

## **Rural Policy Research programme 2008-09**

- **Educational Attainment in Rural Areas**

- Contractor – National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)
- Cost £81,000
- Completion – Early May 2009
- Quantitative research into whether differences can be explained by underlying socio-economic or demographic factors or whether they are due to more intrinsic aspects of living in different types of settlement.
- Using multi-linear and logistic regression on data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)

- **Post-16 Education Choices in Rural Areas**

- Contractor – University of Sheffield School of Economics
- Cost £24,000
- Completion - May 2009
- Quantitative research to document and explain the differences in post-compulsory education staying-on rates between rural and urban areas and between different types of rural area. The raw differences will be compared to the difference when we hold constant a range of characteristics of the areas and the young people who live in them
- Range of multi-variate analytical tools used on the Youth Cohort Study cohort 12.

- **Health Inequalities in Rural Areas**

- Contractor – ONS, Cardiff University, Wales Centre for Health
- Cost - £85,000
- Completion – June 2009
- Do the health differences between rural and urban areas mask greater differences within types of area?
- Are there differences linked to access to specific services?
- Do perceptions about health differ according to rurality?
- Does deprivation in rural areas have a greater, lesser or similar effect on life expectancy than deprivation in urban areas?

- **Housing Markets and need in Rural Areas**
  - Contractor – Colin Buchanan/UCL
  - An informed discussion of the concept of ‘local affordability’.
  - Analysis of the power of rurality in various forms to predict rural house prices, and where this sits relative to other determining factors
  - Informed discussion of the reasons and consequences of including ‘local ties’ in eligibility criteria for social housing or assisted home ownership
  
- **Social Capital in Rural Areas**
  - Contractor – Brook Lyndhurst
  - What does the concept of social capital have to offer us as a determining factor in improving quality of life?
  - Is social capital strong in rural England, or is it the same as anywhere else?
  - Are the forms of social capital we can measure inclusive, or are otherwise excluded people also disadvantaged by exclusivity
  - And many other questions...
  
- **OECD**
  - OECD has been invited to undertake a rural policy review of England which is scheduled to start soon and complete formally in early 2010. The output will be a published report that will analyse our approach to rural policy in comparison to other (similar) OECD member countries, determine where and to what extent our approach has been successful and suggest areas where we might look to improve. These analyses are independent (apart from the OECD researchers, the study will be peer reviewed by two member countries) and comprehensive and we intend that this one should form the basis of a refresh of the Rural Strategy 2004, work on which might start next year and complete in mid 2010. The cost will be 190,000 euros paid over 2008/9 and 2009/10
  
- **SETF**
  - Cost to Defra - £50,000 + 0.5 SEO Seconded, 3 months
  - Completion date – April 2009

- Defra is working with the Social Exclusion Task Force on a short study into the most disadvantaged older people in rural areas. Rural areas will have in coming years a significantly higher proportion of older people than urban areas. This has implications in two main respects:
  - The care needs of older people will be more prevalent in rural areas, and the supply of younger people to meet those needs may be restricted.
  - Overarching policy and planning concerning an ageing society, for example dealing with increased numbers of people with dementia and other diseases of ageing, will need to be fully effective in rural areas – for example costs associated with accessing care or patients in dispersed communities need to be considered.
- **Broadband Next Generation**
    - Cost to Defra, up to £30,000 in 08-09. £20,000 in 09-10
    - Completion – May 2009
    - Partners - CLG
    - Part of the cross-Government consultation paper 'Delivering Digital Inclusion: An Action Plan for Consultation'
    - research project focusing on broadband 'not-spot' areas and the potential risks for communities or places around emerging high-speed internet services and applications to evaluate whether the UK, or parts of the UK, will be at a disadvantage.
    - Outputs -
      - § a geographic mapping exercise on the likely roll-out of next generation broadband - particularly focusing on deprived communities and rural areas at most risk.
      - § good examples of public private partnerships and categorise these based on the type of area they were successful in.
    - The evidence gained would then be presented to Local Authorities and RDAs highlighting areas which are most at risk, combined with examples that may help decide what action needs to be taken at the local level. The key objective is to put the right information into the hands of LAs and RDAs to enable them to manage the risks locally and regionally.
- **Spatial Economics Research Centre**

- Cost – approx £75,000
  - Based at LSE, the new Spatial Economics Research Centre brings together leading researchers from across the country. The Centre aims to provide high quality independent research to further understanding as to why some regions, cities and communities prosper, whilst others don't. Research will focus on why there are disparities in economic prosperity at all spatial levels including regional, city-region, local and neighbourhood.
  - Have entered into dialogue with SERC with a view to rural proofing their work programme. By doing so we will be able to build up quality research in support of our commitment to the Regional Economic Performance PSA and in particular our commitment to it: "Analysis of trade-offs: can the risk of increased intra-regional disparities, with particular regard to peripheral rural areas, be minimised". It is likely that the focus of this year will be on their work programme 1 – The Scale and Nature of UK Spatial Disparities.
- **Homes and Communities Agency**
    - Working in partnership with CLG Defra is funding a research and good practice project which will support the new Homes and Communities Agency to:
      - § Identify, contact and encourage poorly performing Local Authorities to 'up their game' on delivery of rural housing.
      - § Encourage high performing LAs to maintain performance and deliver even more quickly.
      - § Identify gaps in knowledge and commission research/carry out work to fill these.
      - § Identify, evaluate and disseminate good practice relating to rural delivery
    - Throughout the course of the project, HCA will keep the current target under review and will provide advice on target setting to feed into the next spending review. The HCA aims to recruit for the two specialist posts supporting this project before Christmas and is planning a major event to engage local and regional stakeholders before the end of the financial year.

## Next year?

- Transport?
- 
- Business?
- 
- Social Care Provision?
- 
- Sustainability?
- 
- Commuting?
- 
- Computing?