SRUC

FINAL REPORT

Growing the Community Business Network UK-wide: Understanding the 'cold spot' areas where Plunkett Foundation supports fewer community businesses

Contents

Prepared by:
Rural Policy Centre SRUC
Peter Wilson Building
West Mains Road
Edinburgh
EH9 3JG

Contact:
Dr Jane Atterton
jane.atterton@sruc.ac.uk
0131 535 4256

23rd March 2022

Staff Team (listed alphabetically):
Jane Atterton, Simon Gibson-Poole, Jayne Glass, Alexa Green and Jenny McMillan

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1. Introduction

The acquisition of local assets has been increasingly recognised as resulting in far-reaching economic, social and environmental benefits[1]. Community ownership can facilitate the development of a framework for economic development, through access to land and assets, in combination with enhanced participatory governance and rebuilding of community capacity. Across the UK, communities have seized opportunities to purchase local assets, including land, buildings, businesses and services. This has been supported by statutory mechanisms, including legal community rights to bid on assets (introduced by the Localism Act 2011), community asset transfer, and community rights to buy (in Scotland, as a result of land reform and community empowerment legislation). Supporting these purchases, the UK Community Ownership Fund runs from 2021-2025[2] (available to all communities in the UK), the Scottish Land Fund[3] continues to support Scottish communities, and Power to Change in England works in support of communities to revive local assets, protect services and address local needs through community business creation, for example. The existence of statutory commitments and money is not always enough to enable communities to purchase local assets; they need support and advice before and throughout the process[1].

Plunkett Foundation is a national charity that supports rural communities across the UK to tackle the issues they face through community business. Community businesses are enterprises that are owned and run democratically by members of the community, on behalf of the community. The Foundation has a small in-house team and advisers across the UK to provide support to communities at the outset of a community business project and as the business develops and grows.

The Foundation has a particular focus on communities aiming to use a community business approach to alleviate poverty and address social exclusion and isolation. One of the objectives of the Foundation's current strategy (2018-22, and likely of the next strategy as well) is to *"extend our relevance and reach; ensuring the community business model and the support available are relevant and accessible to communities in all parts of the UK."*

[1] See McMorran et al. 2018 Review of the effectiveness of current community ownership mechanisms and of options for supporting the expansion of community ownership in Scotland.
[2] More information about the UK Community Ownership Fund.
[3] See this recent evaluation of the Scottish Land Fund.

2. Project aims and objectives

SRUC's Rural Policy Centre was commissioned by Plunkett Foundation in October 2021 to undertake work to understand 'cold spots' across the UK, areas where Plunkett Foundation supports fewer businesses.

The **aims** of this project were:

- To identify and map the regional and country variances across the UK in the number of community businesses and the number of community businesses supported by Plunkett Foundation;
- To identify the reasons for these variances to inform Plunkett's 2022-2026 strategy to create more community businesses UK-wide.

The **objectives** of this project were:

- To define different ways of measuring what are 'cold spots' (in terms of using different indicators of the potential level of community businesses per head of rural population, etc.) and to advise on the most appropriate measures.
- To identify and map precisely the current location of the 'cold spots' (using the different definitions) and how intense these are (exploring regions, nations and within England county areas).
- To review and synthesise the evidence on the reasons for these 'cold spots' (taking into account variations in these across the UK).
- To map the alternative support currently available in the 'cold spot' areas (across the UK).
- To assess the extent to which alternatives to community business (or community-led action) exist in these 'cold spot' areas.
- To provide an initial assessment of the needs of communities in 'cold spot' areas.
- To provide initial insights into the implications for the design and delivery of Plunkett's services.

3. Methods

To meet the aims and objectives of the project, a six-part approach led to six separate deliverables (including this final report) and incorporated both quantitative data collection (data analysis and mapping) and qualitative data collection (in-depth interviews).

Part 1 involved a desk-based review of evidence relating to the factors that enable or constrain (or even prevent) communities from establishing community businesses. The research team reviewed a wide range of evidence sources, including academic and 'grey' literature from across the UK. A particular focus was placed on identifying relevant sources from key academic journals (such as the *Journal of Rural Studies* and *Sociologia Ruralis*) and research reports, and from organisations working with communities in various ways, including Plunkett Foundation, the Development Trusts Associations (in all the UK nations), Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and Community Land Scotland. The latter included practical documents produced to support communities wishing to take on the ownership and/or management of assets. A summary report discussing the key factors was produced (Deliverable 1). A brief summary of this evidence review is included in this report.

Part 2 involved the creation of a set of GIS maps of the community businesses supported by Plunkett Foundation across the UK (Deliverable 2). Data provided by the Plunkett Foundation in Excel was transferred into a .csv format and uploaded to the QGIS mapping software. Using the postcode information provided, longitudinal and latitudinal data were obtained and merged with the existing data to ensure accurate data point locations. Census Output Areas (OAs) and Local Authority Districts (LADs) were used to further understand the geographical location and distribution of businesses. OA and LAD maps for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland were downloaded from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Part 3 focused on generating maps showing relevant comparative demographic, socio-economic and social/community infrastructure data to review alongside the maps of community businesses, with accompanying data tables where appropriate/relevant (Deliverable 3). The purpose of this mapping and data analysis work was to explore the factors that might explain why some areas are cold spots. Based on the evidence review in Deliverable 1, three broad topics were identified (demographic characteristics, socioeconomic characteristics, and existing community activity and infrastructure), with the aim being to access data to as low a level geography as possible. Several hypotheses were formulated to help guide the data search and analysis.

For this deliverable, the team decided that using the ONS pen portraits for Output Area Classifications would be a particularly useful way of combining a number of different demographic and socioeconomic Census variables about particular geographical areas. In addition to using the ONS pen portraits, the team undertook further analysis of three other issues and accompanying datasets: population density data (from the UK Census 2011); the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD); the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD); the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM); and the Ordnance Survey's Points of Interest database (for England, Scotland and Wales).

The results of this mapping and data analysis work are presented in this report by the nations of the UK and the regions of England, with the cold spots in each of these geographies highlighted.

Part 4 of the project contained two elements. The first identified other organisations across the UK providing similar support to communities as that provided by Plunkett, for example, to set up cooperatives or social enterprises, or to take on the management/ownership of assets in different ways. A range of information was collected about the support provided by these organisations and this was gathered in a summary table (Deliverable 4). The table also contained information about any data made available by the organisation, ideally postcode information, about businesses/communities to which they have provided support. Where this data could be accessed, it was mapped to show the geographical coverage of these organisations in comparison to that of Plunkett. Readily available data was found for Co-ops UK, Social Enterprise UK (SEUK), Locality, and Inspiring Scotland's Rural Communities in Action (RCIA) Fund, with enterprise type information available for Co-ops UK and SEUK. Data tables were created to compare the coverage of these organisations against geographic locations, pen portrait supergroups, and the multiple deprivation indices/measures. Geographic hot and cold spots for Plunkett compared to the organisations mapped could be identified.

Part 5 involved a total of 15 interviews with representatives from a range of organisations providing support to rural communities (including Plunkett) in different parts of the UK. The purpose of these conversations was to sense-check the draft findings of the previous Parts of the project and discuss the implications arising from them, both for Plunkett and for other organisations (e.g. in terms of how far to engage in 'cold spots' in future, the potential for partnership working, etc.).

Part 6 of the project involved the writing of this final report based on all of the evidence collected. All of the detailed maps and data analysis tables and graphics (plus the metadata file) have been provided to Plunkett in previous deliverables therefore this report contains only a summary of this information.

This project had limited resources and time and so what is presented here is an initial exploration of different kinds of data and introductory mapping work. The final section of the report highlights a number of areas of further research which would build on this phase 1 work. This further research could also be guided by additional exploration of the metadata and map files by Plunkett.

Section 4.2.1 describes Plunkett's presence in rural and urban areas of the UK and this highlights that the majority of its work to date has been with rural communities. This focus of this report is therefore on exploring Plunkett's current and potential presence in rural communities across the UK.

4. Key findings

The findings from Parts 1-4 of the research are presented here in three sub-sections. The first summarises the key findings from the review of factors enabling and constraining the establishment of community businesses in rural locations (Part 1 of the project and Section 4.1). These factors are shown below in Boxes 1 and 2. The second and third sub-sections present the key findings from the mapping and data analysis activities with the analysis presented by nations of the UK and by regions of England (Parts 2-4 of the project and Sections 4.2 and 4.3).

4.1 Factors enabling and constraining the establishment of community businesses

The research team explored a wide range of academic and other sources in order to distil a list of factors that enable and constrain rural community activity. Some of this literature related specifically to factors that are important in the establishment of community businesses. However, some of it related to the factors that lead to the creation of alternative forms of enterprise and community ownership (e.g. charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, Development Trusts, Community Land Trusts, etc.) which might take the place of community businesses in certain areas, or simply to what could be termed 'active' communities. This would refer to rural communities in which some or all individuals are engaged in bottom-up, community-led activities, such as running a village hall, running events, providing volunteer support to community members on an everyday and/or emergency basis, etc.

An interesting avenue for further research would be to explore how the decision is made on the type of business model to be followed by the community concerned, likely with the support of, or at least input from, a number of other organisations. Such work could be informed by mapping work (such as that undertaken in this report) which identifies the (varying) locations of these different kinds of businesses.

This part of the work generated a summary of the factors that provide communities with the capacity to act to take on new responsibility/ responsibilities, or those that discourage them from doing so, such as by taking on the ownership and/or management of assets or bidding for funding to support local activities. For some communities, this opportunity may arise suddenly, perhaps if an asset suddenly and unexpectedly becomes available for purchase, while for some the process may be much longer, meaning that the community has time to build capacity and shape its response to a situation when an asset does become available.

There are also important differences depending on whether a community is seeking to acquire a publicly or privately owned asset. For example, a lack of legislation providing community rights to buy presents a barrier primarily to communities trying to acquire privately owned assets, while communities may be faced with a lack of trust from local authorities when they are seeking to explore asset transfer options. It is also worth acknowledging the different legislative, policy, political and institutional contexts across the countries of the UK, which create different backdrops for community activity. For example, Wales and Northern Ireland lack community rights legislation, whereas this is a central element of land reform legislation in Scotland. In Wales, the concept of the foundational economy has become important in policy terms recently, while the concept of community wealth building has gathered importance in Scotland. These characteristics will shape the types and extent of activities that emerge. An interesting focus for further research would be to compare the evolution of these contexts in different parts of the UK over time and the impacts in terms of facilitating (or changing the course of, or even discouraging) activity 'on-the-ground'.

Boxes 1 and 2 below provide a summary of the key enabling and constraining factors that were identified by the research team.

Together, these factors could be viewed as the internal resources, capital and capacity required within communities to set up community businesses and external resources, capital and capacity provided by a range of support organisations (including public and other voluntary/community sector groups). It is generally assumed in the literature that these factors are required in combination to create the enabling environments for community businesses (or indeed other forms of community activity) to emerge. This combination of bottom up or local and top down or external has been termed networked or neo-endogenous rural development[4].

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[4] See for example: Lowe, P., Murdoch, J., and Ward, N. (1995) Networks in Rural Development: beyond exogenous and endogenous models in J. D. van der Ploeg and G. Van Dijk (eds.) *Beyond Modernisation: The Impact of Endogenous Rural Development,* Van Gorcum: Assen pp. 87-105; Murdoch, J. (2000) Networks – a New Paradigm of Rural Development? *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 pp. 407-419; Ward, N., Atterton, J., Kim, T.Y., Lowe, P., Phillipson, J. and Thompson, N. (2005) *Universities, the knowledge economy and 'Neo-endogenous Rural Development'*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Centre for Rural Economy Discussion Paper Series No.1; Shucksmith, M. (2012) Future Directions in Rural Development? A Report for the Carnegie UK Trust. Available online: Future Directions in Rural Development - Full Report - Carnegie UK Trust.

Box 1: Key factors enabling communities to set up community businesses.

Key Enabling Factors

- Critical mass, distribution and mix of population in the local community.
- Range of community 'capacities'.
- Assets and resources within the community, including access to capital/financial wealth (e.g. to support a successful community shares scheme), knowledge, skills (e.g., finance, legal, health and safety, practical, administrative, etc.).
- Community confidence, vision and ambition and 'good' governance.
- Local leadership.
- A supportive and engaged local community.
- External networks to access knowledge, skills, and capital not available locally.
- Other examples locally and elsewhere from which to learn, share 'best practice' ideas and be inspired.
- A supportive or 'facilitating' political, policy, institutional and/or funding context.

Box 2: Key factors constraining the ability of communities to set up community businesses.

Key Constraining Factors

- High upfront costs when purchasing and refurbishing businesses and limited time to raise funds.
- Lack of resilience due to ageing and sparse populations which can lead to less human agency and willingness to start up new ventures due to lack of access to skilled or young workforce.
- Lack of collective and/or individual finance/capital, capacity, skills, knowledge, previous experience, etc. to engage in the processes needed to acquire community land or community businesses.
- Lack of awareness, knowledge and understanding regarding how to set up a community business and complexity regarding the set-up process.
- Absence of a supportive or 'facilitating' policy, political and/or funding context.

4.2 Mapping and Data Analysis

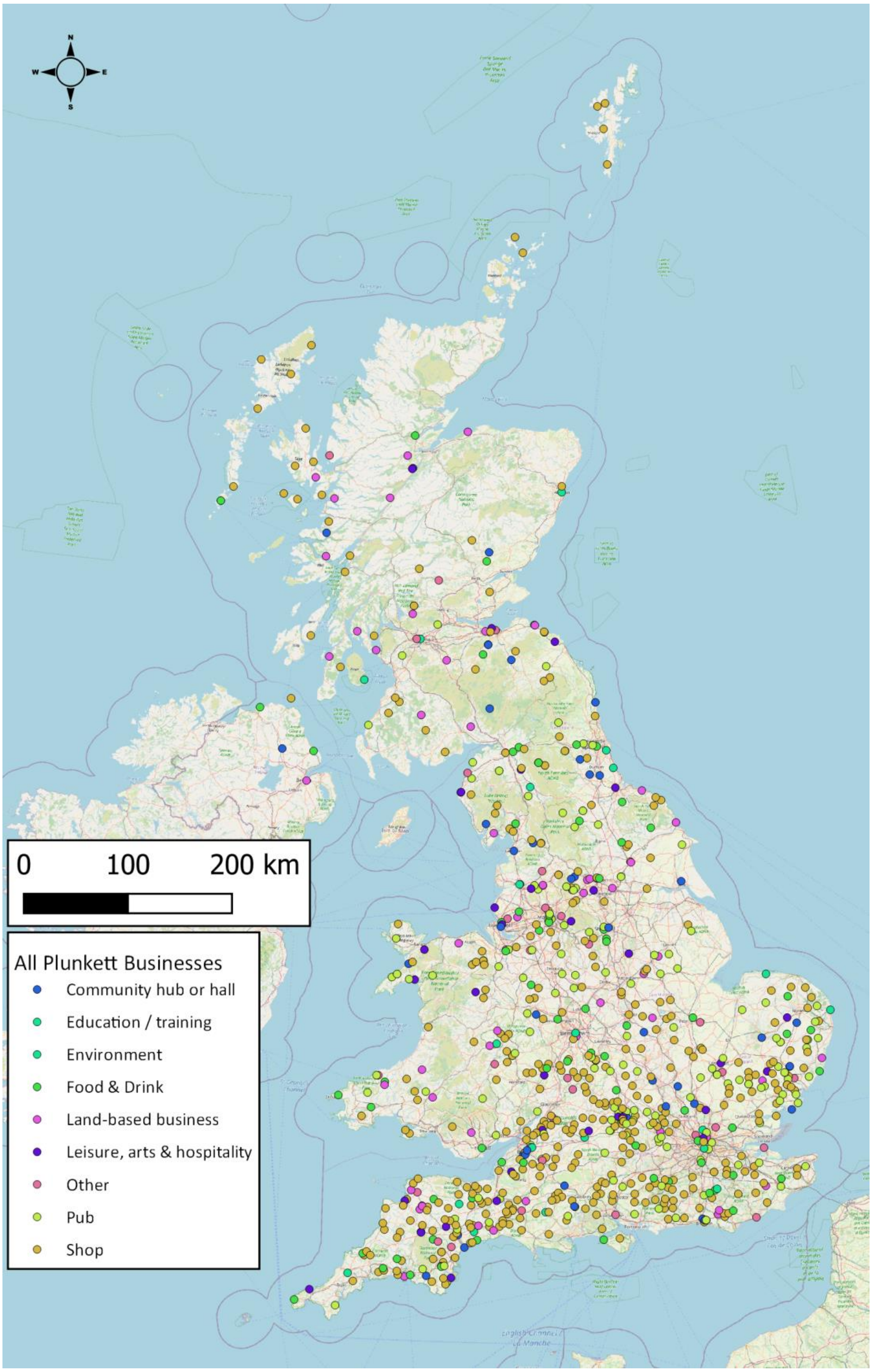
In Parts 2-4 of the project, the research team undertook a range of mapping and data analysis which is summarised in the following sections. For reasons of space, we have only included a sample of the maps and graphs/tables in this report, but all are available to Plunkett in previously submitted deliverables.

4.2.1 Mapping Plunkett Foundation community businesses across the UK

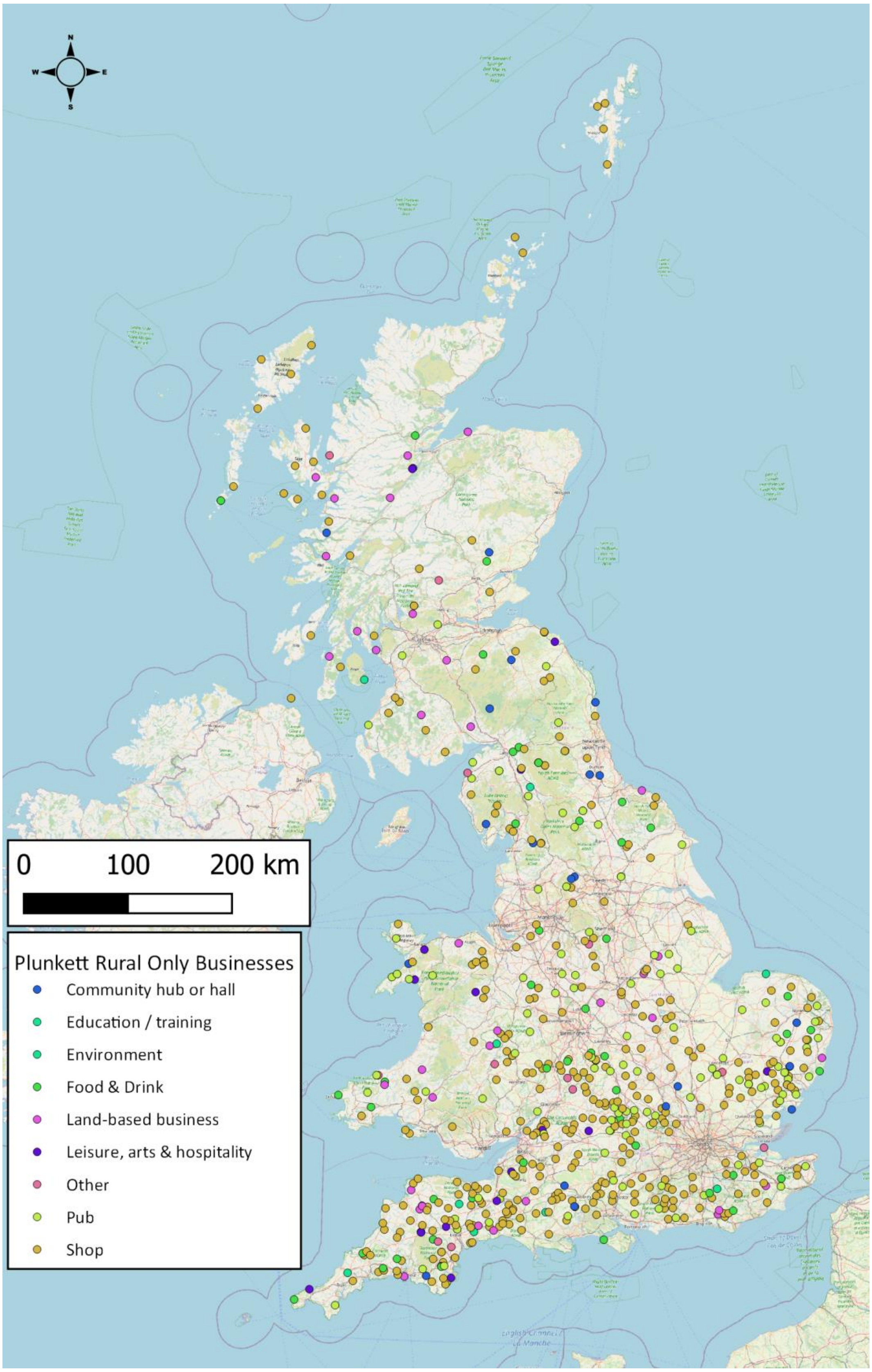
Map 1 below shows the locations of all Plunkett-supported urban and rural community businesses of different types across the UK, while Map 2 shows only those Plunkett community businesses in rural locations (using the official classifications as applicable in each part of the UK).

