

## OLDER PEOPLE AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN RURAL SCOTLAND

We will protect the pensioner in Inverness who lives off her savings and fears ever-rising prices and bills...For Scotland's patients, our commitment to protecting the health budget is all about delivering the better and faster treatment we know they seek...For our unpaid carers, men and women, young and old, who give so much of their lives to look after the people they love, we will work to ensure they are true partners in the delivery of care and their special role is fully recognised...A Warm Homes Fund, which will deliver warm homes for thousands of Scots in our most fuel poor communities... The health of a pensioner living in a damp house will suffer... This is a Government with ambition for Scotland. (First Minister's Statement, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011)<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

A significant portion of the Scottish Government budget benefits older people. The budget for the health service in Scotland in 2011-12 is £11.4bn, of which around 40% will be spent on older people; around £1bn of the adult services community care spend of £1.7bn will be dedicated to older people; and the budget for concessionary travel is around £180 million per year.<sup>2</sup> On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011 the First Minister, Alex Salmond MSP, delivered a speech which set out the Scottish Government's vision for the next term of five years. As leader of the Scottish National Party, with an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament, his words speak to the political priority of constitutional change that in turn is linked to the ambition of far-reaching economic and social transformation. As indicated above, the wellbeing of older people forms a direct and also a more generic running theme in his address. This follows on from considerable advocacy of and policy commitment to this grouping in Scottish society over the past decade with its multiple dimensions of age and quality of life. Rural perspectives do feature in that discourse and, frequently, they give expression to pathologies of social exclusion related to services, material resources and social relations. This context paper deals with those matters and aims to provide critical insight into what works well and what could work differently in Scotland with a view

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<sup>1</sup> *First Minister's Statement: Taking Scotland Forward – May 26, 2011*, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Speeches/FM-Statement-26-05-11>, accessed 1/6/2011

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence received from Scottish Government, Food, Drink and Rural Communities Division, May 2011.

to informing better policy and practice outcomes in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Accordingly, the paper is regarded as a complement to the intensive primary research being undertaken by the HARC Network<sup>3</sup> across the island of Ireland on social exclusion and ageing in diverse rural communities with grant funding from the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI).

The research approach consisted of three key elements. Firstly, an extensive documentation search and review was undertaken in regard to older people issues in Scotland and, where possible, their intersection with governance arenas and rural geographies. Secondly, face-to-face interviews were convened with key stakeholders holding an interest in older people and rural development. These comprised Age Scotland, Consumer Focus Scotland, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Older People and Age Team in the Equality Unit of the Scottish Government, and the Food, Drink and Rural Communities Division of the Scottish Government; in all, the conversations extended across ten interviewees and were helpful in identifying concerns, actions and additional contextual materials. And thirdly, an e-mail request was sent to all local development contact points listed on the data base of the Scotland National Rural Network in order to capture details of and insights into projects ‘on the ground’ that relate to the wellbeing of older people.

This paper reports the findings from that investigation, completed in May and June 2011<sup>4</sup>. The next section unpacks the geographical diversity of rural Scotland and reviews aspects of the older people evidence base that exists as a layer of analysis within that space. This is followed by an overview of the governance context with particular reference to the evolving relationships between the Scottish Government, the local authorities, the health agencies and civil society as these relate to older people. The narrative then turns to an examination of more substantive thematic perspectives related to older people and social exclusion in rural Scotland. These are headlined as transport, housing, health and social care, support and contact, and participation. Where appropriate, local scale initiatives are used to illustrate policy to

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<sup>3</sup> Healthy Ageing in Rural Communities Network comprises staff from NUI Galway, Queen’s University Belfast, Forum Connemara Ltd, Rural Community Network, and Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland.

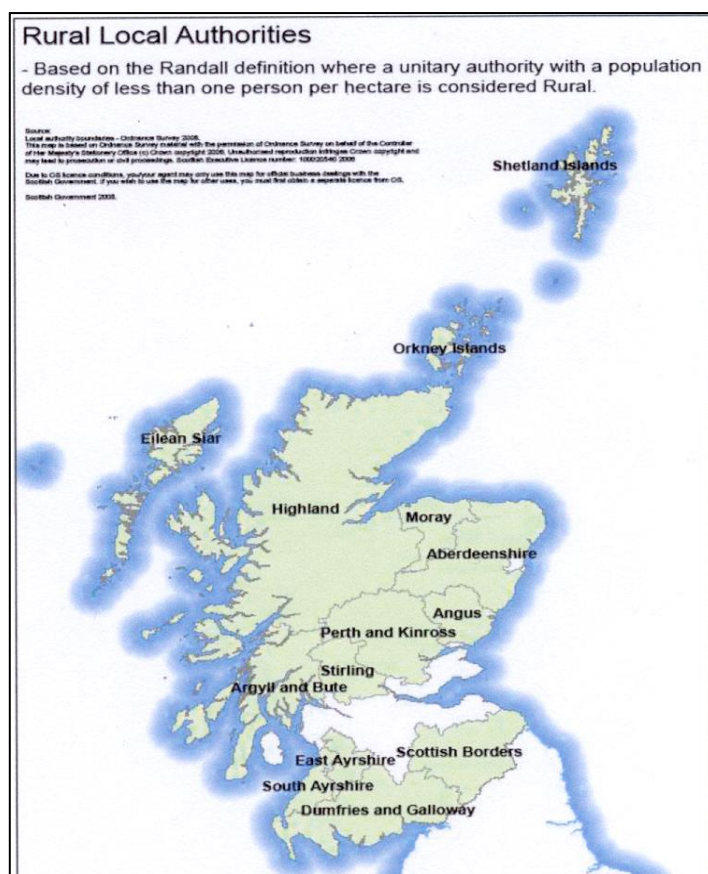
<sup>4</sup> A draft paper was circulated to the key stakeholders listed above in August 2011 and received comments, as appropriate, have been incorporated into the paper.

practice interactions. Finally, the paper identifies key insights from the Scottish experience with a bearing on the way forward in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

## 2. Rural Scotland

The notion of what is “rural” Scotland is one that has multiple meanings that have evolved over recent years. A simple definition, produced in 1985, is provided by the ‘Randall’ mapping of local authorities.<sup>5</sup> Where a local authority has a population density of less than one person per hectare it is considered “rural”. On this basis 14 local authorities are designated “rural” (Figure 1) and they make up 89.8% of Scotland’s landmass.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1. The Randall mapping of rural local authorities in Scotland**



Source: Ecotec (2010) *Developing performance indicators for rural Scotland: a scoping study – a report for the Scottish Government*, p.20.

<sup>5</sup> See Randall, J. (1985) Economic trends and support to economic activity in rural Scotland. *Scottish Economic Bulletin*, 31, pp.10-20.

<sup>6</sup> Pateman, T. (2010/11) Rural and urban areas: comparing lives using rural/urban classifications. *Regional Trends*, 43, Office for National Statistics.

The 2008 population of Scotland totals 5,168,500 people<sup>7</sup> and, out of this, 1,542,600 people (29.8%) are in rural local authorities.<sup>8</sup> The classification helped to inform the 1995 Rural White Paper and is perceived as a useful mechanism to convey a substantial amount of available data.<sup>9</sup> However, it is constrained by the coarse grain of its representation of the rural and the classifying of urban pockets, such as Stirling and Inverness, as rural.<sup>10</sup>

A more spatially differentiated approach has since emerged in the form of the Scottish Government's Urban / Rural Classification.<sup>11</sup> It is constructed around two key criteria: population and drive time accessibility (rather than distance), and has generated a six components' typology and an eight components' typology as set out in Table 1. The key difference between these is the refining of "Remote Small Towns" and "Remote Rural Areas" into two additional "Very Remote" classes. Figure 2 displays this classification for both typologies. The analysis was first introduced in 2000 in order to improve the rural evidence base and during the interim there have been five iterations that allow for the incorporation of changing circumstances. The most recent version is for 2009-2010. The criteria are also used to provide a three-fold classification comprising "Accessible Rural", "Remote Rural" and "Rest of Scotland" and all three versions of the urban – rural classification assist with interpretation of the continuous Scottish Household Survey. This is the major data source on the characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households and individuals, including older people.

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<sup>7</sup> The estimated total population of Scotland in mid 2010 was 5,222,100 people. (*Scotland's Population 2010: The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends 156<sup>th</sup> Edition* available at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files2/stats/annual-review-2010/j176746-00.htm> and accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011).

<sup>8</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Socio-economic briefing on rural Scotland: demography*. Paper 2. Supporting evidence provided to the Rural Development Council Working Group. General Register Office for Scotland, p.5.

<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics (2002) *A review of urban and rural area definitions – project report*, p.20.

<sup>10</sup> Granville, S., S. Mulholland and J. Staniforth (2009) *Use and understanding of the Scottish Government urban rural classification*. Scottish Government.

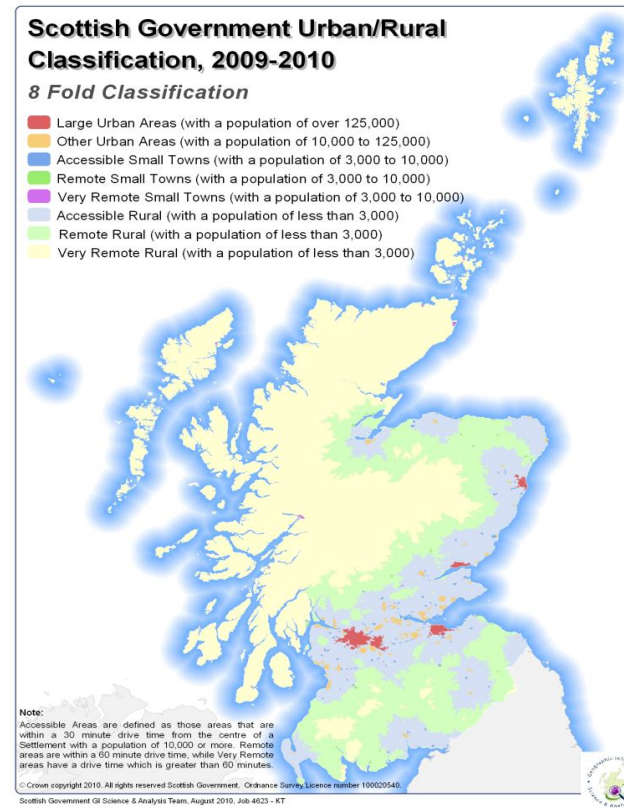
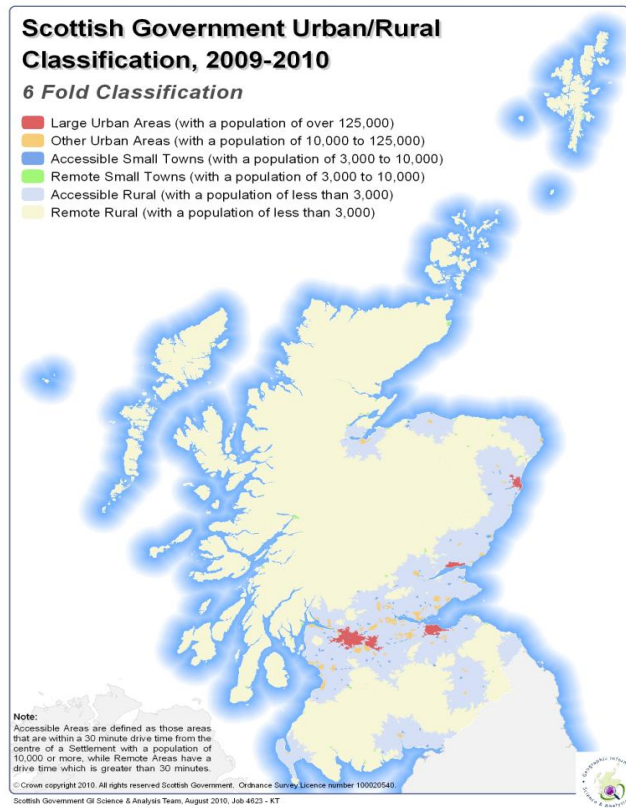
<sup>11</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Scottish Government Urban / Rural Classification 2009-2010*. Geographic Information Science and Analysis Team, Rural and Environment Research and Analysis Directorate.

