

# Urban Regeneration in a small town.



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## **An investigation into the regeneration of commercial services in Mende**

### **Teachers' Notes**

- Lozere is the least populated of all French departments and from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to late 20<sup>th</sup> century has experienced a falling population. It has therefore had to use rebranding, reimagining and redevelopment strategies to promote itself within France and overseas.
- The area is largely rural, but the largest urban area Mende is within easy access of the centre, allowing both urban regeneration strategies to be studied.
- Lozere is combining rebranding and regeneration strategies with those of “sustainable development” (Developpement Durable) and examples of this are studied within this unit.
- The unit is probably best studied in combination with other urban investigation work.
- Urban fieldwork involves the students working in groups away from direct supervision. It is suggested that the day is broken down into a series of time slots and the groups meet up with staff regularly. A central meeting point for emergencies is a good idea and students should be shown this before departing on the study.
- This regeneration study is designed to give students  
Case study material  
Fieldwork investigations  
A variety of methods of collecting, presenting and analysing data.

### **Reference texts:**

INSEE (2000) ‘*Recensement Général de la Population de 1999*’  
Ministere des Affaires etrangeres ‘FRANCE’

Byrne, Pointon, Warren & Yates (2008) “*Edexcel AS Geography*” Pearson

Warn, Dunn, Holmes, Hordern, Oakes & Witherick (2008) “*Edexcel AS Geography*”  
Philip Allan

Digby, Hurst, Chapman, King & Owen “*AS Geography for Edexcel*” Oxford

## **Specification Links**

### **WJEC**

#### **Theme 2 – Investigating Settlement Change in MEDCs**

2.3 What are the issues of the Inner city?

2.4 What are the issues being faced in the CBD?

### **Edexcel AS Geography (8GE01)**

#### **Unit 1 Global Challenges**

5 On the move

7 Global challenges for the future

#### **Unit 2 Geographical Investigations**

Topic 4 Rebranding Places

1 Time to rebrand

2 Rebranding strategies

4 Managing urban rebranding

### **Edexcel A2 Geography (9GE01)**

#### **Unit 4 Geographical Research**

Option 4 The World of Cultural Diversity

## General Information

### Understanding Rebranding and Regeneration

#### Key Terms

- **Rebranding** Developing a place to change its image and peoples ideas about it, effectively a 'marketing strategy'. This will help to 'sell' the place to its target audience.
- **Regenerating** Positively transforming the economy of a place that has displayed symptoms of decline, effectively the practical changes on the ground..
- **Reimaging** Positively changing the standing and reputation of a place through specific improvements.

Regeneration, rebranding and reimaging of places has become increasingly prominent in recent years. In some cases rebranding has not been successful, for example the change from the '*Post Office*' to '*Consignia*' was rapidly abandoned. There is a certain amount of confusion over the process but the concept of remaking and improvement is central to this. Regeneration and renewal can be seen as costly and time consuming, whilst rebranding could be seen as a cheap means of making purely cosmetic improvements. However, the concept goes beyond this and looks at its reputation, spirit and identity. How people regard the place, both as residents and as visitors is important to its future prosperity.

Therefore, at the heart of any rebranding process, there is:

- **An environmental focus** – looking to improve infrastructure and the quality of the environment.
- **A social focus** – to overcome the spiral of decline and deprivation.
- **An economic focus** – to improve job opportunities and bring in income to the area.
- **A political dimension** – to raise money and the profile of the area

### Why is regeneration needed in Lozere?

Lozere is an interesting example as it does not fit many of the classic areas that have required regeneration. It does not contain large urban areas and so has avoided many of the problems associated with these, has not been a major industrial or coal mining area (example available at La Grande Combe) or a coastal area. It is however a predominantly rural area that has experienced massive population decline through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Table 1      Population of Lozere Department 1801 – 2007**

