, MAFF announced that it would be locating one senior official in each GRO.

### *National Statutory Bodies*

Several statutory bodies work on rural issues. In England, the Countryside Agency was established in 1999 as a result of merging the Countryside Commission with the national functions of the former Rural Development Commission. It has a staff of 520 and has annual spending programmes of £63m. While the Countryside Commission was responsible for landscape designation and management, and the promotion of countryside recreation, the new Agency has been keen to stress its additional responsibilities for socio-economic development in rural areas. Also under DETR is English Nature which has a staff of over 660 and is responsible for nature conservation and biodiversity issues in England. The Countryside Commission's concerns with landscape meant that many of its staff came from planning and countryside management backgrounds, although the merger has broadened the staff expertise of the Countryside Agency. English Nature's scientific traditions are more rooted in the ecological and biological sciences. In Scotland and Wales, these sets of functions covered by these two English bodies are combined within Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). On countryside matters, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, SNH, CCW and the Environment Agency liaise through the work of their Land use Policy Group.

DETR's largest environmental statutory body is the Environment Agency, formed in 1996 from the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and local waste authorities. The Environment Agency has 9,500 staff in England and Wales and is

responsible for implementing numerous EU environmental directives, including those for water quality. (There is a separate Scottish Environmental Protection Agency). It is notable that, despite its strong interest in resource protection, the Environment Agency has had relatively little involvement in debates about CAP reform and its implications for rural land management.<sup>xix</sup> However, it is responsible for enforcing regulations on farm pollution.

The main MAFF Agency with rural development responsibilities is the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency. This Agency was established in 1997 following the privatisation of the Agricultural Development Advisory Service. Its role is “to assist government in the design, development and implementation of policies on the integration of farming and conservation, environmental protection and the rural economy”, and it has a staff of over 800.

### *Local and Regional Authorities*

Elected local authorities include both counties and districts in England, while Scotland has 32 single tier local authorities and Wales has 22.<sup>xx</sup> They are responsible for providing key public services in rural (and urban) areas. These services include education, social services, housing, refuse collection and public environmental health. Local authorities’ land use planning powers are critical in influencing the rural land development process. They have the powers to grant or refuse planning permission for individual developments. They also have responsibility for drawing up and consulting on forward plans for their localities. Planning Policy Guidance Notes produced by central government guide their use of planning powers. Local authorities also have some responsibilities for aspects of rural development — primarily through their local economic development work. A large proportion of local authority expenditure is determined by central government allocations. Their contribution to local rural development is therefore relatively more constrained by the statutory and resourcing frameworks within which they operate than is the case elsewhere in Europe. However, many local authorities that benefit from EU rural development funding have become increasingly involved in the operation of EU programmes in recent years, as well as in lobbying through such organisations as the UK Local Authority Objective 5b Partnership.

Regional statutory bodies also have a role in rural development. In England, the new Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were established in April 1999 in the eight English regions. These are Non-Departmental Public Bodies under the DETR, and have responsibility for promoting economic and sustainable development and regeneration in their area. They include staff and resources that were the responsibility of the regional offices of the former Rural Development Commission, and are specifically required to pay due regard to the rural dimensions of development in their region. RDAs are not elected bodies but are accountable to the Secretary of State.

One further type of statutory body involved in rural development is national park authorities (NPAs). There are 11 such authorities, 8 in England and 3 in Wales. NPAs are the statutory planning authorities in their designated territories, and are responsible for landscape protection and the promotion of public access and enjoyment. National Parks are designated by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions who draws upon advice from the Countryside Agency. Two new National Parks are about to be designated in the southern lowlands of England, with two further Parks in the process of being designated in Scotland. Since 1996, NPAs have been required to give consideration to the social and economic well being of the rural communities that live and work within them. This reform has, in effect, increased interest among NPAs in approaches to integrated rural development that at the same time protect and enhance the quality of the rural environment. NPAs act in association through the Association of National Park Authorities.

## *Scotland and Wales*

England's concerns about, and approaches to, rural development often seem to dominate national debates. This is in part because of the place of England within the UK polity, but also because it represents some 80% of the UK population (and, for example, accounts for more than two-thirds of UK agricultural support under the CAP). However, the relations between the component parts of the UK are evolving through devolution. In Scotland and Wales, rural development priorities differ from England. The set of three Rural White Papers published for England, Scotland and Wales in 1995/96, though common in many respects, showed notable differences in the relative priority accorded to economic or community development and to environmental protection. The Scottish and Welsh White Papers were more preoccupied with the question of how to sustain rural communities and ensure their cultural and economic vitality, whereas the English document discussed the countryside more through the need to reconcile economic and environmental objectives.<sup>xxi</sup> More recently, differences in emphasis have been reflected in the Rural Development Plans for England, Scotland and Wales. The English Plan is geared more towards agri-environment, than the others, while spending on Less Favoured Area (LFA) aid is more significant in Scotland and Wales. For example, the proposed allocation of spending on agri-environment measures accounts for around 20% in Scotland, 35% in Wales and 60% in England, while proposed spending on LFA aid comprises 40%, 40% and 18% respectively.<sup>xxii</sup> (Of course, these different proportions partly reflect the proportions of agricultural land in LFAs in each country. Only approximately 10% of England's farmland is in LFAs, while the designation covers the vast majority of Scotland and Wales).

In Scotland and Wales, although a process of administrative decentralisation predates 1999, devolution has provided the opportunity to signal new approaches to rural policy. What was previously the Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD) has been renamed as the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department, overseen by a 'Minister for Rural Affairs'. In Wales, rural responsibilities are split between an Agriculture Department and a Department for Urban and Rural Development, the former now headed by a 'Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development'. In Northern Ireland, the new Northern Ireland Executive has a Department for Agriculture and Rural Development, headed by a Minister with the same title. However, questions still remain over the extent to which devolution is delivering greater discretionary capacity to act on key rural and agricultural policy issues. ("This is devolution on a dog-lead" was one sceptical comment in Wales).<sup>xxiii</sup>

Scotland and Wales have their own statutory agencies with rural functions. The Countryside Council for Wales has been responsible for administering the Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme, which provides a unified approach to agri-environment policy.<sup>xxiv</sup> Economic development functions have been the responsibility of development agencies that predate devolution, including Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in Scotland, and the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), which incorporates the former Development Board for Rural Wales. The WDA and HIE are relatively experienced in rural development, but this is less the case with Scottish Enterprise.

## *Economic Interests*

Agriculture is the economic sector with the most effective organisation and representation nationally. The National Farmers' Union covers England and Wales and has over 55,000 members, and the National Farmers' Union of Scotland has 12,000 members. The Farmers Union of Wales is a second farming union there. The Country Landowners' Association in England and Wales and the Scottish Landowners' Federation represent landowning interests.

Beyond the farming and landowning bodies, the representation of specifically rural economic sectors is relatively weak. The Confederation of British Industry is the main business lobbying organisation but this mainly represents large companies and has no specific rural dimension to its work. Local chambers of commerce may be active in local economic development issues, but these tend to be urban in their orientation and dominated by medium-sized firms. The British Chambers of Commerce has no dedicated rural dimension to its work, although it has occasionally given evidence to Parliamentary Select Committee inquiries into rural policy. Finally, the Federation of Small Businesses is a lobbying body representing the small business sector but it also has no explicitly rural strand to its activities. There are, therefore, few national economic organisations outside of agriculture with a particular focus on rural issues. One exception might be the British Horse Industry Confederation, established in 1999, to represent businesses in the (predominantly rural) equestrian industry.<sup>xxv</sup>

Finally, studies have attributed some 300,000-350,000 jobs in rural England to the leisure and tourism industries.<sup>xxvi</sup> The tourist sector is represented by tourist Boards, which are statutory bodies. These generally have a country or regional geographical perspective and tend to differentiate less between the urban and rural spheres.

### *Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations*

Alongside the farming and landowning bodies, the various environmental NGOs are among the most important lobby groups shaping rural policy in the UK. They have large memberships and can lobby at both the national and European levels. Most important are the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and the WWF. Each brings particular attributes to the environmental sector as a whole. RSPB has the largest UK membership, with over a million members, and specialises in the links between agricultural policy, farming practices and biodiversity. CPRE has particular expertise in the land use planning system, but has also been campaigning on agricultural policy matters since the 1970s. WWF has an extensive international network, including a European Office in Brussels. The various environmental groups closely liaise with each other, especially through umbrella bodies such as Wildlife and Countryside Link.

In addition to the environmental pressure groups is the National Trust. Established in the late nineteenth century, the National Trust is one of the UK's largest landowners, owning some 250,000ha of countryside, and 600 miles of coastline. It has 2.5million members and is a charitable trust oriented to the preservation of national heritage. Its large landholdings, and roles as an agricultural landlord and manager of many rural tourism sites, make it an important organisation in delivering rural development through conservation, and a potentially important source of future innovative approaches.

### *Other Voluntary Sector Bodies*

The rural social and community development bodies are probably the least well resourced and organised. In England, a network of county-based Rural Community Councils (RCCs) is involved in a range of local community development initiatives. Their umbrella body in England is Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE). However, several northern RCCs have broken away to form their own Federation of Rural Community Councils and ACRE is having problems securing core funding. In some Structural Fund regions local LEADER groups have also become well-established vehicles for rural community development projects.

## 2.2 The main rural policy programmes

### *The Common Agricultural Policy*

The CAP is the largest spending programme related to rural development. MAFF estimate that in 1997/98 total CAP support amounted to £5.27 billion (including £3.63 billion in England (69% of the UK total), £716 million (14%) in Scotland, £473 million (9%) in Wales, and £453million (9%) in Northern Ireland.<sup>xxvii</sup> The arable regimes together comprise 34% of the UK's total CAP expenditure, followed by 29% for dairying and 24% for beef. Direct payments have become increasingly important since 1992, and in 1997/98 made up some 47% of total expenditure. Most significant is the Arable Area Payments Scheme, which represents £1.1 billion of CAP expenditure in England alone.<sup>xxviii</sup> The 'intensity' of CAP commodity support also varies across the UK. Measured on a per hectare basis it is highest in Northern Ireland (£425 per ha), followed by England (£395 per ha) and Wales (£320 per ha) and lowest in Scotland (£140 per ha).<sup>xxix</sup> The CAP comes under MAFF's overall responsibility and has traditionally been operated along highly centralised lines. However, devolution and the new Rural Development Regulation (RDR) arrangements, are stimulating a process of decentralisation in the operation of parts of the CAP.

### *The Rural Development Regulation*

The RDR has been strongly supported by the UK Government and many rural interest groups. Indeed, the Labour Government has seen the RDR as a key plank in its strategy to address the problems of agricultural restructuring.<sup>xxx</sup> Because of historically low levels of spending on the CAP's discretionary measures, there was a risk of the UK being locked into a low-spend trajectory with the RDR. However, the decision to apply modulation to the direct payments to farmers, beginning at 2.5% and rising to 4.5%, and to recycle the modulated savings into the RDR has significantly expanded its funding. For example, by 2006, expenditure for agri-environmental measures will have doubled their current budget in England. Four plans have been submitted to Brussels — one each for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.<sup>xxxi</sup> In each plan, a 'country overview' is supplemented by some measures that are to be applied at a more local level. In England, 8 regional chapters detail specific measures for the English regions, and in Scotland the non-Objective 1 area is divided into three separate 'regions' in the Plan.

### *The Structural Funds*

The Structural Funds have become an important part of the rural development policy framework since the late 1980s. During the first programming period, (1989-93), Objective 1 status was awarded to Northern Ireland, while the Scottish Highlands and Islands, parts of Devon and Cornwall in South West England and Rural Wales were awarded Objective 5b status. Under the second programming period (1994-99), the number of Objective 5b programmes increased to 11, representing some £680million of EU funds and covering 2.8million people,<sup>xxxii</sup> while the Highlands and Islands became an Objective 1 region. The Structural Funds signalled a new style of rural development. The drawing up of Single Programming Documents and the development of new partnership arrangements were two of the most significant and novel features. Although the experience of Objective 5b has been mixed, the new institutional and partnerships arrangements that the programmes generated have served as a useful precursor to the development of structures for the RDR. However, there remains a concern among rural development practitioners about the lack of linkage between the RDR plans and the rural aspects of the new Objective 2 programmes where these apply.

### *LEADER and other Community initiatives*

The main Community Initiative employed in rural development in the UK has been the LEADER programme. Under LEADER I, 13 programmes ran until 1994. These included two English pilot project areas within the Objective 5b area in Devon and Cornwall, along with 6 in the Scottish and 4 in the Welsh Structural Fund regions. Under LEADER II (1994-99), resources were expanded to some £51 million for the UK and this supported the work of 57 Local Action/Development Groups in 60 LEADER areas. Other Community Initiatives have also been utilised for the regeneration of rural localities, including KONVER (to assist the restructuring of areas dependent upon defence industries), RECHAR (to assist the regeneration of former coalfield areas) and PESCA (assisting the socio-economic restructuring of areas dependent on fishing industries).