**Table 1. Scottish Government Urban / Rural Classification**

<b>Six-fold classification</b>	<b>Eight-fold classification</b>	<b>Description</b>
Large Urban Areas	Large Urban Areas	Settlements of over 125,000 people.
Other Urban Areas	Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people.
Accessible Small Towns	Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a settlement of 10,000 or more.
Remote Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people, and with drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more (30-60 minutes drive time in eight-fold classification).
Accessible Rural Areas	Accessible Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a settlement of 10,000 or more.
Remote Rural Areas	Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more (30-60 minutes drive time in eight-fold classification).
	Very Remote Small Towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people, and with drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more.
	Very Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more.

Source: The Scottish Government (2010) *Scottish Government Urban / Rural Classification 2009-2010*, p5.

**Fig 1. Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 2009-2010**



Within this classification rural Scotland comprises 94% of the landmass in Scotland (25% in the accessible rural category and 69% in the remote rural category). Rural Scotland accounted for 19% of the total population in Scotland in 2008 (ie. 954,009 persons). Accessible rural areas had a population of 617,953 persons (12% of the Scottish total) having increased by 10.1% over the period since 2001. Remote rural areas on the other hand recorded a population total of 336,056 persons in 2008 (7% of the Scottish total), having gained by 5.3% since 2001.<sup>12</sup>

However, an evaluation of the use and understanding of the Scotland urban – rural classification draws attention to opinion that this method is not the most appropriate way of dealing with the circumstances prevailing in the more remote parts of Scotland, primarily within the Highlands and Islands region. This extends across 50% of Scotland’s landmass and includes over 90 inhabited islands, but it has only 10% of the overall population.<sup>13</sup> In this context the classification method is not perceived as being suitable for islands and does not distinguish between different island settlement patterns; moreover, it understates the important service centre role that some small settlements will play for their surrounding area.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly in 2007 Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) initiated a review across its territory that has allowed for the identification of “Fragile Areas” (largely remote island and mainland communities denoted by a restricted range of services and engagement by local communities in bringing forward their own social and economic projects) and “Areas of Employment Deficit” (areas facing, or potentially facing, a significant shortage of employment opportunities as a result of closure and structural change).<sup>15</sup> As indicated in Figure 3 below, this analysis provides yet a further layer of rural meaning that assists with the priority of strengthening communities. With over 56,000 people, the Fragile Areas, for example, account for 13% of the Highlands and Islands population and agency intervention by HIE seeks to address the consequences

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<sup>12</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, pp.5-6. (*Rural Scotland Key Facts 2011* was published on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and can be accessed at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/28091438/0> )

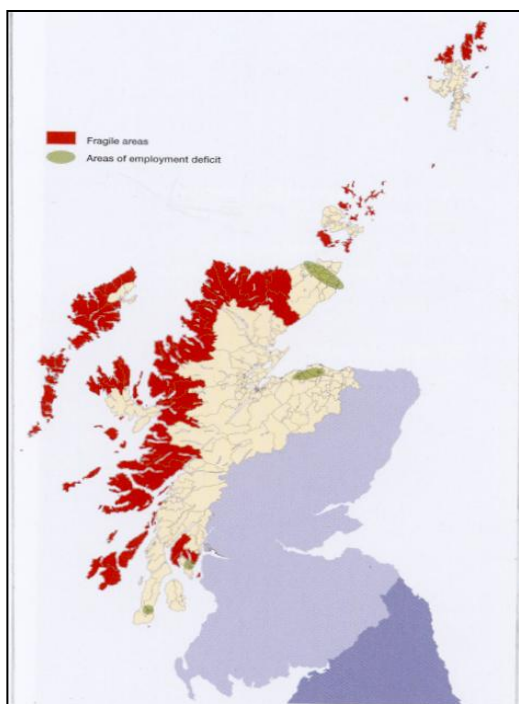
<sup>13</sup> *About Fragile Areas* – Highlands and Islands Enterprise, <http://hie.co.uk/about-hie/about-hie/fragile-areas.html>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Granville, S., S. Mulholland and J. Staniforth (2009) *Use and understanding of the Scottish Government urban rural classification*. Scottish Government, p.27.

<sup>15</sup> Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2011) *Ambitious for Scotland – Operating Plan 2011-2014*. Inverness: Highlands and Islands Enterprise, p.3.

of population loss, low incomes, limited employment opportunities, poor infrastructure and remoteness.<sup>16</sup>

### Figure 3. Fragile Areas and Areas of Employment Deficit in the Highlands and Island of Scotland



Source: *Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2011) Ambitious for Scotland – Operating Plan 2011-14*, p. 3.

In summary, this examination of rural Scotland points to a series of definitions that seek to encompass its realities and diversity. Rural Scotland is not homogenous and even across accessible and remote areas there is variation. Many accessible rural areas across Scotland (notably in the east) have experienced growth of over 25%, while some remote areas in contrast (for example, in Eilean Siar, Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway) have witnessed population declines of more than 10% between 1997 and 2008.<sup>17</sup> There is also more localised differentiation as, for example, in the Highland local authority region where the accessible areas surrounding Inverness

<sup>16</sup> *About Fragile Areas* – Highlands and Islands Enterprise, <http://hie.co.uk/about-hie/about-hie/fragile-areas.html>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Data is taken from Skerratt, S., C.Hall, C.Lamprinopoulou, D.McCracken, A.Midgley, M.Price, A.Renwick, C.Revoreda, S.Thompson, F.Williams and A.Wreford (2010) *Rural Scotland in Focus 2010*, Edinburgh: Rural Policy Centre, Scottish Agricultural College, p.11.

have witnessed population growth over the period 1997-2008, with more outlying areas in Sutherland and parts of Lochaber showing decline over the same period.

These spatial frameworks provide templates of understanding related to rural change, community resilience, and development challenges and accordingly an appreciation of the situation of older people in rural Scotland has to be located within these geographical parameters. Rural Scotland has a higher percentage of older smaller households<sup>18</sup> (where one or both adults are of pensionable age) at 17% in the remote rural category, and 15% in the accessible rural category, compared with 12% for the rest of Scotland in 2009. The corresponding figures for single pensioner households<sup>19</sup> were 15% in remote rural, 12% in accessible rural, and 13% in the rest of Scotland. The rural areas of Scotland are also denoted by a different population structure; they have a lower percentage of the population in the age bands 16-24 and 25-34, but have a higher proportion in the older age bands as set out in Table 2.

**Table 2. Age Distribution of Population in Scotland by Geographic Area, 2008**

	0-15 years	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-59 /64 years	Pension age
<b>Remote Rural</b>	17%	9%	8%	14%	28%	24%
<b>Accessible Rural</b>	19%	10%	9%	16%	26%	20%
<b>Rest of Scotland</b>	18%	13%	13%	15%	23%	19%

Source: *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, p.6.

Migration is a key dynamic in understanding change in rural Scotland and it has implications for policy development and delivery. Research<sup>20</sup> demonstrates that the average annual net migration over the period 2005 /06 to 2007/08 was 12,037 for remote and accessible rural areas compared to 10,607 for the rest of Scotland; accessible rural areas have experienced a greater inflow of people compared with remote rural areas and accounted for 79% of all net migration across rural Scotland over that period. When disaggregated by age band for 2007/08 (Table 3) it is

<sup>18</sup> An older smaller household contains one adult of working age and one of pensionable age and no children, or two adults of pensionable age and no children. Source: *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, p.61.

<sup>19</sup> A single pensioner household contains one adult of pensionable age and no children. Pensionable age is 60 for women and 65 for men. Source: *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, p.61.

<sup>20</sup> Crow, H. (2010) *Factors influencing rural migration decisions in Scotland: an analysis of the evidence*. Scottish Government Social Research. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, pp.9-10.

noticeable that all age bands with the exception of those in the range 16-23 years are contributing to the net in-movement of people. Positive net migration among the older groups (45-59/64 and pension age) was more strongly represented within accessible rural areas, though both categories of rural display an inflow from these groups. This pattern holds for the previous years back to 2005/06. The same research paper notes<sup>21</sup> that the factors encouraging older people to leave rural areas include a lack of suitable accommodation, limited support to stay in one's home, a lack of local care services, poor availability and accessibility of local shops and services, and a perception of social and geographical isolation. On the other hand factors encouraging older people to move into rural areas include an appreciation of the local environment, the availability of appropriate and affordable housing, and the perceived strong sense of community that exists in some rural areas. Significantly the research calls for greater in-depth investigations into older people rural migration decisions that engage especially with the younger older group and additionally distinguish between accessible and remote rural areas in regard to migration decisions.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 3. Net Migration by Urban Rural Classification and Age Group, 2007/08**

	0-15 years	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-59 /64 years	Pension age
<b>Remote Rural</b>	887	-1,506	721	1,015	1,124	31
<b>Accessible Rural</b>	2,765	-494	2,806	2,854	1,989	96
<b>Rest of Scotland</b>	-320	9,507	1,756	-1,925	-1,311	-42

Source: adapted from Crow, H. (2010) *Factors influencing rural migration decisions in Scotland: an analysis of the evidence*. Scottish Government Social Research. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, p.10.

Beyond its aged profile, rural Scotland is also denoted by an ageing population. Over the period 1998-2008 the pensionable age population increased by 17.4% in the 14 rural local authorities (Randall classification) compared to 5.8% for the rest of Scotland.<sup>23</sup> The particular significance of this trend can be demonstrated by reference to three rural local authority areas comprising Angus (an accessible rural

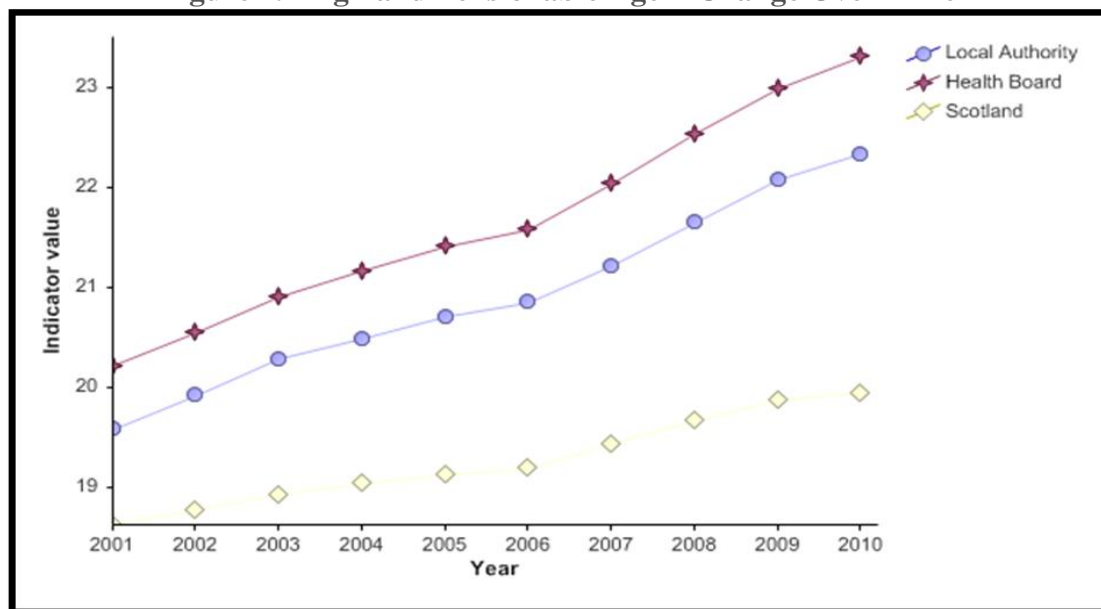
<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, p.3.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, p.5

<sup>23</sup> Data and commentary is taken from The Scottish Government (2010) *Socio-economic briefing on rural Scotland: demography*. Paper 2. Supporting evidence provided to the Rural Development Council Working Group. General Register Office for Scotland, p.3.