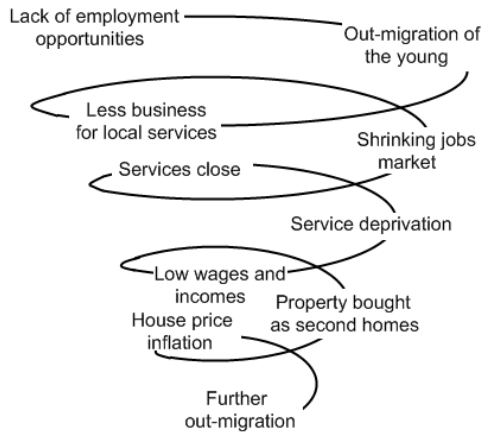
Date	Population	Date	Population	Date	Population
1801	126,503	1872	135,190	1936	98,480
1806	143,247	1876	138,319	1946	90,523
1821	133,934	1881	143,565	1954	82,391
1826	138,778	1886	141,264	1962(A)	80,891
1831	140,347	1891	135,517	1962(B)	81,868
1836	141,733	1896	132,151	1968	77,258
1841	140,788	1901	128,866	1975	74,825
1846	143,331	1906	128,016	1982	74,294
1851	144,705	1911	122,738	1990	72,825
1856	140,819	1921	108,822	1999	73,509
1861	137,367	1926	104,733	2007	74,773
1866	137,263	1931	101,849		

The main reasons for this were that in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century, outside of the few urban centre's, the population was dependant upon agriculture and craft industries. With poor access both within and outside of the area, most agriculture was subsistence, supporting only the local family. This was able to support a population of around 140,000 until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when two disasters upset this fragile economy.

- Overgrazing of the mountainsides by sheep, goats and cattle meant that pasture became scarce. Since people had no alternative sources of food they either moved out or died.
- Disease ravaged the silk worms and the silk industry, which supported much of the craft industry collapsed, never to fully recover.

Linked into this was the increased attraction of the cities outside of Lozere. The growth of the rail and road network, rather than revitalising the economy simply seemed to ease the escape of those unwilling to stay. With the younger population most able and willing to move, the population became increasingly aged, reducing further the attraction of the area. A vicious cycle or spiral of decline was in force. This was again reinforced by the decline of European agriculture in the 1930's and 1940's, forcing yet more people from the land.

### Spiral of settlement decline

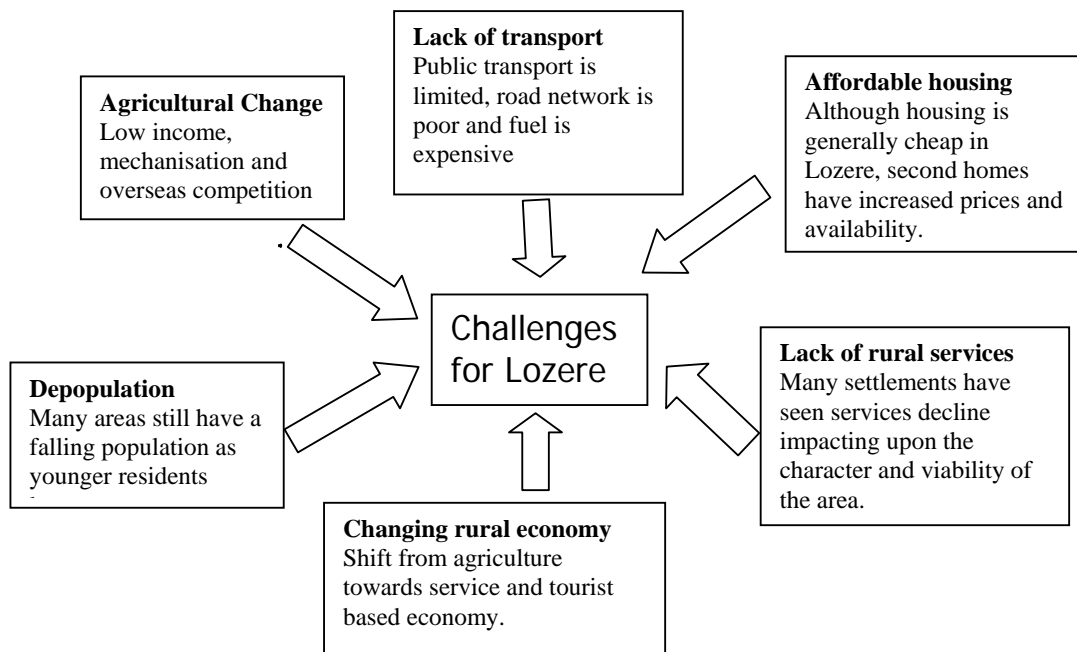


Only in the 1950's was this decline slowed and finally reversed in the 1990's. However the legacy of this decline still leaves Lozere with a number of problems.

