



# Wycombe District Local Plan

## Settlement Hierarchy Study

### Final Report



**June 2016**



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## 1. Background

1.1 Wycombe District Council is currently progressing work on preparing a new planning framework, including a new Local Plan for the District. This work comprises a range of studies to explore options for accommodating new development requirements.

1.2 As part of the Council's technical work which has already taken place, particularly as part of the Local Plan Options Consultation in 2014, it has already become clear that the requirements for new development are likely to be considerably higher than previous targets. Consequently the Council is likely to be faced with significantly greater challenges in terms of finding options to meet these needs.

1.3 To put this into context, the Council's Adopted Core Strategy was based on a housing target of 402.5 new homes per annum, a quantum which was capable of being delivered predominantly through brownfield development and the limited pool of greenfield reserve sites in the south of the District. The early indication of significantly higher growth levels in the District means, however, that for the first time in many years, there is the prospect of a significant level of greenfield development being required to be explored in the Local Plan, to help meet the District's development requirements. This is because under the National Planning Policy Framework (para 14), local plans are expected to meet objectively-assessed needs in full unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or that specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

1.4 The Council has therefore been undertaking various studies to test the options for - and implications of - meeting higher development requirements as part of the plan-making process. It has pursued this work collaboratively with neighbouring local authorities, either through joint work directly on the studies themselves or working to develop a common or consistent methodology for individual studies. The work carried out includes:

- A joint methodology for **Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (HELAA)**, to identify the suitability of land available for housing and economic development;
- a **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)** to identify the economic and housing-related development requirements across Buckinghamshire (carried out in conjunction with the other Bucks authorities);
- a **Green Belt Assessment**, in conjunction with the other Bucks Districts, to appraise the degree to which parcels in the Green Belt fulfil the national Green Belt purposes;

- In areas outside the Green Belt, work has been taking place in **Princes Risborough** and **Longwick** – two of the defined settlements beyond the Green Belt - to assess development potential/capacity constraints of those areas specifically;
- Other work on site options for **villages in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** and work on **other key economic and infrastructure site options**.

1.5 In order to provide a context for this work, there is a need for an assessment to be carried out of the sustainability of all the settlements in the District to allow a judgement to be made regarding their ability to accommodate growth. The objective of this is to provide a robust evidence base to inform the assessment of options for growth including, ultimately, site assessments and sustainability appraisals of these various options.

1.6 To achieve this, a comprehensive **Settlement Hierarchy Study** is required as a starting point to ascertain the current role played by the various settlements in the District and an overview of their existing level of sustainability.

## **2. National policy context**

2.1 The Settlement Hierarchy Study will also comply with the requirement of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** that planning should:

- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paras 6 and 151)
- Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it (para 17, point 5);
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable (para 17, point 11);
- Take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas (para 10);
- Locate housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (para 55).

2.2 Similarly, the **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)** states that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship, and that rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.

2.3 It states that assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or

neighbourhood plan process. However, it states that all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence.

### **3. Methodology**

3.1 This study was required to provide the following outputs:

- To audit current provision of services and infrastructure in settlements across the District;
- To group settlements into a hierarchy reflecting their provision of services/infrastructure and their role in the District; and
- To ascertain any infrastructure/service shortages in the settlements, and to provide an evidence base underpinning requirements from new development in the various settlements.

3.2 It is not the role of this study to set a firm description of the capacity of each settlement, or to advise on the likely quantum of growth which each settlement should accommodate. This is partly because this study acknowledges that service provision is not necessarily a fixed given but can evolve over time according to market forces or changing travel and service patterns. This study presents a snapshot in time.

3.3 So the overall quantum of development directed to each settlement will be determined not by this study (albeit that this study will provide one component of the evidence base) but will be determined through the Local Plan, taking account of the settlement hierarchy and various other studies such as those specifically assessing settlement capacity/growth opportunities. This will include the studies mentioned above, and a range of other technical work such as sustainability appraisal, work to assess transport capacity, flood risk and other key constraints, opportunities and issues.

3.4 Given that there is no national guidance on how to undertake settlement hierarchy studies, a desk-based review of (a) existing local policy and studies and (b) an overview of settlement hierarchy studies carried out elsewhere was carried out to inform the methodological approach. This latter element focused on local authorities either nearby or with similar characteristics as WDC (i.e. mixed urban-rural districts and mix of Green Belt/non-Green Belt districts). Key lessons from this review were:

- Studies have tended to use between four and six tiers of settlement category;
- Studies use a mix of criteria assessing service provision and other factors as well as population, although population can be a good indicator of a settlement's location in the resulting hierarchy;
- Use of different tiers of services is common – splitting key services from other services
- There is some use of scoring systems but this is commonly accompanied by the consideration of other factors, such as

transport provision and accessibility to larger centres, as well as an element of qualitative judgement;

- Consideration of the location of settlements and whether they share services with neighbouring settlements is common in such studies.
- Some studies made judgements and recommendations on what the hierarchy should mean for the resulting development strategy, but others did not.

3.5 This review was accompanied by considering the local context and by making a qualitative judgement about the most effective and appropriate way of building up such a hierarchy in Wycombe District. See Appendices A and B for a summary of the existing local policy context and of a review of other studies respectively.

3.6 The review of other studies influenced the development of the methodology, criteria and hierarchy construction of the Wycombe District Settlement Hierarchy. However, unlike many of these studies, the WDC study does not contain implications for development or provide particular recommendations for development. Instead, it forms a source of information and an evidence base for other studies.

