

26 May 2021: Using Society Digimap Psychogeography: place; ageing and emotional attachment



Dr Aled Singleton
Centre for Innovative Ageing, Swansea University

This Presentation

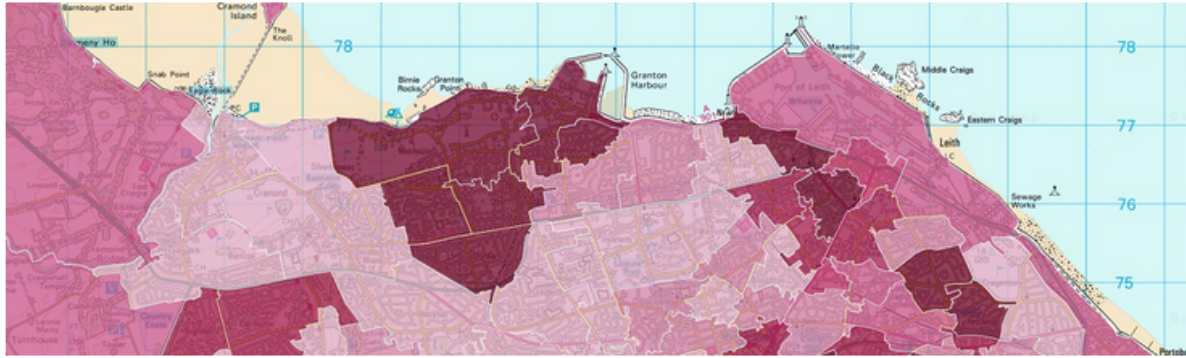
1. Introducing basics of Society Digimap
2. The case study: ageing populations
3. My approach: psychogeography and finding a line
4. Putting the line into Society Digimap
5. Potential applications and opportunities

My Work

- Early Career Researcher - awarded PhD, Dec 2020
- 15 years spent working on built environment projects
- Used GIS extensively in 10 years at Bridgend Council
- Intrigued by sense of space, place and culture

1. How we can use Society Digimap

- How do we understand qualities of a place?
- Not just blocks of statistics
- Link with historic and other maps



Society

About

Data

Getting Started

Access

FAQ

Explore a range of demographic data with this exciting Digimap collection. Society Digimap provides a wealth of census and socio-economic data for Great Britain. The processing required to visualise Census and other demographic datasets can be a barrier to use for many interested in the value of the datasets. By providing these datasets as layers to visualise along with high quality Ordnance Survey data, users can access the rich information to gain valuable insights for their areas of interest without the need to learn how to use a GIS.

View, annotate & print a map



Society
Roam



Download data (for
GIS/CAD)



Society
Download



2. Case Study: An Ageing Place

	2001	2011	2015	% Diff	
Newport	137,014	145,736	147,769	7.85	↑
Caerleon: All Age Groups	8,708	8,061	7,766	-10.82	↓
Caerleon: Age 0-15	1,623	1,346	1,186	-26.93	↓
Caerleon: Age 16-64	5,647	5,047	4,680	-17.12	↓
Caerleon: Age 65 and over	1,438	1,668	1,900	32.13	↑

% increase	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Aged 0 to 15		6.02%↓	4.19%↓	1.49%↓	0.67%↓	3.37%↑	6.85%↑
Aged 16 to 64		1.92%↓	1.72%↓	1.42%↓	2.42%↓	2.26%↓	0.83%↓
Aged 65 and over		5.76%↑	3.51%↑	2.63%↑	1.39%↑	2.63%↑	0.26%↑
Total		1.02%↓	0.95%↓	0.49%↓	1.25%↓	0.21%↓	0.66%↑

Source: Newport City Council (2019)

Attachment and Lifecourse

- No real way of tracing people through their lives
- Biographical walking interviews, led by participant
- 20 interviews – 50% outdoor walks, 50% walk of mind

