

A young girl with braided hair is climbing a playground structure. She is wearing a white t-shirt with the number '27' on it and cargo pants. She is smiling and looking upwards. The background shows a building and some trees.

9 ADDRESSING DEPRIVATION AND DISADVANTAGE TO REDUCE INTRA-REGIONAL INEQUALITIES



9.0.1 Sections 1 and 2 have highlighted the fact that the quality of life in the South West is generally high, but that this is not a reality for everyone. Areas with relatively high levels of multiple deprivation exist in a number of the region's cities, towns and rural areas and this is a clear measure of the inequalities that exist. The following Section sets out how the Draft RSS will play its part in seeking to deliver the '*Just Connect!*' aim of addressing deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional disparities.

9.1 Addressing Intra-Regional Disparities

9.1.1 There are greater differences in living standards and quality of life between places within the South West than there are between the South West and the other UK regions as a whole. The notable 'gradient' from the north and east of the region towards the south and west in terms of generally lower productivity and earnings and increased levels of multiple deprivation has been highlighted in paragraph 2.1.5. (The Index of Multiple Deprivation, or IMD, is the national measure of deprivation, based on a number of social and economic indicators.) These issues are interlinked. One of the long-standing aims for the region has been to address these disparities by influencing publicly funded programmes and by encouraging private investment in economic activity in these places. Recent experience in Cornwall with the Objective 1 programme illustrates what can be achieved in this respect, where annual growth in GVA averaged 7.65% over the period 1999 to 2002 compared with a regional average of 5.3% for the same period. Even so, GVA in Cornwall is still less than 75% of the EU average which is reflected in its Objective 1 status and recent identification for Convergence Funding.



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- 9.1.2** Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have been confirmed as a Convergence Region for the period to 2013. Future European enlargement may result in further changes to support available to this part of the region, making it essential that the proposals contained in the RSS and RES are mutually reinforcing, so that development is directed to assist regeneration and diversification of the economy. Few inroads have been made to deal with the persistent intra-regional disparities, and without continued intervention it is possible that differences will deepen and change will not benefit those in need.
- 9.1.3** The nature of the region with its many small communities means that some locally significant pockets of deprivation and disadvantage may not register as significant in regional statistics, particularly those in rural areas. These pockets should be identified in LDDs. A finer-grained approach to identifying and addressing problems, through Community Plans and other local mechanisms, is often more appropriate at such a scale. A successful and sustainable South West needs to deal with imbalances, harnessing the collective talents the region has to offer and raising skill levels in some areas, to improve quality of life for everyone.

This means tackling the causes and effects of deprivation and exclusion and planning the strong and inclusive communities of the future. Sustainable Development Policy SD4 emphasises the importance of addressing social, environmental and economic factors in terms of reducing disadvantage and achieving sustainable communities across the region. Other Sections throughout the Draft RSS also contribute to this aim, including policies on delivering affordable housing (Policy H1), promoting competitive businesses (Section 8.2), providing for local needs locally, promoting equality and diversity (Policies SI1 and SI2) and improving local environmental quality (Policy G11).



9.1.4 The Draft RSS, RES and other strategies provide an integrated approach to economic development and regeneration. This Draft RSS clearly establishes a spatial prioritisation for economic activity, recognising the need to ‘stimulate’ economic activity in the western part of the peninsula and ‘realise the potential’ of the centre and north of the region, focusing on the role of the SSCTs. There is clear evidence that much of the potential for sustained future economic growth is concentrated in the region’s cities and larger towns. The challenge is to ensure that growth strategies for these places achieve wider benefits, including linking successful areas with less successful ones, and connecting cities and towns with their surrounding areas (so that more people can contribute to, and benefit from, the region’s continuing economic prosperity), and developing appropriate solutions as required to ensure that local needs can be met locally as far as possible. The sub-regional strategies contained in Section 4 have this as one of their underlying aims.

9.2 Supporting Strong and Inclusive Communities and Identifying Spatial Priority Areas for Concerted Investment and Action

9.2.1 The South West performs relatively well in comparison with other regions in terms of overall levels of multiple deprivation. IMD reveals that just under 9% of ‘Super Output Areas’ (SOAs: a unit of geography used in the Index) in the South West belong to the 20% most deprived in England. Table 1 in Appendix 3 provides a list of the most deprived districts in the South West, based on the proportion per district of the total number (278) of South West SOAs in the worst 20% nationally. This proportion has remained relatively static over time.

