

# *Towards more resilient rural communities: the human dimension*

Joint Teagasc-SRUC Conference: 13.03.18

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*Leading the way in Agriculture and Rural Research, Education and Consulting*

# Research journey: 2010-2018



7. Empowerment policies

1. Definitions of community resilience

6. "Recharging rural"

2. Community land ownership and community resilience

5. Social justice implications

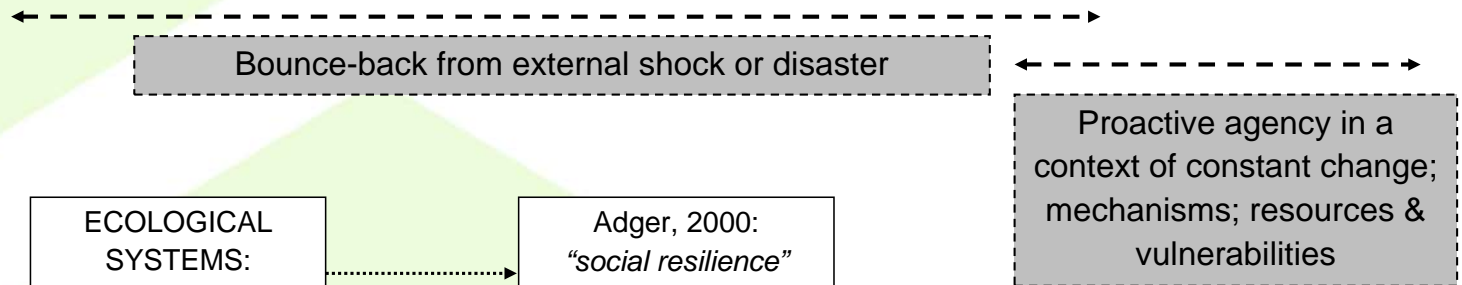
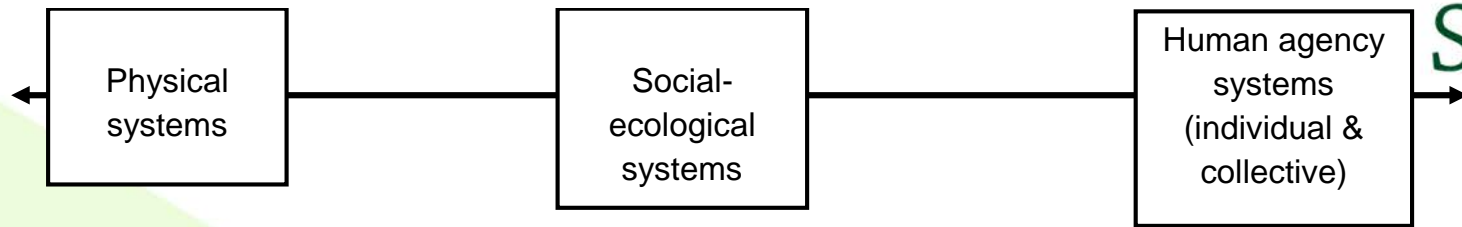


4. Complexities of resilience & empowerment processes

3. Private land ownership and community resilience



# 1. Definitions of community resilience



**ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS:**  
Holling (1978, 1986, 1995):  
*"absorb & maintain..."*

**MATHS & PHYSICS:** Gordon (1978):  
*"recuperation, perseverance"*

Adger, 2000:  
*"social resilience"*

Adger et al, 2004:  
*"adaptive capacity at multiple scales"*

Norris et al, 2008:  
*"process & adaptability; resource diversity"*

Maguire & Cartwright, 2008:  
*"stocks and vulnerabilities"*

Davidson, 2010:  
*"human agency: anticipate; unequal; individual & collective"*

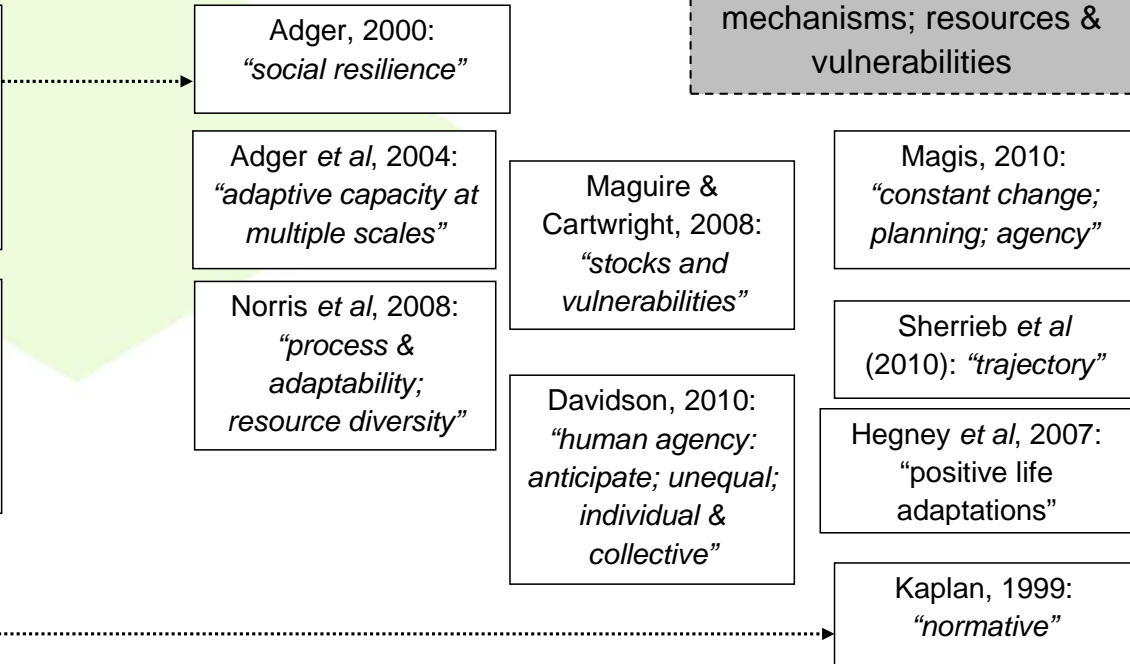
Magis, 2010:  
*"constant change; planning; agency"*