3.7 Following this review, it was considered that the most appropriate methodology for our Settlement Hierarchy Study was that set out below:

#### **Stage 1: Define settlements and establish population size**

The first task of the study is to define the settlements being audited in the study. To do this, the following tasks would be required:

- **Establish the population size for each settlement** using the most up-to-date measure of population. To do this, the Census 2011 figures for Output Areas (the lowest level of area-based analysis used in the Census) were used as a starting point;
- **Establish a minimum threshold for the classification of 'settlements'**. This was set at a level at which places would be generally recognised as 'settlements'. It was considered that settlements below a population size of 100 would be so small as to be very unlikely to contain any services and therefore would not be counted as settlements for the purposes of this study;
- **Define and map all settlements above the threshold.** Mapping of Output Areas were used as a starting point and a map base of settlements was created. For the purposes of this exercise, all settlements being assessed under this study were defined as contiguous built-up areas (see Appendix D for glossary of terms). This is because, even where communities are perceived as being separate from each other, if they are conjoined then they are likely to function as a single settlement by making use of services and facilities within this contiguous built-up area. Where settlements straddle District boundaries, the out-of-District segment of the settlement was also included in the analysis. The definition and determination of settlements also recognised, where appropriate, the role of groups of

nearby villages supporting each others' services, a concept alluded to in paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

## **Stage 2: Audit of key service provision and identification of higher-tier settlements**

The next task for the study was an audit of services provided in each settlement. The services logged as part of this audit were facilities which are considered to be of key importance for the sustainable functioning of settlements, and incorporated some of the facilities and themes outlined in the Core Strategy, Sustainability Framework and other key policy documents (see Appendix A for further details). The key services appraised comprised the following:

- Post office
- Food shop, including supermarkets, local stores and garage shops
- Primary school
- GP surgery
- Pub
- Village/community hall, or such facilities provided as part of places of worship, such as Church Halls
- Recreation ground/playing fields (including sports pitches and children's play grounds)
- Access to high-speed broadband

See Appendix C for a summary of the sources used to obtain this information.

A desk-based analysis was carried out to assess key service provision. The presence or absence of key services was noted and itemised in a matrix with each settlement listed against the relevant services (see Appendix F for detailed audits for each settlement).

**Employment** was also measured through a ward-based jobs figure as a proxy.

At this stage, it was also important to determine the location of higher-order services which, although not typically present in all settlements, were important to be able to be accessed easily. Such services were considered to comprise the following:

- secondary schools,
- dentists
- pharmacies,
- indoor sports/leisure centres and
- permanent libraries.

These are also key facilities but are more likely to be located in a smaller number of larger-sized settlements. The presence of such higher-order facilities was also be logged where relevant. This then enabled a classification of higher-tier settlements to be made, as well as providing context for the assessment of accessibility considerations which followed in the next stage of the analysis.

See Appendix C for a summary of the sources used to obtain this information.

### Stage 3: Audit of accessibility

Whilst a simple audit of services and facilities is an important part of determining the hierarchy, a further analysis of accessibility was also considered to be necessary. This is because, for many smaller settlements, higher-order facilities and opportunities are unlikely to be present, but it is the ease and ability to access such facilities elsewhere which is important in determining settlement sustainability.

The following factors were therefore considered:

- **Travel distance between the settlement and higher-tier settlements** which are able to offer a greater range of key facilities - defined as settlements which are able to provide all of the following higher-order services:
  - secondary school (upper or grammar),
  - indoor sports/leisure centre,
  - permanent library,
  - dentists
  - pharmacy.
- **Availability of public transport** – For this stage of the assessment, settlements were assessed according to whether they have a **good, fair, limited or no level of public transport accessibility**. This judgement took account of frequency, hours of operation and duration to the nearest higher-tier settlement, to provide an effective and appropriate analysis. The level of service provision was defined by the following standards (to qualify for each tier of service quality, all of the requirements listed in the bullet points needed to be met):
  - **Good:**
    - 400m walking distance to railway station or bus stop (subject to presence of an accessible, lit footpath to the railway station or bus stop);
    - At least 6am-8pm all-day service (Monday to Saturday) with reduced service on evenings and Sundays;
    - minimum 15-minute daytime frequency
    - Choice – presence of both bus and rail; choice of multiple destinations
  - **Fair:**
    - 800m walking distance to railway station or bus stop (subject to presence of an accessible, lit footpath to the railway station or bus stop);;
    - At least 7am-7pm weekday & Saturday services at a 15-45 minute daytime frequency, with a reduced service at evenings/Sundays;
  - **Limited:**
    - 800m walking distance to railway station or bus stop (subject to presence of an accessible, lit footpath to the railway station or bus stop);
    - Less than 7am-7pm daily weekday services at daytime frequencies of longer than 45 minutes; with limited or no services at the weekend
  - **None;**

- No regular scheduled bus or train service
- **Consideration of future known investments**, such as infrastructure improvements, was also logged where relevant.

The key outputs from this audit were entered into the Settlement Audit Matrix in addition to the services itemised under the Stage 2 task.

#### **Stage 4: Construction of hierarchy + Qualitative assessment/validation**

The final stage of this assessment was the final construction of the hierarchy into groups. At this stage, there was also a qualitative assessment of the provision of services in the settlement, with commentary provided to corroborate the suggested position of the settlement in the hierarchy. This was partly to verify whether specific circumstances were present which suggested that a settlement's position in the hierarchy was inappropriate for any particular reasons. It was also an opportunity to note additional facilities available in specific settlements, such as major employment and mobile libraries.

An overall qualitative judgement was made on the overall analysis, based on the outputs from the audit. A scoring system was avoided, as it was considered that it could give rise to a crude or over-simplistic assessment.

The audit also considered cross-boundary issues where necessary, for example if part of a settlement fell beyond the District boundary or if the nearest higher-order settlement for some services was across the District boundary.

#### **Definitions**

See Appendix D for glossary of terms.