- Lozere has an increasingly aged population with some areas having over 30% of the population aged over 60.
- Death rates still exceed birth rates in the department and in many areas birth rates are falling.
- One third of all properties (33.4%) are second or holiday homes.
- There are now more 'Lozerians' living in Paris and its surrounds than in the department itself.

This is backed by the image of Lozere within the rest of France. It is considered to be isolated, backward, unsophisticated, boring and slow.

**Table 2 Challenges within Lozere**



### **How has Lozere been rebranded?**

The main aim of any rebranding policy within Lozere has to be to attempt to reverse the outward migration of people from the area. One of the key principals is to turn the negative multiplier effect into one of a positive multiplier effect. Rebranding in Lozere has therefore looked to highlight the positive aspects of the area and identifying its distinctiveness. There has also been a programme of regeneration projects to overcome some of the problems within the area.

### **Lozere Highlights!**

#### **A good place to live? (*your vital energy*)**

- Lozere is considered to have one of the highest qualities of life within France.
- Lozere has one of the lowest unemployment rates in France – 5.6% in 2005 compared to the national rate of 9.5%.
- There are only 4 sets of traffic lights in the whole department.
- A safe place. Crime in Mende recently rose by 200%, due to the theft 3 times of magazines from a newsagent in the town.

#### **And for tourists (*your natural choice*)**

- 2000 hours of sunshine per year (equivalent to Toulouse) and on average 50 days of snow.
- 183 hotels, but no big chains (Campanile, Holiday Inn etc)
- Source of over 400 rivers and streams, with 2700km of top quality fishing.
- Over 2000km of trails for hiking, mountain biking and horse riding.

### **Aims**

- **To investigate urban regeneration strategies within the centre of Mende.**
- **To evaluate the creation of the ZAC (Zone d'activite Concertee) de Ramilles and its impact upon retail services in Mende.**

## Method and Organisation of Study

### Rebranding and regeneration within Mende.

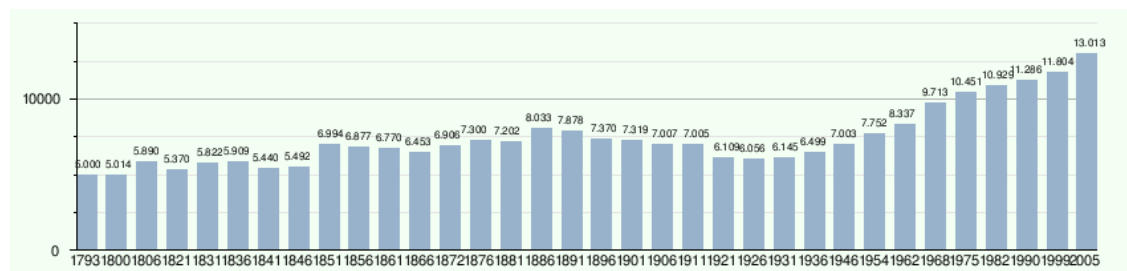
#### Mende

Mende is the largest town within the department of Lozere. As the prefecture it plays a major role within the department, the Mende area having a population of 17000 or about 22% of the total for Lozere. The town itself has a population of nearly 14,000 (13,899 in 2006) which has grown (Table 2) in contrast to much of the rest of the department. The population is also young by comparison with the rest of the department, 25% are under the age of 20. Mende has received most new arrivals to Lozere, 22% of the population lived outside of Lozere before 1990.