Sherrieb et al (2010): *"trajectory"*

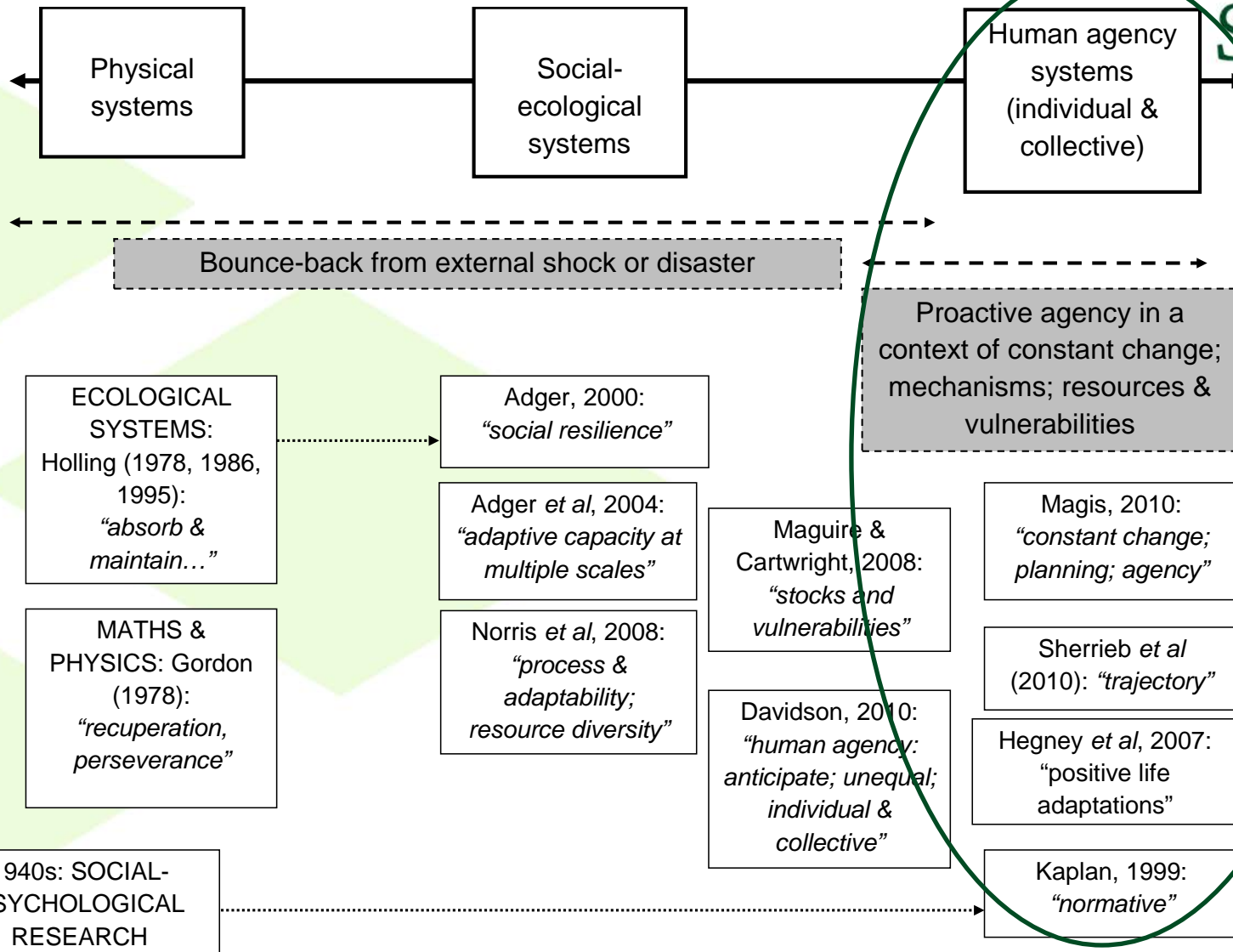
Hegney et al, 2007:  
*"positive life adaptations"*

Kaplan, 1999:  
*"normative"*

1940s: SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH



# 1. Definitions of community resilience



# Human agency:

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- “Community resilience is the existence, development and engagement of **community resources by community members** to thrive in an environment characterised by **change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise.**
- Members of communities **intentionally develop personal and collective capacity** to respond to and influence change, to sustain and renew the community, and to **develop new trajectories for the communities’ future”**