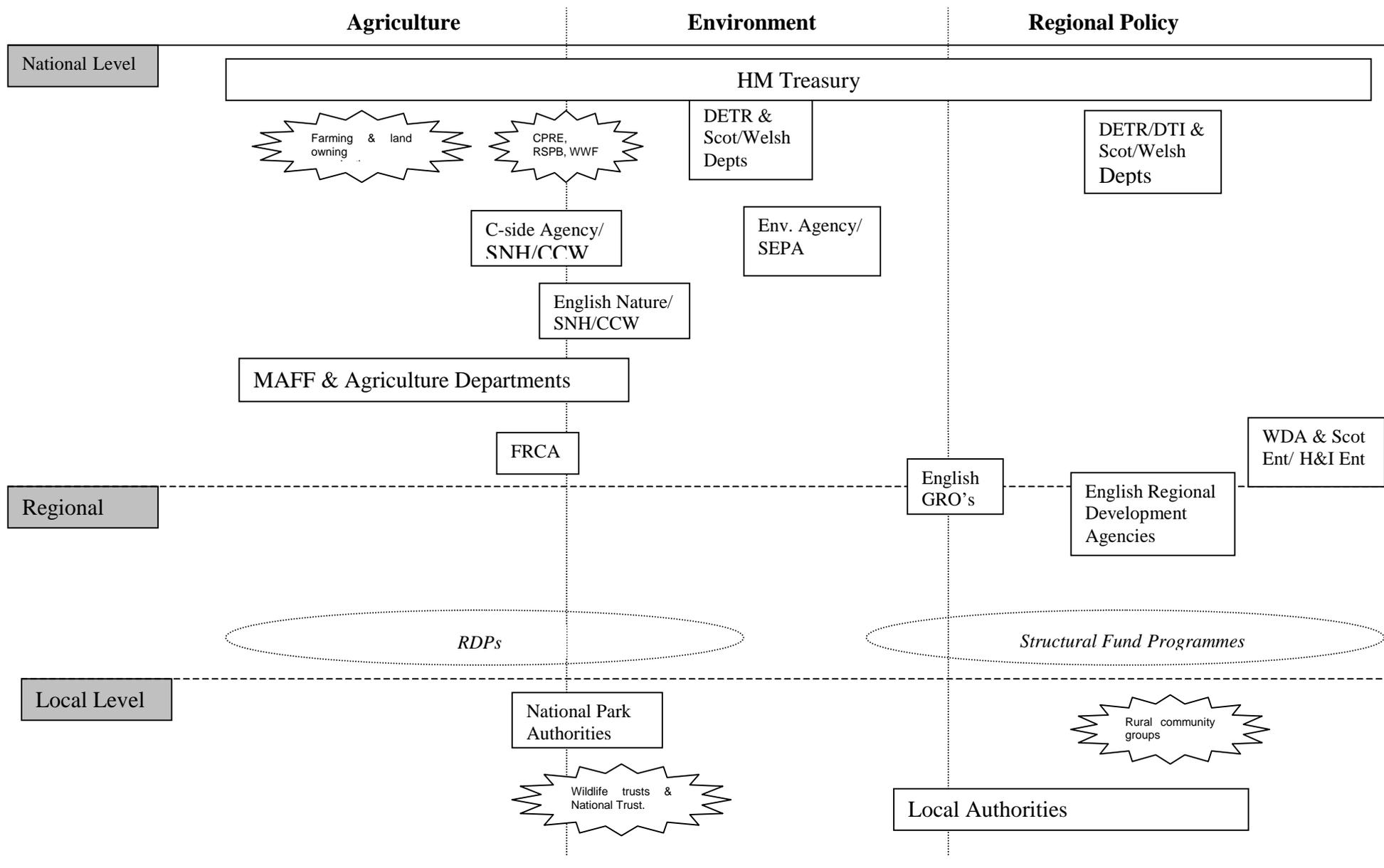
### *Domestic rural programmes*

A series of domestic programmes address social and economic problems in rural areas. In England, until 1999, the rural regeneration work of the former Rural Development Commission provided social and economic regeneration funds in designated Rural Development Areas (which covered a third of rural England) and amounted to just under £10 million. This work has since been transferred to the new Regional Development Agencies and the designations have been re-named Rural Priority Areas. A second strand of former RDC activity was the so-called 'countryside actions' which comprised financial support totalling some £5 million for the county-based Rural Community Councils and support for village community services such as village halls. This work was transferred to the Countryside Agency in 1999. Other national regeneration programmes span rural and urban areas. For example, between 1995 and 2003, about 6.5% (around £200 million) of the Government's Single Regeneration Budget is likely to go to rural areas.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have their own domestic rural development programmes. In Scotland, local authorities play a relatively greater role in financing local rural development schemes than in England.<sup>xxxiv</sup> In Wales, the Welsh Development Agency has developed various rural development schemes, although it is the new Objective 1 programme and the Rural Development Plan under the RDR that will provide the strategic vision and framework for future rural development activities in rural Wales.

Northern Ireland has one of the longest established area-based rural development programmes in the UK, which has a strong community development focus. It has been able to supplement domestic funding from the Department of Agriculture Northern Ireland with Objective 1, LEADER, PESCA and INTERREG funding, as well as support from the International Fund for Ireland and the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

### 3. An Institutional Map for Rural Development in the UK



## 4. Analysis of perceptions, perspectives, tensions and alliances

### 4.1 Rural development in the UK: the main problems and issues

Although there is a general level of agreement over what constitutes the main problems in UK rural development, unsurprisingly perhaps, the priority attached to each problem varies according to the role and perspective of individual organisations. Environmental pressure groups tend to emphasise environmental threats. They draw attention to the evidence of continued environmental stresses, such as the loss of wildlife habitats and species, the absolute decline in biodiversity, damage to protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or the rate of development of rural land. Farming groups, on the other hand, take as their starting point the recent sharp decline in farming incomes and the challenge of strengthening agricultural competitiveness.<sup>xxxv</sup> Other organisations campaign on the decline of rural services or what they see as the threat to the 'rural way of life'. Finally, practitioners in, for example, local and regional authorities and in Scotland and Wales, sometimes view policy issues from the perspective of local discretion versus centralised control. For them the starting point is who takes the decisions and where. In this sub-section, these issues are taken in turn.

#### *Continuing environmental pressures*

Environmental pressure groups express strong concerns about environmental stresses and the continued loss of valued environmental resources in rural areas. For the CPRE, much of their time is spent drawing attention to the implications of proposals and forecasts for future housing development and so an important policy mechanism is the planning system for both its development control and forward planning roles. All environmental groups are also deeply concerned at the evidence, across wide areas of rural England, of a general decline in habitat quality and species richness.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Much attention has focussed on the fact that between 1978 and 1998, the populations of 12 key species of farmland birds fell by 58%.<sup>xxxvii</sup> This decline is taken to suggest the continued threat posed by modern agricultural practices. There is also evidence that agricultural policy has encouraged the over-stocking of land in parts of the UK's Less Favoured Areas to the detriment of valued environmental resources.<sup>xxxviii</sup> The sheep population in England and Wales rose by 80% from 1970 to more than 31 million in 1998.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The area of agricultural land under some form of agri-environmental management has risen more than 15-fold to almost 700,000 ha between 1987 and 1998,<sup>xi</sup> but environmental groups argue that the level of resources given over to agri-environmental programmes is grossly inadequate to meet needs.<sup>xii</sup> The UK Government's decision to apply modulation to direct compensation payments to farmers will mean that agri-environment funding will increase markedly between 2000 and 2007 and this move was widely welcomed by pressure groups. However, WWF estimate that around £900million a year would still be required to achieve their full set of objectives for agri-environment schemes in England — about five times the level of spending that will have been achieved by the English RDP by 2006, even with modulation.<sup>xiii</sup> (The WWF estimate for the UK is £1.6billion a year).

The rate of modulation is relatively modest (2.5% rising to 4.5% in 2005), and some have argued for a higher rate of modulation to fund a more radical greening of the CAP.<sup>xliii</sup> Environmental groups have also been frustrated by the Government's seeming reluctance to apply any environmentally progressive cross-compliance measures and a highly gradualist approach to moving from headage to area-based LFA payments.<sup>xliv</sup> Indeed, with popular and media attention focussing on the 'crisis' in farming incomes, the Government's priority has at times appeared to be to ease regulatory burdens of farmers, including environmental rules. At the so-called 'Farming Summit' at Downing Street in March 2000 the Government announced a review of environmental controls on the sector and its intention to reduce the

burden on farmers imposed by the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive and to lobby in Europe to reform the Nitrates Directive.<sup>xiv</sup> A key tension remains over the pace at which the production-related aspects of agricultural support are re-oriented through modulation and LFA reform, and complemented by cross-compliance and regulatory measures to improve environmental protection and performance. Linked to these concerns is a frustration expressed by many groups at what they see as the relatively slow pace of change — termed “glacial” by the CPRE in September 1999<sup>xv</sup> — in the outlook and priorities of MAFF from an environmental perspective.

### *Economic restructuring and the agricultural sector*

Farming groups see the marked fall in farm incomes since 1997 as a key problem. Weak world commodity prices, the strength pound compared to the Euro, and the impact of the BSE crisis have coincided to cause a 60% decline in ‘Total Income from Farming’ in the UK between 1995 and 1999.<sup>xvii</sup> The UK farming sector has been much more seriously affected than in other European countries.

The income crisis has focused attention on what should be the long-term strategy for UK agriculture. MAFF have carried out a series of consultations to inform not only the development of this strategy but also the implementation of the new CAP arrangements. Farming groups have successfully pressed for emergency aid packages and the Government has given a total of £435million of such support over the last three years to assist.<sup>xviii</sup> Environmental and other rural development interests have highlighted the need for a more forward-looking perspective that embraces a range of approaches to agricultural competitiveness, focussing on food quality, value-added, and marketing, as well as agri-environment schemes.<sup>xix</sup> The goal of encouraging farm diversification has at times proved contentious, with some farmers and farming groups pointing to what they see as an over-emphasis on non-agricultural solutions to farming’s problems. However, the strategy of further encouraging farmers to seek new sources of income was further endorsed in the Rural White paper for England in November 2000. Some farming interests are sceptical of the Objective 5b/Article 33 approach to farm development because the funds are discretionary and so more difficult to access, with more strings attached, than their direct compensatory payments. Moreover, funding farm development through the RDR will also require the use of scarce private sector investment as match-funding. CPRE are also concerned that farm diversification should not be at the expense of local landscape quality.<sup>1</sup>

Although the economic problems of the agricultural sector are the ones that usually attract most public attention, the UK Government has been keen to stress that the sector’s current hardship should be seen in the context of an otherwise relatively buoyant economic situation in most rural areas.<sup>ii</sup> Employment levels and growth are higher in ‘less urban’ areas. However, aspects of employment disadvantage remain, particularly in more peripheral localities, and among specific social groups there. For example, the lowest weekly wages are to be found in the most rural and peripheral localities, rural jobs are more likely to be part-time, casual or seasonal, and there are obstacles to gaining re-employment because of more limited labour markets and problems of access to transport.<sup>iii</sup> These problems of employment disadvantage have received relatively limited attention in debates about rural development in recent years compared to the farming crisis. This is in part because of a lack of organised representation and lobbying capacity vis-à-vis the agricultural and environmental lobbies.

### *Mobility and public and private services*

Another difficult development problem in rural areas arises from the restructuring of both public and private services such as shops, banks, Post Offices and health services, implicitly around the needs and lifestyles of more affluent and more mobile social groups. The threat

to the rural Post Office network has become an issue of particular concern, because potential changes to the way that welfare benefits are to be paid could further erode already narrow economic margins. There has also been a public outcry over the programme of closures of rural branches of Barclay's Bank. Added to this, it has become increasingly recognised that the expansion in the number of out of town retail developments in the 1980s and 1990s has undermined the viability of many local retailers in villages and market towns.<sup>liii</sup> The concentration of services in larger-sized settlements is also increasing people's dependence upon the private car. Levels of car ownership are much higher in rural compared to urban areas, and use of the private car undermines local rural public transport services. A mutually reinforcing spiral of service decline and car dependence has been heightening access and mobility problems for marginalised groups (especially among the elderly, rural youth and non-car-owning households). While these are clearly 'rural development' problems, they have not been among the highest-profile concerns of many countryside pressure groups. The lower profile of some of these problems is also partly a result of the dispersed and sometimes 'hidden' nature of social exclusion in rural areas. For example, the comparison of aggregate statistics between rural and urban areas usually hides the scattered nature of rural deprivation, as more affluent households disproportionately raise mean figures, and so conceal the extent of these types of problems.