Case Study: Mixture of Architecture

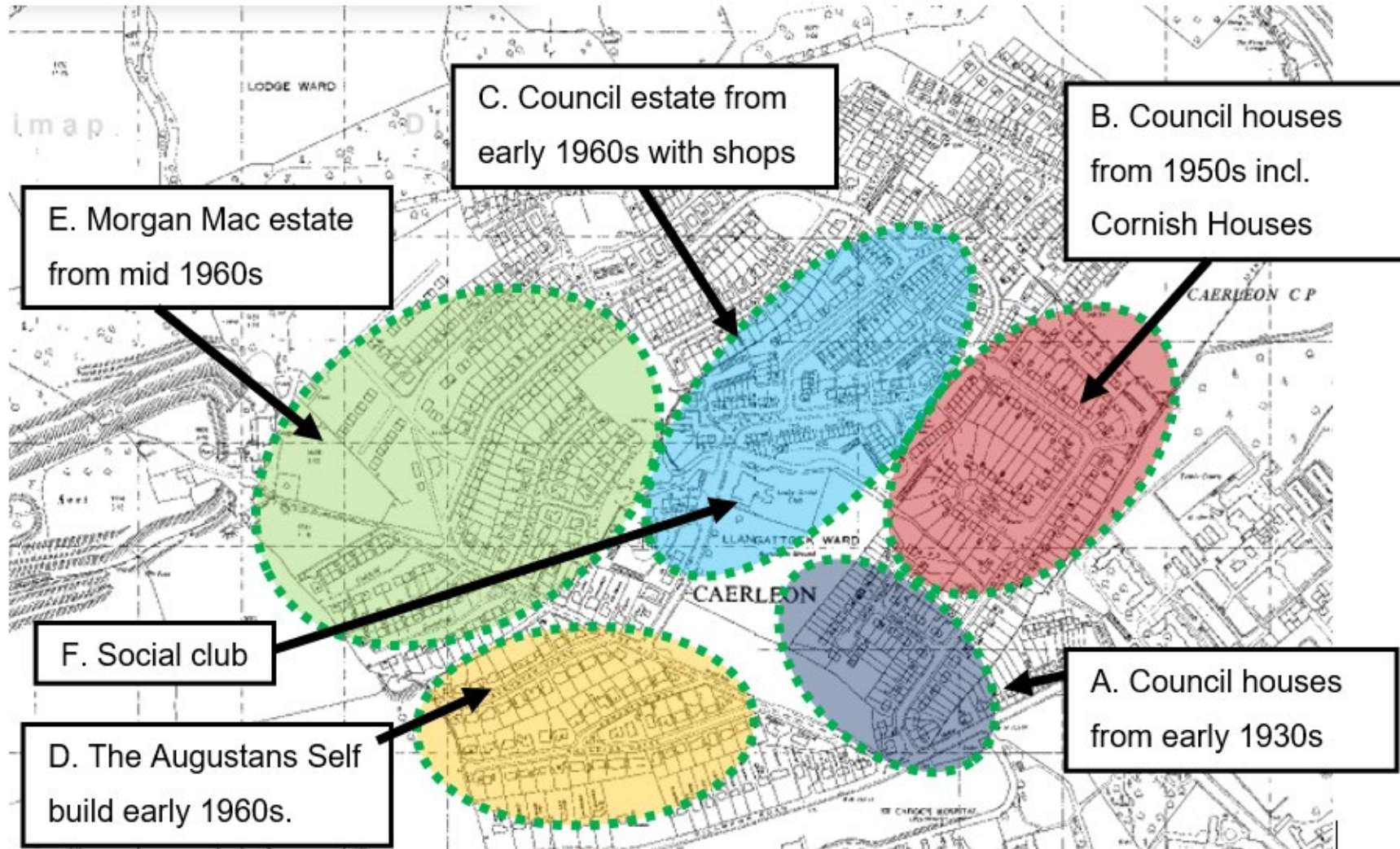


Walking Interviews

- Led by the interviewee
- Lasting up to one hour
- Themes: everyday activities such as work, family life, transport and shopping



Overlaying onto historic maps



3. Psychogeographic Practice

“The study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals” – Guy Debord, *The Situationists*, 1955

Forms since 1990s focused less on playful and more on local history or finding place narrative.

Psychogeographic Group Walking Tours

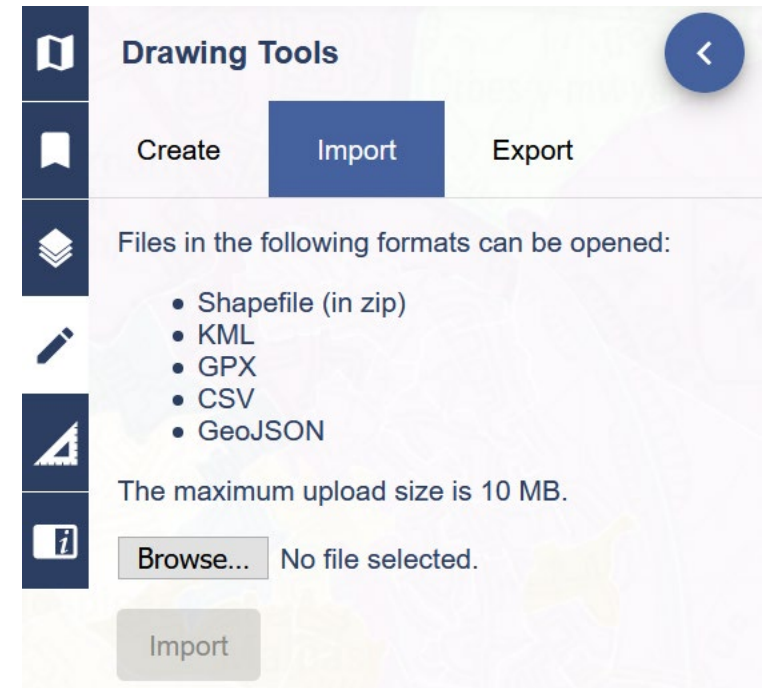
- Route chosen from 1880s road, with modern tweaks
- Partly inspired by interviews – route taken to school
- All public rights of way
- Event One July 2019 & Event Two November 2019
- Worked with performance artist