# 2. Community land ownership and community resilience



## RURAL POLICY CENTRE RESEARCH REPORT



JUNE 2011

### Community land ownership and community resilience

Dr Sarah Skerratt<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

1. This research was carried out to examine the links between community ownership of land and development of associated assets, and the resilience of those communities. Seventeen community land trusts were visited in May 2011 to gather their responses to six key questions.
2. Community land trusts own and manage the land they have purchased from private landlords, public sector bodies or Government; they also develop the associated assets. Their focus is on long-term sustainability of the community and its land for future generations. Land owned and managed by Community Land Scotland members covers half a million acres, or 200,000 hectares. The oldest is the Stornoway Trust (1923), the youngest is West Harris Crofting Trust (2010), with four communities currently seeking to buy the land.
3. Communities buy the land they live on because they see land as the foundation on which all other developments sit. Ownership leads directly to the development of: private enterprise, investment due to security of tenure, affordable housing for rent and purchase, renewable energy schemes, infrastructure development, as well as ongoing estate management. This combination supports increased population and school numbers. The emphasis is on long-term stewardship, investment and growth.
4. Community land trusts are primarily volunteer run, and some have paid development officers. Boards are made up of entirely local, or a combination of local and external, people.
5. Challenges depend on stage in the land-purchase cycle (pre-purchase, the first 1-5 years post-purchase, and beyond 5 years) and to some extent on population numbers, which range from 23 to 11,000. Capability to address these challenges comes from both the local community, and through their connections with those beyond their locality.
6. Trusts address challenges through: maintaining engagement with the community; community involvement on the Board; spreading the workload; employment of staff rather than total reliance on volunteer input; and generation of revenue streams to allow for further investment.
7. Given the large scale of community land purchase, communities identify the need for training, guidance and support, to complement their own skills and capacities as they take forward the purchase and subsequent development of the land and its assets. They see localised decision-making as critical, since it means that communities are proactive rather than simply reactive. They identify specific mechanisms that can enhance their sustainability. They point to the importance of Community Land Scotland in lobbying and communicating evidence at national, strategic levels.
8. There is consensus across all community land trusts that the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) must be reinstated. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 creates the right to buy. The SLF creates the financial means to buy. They specify particular components of the SLF that need to be improved for it to be more workable. They also identify specific legislative requirements that they feel must be addressed, including the transfer of public assets to communities at below market value.
9. The study evidence shows that: resilience can be built and is not only a characteristic of a few communities; resilience is multi-scale – a combination of individual, group, community and external connections; resilience is achieved through deliberate actions or processes, as well as through unplanned decisions or events; communities believe localism is appropriate with associated support and training mechanisms.
10. The Scottish Government is committed to establishing resilient communities (National Performance Framework, Outcome 11). Evidence from the research shows that community land trusts are delivering that brief. Therefore, the potential reform of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, and reinstatement of the Scottish Land Fund (as set out in the SNP Manifesto), become more critical since they are not only relevant to land purchase and management, but linked with the ongoing resilience of Scotland's wider rural communities.



<sup>1</sup> Senior Researcher and Team Leader, Rural Society Research. (E: Sarah.skerratt@sac.ac.uk; T: 0131 535 4335). [www.sac.ac.uk/research/groups/leet/teams/ruralsociety/](http://www.sac.ac.uk/research/groups/leet/teams/ruralsociety/)

Resilience **can be built**, is **multi-scale**, and is achieved through **deliberate actions**.

In National Performance Framework: “We have strong, **resilient** and supportive **communities** where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.” **Evidence from the research shows that community land trusts are delivering that brief.**

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journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud)



Enhancing the analysis of rural community resilience: Evidence from community land ownership