A few key observations can be made about these maps:

- The larger number of Plunkett community businesses in England compared with other parts of the UK.
- The concentration of Plunkett community businesses in the South of England, and in particular in the South West, South East and East of England.
- The relatively small number of Plunkett community businesses in Northern Ireland; there is only one rural Plunkett community business in Northern Ireland.
- In general, there is at least some link between the distribution of Plunkett's community businesses and the distribution of the (rural and urban) population across the UK. For example, there are visible 'cold spots' – locations with no Plunkett community businesses - in the mountainous areas of central Wales and the Cairngorm mountains of Scotland (where there is no population), and in sparsely populated areas such as parts of Northumberland, Lincolnshire and Cumbria, and the Highlands of Scotland.
- Having said this, the picture appears to be more nuanced as there are areas with population that do not have community businesses and areas with very small populations that do. This would seem to confirm that there are other factors influencing the establishment or lack of existence of community businesses, in addition to numbers/distributions of people (as outlined in Section 4.1 and explored in the subsequent sections of this report).



Map 1: Location of all Plunkett supported community businesses (rural and urban) across the UK by enterprise type

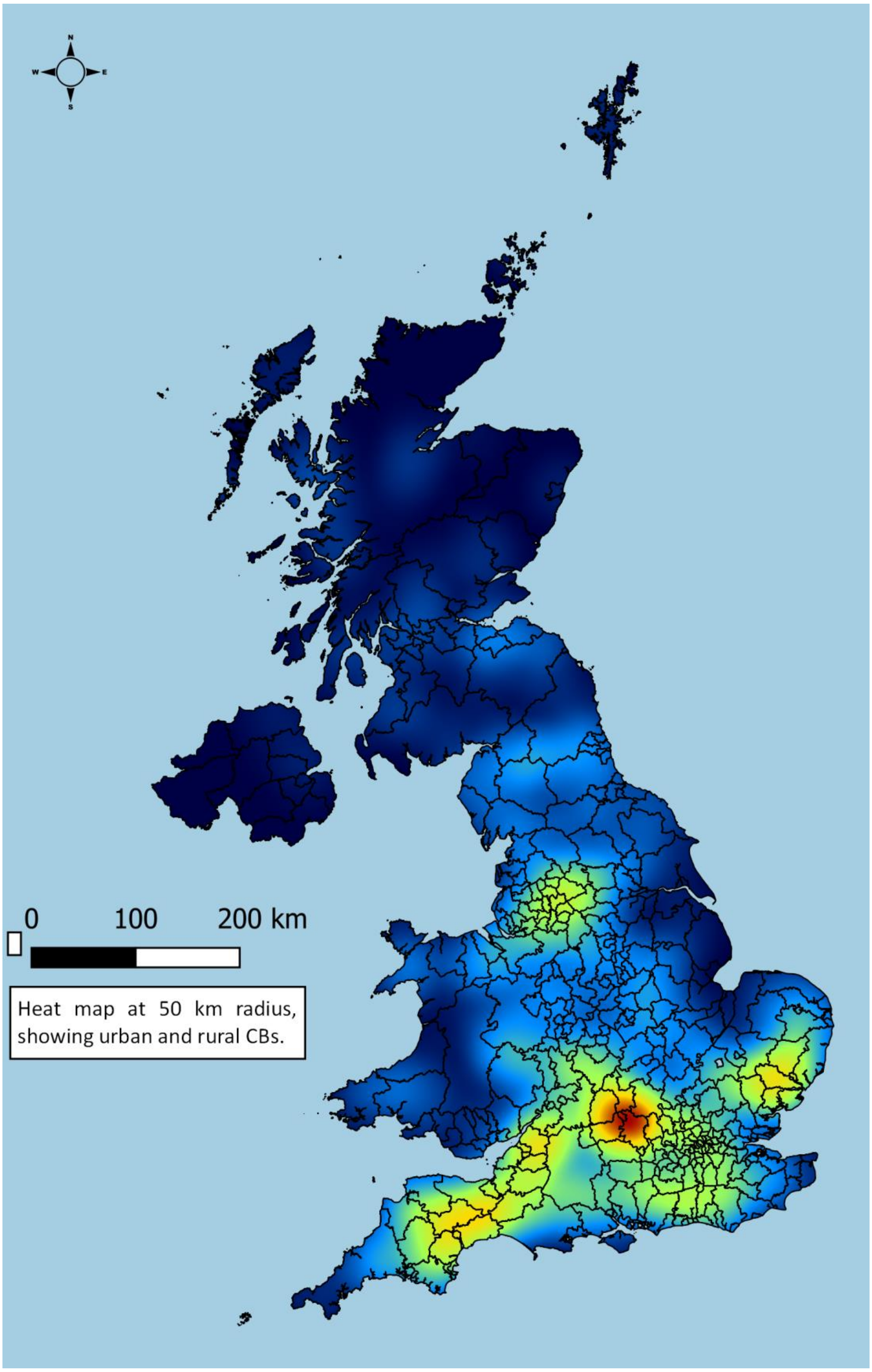


Map 2: Location of Plunkett supported rural community businesses across the UK by enterprise type

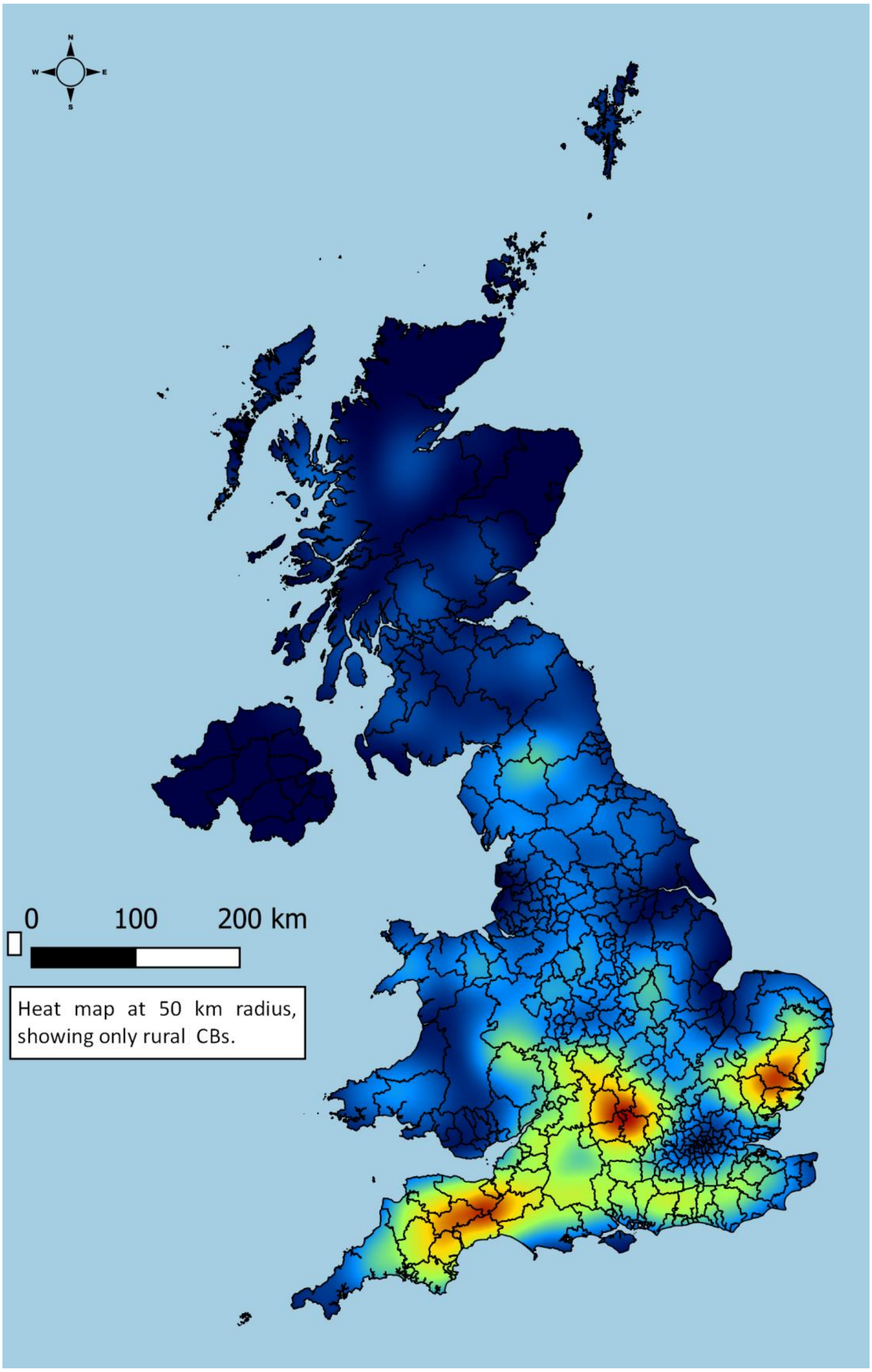
Map 3 also shows the distribution of all Plunkett-supported rural and urban community businesses across the UK using a 'heatmap' approach, while Map 4 takes a similar approach to show only the Plunkett community businesses in rural locations. The heatmap approach visualises locations where higher densities of Plunkett businesses are present within 50km of each other. This map is particularly interesting in terms of highlighting the 'cluster effect,' which is the phenomenon whereby community businesses are more likely to be located near other successful community businesses as they can inspire and learn from one another, and this has (up until the last couple of years at least) been easier where the communities are geographically proximate to one another.

As Map 3 shows, in England, there are clear clusters of community businesses in the South West, South East, East and North West, including a particularly prominent cluster of community businesses in Oxfordshire, around the Foundation's Head Office. There is some clustering of Plunkett-supported community businesses in other parts of the UK though it is less dense. For example, there are some indications of clustering in North and South West Wales, North East Northern Ireland, around Edinburgh and in the Scottish Highlands. Generally-speaking it does appear that 'colder' spots in terms of Plunkett activity include coastal locations, including the east and south coast of England. Overall, Northern Ireland and Scotland are particular cold spots for Plunkett, with this perhaps slightly less true for Wales.

Map 4 only includes rurally-located Plunkett supported community businesses and it is interesting to compare the differences between Maps 3 and 4. Just from a visual examination, the hot spots in the East of England and the South West appear 'hotter', with the South East hot spot in Oxfordshire also very clear. In general, the north of England and parts of coastal England stand out as cold spots, as do Northern Ireland and Scotland.



Map 3: Heatmap of Plunkett supported community businesses across the UK



Map 4: Heatmap of rural Plunkett supported community businesses across the UK

Of the 830 Plunkett businesses mapped across the UK, 628 are in rural areas (76%). Figure 1 shows the breakdown of rural and urban Plunkett-supported community businesses in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (though there are only five Plunkett community businesses in total in Northern Ireland). It is important to note that to classify community businesses into a rural or urban location we have used each country's official rural-urban classification[5].

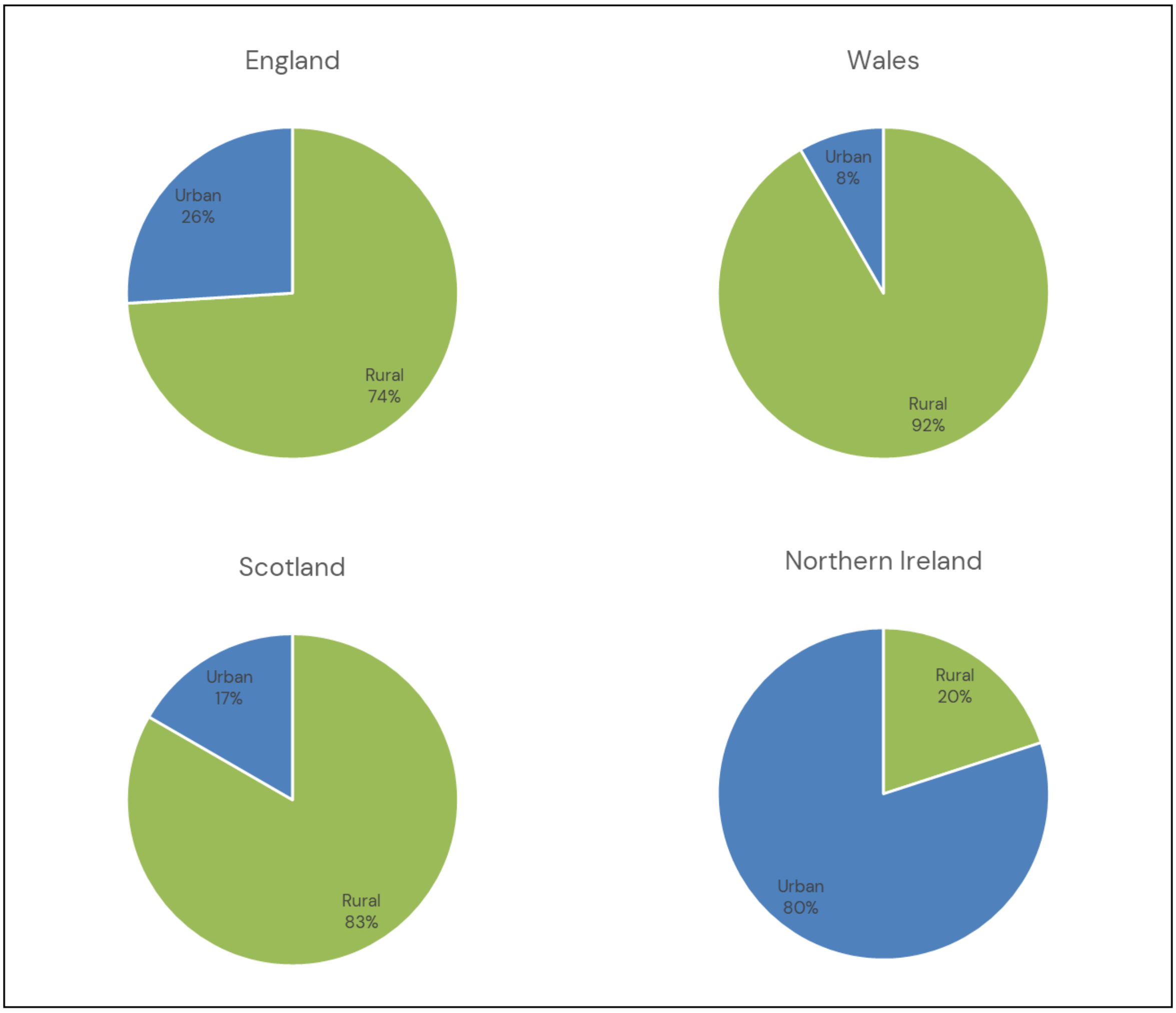


Figure 1: The distribution of Plunkett-supported rural and urban community businesses across the UK.

Figure 1 demonstrates the dominance of rurally-located community businesses amongst the Plunkett portfolio in England, Wales and Scotland. Excluding Northern Ireland, it is in England that Plunkett has the highest proportion of its community businesses in urban locations (26%), but it is likely that many of

[5] In Scotland, the Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification is based on population and accessibility. Rural areas are defined as settlements with less than 3,000 people. In England and Wales, the Rural Urban Classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 residents. In Northern Ireland settlements of less than 4,500 people are recognised as rural.

these businesses are in town and urban fringe locations rather than in inner city locations.

Given the predominance of community businesses in rural locations, as mentioned at the end of the Methods section of this report (Section 3), except where clearly specified, the remainder of this report focuses on Plunkett's rural community businesses and describing the characteristics of the rural areas of the nations of the UK and the English regions (excluding London).

4.2.2 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses across the UK

As described in the Methods section (Section 3) of this report, there were four themes that the research team was particularly interested in exploring in terms of explaining the existence of hot and cold spots for Plunkett's community businesses, which link closely back to the enabling and constraining factors discussed in the evidence review. These are described in this section, with some 'high level' data presented here too in order to enable comparisons across nations of the UK and regions of England. The report then goes on to discuss these characteristics in more detail in rural areas across each of the nations and English regions (excluding London).

Demographic characteristics

The team was particularly interested in exploring the population densities of locations with and without Plunkett rural community businesses, prompted by the link in the literature between establishing a community business and the need for a critical mass of population in the local area (i.e. the hypothesis that areas with very sparse populations would lack the critical mass of people to come together to set up community businesses, or indeed to engage in any community activities). Maps were produced of the population density (population per hectare) for rural Census Output Areas and the locations of rural Plunkett community businesses in England, Scotland, Wales and each of the English regions (Deliverable 3 in the project), using the appropriate classifications in different parts of the UK. The maps also included labels showing the number of households around the community business to give an idea of the extent of household 'clustering' in settlements close to the community business itself. Alongside the maps, the team undertook further analysis of population density data in the nations of the UK and the English regions. The maps and data analysis can be viewed together to discuss the distribution of Plunket supported community businesses across these geographies.

Table 1: Proportion of rural Plunkett CBs and rural population by population density.

Population density	England		Scotland		Wales		Northern Ireland	
	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density
1 (0.00-0.05 ha)	34%	24%	51%	40%	61%	26%	100%	34%
2 (0.51-1.20 ha)	20%	14%	7%	4%	14%	10%	0%	25%
3 (1.21-10.60 ha)	33%	26%	23%	11%	18%	27%	0%	27%
4 (10.61-23.99 ha)	6%	13%	10%	13%	7%	14%	0%	8%
5 (>24.00 ha)	7%	33%	9%	32%	0%	23%	0%	6%

Population density	North East		North West		Yorkshire and the Humber		West Midlands		East Midlands		East of England		South East		South West	
	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density	Rural CB by pop density	Rural population by pop density
1 (0.00-0.05 ha)	30%	16%	23%	47%	34%	24%	46%	27%	26%	23%	24%	21%	26%	17%	41%	26%
2 (0.51-1.20 ha)	0%	7%	13%	10%	3%	11%	27%	16%	32%	13%	22%	13%	20%	15%	20%	13%
3 (1.21-10.60 ha)	60%	25%	27%	27%	24%	26%	17%	25%	26%	27%	42%	28%	44%	33%	28%	27%
4 (10.61-23.99 ha)	0%	14%	13%	3%	24%	14%	8%	11%	11%	12%	5%	13%	3%	12%	6%	13%
5 (>24.00 ha)	10%	38%	24%	13%	14%	25%	2%	22%	5%	26%	7%	25%	7%	24%	6%	21%

Table 1 compares the spread of rural population (by COA) and Plunkett rural community businesses across the UK nations and the English regions. It can be seen that Wales has the highest % of Plunkett rural community businesses in the most sparsely populated areas (61%), especially in comparison to its % of rural COAs in this category (26%). Excluding Northern Ireland, across England, Scotland and Wales, the proportion of Plunkett rural community businesses is higher in the least densely populated areas than the % of population in these areas.

In all English regions, with the exception of the North West, the same Is true: there is a higher % of Plunkett community businesses in the least densely populated areas than the % of population In these areas. This is particularly true of the North East, West Midlands and South West.

Socioeconomic characteristics – Pen Portraits

The research team explored the socioeconomic characteristics of the hot spots and cold spots for Plunkett's community businesses using two datasets. First, due to the time constraints in this project, rather than identify and collate a large number of separate datasets, we decided to use the 'pen portraits' produced by the ONS using 2011 UK Census data[6]. One limitation of the portraits is that they use data from the 2011 Census and do not take into account changes since then, but they do provide an efficient way of describing a range of characteristics of different geographical locations, thereby linking back to the constraining and enabling factors reported in Section 4.1.

There are eight supergroups in the classification, plus 26 groups and 76 subgroups:

1. Rural Residents
2. Cosmopolitans
3. Ethnicity central
4. Multicultural metropolitans
5. Urbanites
6. Suburbanites
7. Constrained city dwellers
8. Hard-pressed living

[6] Output Area Classification data can be downloaded from this link Output Area Classification (2011) | CDRC Data. There is also a downloadable PDF which describes each of the subgroups, groups, and supergroups.

The team produced maps showing the location of Plunkett community businesses across these eight supergroups, with the labels on the maps showing the subgroup for each individual community business.

A set of accompanying graphs and maps focusing only on Plunkett's rural community businesses and rural locations was created. The aim here was to compare the distribution of Plunkett's rural community businesses and the distribution of the rural population in each nation/region across the eight supergroups in order to identify the characteristics of locations in which Plunkett's community businesses tend to be found. These were included in Deliverable 3 (although again the team did some additional analysis to explore this data which was submitted to Plunkett with the draft final report).

Table 2 shows that across England, Scotland and Wales (excluding Northern Ireland with only one Plunkett rural community business) there are more Plunkett rural community businesses in the rural residents supergroup than the % of rural population in this supergroup. This is particularly marked in Wales where 86% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural residents supergroup compared to 49% of the rural population. The rural residents supergroup accounts for 78% of Plunkett's rural community businesses in England and 77% in Scotland.

At regional level in England too the dominance of rural residents areas as locations for Plunkett's rural community businesses is evident - they account for 83% in the North West, 90% in the West Midlands and 85% in the South West (compared to 52%, 62% and 62% of the rural population respectively).

Areas in the rural residents supergroup are characterised by population living in less densely populated areas, generally detached and owner-occupied housing, and often working in the primary sector. These areas are characterised by low levels of unemployment and high levels of private car ownership. The population tends to be older, married and well-educated and there is less ethnic integration in these areas.

In contrast, in all but one of the English regions, a lower proportion of Plunkett supported rural community businesses can be found in supergroup 8 (hard pressed living) than might be expected from the proportion of each region's rural population living in these areas. The exception is the North East of England where 43% of the rural population live in supergroup 8, but 70% of Plunkett's rural businesses are in this supergroup. Although numbers of Plunkett rural businesses are very small in the North East (10), this does suggest that Plunkett's presence in rural areas in this hard-pressed living supergroup is more focused than the share of the region's rural population would imply. Excluding the North East, the highest

% of Plunkett's rural community businesses In the hard pressed living areas can be found In the South East (7%).