#### *The rural way of life: crisis or change?*

Many of these, often disparate, rural socio-economic issues have become wrapped up together and cast by some organisations as a 'crisis' in rural life in Britain. Spokespeople for the Countryside Alliance, for example, have sought to portray some of these issues as part of a broader undermining of rural traditions fuelled by a dominant metropolitan political class who are at best naïve about, and at worst antagonistic to, what they term 'the rural way of life'. The Alliance has been successful at mobilising protestors, principally motivated by the legislative threat to hunting with hounds. However, the forecast growth in housing numbers on greenfield land, the loss of rural services, and the agricultural incomes problems have provided other fertile anxieties about the countryside for campaigners to tap into. Many among the more conventional rural lobby groups share fears about the erosion of distinctiveness of rural localities through the ubiquity of national retail chains among rural market towns, and the related decline in 'local family businesses'. Yet most wildlife and countryside conservation bodies have sought to distance themselves from the campaigning of the Countryside Alliance. It is, in any case, questionable whether changing the socio-economic conditions and lifestyles of people in rural areas collectively amount to a 'crisis'.

#### *The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish dimensions*

The relative weighting attached to these different sets of environmental, economic and social issues varies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who have their own distinctive national concerns too. In Scotland, the land reform question was particularly prominent in the run up to devolution (although curiously it has attracted less public comment since the Scottish Parliament was established). One prominent issue has been public access to rural land, and an associated debate around the notion of 'stewardship'. A legislative programme of land reform is also underway to abolish the system of feudal tenure. The LFA comprises the bulk of the Rural Development Plan in Scotland and agri-environment spending is seen more in terms of being in competition with LFA spending by farming and some environmental groups. Farming and landowning groups stress the rationale of social support for the farming community and point to rural depopulation and the need to maintain rural communities. A longer and more extensive experience with Structural Fund programmes has also meant that cross-sectoral rural development partnerships are more widespread and better established than south of the border.

In Wales, the farming crisis has had a very high profile, with particular concern about the future of the 'Welsh family farm'. A sometimes-explicit goal of the political establishment is to seek to maintain the farming structure at its current level. Alternative agricultural competitiveness strategies (such as value-added, marketing and diversification) are usually regarded with more scepticism than in England with a concomitant emphasis on the continuing need for direct payments to maintain farming households. Supporting a sufficient farming population is also closely bound up with a desire to maintain the Welsh language, although the extent to which protecting farming communities actually serves this end is disputed. Some environmentalists see over-stocking as a significant problem, although some environmental land management problems can also arise from neglected management. In addition, the shape of the substantial new Objective 1 programme raises concerns among environmental groups about the possible prospects of large-scale infrastructure development. As in Scotland, devolution in Wales has led to far greater local political scrutiny of rural policy developments, as well as improved access to, and openness from, key government departments. In turn, Welsh policy-makers have been able to develop and strengthen direct relationships with European institutions. However, pro-devolutionists in Wales have been sceptical about the differences that the new Assembly is able to make. For example, an attempt to introduce a Welsh Calf Processing Scheme failed in part as a result of a lack of support from the UK Minister of Agriculture.<sup>iv</sup>

In Northern Ireland, the sensitivities of the troubles have always made rural and local economic development approaches a special case in the UK. As in Scotland and Wales, devolution has profoundly altered the dynamics of decision-making. Ministers of the Northern Ireland Assembly now take decisions in consultation with their respective Departmental Committees. Rural development now comes under the remit of several Departments (Environment, Regional Development, Agriculture and Rural Development) which could pose challenges for an integrated approach. The regional plan ('Shaping Our Future') is providing a strategic framework for rural development and environmental protection, and looks set to call for a Rural White Paper for Northern Ireland in the near future. Funding will continue to be co-ordinated through the Objective 1 (transitional) programme for 2000-2006.

## **4.2 Tensions and alliances**

Even given these geographical differences in the rural development agenda, a set of common tensions, as well as possible alliances for change, can be identified. These concern the rationale for agricultural support, the future of agricultural sectoralism, the capacity of sub-national institutions, and the consideration of 'the environment' as a cross-cutting issue.

### *The rationale for agricultural support*

One of the key tensions around rural development in the UK centres upon what should be the rationale for financial support for the agricultural sector. Given the impetus towards the reduction in market supports in line with world trade liberalisation, the relative emphasis placed on a *social* rationale vis-a-vis an *environmental* rationale becomes an important determinant of the nature and purpose of rural and agricultural policies. A classic economic argument is that support should be for the provision of public goods (usually understood to imply *environmental* public goods such as landscape, soil and water quality and biodiversity). However, this leaves unresolved the question of whether, over and above these environmental resources, the farming population itself constitutes a public good, to be financially supported *for its own sake*. Not only is this tension unresolved, but it is also geographically variable, with more emphasis on this social rationale for farm support in Wales and Northern Ireland, followed by Scotland, and less in England, particularly in the English lowlands. Linked to this geography is that of the relative scepticism around

alternative strategies for agricultural competitiveness (such as value-added, marketing, diversification), with suspicion about the potentials of such strategies notably stronger in Wales and Scotland. Differences in resource priorities also follow. Questions of the division of resources between LFA and agri-environment measures within the RDPs depend on how this balance is struck. The environmental rationale also raises questions among Treasury officials and others in government about how best to evaluate the success of agri-environment expenditure.

### *Integrated rural development and farming's 'Functional Chimney'*

A further tension is between the traditional institutional sectoralism of the agricultural policy-community, and the imperative of a more territorial and integrated approach to agriculture's role in wider rural development. Government intervention in rural areas and land management remains highly skewed towards the agricultural sector through a classic 'functional chimney' or 'policy silo' — *i.e.* a dedicated Ministry. Because of this, there is a risk that the RDR becomes a narrow instrument to supplement agricultural sectoral support, rather than to strengthen the links between farming and other aspects of rural development in the context of territorial development strategies.<sup>iv</sup> An integrated approach requires a process of organisational learning both in national agricultural institutions (such as MAFF & NFU, for example), but also in regional bodies and in local areas.

Area-based partnership working has become an increasingly important vehicle for delivering rural regeneration in recent years.<sup>lv</sup> However, some actors, such as local authorities and other statutory bodies, are further along the learning curve of this form of governance than others. In England, MAFF, for example, is relatively new to local regeneration partnership working, while other bodies such as local authorities and the Rural Community Councils have long experience of working on the Rural Development Programmes of the former Rural Development Commission. A British agricultural sector (and policy-community) deeply rooted in a tradition of competitive, individualistic enterprise in farming, rather than co-operation, is likely to find cross-sectoral partnership working more of a challenge, compared to other development interests in the UK, and to other European farming institutions. However, where 'Integrated Rural Development' schemes are being piloted to combine agri-environmental and Objective 5b EAGGF measures, the early signs are of an enthusiasm and receptiveness among farmers.<sup>lvii</sup>

### *The capacity of sub-national institutions in the UK*

Linked to the challenge of the shift from sectoralism to cross-sectoral working is that of decentralisation. Indeed, enhancing the scope of regional and local discretion could be argued to be a precursor to reforming agricultural sectoralism nationally. In England, administrative reforms at the regional level hold the potential, over time, for improved integration of agricultural concerns with those of the wider rural development process. These reforms will bring the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency into MAFF, and a greater co-ordination between the rural development policy work of MAFF's Regional Service Centres and that of the Government Regional Offices.<sup>lviii</sup> There is a case for a greater level of regional discretion to be exercised to allow rural development and agri-environment programmes to be more effectively tailored to meet regional priorities. However, in order for discretion to be effectively exercised, and for integration to be achieved, a greater policy capacity at the regional level will be required within MAFF. Without an enhanced institutional capacity at the regional level for cross-boundary working, there is a risk that the RDAs and MAFF regional institutions simply replicate the old national divide between farming and non-agricultural aspects of rural development, instead of developing cross-boundary synergies. Regional reforms to MAFF's structure were announced in July 2000. One senior member of MAFF staff will to join each Government Office. The expectation is that the new organisational arrangements will be reviewed in

2003, and will be closely tied to the evolution of the new Rural Development Plan for England. Notably the Plan is broken into regional chapters that correspond with Government Office rather than MAFF regions. Although a relatively small-scale reform, MAFF's changing relationships with the Government Offices suggests a process of integration is underway.

One interesting tension here is the contrasting ways the rural development agendas have evolved in England compared to Scotland and Wales. It could be argued that devolution has helped reinforce agricultural sectoralism in Scotland and Wales. One reason is the sharp increase in the workload faced by civil servants in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast as a result of the new demands placed upon them by their new, and much more proximate, politicians.<sup>lix</sup> However, also important is the enhanced scope for Scotland-wide or Wales-wide interest groups (such as the farming lobby) to influence their national policy processes through effective lobbying of the new national institutions.

#### *From nature conservation to environmental resource protection*

In part arising from farming's 'functional chimney' is a lack of sufficient integration between agricultural and land management policy and wider resource protection and sustainable development concerns. This also reflects the wildlife, landscape and nature conservation orientation of the main environmental lobby groups. One way forward could be to improve the system of target-setting through the Comprehensive Spending Review and Public Service Agreements system, so that sustainable development indicators are more comprehensively built into the performance targets of Government Departments, and strategies are put in place to meet these targets. This could help overcome the widely perceived problem of Departments merely paying lip service to sustainable development. Another current tension given relatively little consideration to date is the seeming lack of co-ordination and joint-working between the Environment Agency (and its Scottish equivalent) and the statutory countryside and nature conservation agencies in Britain. The latter bodies have played an important part in actively shaping the debates around reform of agricultural and land management policies from a sustainable development perspective, while the former seem to restrict themselves more to their basic regulatory functions. However, in its recent vision statement, the Environment Agency does commit itself to "greatly increase" its reporting of land and soil issues.<sup>lx</sup>

### **4.3 European, national and sub-national relationships in rural development**

There is also a potential for the development of new types of alliances between rural policy interests as a result of the process of Europeanisation of policy-formulation. Agricultural policy has been almost wholly Europeanised since the mid-1970s. Environmental policy became increasingly so during the 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>lxi</sup> With rural development policy, the process has been more recent, beginning with the first round of Structural Fund programmes in 1989, and accelerating during the second round after 1994. The results of this process of Europeanisation have been complex. From a rural development perspective we might identify six sets of implications. *First*, there has been a proliferation in the number of different programmes. LEADER, KONVER, PESCA, Objectives 1 and 5b, and Objective 3 are all programmed alongside domestic development programmes, with the resulting difficulties in the proliferation of 'lines on maps' that spatially-targetted programmes often bring. In many areas, there have been problems with various programmes (both EU and domestic) being insufficiently complementary at the strategic level. *Second*, undoubtedly, Europeanisation has brought with it substantial new funds for rural development that would, in all likelihood, not have been otherwise available. This is particularly so in the designated Structural Fund regions – and at least in the 1994-2006 period. *Third*, the EU programmes have imported a strategic, programming approach, which has meant the development of cross-sectoral, area-based partnerships in rural areas. *Fourth*, this expansion of a strategic,

and partnership-oriented approach has served to raise the profile of rural development problems within sub-national governance structures. In particular, each of the Government Regional Offices in England (except London) have been required to administer a rural development programme as a result of Objective 5b, where they would otherwise have been far less exposed to rural development issues. *Fifth*, a wider range of actors within the UK has become involved in national (and pan-European) lobbying on rural development issues because of the availability of EU funds. For example, the Cork Conference in November 1996 saw British local authorities actively participating in debates about agricultural policy. Rural and farming concerns have also prompted several local authorities to conduct studies of the agricultural sector and its contribution to their local rural economies.<sup>lxii</sup> *Finally*, the particular priorities and objectives tied to EU funds means that there may have been a distortion of some rural development spending priorities. Objective 5b was for capital schemes, and some revenue funding may have been useful. Likewise, the reverse may be the case with agri-environment programmes. Similarly, it could be argued that of its own accord, the UK may have made greater financial provision for payments to farmers for access agreements if EU rules had permitted.

Europeanisation alters the influence of organisations with an interest in rural development in the UK. However, two other processes make interpreting the situation more complex. The first is that while the growth of the Structural Funds (1994-99) can be cast as a period of Europeanisation, the RDR will, in effect, signal a devolutionary step in the operation of the CAP's accompanying measures. It remains unclear whether the Agenda 2000 deal will come to represent the further Europeanisation of rural development policy or the first step in the deepening of national discretion in agricultural policy. Second, devolution is already altering the patterns of lobbying and influence in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Arguably, it will be the dynamics of devolution that will be more significant in determining the changing structures of influence in these countries in the coming years than the process of Europeanisation.

Institutional change within England, when coupled with the new RDR approach, is also posing new risks for some rural development organisations. For example, there is a risk that traditional rural development interests will become more marginalised. This risk applies to organisations such as ACRE, the Rural Community Councils, and the former elements of the Rural Development Commission now in the Regional Development Agencies, and in the Countryside Agency. For these actors, the risks come from an urban-dominated perspective on regional development on the one hand, and an agriculture/agri-environment dominated perspective on rural development, on the other.

Already, the shift in emphasis from Objective 5b to the RDR is raising issues for rural development bodies. For example, under Objective 5b, National Park Authorities have been able to operate their own integrated rural development schemes (such as Northumberland National Parks' Hadrian's Wall Scheme, and the Moorland Regeneration Programme in the North York Moors) and have had the authority to administer grants under the schemes. Such discretion looks less likely under the RDR which is governed by the much tighter Community controls on the EAGGF's Guarantee section. While Objective 5b represented a broadening of responsibility for administering rural development funding, the new RDR arrangements appear to signal a narrowing back of scope within a conventional agricultural administration.