Sarah Skerratt\*

# Elements needed in rural community resilience:

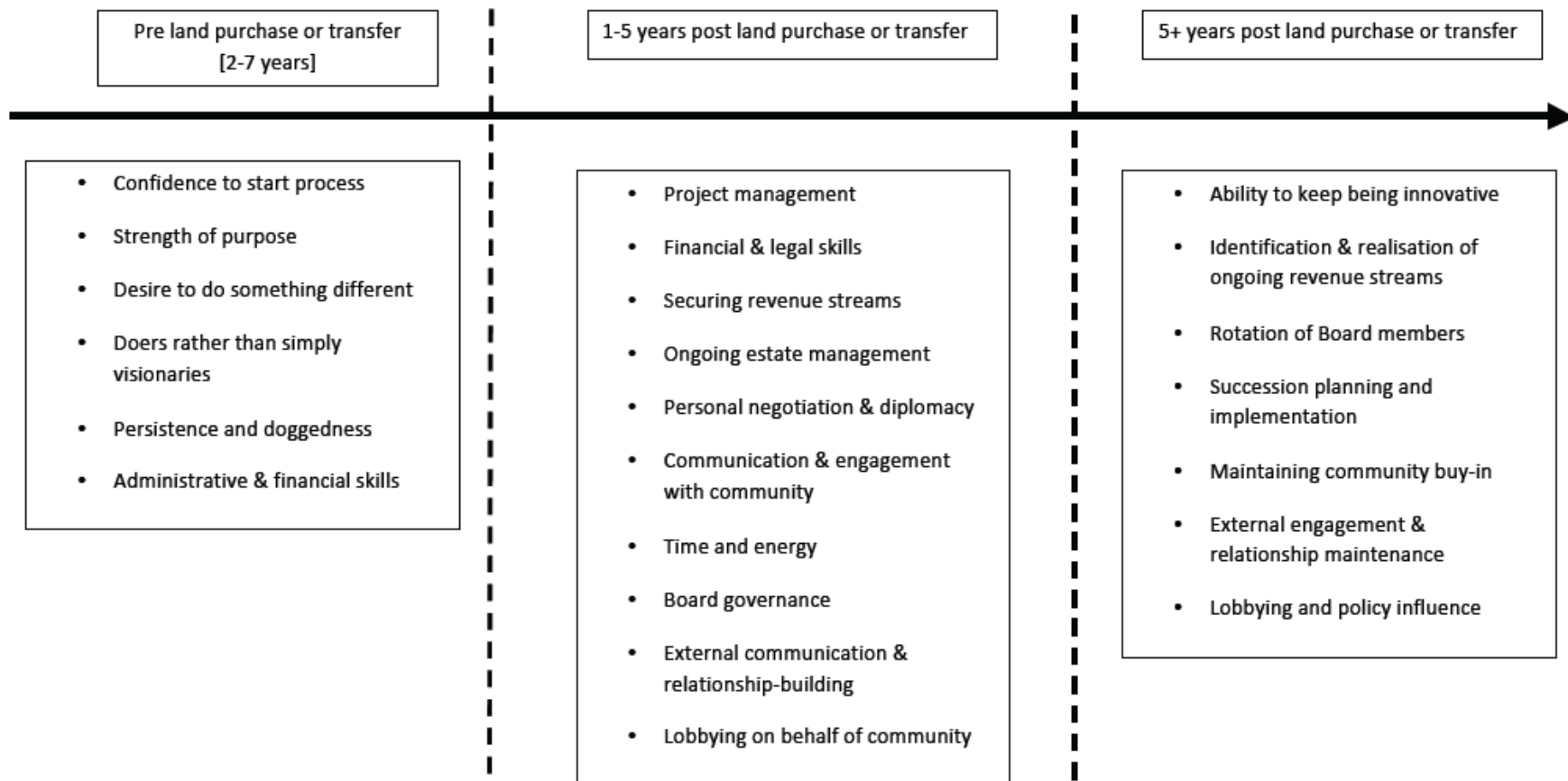


Figure 2: Stages of community land purchase and development, and associated skills and capacities required.

### 3. Private land ownership and community resilience



“A vibrant and strong family estate can contribute to the on-going vibrancy of rural communities, both on or near these estates.”

1. This research aims to explore the links between the management and decision-making of family estates, and wider rural (community) resilience.
2. 'Resilience' is a strong feature of Scottish Government policy. Research which can throw light on ways to enhance resilience in rural Scotland can feed into policy and practice thinking.
3. We explore four resilience themes: (i) the strength or resilience of estates themselves; (ii) the deliberate choices or pathways of estate owners to enhance the strength of their estates; (iii) estate owners' information and knowledge seeking, connections and decision-making; and (iv) the extent to which interviewees feel they should have responsibility for wider rural resilience.



## 4. Complexities of resilience and empowerment processes



Feature

**Community ownership of physical assets: Challenges, complexities and implications**

Sarah Skerratt

LOCAL ECONOMY

Local Economy  
26(3) 170-181  
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DOI: 10.1177/0269094211401491  
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Feature

**Working with communities-of-place: Complexities of empowerment**

Sarah Skerratt

LOCAL ECONOMY

Local Economy  
28(3) 320-338  
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DOI: 10.1177/0269094212474241  
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SAGE

Community empowerment and resilience processes are: non-linear, stop-start, often-exclusive, reinforce inequalities, messy and take time.

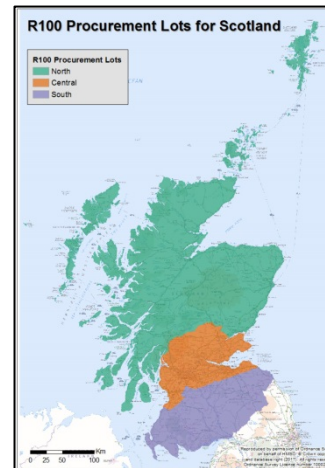
# 5. Social justice implications

## “Enabling frameworks”



Community Empowerment  
(Scotland) Act 2015

Land Reform  
(Scotland) Act 2016



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Bills

Current Bills

- Budget (Scotland) (No.2) Bill
- Children and Young People (Information Sharing) (Scotland) Bill
- Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Bill
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill
- Forestry and Land Management

Islands (Scotland) Bill

Share This Facebook Twitter Email

Stage: 1 2 3

A Bill for an Act of the Scottish Parliament to make provision for a national islands plan; to impose duties in relation to island communities on certain public authorities; to make provision about the electoral representation of island communities; and to establish a licensing scheme in respect of marine development adjacent to islands.

Current Status of the Bill

This Scottish Government Bill was introduced by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, Fergus Ewing MSP, on 9 June 2017. The Bill completed Stage 1 on 8 February 2018.

