



RURAL DEPRIVATION IN CORNWALL

Setting the scene

Cornwall (Fig. 1) is the lowest wage-earning county in England and Wales, which has led to high levels of deprivation. The 2001 Earnings Survey indicated that Cornwall's average weekly earnings were 25.1% below the Great Britain average. The gap between these had increased from 22.1% in 1998. The low wage economy is partially a result of its geographical remoteness. See Figs 1 and 2. Cornwall can be regarded as a **peripheral** region.

Cornwall's deprivation can be traced back to the decline of traditional employment such as china clay, farming, fishing and tin mining reflecting a marked decline in primary employment. Its considerable economic change in recent years is evidenced by the fact that in 1997 79.5% of Cornwall's employment was in the tertiary sector, with tourism currently the fastest growing industry in the county accounting for over 30,000 jobs. Although tourism has replaced many jobs lost from the collapse of employment in the primary sector, many such jobs are part-time, seasonal, low-wage, and semi- or un-skilled such as cleaning.

Within the 10% most deprived areas nationally, a quarter of these are in the South West Region and of these 42 out of 159 are in Cornwall (Source: Government office for the South West – Index of Multiple Deprivation). The reality of Cornwall's position as one of the most deprived areas in Britain has been acknowledged by the EU, who in 1999 awarded it Objective One status, making it one of only four areas in the UK to receive this level of funding, aimed at increasing economic development. Objective One areas are those where average incomes are 75% or less of those across the EU. This puts Cornwall in the same league as the South Wales mining valleys and the South Yorkshire coalfield, both areas of considerable dereliction and deindustrialisation.

Fig. 2 Cornwall's lack of accessibility.

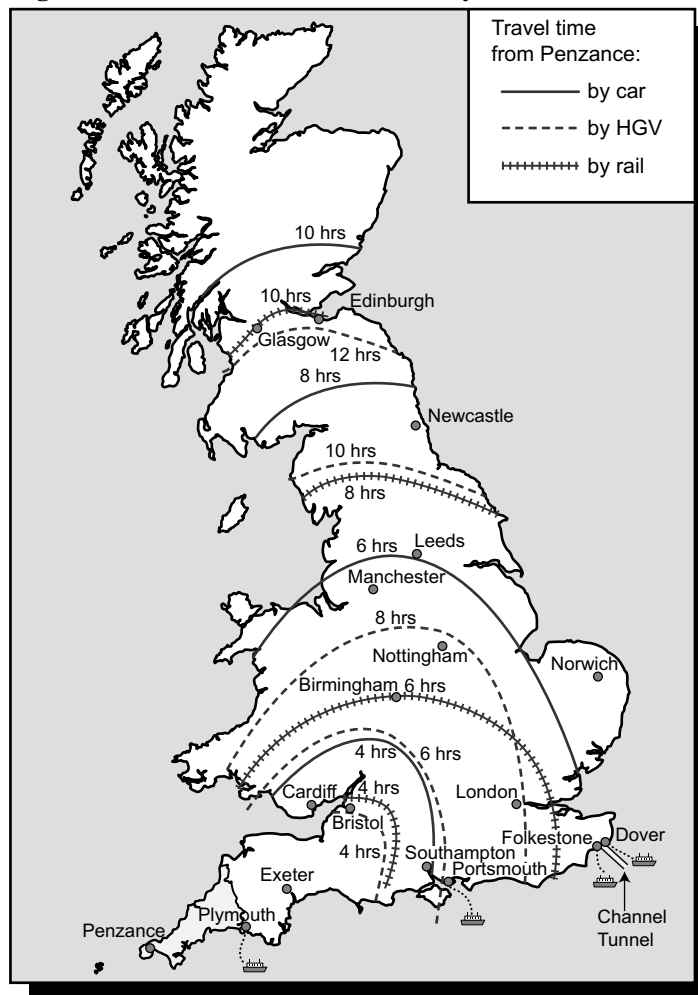
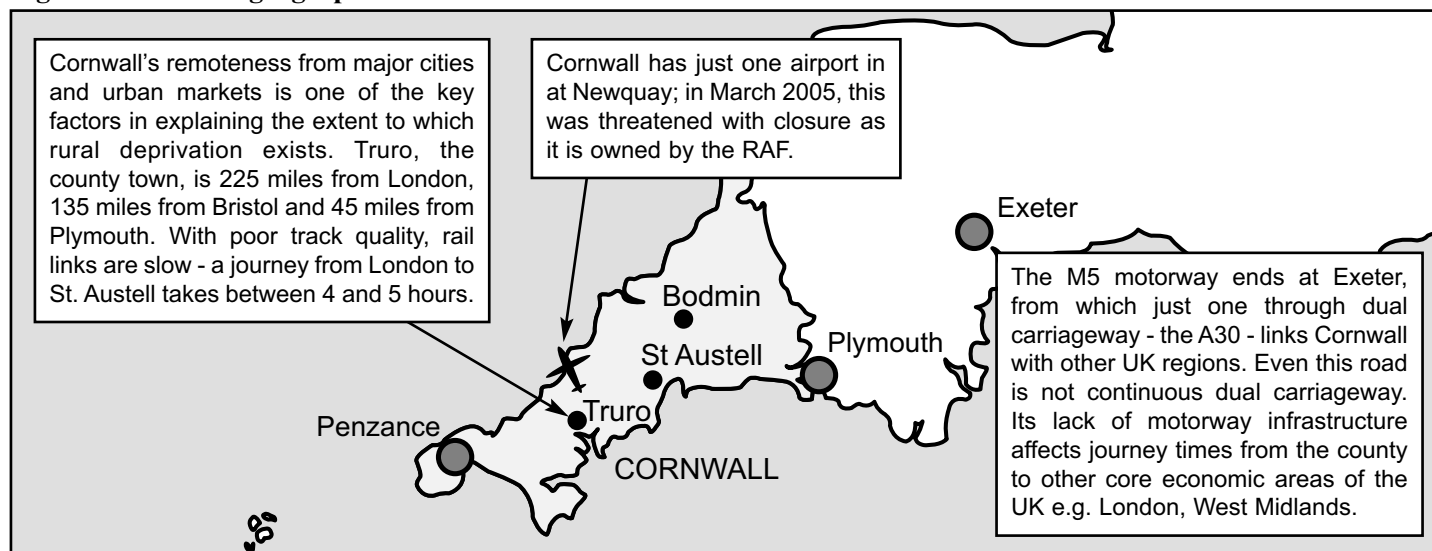