In terms of the characteristics of the hard-pressed living supergroup, the population is most likely to be found in urban surroundings, and predominantly in northern England and southern Wales. There tends to be less non-White ethnic representation in these groups than elsewhere in the UK and a higher than average proportion of residents born in the UK and Ireland. Households tend to have rates of divorce and separation above the national average, are more likely to have non-dependent children, and are more likely to live in semi-detached or terraced properties, and to socially rent. There is a smaller proportion of people with higher level qualifications, with rates of unemployment above the national average. Those in employment are more likely to be employed in the mining, manufacturing, energy, wholesale and retail, and transport related industries.

We also explored the distribution of community businesses across the subgroups of the rural residents pen portrait supergroup for all the English regions, Scotland and Wales (as this is the supergroup in which most Plunkett Foundation rural community businesses are found), and this data is presented in the subsequent national/regional analysis.

Table 2: Proportion of rural Plunkett CBs and rural population by pen portrait supergroup.

Pen Portrait Supergroup	England		Scotland		Wales		Northern Ireland	
	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup
1	78%	44%	77%	56%	86%	49%	1%	71%
2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5	10%	13%	7%	6%	2%	7%	0%	4%
6	7%	17%	3%	13%	0%	13%	0%	9%
7	1%	3%	1%	6%	2%	4%	0%	0%
8	4%	26%	11%	20%	9%	26%	0%	16%

Pen Portrait supergroup	North East		North West		Yorkshire and the Humber		West Midlands		East Midlands		East of England		South East		South West	
	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup	Rural CBs by supergroup	Rural Population by supergroup
1	30%	29%	83%	52%	69%	52%	90%	62%	84%	54%	74%	50%	65%	39%	85%	62%
2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
5	0%	8%	3%	8%	21%	10%	8%	8%	5%	8%	7%	15%	18%	23%	8%	12%
6	0%	18%	10%	21%	3%	21%	2%	16%	8%	22%	16%	21%	9%	23%	3%	10%
7	0%	3%	0%	3%	3%	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
8	70%	43%	3%	16%	3%	15%	0%	13%	3%	15%	1%	12%	7%	11%	2%	13%

Socioeconomic characteristics – levels of deprivation

In terms of a second dataset relating to socioeconomic characteristics, the team explored the location of Plunkett's rural community businesses and levels of deprivation across rural areas in the nations/regions. Again linking back to the enabling and constraining factors reported in Section 4.1, we hypothesised that those locations with higher levels of deprivation would be cold spots for community businesses. To do this, we mapped the Index of Multiple Deprivation (England and Wales), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scotland) and Multiple Deprivation Measure (Northern Ireland) across rural areas, and the distribution of Plunkett supported rurally-located community businesses. Before presenting this analysis, it is worth remembering that, as place-based measures of deprivation, the IMD/SIMD/MDM mask levels of deprivation in rural areas which tend to be more dispersed.

Maps, tables and graphs provided to Plunkett in Deliverable 3 show Plunkett businesses by enterprise type against the IMD/SIMD/MDM rank split into five equal interval categories, with the labels showing the rank of each rural community business' location. The team also analysed the distribution of Plunkett's rural community businesses across the UK (see Table 1) and across England's regions (see Table 2) in terms of the deprivation indices, which were split into quintiles.

Table 3 confirms that there are fewer Plunkett rural community businesses In rural areas with the highest deprivation ranking across the nations of the UK, than the % of population living In these areas. This difference Is most marked In England where 1% of Plunkett rural community businesses are In the quintile 1 (the most deprived 20% of rural areas) compared to 10% of the rural population.

The same pattern Is also observed in the English regions again with the exception of the North East where there is a higher % of Plunkett rural community businesses in the most deprived 20% of rural areas compared to the rural population in these areas (30% and 22% respectively). The Yorkshire and the Humber region is the region with the largest contrast with no Plunkett rural community businesses in the most deprived 20% of rural areas In this region, compared to 35% of the rural population.

Table 3: Proportion of rural Plunkett CBs and rural population by IMD ranking.

IMD ranking	England		Scotland		Wales		Northern Ireland	
	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking
1 (20% most deprived)	1%	10%	1%	4%	5%	8%	0%	7%
2	12%	15%	9%	12%	5%	16%	0%	24%
3	35%	29%	63%	37%	45%	28%	1%	31%
4	34%	27%	24%	38%	34%	31%	0%	27%
5 (20% least deprived)	18%	31%	3%	9%	11%	16%	0%	11%

IMD Ranking	North East		North West		Yorkshire and the Humber		West Midlands		East Midlands		East of England		South East		South West	
	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking	Rural CBs by IMD ranking	Rural population by IMD ranking
1 (20% most deprived)	30%	22%	0%	5%	0%	35%	0%	1%	0%	4%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
2	30%	26%	7%	12%	17%	11%	19%	13%	3%	15%	6%	12%	5%	7%	20%	19%
3	10%	24%	53%	26%	28%	27%	29%	36%	18%	21%	42%	33%	20%	24%	45%	38%
4	30%	17%	33%	33%	45%	12%	37%	33%	45%	30%	39%	28%	41%	34%	23%	26%
5 (20% least deprived)	0%	11%	7%	24%	10%	25%	15%	18%	34%	30%	12%	24%	33%	34%	11%	16%

Community organisations and physical infrastructure

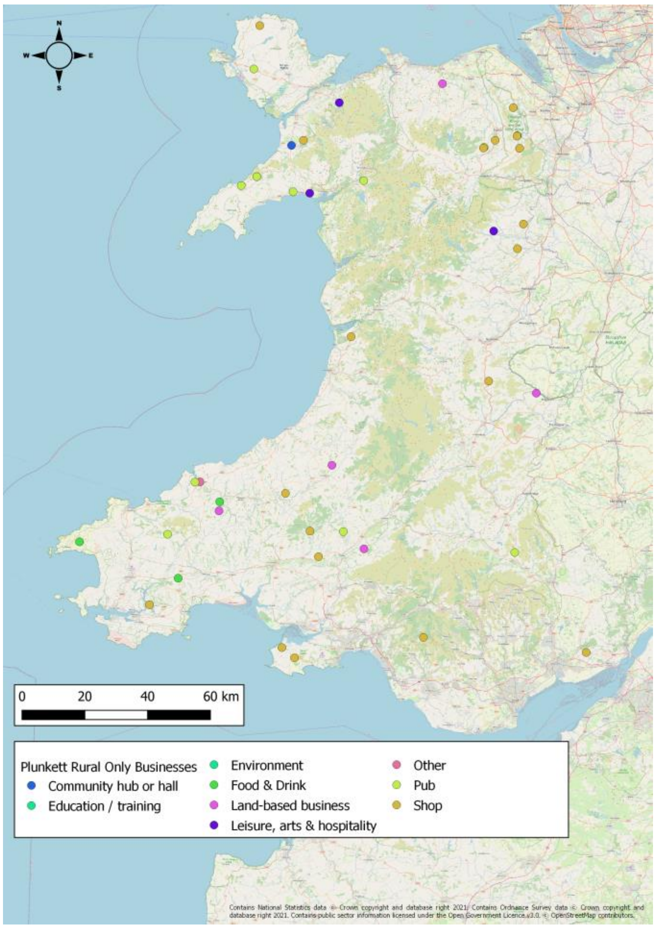
Finally in terms of analysing the characteristics of rural communities alongside the geographical distribution of Plunkett's community businesses, the research team used the Ordnance Survey's Point of Interest database to map: (1) existing community organisations ('Org Pres') including charitable organisations, community networks and projects, religious organisations, sports clubs and associations and youth organisations; and (2) existing community-related physical infrastructure ('Phys inf') including libraries, places of worship and halls and community centres. The rationale for exploring this data was to investigate the existence of other community organisations and infrastructure in the locations where Plunkett's community businesses have been established. On one hand while the existence of these wider community organisations and infrastructure could signal an active community which would have the capacity to set up a community business, the opposite may be true in that a community with this additional activity and Infrastructure may not have the same need to establish a community business as one which does not have this existing level of activity. We do not know from the points of interest database how active the community organisations are nor how well used the infrastructure is.

The labels on the maps already provided to Plunkett show the total number of community points of interest of both types (i.e. organisational presence and physical infrastructure). The distribution of Plunkett's rural community businesses can then be compared against the distribution of these other kinds of community activity and facilities in rural locations. These maps were provided to Plunkett in Deliverable 3 and the key points are summarised in this report.

Based on these key themes, the report now turns to describe, in turn, the rural characteristics of the nations and regions across the UK and the distribution of Plunkett’s rural community businesses in each nation/region. This enables us to understand the characteristics of the locations in which Plunkett’s community businesses are found and where there may be gaps – cold spots – either with similar or different characteristics where Plunkett could target its support in future.

4.2.3 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in Wales

Overall there is a total of 48 Plunkett community businesses in Wales, with 44 of these in rural locations (92%) and 4 in urban locations (8%). Map 5 shows the location of these community businesses in rural Wales. It is worth noting the cluster of community shops in north east Wales and community pubs in north west Wales. The other rural community businesses are widely spread across the country, with some notable visible cold spots, for example, in eastern Wales close to the border with England.



Map 5: Rural Plunkett business locations in Wales.

Figure 2 displays the socioeconomic characteristics for rural Wales as a whole and for the rural locations in which Plunkett's community businesses are located:

- In terms of population density, 61% of Plunkett's rural community businesses in Wales are in areas with the lowest population density (compared to these areas only accounting for one quarter of the rural COAs in Wales). In contrast, Plunkett has supported no community businesses in the rural COAs with the highest population densities which account for one quarter of the rural COAs in Wales.
- 86% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the 'rural residents' supergroup while these areas only account for just under half of the rural COAs in Wales. There are no rural Plunkett community businesses in three of the supergroups ('cosmopolitans', 'ethnicity central' and 'multicultural metropolitans'). In the remaining supergroups, Plunkett rural community businesses are underrepresented, particularly in terms of the 'hard-pressed living' supergroup.
- Exploring the distribution of rural Plunkett community businesses across the pen portrait subgroups within the rural residents supergroup 1 shows a particular presence of rural Plunkett community businesses in those COAs characterised as 'agricultural communities', 'ageing rural flat

tenants' and 'detached rural retirement'. In contrast, rural Plunkett community businesses are under-represented in the 'rural life' subgroup.

- Plunkett's rural community businesses in Wales tend to be concentrated in the less deprived areas (quintile ranks 3-5), with 79% of Plunkett's rural community businesses in IMD quintile ranks 3 and 4. While 8% of COAs in rural Wales are in the most deprived IMD quintile, only 5% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in these locations.
- The research team also explored data relating to the spread of community businesses of different types across areas with different levels of deprivation. Though numbers are small in Wales and so caution is required, rural community businesses (particularly shops) can be found in both the most and least deprived rural locations. 5% of rural community businesses in Wales are in the 20% most deprived areas (compared to 1% in England and 1% in Scotland).

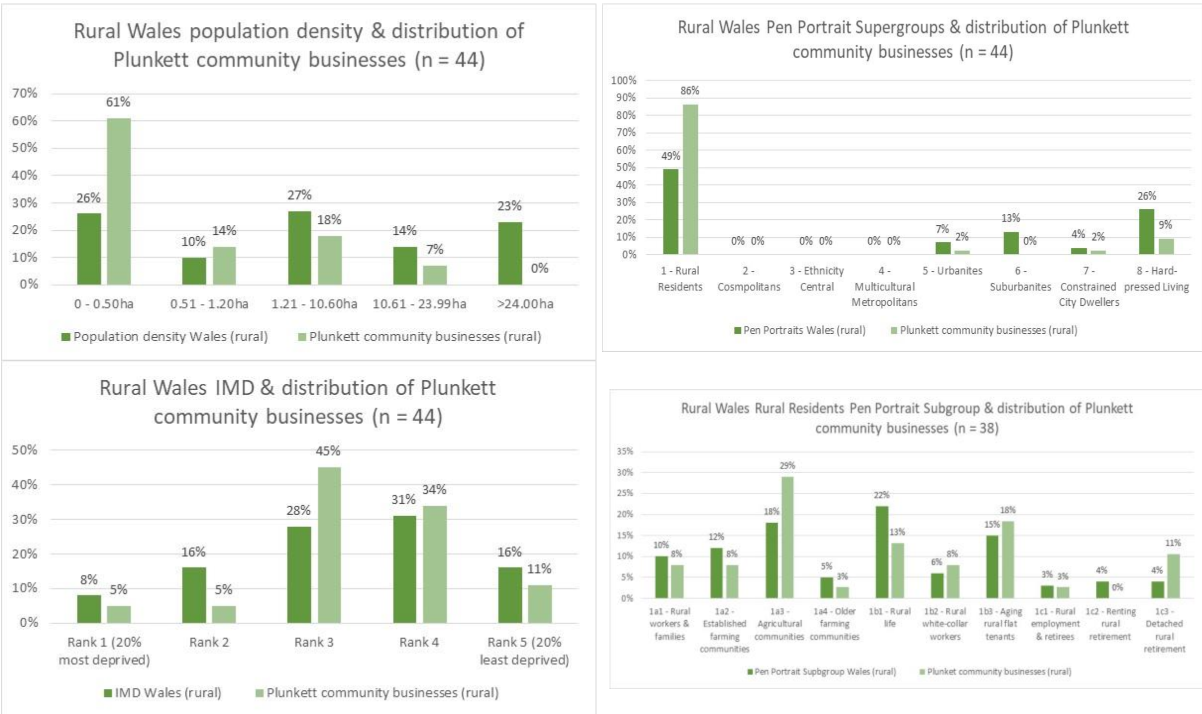


Figure 2: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for Wales.

The points of interest maps of community organisations and physical infrastructure have not been reproduced here for reasons of space. However, Table 4 shows the local authorities (not necessarily themselves defined as rural) in Wales with Plunkett businesses in rural Census Output Areas (COAs) within them and the numbers of points of interest in those rural COAs. Caution is required when interpreting this analysis due to the differences in size of local authorities and in the numbers of (rural) COAs within them. However, notwithstanding these caveats, the data shows that Gwynedd has the highest number of Plunkett community businesses in its rural COAs. It is hard to draw conclusions from the second part of the Table which shows rural COAs by local authority area without Plunkett community businesses, without further analysis including 'controlling for' the factors mentioned above. For example Cardiff is included in this list but as an urban local authority this will have few rural COAs. In contrast, the local authorities at the top of the table are solely/predominantly rural and so would be expected to have more points of interest in rural COAs. It would be interesting to explore any correlations between the location of community organisations and/or physical infrastructure and Plunkett's rural community businesses. A chi-square test would establish statistically the existence or not of a relationship. Exploring the ways in which the organisations and infrastructure are linked with particular Plunkett community businesses in mutually supportive ways would also be interesting.

Table 4: Counts of Plunkett CB locations (or absences) and Points of Interest (POI) by rural Output Area in Local Authority District (LAD) in Wales.

Yes Plunkett - Wales

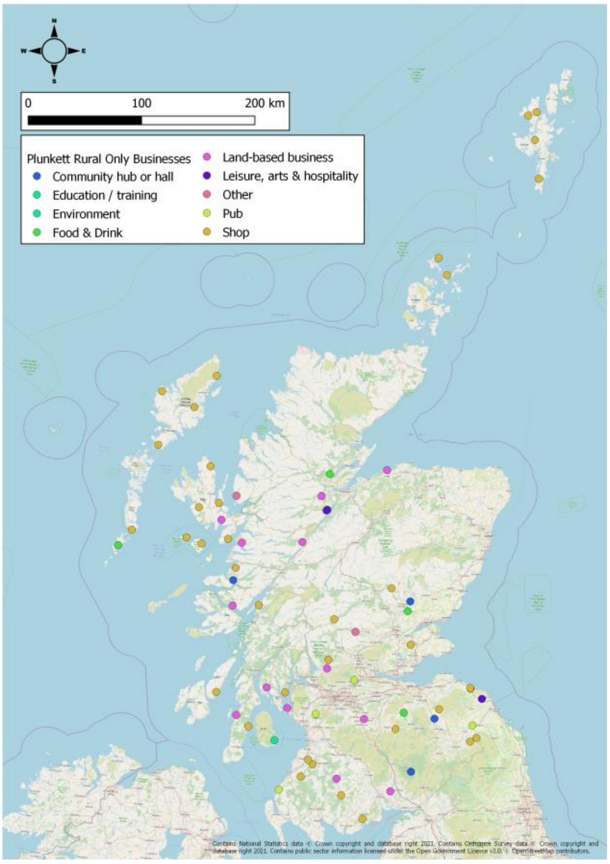
LAD	Plunkett Count	POI Count
Gwynedd	9	20
Pembrokeshire	7	26
Denbighshire	6	8
Powys	6	18
Carmarthenshire	4	15
Ceredigion	4	12
Isle of Anglesey	2	4
Swansea	2	8
Conwy	1	4
Flintshire	1	3
Neath Port Talbot	1	0
Newport	1	2

No Plunkett - Wales

LAD	Plunkett Count	POI Count
Powys	0	788
Gwynedd	0	614
Pembrokeshire	0	483
Carmarthenshire	0	481
Ceredigion	0	346
Isle of Anglesey	0	270
Monmouthshire	0	215
Conwy	0	206
Denbighshire	0	189
Neath Port Talbot	0	136
Wrexham	0	128
Rhondda Cynon Taf	0	122
Flintshire	0	116
Swansea	0	100
The Vale of Glamorgan	0	99
Caerphilly	0	97
Bridgend	0	86
Newport	0	51
Blaenau Gwent	0	34
Merthyr Tydfil	0	22
Torfaen	0	19
Cardiff	0	14

4.2.4 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in Scotland

There is a total of 84 Plunkett community businesses in Scotland, with 70 of those in rural locations (83%) and 14 in urban locations (17%). Map 6 shows the location of these community businesses across rural Scotland. The map shows the relatively high proportion of community shops amongst Plunkett-supported community businesses in Scotland, with several in the Shetland Islands, the Western Isles and north west Highlands and across the south of Scotland (both east and west). There are relatively few Plunkett community businesses in the north east of Scotland, including Aberdeenshire, Angus, Perthshire and Moray.



Map 6: Rural Plunkett business locations in Scotland.

Figure 3 shows the socioeconomic characteristics for rural Scotland as a whole and for the rural locations in which Plunkett's community businesses are found:

- In terms of population density, it can be seen that just over half (51%) of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural COAs with the lowest population density (compared to 61% in Wales for example), compared to only 9% in the rural areas with the highest population density (which account for 32% of COAs in rural Scotland).
- In Scotland, 77% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the 'rural residents' supergroup, while these areas account for 56% of rural COAs in Scotland. As in Wales, there are no Plunkett rural community businesses in three of the supergroups. While 20% of COAs in rural Wales are in the 'hard-pressed living' supergroup, only 11% of Plunkett's rural community businesses can be found in these areas.
- Exploring the distribution of rural Plunkett community businesses across the Pen Portrait subgroups within the rural residents supergroup 1 shows a particular presence of rural Plunkett community businesses in those COAs characterised as 'ageing rural flat tenants' (26% of Plunkett's rural community businesses, compared to 15% of COAs). Approximately 20% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the 'rural workers and families' and 'agricultural communities' subgroups.

- Plunkett's rural community businesses in Scotland tend to be concentrated in SIMD quintile ranks 3 and 4, with 63% of Plunkett's rural community businesses in IMD quintile rank 3. While 4% of COAs in rural Scotland are in the most deprived IMD quintile, only 1% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in these locations. The top quintile (the least deprived COAs) also has few community businesses.

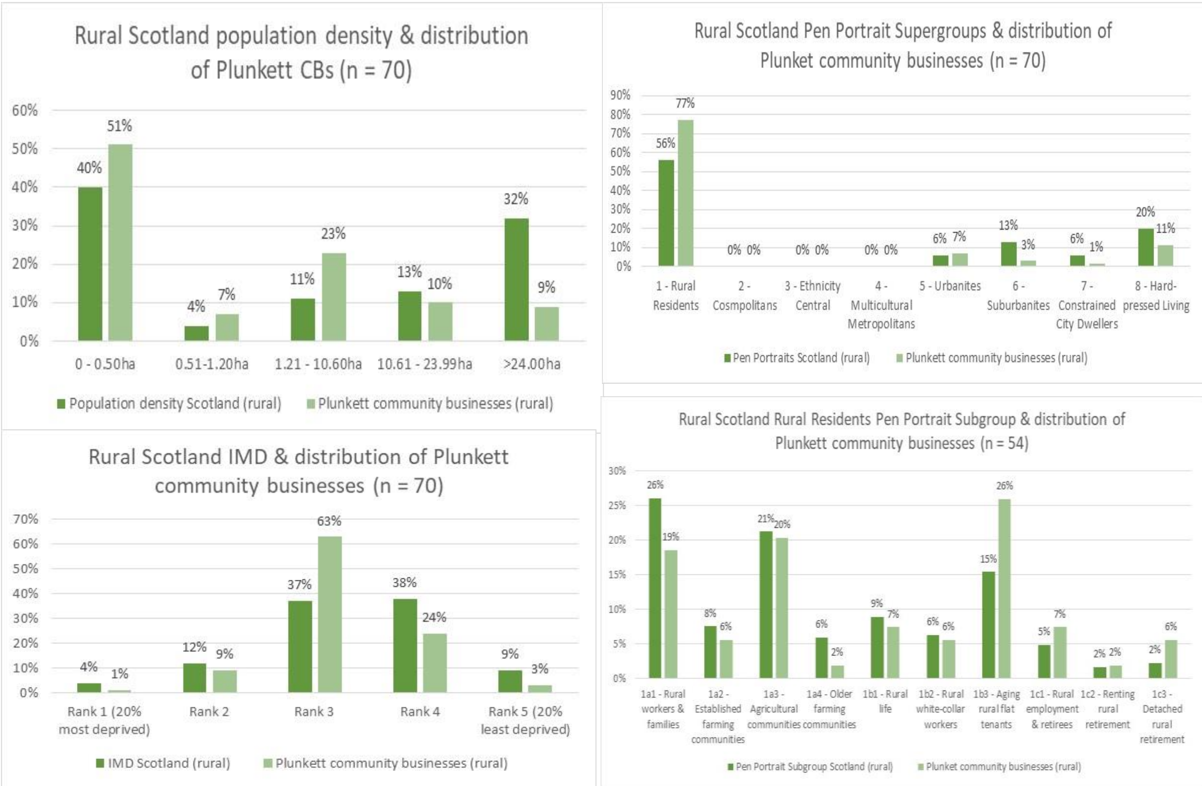


Figure 3: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for Scotland.