#### **4.4 Participation and influence**

It would be a complex and onerous task to gauge with precision the changing pattern and extent of participation and influence around rural development policy matters in the UK. This section therefore seeks to analyse, in fairly broad-brush terms, the views of rural policy-

makers and practitioners on this question. The scope for participation and influence is best considered at two levels — the national level and the regional/local level.

### *National consultations*

There is general agreement that the opportunities to comment on the content of rural policies at the national level have increased considerably in recent years. Indeed, many organisations now sometimes express exasperation at the number of invitations to comment on consultation papers. National Planning Policy Guidance, as well as county-wide structure plans and other local plans, are all produced through a system involving public consultation. The profusion of recent consultations is in part a function of the pace and scale of policy reform since 1997, but also signals a genuine and significant opening of access to the formal policy-making process compared to, say, the 1970s. The posting of consultation papers on the internet has meant that interested parties can now swiftly access documents and comment. MAFF's extensive consultation exercise on the UK Strategy for Agriculture was particularly ambitious, and included a questionnaire to all farmers sent in January 1999. Some interest groups, however, have argued that their ability to feed into the RDP process has been limited to the 'nuts and bolts' issues of individual measures (LFA aid, forestry, etc) with less opportunity to discuss how measures are supposed to fit together as part of a forward-looking strategy.<sup>lxiii</sup> There has also been considerable frustration at the limited time-frames for many consultation exercises during 1999 and 2000.

While opportunities to comment have clearly proliferated, less clear is the extent to which 'having a say' is the same as 'having influence'. With the RDP process, some environmental organisations have expressed satisfaction at the extent to which their views have been listened to, and accommodated. However, this could, they argue, be a result of the fact that the farming lobby has been concentrating their efforts on other issues considered to be more pressing (*i.e.* agri-monetary compensation and deregulation), rather than devoting lobbying resources to influencing the shape of Rural Development Plans.

### *The regional/local level*

Along with the farming unions, the environmental groups are probably among the best resourced to lobby on rural development issues. However, at sub-national levels, their scope for monitoring and engaging with wider rural development issues is often limited, and so efforts are sometimes concentrated on 'core business' issues. Because of the structure of the environmental lobby, this results in a focus on nature conservation/biodiversity and landscape issues. Environmental interests find they have to work harder to establish themselves as interested parties in the drawing up of regional economic development strategies, for example. Indeed, across the UK, countryside environmental groups have been relatively slow to engage with the opportunities and potentials of regional programming and forward planning under the Structural Funds (with the exception of RSPB and WWF).

At the same time, other local and regional development actors sometimes express concern about the approach to integrated development programmes pursued by MAFF and the Agriculture Departments in Scotland and Wales. The experience in several Objective 5b areas was that agricultural priorities and funds were sometimes operated in ways 'semi-detached' from the other Structural Funds. With the current new Objective 1 and Objective 2 programmes, there continues to be a need for dialogue and partnership working between agriculture departments and other local development interests. In Objective 1 areas, EAGGF resources continue to be programmed alongside ERDF within Single Programming Documents. In Objective 2 areas, the RDR is expected to complement and be consistent with the Structural Fund programmes. Some non-agricultural actors continue to highlight the difficulties that arise from different understandings of what constitutes partnership working in these programmes between agriculture departments and other bodies. The

different experiences of European accounting rules (and the implications of the process of 'disallowance') between agriculture departments and other lead departments may, in part, explain this.

At the more local level, efforts to broaden the constituency of interests around local rural development strategies beyond a narrow range of public bodies continue. Community development initiatives usually have the most explicit strategies of widening participation, and community participation and involvement are a prominent theme of LEADER programmes. However, the environmental sector is also evidencing increasing recognition of the value of local participatory approaches to local development, and WWF and RSPB are both experimenting with their own local participatory initiatives, for example.<sup>lxiv</sup>

## 5. Challenges for sustainable rural development

A single, clear definition of what constitutes 'sustainable rural development' (SRD) that commands widespread consensus remains elusive in the UK, as elsewhere. This leaves the term open to different definitions from different sectional interests. At its simplest, SRD might be defined as the achievement of developments in rural areas that offer as much, or more, to the overall welfare of our grandchildren as they do to our society's welfare today.

WWF and its partners have been working to promote a new model of rural development for Europe that is more *sustainable*. For WWF, sustainable development involves the application of four principles: integration; equity; adaptability; and the respecting of limits. An *integrated* approach to sustainable development should promote holistic analyses of the causes of problems and the development of their solutions. In particular, it should recognise the links between environmental, social and economic processes and conditions, and sufficient consideration should be given to each. An integrated approach should also be sensitive to issues of scale, from the local and regional through to the national and international, and ensure that solutions to problems are acceptable and beneficial to all stakeholders. The principle of *equity* applies in three regards. First is between present and future generations, such that the sustainable use of resources acknowledges our obligations to future generations. Second is between local and other stakeholders, such that all stakeholders are acknowledged to have a legitimate right to participate in decision-making that impacts upon them. Third is between environmental, social and economic interests, such that adequate consideration is given to each and as wide a possible consensus is reached. The principle of *adaptability* requires that policy responses be tailored to individual or local circumstances, and that monitoring and evaluation continually inform a process of learning. Approaches to sustainable development, WWF believe, should also recognise that there are environmental *limits* to development. In conditions of scientific uncertainty a precautionary approach warrants a presumption against environmentally damaging developments. Finally, the ethical stewardship of environmental resources requires that those responsible for development contribute to the common good at the same time as catering for private needs.

The statutory countryside agencies of Great Britain have also sought to draw up a set of objectives for sustainable rural development. Their concern is to protect and enhance landscapes and biodiversity, and to encourage sustainable public enjoyment and use of the countryside. In seeking to develop and promote policies for sustainable rural development they work to the following principles:

- *Rural development policy in Europe should seek to increase the social, economic and environmental sustainability of rural areas and support natural and cultural diversity.* It should encourage long term viability by developing competitiveness, social equity and cohesion, and should contribute to EU, national, regional and local needs. Diversity in natural and cultural assets can be a strength in economic, social and environmental terms. Local character and distinctiveness can provide a basis for competitive advantage, for example in the development of local products and services which can tap new markets;
- *Rural development must be pursued differently in different places. There should be an element of local design and involvement in how policies are applied, to respect local needs, character and identity.* Policy therefore needs to involve subsidiarity and devolution. Accountability will be necessary at EU, national, regional and local levels, but this should not mean the accumulation of many layers of bureaucracy;

- *Rural development policies must aim to build complementarity between environmental, social and economic goals* - creating more 'win-win' situations. Where there are conflicts and trade-offs, policies must allow these to be recognised and resolved in a balanced way. This requires active partnership between different interests, at all levels;
- *Rural policies must be integrated. Agricultural policy should no longer be considered in isolation from environmental, social and wider economic policies.* The failure to address this issue has been one of the most serious problems for rural policy. The Common Agricultural Policy has represented a contract between Europe's farmers and Europe's citizens, to ensure that farming could provide food, security and the mainstay of rural economies. The Rural Development Regulation is a first step in moving towards a new contract which recognises that sustainable farming and forestry should provide a range of public benefits for society which include:
  - ◆ *sustainable management of the basic resources* of soils, water and air, upon which we depend for our survival;
  - ◆ *landscapes rich in local character and distinctiveness;*
  - ◆ *maintained and enhanced biodiversity across the EU* through protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats and species, for example by supporting the management objectives of Natura 2000 sites;
  - ◆ *high quality food, fibre and other primary products whose production meets animal welfare and environmental standards;*
  - ◆ *viable rural communities* which are socially inclusive and able to compete in increasingly global marketplaces by sustainable use of their natural and cultural resources;
  - ◆ *opportunities for public enjoyment* through open-air recreation and visual appreciation;
  - ◆ *a rich resource of historic and archaeological features* from which we can continue to learn about the longstanding relationship between people and the land.

Debates about SRD in the UK remain dominated by landscape and nature conservation concerns. The result has been a focus on land use planning and biodiversity policies to the relative detriment of consideration of wider resource-protection issues. (There have, however, been recent efforts to develop the narrower concept of 'sustainable agriculture').<sup>lxv</sup> This section seeks to highlight the current environmental constraints and opportunities in relation to SRD. It then examines the current fortunes of the key 'sustainability sectors' in the rural sphere and finally identifies some future challenges for the UK.

## **5.1 Environmental issues and rural development**

The relationship between environmental issues and rural development has tended to be seen as the former imposing constraints upon the latter. However, recent years have seen increasing recognition of the opportunities that environmental quality and environmental regeneration offer the development process.<sup>lxvi</sup> If environmental assets are viewed as 'capital assets', then the nature of growth ought to be such as to enhance the value of these assets. Moreover, many argue that rural development strategies should be geared to

strengthening the competitive position of rural localities by *enhancing* their quality and attractiveness. This section considers the main facets of environmental protection from this perspective. It focuses on the main opportunities they offer for rural development, as well as the constraints they pose.

### *Biodiversity*

The protection of biodiversity is increasingly being acknowledged as a constraint upon the land development process, and because the majority of biodiversity is found within rural areas, this constraint applies particularly to development there. The UK Government recognises that there has been a decline in some highly valued species and habitats over the last 30 years, especially on farmland.<sup>lxvii</sup> There have been notable losses in farmland birds, and significant declines in plant species diversity in moorland grass, infertile grassland and upland woodland habitats between 1978 and 1990.<sup>lxviii</sup> The Joint Nature Conservation Committee for Great Britain in 1997 considered that over a quarter of native species of fish, amphibians and reptiles to be “threatened”, along with 10-20% of invertebrates, vascular plants and lower order plants.<sup>lxix</sup>

Since 1994, the Government has been committed to delivering the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) which provides the national framework for nature conservation and sets out targets for the recovery of some 45 habitats and almost 400 species. The national targets have been translated down to the local level through the production of local BAPs. By the end of 1999, BAPs for all 391 agreed priority species and 45 agreed priority habitats had been costed and “for many of them action had started”.<sup>lxx</sup> The RSPB, however, express concern about a lack of legislative support for BAPs, as have WWF, who also argue that insufficient resources have been allocated to the task of fully implementing the BAP process.<sup>lxxi</sup> Calls for putting BAPs on a stronger statutory footing have recently been supported by the House of Commons Select Committee on the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs.<sup>lxxii</sup>

The Government emphasises that wildlife is valued “for its own sake”. It has also established a system of indicators to serve as a tool in monitoring progress towards achieving sustainable development. Among a national set of 150 indicators are a set of 15 ‘headline’ indicators which include one for the population of wild birds.

While protected area status may act as a constraint on some forms of rural development, environmental groups and agencies are also keen to point to biodiversity as a positive asset. English Nature, for example, argue that biodiversity and natural features “underpin the social, cultural and economic structure of rural communities, provide a pleasant place to live and work, a resource for tourism and recreation, and a key indicator as to whether natural systems (e.g. the water environment) are being properly managed”.<sup>lxxiii</sup>

### *Landscape*

The attractiveness and appeal of the rural landscape is an important ingredient for the economic success of rural areas in the UK. However, rates of landscape change and the loss of valued landscape features have been dramatic, particularly in the period since the early 1970s. Losses have been highest in the English lowlands, and local studies have identified rates of loss of field boundaries as high as 30% in just 15 years.<sup>lxxiv</sup> The UK Government stresses that “gradual change in the landscape is inevitable, reflecting developments in agriculture, forestry and rural communities”, but recognises that “changes must be well-managed and not cause unacceptable impacts on countryside character”.<sup>lxxv</sup> A plethora of landscape designations now provide recognition and some protection of rural landscapes, including National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts. In England, the Countryside Agency has also devised a map of the 159 distinctive

‘countryside character areas’ which help inform local planning and decision-making processes in order to maintain and enhance local landscape distinctiveness.

CPRE continues to express concern at the rate of development of rural land, and the landscape implications. For example, it calculates that in England an area the size of London has been urbanised every decade since 1945 and more than half of England’s hedgerows have been lost since 1947.<sup>lxxvi</sup> Current forecasts also suggest an additional 1.5 million new homes are to be built on greenfield sites in England in the period 1996-2016.<sup>lxxvii</sup> Some economic interests, on the other hand, claim that landscape protection is at times over-prescriptive and risks stifling economic development in rural areas.<sup>lxxviii</sup> The challenge is for development to be *sensitive* so that the quality of the rural landscape is enhanced rather than undermined. What CPRE calls ‘discerning’ development ought to assist in the sustainable development of rural areas.

### *Air, soil and water quality*

Air pollution does not currently loom large among issues considered as constraints upon rural development. However, there is evidence that rural areas sometimes experience levels of some types of pollution greater than those in urban areas. Concentrations of ground-level ozone above limits critical for natural vegetation and arable crops are commonly experienced in southern England. In addition, despite substantial reductions, emissions of sulphur will still exceed critical loads for acidification in the Lake District and the Pennines in 2010.<sup>lxxix</sup> Another little discussed but significant issue is the extent of agriculture’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, and particularly methane (see below).<sup>lxxx</sup> Nevertheless, fresh air remains an important factor in the appeal of the countryside for leisure and recreation purposes.