#### **Consultation**

The methodology for the assessment was subject to a consultation with local stakeholders which included neighbouring local authorities. This took place in April 2015, and generated four responses relating to detailed elements of the methodology and criteria. The Council took on board these responses in the final determination of the methodology and in the subsequent assessment.

### **4, The resulting hierarchy**

- 4.1 Following the application of the methodology described above, the settlements have been grouped into the hierarchy set out below. Recognising the settlement structure and pattern in the District, it is considered most appropriate to group the settlements into six tiers representing different levels of performance against the various criteria.
- 4.2 The sections following the hierarchy provide a summary of the features of each tier in the hierarchy, and the detailed settlement audits provide further information about service provision in each settlement.
- 4.3 Please note that information was collated in late 2015 and every endeavour has been made to ensure that service provision information and other data is factually correct. However, as services and demographics change over time, this audit and study should be seen as a rolling process to be updated periodically, rather than a fixed position. Please note also that this study

does not represent an assessment of the capacity of infrastructure of individual settlements.

4.4 See Appendix E for detailed audits and maps for each settlement.

### **Wycombe District Settlement Hierarchy**

**Tier 1 (Large Urban Area):** High Wycombe Urban Area (including Downley, Hazlemere/Widmer End/Tylers Green, Penn, Holmer Green, Loudwater and Wooburn Green).

**Tier 2 (Market Towns and Other Major Settlements):** Marlow; Princes Risborough (including Monks Risborough and Whiteleaf); Bourne End/Wooburn (including Well End, Cores End and Abbotsbrook).

**Tier 3 (Higher-order Service Villages):** Flackwell Heath; Stokenchurch; Marlow Bottom; Naphill/Walter's Ash; and Lane End.

**Tier 4 (Other service centres):** Hughenden Valley; Lacey Green/Loosley Row; West Wycombe; Great Kingshill (including Heath End); and Longwick-cum-Ilmer.

**Tier 5 (Small villages):** Little Marlow; Radnage; Great and Little Kimble; Medmenham; Bledlow Ridge; Speen; Cryers Hill; Cadmore End; Frieth.

**Tier 6 (Hamlets):** Hambleden/Pheasant's Mill; Piddington; Danesfield; Claymoor/Clayhil; Bledlow; Saunderton<sup>1</sup>; Ibstone; Beacons Bottom; Askett; North Dean; Hedsor; Bovingdon Green/Marlow Common; Great and Little Hampden; Bryants Bottom and Denner Hill; Fawley; Terrick; Butlers Cross; Bradenham; Bolter End; Wheeler End; Mill End; Moor Common; Ilmer; Skirmett; Ellesborough; Marsh; Fingest; Meadle; Owlswick; North Lee; Turville Heath.

### **Key Findings:**

#### **Tier 1 (Large Urban Area): Summary**

At the top of the settlement hierarchy is the **High Wycombe Urban Area (UA)**. This is by far the largest town in the District with a much greater range of services and facilities than any other settlement. Indeed, it is the largest settlement in Buckinghamshire (outside Milton Keynes). Therefore, it clearly justifies a tier of its own at the top of the hierarchy.

#### **The High Wycombe Urban Area (UA)**

- This is by far the largest settlement in the District with the built-up area having a population of 105,298 (2011 census).

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<sup>1</sup> Area by the railway station only

- For the purposes of this study, the High Wycombe UA includes the entire unparished area of the town as well as the adjacent settlements of Downley, Hazlemere, Widmer End, Tylers Green, Loudwater and Wooburn Green. It also includes the settlements of Penn and Holmer Green which, whilst outside the District (both are within Chiltern District), are also part of the contiguous built-up area.
- Aside from the population of the UA, High Wycombe also has much the greatest provision of services, including several secondary schools, Wycombe Leisure Centre and the largest library in the District. It also has a hospital and a university.
- The town has a wide employment offer, including town centre offices, several business and industrial parks (including a major one at Cressex) and a wide range of sizes and types of employment units.
- It has much the largest shopping offer in the District, with the town offering multiple department stores as well as retail parks and other major stores and supermarkets.
- High Wycombe also has an extensive leisure offer, with many restaurants and cafes as well as two cinemas, a theatre, bowling alley, a wide variety of sports facilities.
- High Wycombe is served by good transport links, with regular services to London, Birmingham, Oxford Parkway, Aylesbury and other destinations, coach services to a wide variety of destinations nationally (some of which are from the new Handy Cross Hub Interchange) and bus services to a wide variety of smaller destinations in the sub-region and district.

### **Tier 2 (Market Towns and Other Major Settlements): Summary**

The second tier in the hierarchy consists of other towns and larger settlements which, whilst substantially smaller than High Wycombe, have a large amount of services and facilities. The settlements coming under this category are **Marlow, Princes Risborough, and Bourne End/Wooburn**. After High Wycombe, these three areas contain the largest variety of key and higher-order services as well as the widest public transport offer.

- Marlow and Princes Risborough are towns which serve important functions within their own respective hinterlands.
- Bourne End/Wooburn is a large settlement which, whilst on a strict reading of the criteria, would fall below this category (as being without an indoor sports centre it does not contain all of the higher-order services). However, it is distinctly larger and has a more extensive offer of services and facilities than any other of the villages in the District. It is considered that, by virtue of its size, extensive range of other services and proximity to other large centres (especially High

Wycombe and Marlow), it is appropriate to include this settlement in Tier 2.

### ***Marlow***

- This is the District's second largest settlement with a population of 14,325, and contains a wide selection of retail and employment units.
- The settlement is a major tourist attraction due to its historic buildings and its Thames-side location, and therefore contains a number of hotels, cafes, restaurants and boutique retail outlets.
- Marlow offers a wide employment offer, with Globe Park and Thames International being situated between the town centre and the strategic A404 route.
- The town is served by a good range of services, including a library, secondary schools and Court Garden Leisure Complex.
- Marlow is served by a regular bus service (the 800/850) between Reading and High Wycombe, and by rail links to Bourne End and Maidenhead.