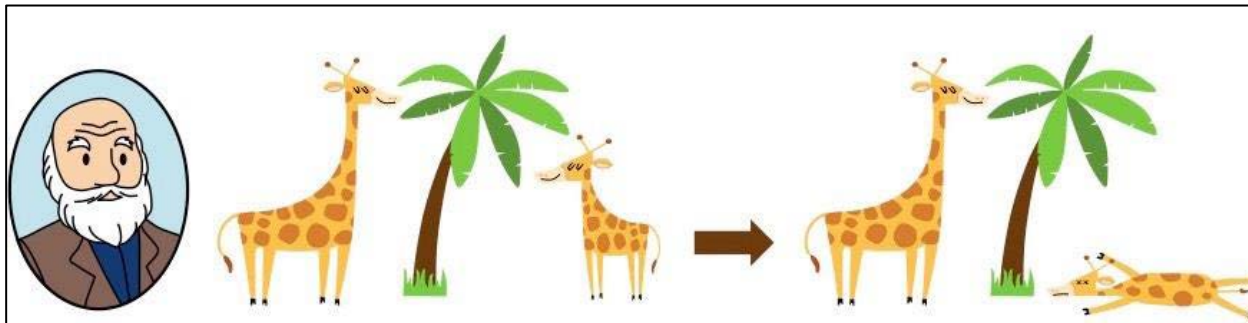
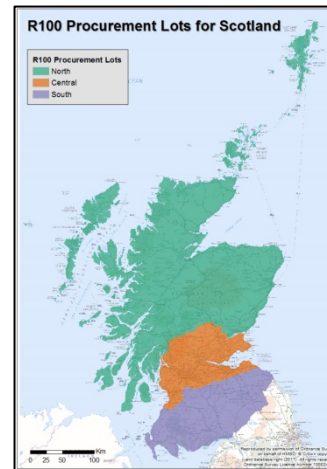
# 5. Social justice implications

## “Enabling frameworks”




Community Empowerment  
(Scotland) Act 2015

Land Reform  
(Scotland) Act 2016





  
 Northern Ireland  
 Assembly  
 Research and Information Service  
 Briefing Paper  
 Paper 73/14      12<sup>th</sup> June 2014      NIAR 101-14  
 Mark Allen  
 Rural isolation, poverty and  
 rural community/farmer  
 wellbeing – scoping paper

# Communities do not all start from same place

  
 Improving later life

*Later life in rural England*



**The town and country divide: the fuel poverty suffered by old people in rural areas**  
 from Sunday Herald, 01 June 2014



Up to three-quarters of elderly people living in rural areas of Scotland are suffering fuel poverty and are "falling through the cracks" in government policy, according to an expert report to be launched tomorrow.

**Fuel poverty hits elderly and poor hardest**  
 Methods inadequate to gauge rural problems

More than half of Highlands and islands pensioners living in fuel poverty

  
 Local Government Association

  
 Public Health England

**Health and wellbeing in rural areas**



case studies

News > UK > Home News

**Beautiful countryside hides ugly truth of social isolation, poor health and poverty, report says**

View that countryside life is idyllic masks pockets of social isolation and poor health, particularly among the elderly, according to major study

# Promoting inclusion:

**rural wellbeing**  
the national rural mental health forum

[www.ruralwellbeing.org](http://www.ruralwellbeing.org)

**SRUC** Scotland's Rural College

**ACUMEN** ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY UNIVERSITIES

**SCOTTISH PATIENT SAFETY PROGRAMME**

**ROYAL HIGHLAND & AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**

**BVA** British Veterinary Association

**SWI** Scottish Women's Institutes

**THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**MORAY wellbeing HUB**

**POLICE SCOTLAND**

**NHS Highland**

**YOUNG FARMERS**

**HUG** ACTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**Scottish Enterprise**

**marine scotland**

**stfa**

**Scottish Crofting Federation** rooted in our communities

**SRA**

**NHS Grampian**

**AUDIT SCOTLAND**

**NFU Scotland**

**SAMARITANS SCOTLAND**

**Scottish Land & Estates** Landowners Working for the Countryside

**Scottish Churches' Rural Group**

**University of the Highlands and Islands** Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean

**support in mind scotland** action for people affected by mental illness

**Youth Borders**

**Mental Health Foundation**

**Dumfries & Galloway COUNCIL**

**LEADER DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY**

**NHS 24**

**rsabi**

**SAC CONSULTING**

**nus scotland** national union of students

**giving nature a home** rspb Scotland

**NHS Health Scotland**

**carerstrust Scotland** action · help · advice

**RURAL HOUSING SCOTLAND**

**Health in mind**

**The Scottish Government** Riaghaltas na h-Alba

**Forestry Commission Scotland** Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

**Scottish Rural Parliament**

## 6. “Recharging Rural” UK



- **Aims:**
  - find out what makes communities in **remote rural UK resilient and sustainable**, in spite of the adversities and challenges they face;
  - identify ways forward into 2030 and beyond; and
  - assist the strategic approach of The Prince's Countryside Fund to plan and deliver its future support to rural communities for years to come.



The Prince's Countryside Fund is thrilled to announce it has appointed Professor Sarah Skerratt of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) to conduct vital research into what can make rural communities in the UK sustainable, in spite of the adversities they face.