Fig.1 – Cornwall's geographical location.



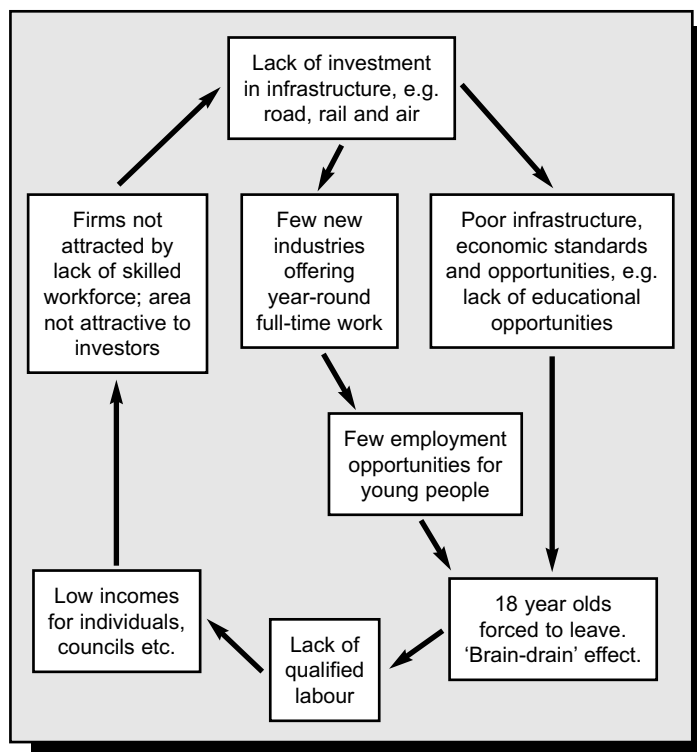
Defining rural deprivation

How far does Cornwall fit the concept of ‘deprivation’? It is useful to establish a precise definition of rural deprivation, to distinguish it from urban deprivation, and to investigate its root causes. Fig. 3 shows a vicious cycle of deprivation, suggesting three main contributory factors potentially leading to what Shaw (1979) called a ‘self-sustaining spiral of rural disadvantage’. These involve:

- **resource deprivation** as embodied in problems of low income and poor quality housing;
- **opportunity deprivation** which relates to availability of services (for example, health and recreation);
- **mobility deprivation** which concerns transport costs and the inaccessibility of jobs, services and facilities.