### ***Princes Risborough***

- This is the third largest settlement in the District, with a population of 7,961, which includes the adjacent settlements of Whiteleaf and Monks Risborough.
- The settlement maintains a rural market town character and the town provides key services for a wide rural hinterland. It has a reasonable employment offer with the Princes Estate business park being located near to the railway station.
- The services offered in Princes Risborough include a secondary school, a library and Risborough Springs Swim and Fitness Centre.
- Princes Risborough is served by a regular bus service (the 300 service) between High Wycombe and Aylesbury, and the town's railway station is served by services to High Wycombe and Aylesbury and also services to London, Birmingham and Oxford Parkway.
- Following the improvement plans for the East-West Rail network, it will also be served by trains for Milton Keynes.

### ***Bourne End/Wooburn***

- This is the fourth largest settlement in the District. Bourne End/Wooburn (which includes the adjacent settlements of Cores End, Well End and Abbotsbrook) has a population of 6,890.
- Whilst it does not possess an indoor sports centre, it offers all other higher-order services as well as a good stock of employment units and a retail offer which includes various food stores in the village centre.

- The proximity of Bourne End to the full range of services in High Wycombe and Marlow as well as its good transport links by bus and train (which make it well connected to High Wycombe, Maidenhead and Marlow), means that it is considered appropriate to include this settlement in Tier 2.

### **Tier 3 (Higher-order Service Villages): Summary**

Tier 3 consists of settlements which are, after the Tier 2 settlements, the largest villages in the District. These are the settlements which typically have a population of over 2,000, and which have all or almost all of the key services as well as some of the other services, to a varying degree.

These villages include the sizeable settlements of **Flackwell Heath** and **Stokenchurch**, which have populations which are just over and just under 5,000 respectively, and both of which contain all key services and some higher-order services. **Naphill/Walters Ash, Marlow Bottom and Lane End** are all well served by key services and have some higher-order services.

All of the Tier 3 settlements have some degree of public transport provision, with most of them having a service rated as 'fair'. Two of the settlements – Stokenchurch and Lane End – are served only by bus routes classed as 'limited' (due to their infrequency), but both of them have a good range of other services and facilities.

### **Tier 4 (Other service villages): Summary**

These are settlements which have most of the key services but are less well-served by other services and by employment provision. These are the villages of **Hughenden Valley, Great Kingshill (including Heath End), Lacey Green/Loosley Row, West Wycombe and Longwick**, all of which have a population of over 1,000.

West Wycombe and Longwick both have all but one of the key services but have limited public transport and a very low number of higher-order services and employment units. Hughenden Valley and Lacey Green/Loosley Row have six of the key services and fair public transport; whilst Great Kingshill only has five key services.

### **Tier 5 (Small Villages): Summary**

Tier 5 consists of eight small villages. These are settlements which typically have around half the key services and very few or no higher-order services, and which generally do not score highly on any of the other criteria. What separates many of these settlements from the tier below is the presence of a primary school and at least some degree of public transport.

### **Tier 6 (Hamlets): Summary**

Tier 6 consists of the remaining settlements, which are 32 very small hamlets or hamlet groupings, all of which have few key services and which do not have a primary school. Whilst some of these settlements have a certain degree of public transport accessibility, most have limited provision or none at all.

### 5.List of settlements considered in study

<b>Settlement name/grouping</b>	<b>Population (2011 Census)</b>
High Wycombe (including Downley, Hazlemere/Widmer End/Tylers Green, Penn*, Holmer Green*, Loudwater and Wooburn Green)	105,298
Marlow	14,325
Princes Risborough (including Monks Risborough and Whiteleaf)	7,961
Bourne End/Wooburn (including Well End, Cores End and Abbotsbrook)	6,890
Flackwell Heath	5,965
Stokenchurch	4,056
Naphill/Walter's Ash	3,853
Marlow Bottom	3,438
Lane End	2,578
Great Kingshill (including Heath End*)	1,761
Hughenden Valley	1,427
Lacey Green/Loosely Row	1,147
Longwick	1,143
West Wycombe	1,014
Bledlow Ridge	748
Radnage	673
Danesfield	667
Speen	637
Little Marlow	521
Great Kimble	518
Hambleden/Pheasant's Mill	500
Beacons Bottom (including Studley Green and Horsleys Green)	420
Hedsor	382
Medmenham	363
Cryers Hill	358
North Dean	325
Piddington	323
Bovingdon Green/Marlow Common	316
Saunderton	315
Claymoor/Clayhill	311
Cadmore End	309
Wheeler End Common	307
Frieth	301
Great Hampden/Little Hampden	300
Moorend Common	273
Butlers Cross	272
Askett	270
Bryants Bottom & Denner Hill	269
Fawley	258

Ibstone	242
Bradenham	226
Ilmer	204
Wheeler End	175
Bolter End	175
Bledlow	168
Little Kimble	164
Marsh	164
Mill End	159
Skirmett	154
Terrick	138
North Lee	138
Fingest	135
Ellesborough	131
Turville Heath	128
Meadle	102
Owlswick	102
Northend	85 – below threshold so not considered further in the study.
Turville	85 – below threshold so not considered further in the study.
Bergher's Hill	81 – below threshold so not considered further in the study.
Southend	43 – below threshold so not considered further in the study.