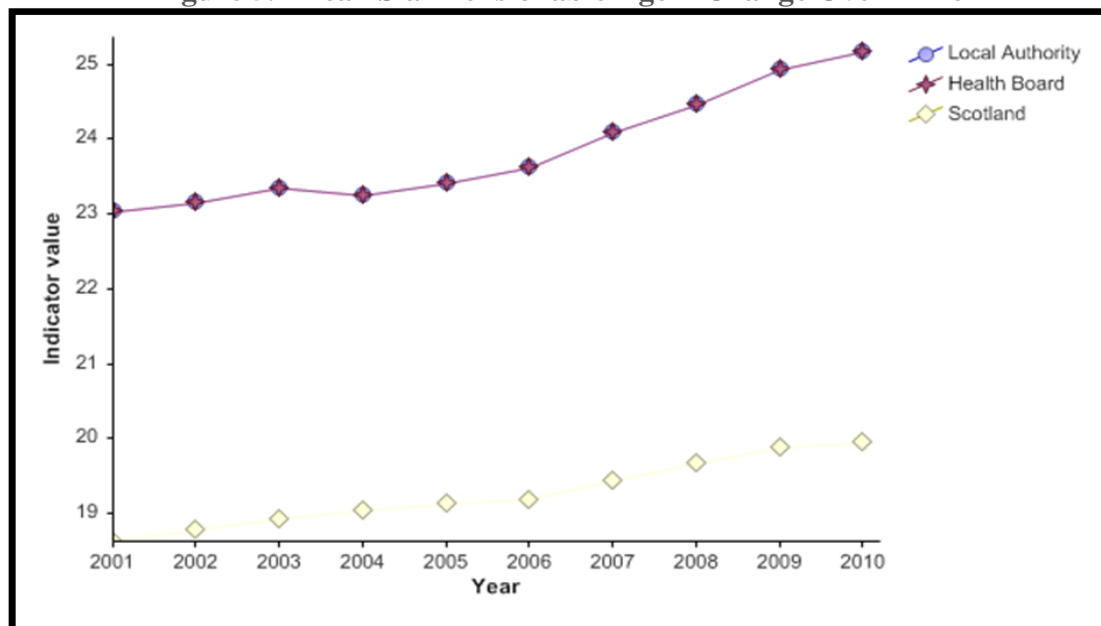
area in the main), Highland (a remote rural area in the main), and Eilean Siar (an archipelago included in the Fragile Areas designation). As illustrated in Figures 4, 5 and 6 each local authority area is marked by a widening gap with Scotland over the

**Figure 4. Highland Pensionable Age - Change Over Time**



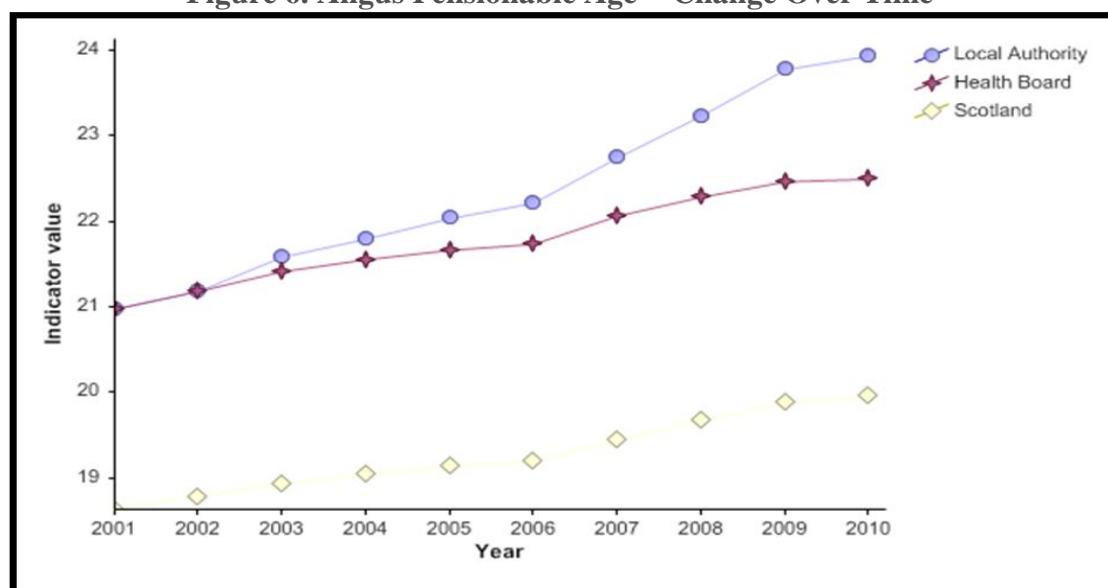
Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.sns.gov.uk/> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

**Figure 5. Eilean Siar Pensionable Age - Change Over Time**



Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.sns.gov.uk/> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

Figure 6. Angus Pensionable Age - Change Over Time



Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.sns.gov.uk/> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

period 2001 –2010.<sup>24</sup> In 2001 the pensionable age population comprised 18.64% of the total population of Scotland, rising to 19.96% in 2010.<sup>25</sup> Over the same period, by comparison, the proportion of the pensionable age population in Angus local authority area increased from 20.98% to 23.94%, in Highland local authority area from 19.59% to 22.35%, and in Eilean Siar from 23.04% to 25.18%. The charts also include a Health Board area trajectory and in this regard it is noteworthy that an urban influence from Dundee (where the pensionable age population remained largely constant at just over 20%) gives Tayside Health Board a flatter profile that is different from Angus. The reverse is evidenced in the case of the Highland Health Board area with its more extensive rural geography *vis a vis* Highland local authority area. These observations also draw attention to the governance context within which matters related to older people are mediated and the next section of this paper deals with that important background.

<sup>24</sup> Data obtained from Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.sns.gov.uk/> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

<sup>25</sup> All people eligible for the state pension. For population estimates up to and including mid-2009, this was males aged 65 and over and females aged 60 and over. For mid 2010 this was males aged 65 and over and females aged approximately 60.15 and over. State pension age for females is scheduled to increase to 65 by November 2018. <http://www.sns.gov.uk/> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

Finally and looking ahead, population projections<sup>26</sup> for Scotland based on 2008 data show that its population is anticipated to increase from 5,168,500 persons in 2008 to 5,544,400 persons in 2033. Within the 14 ‘rural’ local authorities the population is projected to increase by 157,700 persons (10.2%) over that period, while the population of the rest of Scotland is projected to increase by 218,200 persons (6%). The General Register Office for Scotland has reported that pensioners will account for most of this increase in the rural local authority areas, rising from 341,900 persons (22% of their population) in 2008 to 472,800 (28% of their population) in 2033. Quite clearly, aged and ageing rural populations “have implications for local public and private service provision”.<sup>27</sup>

### 3. The governance context

Scottish devolution in 1999 marked a fresh beginning in public policy engagement with citizens, not least around the themes of social exclusion, poverty and inequality. Initially this was driven by ideas around “social justice” that echoed the wider UK interest by New Labour at that time in promoting the values of a fairer society. In 1999 the then First Minister, Donald Dewar MSP, launched *Social Justice...A Scotland where everyone matters* with an expressed vision, targets and milestones constructed around a life cycle action plan for children, young people, families and older people within a communities context.<sup>28</sup> The specific narrative for older people is outlined in Table 4 and inevitably it has contemporary resonance, albeit that the governance instruments and language around incomes, care and health have broadened over the intervening period. Thus in 2008 The Scottish Government, in its document titled *Achieving Our Potential – A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland*, proclaimed that “the time has come for sustained action” and

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<sup>26</sup> Data and commentary is taken from The Scottish Government (2010) *Socio-economic briefing on rural Scotland: demography*. Paper 2. Supporting evidence provided to the Rural Development Council Working Group. General Register Office for Scotland, p.3.

<sup>27</sup> Skerratt, S., C.Hall, C.Lamprinou, D.McCracken, A.Midgley, M.Price, A.Renwick, C.Revoreda, S.Thompson, F.Williams and A.Wreford (2010) *Rural Scotland in Focus 2010*, Edinburgh: Rural Policy Centre, Scottish Agricultural College, p.13.

<sup>28</sup> The Scottish Executive (1999) *Social Justice...a Scotland where everyone matters*. Edinburgh.

**Table 4. Scottish Executive, 1999: Every Older Person Matters**

Our Vision	Long Term Targets	Milestones
<p>A Scotland in which every person beyond working age has a decent quality of life.</p> <p>Too many older people in Scotland experience financial insecurity, isolation and poor access to services. This means that although people can expect to live longer now than in the past, the quality of life for many in retirement is not satisfying or enjoyable. Poor health, poor housing, and a fear of crime can all limit an older person's independence and ability to participate in the life of their communities. We will tackle poverty and injustice for older people in partnership with the UK Government. Actions on incomes and pensions will be underpinned with actions that improve access to better services and improve opportunities for older people to live secure and fulfilling lives, and make sure older people are able to maintain their dignity to provide a better quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure older people are financially secure.</li> <li>• Increase the number of older people who enjoy active, independent and healthy lives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the proportion of older people with low incomes.</li> <li>• Increasing the proportion of working age people contributing to a non-state pension.</li> <li>• Increasing the proportion of older people able to live independently by doubling the proportion of older people receiving respite care at home and increasing home care opportunities.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of older people taking exercise and reducing the rates of mortality from coronary heart disease and the prevalence of respiratory disease.</li> <li>• Reducing the fear of crime among older people.</li> </ul>

Source: The Scottish Executive (1999) *Social Justice...a Scotland where everyone matters*, p.14.

that the Scottish Government working with others across the public, private and third sectors would deliver “greater **Solidarity** for all”.<sup>29</sup> It is noted, for example, that 180,000 pensioners (around 20% of all pensioners in Scotland) were affected by relative poverty in 2006/07,<sup>30</sup> that poverty is most visible in disadvantaged communities in urban Scotland but no less real in rural areas, and that the Government target is to increase the share of income received by the poorest 30% of the population of Scotland by 2017 which includes 370,000 pensioners.<sup>31</sup>

Rural poverty has been identified as a distinct phenomenon, but comment has also been offered that relatively little is known of the true reality of rural poverty and of individuals' and communities' perceptions and experiences of living in poverty in

<sup>29</sup> The Scottish Government (2008) *Achieving our potential: a framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, p.1.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p.5.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, p.6.

rural areas.<sup>32</sup> Subsequent research has, accordingly, sought to partly fill that lacuna of knowledge by focusing on five vulnerable groups across accessible and remote rural areas: single pensioners, single parents, disabled people, people with mental ill health and migrant works. The messages to policy makers highlight, *inter alia*, the need for a “joined-up approach” to poverty, social care, housing, transport and access to new technologies.<sup>33</sup> Policy re-stating, innovation and succession, of course, are vital elements of political renewal and in that vein an older people governance discourse in Scotland can be tracked across the past 13 years under three broad and overlapping headings: performance delivery, rural policy, and older people priorities.