Whilst resource deprivation is likely to differ in nature and severity according to location, it will be present in both urban and rural areas. In contrast, opportunity and mobility deprivation arise specifically from the part played by rural geography. Rural geography determines how it is often the remoteness that makes places deprived – not the people themselves. However, living in a remote rural location with few services means that opportunities may be lacking; that very fact leads to further deprivation, which is compounded for the very old and young by a lack of public transport.

Fig. 3 The ‘cycle of deprivation’ associated with rural areas.



Case Study: Measuring Rural Deprivation in Cornwall

Tregony

Tregony’s geographical location, on the higher reaches of the River Fal, was the prime reason for its historical importance. Today it is a small, rural community largely built around a junction of several local roads. Most employment is based upon farming and tourism. It is significantly smaller than Mevagissey with a population of about 1000 in 2001.

Gorran Haven

Gorran Haven is a small coastal village in Mevagissey Bay, whose tourist attractions sustain the local economy. In 2001, there was a population of 900. Second home owners – including local people who have bought investment property – dominate the core of the village, whilst many newer properties are owned by the village’s retired population.

Mevagissey

Mevagissey is the largest fishing village in St Austell Bay, though the decline of the fishing industry is partly responsible for changing employment patterns. In 2001, there was a population of 2280. Employment is now mainly in tourism, though some residual fishing still takes place.

This case study focuses upon three settlements in South Cornwall – Mevagissey, Gorran Haven and Tregony – in the borough of Restormel. Primary data were collected using questionnaires sampled opportunistically. Respondents were questioned about their employment status and type, home occupancy, car ownership, ownership of a list of ten possessions (ranging from those that would be commonly found e.g. TV to those found only among a few – e.g. second homes), together with their perceptions about personal security and safety. Environmental quality surveys were assessed on a scale from +34 to – 34 using 17 indicators of quality, including building maintenance, open space, and access to services.

Interpretation of results

- Evidence of social, economic and environmental deprivation in Cornwall can be measured using a variety of secondary indicators. Data indicate that there is a hierarchy of towns in Cornwall in terms of resource, opportunity and mobility deprivation. Mevagissey is better off than inland settlements, such as Tregony in respect of mobility, but the influence of second homeowners and holiday homes purchased for rental in the Mevagissey area affects the nature of deprivation. Gorran Haven is affected by its large retired population, which, being on fixed or low incomes, affects rural deprivation.

Case Study: Measuring Rural Deprivation in Cornwall (continued)

- Car ownership tends to be associated with resource availability; money is required to purchase a vehicle and to insure and run it. However, in rural areas such as Cornwall, the dispersed nature of employment and services, together with the lack of public transport means that car ownership is often considered a necessity. Therefore, using the indicator of car ownership may give strong evidence of mobility and opportunity deprivation but not of resource deprivation as the vast majority of those interviewed own at least one car.
- Evidence of a hierarchy of towns in terms of mobility and resource deprivation can be corroborated by measuring the methods of transport. For example, the high percentage of pedestrians present in Mevagissey indicates a greater service provision and availability as well as accessibility of jobs and facilities at settlements on or near the coast. The high percentage of car ownership and use in Tregony indicates the dependence on larger towns such as St. Austell for employment, services and facilities.
- Fig. 4 illustrates the predominance of the service sector in employment. Neither Tregony nor Gorran Haven offered high-income employment; in October (the time of the survey) many were all too aware of the seasonal nature of their work. Work is available, certainly, but very little is in government categories (A (Professional) nor B (Managerial)).
- Figs 5 and 6 are interesting because each contradicts common perceptions of deprivation. Home and car ownership levels in Cornwall are high - urban deprivation almost always indicates low levels in each case. However, this is not so much of an anomaly as it may seem. Home ownership outright, i.e. without a mortgage, is common amongst retired people who may have 'down-sized' from urban areas elsewhere in the UK. It need not indicate particular wealth - but it may indicate a generation which is 'asset-rich but cash-poor'. Car ownership is similarly common; in each of the villages surveyed, bus services were infrequent and the elderly found it difficult to shop without a car. Those in employment would have been unable to get to work without a car. So car dependency is high, leading to high levels of car ownership. However, the data for Gorran Haven (Fig. 6) show that average age for each car was twelve years old. Compare this with some boroughs of inner London where the comparable figure is 2 years.