## 6. Settlement Audit Matrix

	Settlement	Key Services	Higher-order Services	Employment Units - 2004	Pub. Transport	Distance to higher-tier settlements
Tier 1*	High Wycombe (including Downley, Hazlemere/Widmer End/Tylers Green, Penn*, Holmer Green*, Loudwater and Wooburn Green)	8	5	5745	Good	
Tier 2*	Marlow	8	5	1650	Good	
Tier 2*	Princes Risborough (including Monks Risborough and Whiteleaf)	8	5	364	Good	
	Bourne End/Wooburn (including Well End, Cores End and Abbotsbrook)	8	4	377	Good	
Tier 3	Flackwell Heath	8	3	317	Fair	HW (15-20 minutes)
	Stokenchurch	8	3	171	Limited	HW (25 minutes)
	Marlow Bottom	7	2	135	Fair	MA (15 minutes)
	Naphill/Walter's Ash	7	0	112	Fair	HW (10-15 minutes)
	Lane End	8	1	71	Limited	HW (20-25 minutes)
Tier 4	Hughenden Valley	6	1	112	Fair	HW (20 minutes)
	Lacey Green/Loosely Row	6	0	94	Fair	PR (10-15 minutes)
	West Wycombe	7	1	71	Limited	HW (10 minutes)
	Great Kingshill (including Heath End*)	5	0	112	Limited	HW (25 minutes)
	Longwick	7	0	36	Limited	PR (15 minutes)
Tier 5	Little Marlow	4	0	317	Limited	MA (10-15 minutes)
	Radnage	5	0	171	Limited	HW (50 minutes)
	Great and Little Kimble	3	1	72	Good	PR (7 minutes)
	Medmenham	5	0	38	Fair	MA (10 minutes)
	Bledlow Ridge	4	0	99	Limited	HW (15 minutes)
	Speen	4	0	94	Limited	PR (25 minutes)

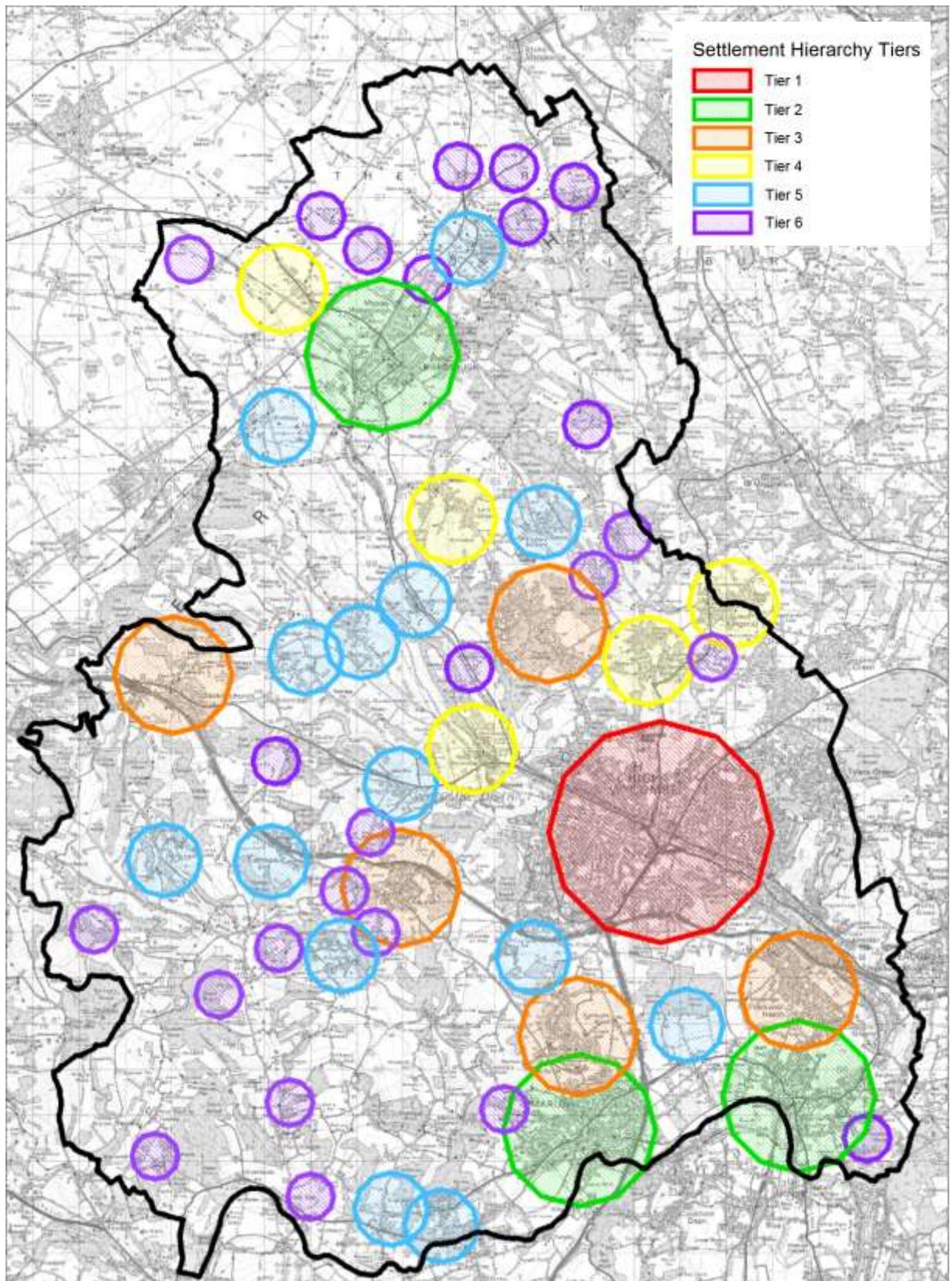
	Settlement	Key Services	Higher-order Services	Employment Units - 2004	Pub. Transport	Distance to higher-tier settlements
Tier 5	Cadmores End	4	0	71	Limited	HW (20 minutes)
	Frieth	4	0	38	Limited	HW (40 minutes)
Tier 6	Cryers Hill	4	0	112	None	HW (3.1 miles)
	Hambleden/Pheasant's Mill	5	0	38	None	MA (5.5 miles)
	Piddington	4	0	71	Limited	HW (10-15 minutes)
	Danesfield	1	0	135	Fair	MA (7 minutes)
	Claymoor/Clayhill	2	0	135	Fair	HW (25 minutes)
	Bledlow	4	0	99	Limited	PR (20 minutes)
	Saunderton*	3	0	99	Limited	PR (7 minutes)
	Ibstone	3	0	38	Limited	HW (50 minutes)
	Beacons Bottom (inc. Studley Green and Horsleys Green)	3	0	171	Limited	HW (15 minutes)
	Askett	2	0	364	Limited	PR (15 minutes)
	North Dean	3	0	112	Limited	HW (15 minutes)
	Hedsor	1	0	377	None	BE (1.5 miles)
	Bovingdon Green/Marlow Common	3	0	135	None	MA (1.1 miles)
	Great and Little Hampden	3	0	94	Limited	HW (40 minutes)
	Bryants Bottom & Denner Hill	1	0	112	Limited	HW (35 minutes)
	Fawley	1	0	38	Fair	HE (5 minutes)
	Terrick	2	0	36	Fair	PR (10 minutes)
	Butlers Cross	3	0	36	Limited	PR (10 minutes)
	Bradenham	2	0	99	Limited	PR (15 minutes)
	Bolter End	2	0	71	Limited	HW (50 minutes)
	Wheeler End	2	0	71	Limited	HW (15 minutes)
	Mill End	0	0	38	Fair	MA (10 minutes)
Moor Common	1	0	71	Limited	HW (40 minutes)	
Ilmer	1	0	36	Limited	PR (10 minutes)	
Skirmett	3	0	38	None	HW (8.1 miles)	