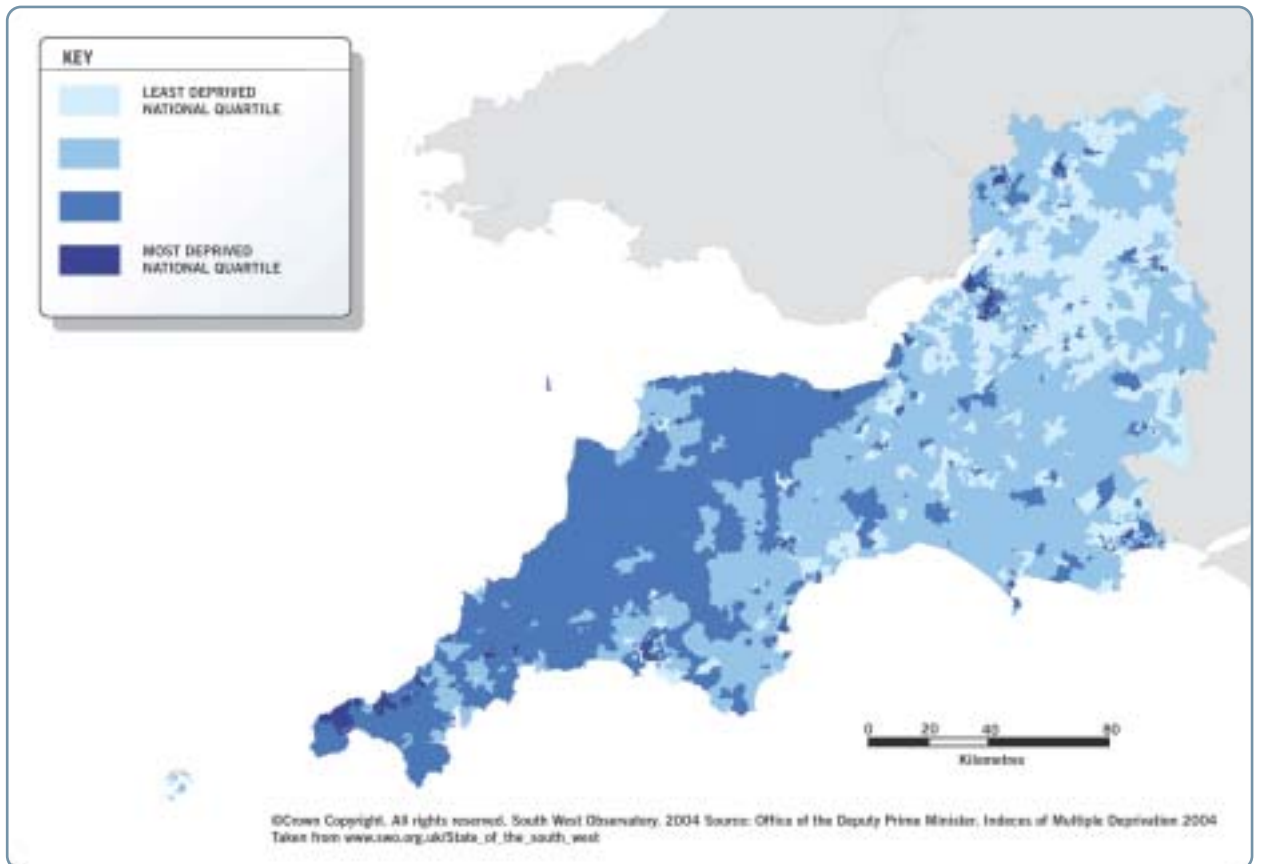
9.2.2 There are distinct spatial patterns in terms of clustering of multiple deprivation, with the populations of these clusters varying greatly. The challenges in each area will be different and so a range of resources may be required. For example, in Bristol there is a large population affected, and the issues associated with urban deprivation include high crime levels, relatively poor standards of educational attainment, skills and training, and income deprivation. In Plymouth there are issues of structural decline together with poor living environments, high crime levels and health deprivation. In rural districts the issues often relate to housing affordability, poor service provision and lack of access to rewarding jobs which will require stimulation of the local rural economy in order to reduce the need to travel. Section 10 also highlights the links between multiple deprivation and issues around equalities and inclusion.

9.2.3 It is also important to understand that the concentrations in each local authority area vary. This is illustrated by Table 2 in Appendix 3 which measures the rank of the average SOA score relative to all local authorities in England. Ranks are out of 354 local authorities with 1 being the most deprived. The Table details local authorities in the South West which feature in the 100 most deprived local authority areas in England by this measure; these are Penwith, Bristol City, Plymouth, Kerrier, Restormel, Torbay and Bournemouth. Appendix 3 illustrates that, whilst there are significant clusters of multiple deprivation in many of the region's urban areas in terms of numbers of SOAs, a number of other local authority areas, notably in the west of the peninsula, have relatively high proportions of deprived SOAs. This is illustrated in Map 9.1.



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Map 9.1 Rank of English Local Authority's Average IMD Score for Super Output Areas 2004



9.2.4 Data used to measure against DEFRA's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target concerning rural productivity have been used to help define the spatial priorities for rural renaissance identified in the statement below.

Statement of Priorities for Addressing Deprivation and Disadvantage in the South West

Addressing deprivation and disadvantage to reduce intra-regional inequalities will require action at a number of levels by a range of public bodies and the voluntary and private sectors. This will range from tackling multiple deprivation at the neighbourhood level, to addressing the gradient of productivity and incomes at the regional level. Critically this will also need to harness the role of prosperous areas with high levels of economic potential, as a process of ongoing economic development, in order to secure wider regional benefits. This will require investment and action to be focused within the following spatial priorities:

- **Economic development – harnessing the economic potential of Bristol (city centre and north fringe), Swindon and Exeter as well as Bournemouth/Poole and Cheltenham and Gloucester**
- **Regeneration and neighbourhood renewal – securing concerted economic regeneration and restructuring and tackling the significant clustering of multiple deprivation in parts of Bristol, Plymouth, Cornwall (Objective 1 and Convergence), Bournemouth, Gloucester, Swindon, Weston-super-Mare and Torbay**
- **Urban renaissance – supporting targeted intervention to bring about the renaissance of the region's main urban areas, particularly Urban Regeneration Companies in Swindon, Gloucester and Camborne-Pool-Redruth**
- **Rural renaissance – focussing improvements in productivity in 10 rural priority districts: six Cornish Districts, Forest of Dean, West Devon, North Devon and Torrington, ensuring that these improvements address need arising from problems with accessibility to jobs and services and affordability of housing**