With respect to soil, one of the main long-term pressures on soil sustainability comes from soil erosion. Some 36% of arable land in England and Wales is estimated to be at ‘moderate’ to ‘very high’ risk of erosion, including much of the better-drained and easily worked land.<sup>lxxxi</sup> The expansion of arable production up to the 1990s, and also the growth in sheep numbers, has increased soil erosion pressures. However, currently, soil erosion is not generally considered to be a pressing policy issue in the UK, although some scientists have warned that sustained production beyond 2025 is threatened because of soil losses.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

In contrast, water quality has been a relatively high profile issue in debates about SRD. Problems of agricultural pollution became more widely recognised in the late 1980s and early 1990s, prompted by debates about the privatisation of the water industries in England and Wales. Data from Friends of the Earth highlighted the presence of agricultural pesticides in the drinking water supplies of large parts of England and Wales at levels above those stipulated the 1980 EC Drinking Water Directive.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Efforts to address the problem have concentrated initially on installing equipment at water treatment works to remove pesticides from supplies, rather than on introducing regulatory controls on the use of the agrochemicals in the field. A different ‘end-of-pipe’ strategy has been employed to tackle pollution from farm livestock wastes. Pollution incidents from farms doubled during the 1980s and the problem was addressed by encouraging farmers to upgrade their pollution control and farm waste storage facilities, rather than place constraints on farm livestock stocking rates.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> The numbers of incidences have since fallen, and the quality of rivers is generally improving. In some regions, particularly East Anglia, water resource availability is, however, likely to increasingly impose a constraint on rural development and agricultural practices in the future.

### *Climate change*

The relationships between climate change and sustainable rural development are only beginning to be explored. Most research has focussed on the implications of climate change for agricultural crop production.<sup>lxxxv</sup> It is notable that debates about future agricultural policies, including agri-environmental issues, often take little notice of the dynamics of climate change and the future challenges it may pose in the UK.

The UK Government agreed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 12.5% by 2010, relative to 1990 levels, and has adopted a domestic goal of achieving a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over the same period. The total global warming potential of UK emissions comprises 80% CO<sub>2</sub>, 11% methane, 7% nitrous oxide and 2% industrial gases. Overall, agriculture is responsible for about 8% of total emissions, but is a major source of methane and nitrous oxide. Almost a third of methane emissions come from the agricultural sector, and of these 90% comes from ruminant livestock production. Agriculture is responsible for about 70% of nitrous oxide emissions, a proportion that has risen significantly as emissions from industrial processes have been greatly reduced.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Fertilisers and animal wastes are responsible, in equal measure, for 90% of this figure.

#### *Transport, traffic and land use in rural areas*

One significant challenge to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is likely to be the continuing process of population deconcentration and related issues of car dependency. Car ownership is, on average, higher in rural areas. Some 83% of rural households have a car compared to the national average of 70%, and rural households are twice as likely to run more than one car compared to metropolitan areas.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Rising trends in personal mobility and car ownership, coupled with the continuing aspiration of a majority of people to move to more rural localities, is encouraging traffic growth. The restructuring of local services also stimulates the demand to travel by car in rural areas, where journeys are already, on average, longer. The Government's National Road Traffic Forecasts of 1997 predict a doubling of road traffic on minor rural roads in England between 1996 and 2030 without policy intervention.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> CPRE have called for land use planning and transport planning to be more effectively integrated so as to reduce the spread of 'car-based developments' which also increase the take of green land.<sup>lxxxix</sup> However, rather than address the risks that car dependence pose for rural sustainability, the 1995 English Rural White Paper suggested that owning of two cars per household "may not be a luxury in rural areas".<sup>xc</sup>

#### *Cultural and historic heritage*

The nature and value of cultural and historic heritage in the rural areas of the UK is the subject of sometimes-heated debate and controversy. This is especially so in England, where rural traditions have, for some, become intricately bound up with questions of national identity and issues of class conflict. In Wales too, rural problems are closely interwoven with concerns about Welshness and Welsh cultural heritage. Views differ sharply on the role of rurality and rural traditions in national culture, and differences have been brought into sharper focus because of the Government's recent emphasis on rhetoric of 'modernisation'. Despite these tensions around what *type* of heritage is to be preserved, there is general agreement on some issues. For example, most agree that historical monuments are an important component of cultural heritage in rural areas, and one recent survey estimated that 30% of monuments in England are under threat from arable cultivation.<sup>xc</sup>

#### *Considering sustainability in rural development*

The development of rural land and evidence of decline in aspects of biodiversity get cited much more than other sustainability issues by environmental groups in the UK. However, there has recently been a gradual recognition of other resource protection and climate change challenges. To date, there has been little substantive effort to address these wider

sustainable development issues from a rural development perspective. One potentially important mechanism for incorporating wider sustainability issues into rural development is through a strengthened strategic planning process. The UK Round Table of Sustainable Development has recently called for greater recognition of the contribution that environmental quality can make to regional economies and employment in England, for example.<sup>xcii</sup>

## 5.2 Sustainability sectors and rural development

Although, as has been argued above, concerns for sustainability and environmental protection are often portrayed as constraints upon the development process, improving environmental performance represents an opportunity for development. The scale of the environmental challenge is matched by the considerable scope for the support and growth of new sustainability sectors in rural development. This section briefly describes this scope in relation to some 'sustainability sectors'.

### *Organic farming*

Organic farming enjoys popular support among the British public. However, the scale of organic production, and financial support for it, has been extremely limited, particularly compared with other European countries. The European annual growth rate in the agricultural area under organic production over the last 10 years is 25% which, if extrapolated forward, would result in 10% of European farmland under organic production by 2010.<sup>xciii</sup> In the UK, only 0.34% of the total agricultural area was either certified as organic or in conversion in 1997, compared to 1.53% for the 15 EU Member States.<sup>xciv</sup> There has been some recent growth organic production, in the UK from 0.5% of the total agricultural area in 1998 to 1.3% in 1999.

Although the total value of retail sales of organic food in the UK was £390million in 1998/99, some 70% was imported. Government financial support for organic conversion is generally outstripped by demand from producers to join organic schemes. In 1997, average payment rates for conversion to organic production in the UK were just ECU 28 per hectare compared to an EU average of over ECU 200 per hectare.<sup>xcv</sup> However, the total resources for organic conversion schemes are to be significantly increased (and doubled in England) between 2000 and 2006 through the RDR, and payments rates have been increased too. Organic farming groups argue for support to be on-going — *i.e.* an organic *stewardship* scheme — rather than confined to assistance for conversion. One difficulty they face is in convincing the Treasury of the existence of any market failure that warrants public subsidy. Another is the lack of decisive evidence of overall sustainability benefits from organics.

### *Sustainable forestry*

Innovative approaches to forestry development continue to represent opportunities for sustainable rural development in the UK, although forestry is currently a more significant land use in Scotland than in England and Wales. In the past, environmental groups have criticised the productivist orientation of the 'industrial forestry' sector. However, in England, a national forestry strategy was developed in 1998, which has been welcomed by environmental groups as a step forward.<sup>xcvi</sup> It considers the linkages between forestry and wider rural development objectives, including recreation and tourism. The viability of forestry is currently inhibited by the continuance of CAP production subsidies. As these are reduced over time, so forestry ought to become comparatively more viable in some areas.

### *Energy crops and biofuels*

Recent years have seen increasing interest in the potential for biomass and energy crop production on agricultural land in the UK. This interest is reflected in the allocation of almost £30million of resources under the English Rural Development Plan, for example. A significant expansion of energy crops such as short rotation coppice (SRC) and miscanthus could serve to reduce the UK's dependency on non-renewable fossil fuels and reduce net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. There could be risks, however, that energy crops become intensively farmed with all the problems this may pose for other aspects of environmental resource-protection. Indeed, the agricultural areas likely to prove most viable for the production of some energy crops are the wetter lowlands of southern England — areas also highly valued for their biodiversity.

### *Tourism*

Tourism is sometimes cited as a panacea for the diversification and development of local rural economies and the solution to the farm incomes problem. Tourism is a major contributor to the UK economy, supporting 7% of employment, and the former Rural Development Commission estimated that tourism spending in the English countryside is worth £8billion per year and supports 350,000 rural jobs.<sup>xcvii</sup> However, there is an increasing scepticism among some rural development practitioners about the nature and extent of opportunities tourism offers. Gross spending by UK tourists in the English countryside is estimated to have fallen by 3% between 1994 and 1998 to £2.07 billion, for example, although spending by overseas visitors on countryside holidays rose by 37% to £700million.<sup>xcviii</sup> From a rural development perspective, important questions remain over the quality of some tourism-related employment, and the capacity of local networks of tourist businesses to capture high spending, long stay, long season visitors. In addition, insensitive or ill-planned tourism developments can contribute to environmental problems and undermine sustainability. Some English National Parks, such as the Lake District and Peak District, for example, now suffer problems of traffic congestion, litter and footpath erosion from the sheer number of day visitors.

### *Business and sustainable development*

Small businesses have recently represented a rural growth sector. During the 1980s, business start up rates were higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Surveys also suggested that entrepreneurs were moving to rural areas, because of the aesthetic appeal of the rural landscape, in order to establish new businesses there.<sup>xcix</sup> (Interestingly perhaps, this wave of increased business start ups coincided with a period of accelerated counterurbanisation and liberalisation of the planning system). However, in recent years, there is evidence that rates of business start ups in rural areas are lower than the average for their region.<sup>c</sup> Some commentators have placed faith in the IT revolution and the much-hyped phenomenon of teleworking, where workers and entrepreneurs in the new service-sector industries are able to work from home in rural areas. However, evidence remains inconclusive as to whether such changing working practices reduce overall travel.<sup>ci</sup>

There is also evidence that the process of improving environmental performance and protection can serve as a stimulus to innovation, employment creation and new firm formation.<sup>cii</sup> The RSPB estimates that more than 10,000 full-time equivalent jobs are sustained in the nature conservation sector in Britain, while Tourism Associates (1999) estimate that some 54,000 full-time equivalent jobs are sustained by landscape motivated holiday trips to the South West of England. However, over and above these nature conservation and tourism activities, active environmental regulation can also stimulate the growth in business activities among environmental technology and consultancy firms including those associated with pollution control, for example.

### 5.3 Future challenges

Future uncertainties facing sustainable rural development in the UK centre around the impacts of climate change on land management practices, how to reconcile the continuing appetite for personal mobility with international climate change commitments, and the nature and direction of technological change. In this latter category, the question of GM crops is one that has prompted considerable public debate in Britain over the last two years, but has yet to be considered from the perspective of rural development. The implications of the biotechnological revolution for rural land use practices and ecosystems are far from clear, but in 30 years time may render the current debates about the functioning and funding of current agri-environmental policy strangely irrelevant.

It is worth emphasising at this point the extent to which debates about sustainable rural development are often preoccupied with the operation of public policy and neglect consideration of wider market trends and business and corporate strategies. Forecasting future market and technological trends is a notoriously imprecise art. It is nevertheless quite clear that the nature of consumer preferences for food products and for countryside leisure activities, and the structure of provision of these types goods and services, are likely to continue to change in the coming years. The rise of ethical consumerism, and the increasing interest amongst food retailers in the ethical and environmental implications of their product sourcing strategies, may open up opportunities for furthering sustainable rural development objectives in new ways beyond the public policy framework.

Nevertheless, given the current policy framework, and the dominance of the CAP in influencing current land management decisions, a key policy challenge for environmental and other rural development interests in the immediate future remains that of making the RDR a success such that it thrives and grows. A mid-term review in 2003, followed by the likely re-opening of the CAP reform negotiations after that, provide opportunities to review progress and, perhaps, press for further and deeper changes in the direction of CAP spending towards RDR measures and away from damaging production-related payments.

There is also agreement among many groups on the continuing need to transform the way 'the environment' is conceptualised across Government from a 'sectoral' issue — and the responsibility of DETR — to a cross-cutting one. It is notable that the Sustainable Development Unit, established in the DETR, is not seen as a key and important player in the Whitehall policy-making process, but is seen rather as a creature of the DETR. Another machinery of government challenge is to progress the role of sustainable development indicators and targets as mechanisms for 'tying government departments down' to meet sustainable development objectives. It is to a more detailed discussion of the future challenges and opportunities for sustainable rural development that we now turn.

