

2.1.1 How are urban and rural areas in Wales linked?

Counter-urbanisation

Counter-urbanisation is the process by which people and work move away from the cities and large towns to smaller areas. There are many reasons why people migrate from **urban** to **rural** areas. These are divided into **push** factors and **pull** factors.



Below are some examples of push factors from urban areas and pull factors to rural areas.

Push factors (from urban areas)	Pull factors (to rural areas)
A lack of open spaces.	Gardens and more open spaces e.g., parks.
An increase in crime rates and concern for safety, especially children.	Lower crime rates and a safer place to raise children.
Air pollution	A sense of community/closer communities.
High rent/house prices	A better quality of life in rural areas and a chance to experience 'community life'.
The perception that life in urban areas are stressful.	New ways of working and advances in technology allow people to work from home, therefore they do not need to be based in cities for work.
Traffic congestion	Less traffic
Noisy environment	A quieter and more peaceful environment – less stressful.
	Car ownership has meant an increased ability to commute.

Impacts of counter-urbanisation

A growing population in accessible rural villages has several positive and negative effects. They can be grouped into three categories:

Social	Economic	Environmental
Small villages lose their original identity and traditions leading to a loss of community spirit e.g., loss of the Welsh language.	House prices in rural areas increase as demand increases. Local people cannot afford these prices and as a result have to move away.	An increase in commuting leads to increased congestion and air pollution.
A wider range of people from different backgrounds and cultures bring new experiences and cultures to a rural area.	Commuters shop in large supermarkets on the edge of cities and towns on their way home from work. This results in a lower demand for village shops and services and as a consequence they are forced to close. These areas are known as dormitory towns , with a low daytime population.	With increased demand for housing, greenfield sites are built on, leading to a loss of habitats and countryside areas.
Conflict between local residents and 'newcomers'.	A loss of traditional industries in rural areas e.g., farming.	
Local rural schools have increased numbers and can stay open.	Public transport will decline as the new residents own cars. It will be a problem for the original residents who have no transport of their own, especially the elderly.	

Patterns of commuting and transport issues that arise from counter-urbanisation

Commuting is the daily or weekly movement of workers from their home in one place, to their workplace at another location.

People commute to work in cities and towns as there are more work opportunities in cities than in rural areas where they live. It is often cheaper for people to live in rural areas and commute (sometimes for long distances), than to live in cities.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have resulted in more people working from home. Many people continue to work from home 2-3 days a week, and commute for the remainder of the week. Advances in technology in the last 15-20 years have also allowed this to happen.

Transport issues that arise from counter-urbanisation:

- Traffic congestion on main roads into cities especially during rush hour, leading to longer travelling times.
- More air and noise pollution.
- An increased volume of traffic and traffic congestion makes it more dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.