Group Walking Tours



4. Putting it together into a GPS-mapped line

- Record the combined route from two walking events
- Import the GPX into Digimap
- Save as a map





caerleon



Society Roam



Overlays



Population aged 65 and over

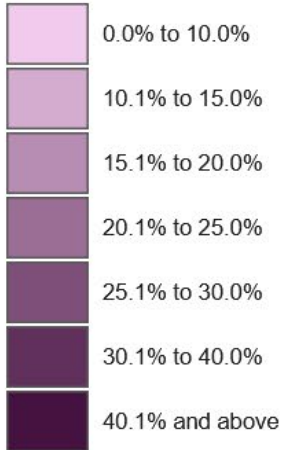


Transparency

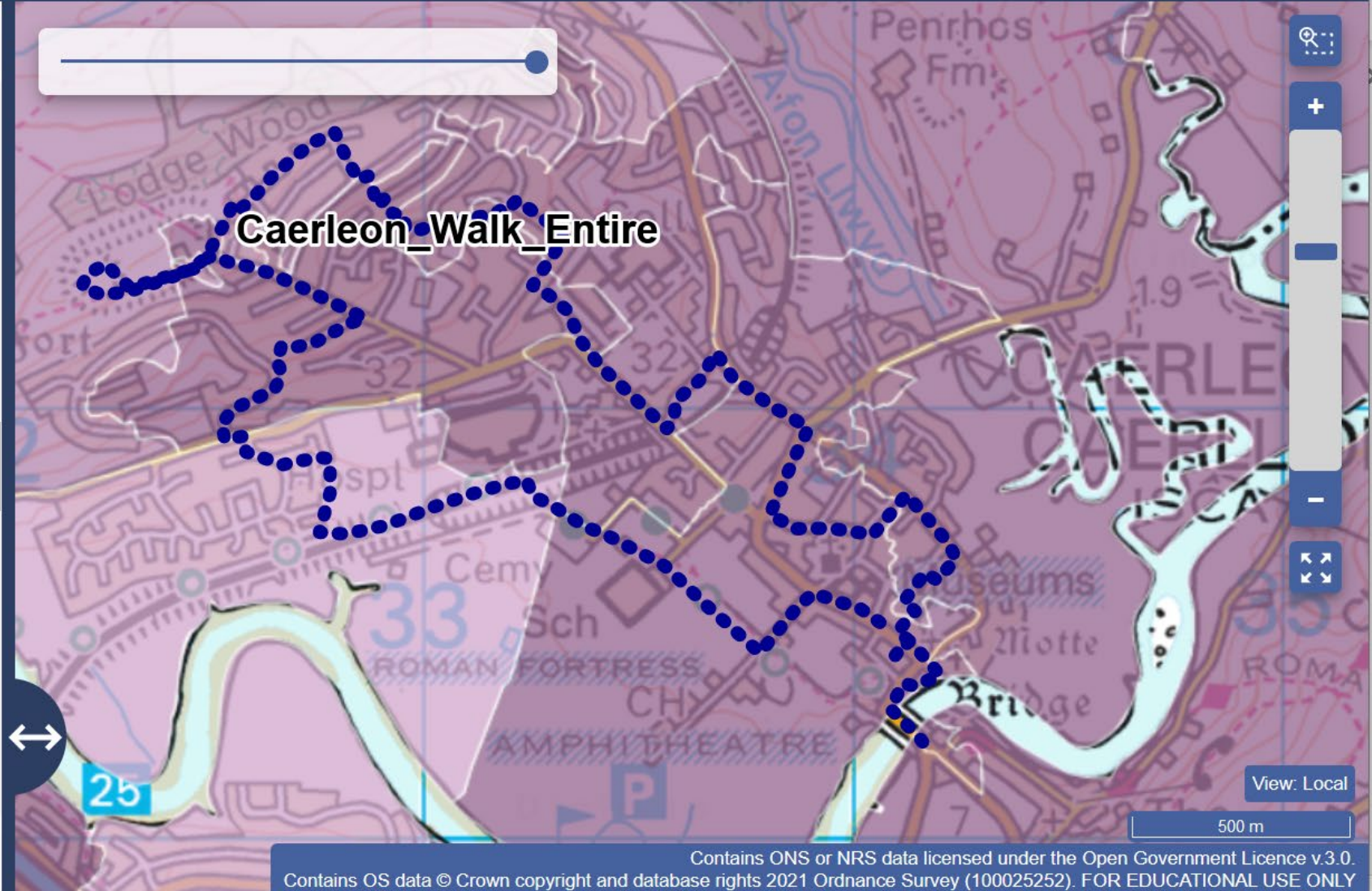


This layer shows the percentage of the population that we aged 65 and over on Census day 27th March 2011.