### *Performance delivery*

In terms of state governance, the initial post-devolution focus on social justice, constructed around an advocacy and milestones approach, was replaced in 2004 by a new initiative *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (CtOG) following a Cabinet review of social inclusion policy led by the Minister for Communities.<sup>34</sup> Its three primary aims were to prevent poverty, to provide routes out of poverty and to sustain poverty free lives. This reflected ambition by the newly appointed Scottish Executive to overcome poverty in Scotland following second term elections in 2003. The strategy was designed to operate at three levels: aims (as stated above), objectives and targets. The high level objectives span matters of employability, vulnerable groups, financial exclusion, health and place-based disadvantage which notably converge in the case of rural areas: “to improve access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities – in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their access to opportunity”. There is no specific mention of older people at this level, though the objectives do have relevance for this grouping. Within the category of the follow-on ten targets older people are cited as thresholds related to improvements for under-75 Coronary Heart Disease mortality and cancer mortality by

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<sup>32</sup> McSorley, L. (2008) *Special study on living in poverty in rural areas*. Report to the Scottish Government Rural and Environmental Research and Analysis Directorate. Edinburgh: Scottish Agricultural College.

<sup>33</sup> EKOS Ltd (2009) *The experience of rural poverty in Scotland: qualitative research with organisations working with people experiencing poverty in rural areas*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research.

<sup>34</sup> McKendrick, J.H., S. Sinclair, D.Mason, N.Smith, M.Gillespie, P.Bivand, S. Moley and D. Tyler (2007) *Closing the Opportunity Gap (CTOG) programme: phase 1 evaluation*. Scottish Government Social Research. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

2008. A similar target time horizon, though not quantified, is set out for service delivery improvements in rural areas.

An evaluation of CtOG for the period through to January 2007 indicated that poverty in Scotland was falling, though that trend did predate CtOG and that, in particular, pensioner poverty was reducing. Thus by 2004/05 it is reported that 17% of pensioners in Scotland experienced poverty, almost half the proportion who were in poverty in the mid 1990s.<sup>35</sup> More generally the evaluation recognises varying performance trends against targets, comments on data limitations, and acknowledges the contribution made by CtOG to developing an Executive-wide approach to social inclusion. It also highlights jurisdictional performance constraints on the Scottish Executive not least in regard to benefits and employment policy and concludes by stating that the Scottish Executive's influence is "limited to providing people in Scotland with the health, skills and opportunities to enter and sustain formal work" and that "it is not clear if this will be enough to prevent and significantly reduce poverty in Scotland".<sup>36</sup>

Accordingly, third term elections to the Scottish Parliament in May 2007 evidenced a Scottish National Party minority government attaching significant importance to economic growth and employment as part of a social inclusion agenda, with "work" being emphasised as a way out of poverty.<sup>37</sup> Central to this public policy thrust has been the creation of a *National Performance Framework* whose purpose is "to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth".<sup>38</sup> The purpose is underpinned by five strategic objectives comprising: a wealthier and fairer Scotland; a smarter Scotland; a healthier Scotland; a safer and stronger Scotland; and a greener Scotland. At its core is a new and agreed working relationship with local government based on the introduction of a Single Outcome Agreement for every council that is defined against 15 National Outcomes and 45 National Indicators to track performance. Additional local outcomes and indicators can be devised by each local authority. Single Outcome Agreements set out

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.22.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p.115.

<sup>37</sup> Mooney, G. (2011) Poverty and anti-poverty policy in Scotland: themes and issues, in McKendrick, J.H., G. Mooney, J. Dickie and P.Kelly (eds) *Poverty in Scotland 2011*. London: Child Poverty Action Group, p.8.

<sup>38</sup> The Scottish Government (2007) *Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government*, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13/13092240/concordat> accessed 16 June 2011.

the priority outcomes for a council and its community planning partners and seek to link a local responsiveness to needs priorities with national performance delivery aspirations.

A desk study<sup>39</sup> of the first wave of Single Outcome Agreements signed by all 32 local authorities with the Scottish Government has identified that five National Outcomes and nine National Indicators have relevance to older people. However, in writing this current paper, a review of the 2008 guidance given to local authorities on devising their Single Outcome Agreements would suggest that not fewer than nine National Outcomes and not fewer than 15 National Indicators could also have applicability, albeit within a generic context, to older people.<sup>40</sup> But only two of the 45 indicators refer directly to older people and these relate to acute health care and those with high level care needs.<sup>41</sup> This highlights the issue of subjective judgement, but more profoundly what some interviewees in the current research have identified as the absence of a National Outcome specifically related to older people and which then can drive National Indicators and Targets.

Nonetheless, in cherry-picking from the guidance given on Single Outcome Agreements, Table 5 illustrates the very wide range of policy concerns that interact with older people: access to opportunities to make an economic contribution, learning throughout life, effective services, health and wellbeing, and appropriate living environments. Aspects of that inventory are reviewed in more detail in the penultimate major section of this paper. However, what is noteworthy is that, firstly, this current mode of managing performance delivery is in line with a tendency in Scotland to give more scope to local government;<sup>42</sup> secondly, it identifies the positioning of social inclusion across multiple policy areas; and thirdly, it underscores the significance attached to continued representation, beyond the formal rubric of the National Performance Framework and its preceding measurement codes, of specific rural and older people perspectives lest they be diluted through a combination of deepening local government flexibility and central government mainstreaming.

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<sup>39</sup> Older People and Age Team, Scottish Government (2009) *Single Outcome Agreements*.

<sup>40</sup> Audit Scotland, COSLA, The Scottish Government, Improvement Service and SOLACE (2008) *Single Outcome Agreements: guidance, format and indicators for Scottish local government*.

<sup>41</sup> The National Forum on Ageing Futures Group (2010) *Learning through life: older people – the forgotten generation?* Edinburgh, p.6.

<sup>42</sup> Keating, M., S. Stevenson, P. Cairney and K. Taylor (2004) Does devolution make a difference? Legislative output and policy divergence in Scotland. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol.9, No. 3, p.4.

Indeed, an independent analysis<sup>43</sup> of how devolution has served the interests of older people in Scotland has concluded that there is a need to monitor Single Outcome Agreements' delivery for older people, that there is a question mark about how policies for older people rank alongside competing policy fields, and that there is "a strong case for arguing that policies for older people should have an unambiguous priority towards the top of the Scottish Government's hierarchy of objectives."<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Lord Sutherland in his 2008 review of Free Personal and Nursing Care Policy in Scotland recommended that the Scottish Government should consider including specific reference to older people within its list of National Objectives to which the Government has agreed when next the objectives are reviewed.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 5. National Outcomes and Indicators Relevant to Older People**

<b>National Outcome (No.)</b>	<b>Description</b>
2.	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
3.	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful.
6.	We live longer and healthier lives.
7.	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
9.	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
10.	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
11.	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
12.	We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
15.	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
<b>National Indicator (No.)</b>	<b>Description</b>
2.	Increase the business start-up rate.
10.	Decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty.
13.	Increase the social economy turnover.
15.	Increase the average score of adults on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale by 2011.
17.	Reduce the percentage of the adult population who smoke to 22% by 2010.
18.	Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions by 2011.
19.	Achieve annual milestones for reducing inpatient or day case waiting times culminating in the delivery of an 18 week referral to treatment time from December 2011.
20.	Reduce proportion of people aged 65 and over admitted as emergency inpatients 2 or more times in a single year.

<sup>43</sup> Jeffery, C. (2010) *Older people, public policy and the impact of devolution in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Age Concern

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, p.38.

<sup>45</sup> *All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population – Progress Report to the Scottish Parliament*, 8 December 2008, p.5.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18501/Experience/AOFParliament> accessed 21 June 2011.

21.	Reduce mortality from coronary heart disease among the under 75s in deprived areas.
26.	Increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high levels of care needs who are cared for at home.
28.	Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live.
30.	Reduce numbers of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems.
31.	Increase positive public perception of the general crime rate in local area.
43.	Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered.
44.	Improve the quality of healthcare experience.

Source: Audit Scotland, COSLA, The Scottish Government, Improvement Service and SOLACE (2008) *Single Outcome Agreements: guidance, format and indicators for Scottish local government*, pp.7-9.

### *Rural policy*

The “rural” features prominently in analyses of Scotland’s geography and is far from being perceived as a territorial residual outside the major cities. Any cultural imaginary of there being a “rural remainder” is tempered by the longstanding and high level scrutiny of rural issues extending across land, environmental resources, economies and society. In 2008, for example, the OECD rural policy review of Scotland<sup>46</sup> revealed a high degree of spatial heterogeneity and called for policies tailored to the opportunities and needs of different places. Since devolution there has been a series of national scale statements relating to rural Scotland: *Rural Scotland – A New Approach* in 2000, *Rural Scotland: Taking Stock* in 2003, *Rural Scotland: Better Still, Naturally* in 2007, the *Rural Development Programme for Scotland 2007-2013 – The Strategic Plan*, *Speak Up for Rural Scotland*<sup>47</sup> in 2010, and *Our Rural Future* in 2011. In reading these documents there is a sense that the language and ambition is far reaching; it is also somewhat repetitive as illustrated in Table 6 below in regard to three of the key agenda setting documents. Arguably, what has been happening is the playing out of a process of thinking about rurality<sup>48</sup> and how to portray and respond to a multiplicity of social and economic challenges particular to rural Scotland. It is also a narrative that has paralleled rural policy concerns across

<sup>46</sup> OECD (2008) *OECD Rural Policy Reviews – Scotland, UK: Assessment and Recommendations*. Paris: OECD.

<sup>47</sup> *Speak Up for Rural Scotland* was not strictly a Scottish Government policy document; the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment convened an independent Rural Development Council to advise him on rural policy issues; *Speak Up for Rural Scotland* was its document and which was issued for public consultation in June 2010. The Scottish Government’s response to the Rural Development Council and the consultation findings was published in March 2011 under the title *Our Rural Future*.

<sup>48</sup> Keating, M. and Stevenson, L. (2006) Rural policy in Scotland after devolution, *Regional Studies*, Vol.40, No.3. p.402.

many EU member States and which at an operational level can be denoted by devolved decision-making, a broad partnership approach, citizen participation, attempts to ensure better policy coordination within central government, and flexible support to meet diverse needs and circumstances.<sup>49</sup>

**Table 6. Rural Policy Agenda Setting in Scotland 2000 – 2010**

<i>Rural Scotland – A New Approach (2000)</i>	<i>Rural Scotland: Better Still, Naturally (2007)</i>	<i>Speak Up for Rural Scotland (2010)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting economic development.</li> <li>• Breaking down barriers.</li> <li>• Improving access to services.</li> <li>• Sustaining and making the most of our natural and cultural heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing the rural economy.</li> <li>• Making the most of our heritage.</li> <li>• Delivering better services.</li> <li>• Supporting thriving rural communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural economies.</li> <li>• Multi-purpose land use.</li> <li>• Renewable energy.</li> <li>• Empowered communities.</li> <li>• Sustaining rural communities.</li> <li>• Infrastructure and services.</li> <li>• Working together.</li> </ul>

Notwithstanding the breadth of rural development considerations, there is a critique which argues that the range of interventions, especially within the EU co-funded Scotland Rural Development Programme, are “heavily agricultural in character” and that some of the territorial interventions aimed at the whole rural population are also “partially aimed at farmers”.<sup>50</sup> This is an enduring tension within rural development policy that extends far beyond Scotland and is one which speaks to the out-working of power relationships within complex policy communities at multiple scales. In the context of this paper on older people and social exclusion in rural Scotland, however, the advice of the OECD on stronger local participation and wider stakeholder involvement is pertinent. These are seen as “key factors not only to improve knowledge sharing and the effectiveness of policy, but also as a means to foster social cohesion”.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Bryden, J. (2000) *Is there a ‘new rural policy’?* Paper presented at the International Conference: European Rural Policy at the Crossroads, 29 June – 1 July, The Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research, University of Aberdeen.

<sup>50</sup> OECD (2008) op. cit. p.10.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p.13.