**Table 2**

Population change in Mende 1881 - 2006									
1881	1901	1921	1936	1954	1968	1982	1990	1999	2006
7202	7319	6109	6499	7752	9713	10929	11286	11804	13899

The town also represents the centre of decision making, commerce, transport and employment within the department. It also has about 25% of the economic activity and 40% of the employers within the department. The town is however still the smallest prefecture within France and is heavily dependant upon state and departmental functions for much of its employment base. There is little in the way of manufacturing industry and tourism is far more limited than the resources available to the coastal towns of the region.



## **Fieldwork**

### **Task 1      Establishing the profile of Mende centre**

- Within the central area of Mende carry out a range of placecheck surveys to establish the profile of the area. The whole area should be visited (**Survey 1**).
- 10 contrasting sites within the centre should be selected for a street and property quality survey (**Survey 2**) Record these on **Map1**.
- Carry out the shopping survey in the central square to contrast with ZAC Ramilles (Survey 3)
- Collect data for service record sheet (**Survey 4**)
- Complete a number of pedestrian counts to determine usage of the area.
- Within the ring road annotate on the map any areas that have been improved or are in need of regeneration.
- Collect evidence of how Lozere and/or its products are being promoted in Mende.
- Collect evidence of how sport and tourism, especially in respect of the natural environment.



## Regenerating Street and Property Survey (Survey 2)

Each factor should be assessed and scored from 0 – 5 with 5 representing the highest quality.

*Add any other factors that you feel are important*

Street and Property Quality Survey										
Site Number (mark on map)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
General appearance										
Traffic										
Dereliction										
Industry										
Litter and vandalism										
Noise level										
Pavement condition										
Street lighting										
Accessibility										
Play areas / gardens										
Air quality										
Historical value										
Building design										
Street safety										
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>										



### Survey 3    Urban Shopping and Environmental Index

This index is designed to examine whether variation exists between areas within a settlement in terms of its shopping quality and environmental quality. This will give a quantitative rather than a qualitative assessment. The area is broken down into a series of factors and each one scored on a scale of 0 – 10, with the lower score representing a poorer environment.

#### Shopping Quality

Access to Shops	Score
Free parking/or bus close to area	10
Pay to park close to area	8
Have to walk more than 200m	5
Have to walk more than 500m	0

Types of Shops	Score
Mainly comparison goods	10
Wide variety	5
Mainly convenience goods	2
No Shops	0

Shop Building Quality	Score
All well maintained	10
Generally good repair	8
Scruffy	5
Very poor condition	2
Derelict or no shops	0

Quality of Goods	Score
High quality/ high prices	10
Low quality/ low prices	2
No shops/ no goods	0

Number of Shoppers	Score
Crowded	10
Large numbers	7
Moderate numbers	4
Few people	2
No people	0

Total Shopping Quality Score ( 0 to 50)	
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#### Environmental Quality

Litter	Score
Completely clean, no litter	10
Some litter, not obvious	7
Some litter, obvious	4
Extensive litter, obtrusive	0

Traffic safety	Score
Pedestrian Street	10
Restricted vehicle access	8
Light traffic	6
Heavy traffic, with crossings	3
Heavy Traffic, no crossings	0

Paving Condition	Score
Good state of repair	10
Good, In need of repair	7
Poor, In need of repairs	4
Very Poor, damaged badly	0

Noise	Score
No obvious noise	10
Some noticeable noise	7
Obtrusive noise	3
Intolerable noise	0

Graffiti	Score
No graffiti on any surfaces	10
Some graffiti, not obvious	7
Some graffiti, obvious	3
Very extensive graffiti	0

Total Environmental Quality Score (0 to 50)	
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<p>AREA:</p> <p>TOTAL SCORE:</p> <p>OTHER COMMENTS:</p>
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## **Urban regeneration at the ZAC Ramilles**

In 1997 it was decided to create the **ZAC (Zone d'activite Concertee) des Ramilles** as a Commercial Retail Area that would allow Mende to compete with other regional towns such as Millau, Rodez, St Flour and Rodez. It was not designed to compete with the regional centres of Clermont Ferrand and Montpellier. The site covers an area of 12 hectares is located on the flood plain of the River Lot, adjacent to the RN.88. The initial project completed in 2003 was for the parking area, a Hypermarket (the first in Lozere) and a McDonalds (the only one in Lozere). The success of the scheme meant that the Hyper U expanded from 1,700m<sup>2</sup> to 2,800m<sup>2</sup> by September 2005. Later editions to the scheme included a service station, Briconautes and But stores (2007) and finally the commercial hall and extra parking opened in May 2008.