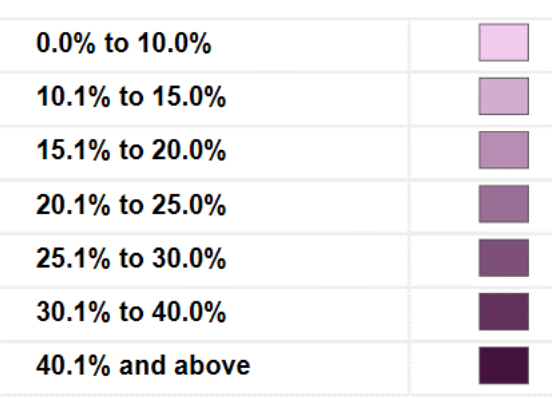
[Read more](#)



« Collapse Sidebar



CAERLETON / CAERLEON



19.4%

27.4%

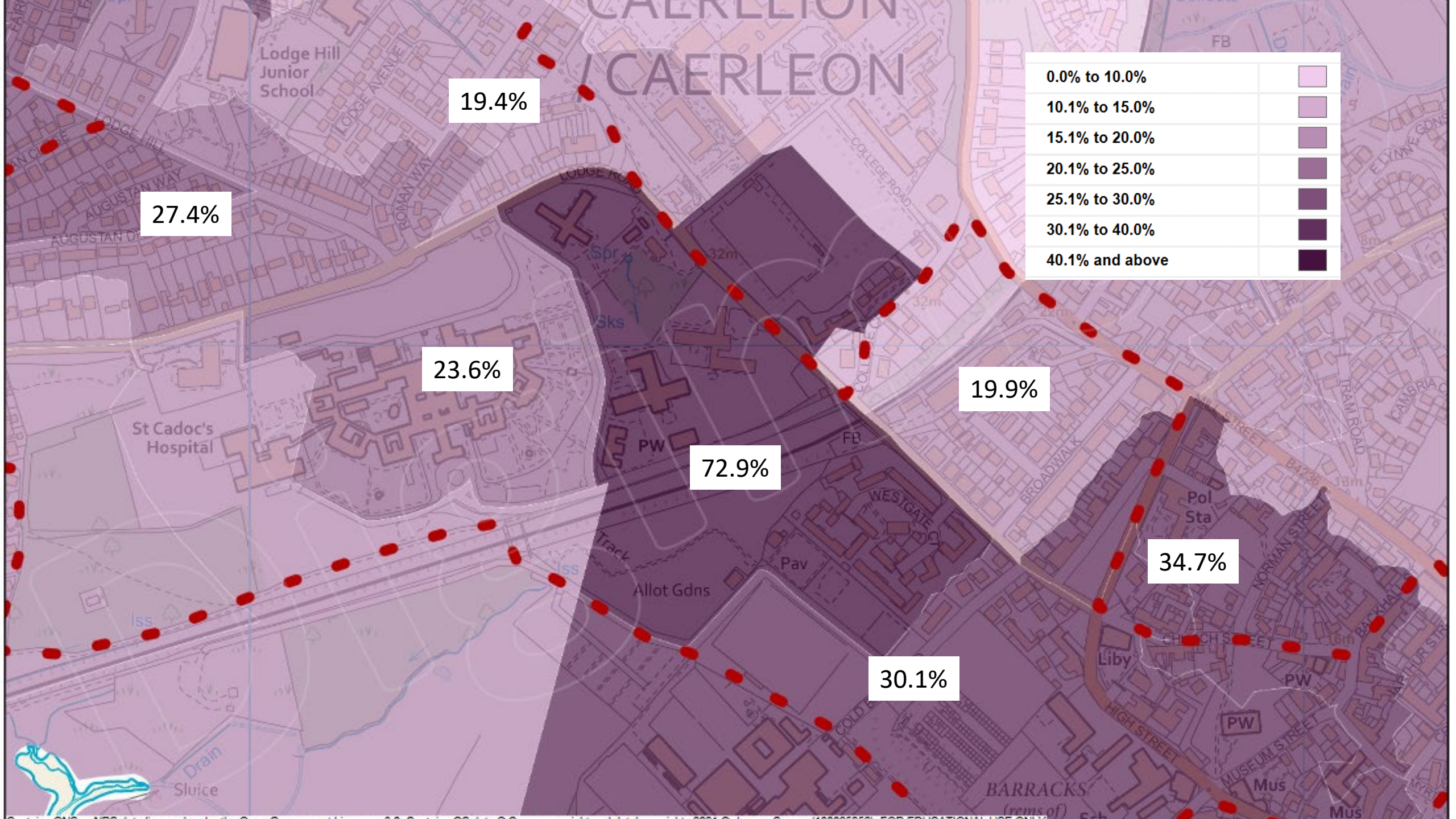
23.6%

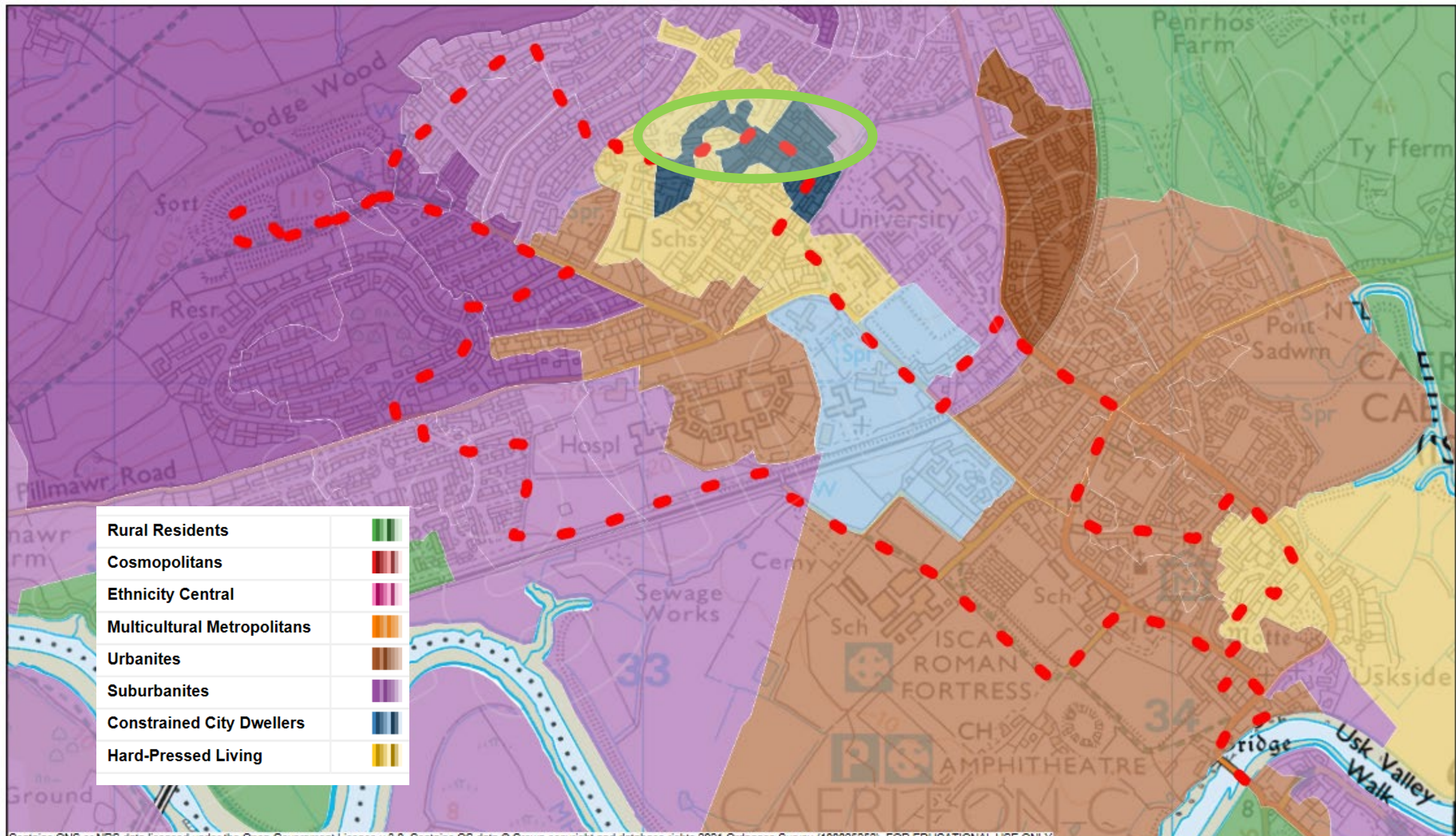
72.9%









19.9%

34.7%

30.1%





Rural Residents	
Cosmopolitans	
Ethnicity Central	
Multicultural Metropolitans	
Urbanites	
Suburbanites	
Constrained City Dwellers	
Hard-Pressed Living	

CDRC Maps

DATA CHOOSER

Geodem Indicators Metrics

Select a map:

2001 Area Classif/n of OAs

MAP OPTIONS

Layers: Land Labels

Overlays: Pin Clear

Tip: Try dropping KML or GeoJSON files onto map.