In this vein, research<sup>52</sup> carried out by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and funded by the Carnegie UK Trust is both timely and important in that it reports evidence on the day-to-day issues of importance to people who live and work in Scotland's rural communities. The research themes embrace housing, transport, population change, employment and the rural economy, environment and land management, access to services, volunteering and the voluntary sector, and democracy and local governance. The next section of this paper will reveal some of the data under the selected themes specifically in regard to older people, but what is noteworthy at this juncture is the resonance of that primary research content with the Scottish Government's response in 2011 to the *Speak Up for Rural Scotland Consultation*. (That consultation had been led by the Rural Development Council, an advisory group to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, and was predicated on an analysis of "Step changes for Rural Scotland" and delivery based on "engagement and activity".<sup>53</sup>) A total of 13 priorities are defined by the Scottish Government in its 2011 statement<sup>54</sup> to enhance the current thrust of public policy in rural Scotland:

1. Higher speed broadband for households and businesses with opportunities for wider community access.
2. An improved supply of affordable housing in the places where it is needed, using designs which are appropriate and sustainable.
3. Affordable motor fuel and the effective use of public transport across buses, ferries and trains, with encouragement given to local authorities to enhance demand responsive and community transport schemes.
4. Improving rural healthcare services.
5. Better partnership working to co-ordinate and agree on land use purpose and priorities.
6. Renewable energy developments with shared benefits for communities, commercial developers and land managers.
7. A more effective partnership between communities and Community Planning Partnerships / Local Authorities.

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<sup>52</sup> Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) *Voices from rural Scotland: what really matters to the people who live and work in Scotland's rural communities*. Edinburgh: SCVO.

<sup>53</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Speak Up for Rural Scotland*: Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

<sup>54</sup> The Scottish Government (2011) *Our Rural Future: The Scottish Government's response to the Speak Up for Rural Scotland consultation*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

8. Capacity and skills development for communities with more learning opportunities for local leaders to enable them to organise, motivate and inspire their neighbours.
9. More community control of assets and resources with assistance to community groups to enable them to take on transferred assets from local authorities.
10. Promotion of development trusts and social enterprises.
11. Local business growth.
12. Skills training based on the needs of the local economy.
13. Public procurement opportunities for local businesses.<sup>55</sup>

This is an agenda that speaks very much to social inclusion from an integrationist perspective<sup>56</sup> whereby there is emphasis on raising participation, reducing powerlessness, and deepening social integration in rural communities. Poverty narratives that form a large part of the Scottish policy landscape, and linking with low income and a lack of material resources, are very much in the background. What comes through is a more nuanced expression of contemporary rural policy in Scotland that is designed to stimulate employment, earned income, sense of self-worth and networks of engagement. Older people priorities, as discussed in the following paragraphs, are embedded in that reshaping of governance trajectories.

### *Older people priorities*

There is little doubt that older people priorities have gained profile in Scotland over the past decade. In the first period of devolved government with its emphasis on social justice and measuring performance against milestones, the political message was clearly that the Scottish Executive was making a difference to multiple lives. In its *Indicators of Progress 2003* report attention was drawn, for example, to the fact that the proportion of pensioners in households with incomes below 60% of the median household income (after housing costs) had fallen by almost a third since 1996/97 and that the 2001/02 proportion in Scotland was 20%, compared to 29% in 1996/97.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, it was observed that the proportions of pensioners in low income after

<sup>55</sup> adapted from The Scottish Government (2011) *Our Rural Future: The Scottish Government's response to the Speak Up for Rural Scotland consultation*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

<sup>56</sup> after Shucksmith, M. (2000) *Exclusive countryside? Social inclusion and regeneration in rural areas*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p.12.

<sup>57</sup> Scottish Executive (2003) *Social Justice – a Scotland where everyone matters. Indicators of Progress 2003*. Edinburgh, p.80.

housing costs and before housing costs were similar and that housing costs, therefore, took up a similar proportion of income (perhaps very little) for those on low and high incomes.<sup>58</sup>

These data, however, are not disaggregated by a rural-urban split, and thus the geographical particularities of rural poverty are masked as, for instance, in relation to fuel poor pensioners faced with heating the higher proportion of detached houses that exist in rural areas. Research published by the Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group at that time noted that the “quality of housing in rural Scotland is a concern, especially amongst older people who own their homes, but cannot afford to carry out repairs”.<sup>59</sup> Indeed this Working Group strongly advocated a rural-urban breakdown of all 29 social justice milestones being promoted by the Scottish Executive; it stated “that this is now absolutely essential”.<sup>60</sup> It also called for a commissioned study to examine data and good practice in regard to older people in rural areas, having flagged transport, health and care, housing and income as barriers to inclusion.

What emerged, thereafter, is commonly regarded as a research report of seminal significance that is titled *Scoping Study of Older People in Rural Scotland*.<sup>61</sup> It picks up on these dimensions to rural living by older people, extends its analysis into community life and quality of life, and offers insight into comparative practice. The issues that are raised may, by today’s level of understanding of older people living in rural areas, seem well-trodden territory, but that would be an unfair judgement. What this study successfully highlights is the rich contribution that older people make to rural society in Scotland and, thus, it is less a commentary on problems and more a celebration of endowment and recognition of potential. The contemporary phrase “assets based planning” comes to mind. For those seeking a grounding in the contribution that older people make to rural living, this is unquestionably required reading. Arguably, this report also denotes a significant watershed in national scale public policy inquiry into older people. The research agenda altered, thereafter, to embrace the longer-term consequences of demographic shift and prudent fiscal management for services delivery. Concerns around poverty and social exclusion were certainly not abandoned, but ideas around the need for

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, p.81.

<sup>59</sup> *Poverty and social exclusion in rural Scotland: a report by the Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group*, September 2001, p.25.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*, p.5.

<sup>61</sup> Philip, L., A. Gilbert, N.Mauthner and E. Phimister (2003) *Scoping Study of Older People in Rural Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research.

change, harnessing potential and learning through listening gained considerable traction in taking forward political commitment to older people priorities.

In 2007 The Scottish Executive published *All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population*.<sup>62</sup> This stands as an important signifier of that need for policy engagement with older people in the context of longer life expectancy and substantial increases in the number of people aged 50+ and 75+. Table 7 summarises its guiding vision, strategic outcomes and priority action areas. Critical comment views this document as being notable in a number of ways. Firstly, there is a strong emphasis on the perspective of the individual older person as framed by the concept of active ageing. Secondly, it avoids traditional depictions of older people as passive recipients of services and as problems that need to be addressed. And thirdly, it acknowledges a commitment to collaborative work across the administrative boundaries of the public sector in order to produce an integrated set of policies.<sup>63</sup>

The key proposals for delivery that have emerged out of *All Our Futures* comprise the establishment of the Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice, the setting up of the National Forum on Ageing Futures Group, the mounting of a campaign to combat ageism and to promote more positive images of older people, regular reporting to the Scottish Parliament, and national stakeholder workshop events. All have been implemented<sup>64</sup> and thus some brief descriptive comment on each initiative is warranted.

- The Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice was established in 2007 and it engages with public, private and voluntary sector organisations, families and individuals to gather, share and develop best practice relating to older and younger people working together. The Centre, based in Glasgow, was funded at £200,000 each year for the three years 2008-09 to 2010-11, and at £100,000 in 2011-12.<sup>65</sup> It is part of a wider UK movement linking generations, not least in relation to comparable activities in Wales and England designed to disseminate training resources and experiences.

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<sup>62</sup> Scottish Executive (2007) *All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population*. Edinburgh.

<sup>63</sup> Jeffery, C. (2010) op. cit. p.20.

<sup>64</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government updated 26 May 2011.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, p.2.

**Table 7. The Focus of *All Our Futures***

<b>Vision</b>	
<p>Our future vision for Scotland is of a confident society that values and empowers people of all ages to use their knowledge, talents and skills to make the most of their lives, to help build up the fabric of our society and to contribute to Scotland's future success. We want to ensure that older people are valued, appreciated and – where necessary – supported to live full and fulfilling lives. We want our older people to help build thriving local economies; to contribute to the work of the voluntary sector; and to participate in sport, culture and the arts in every capacity. We want more older people to take on leadership responsibilities in their communities, and to become involved in helping to foster understanding and mutual respect across generations.</p>	
<b>Strategic Outcomes</b>	<b>Priority Action Areas</b>
<p>1. All the years of life are fulfilling and the contribution of older people – irrespective of age, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or religious belief – is valued, appreciated and, where necessary, supported.</p> <p>2. Age is not used to define or make assumptions about the role, value or potential of an individual.</p> <p>3. People enjoy more years of healthy life and are enabled to manage long term health conditions.</p> <p>4. People are enabled to continue to work for as long as they want or need to, in the way that suits them best, supported by flexible approaches to employment and retirement.</p> <p>5. Older people have ready access to information technology and the internet.</p> <p>6. Older people are able to participate in learning activities, both vocational and for personal development.</p> <p>7. Older people are enabled to volunteer for as long as they want, in the way that suits them best, and that contribution is fully recognised.</p> <p>8. Fewer older adults than ever before will live in poverty.</p> <p>9. Vulnerable older people are protected, safe, and are free from fear.</p> <p>10. Older people have access to public services which are people-centred, accessible and joined up; and can access quality services appropriate to their needs, when and where they are required.</p> <p>11. Houses, buildings, communities, transport systems and infrastructure are well designed and accessible, and can be used by older people in safety and with confidence.</p> <p>12. Authoritative, up to date sources of advice and information are accessible to older people, when and where they are required and in a format that is accessible and user-friendly.</p>	<p>1. Removing barriers and improving opportunities for older people.</p> <p>2. Forging better links between the generations.</p> <p>3. Improving and maintaining the health and wellbeing of older people.</p> <p>4. Care, support, safety and protection of older people.</p> <p>5. The right housing, transport and planning infrastructure to progressively meet the needs of all ages.</p> <p>6. The development of lifelong learning opportunities to meet the needs of an ageing population</p>

- The National Forum on Ageing Futures Group is based at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh and its membership includes key organisations with an interest in older people. It perceives itself as an independent ‘think tank’ that is concerned with developing new ideas around active ageing based on dialogue. In particular it is seeking to extend debate and practice beyond the core themes of housing, health, care and transport and in this vein has published three agenda setting papers that push forward positive appreciation of and new opportunities for older people: *Unlocking our Potential: older people – a key to Scotland’s future?* in September 2009, *Learning through Life: older people – the forgotten generation?* in April 2010, and *Scotland’s Skills Challenge: older people – an asset to the workforce?* in October 2010. In March 2011 it turned its attention to Creative Ageing and has embraced the commencement of a three years programme of arts for older people.<sup>66</sup>
- The campaign to promote more positive images of older people and to tackle ageism was branded as *See the person, not the age* and ran over three phases between July 2008 and November 2009. It comprised television, radio and press advertising, billboard publicity and the creation of a website. Project expenditure totalled £1.053 million and impact assessment after each phase indicates that it did create high awareness across Scotland of the issue, and successfully championed the cause for older people. Nonetheless it is conceded that the shifting of attitudes must remain a medium to long term objective.<sup>67</sup>
- In *All Our Futures* the Scottish Executive gave a commitment to make regular reports to Parliament. The first progress report was delivered in December 2008 and lists progress against high level commitments and a further 41 action priority areas.<sup>68</sup> A second report to Parliament is anticipated in autumn 2011.<sup>69</sup>
- The final major initiative that emerged out of *All our Futures* was a series of seven stakeholder events spread over the period November 2008 to June 2009.

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<sup>66</sup> National Forum on Ageing, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18501/Experience/NationalForumonAgeing> accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government updated 26 May 2011, pp.4-5.

<sup>68</sup> *All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population – Progress Report to the Scottish Parliament*, 8 December 2008, Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

<sup>69</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government updated 26 May 2011, p.2.

The workshop themes included sessions on lifelong learning, physical activity, work and volunteering, technology, health and wellbeing, pensions and savings, safety and intergenerational activity. A synthesis report of findings was published in September 2009.<sup>70</sup>

One additional initiative, outwith *All our Futures*, should be mentioned at this juncture comprising the establishment of The Scottish Older People's Assembly which was convened in the Scottish Parliament on 2 October 2009 with facilitation from Age Concern and Help the Aged in Scotland. Some 300 people attended that inaugural event, a report by the Scottish Government to 13 priorities identified by the Assembly was published in April 2010, and a second Scottish Older People's Assembly was held in Glasgow on 10 November 2010<sup>71</sup>. A third Assembly meeting is scheduled to take place in Edinburgh on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011<sup>72</sup>.