Fig. 4 Employment in Gorran Haven and Tregony.

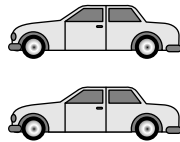
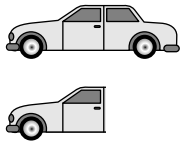
Employment	Tregony*	Gorran Haven**
Primary Sector	Farmer, Fisherman	Fisherman
Secondary Sector	Carpenter, Builder	Plumber, Workman, Labourer (workshop)
Tertiary Sector	Hotel Receptionist, Pub Manageress School secretary, Chef, Electrician, Manual Labourer,	Prison warden, Sailor, Hotel assistant, Shopkeeper, Eden Project Tour Guide, Hotel Manager, Barman, Post Office Assistant, Bed & Breakfast Owner
Quaternary Sector	Lawyer	
Example of local employer	Lark Construction is the 'largest independent building contractor' in Cornwall and has a permanent employment base of hundreds.	Cakebreads local store in Gorran Haven. The shop provides employment for 3 full-time staff and several part-time employees. Both residents and non-residents visit the shop.
	*including advertisements	**These data were derived not only from questionnaires and personal interviews conducted in the 3 study locations but also the job section of County newspaper The Cornish Times.

Fig. 5 Housing, Households and Communal Establishments Profile from 2001 Census.

Housing Tenure		
	Number	Percentage
Total Households	215,695	100.0
Owner occupied:		
Owned outright	82,690	38.3
Mortgaged	71,770	33.3
Shared Ownership	1,445	0.7
Total owner occupied	155,905	72.3
Rented:		
Council	13,615	6.3
Housing Association	11,930	5.5
Private Landlord	25,310	11.7
Other	8,935	4.2
Total Rented	59,790	27.7

(Source – Cornwall County Council www.cornwall.gov.uk/Facts/index.htm)

Fig. 6 Car ownership in Tregony and Gorran Haven.

Tregony	Gorran Haven
Average car ownership is 2 cars per household	Average car ownership is 1.5 cars per household
	
Mean average year of purchase: 1998	Mean average year of purchase: 1993

- Possessions ownership is a reflection of age of the respondents as well as deprivation. Whilst young people may consider mobile phone ownership (one of the indicators in our survey) essential, those over 65 do not always feel similarly; however few people owned six or more of the ten possessions. A similar survey in London's docklands had revealed an average ownership of over eight.

Fig. 7 – Summary of some of the key indicators found by the survey suggesting rural deprivation

<p>Economic House prices Car ownership Property ownership Building maintenance Employment</p>	<p>Indicators of economic deprivation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disparity in salaries (employment disparities) - this can be either between rural and urban areas or looking within the rural (top bracket earners to the low bracket earners). i.e. Due to these people earning less they can afford less affluent properties. • Car and property ownership (including whether rented property is from council or private owners). • Buildings left derelict and/or badly maintained. • Unemployment statistics. • Percentage of primary sector employment compared to secondary and tertiary within employed population. • Property and land value, and availability (and therefore demand).
<p>Social Education Access to amenities and local services Quality of social life, e.g. opportunity to meet family and friends</p>	<p>Indicators of social deprivation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of second homes – analysing house price increase and the effect on the community if many houses are empty. Empty and/or derelict houses may affect social and community spirit. For example, the breakdown of traditional village communities. • Lack or possible loss of infrastructure and amenities (such as transport). For example, a bus route that used to work on 5 buses per day and now it only operates 1 bus per day. • Decline of farming (change in employment structures). Distinction on rural areas being used for agriculture and primary sector. • Average age of residential population.
<p>Environmental Environmental quality Gardens and open spaces Traffic noise, congestion, and pollution</p>	<p>Indicators of environmental deprivation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion on roads, large traffic density causing noise, smell and general environmental pollution. • Safety in the outside environment e.g. Danger of walking alone at night • Occurrence and/or standard of private and public gardens, parks and other open spaces. • Litter pollution. • Maintenance of roads and pavements • Availability of garden or open space, beaches etc