Postcode: Go

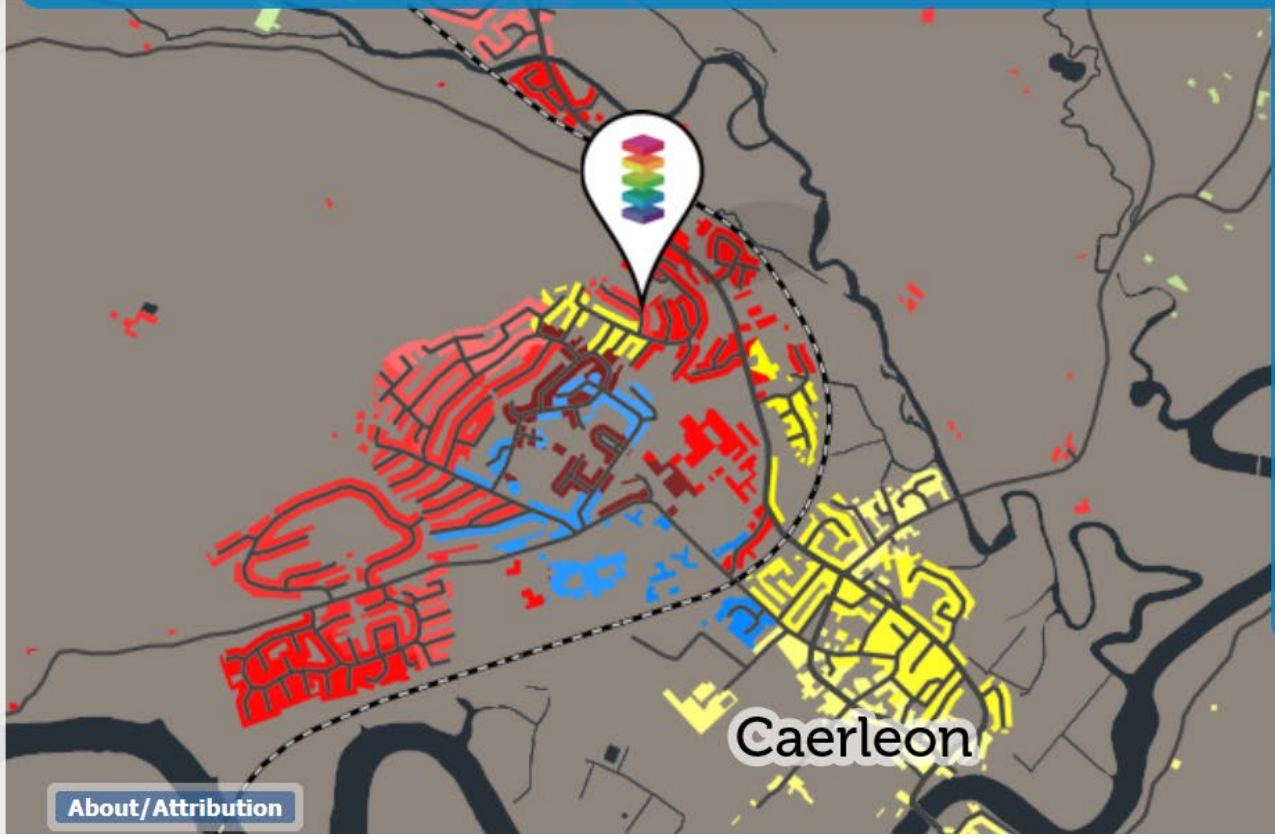
CENTRES & CATCHMENTS

JUMP TO CITY

Aberdeen Birmingham Brighton
Bristol Cardiff Edinburgh Glasgow
Leeds Liverpool London

2001 AREA CLASSIF/N OF OAS

OAC 2001 OAC 2011



About/Attribution

MAP KEY

2001 OAC

The 2001 Area Classification for Output Areas, and also known as the Output Area Classification (OAC). It groups the UK population into 7 Supergroups, 21 Groups and 52 Subgroups. The only data source used is the 2001 UK Census (41 Variables).

[More info about this map](#)

[Download these data](#)

- Blue Collar Communities
- City Living
- Countryside
- Prospering Suburbs
- Constrained by Circumstances
- Typical Traits
- Multicultural

Application: Statistics Over Time

- Digimap Society allows you to focus on streets
- Select the specific neighbourhood e.g. W06000022
- One street changed from “younger blue collar” in 2001 to “hard pressed ageing workers” in 2011.



caerleon



My Previous Downloads



Society Data Download



Select Area of Interest

Draw

Modify

Delete



Use Coordinates

Select Visible Area

Use Tile Name

Import Polygons

Select Data Products

Filter Products

Product	Order Size
2011 Census data layers	(0 selected)
Neighborhood areal classification	(0 selected)
<input type="checkbox"/> Output Area Classification	<input type="checkbox"/> No limit
Internet usage data	(0 selected)