Again the maps of community organisations and physical infrastructure are not reproduced here. Table 5 shows the distribution of Plunkett community businesses across rural COAs in Scotland's local authorities. The Table shows the larger number of Plunkett community businesses in rural COAs within the Highland and Scottish Borders local authority areas. Again, it appears that those rural COAs without Plunkett community businesses are relatively well served with other community infrastructure but further in-depth analysis is required to explore this in more detail (including, as mentioned earlier, chi-square statistical tests, for example).

Table 5: Counts of Plunkett CB locations (or absences) and Points of Interest (POI) by rural Output Area in Local Authority District (LAD) in Scotland.

Yes Plunkett - Scotland

LAD	Plunkett Count	POI Count
Highland	17	25
Scottish Borders	10	5
Na h-Eileanan Siar	7	10
Argyll and Bute	6	2
Dumfries and Galloway	5	6
Shetland Islands	4	7
South Ayrshire	4	6
Perth and Kinross	4	5
Stirling	4	2
Orkney Islands	2	2
North Ayrshire	2	1
East Ayrshire	1	2
North Lanarkshire	1	1
Fife	1	0
Moray	1	0
South Lanarkshire	1	0

No Plunkett - Scotland

LAD	Plunkett Count	POI Count
Highland	0	606
Aberdeenshire	0	363
Argyll and Bute	0	275
Dumfries and Galloway	0	246
Perth and Kinross	0	231
Scottish Borders	0	193
Fife	0	179
Na h-Eileanan Siar	0	166
Moray	0	127
Angus	0	118
Shetland Islands	0	107
South Lanarkshire	0	94
Stirling	0	83
Orkney Islands	0	77
East Lothian	0	72
East Ayrshire	0	61
North Ayrshire	0	57
North Lanarkshire	0	47
South Ayrshire	0	46
Midlothian	0	41
Falkirk	0	34
West Lothian	0	33
City of Edinburgh	0	22
Clackmannanshire	0	17
Renfrewshire	0	14
East Dunbartonshire	0	13
Aberdeen City	0	11
Inverclyde	0	9
East Renfrewshire	0	7
West Dunbartonshire	0	4
Dundee City	0	1
Glasgow City	0	1

4.2.5 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in Northern Ireland

There is only one rural Plunkett community business in Northern Ireland (Map 7) and five Plunkett community businesses in total. The Ordnance Survey's Points of Interest database is not available for Northern Ireland.

Figure 4 below provides information on the socioeconomic characteristics of COAs in rural Northern Ireland which may help to guide Plunkett's future strategy there, given that as a whole it is a cold spot for the organisation's current work.

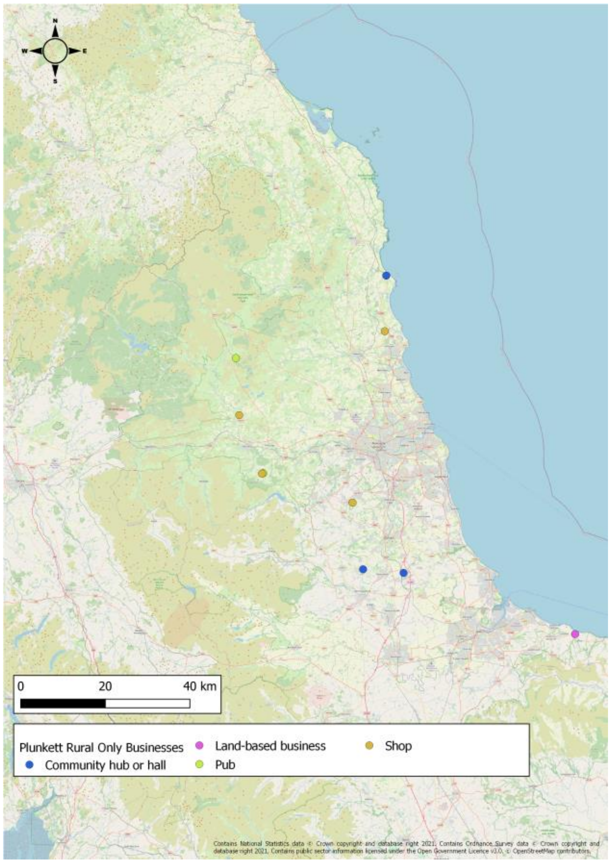
- There is a much more even spread of COAs in the three lowest categories than is the case in rural Wales and Scotland.
- 71% of COAs in rural Northern Ireland are in the 'rural residents' supergroup (and this is where Plunkett's existing rural community business is found too).
- 54% of Northern Ireland's rural COAs can be found in the 'rural workers and families' subgroup within the rural residents supergroup, with 25% in the 'rural life' subgroup.
- The existing Plunkett rural community business can be found in a COA ranked 3 in the MDM quintiles, while there is a relatively normal distribution of COAs across the quintiles in Northern Ireland.

Map 7: Rural Plunkett business locations in Northern Ireland.

Figure 4: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for Northern Ireland.

4.2.6 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the North East region of England

There are only 18 Plunkett community businesses in the North East region, with 10 of those (56%) in rural locations and 8 (44%) in urban locations. Map 8 shows the location of the rural community businesses which are dispersed across the region. It is fair to say that there are large rural cold spots i.e. rural areas in the region with no Plunkett supported community businesses, including large parts of Northumberland and County Durham.



Map 8: Rural Plunkett business locations in the North East region of England.

In the same way as for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, we can explore the socioeconomic characteristics of rural areas (COAs) in the North East region with the characteristics of those rural areas (COAs) with Plunkett community businesses (see Figure 5):

- In terms of the population density of rural areas across the North East region and the distribution of Plunkett's rural community businesses across those rural locations, 60% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in rural areas with a population density of 1.21-10.6 people per hectare. There are more Plunkett community businesses in rural areas with the lowest population density than the share of COAs in that category, while the opposite is true of rural areas in the highest category of population densities.
- The proportion of Plunkett's rural community businesses in the rural residents supergroup Is very similar to the proportion of COAs in this pen portrait (29-30%). All of these community businesses are in the 'rural white-collar workers' subgroup. Interestingly, 60% of Plunkett's rural community businesses (though this is only six) are in the hard-pressed living pen portrait compared to only 43% of rural COAs, suggesting that in the North East region, Plunkett has been effective at setting up community businesses in more deprived locations (albeit only a small number in absolute number terms).

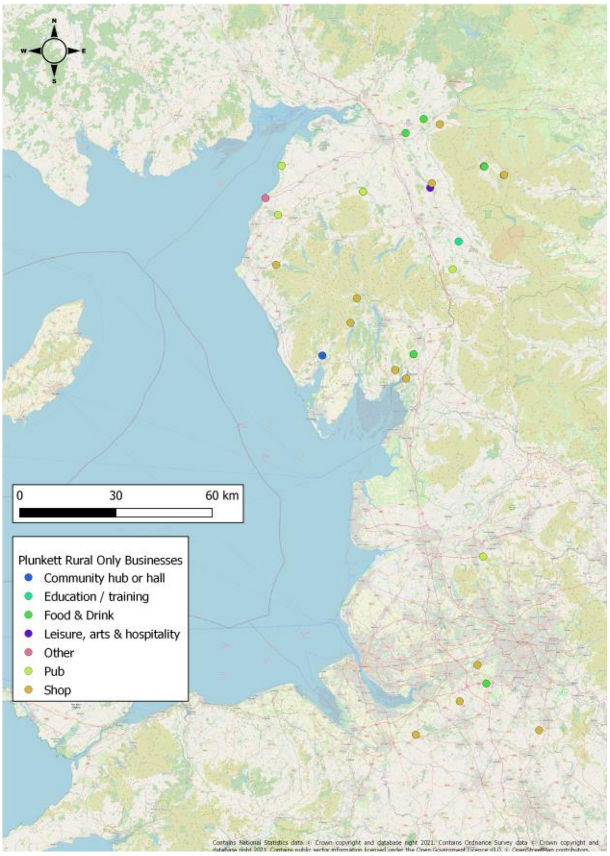
- This observation linked to the pen portraits is also reflected when exploring the location of Plunkett's community businesses compared to the distribution of rural COAs across the IMD quintiles. 30% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are within the top 20% most deprived locations in the North East region compared to 22% of the region's COAs. There are no rural Plunkett community businesses in the least deprived rural COAs in this region.

Figure 5: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for the North East region of England.

Table A1 in the Appendix shows the counts of Plunkett community businesses in local authority areas across England by region. In the North East of England, Northumberland has six Plunkett community businesses in its rural COAs, County Durham has three, while Redcar and Cleveland has one.

4.2.7 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the North West region of England

In total there are 68 Plunkett community businesses in the North West region of England (see Map 9), with 30 (44%) of these in rural locations in the region. Again, the community businesses appear to be relatively spread out across the region with large rural areas having no community businesses, including parts of the Lake District National Park, areas to the north of the Park, and perhaps most notably, areas to the south of the Park area following the M6 corridor through Lancashire, including around the Forest of Bowland and stretching towards the Yorkshire Dales National Park.



Map 9: Rural Plunkett businesses in the North West of England.

Again we can compare the socioeconomic characteristics of rural areas (COAs) in the North West region with the characteristics of those rural areas (COAs) with Plunkett community businesses (remembering though that there are only 30 rural Plunkett community businesses in this region) (Figure 6):

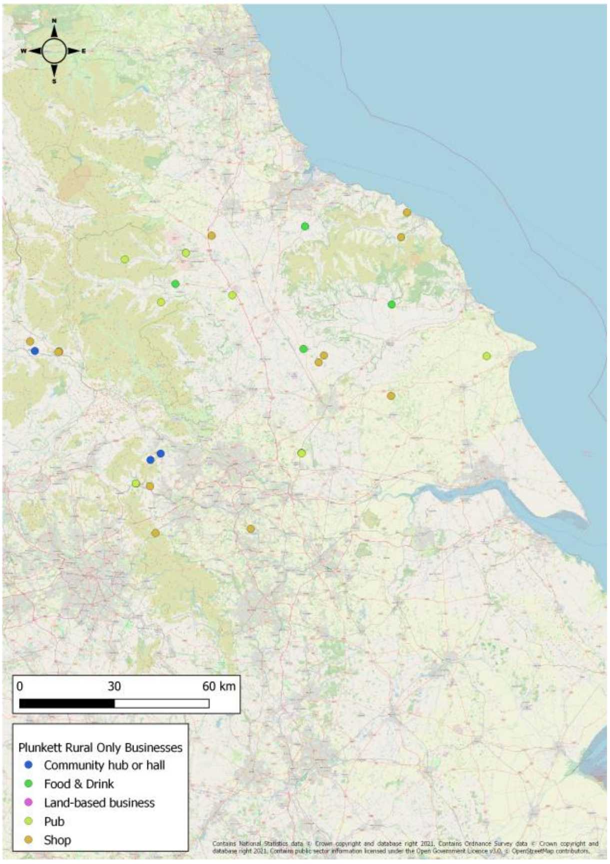
- There is a concentration of Plunkett community businesses in rural areas with very low population densities in this region, with 60% of all rural community businesses in areas with 0-0.50 people per hectare.
- 83% of Plunkett rural community businesses are in the rural residents supergroup and almost half of those are in the ageing rural flat tenants subgroup.
- There are no Plunkett community businesses in the most deprived rural COAs in this region and only 7% in the second quintile group, suggesting that the more deprived rural communities in the North West may be a particular cold spot for Plunkett.

Figure 6: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for the North West region of England.

Again referring to Table A1 in the Appendix, there are nine local authorities with Plunkett community businesses located in rural COAs within their boundaries. Eden has the most with nine Plunkett community businesses, followed by South Lakeland (six) and Allerdale (five). Rural COAs in both Eden and South Lakeland appear also to be relatively well served with other points of interest.

4.2.8 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the Yorkshire and the Humber region of England

There are 51 Plunkett community businesses in the Yorkshire and the Humber region, with 29 in rural areas (57%) and 22 in urban areas (43%) of the region. Map 10 shows the locations of the rural community businesses across the region and again the businesses are relatively dispersed. However, the North Lincolnshire, East Riding of Yorkshire and Harrogate areas stand out as relative cold spots for Plunkett with no or very few (respectively) rural community businesses.



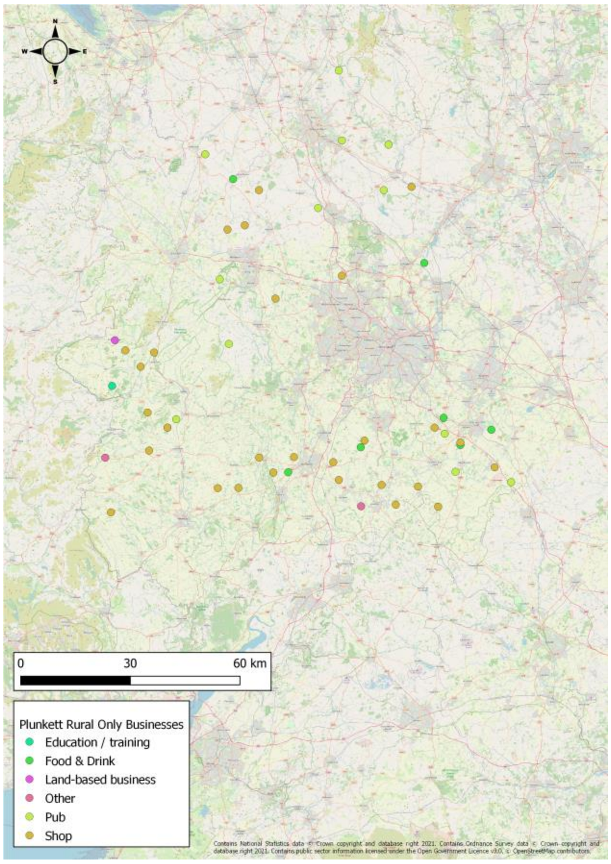
Map 10: Rural Plunkett business locations in the Yorkshire and the Humber region of England.

In terms of socioeconomic characteristics (Figure 7):

- Plunkett community businesses are over-represented in the least densely populated rural areas of the region (with 34% of Plunkett's rural community businesses found in these areas) and under-represented in the most densely populated rural areas.
- 69% of all Plunkett's rural community businesses are found in the rural residents supergroup, compared to just over half of the rural COAs in this region. Plunkett rural community businesses are over-represented in the urbanites supergroup with one in five rural community businesses in this group.
- Within the rural residents supergroup, approximately half of Plunkett's rural community businesses are In agricultural communities and ageing rural flat tenants subgroups.
- There are no Plunkett rural community businesses in the 20% most deprived rural COAs in the Yorkshire and the Humber region (which make up 5% of all rural COAs) and instead most Plunkett rural community businesses can be found in areas ranked 3 and 4.

Figure 7: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for the Yorkshire and the Humber region of England.

Table A1 shows that there are 11 local authorities in the Yorkshire and the Humber region with Plunkett community businesses in their rural COAs. Richmondshire has six Plunkett community businesses, while Hambleton has five and Craven four. Both Richmondshire and Craven also appear to be relatively well served with points of interest too.



Map 11: Rural Plunkett business locations in the West Midlands region of England.

4.2.9 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the West Midlands region of England

In total there are 58 Plunkett community businesses in the West Midlands region of England, with 52 of these (90%) in rural locations and 6 (10%) in urban locations (Map 11). As with the other region maps Plunkett's rural community businesses are relatively dispersed around the region, though Gloucestershire stands out as relative cold spots for Plunkett.

In terms of the socioeconomic characteristics of rural areas in the West Midlands and rural areas with Plunkett community businesses (Figure 8):

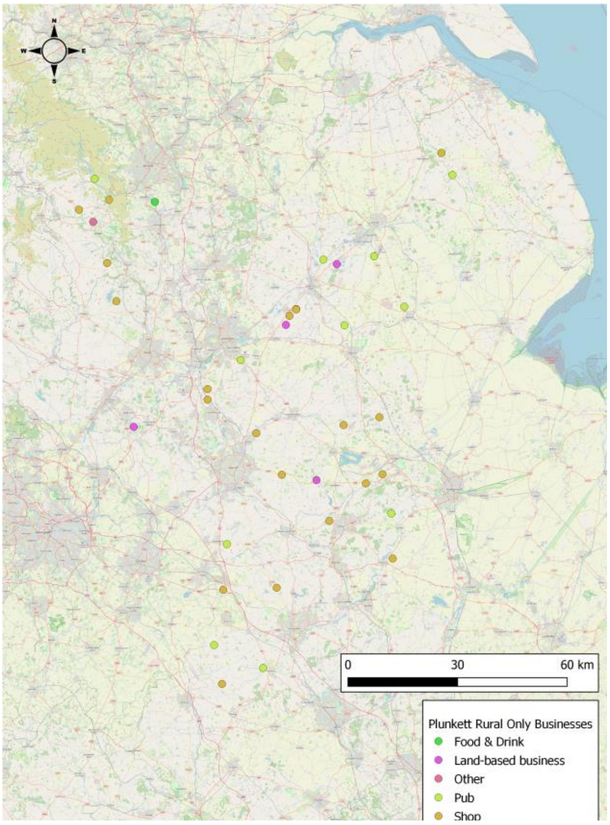
- 46% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the least densely populated rural areas in this region, compared to 27% of the regions rural COAs.
- 92% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural residents supergroup areas compared to 61% of rural COAs. Indeed, it is worth noting that the West Midlands (along with the East Midlands and the South West) has a particular dominance of community businesses in this supergroup.
- Within the rural residents supergroup, Plunkett's community businesses are relatively spread across the subgroups, though just under half of them can be found in the rural white collar workers and established farming communities subgroups.
- There are very few rural COAs and no Plunkett rural community businesses in the most deprived 20% of areas according to the IMD. The majority of Plunkett's rural community businesses can be found in rural areas ranked 3 and 4 on the IMD.

Figure 8: Demographic and socioeconomic data for the West Midlands region of England.

Table A1 shows that there are 13 local authority areas in the West Midlands with Plunkett community businesses within their rural COAs. The local authority areas with the most are Shropshire and Herefordshire. Again rural COA areas in these local authorities also appear to be relatively well served with other points of interest too.

4.2.10 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the East Midlands region of England

There are 45 Plunkett community businesses in the East Midlands region, with 38 (84%) located in rural areas and 7 (16%) located in urban areas. Map 12 shows the Plunkett rural community businesses in the East Midlands region. Lincolnshire stands out from the map as a cold spot for Plunkett as does Nottinghamshire.



Map 12: Rural Plunkett business locations in the East Midlands region of England.

- Figure 9 shows that there are very similar proportions of COAs and rural Plunkett community businesses in the least densely populated rural areas of the region (23% and 26% respectively).
- 84% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural residents supergroup in this region (compared to 54% of COAs) with smaller proportions also in the urbanites, suburbanites and hard-pressed living supergroups (Figure X).
- Within the rural residents supergroup, 38% and 31% of Plunkett's community businesses are in the rural life and rural white-collar workers subgroups.
- There are no Plunkett rural community businesses within the most deprived COAs in the East Midlands. 79% of Plunkett's community businesses are in rural areas ranked 4 and 5 in the IMD, compared to 60% of the region's rural COAs.