## 6. Helping and hindering sustainable rural development

Within the UK countryside and rural development agendas the high profile of environmental concerns is a result of the efforts of a relatively well-established landscape and nature conservation lobby. This has meant that the environmental agenda has had a strong landscape and nature conservation perspective, with less emphasis placed on other types of environmental issue. This perspective has also been a relatively *backward-looking* one. Arguments about protecting land and habitats through curtailing rates of loss, usually come accompanied with dramatic figures about what has been lost since some fixed point in the past. Countryside change seems inexorably associated with a process of loss. However, the rise in usage of the concept of sustainable development in the UK since the 1980s has required a more *forward-looking* approach to thinking about rural development. Yet visioning the future of rural development in the UK is hampered by the strength of this rhetoric of 'protecting the past'.<sup>ciii</sup> As a result, debates become bogged down in seeking to preserve particular types of landscape, rather than creating new ones. The concept of environmental regeneration still seems far ahead of its time in the UK countryside debate, for example. Similarly, efforts to develop a political agenda around the concept of *environmental modernisation* have difficulty in accommodating British countryside concerns.<sup>civ</sup>

This final section seeks to draw out some overall lessons and conclusions from the discussion and analysis in the sections above. It begins by highlighting the key constraints faced by those organisations that are pressing for the adoption of a sustainable rural development approach, before concluding by identifying some positive steps to advance a process of transition.

### 6.1 Constraints upon the sustainable rural development approach

The main constraints that are serving to inhibit the growth of a sustainable rural development approach include a lack of resources, a lack of political will, a lack of leverage, and a lack of institutional capacity. These will each be taken in turn.

#### *Lack of resources*

English Nature estimate that some £835million of resources are necessary to deliver what it sees as the required level of biodiversity and landscape benefits in England. It has called for at least 25% of the CAP budget to be directed to this end.<sup>cv</sup> WWF have recently produced similar types of estimates of the resources required to achieve adequate levels of environmental protection and management in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (£990million, £64million, £92 million and £37.5 million respectively).

One factor influencing the growth of funding for agri-environmental schemes in the UK is the operation of the Fontainebleau Accord of 1984, which allows the UK to reclaim a rebate from its financial contributions to the EU.<sup>cvi</sup> The effect of the rebate is to serve as a disincentive for the UK Government, compared to other Member States, to spend on discretionary EU schemes. For any EU schemes with a 50% co-financing arrangement, the effective EU contribution — after taking into account the UK rebate — is only 15%. Agri-environment spending also suffers from the widely held view among non-agricultural policy-makers within government that such schemes simply represent a new means of subsidising an already heavily subsidised agricultural industry.

A further tension in the process of securing resources for agri-environment schemes is that changes to the payment rates within schemes can be unpopular with farmers and farming groups. Because payment rates are partly based on income foregone, falling farm incomes can lead to pressure to modify payments rates downwards. Similarly, the longer term trend to improve the environmental performance of agriculture (through such measures as cross-

compliance, for example) could require that some practices which currently warrant positive payments become part of generally accepted 'good farming practice'.<sup>cvii</sup> Reviewing payments and scheme requirements can be unpopular with farmers, but those responsible for public spending have a keen interest in the 'value for money' that such spending provides and how this can be improved over time.

### *Lack of political will*

There is no shortage of interest among the public in rural issues and the protection of the rural environment. However, for those politicians less heavily involved in rural policy issues, the high-profile and confrontational campaigning of the country sports lobby has served to cast aspects of the rural agenda in a difficult light. There are few votes in rural areas. There are also relatively fewer target Parliamentary seats for the Labour Party in rural areas. Why, some politicians may ask, bother spending financial, administrative and political resources on countryside issues?

The political sensitivity of aspects of the 'rural agenda' is further heightened by the farm incomes crisis. The threat of direct action among farmers, and the establishment of more radical splinter groups from the farming unions (such as 'Farmers For Action') has instilled a reluctance on the part of the Government to upset a fragile and threatened farming community. Indeed, farming groups have had repeated doses of 'tea and sympathy' from the Government, as well as emergency financial aid. The extent of Government sympathy for the economic hardships faced by the farming industry has also been reflected in the actions flowing from the Prime Minister's Farming Summit at Downing Street in March and its pursuit of a deregulatory agenda with respect to some environmental controls on the industry.

A further problem in generating the political will to deliver a more sustainable approach to rural development lies in the relative lack of positive enthusiasm among farmers and their representatives for the RDR, compared to other rural interests. The RDR can appear to farmers as at best a 'harmless diversion', and at worst a means of 'taking "our money" away'. This raises a wider point concerning farming culture. The sustainable and integrated rural development agenda, in part represented by the RDR, poses an important challenge to way the farmers think of themselves, their occupational community, and the ways in which their farming practices are valued by society. The nature of farming support is likely to change in the coming years, and this will require a concomitant change in farming culture and farming's self-understanding. Without support and enthusiasm from farming interests, making the case for enhancing the RDR approach will risk facing obstacles politically.

### *Lack of leverage over government departments*

The continued prevalence of conceptualising the environment as a sectoral issue has been highlighted in the analysis above. There have been notable innovations in central government policy-making for sustainable development, but questions remain about the scope and purchase of sustainable development as a cross-cutting issue across government and beyond. CPRE, for example, have argued that there remain "serious questions about the degree of political commitment to the aims of the [Sustainable Development] Strategy in departments other than the DETR".<sup>cviii</sup> The Sustainable Development Unit, for example, remains a relatively low profile part of the Whitehall machine lost within the DETR and with little influence beyond that Department. Sustainable development still risks being cast, by those Departments with an industry sponsorship role (such as MAFF and DTI), as an *inhibitor* of the 'serious business' of economic growth. The commitment to the use of sustainable development indicators as a tool for monitoring progress is a step forward but, to have real purchase, indicators will need to be accompanied by clear performance targets for government departments too.

A further limitation is the tendency by some policy-makers to see rural land use issues as the sole preserve of either DETR or MAFF (or both). Sustainable rural development cannot be compartmentalised as a bounded 'rural' issue. Indeed, in a highly urbanised country like the UK, many of the socio-economic trends and individual decisions affecting rural activities will originate in urban areas. Decisions about the provision of public or private services, the regulation of utilities, and the development of transport and communications can all serve to enhance or challenge SRD.

#### *Lack of institutional capacity*

The analysis above also points to the limitations to delivering sustainable rural development that are imposed by the lack of institutional capacity. This problem is in part a result of the poorly developed interface between old rural development actors (such as the ex-Rural Development Commission staff in England) and the interests now clustering around the new Rural Development Regulation. There is a risk that the development of the RDR in narrow (agricultural restructuring), rather than broad (rural development), terms will reinforce a divide between the agricultural and land-based side of rural development and the other important dimensions to rural economic and social development.

There is a particular risk of a lack of capacity for policy innovation at the sub-national level, especially in the English regions. Debates about the reform of MAFF at the regional level have become embroiled in issues of the efficacy of IT systems in administering CAP payments, rather than enhancing the capacity of the RSCs to participate fully in cross-sector partnership working. The role and lines of responsibilities of the FRCA will be an important influence on the future development of regional capacity.

In Scotland and Wales, cross-boundary working is generally regarded to be easier to achieve than in England because the rural policy communities are smaller and so officials have more contact with each other. The main constraint on policy-making capacity there lies in the volume of work facing officials in the Scottish Executive and National Assembly for Wales, although this may be a short term issue in the immediate aftermath of devolution.

## **6.2 Facilitating sustainable rural development**

None of these challenges are necessarily insurmountable, however. This final sub-section considers the moves and measures required in order to facilitate moves towards a sustainable rural development policy for the UK.

#### *Resourcing: a positive, forward-looking approach to CAP reform*

For environmental interests, the decision by the UK Government to apply modulation and implement the RDR in something more than a minimalist way bodes well for the future. A significant increase in resources for agri-environment schemes, and a new approach to sub-national RDP implementation provide an opportunity for the UK to demonstrate how a shift from the first to the second pillar of the CAP can benefit rural economies and environments at the same time. The Labour Government positively supports the RDR as a long-term and forward-looking means of addressing the problems raised by agricultural restructuring.

A central axis in the next round of CAP reform is likely to be the future of the system of direct compensation payments introduced in 1992. The successful operation of the RDR among Member States ought to help the case of those (like the UK) arguing for direct payments to be gradually reduced over time, with a proportion of the resources that are saved being redirected to the RDR. Important in this political process, in the UK as elsewhere, will be

whether the RDR approach can begin to generate real enthusiasm and commitment among farming groups.

*Political will: local examples of best practice*

The arguments for the use of the RDR as an over-arching framework for a new and integrated sustainable rural development policy are still in their infancy. There is a need for attention to be drawn to the success stories that such an approach can bring. In the course of this study, several interviewees in England mentioned the new pilot schemes in the Forest of Boland and Bodmin Moor, for example. These schemes combine agri-environment measures with the EAGGF measures under Objective 5b. They also include an intensive advisory and support system for farmer applicants. Indeed, in the Objective 5b programmes, the most successful schemes have often been those that include a role for local facilitators to publicise the new approaches to rural development and help devise local integrated strategies.

Disseminating best practice in the design and facilitation of local rural development schemes is a pre-requisite for the stimulation of the political will to expand and develop this approach to rural development in the UK. The CAP and rural policy reform cycle at times requires that time and attention be focused on national and EU-level debates and lobbying. However, an important role that must not be over-looked, is for attention also to be focused on local design and implementation on the ground. Later phases of WWF and partners' 'Nature of Rural Development' research project will seek to address these issue in more detail.

Within the UK policy cycle, discussions will begin for the next Comprehensive Spending Review during 2002/03. There will be a need for those advocating further expansion of the RDR approach to highlight examples of where the system is working well to deliver clear, tangible benefits in good time for that review process. Although the European CAP negotiations will be a principal determinant of the future scale of RDR funding, RDR success stories will play an important role domestically in raising the profile of, and support for, this new approach.

*Leverage: cross-cutting issues and sustainable development indicators*

Improving the leverage of sustainable development concerns on the rural policy framework also depends on machinery of government reforms. Among these, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) process is becoming an important new means of reviewing policy priorities and setting targets for performance.<sup>cx</sup> The CSR for 2001-2004 is introducing a new 'two-tier' approach to tying public spending to departmental aims and performance. In addition to departmental Public Service Agreements, which set out the overall aims and objectives of government departments, will be a system of Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs), which will set out fixed performance targets for departments to achieve.

One potentially important reform is the introduction of departmental targets based on sustainable development indicators such as MAFF's new target for farmland birds.<sup>cx</sup> The system of targets could, for example, be updated and fine-tuned over time through the Comprehensive Spending Review process and the monitoring of Service Delivery Agreements. The CSR process could also provide future opportunities for the introduction of other sustainable development indicators and targets to be employed to guide policy development in rural land use issues.

The system of Biodiversity Action Plans also provides the opportunity to strengthen and develop the approach to the protection and management of what is sometimes termed our 'critical natural capital'. One means of improving this process would be to place BAPs on a

stronger statutory footing, as recently recommended by the Common Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs.<sup>cxix</sup>

Finally, the Rural White Paper for England established the Government's new commitment to a system of rural proofing, through which the rural implications of other government policies and decisions will be scrutinised. This technique was originally devised as a result of a concern that rural communities were sometimes unfairly disadvantaged because of the unforeseen implications of wider policy decisions. However, there is no reason why rural proofing mechanisms should not be used to strengthen the scrutiny of the whole machinery of government from a sustainable rural development perspective.

#### *Institutional capacity: effective partnership working*

Problems of limited institutional capacity have been identified, particularly at the sub-national level. These are compounded by the seeming proliferation of reforms and initiatives impacting upon rural policy over recent years. Moreover, devolution is profoundly altering the geographical scale at which actors in Scotland and Wales focus their energies, as well as their capacities to work in cross-cutting ways.

Across many areas of public policy, there is increasing emphasis on the role of partnership working to improve decision-making and promote joint working and shared responsibility.<sup>cxii</sup> Here rural policy actors could learn lessons from experience in other realms of public policy. There is general agreement that partnership working is not easy, and requires time, care and trust. While there is no one single model, it is generally agreed that for partnership working to be effective, attention needs to be paid to developing clear objectives, ensuring that all partners benefit, building in meaningful evaluation processes, and building trust through understanding institutional and policy cultures. The evolution of rural development in the UK, and the gradual growth of a SRD-type approach through mechanisms such as the RDR, will be part of a move from an overly sectoral perspective on agricultural production, towards a more territorially-focused approach in which partnership working is a common feature. A key challenge will therefore be to continue to cultivate a growing sense of joint-ownership and decision-making.

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## NOTES

For the full references for each cited publication, see the full list of references below.