The thread that runs through all this recent work is the tremendous vigour attached to learning and doing based on listening. The very diverse dialogues over a relatively short period have assisted in raising the national profile for older people issues, have sought to challenge negative stereotypes and have helped shift the public debate from a needs-based focus towards a more assets based appreciation of opportunity and potential. Accordingly, the positioning of older people in the governance concerns of Scotland is unquestionably in a very different place from what was the situation in 1999. All these considerations find current representation in the emerging *Reshaping Care for Older People* programme in Scotland, arguably "the largest piece of work being undertaken by the Scottish Government that affects older people".<sup>73</sup>

In March 2009 a high level Ministerial group within the Scottish Government agreed to bring forward a strategy for the reshaping of older people care in Scotland having regard to projected demographic change, increasing services requirements and

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<sup>70</sup> *All our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population – Older People Stakeholder Events, 14 November 2008 – 3 June 2009*. Edinburgh, The Scottish Government. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18501/Experience/stakeholdereventsreport> accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government updated 26 May 2011, pp.6-7. See also Scottish Government (2010) *Priorities emerging from the Scottish Older People's Assembly*. Edinburgh.

<sup>72</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government received 2 September 2011.

<sup>73</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government updated 26 May 2011, p.7.

emerging financial constraints. The particular context is also one that was born out of devolution with ‘free’ personal and nursing care guarantee arrangements in Scotland being different from the rest of the United Kingdom. Funding issues have been central to its implementation and there is a misperception that all costs are covered, whereas the reality is that free personal and nursing care is only available for those receiving care in their homes. Nonetheless, the evidence is that this is a popular policy in Scotland and that growth in home care has been significant in responding to older people concerns around continuity of independent living. On the other hand, it has been claimed to be age discriminatory by being restricted to over 65s and operating as a flat rate benefit based on need and not means tested. It also impacts on local authority budgets which may result in claims of insufficient funding to meet demand, or the diverting of funds into other local authority services under the Single Outcome Agreement approach to performance delivery. In short, it is a flagship policy within the compass of older people priorities, but one, it is alleged, that was not well planned at the outset.<sup>74</sup> Faced with all these issues the Scottish Government has had to tread very carefully in building a new consensus around the way forward.

In March 2011 the Scottish Government, COSLA and NHS Scotland jointly published *Reshaping Care for Older People: A Programme for Change 2011-2021*, a document which acknowledges that sense of crisis, which has been shaped through intensive and extensive consultation, and which looks to community based solutions as key to future provision. The main themes to be rolled out include the building of an approach based on co-production principles, enhanced personal healthy ageing settings, improved pathways of care within a system-wide delivery context, workforce development, and the creation of a £70 million Change Fund for 2011-2012 that will be sustained annually out to 2013-14 and which will allow for partnership based planning and delivery of older people’s services. Looking ahead, three workstreams are likely to emerge comprising care settings, care pathways and empowering communities, and further analysis of the funding environment is anticipated for publication in autumn 2011.<sup>75</sup> The concept of co-production<sup>76</sup> and its linkages with

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<sup>74</sup> Jeffery, C. (2010) op.cit. pp.24-28.

<sup>75</sup> Written communication from Older People and Age Team, Equality Unit, Scottish Government updated 26 May 2011, pp.7-8.

<sup>76</sup> “Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.” Cited in

growing a supportive capacity within local communities is, of course, in line with wider trajectories in public policy towards localism, empowerment, participation and collaboration. But there is a danger that this official language could become a rhetorical driver for shifting responsibilities or for ‘doing more with less’ and thus continued scrutiny by CARDI of the Scottish case at multiple scales and across diverse stakeholders would seem worthwhile in order to learn further about the outworking of these new emphases on meeting older people priorities.

#### **4. Thematic perspectives on older people in rural Scotland**

Thus far the discussion in this paper has explained the many dimensions of the complex geographical and governance context which an analysis of older people and social exclusion in rural Scotland must have regard to. The commentary has, in the main, examined key dynamics of change and their spatial representation along with policy responsiveness and innovation, largely at a macro level. In this section of the paper the emphasis is much more on practice activities. The contextual analysis is brief and the opportunity is taken to report the circumstances and opinions of older people using secondary data, along with illustrative initiatives that have a bearing on their rural living. The themes are selective and do overlap in terms of their impact on older people. Five matters that can have significant social exclusion dimensions are addressed: transport, housing, health and social care, support and contact, and participation.

##### *Transport*

For elderly people in rural Scotland, transport is vital in addressing social exclusion. It enables them to get access to important services and activities, for example, prescriptions, shopping, post office, medical services and social opportunities. It is essential in supporting a meaningful lifestyle, helping older people stay active, and maintaining communication with peers and family.<sup>77</sup> Bus services perform an important role for those without access to personal transport and yet the evidence is that accessibility does vary across Scotland. Only 57% of the total remote rural population and 68% of the accessible rural population live within 6 minutes of the

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COSLA, The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland (2011) *Reshaping Care for Older People: A Programme for Change 2011-2021*. Edinburgh, p.19.

<sup>77</sup> Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) *Voices from rural Scotland: what really matters to the people who live and work in Scotland's rural communities*. Edinburgh: SCVO.

nearest bus stop compared with 89% for the rest of Scotland. Additionally 11% of people in remote rural areas and 4% of people in accessible rural areas do not have access to a bus service, compared with no-one in the rest of Scotland.<sup>78</sup>

Against this background there are two transport initiatives that are designed to benefit older people: firstly, the *Concessionary Travel Scheme* for elderly and disabled people which offers free bus travel to those aged 60+ at any time across the whole of Scotland, and secondly, *Demand Responsive Transport* focused on older people who have difficulty in accessing the concessionary scheme, say in remoter rural areas where the availability of bus services is limited, or because of personal immobility. The former is funded by the Scottish Government with payments to bus operators, while the latter is delivered by local authorities with grant funding from the Scottish Government. It is noted that the Concessionary Travel Scheme has a high take-up and generally appears effective, albeit extending a subsidy to those affluent enough to pay for services.<sup>79</sup> However, the concession can only be “of limited use to older people in rural areas with infrequent bus services” and among the older elderly there are personal barriers that may give rise to limited use.<sup>80</sup> Demand Responsive Transport is perceived as providing only a “limited alternative” for the rural elderly and the older elderly with lower incomes as that service is fee-charging.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, during the research interviews concern was expressed that the flexibility attached to performance delivery through Single Outcome Agreements could marginalize local authority commitment to Demand Responsive Transport in the face of budgetary constraints.

For those older people who have personal use of a car, one issue in rural Scotland that has surfaced during the research is the availability of a convenient petrol station. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations has recorded the following opinion in its rural voices research:

But I have to say that none of my parents and parents in law would be able to go by car if there is no fuel in that village. They would not go across the A9 to go and get the fuel. But they will go around their village and put the fuel in their cars. And this is very-very important. There is someone who is 87 and he is still driving. But if he stops

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<sup>78</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, p.20.

<sup>79</sup> Jeffery, C. (2010) op.cit. p.33.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*, p.34.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*, p.34.

driving his will changes completely. And they are old people providing service to other old people.<sup>82</sup>

The issue being raised here is the availability of local petrol filling stations in remote rural Scotland in a situation where the number of sites has been falling across Scotland as a whole. However, unlike urban areas marked by a small number of high volume sites, rural areas such as in the Highlands and Islands are denoted by a large number of small sites with a very low average sales volume and therefore operate at a cost disadvantage. Additional factors including environmental regulations, family succession, ageing infrastructure, consumer behaviour and new market entrants can also influence change and in the Highlands and Islands the network has reduced from 388 petrol filling stations in 1995 to 231 petrol stations by 2008.<sup>83</sup> In order to offset that decline, a *Rural Petrol Station Grant Scheme* has been supported by the Scottish Government, with funding up to 50% of project value, and between 1999 and 2008 total expenditure has amounted to almost £3.5 million.<sup>84</sup> Community enterprise performs a significant role in that regard as illustrated by the launch in July 2010 of a newly refurbished filling station at Applecross in Wester Ross in the Highlands with funding support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise.<sup>85</sup> The filling station is community owned and managed, and is underpinned by a locally raised fuel fund of £20,000 to ensure continuity of supply. The presence of that facility certainly supports independent mobility by older people.

Island living poses its own particular challenges in regard to accessibility to services and thus ferry provision is vital. Public funding is required to maintain this transport mode and its future is linked to the forthcoming findings of the Scottish Ferries Review that is due to publish a *Draft Ferries Plan* in 2011.<sup>86</sup> Research informing that review includes a household survey involving just over 4,500 respondents of which notably 59% were in the age bands 55+. The data are not cross-tabulated by age, but interestingly the overall reasons, classified by islands, for

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<sup>82</sup> Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) op cit.

<sup>83</sup> Experian (2009) *Working Paper 1: Rate of closure – Road fuel supply in the Highlands and Islands*. Inverness: The Highland Council, p.4.

<sup>84</sup> Experian (2008) *Future of rural road fuel supply in the Highlands and Islands – scoping paper*. Inverness: Highland and Islands Enterprise, p.10.

<sup>85</sup> *Remote community provides key service for the future*. <http://www.hie.co.uk/about-hie/news-and-media/archive/remote-community-provides-key-service-for-future.html> accessed 28 June 2011.

<sup>86</sup> The Scottish Government (2011) Scottish Ferries Review. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Transport/ferries-ports-canals/14342/Review> accessed 28 June 2011.

travelling on a ferry are heavily weighted to visiting friends/relatives/other leisure (in the range 53%-84%), health related (in the range 11% to 54%) and shopping (29% to 87%) on the basis of multiple responses.<sup>87</sup> Again during the interview stage in this research paper attention was drawn to the importance of community ferries that allow older people to connect more easily with mainland healthcare services than would be the case using alternative commercial provision. One such project is the Jura passenger ferry operated by Jura Development Trust. It runs from Craighouse to Tayvallich on the mainland following its introduction on a pilot basis in 2008 and has seating for 12 passengers. The important point here, with a bearing on older people, is that the ferry schedule is coordinated with the local bus services on to Oban and Glasgow and timings allow for same day return trips. It also operates an emergency response service.

### *Housing*

Facilitating housing choices for older people across rural Scotland is not just about increasing the availability of a greater diversity of dwellings (such as bungalows) or offering specialist provision (such as sheltered housing or very sheltered housing), but making sure that older people's existing accommodation arrangements can be sustained as far as is practicable.<sup>88</sup> This may involve house adaptation and extending the availability of telecare services for older people.<sup>89</sup> However, within rural Scotland the nature of the housing stock poses particular challenges that require policy intervention. Over 90% of properties in rural areas are houses or bungalows, unlike the rest of Scotland where the corresponding figure is 61%. Additionally, more people in rural Scotland own their own homes and the housing stock in rural Scotland is generally much less energy efficient than the stock in the rest of Scotland. Within remote rural areas, in particular, houses are slightly more likely to have some level of disrepair, damp or condensation and are more likely to be deficient in loft insulation.<sup>90</sup> It has been reported that for single pensioners on a low income, costly upkeep and repair present a major difficulty and that the colder climate and greater exposure in

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<sup>87</sup> Wilson, M. and D. Notman (2010) *Analysis of the Scottish Ferries Review Household Survey*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research.

<sup>88</sup> The Scottish Government (2008) *Housing issues for older people in rural areas*. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/17120038/1> accessed 23 May 2011.