Add To Basket

View Basket

Reference Grids



Click then release mouse to start drawing

Current selection: 1.96 km²

1:50 000 Raster

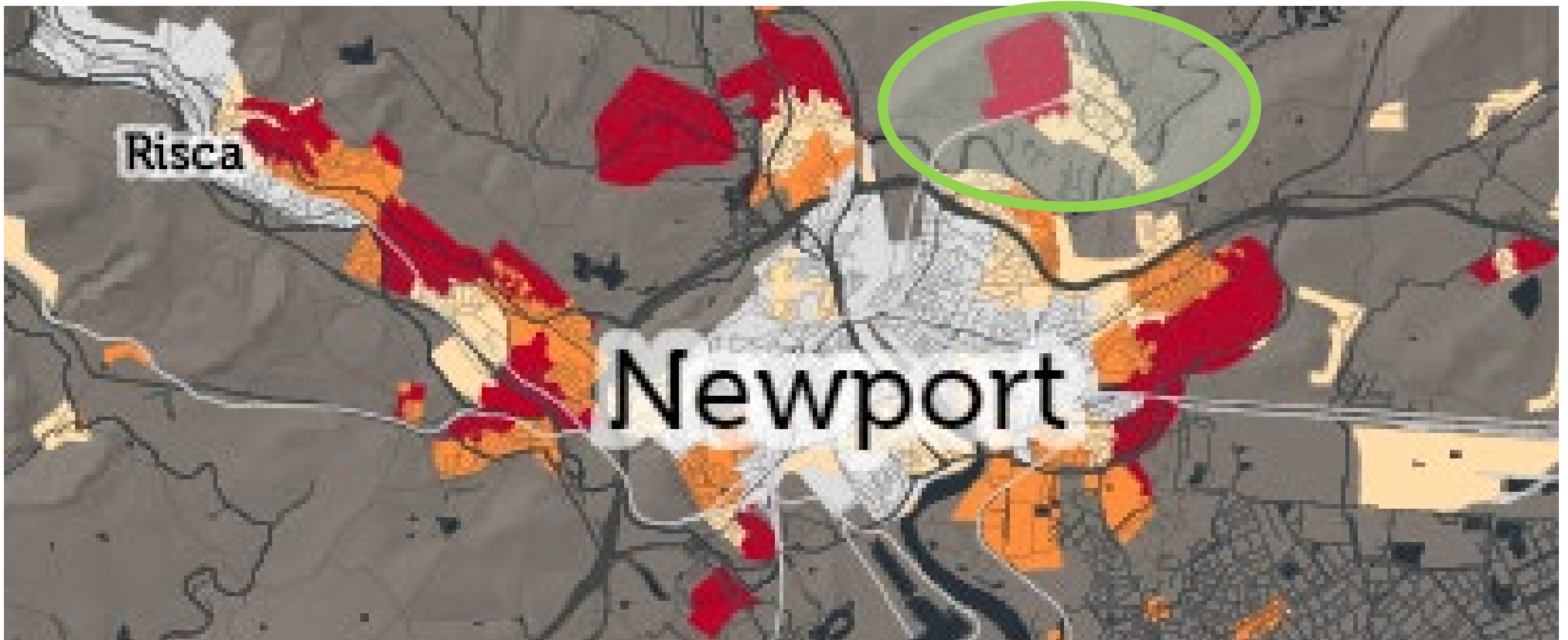
500 m

Getting data from Society Digimap

- Add to Basket
- Choose file type
- Emailed to you
- Tidy as desired

Output area	supergroup name	group name	subgroup name
W00008454	Urbanites	Urban Professionals and Families	White Professionals
W00008450	Constrained City Dwellers	Ageing City Dwellers	Retired Independent City Dwellers
W00008452	Constrained City Dwellers	Challenged Diversity	Multi-Ethnic Hardship
W00008456	Suburbanites	Suburban Achievers	Comfortable Suburbia
W00008459	Urbanites	Ageing Urban Living	Self-Sufficient Retirement
W00008453	Hard-Pressed Living	Hard-Pressed Ageing Workers	Ageing Industrious Workers
W00008457	Suburbanites	Suburban Achievers	Detached Retirement Living
W00008451	Suburbanites	Semi-Detached Suburbia	Semi-Detached Ageing

Wider story: built Post 1945



5. Opportunity to influence design and policy?

Learning to walk (again) and engage with places

By Aled Singleton,
Swansea University

This essay discusses and presents a walking methodology that architects, planners, designers and the general public could use to re-investigate mostly suburban places built in the post-war era.

Caerleon is presented as a case study, drawn from my 2019 PhD feedback for the Centre of Innovative Ageing at Swansea University, research to better understand relationships between the ageing population and neighbourhood life. The case study complements existing research on how walking helps the individual to connect with their deeper relationships with everyday spaces like the house and the street. Specifically, I go beyond existing theory to present a way of deep mapping a place by using walking interviews with individuals and two public promenades. To start we ask why the pedestrian perspective has perhaps been neglected.

How everyday walking has been neglected

The reasons why we don't take time to walk our local streets and neighbourhoods can be found all around us: low-density suburban housing estates and a built environment dominated by the car. This shift in urban form has happened in living memory, for example, it is only since 1970 that more than half of UK households have owned a car. More importantly the fabric of urban Britain has been changing: approximately 6.7 million new houses were built in Britain from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, the majority of which were located in new towns, edges of small towns, and new suburbs around existing cities.

Although many new properties accommodated families of the post-war baby boomer population bulge, a significant number replaced older terraced properties in industrial towns and the inner-city: nearly 11 million dwellings were cleared in England and Wales between 1954 and 1974. These new environments had a particularly big impact for young adults in the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s – using the car for shopping, leisure activities and commuting long distance to work. Perhaps also they unconsciously shaped their everyday lives around motor vehicles.

Inner-city decline had slowed considerably by the 1980s and – interestingly – growth in car use levelled out from the mid-1990s. Indeed, large British cities are much more likely to be populated by younger people, Paul Watt writes about gentrification displacing older residents from larger cities. So why does it matter if people move around, break and form connections with places? A review of place attachment research by Hidalgo and Hernandez² found that life-long psychological connections to geographical space are made in adolescence and early adulthood.