Solutions

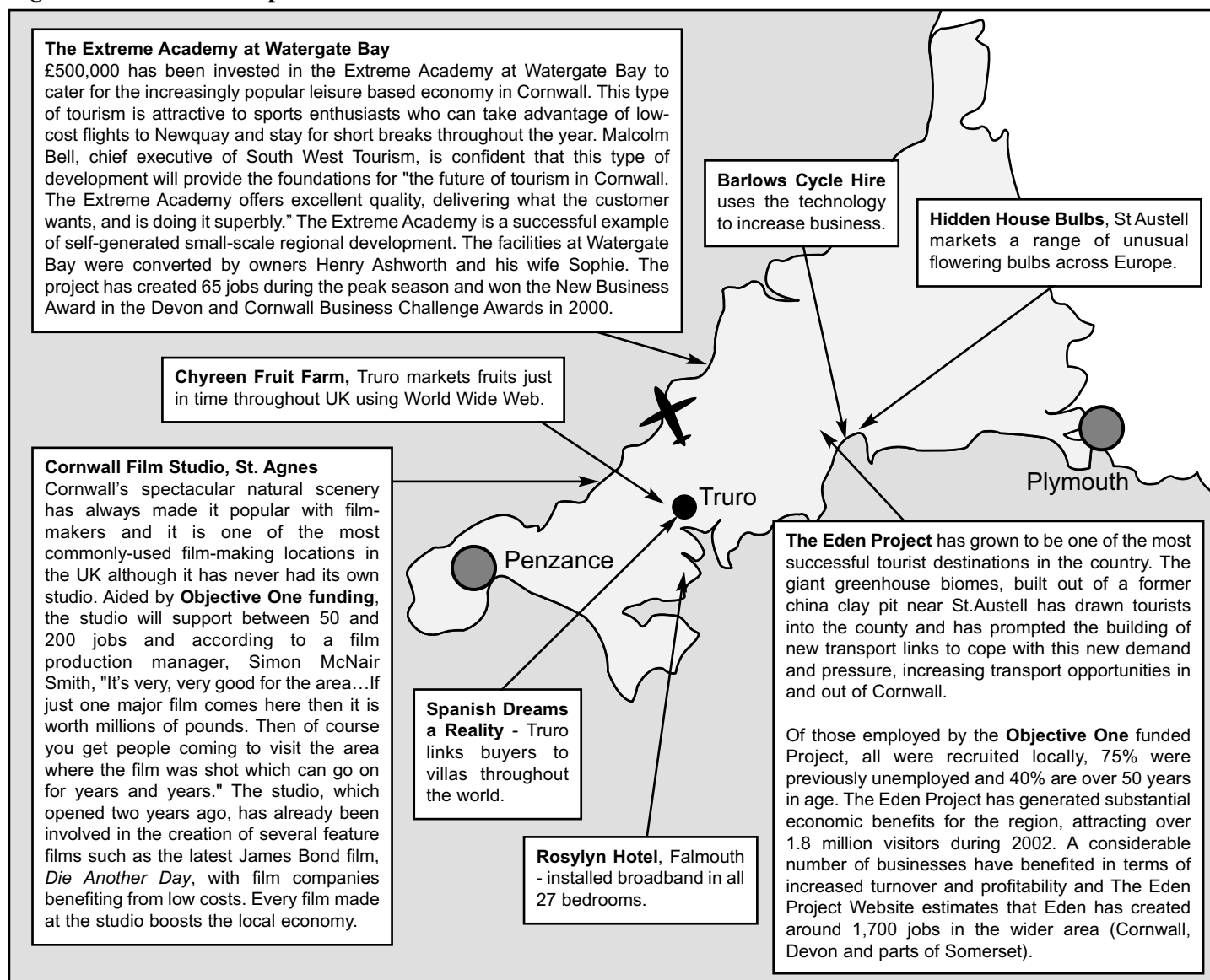
In an attempt to reduce deprivation across the EU's poorest regions, the EU makes two kinds of funding available – **Leader** and **Objectives Funds**.