<sup>89</sup> See Age Concern Scotland and Help the Aged (2010) *Talking policy – telecare in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Age Scotland. In Spring 2010 both organisations became Age Scotland

<sup>90</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, pp.30-36.

some rural areas, particularly in the Highlands and Islands, increase the need for houses to be wind and watertight.<sup>91</sup> Heating issues linked to housing quality deficiencies are compounded in rural Scotland by remoteness in many cases from the gas grid and reliance on more expensive heating fuels.<sup>92</sup>

A significant dimension of social exclusion in this sphere comprises fuel poverty defined where a household must pay more than 10% of its disposable income to heat their home to an adequate level. Extreme fuel poverty is defined as a household having to spend more than 20% of its income on fuel.<sup>93</sup> More households in rural areas are classed as being fuel poor or extreme fuel poor. Only 50% of households in remote rural Scotland are identified as not fuel poor, compared with 69% in accessible rural areas and 76% in the rest of Scotland.<sup>94</sup> Across Scotland data show that 58% of single pensioner households (217,000) and 34% of older smaller households (127,000) were fuel poor making them more likely to experience fuel poverty.<sup>95</sup> Evidence presented in 2008 to the Fuel Poverty Forum, for example, by the West of Scotland Senior's Forum revealed that not only are fuel prices a concern among Scottish pensioners, but that fuel payments account for a very large proportion of yearly income; over 90% of respondents to a questionnaire survey (n=270) indicated that they spent at least 10% of their yearly incomes on fuel, with 45% claiming that that were paying 20% or more of their income.<sup>96</sup> The following comment in the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations rural voices report is illustrative of these strains on the ageing population:

I went on protected price. I come off that next year in April. I've done the calculations, and up to this September not including the price, gas has increased by 37%, it wouldn't be on my bill, because I am obviously protected but I've got to pay some. But next year I could be facing something like 50% increase in fuel costs, which is...the income doesn't increase like that or my pension!<sup>97</sup>

<sup>91</sup> EKOS Ltd (2009) op cit. pp.33-34.

<sup>92</sup> Jeffery, C. (2010) op. cit. p.31.

<sup>93</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) *Rural Scotland Key Facts 2010*, p.35.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*, p.35.

<sup>95</sup> Age Concern Scotland and Help the Aged (2010) *Talking policy: Fuel poverty and older people policy briefing*, p.1. Edinburgh: Age Scotland.

<sup>96</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *Fuel Poverty Forum – Evidence presented to the Forum*, p.59 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/FP/FPFORUM> accessed 28 June 2011.

<sup>97</sup> Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) op cit.

Age Scotland acknowledges that the Winter Fuel Payment and the Cold Weather payment do help older people, but have suggested that later payment would coincide with the arrival of winter fuel bills and that an additional payment should be made to people living in colder climates along Scotland's coastal fringe and islands.<sup>98</sup> Up until April 2009 the chief way in which fuel poverty among low income households was addressed was through improving the energy efficiency of housing through the provision of central heating and insulation. The central heating investment was branded as a key fuel poverty intervention, but there is recognition that this was a blunt instrument and in effect provided free central heating to older people of pension age regardless of their fuel poverty status.<sup>99</sup> The key initiative currently is the *Energy Assistance Package*. It is a universal scheme that runs through different levels of free advice and targeted support: a free home energy check, a benefit and tax credit check, and home insulation and central heating measures. Consumer Focus Scotland has been a champion of support in this arena and has actively promoted the idea of shopping around on energy prices and reducing energy bills by changing supplier or tariff through its *Energy Best Deal Scotland* campaign, launched in November 2010. Not only is this providing information to the public but it also offers training and resources to organisations, such as Citizens Advice Bureau, that seek to support customers, especially those living on low incomes. Thus far, training sessions for advisers in rural Scotland have included venues in Stornoway, Inverness and Dumfries. Looking ahead, the Scottish government has a commitment to end fuel poverty by 2016. But with ever-increasing fuel prices that goal looks overly optimistic and there is a view that fuel poverty in Scotland is likely to rise further in future years.<sup>100</sup>

### *Health and social care*

Research on health inequalities in urban and rural Scotland has pointed to an increase in inequalities between 1981 and 2001, which was greatest in remote rural Scotland for both males and females. In particular, health inequalities amongst the elderly (age 65+) in 2001 were greater in remote rural Scotland than urban areas for both males

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<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, p.4.

<sup>99</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *Review of fuel poverty in Scotland*, p.6.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, p.6.

and females.<sup>101</sup> It is suggested that this may be due to the socio-economic difference between local elderly and the non-local middle class in-migrants in rural areas with each group having different needs in terms of health service provision. Health, wellbeing and confidence formed one strand of the Stakeholder Events rolled out under *All our Futures* and in the report of that dialogue recurring concerns were noted as the cost, waiting times and availability of services, the need for more focus on leisure activities that are older person friendly, flexibility around personalised care options, and more attention being given to mental health (especially depression), alcohol consumption and malnutrition.<sup>102</sup> The interaction of these concerns with the in-migration of older retirees has been identified by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations in primary research conversations with rural people. It is noted that, while newcomers can increase the uptake for local statutory services, making them more viable, they can also raise the demand for services, thus putting local people in a worse-off position. As an illustration, one rural voice from Perthshire commented:

You can't get on the list. We had to go private. I live right next door to doctor's surgery...and you can't get an appointment...because the population is growing all the time. It's all the people from down South who are taking early retirement, who are 50-55 years old. And they are coming up here because it's a lovely place to live and has a lot to offer.<sup>103</sup>

An alternative perspective on services supply was offered by another voice from Stornoway:

The other thing that was reported in the last year or so was some GPs practices in the Western Isles were finding it hard to recruit doctors from the mainland, they actually couldn't set up a practice here.

In both instances the issue at stake is access to a key health related service and, even when facilities are available, accessing them in terms of travelling time and cost can be significant for older people.<sup>104</sup> Essentially the same conclusion was drawn in a

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<sup>101</sup> Levin, K.A. and A.H. Leyland (2006) A comparison of health inequalities in urban and rural Scotland, *Social Science and Medicine*, 62, pp.1457-1466.

<sup>102</sup> *All our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population – Older People Stakeholder Events, 14 November 2008 – 3 June 2009*. Edinburgh, The Scottish Government, pp.6-7.  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18501/Experience/stakeholdereventsreport>  
accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>103</sup> Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) op cit.

<sup>104</sup> *Poverty and social exclusion in rural Scotland: a report by the Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group*, September 2001, p.42.

more recent review of healthcare delivery which demonstrated that rural patients' experiences differ from those of urban patients in that they often have to travel large distances.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, key differences between rural and urban areas include in the former: higher suicide rates, higher incidence of alcohol related disease, higher accidents on roads or through farming and fishing, higher palliative care workloads as patients from remote areas often prefer to or are enabled to die at home, and seasonal fluctuations in population.<sup>106</sup> Community care is centre stage in the Scottish health debate and, in extending that model, a number of building blocks have been identified: community resilience that encourages self care and the use of volunteers and informal carers, anticipatory care through practitioner intervention and including increased use of e-health solutions, long term condition management especially for older people so as to reduce hospital admissions, more effective planned and emergency care, and a more team based approach to out-of-hours cover.<sup>107</sup>

Thus with reshaping care for older people a current priority for the Scottish Government, it is worth noting some of the comments received at two of the consultation workshops on that matter.<sup>108</sup> In the Highland area it was suggested, for example, that:

Carers, especially with responsibility for someone with dementia are often very stressed and need short breaks from their caring responsibilities. In many communities this type of short respite service is not available.

Care at home, weekend and holiday cover, is a problem for many trying to cope in their own homes.

There is an urgent need to integrate health and social care and to co-locate them under one roof, with one budget.

Additionally, the particular care system challenges for island communities have been recorded in the following terms:

With families moving away not everyone has someone to look after them and there is sometimes a 'missing link' when there is no family

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<sup>105</sup> The Scottish Government (2008) *Delivering for remote and rural healthcare: the final report of the remote and rural workstream – improving the patient experience of remote primary care*, p.2. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/06084423/4> accessed 28 June 2011.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*, p.2

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*, pp.3-4.

<sup>108</sup> The Scottish Government (2011) *Event reports and engagement outcomes*, Highland –17 May 2010, Orkney – 26 August 2010. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/care/reshaping/eventreports> accessed 21 June 2011.

member to help arrange services. People in these circumstances need to be aware of what is available locally.

Need to be aware that if you keep people at home in communities such as Orkney, you also need to address issues such as isolation. Older people can often be left for long periods of time without having any visitors or seeing anyone and can be very lonely.

In drawing together these varied lines of enquiry, attention was drawn during the interviews associated with the preparation of this paper to the completion of the *Highland Joint Community Care Plan 2010 / 13* as an illustration of emergent practice concerned with doing things differently and better in that aspect of provision.<sup>109</sup> This Plan brings together NHS Highland and The Highland Council within the rubric of the Highland Community Care Partnership and is significant for the following reasons:

1. it is based on intensive consultation commencing in the summer of 2009 involving conversations with nearly 400 community care users and their carers. The information gathered was used to inform a second consultation between April and June 2010 linked to the dissemination of background documents on the outcomes being sought, the challenges being faced, what people had said thus far and areas for change and improvement. Interviews were conducted at that stage with over 600 people including members of 'harder to reach' groups. Additionally, over 300 consultation questionnaires were received. Feedback on the consultation process is contained in the Plan and key areas are listed as helping to quickly restore people's skills and confidence; housing and support solutions; improved joint working between key agencies; helping people and communities to better help themselves; better information and communication; carers as partners, young carers; using new assistive technologies, personalised and self directed support; creating local, specialised services; making clearer links between needs and resources; and using clear targets to measure performance;
2. Community Care Services are then conceptualised in a three tiered delivery model that maps activities and sectoral stakeholders. Thus

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<sup>109</sup> NHS Highland and The Highland Council (2011) *Highland Joint Community Care Plan 2010/13*. Highland Community Care Partnership. <http://www.fhcommunities.org/consultation.asp> accessed 27 June 2011.

Tier 3 identifies targeted services for adults in need and links with hospital based care and rehabilitation. Tier 2 deals with community based supports, focuses on preventative activity and introduces community and voluntary sector participation. Tier 1 concentrates on information giving and signposts the role of informal social infrastructure and statutory partners in raising awareness;

3. The final element of the Plan relates to implementation and under that heading High Level Outcomes for Community Care and Delivery Outcomes are embedded beneath Single Outcome Agreement outcomes. But what is especially noteworthy is the transparent refining of consultation data into eight thematic outcomes that people seek and the subsequent identification of Delivery Outcomes for the components of each thematic outcome. A total of 11 Strategic Planning Groups are proposed to take charge of delivery, one of which relates specifically to older people.

In short, the *Highland Joint Community Care Plan* fits well with the thrust of Scottish Government thinking around the way ahead. It places older people within a model of care that is inclusive of multiple demands and opportunities for community support. But importantly it is constructed on an evidence base derived from in-depth consultation and thus endeavours to bridge top-down and bottom-up development perspectives on a key attribute of social inclusion.