Sensing space

Putting the social aspects to one side, many geographers note how certain sites gain qualities and atmospheres over time. Edward Casey writes that space thickens with more doing and making; also that space thins with less activity. Walking allows us to sense what Casey calls thick and thin space – concepts used throughout this essay. For example, in 2010 older people took Rescue Geography walks through inner-city Birmingham neighbourhoods where only the street layouts remained from fifty years earlier.³

Being in these spaces triggered emotional responses to long-demolished communal spaces such as pubs, shops and factories. Effectively these spaces remained thick for this small number of older ex-residents, but thin for nearly everybody else. In another case, it was found that young people sense thickness in spaces where they skateboard and hang out. The value of walking with people is allowing them to reveal subjective experience.

Post-war planning and economic changes mean that British residential streets are generally separate from shops, factories and employment sites. In Wales, approximately 64% of dwellings were built after 1945. The Caerleon case study has an interesting pre-war to post-war split: nearly four fifths of houses are on estates from the 1950s onwards. For the Caerleon study I developed a walking methodology to explore seemingly prosaic spaces and find the thick qualities

The value of walking with people is allowing them to reveal subjective experience.

Figure 1 - Walking tour, November 2019



Places for Life 2 Understanding a Place

Potential for walking interviews

Walking research techniques range from the scientific to the low tech. At the researcher-led end, experiments can use wearable electroencephalography (EEG) sensors to analyse brain activity. A large EEG study in Edinburgh with 95 participants⁴ made interesting conclusions about how urban green and urban quiet spaces cause less 'arousal, frustration, and engagement' than urban busy spaces. Though promising, such experiments are resource-heavy and – thus far – explain little about why and how the environment stimulates such brain activity.

The low tech end of the scale is a one-to-one scenario where the interviewee decides on routes through streets and neighbourhoods important to their biography and everyday life. The interviewer asks questions as they go-along and records the conversation using an audio-recording device. Most smart phones are surprisingly good with sound; short films can help to capture detailed features; and walks can be easily GPS-mapped. The narrative is framed by stories which relate to features such as streets, parks and houses. In many ways this suits an architect, planner or designer who may be uncomfortable seeking too many personal details. From an hour-long walk there were fascinating accounts about topics that I would never have considered asking about – more of which later. However, the downside to the go-along is that details of life, whether it was being a teenager in 1980s or a teenager in the present day, may not make sense to the interviewer.



Figure 4: Representing construction in the 1960s, November 2019

Stages Five and Six:

The Story of Post-war Caerleon

Stage Five was a return to Lodge Hill, Marega and I teamed up again for a second event with new material to share. The weather on that Saturday morning in November 2019 was rainy, so we spent an hour inside the former post office, now the Community Hub run by Caerleon-based social enterprise Village Services. This second gathering was sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Sciences - giving resource to employ a film maker.

Marega put together a short but simple performance which took people back to the days when construction vehicles sped through local streets to help make a massive new steelworks on the edge of Newport (Fig. 4). This sparked many more stories from past and present Caerleon residents. We discovered that many families came to Caerleon in the 1960s from other parts of south Wales, such as Ebbw Vale and Bargoed. One man who came in the early 1960s said that communities were blown apart: when people moved down from the valleys, people started to form new habits, such as driving cars and going to the supermarket, as estates like Lodge Hill had few communal facilities.

In Stage Six we left the Community Hub and walked 1.3km to the centre of Caerleon. Chris Thomas, from Caerleon Civic Society, led for a while. He discussed social housing and how council tenants had the right to buy their properties from the late 1970s. There were interesting stories about repairing the structural weaknesses of concrete-framed Common houses from the late 1950s. One lifelong resident explained how the shape of front gates revealed

when certain houses had been sold off by the council. We then walked around a corner, took a short cutting past a hedge and some other former social housing.

Chris stopped the group to reflect on the live planning debate which concerned the former Caerleon Campus site. The planning application that was submitted for over 300 properties was rejected on grounds including air pollution and a lack of active travel. Both of these issues are explicitly related to living in places dominated by the car.

Towards the end of our walking tour we arrived at a row of back-built shops from the late nineteenth century. We were guided by Nigel, who had spent his teenage years living nearby in the 1970s. He talked us through tales of buying sweets and running errands for his mother, pointing to the former grocery stores, a sweet shop, a transport cafe and a butcher's. From Nigel's stories we learned how new habits in the 1970s thinned the local shopping offer and bolstered the supermarket; the chest freezer reduced the frequency of trips to nearby shops and the village baker stopped delivering to the door.

Our guided walk ended at Caerleon Common. Visitors for the day shared some interesting perspectives. One man said that visiting the estates took him back to his youth in a similar place near Birmingham during the 1970s. He reflected how 'kids were all thrown in together'; perhaps 'blotting' that place. Another person said she had made friends for a morning as the group walked around and learned about the place.

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Any Questions?



Email: a.m.singleton@swansea.ac.uk

Twitter: [@aledsingleton](https://twitter.com/aledsingleton)

Film: <https://vimeo.com/373090583>