- 1) In June 1999, Cornwall was awarded **Objective One** status by the European Union (EU) which would provide £300 million in grants over six years. The grants are targeted at increasing economic development in Cornwall to break the cycle of rural deprivation. The funds are specifically directed at small and medium-scale businesses, tourism, agricultural diversification, community regeneration, improving the environment and tackling long-term unemployment. *Fig. 8 (page 5)* shows three projects which have succeeded in generating interest and economic growth in Cornwall. Two - the Extreme Academy and the Eden Project - have proved highly successful in generating employment and in developing a multiplier effect that is felt locally; the Eden Project, for instance, took a substantial number of its staff from St Austell's unemployment register. However, the Film Studios at St Agnes have been called into receivership (late 2004) and are awaiting a new buyer.
- 2) **Leader programmes** are designed to promote small-scale development in rural areas. They are targeted at five main areas of activity: rural tourism, agriculture, small businesses, vocational training and community development.

To promote self-generated development, leader programmes require proposed projects to at least match the grants awarded. Therefore the maximum amount paid by the EU is half of the cost. There are numerous examples of small scale farm diversification schemes, small scale tourism ventures and IT related small business enterprises which have received Leader II grants. Of huge importance to Cornwall's success is the broadband revolution.

The Broadband Revolution

Today, Act Now, an acronym for Access for Cornwall through Telecommunications to New Opportunities Worldwide, launched in 2002, is a key driver of the Cornish economy. The £12.5 million scheme is backed by BT, Cornwall Enterprise, the South West Regional Development Agency, Cornwall College, Cornwall County Council, Business Link and DEFRA and is an example of a private public sector partnership. £5.25 million was also donated from EU Objective One funding. Some 5500, largely small businesses including farms, now benefit from high speed broadband internet connection – a take up rate of 35% (national average 25%) combined with connexion advice and grants up to £200. The connexions allow small businesses to trade nationally and internationally overcoming the barriers created by geographical remoteness. In July 2005, 30 more small rural telephone exchanges will be upgraded in project Blitz ensuring that more than 99% of Cornish houses will have broadband access.

Fig. 8 Broadband developments in Cornwall.

Broadband has been responsible for the growth of numerous SBEs in Cornwall, by providing a favourable opportunity for them to develop at comparatively low costs. Successful projects include those shown in *Fig. 8* – many are in tourism as broadband connects businesses to customers and provides low cost flexibility.

Conclusion

Rural deprivation certainly exists in Cornwall. The dramatic influence of second homeowners can reduce certain factors of deprivation but it can also exacerbate it. This influence may ameliorate some aspects of resource deprivation although it tends not to improve opportunity and mobility deprivation for locals. The status of many communities in Cornwall is jeopardised by wealthy second-home owners who cause price inflation and many young local first-time buyers are being priced out of the market. A lack of affordable housing is the biggest single factor leading to out migration of talented young people.

Measuring and defining rural deprivation in Cornwall has been shown to be of a wholly different and perhaps altogether more complex nature than urban environments.

This underlines the importance of historical and socio-economic context when investigating rural environments and deciding which indicators can accurately reflect and are appropriate to reality.

Social, environmental and economic deprivation is widespread in Cornwall although considerable government and European investment is hopefully paving the way for a brighter future. Inequalities still exist, especially in terms of opportunities and the pattern of rural disadvantage in Cornwall may be present for many years to come.

Useful websites:

- Cornwall County Council Website - www.cornwall.gov.uk
- Objective One in Cornwall - www.objectiveone.com
- The Eden Project Website - www.edenproject.com
- North Cornwall District Council - www.ncdc.gov.uk

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