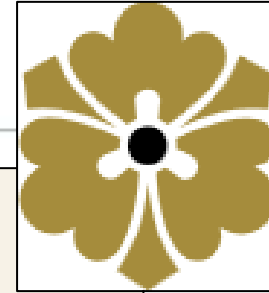
These communities are facing an increasing number of seemingly insurmountable challenges. An ageing and disconnected population is experiencing a reduction in local amenities and services; younger people are being priced out of living in rural areas thanks to rising housing costs and lower wages; added to this, urban dwellers are becoming increasingly distanced from the rural way of life.

Farming and agriculture, the beating heart of many of these rural communities, is about to undergo its most profound series of changes in a century which will prove challenging for the rural economy.

Yet rural communities have always been many of our most resilient, taking challenges and change in their stride and welcoming the influx of new blood, which brings energy and new ways of thinking to their

- 6-month, UK project
- Stakeholder workshops
  - Policy workshops
- Call for Evidence (March)
  - Report July 2018

# Call for Evidence:



THE PRINCE'S  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND

## Recharging Rural

The Prince's Countryside Fund has appointed Professor Sarah Skerratt of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) to conduct vital research into what can make rural communities in the UK sustainable, in spite of the adversities they face. [You can read the full announcement here.](#)

The report, Recharging Rural, will be released to coincide with National Countryside Week, Monday 30th July to Sunday 5th August 2018.

The research will seek views from stakeholders via workshops in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as casting the net as wide as possible through a Call for Evidence in February/March 2018.

The Call for Evidence will focus on:

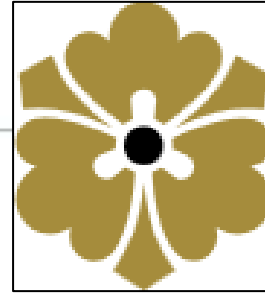
- Identifying the public value of isolated communities
- The recent trends and what further challenges are likely to develop
- The elements needed for thriving and resilient communities
- How inhabitants can work together to help themselves
- How new technology and collaborative ways of working can be harnessed for the particular needs of rural inhabitants
- Specific challenges faced by very isolated communities (e.g. islands) and how their future can be secured
- Recommendations on how to secure the long-term sustainability of rural communities

Information on how to submit evidence will be announced in early 2018. You can register your interest to be kept updated below.

Name  \*

Email Address  \*

Submit



THE PRINCE'S  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND

“Recharging Rural” includes a focus on  
new technologies and collaborative ways  
of working...



# Infrastructure to *enable* new technologies

## • Challenges:

- Resilience of remote rural...
- Differences in community capacity
- Social justice and human rights issues
- Technologies as “enablers”

## • Achievements:

- [www.Cybermoor.org](http://www.Cybermoor.org)
  - (UK 1<sup>st</sup> social enterprise town)
- Lothian Broadband
- Isle of Eigg BB

## • Equity for the “last mile”

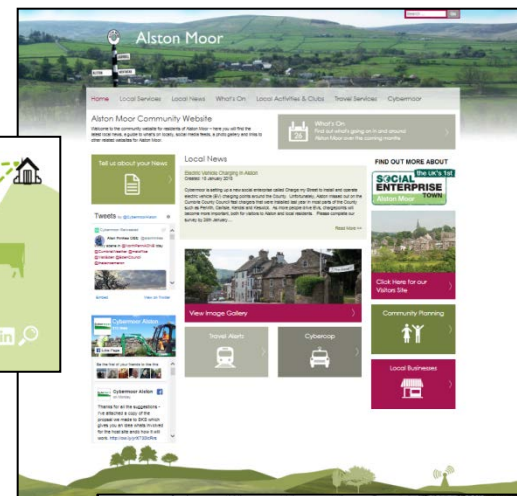
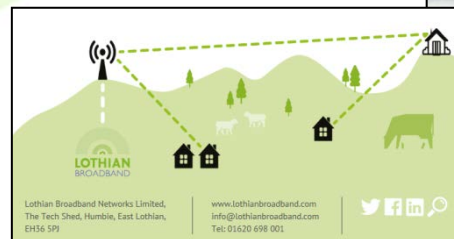
- People “follow the bandwidth”
- Business advantages (Dr Gary Bosworth, Lincoln)
- Harness benefits for all

Inquiry status: **open**

### Scope of the inquiry

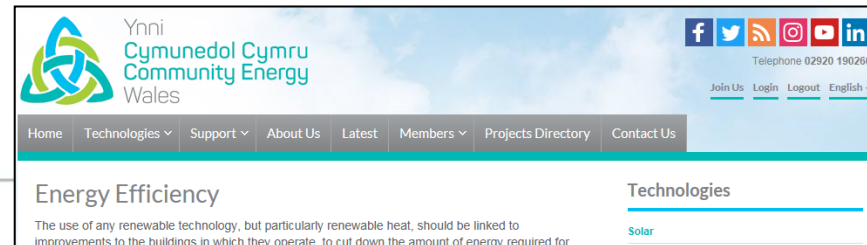
This inquiry seeks to investigate:

- What level and standard of mobile and broadband coverage does Scotland need to achieve to maximise the economic and social benefits of greater connectivity? To what extent do current plans for the rollout of broadband and mobile coverage in Scotland meet these needs?
  - What are the barriers (economic, technical, regulatory, and improved mobile coverage in Scotland? What steps challenges?
  - Is the level of funding for broadband and mobile phone geographic and demographic challenges Scotland faces?
  - How well do the different stakeholders (UK Government providers) work together? Are there ways these relationships can be improved?
  - What technology options are available to increase connectivity in areas of Scotland? What support is needed to develop and deliver these solutions?
- The Committee are particularly keen to hear from members of underrepresented groups.