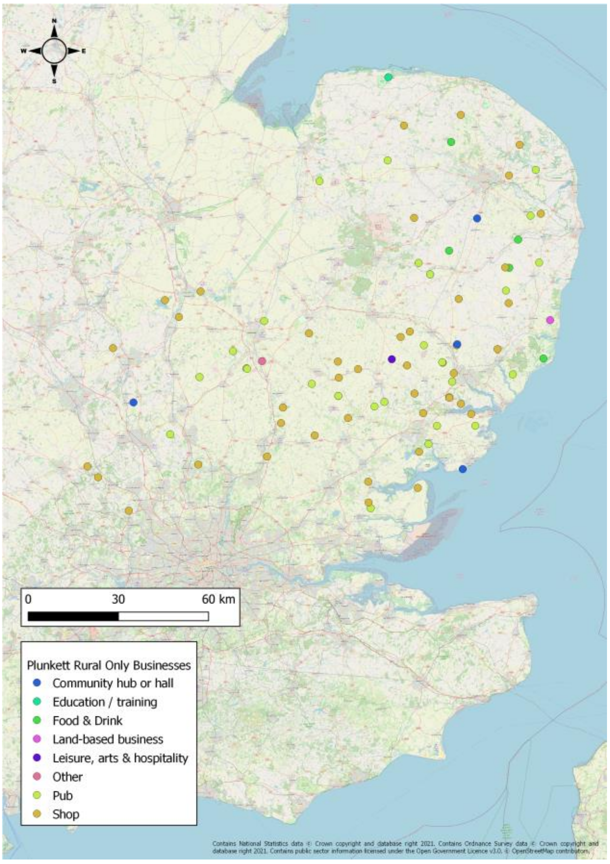
Table A1 shows that a large number of local authorities have Plunkett community businesses in rural COAs. Derbyshire Dales and Rushcliffe local authority areas have the highest number (five) but these numbers might have been expected to be higher given the figures in other regions and the population of this region (the equivalent figures for the points of interest are also relatively low in this region). This suggests that rural areas of the East Midlands may be a cold spot for Plunkett.

Figure 9: Demographic and socioeconomic data for the East Midlands region of England.

4.2.11 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the East of England region of England

In total there are 102 Plunkett community businesses in the East of England region (see Map 13), with 85 (83%) of these in rural locations.

- Figure 10 shows that roughly one in five rural COAs and rural Plunkett community businesses can be found in the least densely populated COAs in the region.
- 74% of Plunkett's rural community businesses can be found in the rural residents supergroup compared to half of its rural COAs. Plunkett's rural community businesses can also be found in the urbanites and suburbanites supergroups.
- Focusing on just those Plunkett rural community businesses in the rural residents supergroup, the majority are in the established farming communities, rural life and rural white-collar workers subgroups.
- Very few rural COAs and Plunkett rural community businesses are located in the 20% most deprived rural parts of the region. As has been the case in other regions, the majority of Plunkett's rural community businesses are located in less deprived rural areas i.e. those ranked 3 and 4.



Map 13: Rural Plunkett business locations in the East of England region

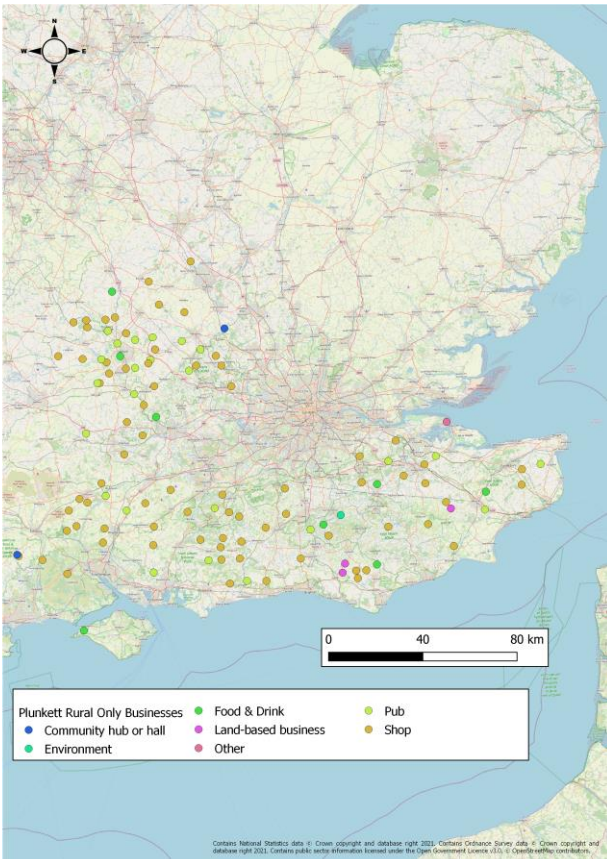
Table A1 shows the spread of Plunkett community businesses in rural COAs across a number of local authority areas, with the highest count in Mid Suffolk (13), an area which also has a notable presence of other points of interest. Babergh and Breckland also have eight and seven Plunkett community businesses in rural COAs respectively.

Figure 10: Demographic and socioeconomic data for the East of England region

4.2.12 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the South East region of England

In total there are 150 Plunkett community businesses in the South East region of England, of which 113 (75%) are in rural locations (see Map 14).

- Figure 11 shows the over-representation of Plunkett rural community businesses in areas with very low population densities in this region, with one in four Plunkett rural businesses in this category compared to 17% of COAs



- 65% of Plunkett's rural community businesses in the South East are in supergroup 1 rural residents compared to 39% of COAs.
- 55% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural white-collar workers subgroup of the rural residents supergroup, with 18% in the agricultural communities subgroup.
- The proportion of Plunkett supported community businesses located in the least deprived rural areas (33%) aligns closely with the overall proportion of least deprived rural areas in this region (34%). The proportions of COAs and Plunkett-supported rural areas in the most deprived rural areas in this region are low.

Table A1 shows the distribution of Plunkett community businesses across rural COAs in the South East's local authority areas. West Oxfordshire is the local authority area with the highest count of Plunkett community businesses in rural locations (nine), and South Oxfordshire has eight. This confirms the cluster of Plunkett community businesses evident in Maps 3&4.

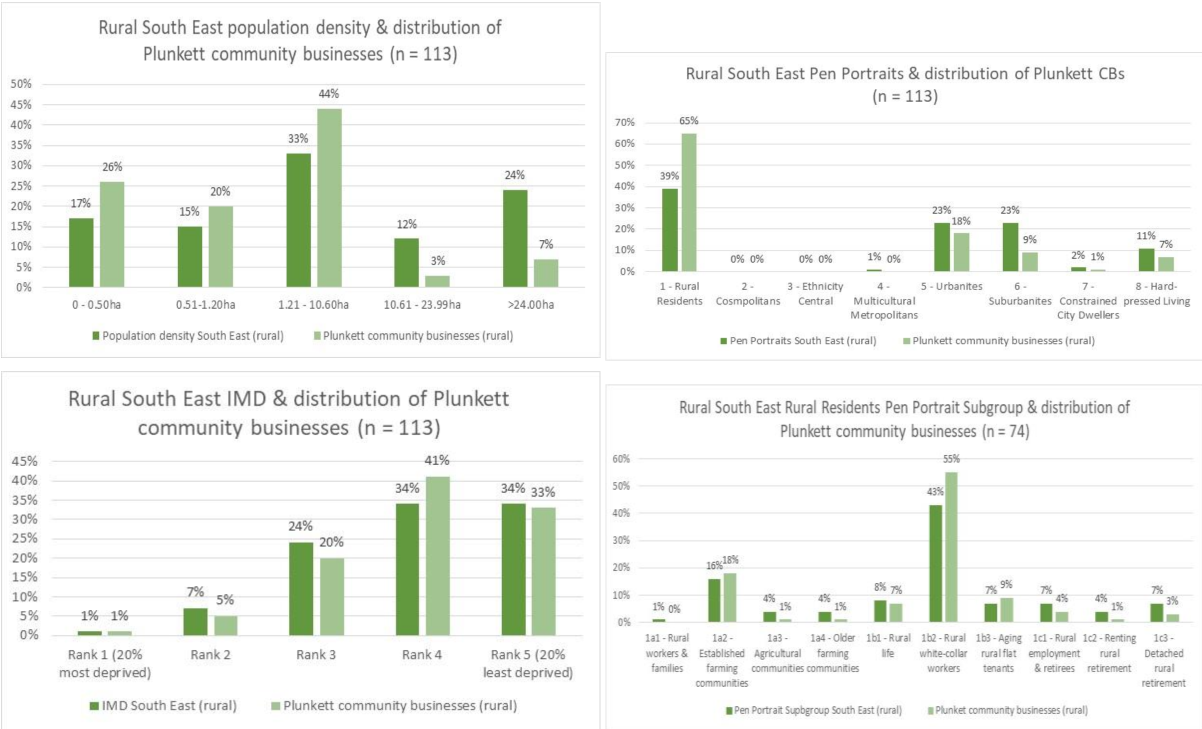
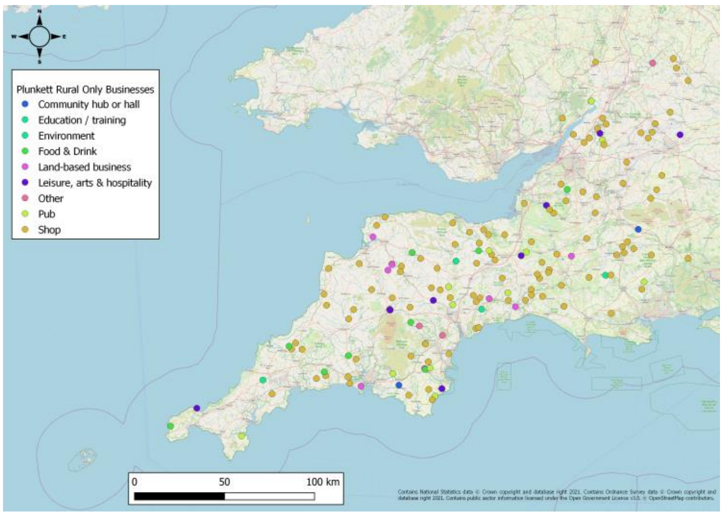


Figure 11: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for the South East region of England.

4.2.13 Exploring Plunkett's rural community businesses in the South West region of England

In total there are 187 Plunkett community businesses in the South West region of England with 156 (83%) of those in rural locations (see Map 15).

- Figure 12 shows that 41% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural COAs with the lowest population densities (compared to 26% of rural COAs). A further 48% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in areas with low population densities.
- 85% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the rural residents supergroup (compared to 62% of COAs).
- Within the rural residents supergroup, just under two thirds of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the agricultural communities, rural



Map 15: Rural Plunkett business locations in the South West region of England.

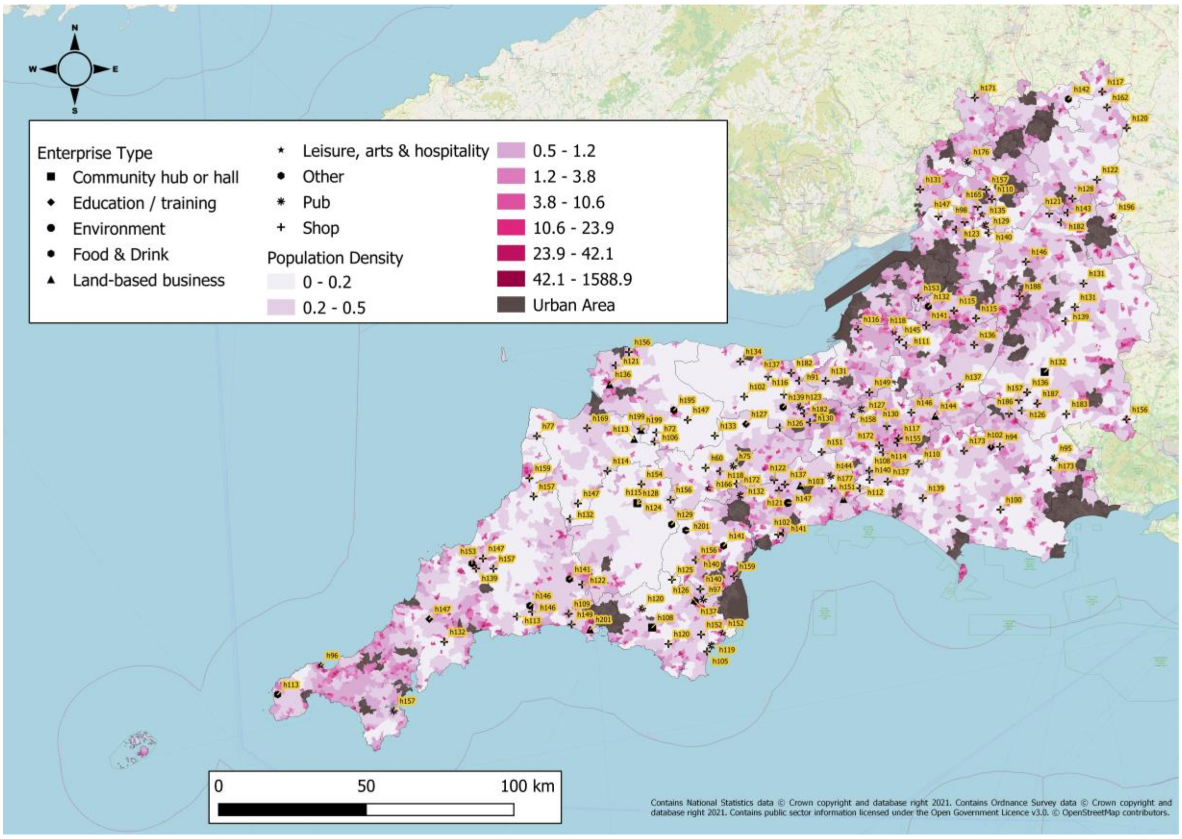
white-collar workers and ageing rural flat tenants subgroups.
- Very small proportions of COAs and Plunkett rural community businesses are in the most deprived rural areas of the region. 45% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are in the areas ranked 3 on the IMD.

Figure 12: Rural demographic and socioeconomic data for the South West region of England.

Table A1 shows that Cornwall has the highest number of Plunkett community businesses in its rural COAs (19), followed by Wiltshire, East Devon and South Hams. These areas also appear to be relatively well served with other points of interest too.

Given the relatively large number of Plunkett community businesses in rural areas of the South West region it was possible to do some additional analysis, for example to compare the distribution of different types of Plunkett community business across rural areas with varying population densities.

Map 16 and Table 6 explain the distribution of different Plunkett enterprises by population density in rural locations in the South West region. 41% of Plunkett businesses in the South West of England are located in rural areas with population densities between 0-0.50. In rural areas with population densities between 0-10.60, shops are the most common enterprise type. There are smaller proportions of Plunkett community businesses in rural areas with higher population density.



Map 16: Location of rural Plunkett supported community businesses by enterprise type in South West England with population density information at the census output area level.

Table 6: Count of rural Plunkett supported community businesses by enterprise type in South West England under five population density brackets.

Population density	0 – 0.50	0.51-1.20	1.21 - 10.60	10.61 - 23.99	>24.00
Community hub or hall	0	0	0	2	1
Education/training	1	0	0	1	1
Environment	0	0	1	0	0
Food & drink	5	0	1	1	2
Land-based	1	3	4	0	0
Leisure, arts & hospitality	0	0	2	2	4
Other	2	0	1	0	1
Pub	7	3	2	0	0
Shop	48	25	32	3	0
Total	**64**	**31**	**43**	**9**	**9**
Proportion by percentage (% rural population)	**41% (26%)**	**20% (13%)**	**27% (27%)**	**6% (13%)**	**6% (21%)**

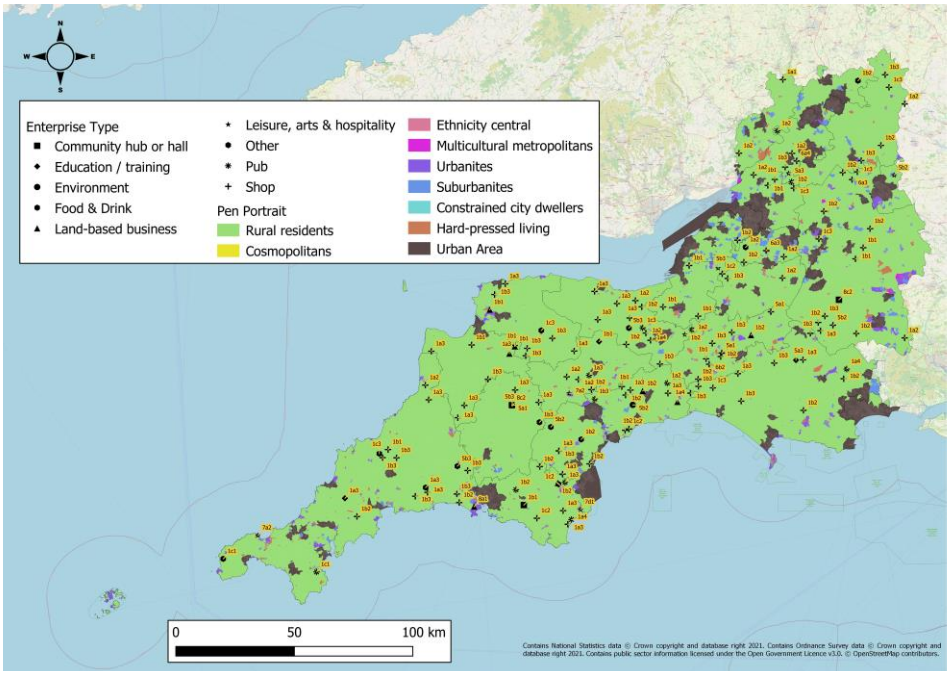
This analysis was also undertaken for the other English regions (with some regions grouped due to small counts, and the business types grouped into shop, pub and other due to small counts) and was presented to Plunkett in a new Deliverable 3 alongside this report.

The analysis demonstrates that across the UK, shops are the most common community business type in areas of lower population densities while pubs tend to become more prevalent as population density increases. For example, in England 58% of Plunkett's rural community businesses are shops in the 0.00-0.50 population density category (56% in Scotland, 48% in Wales), whereas in the >24.00 people per hectare population density category, this drops to 17% in England (and 33% in Scotland and 0% in Wales).

Exploring regional patterns shows that, in the majority of English regions, shops are most prevalent in the 0.00-0.50 and 1.21-10.6 people per hectare category, with the exception of the East and West Midlands where they are most prevalent in the 0.51-1.21 people per hectare category. For all English regions, pubs are most common across the 0.50-10.6 people per hectare category. This analysis suggests that community shops may in many instances be providing a vital retail function in areas of low population density/remote rural locations, in addition to any wider social and community benefits that they are generating.

Again, for illustrative purposes here we have included one map of the South West region (Map 17) and a Table showing the distribution of community businesses across the pen portrait subgroups under the pen portrait supergroup 1 (Table 7).

Plunkett businesses located in rural residents supergroup areas in South West England are mostly located in areas classified by rural white-collar workers (22%) with this subgroup representing 21% of the South West's Rural Residents supergroup overall. This is followed by agricultural communities (20%), and ageing rural flat tenants (20%) with both of these sub-groups representing 16% of the South West's Rural Residents supergroup. Areas with rural white-collar workers tend to be less densely populated and have a higher proportion of people working in information, communication, and finance related industries. Areas with agricultural communities also tend to be less densely populated and have a higher proportion of people employed in the agricultural industry. Areas with ageing rural flat tenants have a higher proportion of people who are aged 65 and over and live in slightly denser populated areas. A higher proportion of households live in flats and socially rent whereas a lower proportion of people work in the information, communication and finance sectors.



Map 17: Location of rural Plunkett supported community businesses by enterprise type in South West England with pen portrait supergroup information at the census output area level.

Table 7: Count of rural Plunkett supported community businesses by simplified enterprise type in South West England by pen portrait subgroup type under the rural residents supergroup.

Pen Portrait Subgroup	Shops	Pubs	Other	Total	Proportion by percentage	SW rural population
1a1 – Rural workers & families	1	0	0	**1**	**1%**	**2%**
1a2 – Established farming communities	12	3	1	**16**	**12%**	**11%**
1a3 – Agricultural communities	22	2	3	**27**	**20%**	**16%**
1a4 – Older farming communities	1	2	1	**4**	**3%**	**5%**
1b1 – Rural life	12	0	4	**16**	**12%**	**17%**
1b2 – Rural white-collar workers	21	2	6	**29**	**22%**	**21%**
1b3 – Ageing rural flat tenants	24	1	1	**26**	**20%**	**16%**
1c1 – Rural employment & retirees	0	1	1	**2**	**2%**	**4%**
1c2 – Renting rural retirement	3	0	1	**4**	**3%**	**4%**
1c3 – Detached rural retirement	5	1	2	**8**	**6%**	**5%**

4.3 Other organisations working in support of (rural) communities across the UK

The next stage of this project involved desk-based research to identify other organisations operating in different ways either UK-wide or in different parts of the UK in support of community-based enterprise. The research team identified a comprehensive (though we acknowledge not fully complete) list which can be seen in Box 3.

- **UK-wide organisations**: National Lottery Community Fund; Co-operatives UK, Social Enterprise UK; UK Government Community Ownership Fund; various energy companies with renewable energy community benefit schemes.
- **Scotland:** Scottish Government (Including Rural Communities Testing Change Fund, plus through funding of e.g. Community Shares Scotland; Community Enterprise; Community Enterprise in Scotland; Scottish Land Fund; National Lottery Scotland-specific funding streams (e.g. Awards for All Scotland, Community-led Fund Scotland); SEPA; DTAS and Community Shares Scotland; Community Land Scotland; Scottish Land Commission; Community Energy Scotland; Community Woodlands Association; Scottish Forestry; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; South of Scotland Enterprise; Cooperative Development Scotland; Crown Estate Scotland; Scottish Community Alliance; Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).
- **England:** Power to Change; Locality; Social and Sustainable Capital; the Co-op (England); Access - the Foundation for Social Investment; ACRE - Action with Communities in Rural England; Cooperative and Community Finance.
- **Wales:** Development Trusts Association Wales; Wales Co-operative Centre (including Social Business Wales programme); Wales Council for Voluntary Action (including Social Investment Cymru programme); Welsh Government; Menter a Busnes; National Lottery (Wales specific programmes).
- **Northern Ireland:** Development Trusts Association Northern Ireland; Rural Community Network; Co-operative Alternatives.

