

2.1.2 How are rural areas in Wales changing?

Urban **spheres of influence** and **technological change** have had several impacts on service provision in rural areas. Below are some of these impacts.

House prices are pushed up in attractive, rural areas due to:

- wealthy families or retirees moving from urban areas
- increased demand for **second homes** in rural and coastal areas
- lack of new housing in rural areas, meaning there is a limited supply for sale.

As a consequence, locals raised in the rural areas cannot afford the rising house prices and are forced to leave the area.

Depopulation is the reduction in people living in an area. Rural areas experience depopulation. This is often because young people move out of the area to look for work opportunities or to go to university in urban areas.

This leaves an ageing population in rural areas. We can also see a **brain drain** from rural areas where people with many qualifications move out into the city to look for work.

There is less need for farm workers because:

- the **development of machines** can do the job more efficiently
- more food is **imported** from abroad.

As a consequence, there is a decline in the farming industry, and traditional industries like farming are lost from rural areas. There are less primary sector jobs and more tertiary sector jobs.

Rural areas have seen many services close, e.g., schools, post offices, shops, pubs. Reasons for this include:

- Many people **commute** to cities each day for work and shop in large supermarkets on the edge of cities and towns on their way home from work.
- Online food shopping is convenient and as a result has become more popular. This results in a lower demand for village shops and services.
- Many young people have moved out of the area, so there will be fewer families. This means that there is less demand for local schools.
- The people who buy **second homes** in the area live there only seasonally, e.g., on the weekend or summertime. They do not use the services often.
- Due to an increase in new, fuel efficient cars, locals commute to work every day. Therefore, there is less demand for **bus services**. A reduction in bus services can lead to the elderly being without a regular mode of transport.
- Post offices and banks have centralised in towns and cities, and banking online has become more convenient.

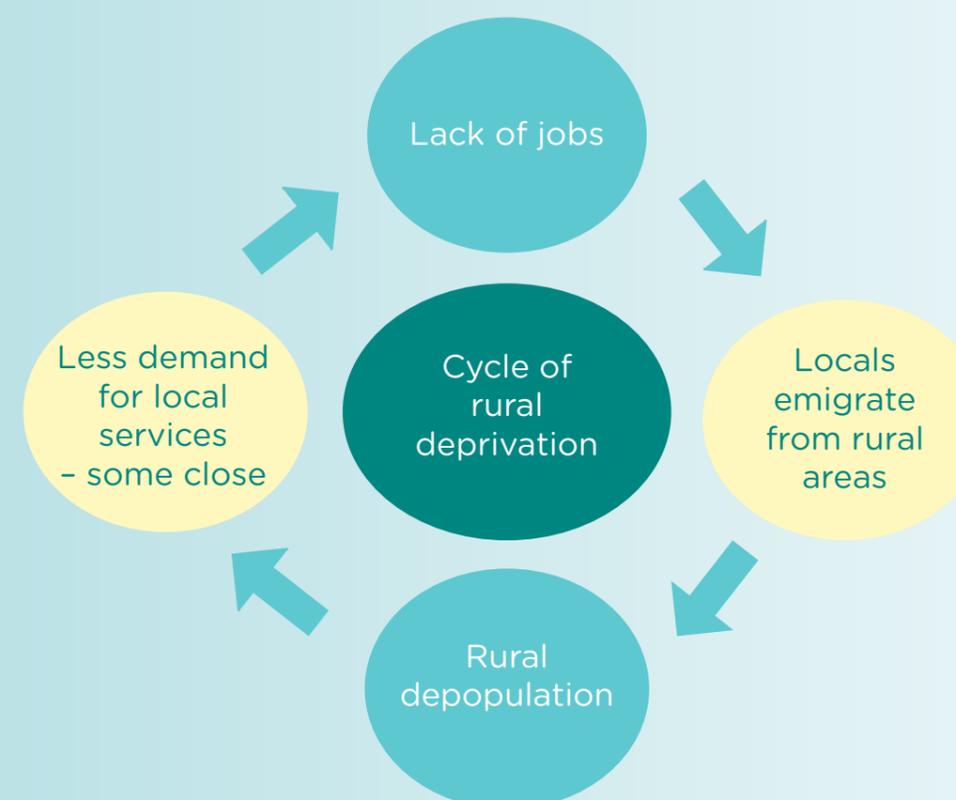
Causes and effects of rural poverty and deprivation

The following problems are **CAUSES** of rural deprivation:

- **Low wages:** especially in the tourism industry, which is seasonal.
- Lack of **jobs**.
- High cost of **goods and services** in rural areas.
- Higher cost of **travel**, including petrol and diesel costs, with increased travel distances and often without the option of public transport.
- Higher costs to **heat** rural homes
- Higher costs of **rent/house prices**.

The above causes have led to **rural depopulation** – people emigrating from rural areas, especially young people as they seek employment and education opportunities as their local services are closed.

This out-migration and the loss of services have led to **rural poverty and deprivation**. *Deprivation is the lack of access to features and services that are considered necessary for a reasonable standard of living.* This can mean lack of access to transport, leisure, education, healthcare, etc. This deprivation and depopulation occurs in a vicious cycle:



Strategies for creating sustainable rural communities

To create sustainable rural communities, **resources** must be safeguarded, the **economy** sustained, and the decline in the **quality of life** for current and future residents halted. The following strategies can be used to make rural communities sustainable:

- **Community shops** that locals run in order to provide provisions for local people.
- **Sustainable rural housing:** providing good quality affordable housing for local people.
- Converting old primary industry locations into **leisure amenities**, e.g., converting an old slate mine into an outdoor activities centre.
- **Mobile banking** in rural communities – some locals prefer banking face to face than online.
- Ensuring **local services** stay open and continue to run e.g., schools, shops, pubs, bus services, medical centres and post offices.
- **Wi-fi:** ensuring a reliable broadband service is readily available to all residents.