- <sup>i</sup> Commission of the European Communities Directorate General for Agriculture (1997), p.8.
- <sup>ii</sup> Office of National Statistics (1998).
- <sup>iii</sup> Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1998), p.202. The figures for the component parts are: England – 73%, Scotland - 75%, Wales - 79% and Northern Ireland - 81%.
- <sup>iv</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1999), pp.63-64.
- <sup>v</sup> Northern Ireland represents a distinct and special case within the UK state and will not be considered at the same level of detail in this report as England, Scotland and Wales. This approach is primarily a result of the time and resource constraints on the study.
- <sup>vi</sup> See Rogers (1999).
- <sup>vii</sup> See various chapters in Drudy (1976) for a discussion of this rural dimension to regional development.
- <sup>viii</sup> See Ward & McNicholas (1998); Lowe & Ward (1998).
- <sup>ix</sup> See Shoard (1999).
- <sup>x</sup> The Alliance's public campaigning has attracted widespread media and public attention. It was initially prompted by efforts by MPs to legislate to ban hunting wild mammals with dogs. From a rural development perspective, in terms of both participation in the sport and the employment generated, this is a relatively minor issue. However, amongst national and local media it has become one of the most heated 'rural controversies' of recent years and has helped politicise rural issues more generally. The Countryside Alliance's efforts to suggest a wider rural crisis are part of the organisation's attempt to widen its appeal beyond the hunting question.
- <sup>xi</sup> Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (2000) pp.53-4.
- <sup>xii</sup> Milbourne *et al.* (1998a, 1998b).
- <sup>xiii</sup> Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (2000).
- <sup>xiv</sup> Scottish Executive (2000).
- <sup>xv</sup> EAGGF stands for the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.
- <sup>xvi</sup> LEADER I and LEADER II were administered by the Department of the Environment in England, with the Department of Trade and Industry having overall responsibility for Structural Funds and Community Initiatives. In Scotland, LEADER I was administered by the Scottish Office, and LEADER II was administered through a system of global grants through Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise and delivered through the network of Local Enterprise Companies.
- <sup>xvii</sup> The Agency explained to the Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee (2000, p.xxxii) "there are elements within MAFF which have been changing in recent years, but it has not been broad enough; nor have the countryside section in MAFF been given enough kudos and power to develop its thinking".

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<sup>xviii</sup> For example, the Advice and Better Regulation Division, Marketing, Consumers and Competition Division, Livestock Schemes Division and New Crops and Sugar Division have all been involved in developing ERDP measures.

<sup>xix</sup> In fact, the Agency has recently been criticised by a Parliamentary Select Committee for its general failure to take a proactive approach to raising the profile of sustainable development issues more generally (see House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee, 2000a).

<sup>xx</sup> In Scotland and Wales, Community Councils are a statutory tier of local government (similar to the Parishes in England).

<sup>xxi</sup> See Department of the Environment and MAFF (1995), Scottish Office (1995), Welsh Office (1996), and P. Lowe (1997) p.390.

<sup>xxii</sup> These proportions are for the early years of the programmes and would fall as modulation money comes on stream (Dwyer and Baldock, 2000, p.25 & 30).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Quoted in Morgan and Mungham (2000), p.148.

<sup>xxiv</sup> In England there are various agri-environmental schemes, including Environmentally Sensitive Areas, the Countryside Stewardship scheme, the Moorland Scheme, the Habitats Scheme, the Countryside Access Scheme and the Organic Aid Scheme. In Wales, most of these schemes are combined into the single Tir Gofal scheme, which is not spatially restricted to designated areas. Agri-environment schemes were being administered at the 'country' (rather than UK) level prior to devolution.

<sup>xxv</sup> The BHIC has estimated the industry's annual worth to be some £2.5 billion, supporting approximately 150,000 jobs, and leading it to claim to be the second largest economic industry in the British countryside to farming (£7.4 billion) (BHIC, 2000).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Geoff Broom Associates (1998); Rural Development Commission (1999).

<sup>xxvii</sup> Figures taken from MAFF (1999), p.60.

<sup>xxviii</sup> National Audit Office (1999).

<sup>xxix</sup> MAFF (1999), p.61.

<sup>xxx</sup> See, for example, Performance and Innovation Unit (1999).

<sup>xxxi</sup> The rural development measures funded by the EU in Northern Ireland will be programmed under the Objective 1 programme there.

<sup>xxxii</sup> See Ward and McNicholas (1998).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), p.95. The SRB was established in 1994 to bring together a number of programmes from several Government Departments with the aim of simplifying and streamlining the assistance available for regeneration. SRB provides resources to support regeneration initiatives in England carried out by local regeneration partnerships. Its priority is to enhance the quality of life of local people in areas of need by reducing the gap between deprived and other areas, and between different groups. The types of scheme supported differ from place to place, according to local circumstances but often include local economic and community development, skills and training, and combating social exclusion.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> In particular, the operation of the Barnett formula in the distribution of public spending delivers a level of per capita spending in Scotland higher than England even considering 'needs' (see McLean, 2000).

<sup>xxxv</sup> See NFU (1998, 1999).

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> DETR (1999).

<sup>xxxvii</sup> DETR & RSPB.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> In its 1999 Annual Report, for example, English Nature reported that some 17% of SSSIs remain in unfavorable condition showing no signs of improvement and nearly 11% continue to deteriorate because of neglect, hydrological problems, or inappropriate management (English Nature, 1999a, p.13; see also Ashworth *et al.*, 1997 ).

<sup>xxxix</sup> Environment Agency (2000a), p.41.

<sup>xl</sup> Cabinet Office 2000, p.70. These figures are for Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas schemes, and do not include land under organic farming schemes.

<sup>xli</sup> See WWF (2000a-d)..

<sup>xlii</sup> WWF (2000a-d).

<sup>xliii</sup> The House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs (2000b, para 52) recently called for the rate of modulation to rise to 10% over the 2001-2004 Comprehensive Spending Review period with a view to eventually achieving the full 20% allowed under the CAP.

<sup>xliv</sup> The British Rural Development Plans have been criticised by European Commission officials for the overly modest rate of change from one form of LFA support to the other.

<sup>xlv</sup> See MAFF's 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2000 progress bulletin on the Action Plan for Farming for further details of these deregulatory measures. The Better Regulation Task Force published its review in November 2000.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Council for the Protection of Rural England (1999a), p.59. It is perhaps worth noting that CPRE's criticism was levelled before MAFF announced its decision to modulate CAP payments and so expand agri-environment and rural development programmes.

<sup>xlvii</sup> MAFF Statistical Release 61/99, 29 November 1999.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), p.35.

<sup>xlix</sup> See, for example, Performance and Innovation Unit (1999) and Country Landowners Association (2000).

<sup>l</sup> CPRE (2000).

<sup>li</sup> Cabinet Office (2000).

<sup>lii</sup> See, for example, Monk *et al.* (1999).

<sup>liii</sup> See, for example, CB Hillier Parker (1998).

<sup>liv</sup> See Morgan and Mugham (2000, pp.202-7) for a discussion.

<sup>lv</sup> Bryden, J. (2000).

<sup>lvi</sup> See, for example, Edwards *et al.* (1999).

<sup>lvii</sup> See the discussion in Dwyer and Baldock (2000) of the initial success of the Forest of Bowland scheme.

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<sup>lviii</sup> Hansard 24 July 2000, Col. 474.

<sup>lix</sup> There has been a huge increase in the number of questions from politicians that civil servants in the devolved administrations have to answer. Where, for example, civil servants in the former Scottish Office worked to five ministers, post-devolution there are now 3 ministers in London and 22 in Scotland.

<sup>lx</sup> Environment Agency (2000b), p.31.

<sup>lxi</sup> In 1994, the then Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, estimated 80 per cent of the UK's environmental legislation to be decided collectively at the European level.

<sup>lxii</sup> See, for example, DTZ Pida Consulting (1998), Hampshire County Council (1997), Oxfordshire County Council (1999), SAC Farm and Rural Business Division (1998), Ward and Lowe (1999).

<sup>lxiii</sup> This complaint has been stronger in Scotland and Wales than in England.

<sup>lxiv</sup> Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (2000).

<sup>lxv</sup> See Centre for Rural Economy (1994), Baldock *et al* (1996), MAFF (2000a).

<sup>lxvi</sup> See, for example, Jacobs (1999).

<sup>lxvii</sup> Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999), p. 209.

<sup>lxviii</sup> DETR (1999), p.213.

<sup>lxix</sup> DETR (1999), p.221.

<sup>lxx</sup> DETR (1999), p.214.

<sup>lxxi</sup> WWF (2000e).

<sup>lxxii</sup> House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee (2000c).

<sup>lxxiii</sup> English Nature (1999b), p.102.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Ward *et al.* (1990).

<sup>lxxv</sup> DETR (1999), p.209.

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Council for the Protection of Rural England (1999a), p.55.

<sup>lxxvii</sup> Council for the Protection of Rural England (1999b).

<sup>lxxviii</sup> See, for example, British Chambers of Commerce (1999), p.8.

<sup>lxxix</sup> Countryside Agency (2000).

<sup>lxxx</sup> MAFF (2000b).

<sup>lxxxi</sup> Environment Agency (2000), p.30.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Morgan (1985).

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Friends of the Earth (1988).

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Ward *et al.* (1998).

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- <sup>lxxxv</sup> MAFF (2000b); Countryside Commission (1998).
- <sup>lxxxvi</sup> MAFF (2000b), pp.6-8.
- <sup>lxxxvii</sup> Countryside Agency (2000), p.53.
- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Council for the Protection of Rural England (1999a), p.63.
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> CPRE (1997), p.6.
- <sup>xc</sup> DoE and MAFF (1995), p.74.
- <sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup> Darvill and Fulton (1998).
- <sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> See UK Round Table on Sustainable Development (2000a,b).
- <sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup> Soil Association (1999).
- <sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> Lampkin *et al.* (2000), p.223.
- <sup>xc<sup>v</sup></sup> Lampkin *et al.* (2000), p.226.
- <sup>xc<sup>vi</sup></sup> Forestry Commission (1999).
- <sup>xc<sup>vii</sup></sup> Rural Development Commission (1999).
- <sup>xc<sup>viii</sup></sup> Geoff Broom Associates, cited in Countryside Agency (2000).
- <sup>xc<sup>ix</sup></sup> Keeble *et al.* (1992).
- <sup>c</sup> Countryside Agency (2000), p.43.
- <sup>ci</sup> Adams identifies a strong correlation between trends in physical and electronic mobility. He argues that "The hope that extensive use of telecommunications will obviate the need for travel and the movement of goods, rests upon a decoupling of the trends of electronic and physical mobility for which there is no precedent" (2000, p.120).
- <sup>c<sup>ii</sup></sup> See Friends of the Earth (1994), Jacobs, (1999), Rayment (1997), Tourism Associates (1999).
- <sup>c<sup>iii</sup></sup> See Paxman (1998) for a discussion of attachments to the past and English national identity.
- <sup>c<sup>iv</sup></sup> Jacobs (1999).
- <sup>c<sup>v</sup></sup> English Nature (1999c).
- <sup>c<sup>vi</sup></sup> See George (1990) for an account of the agreement.
- <sup>c<sup>vii</sup></sup> See Lowe *et al.* (1999) and Dwyer *et al.* (2000) for a discussion.
- <sup>c<sup>viii</sup></sup> CPRE (1999c).
- <sup>c<sup>ix</sup></sup> See Twigger (2000) for a discussion.
- <sup>c<sup>x</sup></sup> See HM Treasury (2000), para.16.1-16.4.
- <sup>c<sup>xi</sup></sup> House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee (2000c).
- <sup>c<sup>xii</sup></sup> See Jupp (2000) for a discussion.

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## **ANNEX I – Institutions Involved in Rural Development in the UK**

### UK Level

**Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food** (Rural Division, MAFF, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR, Tel: 020 7238 3000 [switchboard]).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.maff.gov.uk/>]

MAFF is the UK agriculture Ministry and competent authority for the English Rural Development Plan. MAFF has seen an expansion of rural development and agri-environment responsibilities over the last decade. It is still criticised by some for an overly-agricultural perspective on rural issues, but is experiencing an evolving approach to integrated rural development, with some institutional changes at the regional level, including greater cross-departmental working.

**Department of Environment, Transport & the Regions** (Wildlife and Countryside Directorate, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU, Tel: 020 7944 3000 [switchboard]).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.detr.gov.uk/>]

The DETR is a large 'super-Ministry', created in 1997 by merging the former Department of the Environment with the Department of Transport. It is also responsible for local authority, housing and land use planning matters. Its Wildlife and Countryside Directorate is responsible for the conservation and enhancement of England's countryside; the economic and social development of rural areas; environmental aspects of forestry and agricultural

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policy; policy on trees; access to and informal recreation in the countryside; National Parks policy; and coastal policy. This is a small Directorate with a very large Ministry. Its approach to land management in rural areas has historically been from a wildlife and landscape conservation perspective. It is the 'parent' Whitehall Department for the Countryside Agency and English Nature.

**Department of Trade and Industry** (Structural and Cohesion Funds, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET, Tel: 020 7215 5000).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/>]

The DTI is the lead UK department responsible for Structural and Cohesion Funds issues. It does not have a strong 'rural' dimension, and is primarily concerned with corporate and trade policy, business support and competitiveness issues.

**HM Treasury** (Agriculture Team, HM Treasury, Parliament Street, London, SW1P 3AG, Tel: 0207 270 3000).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/>]

The Treasury is the UK's finance ministry and has responsibility for public expenditure. It has traditionally sought to minimise discretionary national expenditure on EU rural development (and agricultural structural) schemes in order to maximise the UK's rebate from the EU under the 1984 Fontainebleau Accord.

**Forestry Commission** (231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH12 7AT, Tel: 0131-334 0303).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/>]

The Forestry Commission is the Government Department responsible for advising Ministers on forestry policy and for implementing that policy throughout Britain. Forestry is not a major economic sector in the UK. (It supports about 35,000 jobs in total). Forestry can be a significant land user in Scotland, and in parts of upland England, however.