Box 3: List of organisations working across/In different parts of the UK In support of community and/or social enterprise.

It is perhaps worth making a couple of summary points about the information in Box 3. First, Co-ops UK and Social Enterprise UK are important organisations operating at the UK scale (covering rural and urban locations), but they have a focus on specific business models; the others in the relatively limited list of UK-wide organisations tend to be focused on providing funding for broad kinds of community activity. Exploring the support organisations which operate in the different parts of the UK demonstrates the varied 'landscapes of support' in the different nations (as mentioned earlier in Section 4.1) and therefore the different types of social/community enterprise that have emerged, and suggest that, for a relatively small organisation like Plunkett, operating at UK scale in such different contexts is likely to be challenging. It will not simply be possible to 'transfer' one way of working from England to Wales or Scotland for example, as the legislative, political, policy and institutional/organisational contexts are so different across the UK. This issue is returned to later in the report as it was discussed in-depth in the interviews.

After identifying this comprehensive list of organisations providing support to communities across, and in different parts of, the UK, the research team then sought to gain access to data from some of these organisations in order to be able to map the locations in which they have been active (their hot spots) and inactive (their cold spots) and to see if these hot and cold spots are in the same locations as Plunkett's.

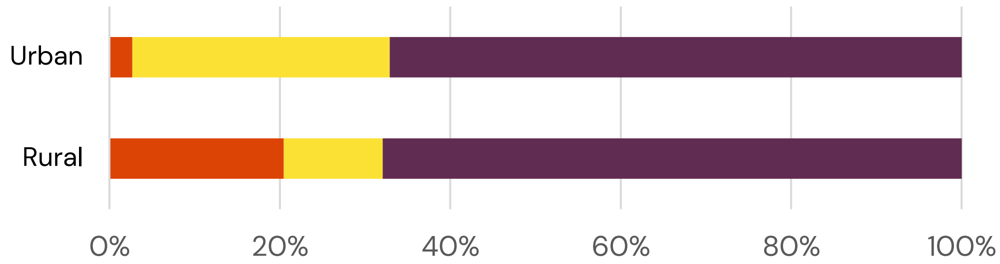
The limited timescale and resources of this project meant that it was only possible to obtain and map a relatively limited amount of data which provides a starting point for this kind of spatial analysis of data from different organisations. With more time, it may be possible to explore the potential for data sharing with more organisations to produce a comprehensive package of maps which could be overlain on one another to identify 'persistent' hot and cold spots for all organisations. Such an exercise may be particularly useful in informing the future funding and support decisions of a range of organisations, including decisions by Government around future replacements for EU LEADER funding in rural areas, particularly if there is a desire for this funding to target 'hard-to-reach' communities that haven't previously accessed funding.

The team did manage to obtain data for the UK as a whole from Social Enterprise UK and Coops UK. Social Enterprise UK is the national membership organisation for social enterprises and their supporters. The data obtained (from Social Enterprise UK via the Plunkett team) provides postcode information for all social enterprises which are either currently receiving support from the organisation, or have done recently. Co-operatives UK is the voice for the UK's thousands of independent co-ops and it provides support for co-ops to start up and thrive. Their (open source) organisation data provides postcode information for coops that they have supported[7]. Given the focus of Plunkett's activities in rural areas the maps in this section only focus on rural social enterprises/co-ops/community businesses.

[7] See Open data | Co-operatives UK for more information on this data.

Given the focus of Plunkett’s work to date has been in rural locations, and this is likely to be the case in future too, it was interesting firstly to compare the rural and urban presence of these different organisations. This exercise was undertaken for Plunkett Foundation, Co-ops UK and SEUK data (see Figure 13). It can be seen that while Plunkett's community businesses only make up 2% of organisations supported by these three organisations across the UK, Plunkett's community businesses make up 19% of rural organisations supported by the three organisations across the UK. Interestingly Co-ops UK accounts for a very similar proportion of co-ops in rural and urban areas of the UK.

Whilst Plunkett supported businesses are most likely to be in rural areas (76%) compared to urban areas (24%), over 80% of those supported by Social Enterprise UK are located in urban areas and 71% of those supported by Co-operatives UK. Figure 13 shows the distribution of enterprises supported by the three organisations across rural and urban areas of the UK.

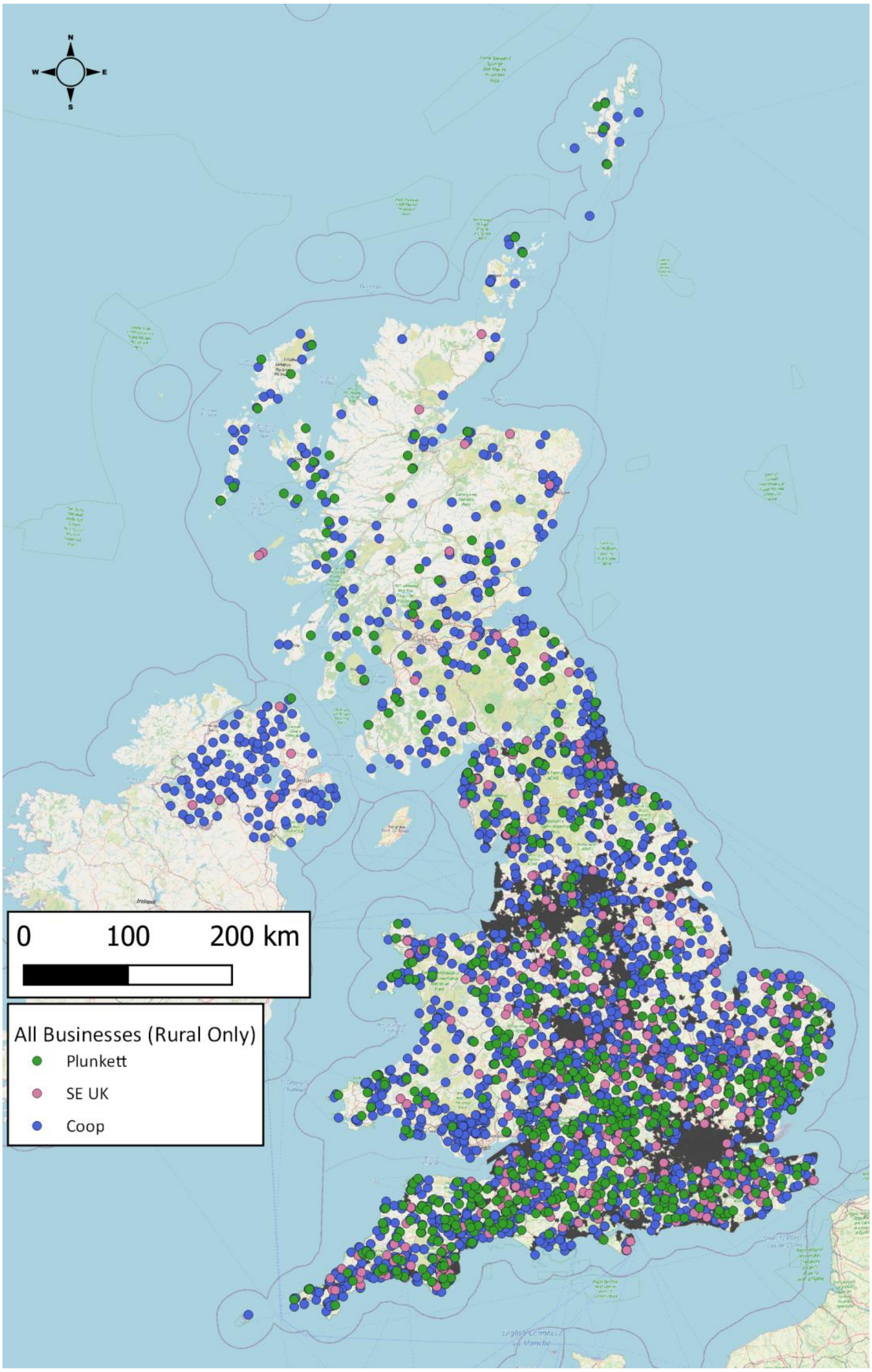


	Rural	Urban
Plunkett	19%	2%
Social Enterprise UK	11%	26%
Coop	64%	58%

Plunkett   Social Enterprise UK   Coop

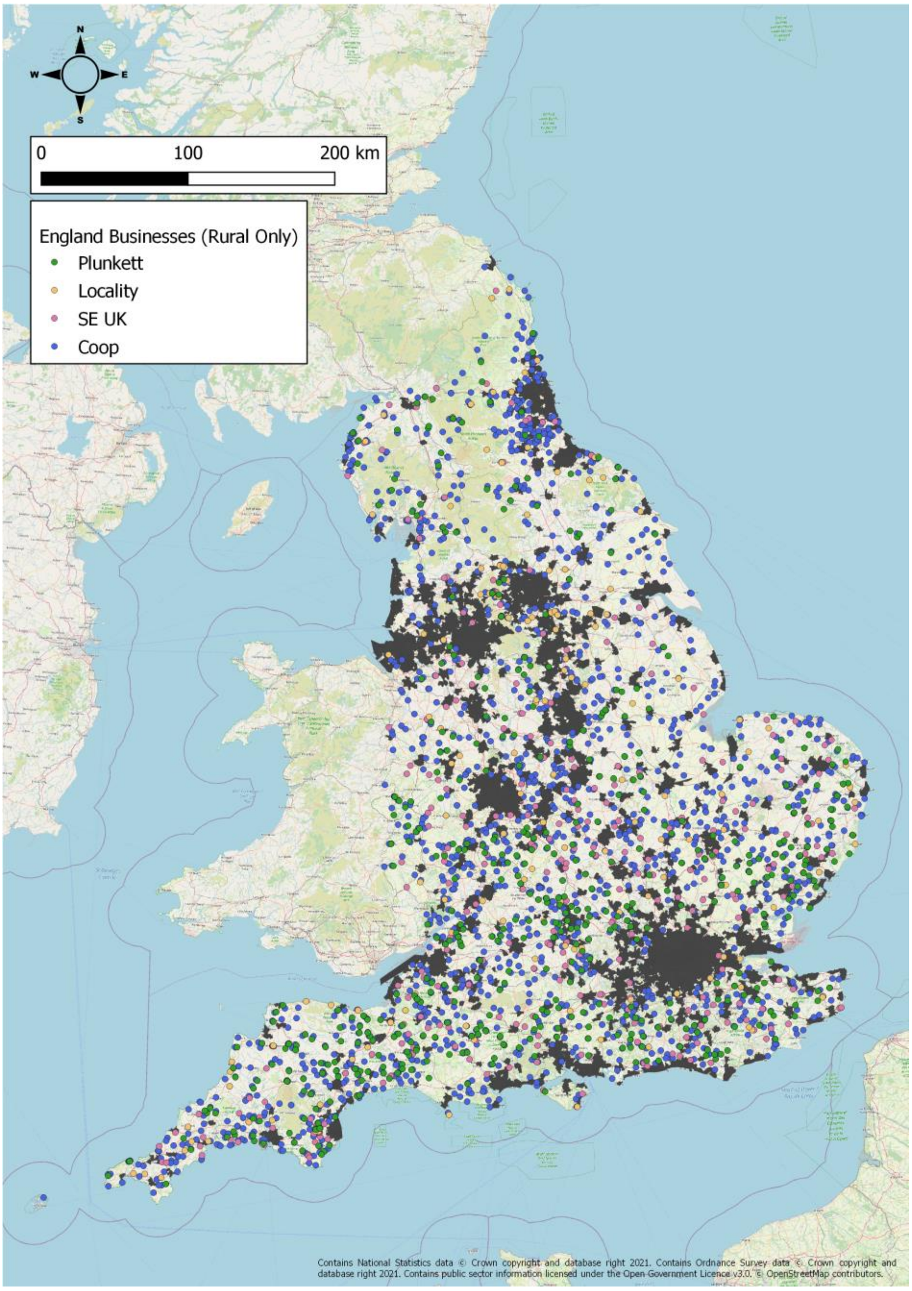
Figure 13: Percentage distribution of Plunkett, Locality, Social Enterprise UK, and Coop businesses between urban and rural areas in the UK.

Map 18 shows the distribution of rural Plunkett, SEUK, and Coop businesses across the UK. What perhaps ‘stands out’ the most is the dominance of enterprises for all organisations across southern England, though this is perhaps less so the case for Co-ops UK, which has a strong presence in rural areas across the country, including Northern Ireland, northern England and Scotland. In contrast, SEUK’s presence does appear to be particularly strong in rural areas of the south of England and the Midlands. It is perhaps also worth noting that beyond the south of England, the ‘overlap’ between the locations in which the three organisations have been working is minimal perhaps suggesting that they are operating in complementary locations outwith southern England.



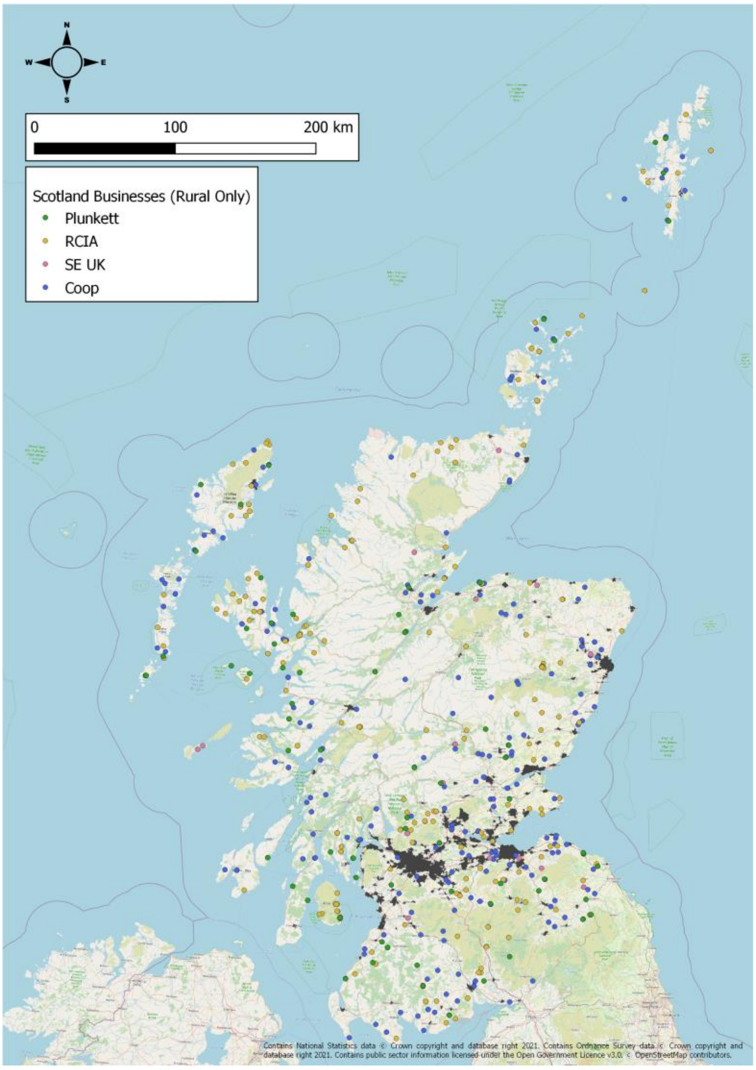
Map 18: Rural locations of SEUK, Co-ops UK and Plunkett Foundation enterprises across the UK.

We were also able to obtain data from Locality, the national network supporting community organisations in England. Map 19 focuses on England only, plotting the rural locations that SEUK, Co-ops UK, Plunkett Foundation and Locality have operated in. Again, just based on a visual examination of the map, it does seem that these organisations are operating in different rural areas with minimal duplication of their activities in terms of geographical locations. Again the particular cluster of Co-ops UK activity in rural areas of the North East of England is interesting.



Map 19: Rural locations of Locality, SEUK, Co-ops UK and Plunkett Foundation enterprises across England.

For Scotland, we obtained postcode information for community groups that have recently received funding from the Scottish Government's 'Rural Communities Ideas into Action (RCIA) Fund'[8]. Map 20 shows the geographical spread of rural locations in which support has been received from Plunkett Foundation, SEUK, Co-ops UK and the RCIA funding. As mentioned previously SEUK has a relatively limited presence in Scotland, and it is interesting to note the locations of the RCIA funded projects many of which are in locations with no other organisational presence. One of the aims of this funding for Scottish Government was to encourage applications from community groups that hadn't engaged previously, although it is worth noting that the short timescale for the funding meant that many of the groups that received funding were already active in the sense of having previously received funding for community-based activities.



Map 20: Rural locations of RCIA, SEUK, Co-ops UK and Plunkett Foundation enterprises across Scotland.

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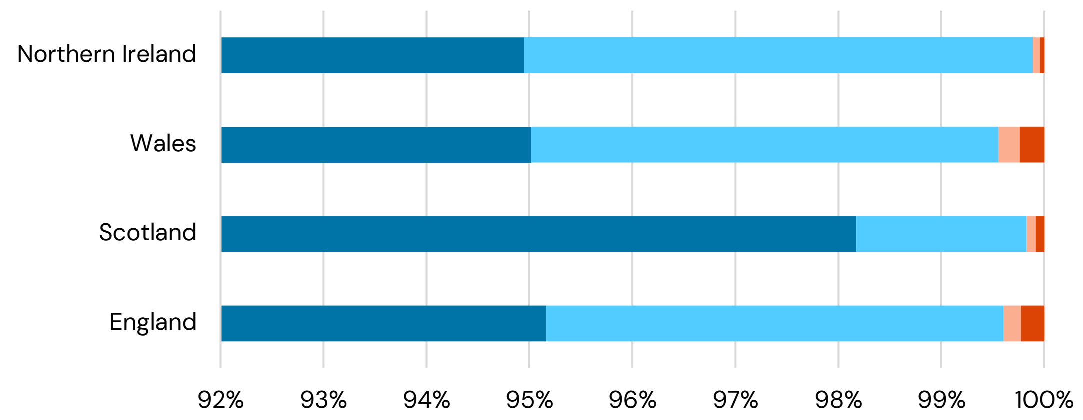
[8] See Scottish Government's Rural Communities Ideas Into Action Fund.

In analysis not presented here (for reasons of space) but available in Deliverable 4, Locality, Social Enterprise UK and Co-operatives UK were all found to support a higher percentage of community businesses in the most deprived 20% of areas in England, 39%, 22% and 21% respectively compared to Plunkett at 9%, but in large part this will be because these organisations tend to support more community enterprises/co-ops in urban areas which are more likely to fall into these more deprived categories.

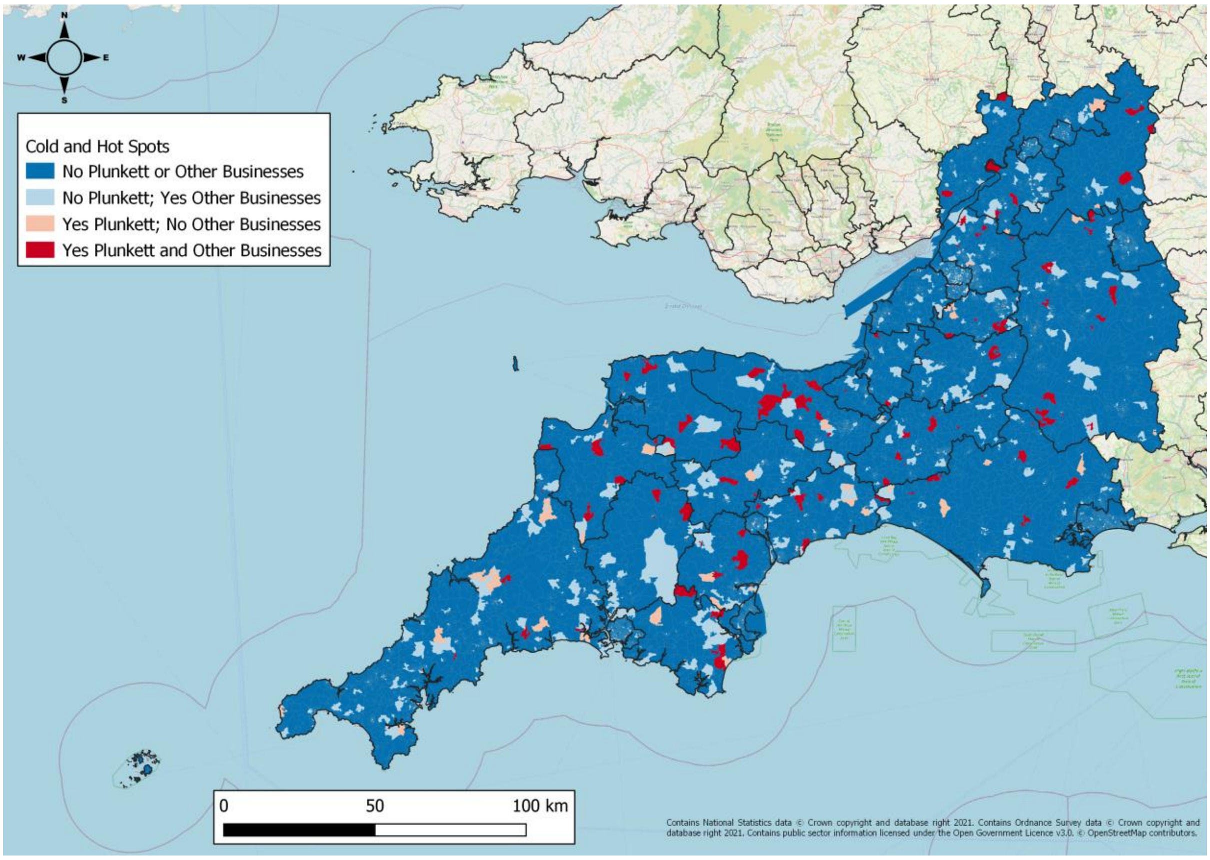
Building on this analysis, the research team then created maps and graphs showing cold and hot spots for Plunkett and the other organisations (see Figure 14). This enables us to deepen our assessment of the extent to which the different organisations are operating in similar or different geographic locations. As a first step in this analysis the research team calculated cold spots by creating counts of census output areas (including rural and urban areas) where Plunkett is operating, where at least one of the other organisations is operating, where all of the organisations are operating, and where none of the organisations are currently operating. While doing this analysis based on number of COAs is a somewhat simplistic approach, it can be seen from Figure 14 that all of these organisations have a more limited presence in Scotland than in other parts of the UK, but a greater presence in Wales and England. Further analysis would be required to explore whether in Scotland, this is due to the existence of other support organisations making the presence of Plunkett, SEUK and Co-ops UK less important.