### *Support and contact*

The wellbeing of older people is inextricably linked to lifestyles that engage with family and friends, that are based on positive attitudes and keeping as active as possible, and that maintain capability and independence.<sup>110</sup> Transnational research carried out within the EU co-funded *Our Life as Elderly* project included rural Scotland and has concluded that despite demographic changes in family life, family and kinship networks still remain important sources of emotional, practical and financial support for Scottish older people. In the Highland region case study, for example, rural families described relationships based on reciprocity whereby many older people provided childcare and emotional support, and the younger people

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<sup>110</sup> Scottish Executive (2007) *All our Futures: planning for a Scotland with an ageing population – the evidence base*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive, p.86.

provided practical help with house and transport. Those people who did not have any family living nearby talked about their friends being like family. However, it is interesting that while older people wished to continue to live independently for as long as possible, they did not want their family or friends to provide nursing care for them and looked to health professionals to provide any personal and nursing care that might be needed in the future. Indeed health professionals in this research expressed their agreement that such tasks are too intimate and that families are best at helping with shopping, cooking and taking older people to appointments and simply 'being there'. In short, the social capital of informal care is a profoundly important aspect of living in rural Scotland.<sup>111</sup>

A key aspect of support and contact that is valued by older people across Scotland relates to the provision of food services comprising the delivery of hot and frozen meals, grocery shopping, assistance with meal preparation, and lunch clubs. It is only recently that baseline data about these services have become available including feedback from older people users.<sup>112</sup> As noted above there is a convergence of public policy and older people preference regarding care at home and in this vein there is a corresponding requirement that older people have access to affordable and nutritious food. Local authorities in Scotland have a lead role in provision, either directly or by commissioning an external organisation to take charge of delivery. So, for example, in rural Scotland, Shetland Council produces its own meals and uses a contractor to deliver them. However, the picture across Scotland is far from uniform with local authorities offering different configurations of services, while the level of provision can also vary geographically within a local authority area. It is estimated that across Scotland in March 2010 (for returns available) some 6,066 clients were receiving a hot meal service by a local authority and 4,380 clients were in receipt of a frozen meals service. For the 14 rural local authorities under the 'Randall' classification, the corresponding figures were 2,379 (hot) and 1,765 (frozen) and, where one type of meal was provided, the other was not provided.<sup>113</sup> The important

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<sup>111</sup> *Our Life as Elderly* (2006) Final Report – Subproject 4: Relatives and Kinship. Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery Programme.

<sup>112</sup> ODS Consulting (2011) *Food services for older people in the community*. Glasgow: Consumer Focus Scotland. Community Food and Health (Scotland) and Consumer Focus Scotland (2011) *Meals and messages: a focus on food services for older people living in the community in Scotland*. Glasgow: Consumer Focus Scotland.

<sup>113</sup> ODS Consulting (2011) *Food services for older people in the community*. Glasgow: Consumer Focus Scotland. Community Food and Health (Scotland), p.12.

point here in terms of the theme being examined is that the delivery of hot and frozen meals is an important source of social contact and reassurance for many older people; one survey respondent commented:

I know that if anything happens to me, if meals on wheels can't get an answer at the door, then there will be someone checking on me.<sup>114</sup>

Much the same in terms of social benefit comes through in relation to the role played by lunch clubs which not only offer perceived good value for money, but also companionship. In a case study of the Western Isles, included as a part of the research project<sup>115</sup>, the following comments were offered by interviewees:

This is the first time I have sat at a table in a restaurant with other people in 20 years. It is so nice, thank you. (Over 50s Men's Health Lunch Club, Stornoway)

The quality of this service at all levels is excellent value for money, food is freshly prepared and very palatable. My mother is a regular attendee and really enjoys the social aspect and for me it offers a few hours of respite and peace of mind that she is being cared for. (Isle of Uist lunch club)

It is a lifeline, I live on my own and if I didn't go to the lunch club, I would not be meeting up with people all week. Just to simply sit and have lunch with someone else is great, much better than being on my own. (Afternoon Lunch Club, South Lochs)

Again with budgetary pressures looming large, there is deep concern that services such as these, which are valued for the combination of food made available and the opportunities for social interaction, may be discontinued. Consumer Focus Scotland is pressing the Scottish Government to facilitate the raising of capacity through the involvement of social enterprises, to develop a benchmark for food services for older people living at home across all local authorities, and to promote up-to-date information on the availability of and entitlement to food services for older people<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> Community Food and Health (Scotland) and Consumer Focus Scotland (2011) *Meals and messages: a focus on food services for older people living in the community in Scotland*. Glasgow: Consumer Focus Scotland, p.11.

<sup>115</sup> ODS Consulting (2011) op. cit. pp.71-77.

<sup>116</sup> Community Food and Health (Scotland) and Consumer Focus Scotland (2011) *Meals and messages: a focus on food services for older people living in the community in Scotland*. Glasgow: Consumer Focus Scotland, pp.3-4.

*Participation.*

Across Scotland older people make a significant contribution in the workplace, at home and in the community. Much of this participation in terms of its social and economic benefits is generally not measured and goes unacknowledged. And yet the roles of older people as carers, as volunteers, as workers and as learners is valuable to society. *All our Futures* notes, for example, that 48% of all volunteering in Scotland is undertaken by those in the 50 and over age group, with the most common forms of activity being fund raising, committee work and helping to organise events. Interestingly the proportion of volunteering for all age groups increases with rurality, with 35% of older people in the age group 60-64 volunteering in remote rural areas compared to less than 20% in large urban areas. For the age group 65-69, the corresponding participation rates are around 37% and 21%. It is noted that for some, volunteering supports the transition process from paid employment to retirement, allows older people to ‘give something back’ and feel useful and valued, and puts structure to free time by exploring new opportunities of engagement.<sup>117</sup> Research by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations is in line with that analysis and its rural voices are illustrative of what is happening to combat disadvantage:

Communities depend on volunteers in all aspects – it’s almost always volunteers who get involved in it.

How important is it (community volunteering) for the life of the community? – It almost depends on it!<sup>118</sup>

Participation, therefore, is central to community resilience and is a key driver within the current joint initiative by the Scottish Government and local authorities in the form of the *Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan* launched in 2009. Community empowerment is defined as “a process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them”.<sup>119</sup> Emphasis is placed on everyone in a community having the opportunity to get involved and accepts that too many people can be excluded from

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<sup>117</sup> Scottish Executive (2007) *All our Futures: planning for a Scotland with an ageing population – the evidence base*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive, pp.39-40.

<sup>118</sup> Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) op cit.

<sup>119</sup> The Scottish Government and COSLA (2009) *Community – Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan: celebrating success, inspiring change*. Edinburgh, The Scottish Government, p.8.

fulfilling their potential in this sphere because of race or ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender or age. Empowerment actions are firmly linked, therefore, to matters of diversity and equality.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand there is a view that non-participation is normal and that disinclination to participate often means that community initiatives empower only a small group of people, for example, retired professionals. It is acknowledged that this can be effective, but advice is given that a balance needs to be struck between the depth and breadth of participation.<sup>121</sup> This is not to undervalue the contribution made by older people, but more to point the way towards an engagement that promotes wider inclusion.

The capability of older people in bringing forward and delivering on ideas to improve their communities is well demonstrated by participants in the National Endowment for Science and Technology (NESTA) *Age Unlimited Scotland* initiative. This offers training, mentoring and small grants to tackle the issue of social isolation in people in their later years and is targeted at those in their 50s and 60s. Rural communities have benefited from this investment of older people expertise as stories associated with the project reveal:

- A seated exercise project in rural Angus delivered either on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting in a care home or sheltered housing -

As an older-younger person, I was intrigued by the Age Unlimited Scotland programme, and the idea of training older people to deliver social ventures. We had the germ of an idea, and were encouraged through the workshops and training to develop this into a business plan – the more involved we’ve become, the more exciting it has got. Although not naturally confident, we’ve really developed our own confidence and it’s helped us as much as the older folk we’re wanting to help.

The whole point for me was to change something in our local community before I got older; I don’t want to be old and have what’s around us now – I want to be old and have a project like ours in place so I can still be active and have fun.

- A project to enable older people to become more involved in improving the environment of a village in Aberdeenshire that draws on interaction between the generations -

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid*, p.9.

<sup>121</sup> Wood, M. (2010) Rethinking rural communities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century empowerment, in *ESRC / The Scottish Government Seminar Series: Mapping the public policy landscape – Rural community empowerment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: building a ‘can do’ culture*, p.17.

The NESTA funding has already allowed us to buy essential equipment and to work with Elgie House to provide raised flower planters and a bench en-route to the co-op when they get ‘out of puff’ and in the future will take people from the isolation of their own homes to the community polytunnel we plan to buy.

It’s not about doing things for older people, always very much together with them, utilising community goodwill, neighbourliness and self help.<sup>122</sup>

Finally, during the background research connected to the preparation of this paper, attention was drawn to one initiative that is deemed especially emblematic of older people participation in rural Scotland. This is titled O4O (*Older People for Older People*) and is about enabling older people to help each other, thereby improving social inclusion and promoting health and wellbeing. This action-oriented project was co-funded under the EU Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013 and in some regions O4O worked with communities to set up social enterprises run by older people to provide basic services for other older people. Outputs include a detailed toolkit related to the development of social enterprise and service delivery in remote and rural areas that contains operational guidance and illustrative case studies. Within Scotland O4O supported the development of a community car scheme (in Tongue, Melness and Skerry), a community care hub (in Assynt), community services to support older people in their own homes (in South West Ross), and an oral history project (in Ardersier). In drawing this work together across all partner territories, O4O has identified principal elements of the future agenda for older people’s services: firstly, communities should be involved in the delivery of some supporting services for older people by drawing on the contribution of volunteers; secondly, there should be a long-term policy commitment to service co-production with communities; thirdly, communities will need a variety of supports to engage in service delivery through social enterprise, including funding for community enablers; and fourthly, older people’s needs must be fully integrated into policy making and

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<sup>122</sup> NESTA (2011) *Age Unlimited Scotland – It’s Your Time to Shine*  
[http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas\\_of\\_work/public\\_services\\_lab/ageing/age\\_unlimited\\_scotland](http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/public_services_lab/ageing/age_unlimited_scotland) accessed 30 June 2011.

public sector decision-making through the active involvement of older people in these arenas.<sup>123</sup>

## **5. Insights for policy and practice in Ireland and Northern Ireland**

This paper has, of necessity, ranged widely across the evolving governance landscape of Scotland in order to help contextualise the complexity and multi-dimensionality of policy and practice linkages that have a bearing on older people and social exclusion in its rural areas. The paper identifies continuity and change in the way that older people are represented in geographies of inclusion and points to a deepening discourse of appreciation that older people matters are important for Scottish society. The politics of devolution is a significant element of that progression and it is driving forward new trajectories of analysis, prioritisation and intervention. In short, there is a vibrant dialogue across multiple stakeholders on the very many issues that pertain to older people in rural Scotland. Six key insights for policy and practice in Ireland and Northern Ireland can be summarised as follows:

- The classifications of differentiated rural geographies within government and which in turn provide for the preparation and presentation of longitudinal spatial data sets to assist with the analysis of demographic change and social exclusion;
- The very considerable body of research on older people, rurality and social exclusion that has been commissioned by the Scottish Government and other organisations over time and which is publicly available for secondary analysis;
- The publication by the Scottish Government of a landmark strategy for older people in 2007 and calls being made for a new National Outcome related specifically to older people in order to better assess delivery performance;
- The emphasis placed on deep consultation with older people in policy formulation and evidence of transparency in how that information is used to shape policy and practice;

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<sup>123</sup> O4O: Older People for Older People (2010) *Final report*, Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013. O4O: Older People for Older People (2010) *A future agenda for older people's services*, O4O Policy Retreat Briefing No 1, Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013. O4O: Older People for Older People (2010) *O4O Toolkit: Older people for older people: delivering social enterprise and service delivery in remote and rural areas*, Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013.

- An appreciation that older people are assets to rural society in Scotland, rather than sole deployment of a conventional needs and challenges based analysis;
- The complexity of the older people lived world where, for example, housing, transport, health and social care, support and contact, and participation are inextricably linked, where there are varying rural dimensions to these themes, and with this complexity being worked-through along multiple lines of vertical and horizontal governance.

Finally, this paper is very much fixed in a moment of time, albeit that it looks back and does look forward. It would seem appropriate, therefore that CARDI should continue to support research that examines the experience of Scotland in regard to continuing developments in policy and practice with a bearing on older people in rural areas. Moreover, there is merit in extending that coverage to Wales and England in order to bring together a wider set of comparative experiences that can be set against our understanding of rurality, social exclusion and older people in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

**HARC Network, October 2011**