### England and Wales

**Farming and Rural Conservation Agency** (Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR, Tel 020 7238 5432).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.maff.gov.uk/aboutmaf/agency/frca/frca.htm>]

The FRCA was previously part of the state agricultural extension service. Its role is to assist government in the design, development and implementation of policies on the integration of farming and conservation, environmental protection and the rural economy. It has over 800 staff and is responsible for administering most agri-environment schemes and providing policy advice on agriculture and land use issues to local and regional planning authorities in England and Wales.

**Environment Agency** (Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4UD, Tel: 01454 624 400).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>]

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The Environment Agency was established in 1996 through the merger of the former National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and local waste authorities. The Agency is responsible for the implementation of numerous EU environmental directives and has a statutory duty to contribute, through its work, to attaining the objective of achieving sustainable development. Although it produced a discussion paper on rural communities in March 1998, the Agency has not been an important influence upon the rural development debate. The Agency has a staff of 9,500, organised in seven regional offices, plus one in Cardiff for what, since 1999, has become Environment Agency Wales.

**Association of National Park Authorities** (Ponsford House, Moretonhampstead, Devon, TQ13 8NL, Tel: 01647 440245).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.anpa.gov.uk/>]

The ANPA represents the 11 UK National Park Authorities (8 in England and 3 in Wales). The purposes for which a national park is designated are to conserve the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of its area and to provide for the enjoyment and understanding of its special qualities by the public. While these purposes are pursued as its prime duty, since 1996, NPAs have been required to foster the social and economic well being of the communities within the parks. This requirement has raised interest within NPAs in approaches to integrated rural development.

#### English National Level

**Countryside Agency** (John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 3RA, Tel: 01242 521381).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/>]

The Countryside Agency is a fairly new statutory body, formed in April 1999 from a merger between the former Countryside Commission (a landscape conservation and countryside recreation body) and the national functions of the former Rural Development Commission (socio-economic and community development in rural areas). Its role is to innovate in policy development and advise the Government on various countryside issues.

**English Nature** (Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, Tel: 01733 455000).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.english-nature.org.uk/>]

English Nature is the statutory agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features in England. It is responsible for National Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Action Plans. It designates the most important areas for wildlife and natural features as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and secures the sustainable management of these sites.

#### English Regional and Local Level

**Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Regional Service Centres** (9 RSCs in English regions).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.maff.gov.uk/aboutmaf/contacts/rsc1.htm>]

MAFF's RSCs carry out the administration of CAP payments to farmers in the English regions. They have only limited policy roles at the regional level, principally because MAFF

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is a sectoral and highly centralised ministry. Their regional boundaries do not yet correspond to those of other central government departments.

*Various **Government Regional Offices*** (8 GROs in the English regions).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/go/goindex.htm>]

Since 1994, the activities of the Departments of Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Department of Trade and Industry have been integrated at the regional level in integrated Government Regional Offices. Though not subject to regionally elected institutions, these offices have grown in staff and responsibility and serve, in effect, as nascent regional civil services. The English Rural Development Plan has been drawn up according to GRO/RDA regional boundaries, rather than those of MAFF.

*Various **Regional Development Agencies*** (8 RDAs in the English regions).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/rda/info/index.htm>]

The new RDAs were established in April 1999 as statutory agencies responsible for economic development in the 8 English regions. Some staff and funding programmes from the former Rural Development Commission are included within the RDAs, which have a specific remit to include the rural parts of their regions in their regional economic strategies. Currently, the RDAs seem more involved in rural regeneration schemes and have less expertise or interest in the agricultural sector.

*Various **Local Authorities*** (County Councils, District Councils and Unitary Authorities).

[Directory of Local Authority Home Pages: <http://www.tagish.co.uk/tagish/links/localgov.htm>]

The growth of EU Structural Funds programmes since 1989 has served to raise the profile of UK local authorities in local and regional rural development issues. Such authorities are widely represented on rural development partnerships, and often co-finance rural development programmes and projects. Several local authorities have taken an increasing interest in the economic health of the agricultural sector in recent years.

## Scotland

**Scottish Executive** (Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Tel: 1031 556 8400).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/>]

Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department (SERAD) took over from the former Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department following devolution. Some 250 staff work at its HQ in Edinburgh, complemented by around 500 professional, technical and administrative staff located in 18 Area Offices and Sub-Offices throughout Scotland.

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**Scotland Office** (Scotland Office – Edinburgh, 1 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7HW, Tel: 0131 244 9010).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.scottishsecretary.gov.uk/>]

The Scotland Office is the UK government department charged with ensuring that Scottish interests are represented within the UK Government in London.

**Scottish Natural Heritage** (2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP, Tel: 0131 447 4784).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.snh.org.uk/>]

Scottish Natural Heritage is the statutory body with responsibility for landscape management and nature conservation issues in Scotland. It advises government and other bodies on policies and promotes projects that aim to improve the natural heritage and support its sustainable use.

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency** (Erskine Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TR, Tel: 01786 457700)

[Web Home Page: <http://www.sepa.org.uk/>]

Founded in 1996, SEPA carries out a similar role to that of the Environment Agency in England and Wales in protecting land, air soil and water in Scotland.

**Convention of Scottish Local Authorities** (Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5XZ, Tel: 0131-474-9200).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.cosla.gov.uk/>]

Established in 1975, COSLA is a voluntary association of all local authorities in Scotland. It employs 50 staff and has a budget of £2.3M. It represents the collective interests of Scottish local government to Ministers on local government policy and local government finance, seeks to influence policy development, and has particular interests in the development and operation of EU Structural Fund and CAP policies as they affect Scotland.

## Wales

**National Assembly for Wales** (National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA, Tel: 029 20 825111).

[Web Home Page: [http://www.wales.gov.uk/index\\_e.html](http://www.wales.gov.uk/index_e.html)]

The Assembly, created in 1999, is responsible for agriculture, fisheries and food in Wales, among other domestic policies. While the Assembly cannot pass primary legislation, it is able to propose primary legislation for the UK Parliament, as is able to introduce secondary legislation such as regulations under Acts of the UK Parliament.

**The Wales Office** (Office of the Secretary of State for Wales, Gwydyr House, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2ER).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.oss.wales.gov.uk/>]

The Wales Office is the UK government department charged with ensuring that Welsh interests are represented within the UK Government in London. It liaises with the National

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Assembly for Wales and is headed by the Secretary of State for Wales who represents Welsh interests in the Cabinet.

**Countryside Council for Wales** (Plas Penrhos, Ffordd Penrhos, Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2LQ. Tel: 01248 385500).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/>]

CCW is the national wildlife and conservation statutory body for Wales. It is responsible for advising government and other bodies on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment. It is also responsible for administering Tir Gofal, the Welsh integrated agri-environment scheme.

**Welsh Development Agency** (Principality House, The Friary, Cardiff, CF1 4AE, Tel: 02920-775 -577). [Web Home Page: <http://www.wda.co.uk/>]

Established by the UK government in 1976, the WDA has been tasked with regenerating the economic prosperity of Wales in the wake of heavy industry decline in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The former Development Board for Rural Wales became part of the WDA in 1999.

## England

**National Farmers Union** (164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HL, Tel: 020 7331 7200).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.nfu.org.uk/>]

The NFU is the dominant farming union in Britain and enjoys a relatively close relationship with MAFF. Critics argue that the interests of larger and wealthier (eastern arable) producers dominate the NFU. Though suspicious of the 'rules and regulations' surrounding EU Structural Funds, the parts of the NFU are beginning to accept the arguments about support for the multi-functional role of agriculture and would welcome expanded agri-environment programmes.

**Country Landowners Association** (16 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PQ, Tel: 020-7235-0511). [Web Home Page: <http://www.cla.org.uk/>]

The CLA's 50,000 members, some with large farms and estates, others with smaller amounts of land, own and manage 60% of the countryside in England and Wales. The CLA works closely with the NFU on many aspects of rural development policy and has a particular interest in the planning system and farm diversification.

**Council for the Protection of Rural England** (Warwick House, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0PP, Tel: 0207 976 6433).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.greenchannel.com/cpre/>]

The CPRE is one of the most effective of the environmental pressure groups in the UK. Formed in the 1920s, its main focus on interest is the operation of the land use planning system and its main concern is to help contain urban encroachment onto green land. CPRE's interests in agricultural policy date back to the 1970s, and it has been a vocal body

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lobbying for the implementation of a more integrated rural development (and agri-environment) policy under the CAP's Rural Development Regulation.

**Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** (The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, Tel: 01767 680551).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/>]

The RSPB is the UK's largest environmental organisation, with over a million members. Its interest in rural and agricultural policy come from an interest in wildlife/biodiversity (and particularly bird) conservation. It has a large group of scientists who have helped document the dramatic decline in farmland birds in the UK over recent years.

**WWF** (WWF-UK, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1XR, Tel: 01483 426 444). [Web Home Page: <http://www.wwf-uk.org/home.shtml>]

WWF-UK, including devolved offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is interested in rural policy from the perspective of nature conservation. WWF is the world's largest and most effective conservation organisation. It has a global network of 27 national Organisations (of which WWF-UK is one). The mission of WWF – the global network environment – is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment, and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity;
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable;
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

**Countryside Alliance** (The Old Town Hall, 367 Kennington Road, London, SE11 4PT, Tel: 020 7840 9200).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.countryside-alliance.org/>]

The Countryside Alliance was established in 1998 out of the former British Field Sports Society. It has primarily been concerned with the campaign to protect fieldsports such as hunting with hounds. However, it has recently sought to widen its portfolio of interests and comments on rural policies more generally. Its ability to mobilise its supporters to attend large demonstrations have meant that it is a political force that attracts much media attention.

**Action for Communities in Rural England** (Somerset Court, Somerford Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1TW, Tel: 01285 653477).

[Web Home Page: <http://www.acreciro.demon.co.uk/>]

ACRE is the umbrella body for about 30 county-based Rural Community Councils in England. These bodies help co-ordinate voluntary sector bodies and projects in rural areas. Their primary focus is on community development and local socio-economic development. Though perhaps not powerful players nationally, RCCs and their staff are often involved in local rural development partnerships and have a particular interest in LEADER programmes.

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*Various **Wildlife Trusts*** (county bodies).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/>]

Wildlife Trusts are usually county-based voluntary organisations with an interest in wildlife and habitat conservation. They manage 2,300 nature reserves and have a membership of some 325,000 people.

**UK Objective 5b Partnership** (c/o Dumfries and Galloway Council, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DD, Tel: 01387 260030). [Web Home Page: <http://rural.exchange.powys.gov.uk/>]

The UK Objective 5b Partnership is a network of approximately 30 local authorities that have benefitted from Objective 5b designation during the 1994-99 programming period. The Partnership has provided a forum for the exchange of best practice among local authority officers with respect to using the Structural Funds for local rural development, and has recently taken an increasing interest in influencing the CAP reform and RDR agenda within the UK.

**National Trust** (36 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AS, Tel: 0207-222-9251).  
[Web Home Page: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/>]

The National Trust is one of the UK's largest landowners, owning some 250,000ha of countryside, and 600 miles of coastline. It has 2.5million members and is a charitable trust oriented to the preservation of national heritage.

## **ANNEX II – Acknowledgements**

A draft of this report was presented and discussed by participants at workshops in Edinburgh and London on 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2000. Participants at the Edinburgh workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> September were: Prue Dowie (Angus Council), Adrian Shaw (Argyll & Bute Council), Rhys Evans (Arkelton Centre, Aberdeen University), Andrew Raven (Deer Commission), Tony Fitzpatrick (Dumfries & Galloway Council / European Rural Exchange), Vanessa Halhead (Duthchas Project), Alister Jones (Forestry Commission), Peter Ross (Food Futures), Alistair Dillon (Researcher for Elspeth Attwooll MEP), Irene McGugan (MSP), Douglas Patullo (Researcher for Alex Johnstone MSP), Craig Campbell (National Farmers' Union of Scotland), Charlotte Flower (Oxfam), Duncan Orr-Ewing (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds-Scotland), Fiona Newcombe (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds-Scotland), Juliet Harvey (Scottish Executive, Central Research Unit), Andrew Dickson (Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department), Daniel Gotts (Scottish Natural Heritage), Pat Snowdon (Scottish Natural Heritage), Adam Harrison (WWF Scotland), Simon Pepper (WWF-UK),

Participants at the London workshop on 7<sup>th</sup> September were: Philip Andrews (No 10 Policy Unit), David Baldock (Institute for European Environmental Policy), Annali Bamber-Jones (WWF), Richard Brown (HM Treasury), Ian Brown (Lee Moor Farm, Northumberland), Marie-Helene Baneth (Country Landowners Association), Jim Dixon (English Nature), Fiona Gough (Farming & Rural Conservation Agency), Guy Hills Spedding (Countryside Alliance), Philip Lowe (University of Newcastle), Brian McLaughlin (National Farmers' Union), Peter Midmore (University of Wales, Aberystwyth), Richard Perkins (WWF-UK), Peter Pitkin (Scottish

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