	Settlement	Key Services	Higher-order Services	Employment Units - 2004	Pub. Transport	Distance to higher-tier settlements
Tier 6	Ellesborough	2	0	36	Limited	PR (10 minutes)
	Marsh	2	0	36	None	PR (4.4 miles)
	Fingest	2	0	38	None	HW (7.7 miles)
	Meadle	1	0	36	None	PR (2.7 miles)
	Owlswick	1	0	36	None	PR (2.7 miles)
	North Lee	0	0	36	None	AY (4.2 miles)
	Turville Heath	0	0	38	None	HE (6.3 miles)

\* Settlements in these tiers are all considered to be higher-tier settlements.

Please see Appendix E for detailed audits and maps for each settlement.

## 8. Map showing settlement hierarchy



## **Wycombe District Settlement Hierarchy Study**

### **Appendices A-D**

## **APPENDIX A: Local policy context**

Although the Core Strategy and some of the other existing plans will be replaced by the new Local Plan, a review of the existing local planning policy framework is helpful in providing a context for constructing a comprehensive settlement hierarchy. In particular, the following policies provide an indication of the current notional settlement hierarchy:

- **Core Strategy policy CS2** states that the principal focus for new development will be High Wycombe (including the adjoining settlements of Downley, Hazlemere/Widmer End/Tylers Green, Loudwater and Wooburn Green), and that at Marlow, Princes Risborough and the other smaller settlements identified in CS7, development will be on a smaller scale and of a character commensurate with the size and relative sustainability of the settlements.
- **Core Strategy Policy CS7**, meanwhile, states that the rural settlements will be sustained by providing housing within Bourne End/Wooburn, Flackwell Heath, Great Kingshill, Marlow Bottom, Lane End, Naphill/Walter's Ash, Stokenchurch and Longwick.

These policies will be replaced through the new Local Plan taking account of an up-to-date analysis of settlement hierarchy as well as other factors.

The existing district-wide Local Plan - the Adopted Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 - also contains policies which help give an indication of the current extent, context and categorisation of settlements in the District. These policies in particular are framed in the context of the widespread Green Belt designation over much of the District (covering almost half of the land area), and the rural nature of the area beyond it. These policies include Policy GB4 (Built-Up Areas Within the Green Belt) and Policy C9 (Settlements Beyond the Green Belt).

Taking all the above together, it can be seen that, for planning policy purposes, the existing categorisation of the District's settlements is as follows:

- **Settlements excluded from the Green Belt:** High Wycombe urban area; Bourne End/Wooburn; Flackwell Heath; Great Kingshill; Marlow Bottom; Naphill/Walter's Ash.
- **Settlements beyond the Green Belt:** Lane End; Longwick; Princes Risborough; Stokenchurch.
- **Built-up areas within the Green Belt:** Beacons Bottom/Studley Green; Bledlow Ridge; Bovington Green; Claymoor/Clayhill; Cryers Hill; Hughenden Valley; Lacey Green/Loosley Row; Little Marlow; Piddington; Speen; West Wycombe.
- **Other settlements** which are either 'washed over' by the Green Belt; or are in the countryside beyond the Green Belt but without defined settlement boundaries.

Whilst not setting out a settlement hierarchy, these policies give an indication of the extent of settlements in the District, and are therefore useful for setting the context of the study.

Other policies and documents provide an indication of what should be classified as key community facilities and services.