	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
No Plunkett or Other	95.16%	98.17%	95.02%	94.95%
No Plunkett, Yes Other	4.44%	1.65%	4.53%	4.94%
Yes Plunkett, No Other	0.17%	0.09%	0.21%	0.07%
Yes Plunkett and Other	0.23%	0.08%	0.24%	0.04%

Figure 14: Cold and hot spots for Plunkett and other businesses.

Map 21 shows an example of cold and hot spots identified in the South West of England.



Map 21: Distribution of hot and cold spots for Plunkett and other businesses in the South West of England.

5. Exploring the implications of our findings with stakeholders

5.1 Introduction

Part 5 of the research project involved the research team undertaking 15 in-depth interviews with representatives of a range of different organisations across the UK[9]. This included organisations working in support of co-operatives, social enterprises and community activities of various types, as well as researchers and representatives of national government. An interview guide was drawn up to inform the conversations, covering the following issues:

- Information about the individual and their organisation in terms of its role, geographical focus, business type/s supported, etc.
- The varied picture across the UK in terms of organisations supporting community businesses (or similar business models)
- Where are there known cold spots in terms of the work of different organisations and/or Plunkett Foundation?
- What are the reasons for cold spots and how might we identify and measure them?
- How can cold spots be tackled through interventions from different organisations?
- What is the potential for Plunkett (and others) to expand into cold spots in the future, including through partnership-working?

This section of the report summarises the key themes emerging from those interviews, following the issues listed here. Together with the findings of the mapping and data analysis work reported in previous sections, they inform our recommendations for Plunkett's 2022-2026 strategy to create more community businesses UK-wide (Section 6).

5.2 History shaping the future

All interviewees commented on the extent to which the history and evolution of an organisation will shape its current and indeed future role. This might be, for example, in terms of the type of support offered to particular community business types or geographical areas, at different times. This is certainly true of

[9] We spoke to representatives from: Plunkett Foundation, Co-operative Development Scotland, Community Land Scotland, Wales Co-operative Centre, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Rural Services Network/Rural England, Development Trusts Northern Ireland, Power to Change, Locality, Co-ops UK, DEFRA, Scottish Government Rural Communities Policy team, South of Scotland Enterprise and Community Shares Scotland (part of the Development Trusts Association Scotland); and one individual who has worked in rural research for some time.

Plunkett itself in terms of its evolution since its set-up by Horace Plunkett in 1919 in Ireland, with an international remit, to the current day focus on community businesses across the UK. This evolution happened over time, from its shift from international work to a focus on community shops in particular after merging with ViRSA (the Village Retail Services Association) and its link with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

From 2013 onwards, Plunkett's programmes of work have evolved to provide business support to a whole range of community businesses, including through dedicated projects such as 'Our Urban Shop' with Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and 'Making Local Food Work' with National Lottery funding. The launch of the Power to Change Trust in 2016, with its focus on community business has also led to a number of (joint) projects, including the 'More than a Pub' programme. In recent years Plunkett has also established its Frontline Team - now called the Community Business Team - which is responsible for delivering the advice line and developing and managing all future programmes which offer direct support to community businesses. It is also worth noting that the language used by Plunkett has shifted over time from talking about co-operatives towards social enterprises, community enterprises and, most recently, community businesses. Plunkett is also moving towards the aim of having a larger proportion of its financial support in a more flexible 'pot' which is available to support all potential community businesses at any point in their journey, in any location.

This evolution can be contrasted, for example, with Social Investment Cymru or Social Business Wales (SBW, run by the Wales Co-operative Centre) which have been, and are still now, heavily reliant on European funding. The current and future roles of organisations are also shaped by the differing policy, political and institutional contexts in which they operate, and this is discussed in the next section.

5.3 Variations across the UK

The ways in which different support organisations have evolved in different places is also partly related to the different political, policy and institutional contexts in which they operate. As our interviewees were located across the UK, we were able to discuss with them the different 'set-ups' in the different countries, and the challenges (and opportunities) that this provides for an organisation like Plunkett which is seeking to work UK-wide and to provide a service which is different to, and doesn't duplicate, that of others.

5.3.1 Wales

In Wales for example, the key organisations operating in this 'ecosystem' are The Wales Co-operative Centre, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and

Development Trusts Association Wales. These organisations all sit, with Welsh Government, on a strategic group and (amongst other things) work jointly to deliver the 10-year vision and action plan for social enterprises. Menter a Busnes also delivers European Union funded business support across rural Wales. European funding has been very important to many of these organisations, with Social Business Wales (delivered by the Wales Co-operative Centre) for example relying on European money until June 2023. After this time, there is considerable uncertainty as to the type, extent and focus of Welsh Government and UK Government funding that will be available, including through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The 'modus operandi' and remits of these organisations are different. For example, SBW (as part of the Business Wales 'family') provides publicly funded support to new start/growth social enterprises, co-operatives, mutuals and employee-owned businesses. The SBW programme started in 2015 and will run until June 2023, representing a £20 million project. SBW has development officers and business advisers working at county level supporting new start and growth businesses, does market development work looking for opportunities for the sector (e.g. relating to social care and housing) and collects data and offers learning/training opportunities for organisations operating in the sector. So, SBW works both on creating the enabling environment to grow the sector and the support to allow those businesses to make the most of that environment. SBW/the Wales Co-operative Centre have a close relationship with WCVA which runs Social Investment Cymru; the former provide the wider support for any new start/growth business across the sector, while the latter provides (through lending, including recently more blended finance with 40% grant funding and 60% loan) the social finance. Interviewees recognised that both aspects are critical to supporting the community business sector.

Interviewees reflected that Plunkett's role in Wales has tended to be with the more traditional shops or pubs, with the Foundation working with these other organisations to provide support. For 'clients' in Wales, therefore, the relationship with Plunkett is weaker, although it was noted that some Plunkett advisers 'on-the-ground' in Wales are well known and effective in terms of supporting community businesses.

One interviewee reflected that although Plunkett’s expertise is highly valued, particularly in relation to rural community businesses, if Plunkett is inclined to expand into Wales more strongly, there would be a questioning of whether this was really needed, especially given Wales' relatively small population, the uncertainty over future funding for some organisations in particular given Brexit and the loss of EU monies, and the existence of a range of support organisations. Instead, there might be a strong argument for a re-drawing of the support landscape and the creation of one organisation which is properly resourced.

While this would represent a drastic change, there is perhaps merit particularly once EU funding has disappeared for the roles of various organisations to be revisited to ensure support is delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

5.3.2 Scotland

Overall, there were differing opinions about the extent to which Plunkett could/should work more in Scotland. Several interviewees (both in and outside Scotland) reflected on the supportive legislative context in Scotland for the community ownership and management of assets, including the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, Land Reform (Scotland) Acts, the ongoing Local Governance Review, increasing policy emphasis on community wealth building, etc. While on the one hand it could be argued that the legislative and policy contexts in Scotland provide potentially 'fruitful' ground for Plunkett, some interviewees noted that there are institutions already embedded there providing similar services (including Development Trusts Association Scotland, Community Land Scotland, Community Energy Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise, etc.) and dedicated funding streams (e.g. the Scottish Land Fund) so there is an argument for Plunkett having less of a role. Other interviewees reflected on the strong partnership relationships that already exist between Plunkett and some of the Scottish-based organisations (e.g. Community Shares Scotland) and on the value of Plunkett seeking to develop new collaborative relationships (including with Scottish Government).

It was also noted that even historically rural-focussed support organisations in Scotland are now offering support in urban cold spots, including Community Land Scotland which now has a Community Ownership Hub offering advice and support in Glasgow and Clyde Valley. Nonetheless, one interviewee felt that Plunkett could do more in Scotland, particularly if the organisation first 'took stock' to identify the best way to 'slot in' to the already dense third sector landscape. One suggestion was that Plunkett could connect better with the two enterprise agencies (Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise) and local authority leaders across those two regions to enable Plunkett to deliver specialist support and help to take forwards the community wealth building agenda.

5.3.3 Northern Ireland

In terms of the context in Northern Ireland, one interviewee commented on the availability of 'peace money' in the country which may have created more of a grant dependent culture and mindset rather than a need to set up community businesses; in short there is less need for the community to 'step up'. There is also a strong family business culture in Northern Ireland, which perhaps reduces the appetite for community organisations in some ways. There is very limited presence of co-operatives in Northern Ireland. Development Trusts Northern Ireland (DTNI) and Co-operative Alternatives are also active organisations in the country perhaps creating less demand for Plunkett's services. DTNI works with a large network of community organisations, with a focus on community acquisition of assets to deliver services, although it is hard for communities to access capital funding (access to capital funding is therefore a focus of DTNI's lobbying activity). There is the potential for Plunkett to explore mutual interests with DTNI, particularly the potential to learn from Plunkett's work in England and apply the lessons in a Northern Irish context.

5.3.4 England

Power to Change and Locality are key organisations in England, and Plunkett has worked alongside these for many years and more recently as strategic partners (CoPlunkAlity). Plunkett and Locality are very different organisations, and the relationship between Plunkett and Power to Change is much closer with the two organisations almost co-creating their services. For Plunkett there was felt to be a much greater gain from working with Power to Change (in short, in communities where funding is available) than from switching its focus to work in different communities (where money is not available).

These different policy, political and institutional contexts make a challenging landscape for organisations such as Plunkett that are trying to operate across the UK. The differences go beyond this to include language and culture too, perhaps particularly in more remote rural communities where the Gaelic and Welsh languages may be more widely spoken. It is certainly true that there is a need for England-based organisations that operate across the UK (or indeed for any organisations based in one country but operating across them all) to be well informed and knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, these differences. Several interviewees felt that it is not appropriate for a model which works in one part of the UK to simply be transferred to another; one size does not fit all.

5.4 Identifying and explaining cold spots

Interviewees were sent the map showing Plunkett-supported community businesses across the UK in advance of the interview (see Figure 1). They were asked to reflect on Plunkett's cold spots but also on cold spots for their own organisations and whether these were the same geographical areas.

Most interviewees noted the larger number of Plunkett-supported community businesses in the south of England and their more dispersed nature further north and west, but acknowledged correctly that this could be explained, at least to some extent, by the distribution of the population across the UK. However, most interviewees also felt that there was more to the map than the distribution of community businesses matching the distribution of population. Moreover, interviewees noted that urban areas did not 'stand out' as having more community businesses than rural areas, in fact quite the opposite seemed to be the case. This was despite a few interviewees noting that urban areas are generally much 'colder', especially in Scotland where most community business activity to date has been in rural or island communities. One interviewee from Wales illustrated this using the example of Cardiff, which usually stands out on a map of activity as it is such a dominant centre in terms of its proportion of the population (10%) and as the location of many organisational head offices.

In terms of the urban-rural spread of recent/current Plunkett-supported community businesses, the dominance of rural businesses is very clear. Two interviewees noted the east of England as a cold spot, with West Yorkshire and the Midlands as a targeted 'growth area' for one organisation's current activities. It was acknowledged that funders like the Lottery have had more success channelling support to northern England and into areas of high deprivation (IMD categories 1-3). In eastern areas, challenges exist around reaching and supporting coastal communities, those in IT poverty and those in rural areas experiencing hidden deprivation. In these communities, community capacity was thought to present the main barrier to successful uptake of support (which is considered in more detail below). In Northern Ireland, there seems to be less focus on 'cold spots', with attention paid instead to gaps in the membership of DTNI, for example. This then helps to target resources towards effective community engagement with potential members.

On its website, the Plunkett Foundation states that it is a national charity that supports rural communities, although Plunkett has supported community businesses in locations that are officially defined as urban across the UK, albeit usually in more urban fringe locations. Interviewees in this project also shared what they felt to be the general perception that Plunkett is an organisation focused on rural communities, and that this was one of its core strengths as its staff have a deep understanding of rural communities and their challenges and opportunities, albeit perhaps primarily focused on England. One of the interviewees based in England praised the work of Plunkett in rural settings, especially as the focus of other organisations on larger, capital investment projects presents challenges for success at village level where populations are smaller and/or the case for this type of investment may be weaker - rural areas are 'cold spots' for them. Referring back to Section 4.3 of this report and our analysis of the geographical distribution of co-operatives and social enterprises across the UK, which is more urban focused, there is a strong sense that the focus of Plunkett's service on rural communities is very complementary to the activities of other organisations.

In addition to points made about the east of England and the lack of reach into rural areas for some, others also noted the lack of engagement from young people in community businesses and the lack of reach into predominantly BAME communities.

Interviewees' comments about Wales were interesting, with reference made to the split of Wales into two regions for European funding: West Wales and the Valleys, which is the old Objective 1 area receiving the highest level of support and East Wales, which was latterly known as a convergence area. When Social Investment Cymru (as an arm of WCVA) started lending, it could only do so to West Wales and the Valleys so that division into two regions historically has shaped much of the current funding and associated activity landscape, with West Wales and the Valleys tending to have more hot spots. As organisations in Wales move further away from reliance on European funding it will take time to alter this distribution. One example of this in practice is that Powys is a known cold spot for Social Investment Cymru, and indeed this local authority area is also a cold spot for Plunkett. The area is in East Wales so traditionally has not benefited from the highest funding. However, it was also noted that there is lots happening there in terms of grassroots community activity, but challenges around a dominance of primary sector activity and hidden rural poverty and only limited examples of this grassroots activity 'scaling up' to community business or social enterprise projects. A contrasting area would be South West Wales which has lots of wealthy in-migrant retirees mainly from England.

SBW's model is to have advisers based in each county of Wales. This means that the organisation generally has very well-developed networks across Wales' local authority areas which act as the basis for identifying and building new social business projects. However, there are a couple of local authority areas where the organisation's networks are weaker for historic reasons, and these are their cold spots. Having fewer active projects means a less active or dense local network, which in turn exacerbates the challenge of tackling the cold spots. One interviewee reflected that it may be less important now for organisations to have a physical presence in local areas, but at the same time argued that digital networking cannot replace the development of important face-to-face networks.

5.5 Expanding into cold spots

This section explores a range of issues which all relate to the issue of Plunkett expanding into existing cold spot areas.

5.5.1 The importance of community capacity

Most interviewees discussed the important issues of community resources and capacity. One interviewee commented that it is important to consider Plunkett's 'modus operandi' in terms of the types of communities the organisation predominantly works with. Communities thinking about establishing a community business pick up the phone to the Community Business Team helpline. This suggests that the community has a certain level of 'capacity', skills and resources which has enabled them to get to the point of being confident that setting up a community business may be a possibility for them and making the phone call. It is worth highlighting the views of this interviewee in relation to how another organisation's 'modus operandi' has changed over the last 20-30 years:

> "*The enquiries are more likely to find [us] because of the reach out into the communities… whereas back in the day when I started…we would do that community development piece on the ground, we would do that capacity-building, group development, within the current project there is less of that, there is an expectation that when they come into us they will be ready to have the conversation about the business model, to incorporate pretty soon, and be working on their business plan. Years ago, it was much more the developmental phase and it was much more based on the community development model…. So, 25 years ago we were anchored within the community and you would be starting at an idea stage with an individual even before the group has been formed*."

For this interviewee, one of the key drivers of this shift was the funding which, because of its strict targets, encouraged the organisation to focus on the businesses that are going to trade, employ staff, etc. rather than to invest in the animation and community development work.

Although it has local advisers on the ground, Plunkett does not actively seek out communities to work with or engage directly in animation activity with communities to build up that capacity prior them making the phone call, or explicitly work in partnership with other organisations that do this. It is therefore perhaps not a surprise that Plunkett's community businesses tend to be in communities with lower levels of deprivation, less 'need' and with more affluent populations. Interestingly, one interviewee reflected that 25 or so years ago, the Wales Co-operative Centre had dedicated local community development workers undertaking some of this 'animation' work but that the organisation had over time moved away from this. In contrast, Locality has staff 'on the ground' in all the English regions, seeing 'having eyes and ears on the ground' as a core part of their delivery model.

If Plunkett wanted to work more in future with those communities that could be described as 'lacking capacity' or 'more deprived', this would likely be more achievable if they worked in partnership, and shared evidence and data, with organisations/individuals delivering this kind of animation work, such as

Development Trusts Associations, the ACRE network and its Community Councils, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust or, at least to some extent, (some) local authorities and enterprise companies.

It would be interesting in further work, if this is possible, to explore the histories of different communities, perhaps in a local authority area or region, in terms of the extent to which they have had community development workers in the past, funded by a local authority or an organisation like the Coalfields Regeneration Trust. These are the communities that may now be in a better position to engage with organisations like Plunkett to establish and run a community business. On the other hand, these may also be the communities that do not need the support of Plunkett or similar organisations due to having had those community development workers. In conclusion, in exploring the potential for communities to engage now, it is important to understand their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics but also these legacies and histories.

5.5.2 Focusing on more 'deprived' communities?

Several interviewees commented on the tendency for many of the community pubs that Plunkett or indeed other organisations have supported, to be in the wealthier communities where considerable money has been raised through community shares, funding from local individuals, and/or the funding applications such as the Community Ownership Fund to get the project off the ground, but then the disposable income is also available to ensure the asset can be sustained in community ownership. As one interviewee commented:

> "*These community businesses tend not to be found in locations where there are greater social problems, available skills levels are lower for people to be able to run these things and people lack cash and time to invest in them. So, the question is who is helping them, because they are the people that need help the most? But the challenge is that these kinds of projects tend to only be successful where you have got significant financial resources and commitment and buy-in locally. And you can't fabricate that, it has to be bottom-up and have depth to it. But there are some great examples of people doing some great stuff, but with a little bit of help they could do so much more, and what they lack is some expertise to help and support the leadership that has emerged there and/or the resource to help things happen… because we all know one of the biggest gaps in funding is in that pre-start phase, where an awful lot of time and specialist knowledge are required to get it to a fundable position and if that's in some of the poorest communities then it's just not there.*"

This links to a further point made by one interviewee about the importance of volunteer support organisations in terms of providing training and support for the vital volunteers in Plunkett-supported community businesses. If Plunkett was to want to focus in future on supporting more pubs in more deprived locations, working closely with these kinds of third sector organisations would be critical. It may also be important to consider a further practical step, such as setting a higher grant rate for more deprived communities. At the same time, perhaps all of this takes Plunkett away from its primary focus, which is supporting the community business model, and it maybe brings greater potential for duplication and/or competition with other organisations (including third sector organisations, rural community councils, etc.). Perhaps Plunkett (and others) should accept that the community business/community ownership model will only work in those places which have existing resources and capacity, i.e. the less deprived towns and villages, and that it will not be realistic or feasible everywhere? It should also not be forgotten that these less deprived communities, and individuals within these communities, can experience challenges too, including isolation and loneliness and distance from services. As one interviewee commented:

> "*It's knowing what you're trying to achieve, isn't It? If it's beautiful pubs in more affluent rural communities that's fine, but it's being explicit about that, and there's nothing wrong with that*."

Our understanding is that in future Plunkett is keen to continue with dedicated programmes of support (e.g. focusing on particular types of community businesses) but also to grow its 'pot' for flexible support which can be used to support anyone, in any place, at any stage of the community business journey. With this, the aim is that Plunkett becomes more sustainable and independent, although it is recognised as a challenge to grow and maintain that income. It might also be worth considering how the community businesses that Plunkett has supported in the wealthier communities could be encouraged to more explicitly support local people who are experiencing disadvantage or poverty.

5.5.3 Changing the community business model

There may be two very different community business models that Plunkett could seek to support in future. One model is more appropriate for those communities with financial wealth and residents in higher socio-economic groups with a range of skills, who have time to devote to community activities and who may be looking for their community-owned local shop or pub to deliver locally sourced meat, beer, etc. The other model is more concerned with providing a range of everyday 'goods' for local people on lower incomes, without private transport, etc. at affordable prices, perhaps where there is no alternative local shop. Going beyond this, the latter 'model' might be one in which a range of service providers could be involved to provide advice and support of various kinds (e.g. on welfare entitlement and claims, employment, childcare, etc.) for local people.