Plans exist for the scheme to create a golfing area and children's playground accessible from the parking area. The scheme is also part of a longer term plan to divert the RN.88. away from the centre of Mende and to the north of the town. The initial part of this can be seen with the construction of the new viaduct providing better access from the RN .106. coming in from the north of the department.

There has however been some local opposition to the scheme. The location has been criticised as it is within the flood zone of the River Lot (as defined in the Departmental Hazards Plan). A number of measures have been taken to overcome the problems of this (these can be investigated by students who are studying flooding). It is also located on a steep slope with potential for mass movement and again a number of measures have had to be undertaken to mitigate this.

However, perhaps the greatest protest has come from those who feel that this scheme is producing a 'clone' area of national chains, without the appeal of local shops associated with the historic centre. Ultimately this may have a negative impact upon the central area of Mende.

### **Task 2          Evaluating the ZAC Ramilles urban regeneration site**

- Carry out the shopping survey in the ZAC Ramilles (**Survey 3**)
- Collect data for service record sheet (**Survey 4**)
- Complete a number of pedestrian counts to determine usage of the area.
- Carry out a questionnaire to assess peoples attitudes to the area. (**survey 5**)

**Survey 5 Shoppers Questionnaire (English version)**

*Good Morning/ Afternoon.*

*I am a Geography student from \_\_\_\_\_ and am carrying out research on shopping within Mende. Would you please answer a few questions?*

**1. Where do you live?**

<b>Mende</b>	<b>Within Lozere</b>	<b>Other France</b>	<b>Other (specify)</b>
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**2. How did you travel here today?**

<b>Walk</b>	<b>Bicycle</b>	<b>Bus</b>	<b>Car</b>	<b>Taxi</b>
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**3. What is the reason for your visit?**

<b>Shopping</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Tourism</b>	<b>Other (specify)</b>
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**4. How often do you visit?**

<b>Every Day</b>	<b>2-3 times a week</b>	<b>Once a week</b>	<b>Once a month</b>	<b>Less than once a month</b>
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**5. What do you like about this area? Please rate it from 1 to 5.**

	<b>Very Poor 1</b>	<b>Poor 2</b>	<b>Average 3</b>	<b>Good 4</b>	<b>Excellent 5</b>
<b>Quality of shops</b>					
<b>Range of shops</b>					
<b>Easy access</b>					
<b>Clean and tidy</b>					
<b>Safety</b>					
<b>Attractive Environment</b>					

**Thank you for your time!**

**Survey 5 Shoppers Questionnaire (French version)**

*Bonjour Monsieur/Madam. Je suis étudiant(e) Britannique et je fais une enquête géographique à Mende. Auriez-vous la gentillesse de répondre à quelques questions?*

**1. Où habitez-vous?**

Mende	Lozere	Autre Departement (le quelle?)	Autre pays?
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**2. Comment avez vous voyager d'ici?**

À pied	A vélo	Autocar	Voiture	Taxi
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**3. Pour quelle(s) raison(s) etes-vous ici d'au jour d'hui?**

Shopping	Work	Tourism	Other (specify)
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**4. Combienes de fois est que vous visitez de Mende?**

Chaque jour	2-3 fois par semaine	1 fois par semaine	1 fois chaque fois	Moins que 1 fois chaque mois
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**5. Qu'est que vous bien aimez a Mende? Marque des points entre 1 (meilleure) et 5 (mauvais) au dessous :**

	Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Average 3	Good 4	Excellen t 5
Qualitee des magasins					
Choix des magasins					
Facilitee d'access					
Propre					
Securite					
Environnement intéressant et charmant					

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ZAC Ramilles site

Photographs illustrating the historical growth of Mende



Vue Panoramique