- Core Strategy Policy CS15 provides a definition of community facilities
- **The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Wycombe District Local Plan**, published in October 2013, includes a Sustainability Framework. This incorporates key environmental, social and economic sustainability objectives, including those listed below, which provide a picture of the types of services and facilities which should be classified as key ingredients for enabling the sustainable functioning of settlements and communities:
  - ***To deliver transport improvements, improve travel choice and connectivity, reduce the need for travel by car and reduce the negative impact of transport on the environment (Objective 7)***: appraisal of this objective includes an analysis of access to sustainable transport, walking and cycling, including distance to the nearest bus stop and frequency of service; and accessibility of services and facilities accessible by sustainable modes of transport, particularly in rural areas;
  - ***To improve accessibility for everyone to health, education, recreational, cultural and community facilities and services (Objective 9)***: appraisal of this objective includes an analysis of residents' accessibility to key services, including post offices, food shops, primary schools, healthcare services and key employment.
  - ***To maintain and improve the health, well-being and community cohesion of the population and reduce social deprivation (Objective 11)***: appraisal of this objective includes an analysis of accessibility to healthcare services and access to sporting, recreational and leisure facilities and green infrastructure;
  - ***To maintain high and stable levels of employment so that everyone can benefit from economic growth (Objective 13)***: this objective incorporates an appraisal of the provision of employment uses;
  - ***To raise educational attainment and develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness (Objective 14)***: this objective incorporates an appraisal of access to educational and training opportunities.
- The **Delivery and Site Allocations Plan** (adopted in July 2013) includes various policies which are relevant for background or helping define criteria for assessing settlements, including in particular policies for the various town centres in the district and also Policy DM2, which sets out the Council's expectations from developments which require a transport assessment. The supporting text of this policy sets out what the county council considers to be a high-quality public transport service.

## **APPENDIX B –Review of Other Settlement Hierarchy Studies: Summary**

<b>Local Planning Authority and date of study</b>	<b>Summary of Approach</b>
<p><b>Aylesbury Vale DC</b> (September 2012; please note that this has since been updated)</p>	<p><b>Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classification of strategic settlements by population size only – 3,800 and over</li> <li>• Classification of larger and smaller villages according to how many basic services/facilities they have available, along with population size</li> </ul> <p><b>Criteria:</b> Key Criteria including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population size</li> <li>• Connectivity and Public Transport</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Key Services</li> <li>• Non-Key services</li> <li>• Qualitative assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b> Strategic Settlement, Larger Village, Smaller Village or Other Settlement</p>
<p><b>Guildford BC</b> (May 2014)</p>	<p><b>Approach:</b> Categorisation according to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ scoring system of a range of sustainability indicators (services, facilities etc)</li> <li>○ Other factors such as population size</li> </ul> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Urban area</li> <li>○ Rural service centre</li> <li>○ Large village</li> <li>○ Medium village</li> <li>○ Small village</li> <li>○ Other rural communities (hamlets/ribbon developments)</li> </ul> <p><b>Other features:</b> Settlement profiles provided – detailed info</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental designations NOT considered as part of Settlement Hierarchy – but an important consideration including when considering development capacity</li> </ul> <p><b>Implications for development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Forms part of evidence base to inform new Local Plan</li> <li>○ Evidence base and SA assists in making decisions</li> <li>○ Recommendations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appropriate to direct development towards Guildford UA, Ash and Tongham UA, East Horsley and some (but not all) of the large villages</li> <li>▪ Identifies other villages where it would benefit from future development and improved access to key service</li> </ul>
<p><b>South Oxfordshire DC</b> (March 2011)</p>	<p><b>Approach:</b> Categorisation according to population size and a range of sustainability criteria (such as presence of services and facilities etc)</p> <p><b>Criteria and Hierarchy:</b> Population size – 1,000 and 3,000 thresholds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoring system – population size one of the categories for this</li> <li>• Categorisations – larger, smaller and other villages</li> </ul> <p><b>Implications for development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Larger villages – allocations; no limit to infill; Rural exceptions possible if need shown</li> <li>○ Smaller villages – no allocations, infill on sites of up to 0.2ha; Rural exceptions if need shown</li> <li>○ Other villages – no allocation, infill on sites of up to 0.1ha; Rural exceptions if need shown</li> <li>○ All other places not listed – none</li> <li>○ All development to respect national designations such as GB and AONB, the character of the area and local distinctiveness and meet requirement of relevant development plan policies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fenland DC</b> (July 2012)</p>	<p><b>Approach:</b> Ranks settlements according to size and range of services and facilities, including population size, services and accessibility.</p> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b> Four levels – Market Towns; Growth Towns; Limited</p>

	Growth Villages: Small Villages.
<b>Cherwell DC</b> (Village Categorisation 2014)	<p><b>Approach:</b> Categorisation of villages according to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rural issues in Cherwell</li> <li>○ Sustainability criteria including the provision of services and facilities, the distance to urban areas having regard to the availability of bus services, population size and the availability of potential sources of employment (established employment areas)</li> <li>○ The weighting of different services and facilities as important amenities</li> <li>○ Village clustering – the relationship between larger, service centre villages and ‘satellite’ villages</li> <li>○ Transport sustainability of villages</li> <li>○ Final balancing of services and facility provision against transport considerations</li> </ul> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b> Resulted in Category A and Category B villages</p> <p><b>Implications for development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Category A villages minor dev’t, infilling and conversions ok within built-up area</li> <li>○ Category B villages: infilling and conversions ok within built-up area</li> <li>○ Category C villages: only conversions permitted</li> </ul>
<b>East Hertfordshire District Council</b> (East Herts Interim Village Hierarchy Study, December 2015)	<p><b>Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain villages assessed only (not market towns or smaller villages)</li> <li>• Looked at sustainability of villages</li> <li>• Focus on services and facilities that a rural community value</li> <li>• Also assessed policy constraints, environmental capacity, school capacity.</li> <li>• Assessment of services split between ‘primary facilities’ and ‘secondary facilities’ – higher score given for the former.</li> <li>• Also encompassed an assessment of public transport.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b> Villages grouped into three separate groups (Group 1, 2 and 3).</p>
<b>Basildon Borough</b>	<b>Approach:</b> Historic settlement review