# Good “fit” to remote rural:

- **Energy:**
  - Renewable energy
  - Electric cars (Cybermoor “Charge My Street”)
  - Smart Energy GB (in partnership with ACRE)
- **Remote diagnostics in healthcare:**
  - e.g. Capsule endoscopy
- **Integrated transport:**
  - Demand responsive transport
  - Flexible Integrated Transport (hospital)



## Local News

Electric Vehicle Charging in Alston  
Created: 18 January 2018

Cybermoor is setting up a new social enterprise called Charge my Street to install and operate electric vehicle (EV) charging points around the County. Unfortunately, Alston missed out on the Cumbria County Council fast chargers that were installed last year in most parts of the County such as Penrith, Carlisle, K... become more important, bo... survey by 25th January....



Smarter Britain



A smart energy future  
for rural areas

June 2017



# ENRD “Smart Villages”:



European Network for  
Rural Development

Connecting Rural Europe ...

European Commission > The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) > Smart and Competitive Rural Areas > Smart Villages

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## Smart Villages

‘Smart Villages’ is the current sub-theme of the broader ENRD thematic work on ‘[Smart and competitive rural areas](#)’.

A Thematic Group (TG) is working on this topic between September 2017 and July 2018. The TG focuses on ways of **revitalising rural services through digital and social innovation**. It explores how rural services – such as health, social services, education, energy, transport, retail – can be improved and made more sustainable through the deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and through community-led actions and projects.

The TG contributes to the [EU Action for Smart Villages](#) by enabling exchange on innovative ways of creating more vibrant, sustainable and attractive rural areas and by exploring how the [Rural Development Programmes](#) (RDPs) can be best used to support this.

Information on Thematic Group meetings and related thematic outputs will be uploaded here on a regular basis.

### Thematic Group

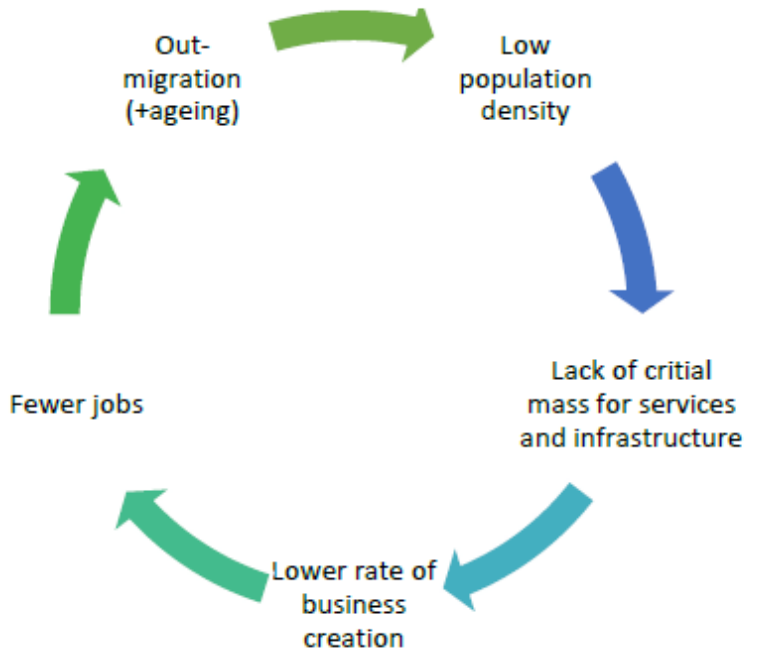
> [Leaflet](#)

> [Scoping Paper and Work Plan](#) (*working draft*)

TOOLS

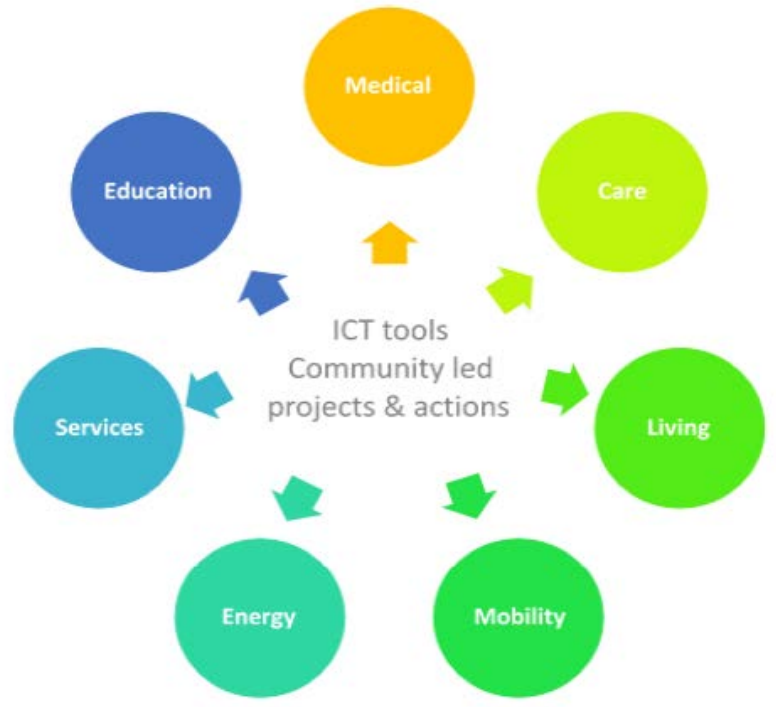
# ENRD “Smart Villages”:

Figure 1: Circle of declining rural regions

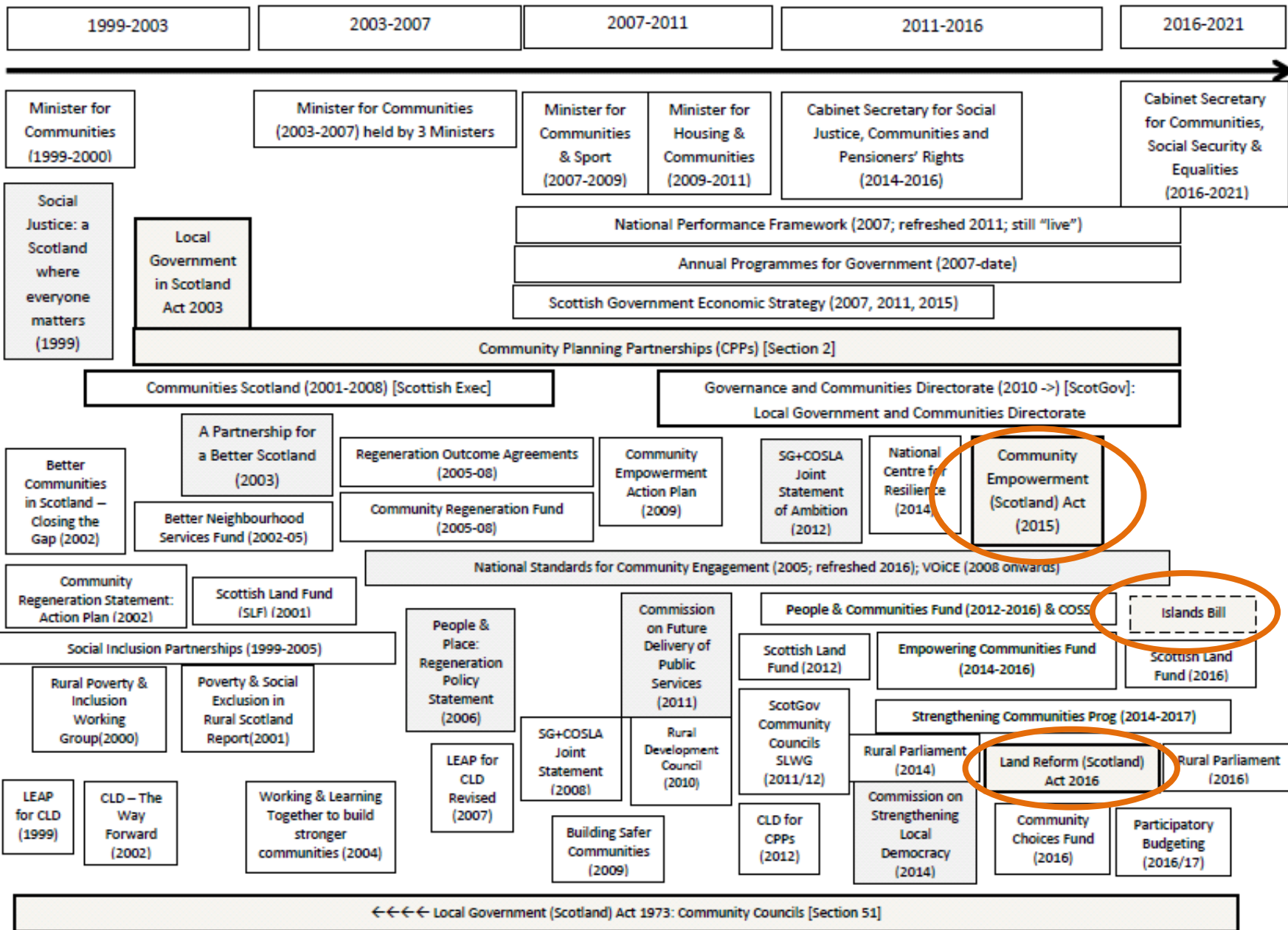


Source: OECD Rural Policy Reviews: Strategies to Improve Rural Service Delivery, OECD

Figure 2: Main services in rural areas



## 7. Empowerment policies



**SOURCE: Rural Scotland in Focus Report 2016 (29/11/16)**

# What have we learned?



1. “Enabling frameworks” are necessary but insufficient to ensure resilient communities across rural Scotland (and Ireland? and UK?)
2. Systematically recognise and record rural social justice implications, plus any approaches.
3. Create relationships and engage with policy colleagues across Directorates to ensure high-quality rural evidence makes its way into debates and has impact.

# *Towards more resilient rural communities: the human dimension*

Joint Teagasc-SRUC Conference: 13.03.18

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*Leading the way in Agriculture and Rural Research, Education and Consulting*