It was interesting to note the requirement placed by the Social Investment Cymru 'arm' of WCVA on potential community pubs demonstrating that they have a social mission; the venture has to be more than a community pub with other activities potentially including outreach work for those who are experiencing disadvantage in the local area. As well as bringing direct benefits for these individuals/families, this also helps to increase engagement and commitment with the project..

5.5.4 Presenting the Plunkett offering

Several interviewees praised the 'great support' Plunkett provides on community shops, particularly the wealth of information available on the Plunkett Facebook page. However, many of the case studies on Plunkett's website (including those featured in their short videos) or mentioned in social media posts are shops or pubs in wealthier rural communities. It may be worth Plunkett re-considering how the information on the wider range of shops that they have supported is presented; there may be ways to make information available more creatively, including through working with organisations operating on the ground in cold spot locations. One good example is the video providing information on Siop Griffiths in Penygroes, Wales[10] which is in a community experiencing greater deprivation and which provides a range of services for local people.

The importance of having advisers on the ground in different geographical locations was cited by some interviewees, with some mentioning particular individuals in the Plunkett team who have had a significant impact in terms of encouraging the establishment of community business in their area. As one interviewee argued: *"Having that local presence and knowledge is particularly important in a rural context."*

It was suggested that Plunkett could think about increasing its presence in cold spot locations such as the North East of England or Scotland to improve awareness about what they do, working with communities 'on the ground' and supporting local information and intelligence gathering. In England, this could perhaps link in with the network of Locality staff employed in each of the English regions (with the aim of aligning work, sharing good practice and reducing competition as much as it feasible). It was also noted that having Trustees from different parts of the UK is important.

Several interviewees also noted the importance of communities being able to learn from one another, and particularly from (geographically) neighbouring communities if they see them setting up a successful community shop. Being

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[10] For more information see: [Film: Supporting Community Business - Plunkett | Plunkett Foundation](#).

more 'present' in communities could help this knowledge sharing and learning from existing businesses, as could the development of a new marketing campaign, such as that established by SBW in 2021 to target its persistent cold spots. As mentioned previously, SBW has highly valuable local networks across many local authority areas in Wales and in the past has used a range of tools to increase awareness of its work, including seconding staff into local authorities which can help to enhance networks and knowledge and create 'legacy'.

> "*There is plenty of written up stuff, but do people learn that way? Maybe it does need visits or at least conversations. Maybe it's just about trying different methods, people will find information in different ways. And it's about having a range of case studies*."

Several interviewees also commented on the importance of outreach work and 'getting the messaging right' in different locations; this can be particularly important in encouraging different individuals, families, households etc. to engage from local communities. This might include something as straightforward as being sure to use the most appropriate case study examples when seeking to expand into a cold spot. In Wales and Scotland, this might include being aware of the Welsh and Gaelic languages (such as preparing written materials in both languages) when working with communities particularly in more remote rural locations, or when attending shows, etc. The messaging or marketing also needs to be sensitive to the existing institutional infrastructure and policy and political context (e.g. in terms of which matters are devolved and which are not). One interviewee commented:

> "*Lots of the England-based organisations that have a UK remit haven't really got to grips with devolution, which is hardly surprising because some of the politicians haven't either! But the whole point about a devolution settlement is that things happen differently. So, if you only take what's happening in my area there to there, it's not going to work. And policy-makers will see through that and say 'well that's a very England-centric view', which is fine for England but it won't work from a UK perspective. It's a very different dynamic if you say 'We are a UK-based organisation and understand how the four UK nations work. We work with similar organisations in those four devolved nations'*."

All interviewees reflected on the 'support landscape' in their respective parts of the UK, in which Plunkett is one of the players. The key aim is for organisations to provide *"better support together"* - there is clearly scope for Plunkett to work more with partners in Northern Ireland, for example. It was suggested by one interviewee that Plunkett could expand into current cold spots and could bring considerable expertise to them, but the organisation needs to be mindful of and build on other organisations' local networks and knowledge; these kinds of partnerships could be extremely valuable, and could include co-design or strategic alignment with a new funder, being mindful of local funders' ambitions. However, several interviewees also praised the knowledge and experience of Plunkett in relation to their current 'offer', with some hesitancy about the organisation offering more generalist support outside of their current expertise and locations. For example, there is a risk of duplication of effort by organisations - however, a Scotland-based interviewee noted that they would always refer a community to Plunkett for specialist advice on community shops, for example. In the current context of recovery from the pandemic, one interviewee emphasised that there will be ongoing demands for supporting rural communities, especially as more people move out of cities to rural areas. Plunkett is seen as being in a strong position to represent and support rural interests, rather than seeking out cold spots in urban areas, with one interviewee expressing a view that Plunkett's main focus should be rural communities in England:

> "*The argument for Plunkett could be that they shouldn't be attempting to do more in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland because they haven't got that traction.... But also, they don't need to be doing more because Scotland and Wales at least have their resources and ecosystems in place, which are not there in England. So, arguably, the need is greater in England. We know there are support functions and projects in place in Scotland and Wales that we haven't got in England so Plunkett could argue that they want to boost and develop that in England and will work with partners in Wales and Scotland and bring their logo and product offering and work through the systems in a very different way, so it's not resource-intense then, they won't need for example to employ business advisers because [other partners] have them.*"

Some interviewees noted the potential for Plunkett and others to work more with the Combined Authorities in England, encouraging them to look at gaps in their provision of community support and include community businesses within wider community wealth building approaches. There are options to explore possibilities around community share offers, as well as overseeing the legal aspects of asset transfers. Key organisations to partner within Wales include WCVA and SBW - and it is acknowledged that some partnership arrangements already exist. Clearly, Interviewees also noted the importance of the ACRE network which is (to varying degrees across England) providing support to rural communities and community projects, such as shops.

5.6 Horizon-scanning for future developments

Several interviewees noted the rapidly changing context in which Plunkett and other organisations are operating, not least in terms of newly emerging domestic funding streams and the ending of European funding which may lead to changes in the support landscape in different parts of the UK.

One interviewee encouraged Plunkett to think about the flexibility of their community shop model in the future. For example, could shops link more closely with primary producers to encourage more fresh, local produce to be available, or could community shops be encouraged to think about how they could better serve more disadvantaged households in their local area (e.g. through offering a kind of food bank facility and/or delivery service)?

The pandemic has deepened local challenges around poverty and deprivation in many places and cost of living increases in 2022 may exacerbate this further. This may create new requirements and demands for different kinds of community shops which may be worth considering. As mentioned previously, the foundational economy (in Wales) and community wealth building (in Scotland) are emerging as key policy agendas to which Plunkett may wish to pay increased attention. These agendas are also worth considering in the context of Plunkett's role outwith England when the Northern Irish, Welsh and Scottish Governments may wish to place more emphasis on retaining money within their own countries; this is about applying the localism agenda to decisions about where support is provided from.

6. Recommendations

From the range of evidence collected in this project and presented here, the research team has distilled the following list of recommendations for Plunkett to consider when drafting their new strategy for 2022-2026. We acknowledge that Plunkett is already undertaking some of these activities as they form part of Plunkett's current strategy, so our recommendation is to further continue or indeed enhance them.

1. **Maintaining a UK-wide presence and remit:** As noted at the start of this report, Plunkett's current strategy includes an objective which states: *"extend our relevance and reach; ensuring the community business model and the support available are relevant and accessible to communities in all parts of the UK"*. The evidence collected in this study, in particular from the qualitative interviews, but also from the mapping of support from SEUK and Co-ops UK (where there appeared to be minimal overlap/duplication with Plunkett-supported locations) supports Plunkett in continuing its presence and remit across the UK. Its expertise, particularly in relation to supporting *rural* community businesses, is valued in all parts of the UK and in general it is felt that it brings different and complementary skills, knowledge etc. to

organisations already operating in the support ecosystems in the different parts of the UK.

2. **The importance of partnership-working:** The evidence gathered in this report has demonstrated the range of organisations already operating in different parts of the UK and it is clear that taking a collaborative and partnership approach to supporting community businesses is likely to be the most effective and cost-efficient way for Plunkett to work UK-wide. There are good examples of this approach being successful, for example, the good working relationship between Community Shares Scotland and Plunkett or between Social Business Wales and Plunkett which ultimately means that communities benefit from a clear and comprehensive support offering which does not involve duplication between organisations. The same partnership approach should be taken, but involving local and regional level organisations, if Plunkett is seeking to expand its support offering into new cold spot communities in England, including in terms of undertaking capacity-building and animation work. Sharing experiences and expertise in terms of working specifically with rural communities at UK level may also be valuable, for example between SEUK, Co-ops UK and Plunkett Foundation.
3. **Understanding and acknowledging the contexts in different parts of the UK:** This understanding is critical to informing how, where and when Plunkett should seek to engage (in partnership) in the different parts of the UK. This research has revealed how different the constituent parts of the UK are in terms of the scale and types of support available, the language and terminology used, the facilitating (or not) current and future political and policy context, the evolution and current role (and 'extent of presence') of different institutions, etc. UK-wide organisations need to be mindful of these contexts when delivering their services. This is where working in partnership will also be beneficial as intelligence will be brought to these relationships by 'local' organisations. Having Trustees and Board members from across the UK as well as local staff on the ground is also important.
4. **Tailoring the community business model to emerging challenges and opportunities:** The pandemic has brought challenges and opportunities for both urban and rural communities. Similarly, the UK is facing a significant cost of living crisis as prices rise over the next few months, and there are policy priorities around the foundational economy (in Wales) and community wealth building (in Scotland) for example, and of course around local food provision and climate change and net zero. New UK Government funding became available this financial year (in the form of the UK Community Ownership Fund for example) and there will be more changes next year with the UK Shared

Prosperity Fund, the ending of European funding through Structural Funds and LEADER and the launch of new 'community led local development' funding streams in different parts of the UK. It is important that Plunkett is 'up-to-speed' on these changing social and policy priorities to ensure that its work is delivering to these agendas.

5. **Focusing support on rural businesses or supporting both rural and urban community businesses:** Interviewees across the UK particularly emphasised the value of Plunkett's expertise in terms of supporting rural businesses, and certainly the majority of community businesses that Plunkett has supported recently have been in rural locations. There may be more value to be gained from Plunkett continuing to focus on providing its support to community businesses in rural locations, and not seeking to do so in inner city locations and urban centres where their characteristics (e.g. structure, size, focus, governance, challenges and opportunities), are likely to be considerably different, and where other organisations (including Co-ops UK and Social Enterprise UK) have significant presence.
6. **Expanding support to encompass more deprived communities:** The analysis has revealed that the majority of Plunkett supported community businesses, though by no means all, are in wealthier rural communities with skilled populations with lower experience of deprivation and where raising private finance or community shares is likely to have fewer challenges (i.e. areas falling into the 'rural residents' Pen Portrait supergroup). This is not a criticism, and it may be that that focus is entirely appropriate for successful implementation of the community business model. However, Plunkett may wish to consider whether it wishes to shift focus slightly to support community business activity in more deprived communities, and if so, how that might be achieved. Different community business models will likely to be required , for example, with less focus on local produce and closer working with larger retailers in terms of the products available, or the involvement of other service providers to ensure the shop becomes a 'hub' for a range of information and advice provision. Alongside different models, working in partnership with a range of local organisations will be critical (such as the Lottery) and it might be worth considering different grant intervention rates in these locations.
7. **Building community capacity:** It is perhaps not surprising that those communities Plunkett has worked with tend to be those that are already active and 'have capacity' for example to have reached the conclusion that a community business model might work in their community as those are the communities that will be approaching its advisers or phoning the helpline. If Plunkett is to work with cold spot communities, including those experiencing greater levels of

deprivation, some animation or pre-project work will undoubtedly be required, by Plunkett itself and/or by a range of other organisations (e.g. the ACRE network of Rural Community Councils, professional community development workers, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Development Trusts Associations, the National Association of Local Councils, etc.)

8. **Working collaboratively on identifying cold and hot spots:** This research has revealed considerable similarities in terms of the cold spots experienced by a range of different organisations. It would be worth considering how the data mapping and analysis work undertaken here could be extended to encompass a wider range of organisations on an ongoing basis to monitor changes over time and identify persistent cold spots in which future funding, animation and support activity could be focused. This is where there is a strong link with our suggestions for further research.

   Within the constraints of this small project, it has not been possible to describe the locations and characteristics of cold spots in different parts of the UK. This would involve detailed interrogation of the maps and then discussions with local stakeholders and a review of local information to identify other organisations already operating there, local characteristics that might mitigate against the formation of community businesses, the role of key individuals, etc. One useful next step could be the sharing of learning from a community business in a similar location elsewhere, through a kind of 'matching' process.

9. **Sharing information and raising awareness about Plunkett's services**: Plunkett's website and Twitter and Facebook presences are very valuable sources of information about the work that the organisation does. The case study videos are particularly useful for communities thinking about the community business model to see how it has worked in other locations. It may be worth Plunkett considering how to make more information available about how it has supported community businesses in more deprived communities, and/or how those experiencing deprivation or other challenges in any community have benefited from the establishment of community businesses. Considering opportunities for secondments in, or training for, organisations in cold spot areas might be appropriate (e.g. in using Plunkett tools).

7. Suggestions for further research

This project has involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, but it has been undertaken over a short timescale and with fairly limited resources. While undertaking the work the research team has noted a number of areas which would benefit from further research to inform Plunkett's future activities but also to improve knowledge across the sector as a whole. Some suggestions for further research are:

- **Understanding different national contexts:** Undertaking a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the different political, legislative, policy, institutional and funding contexts, and how they have changed over time, in the different countries of the UK. This evolution could then be compared to the changing number and distribution of community businesses, or other types of enterprise, across each country, i.e. assessing the extent to which the context has shaped activities 'on-the-ground'.
- **Expanding the literature review:** Work could be undertaken to identify a broader range of literature to review, including more of the research and analysis undertaken by different support organisations. Linked to this, it would be interesting to explore in more depth how the enabling and constraining factors (identified in Section 4.1) inter-relate and which one/s is/are the most critical to shaping community activity on the ground.
- **Exploring the 'cluster effect' in practice:** The research has highlighted the 'cluster effect' where communities see their neighbours setting up a community business and seek to follow their example. It would be interesting to undertake further research to explore how this process happens in practice, and to explore the impact of increased digital connectivity and new ways of sharing information (that do not involve physical proximity, such as through podcasts, videos, virtual tours, etc.) on how and how far communities learn from best practice examples located close and distant from them.
- **Expanding the quantitative analysis:** The quantitative analysis undertaken in this project could be expanded in many ways. For example, it would be worth considering how to compare the number of community businesses in different geographical areas, such as by Rural Community Council in England. This would enable an assessment of density of community businesses by rural population and then the areas could be ranked from low density (i.e. cold spots) to high density (i.e. hot spots). This was unfortunately beyond the scope of this project but would be an interesting exercise to undertake (as suggested by Stephen Nicol, Chair of the Plunkett Foundation). It would also be interesting to explore in more detail the apparent pattern of more community shops in less densely populated rural areas compared to more pubs in more densely populated rural areas. Is this due to the critical mass of people required to support the different types of community business, or perhaps due to need, i.e. have more (privately owned) shops been closing in more remote/less

densely populated locations, encouraging communities to step in? It would be interesting to compare community businesses of the same type in different subgroups in the same region/nation or indeed in different regions/nations in order to investigate key enabling and success factors, for example. The research team also began to do some analysis of the urban-located Plunkett businesses but this work could be expanded further. Also of interest would be more in-depth analysis of the location of Plunkett businesses in the pen portrait groups and subgroups across the UK's nations and regions and analysing some of the variables used here together (e.g. exploring the distribution of the pen portrait groups across different population densities). Finally, further work with the Points of Interest database could involve exploring the existence of correlations between the locations of community organisations, physical infrastructure and Plunkett-supported community businesses.

- **Bringing in case study information:** This project has not explored any case study examples of community businesses in different locations. This would certainly be potentially interesting in future work, to explore the different factors that have led to their establishment and evolution, the role of different support organisations, etc. A range of case studies could be chosen, including for example by using the pen portraits to select case studies in different kinds of geographical locations.
- **A statistical understanding of hot and cold spots:** It may be possible to utilise some specific GIS tools to create statistically valid hot spot/cold spot maps. This work could be guided by two questions: (1) where are the hot/cold spots in relation to where Plunkett is traditionally present; and (2) where are the hot/cold spots in relation to where Plunkett would like to be present. To undertake this analysis would require values to be generated for output areas with higher values indicating hot spot areas (i.e. where Plunkett or others are already present) and lower values indicating both lack of presence and suitability (this could be termed a 'scale of suitability'). To generate a single value for each output area would require a formula to be created from a range of data (such as generating binary variables with two values i.e. 0 and 1 from demographic or deprivation data, and also from qualitative data, or perhaps more appropriately a scale from 1 to -1 where values close to 1 are hot spots, values around 0 indicate no presence but unsuitable circumstances, and values around -1 indicate no presence but suitable circumstances). A less complex version of this would be simply map the features but this would not generate statistical significance. Exploring these ideas further would be interesting and potentially very valuable as part of a follow-on project.
- **Creating a package of maps and accompanying data analysis:** This links to our final suggestion, as outlined in the Recommendations above, there would be great value in all of the organisations in the support 'ecosystems'

in the different countries working together to produce a package of maps and data analysis broadening everyone’s knowledge of the geographical distribution of community businesses, social enterprises, etc., identifying hot spots and cold spots, and guiding the future targeting of funding.

Appendix

Table A1: Count of Plunkett CBs by Local Authority Districts (England)

LAD	Plunkett Count	POI Count
East Midlands	**38**	**60**
Charnwood	1	2
Corby	1	1
Daventry	3	4
Derbyshire Dales	5	11
East Lindsey	1	2
East Northamptonshire	3	3
Harborough	2	2
High Peak	1	3
Newark and Sherwood	3	1
North East Derbyshire	1	3
North Kesteven	3	4
North West Leicestershire	1	0
Rushcliffe	5	9
Rutland	3	7
South Kesteven	2	3
South Northamptonshire	2	3
West Lindsey	1	2
East of England	**85**	**116**
Babergh	8	8
Bedford	1	1
Braintree	7	7
Breckland	3	3
Broadland	3	4
Central Bedfordshire	1	1
Colchester	3	4
Dacorum	2	1
East Cambridgeshire	1	1
East Hertfordshire	1	0
Huntingdonshire	3	4
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	1	0
Maldon	4	5
Mid Suffolk	13	22
North Hertfordshire	1	3
North Norfolk	4	7
South Cambridgeshire	6	6
South Norfolk	4	2
St Edmundsbury	3	6
Suffolk Coastal	5	9
Tendring	4	6
Three Rivers	1	2
Uttlesford	4	8
Waveney	2	6
North East	**10**	**13**
County Durham	3	3
Northumberland	6	7
Redcar and Cleveland	1	3

North West	**30**	**55**
Allerdale	5	7
Blackburn with Darwen	1	1
Carlisle	3	5
Cheshire East	2	0
Cheshire West and Chester	2	4
Copeland	1	4
Eden	9	19
South Lakeland	6	12
Warrington	1	3
South East	**113**	**167**
Arun	3	3
Ashford	4	3
Aylesbury Vale	7	10
Basingstoke and Deane	3	5
Canterbury	2	3
Cherwell	2	5
Chichester	7	14
Chiltern	3	6
Dover	1	0
East Hampshire	2	5
Gravesham	1	0
Guildford	1	0
Hart	1	1
Horsham	2	4
Isle of Wight	1	1
Lewes	1	3
Maidstone	4	5
Medway	1	4
Mid Sussex	4	4
Milton Keynes	1	3
Mole Valley	1	0
New Forest	4	6
Oxford	1	1
Rother	1	2
Sevenoaks	2	5
South Oxfordshire	8	15
Test Valley	6	4
Tonbridge and Malling	2	2
Tunbridge Wells	1	2
Vale of White Horse	6	7
Waverley	3	2
Wealden	7	12
West Berkshire	3	5
West Oxfordshire	9	16
Winchester	5	5
Wycombe	3	4
South West	**156**	**272**
Bath and North East Somerset	4	2
Cornwall	19	31
Cotswold	5	6
East Devon	12	17
East Dorset	2	5
Forest of Dean	2	3

Mendip	3	2
Mid Devon	6	10
North Devon	8	13
North Dorset	3	6
North Somerset	1	1
Purbeck	1	2
Sedgemoor	4	9
South Gloucestershire	4	7
South Hams	11	19
South Somerset	9	12
Stroud	6	9
Swindon	1	3
Taunton Deane	8	18
Teignbridge	6	8
Tewkesbury	1	3
Torridge	8	23
West Devon	6	14
West Dorset	5	7
West Somerset	6	16
Wiltshire	15	26
West Midlands	**52**	**92**
East Staffordshire	2	3
Herefordshire, County of	10	21
Lichfield	1	0
Malvern Hills	3	3
Redditch	1	1
Shropshire	11	24
South Staffordshire	1	0
Stafford	1	2
Staffordshire Moorlands	3	10
Stratford-on-Avon	6	11
Telford and Wrekin	2	5
Warwick	5	5
Wychavon	6	7
Yorkshire and The Humber	**29**	**47**
Bradford	2	1
Calderdale	3	1
Craven	4	13
East Riding of Yorkshire	2	2
Hambleton	5	3
Kirklees	1	2
Richmondshire	6	14
Ryedale	1	3
Scarborough	2	6
Selby	2	1
Wakefield	1	1
Grand Total	**513**	**822**