<p><b>Council</b> (Settlement Hierarchy Review, August 2015)</p>	<p>Assessment of services and facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wide range of services assessed</li> <li>- simple scoring system</li> <li>- included implications of development</li> </ul> <p><b>Hierarchy:</b> Four categories identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Green (Major Urban Area)</li> <li>- Orange (Large Towns)</li> <li>- Pink (Serviced Villages)</li> <li>- Blue (Unserviced Settlements)</li> </ul>
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Key lessons from this review were:

- Studies have tended to use between four and six tiers of settlement category;
- Studies use a mix of criteria assessing service provision and other factors as well as population, although population can also be a good indicator of a settlement's location in the resulting hierarchy;
- Use of different tiers of services is common – splitting key services from other services
- There is some use of scoring systems but this is commonly accompanied by the consideration of other factors, such as transport provision and accessibility to larger centres, as well as an element of qualitative judgement;
- Consideration of the location of settlements and whether they share services with neighbouring settlements is common in such studies.
- Some studies made judgements and recommendations on what the hierarchy should mean for the resulting development strategy, but others do not.

These studies influenced the development of the methodology, criteria and hierarchy construction of the Wycombe District Settlement Hierarchy. However, unlike some of these studies, the WDC study did not contain implications for development or provide particular recommendations for development. Instead, it is intended that it should form a source of information and an evidence base for other studies.

## APPENDIX C – Summary of Information Sources

<b>Dataset/service criteria</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Population	ONS table PHP01 – 2011 Census: Usual residents by Output Areas (OAs) in the South East ( <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/population-and-household-estimates-for-wards-and-output-areas-in-england-and-wales/rft-table-php01-2011-in-the-south-east.zip">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/population-and-household-estimates-for-wards-and-output-areas-in-england-and-wales/rft-table-php01-2011-in-the-south-east.zip</a> ) Council GIS mapping system to determine Output Areas. In some cases it was necessary to divide output areas between settlements to provide an accurate reflection of their boundary.	
<b>Key services</b>		
Post Office	Post office branch finder ( <a href="http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder">http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder</a> ), parish websites and local knowledge	
Food shop	Internet search, parish websites and local knowledge	
Primary school	BCC Schools and early-years directory ( <a href="http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/education/schools/schools-directory/">http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/education/schools/schools-directory/</a> ), parish websites and local knowledge	Primary schools were noted and there was one instance where the settlement had an infant school only. This was noted in the audit.
GP surgery	NHS service search ( <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/service-search">http://www.nhs.uk/service-search</a> ), parish websites	
Pub	Internet and mapping search, parish websites and local knowledge	
Village/community hall	Internet and mapping search, parish websites and local knowledge	
Recreation ground/playing fields	Mapping search, parish websites or WDC park finder ( <a href="http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-recreation/play-areas.aspx">http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-recreation/play-areas.aspx</a> )	
Access to high-speed broadband	Broadband availability checker ( <a href="http://www.uswitch.com/broadband/">http://www.uswitch.com/broadband/</a> )	Although not counted as part of the audit, the individual

		settlement audits show whether Fibre Optic is also present.
<b>Higher-order services</b>		
Secondary schools	BCC Schools and early-years directory ( <a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/schools/schools-directory/">http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/schools/schools-directory/</a> ), parish websites, parish websites and local knowledge	
Dentists	NHS service search ( <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/service-search">http://www.nhs.uk/service-search</a> )	
Pharmacy	NHS service search ( <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/service-search">http://www.nhs.uk/service-search</a> )	
Indoor sports centre/leisure centre	Council and parish websites and local knowledge	
Library	BCC library search ( <a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries/find-a-library/">http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries/find-a-library/</a> )	
Employment unit figures	Based on ward-based VAT registered Local and Enterprise units recorded on Inter-departmental business register in 2004 (only complete record of all wards), found on ONS Neighbourhood statistics for each ward.	Total units were divided equally between all settlements present in the ward.
Public transport	Buses – based on BCC website for timetables ( <a href="http://www.transportforbucks.net/Buses-and-trains/Bus-timetables.aspx">http://www.transportforbucks.net/Buses-and-trains/Bus-timetables.aspx</a> ), bus stops located using NextBus ( <a href="http://www.nextbus.travel/">http://www.nextbus.travel/</a> ). Trains – <a href="http://www.nationalrail.co.uk">http://www.nationalrail.co.uk</a>	Scoring based on public transport audit as set out in the methodology, for Good (4), Fair (3), Limited (2), Very limited (1) and None (0). A full transport audit can be found in the appendix.
Distance to nearest higher-order centre	Higher-order centres noted as Tiers 1 &2. Based on public transport through the same sources as above. If no available service, distance has been	Where no public transport

	calculated using Google Maps route-planner.	service was available, the distance in kilometres has been calculated using the centre of the settlement or nearest high-street/popular location.
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## **APPENDIX D: Glossary of Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Contiguous built-up area	A built-up area comprising settlements which may be separate administratively but which are physically conjoined, so for the purposes of this study are regarded as a single settlement.
Employment Units	For the purposes of this study, these comprised registered local and enterprise business units counted in a 2004 Office of National Statistics study of such units.
Food shop	A shop or outlet (including, where appropriate, local stores and garage shops) selling a good range of basic foodstuffs.
Higher-order services	Services which, whilst not classed as key services for each settlement, are important to be able to be accessed relatively easy for day-to-day purposes. For the purposes of this study, these were classed as secondary schools, dentists, pharmacies, indoor sports/leisure centres and permanent libraries.
Higher-tier settlements	For the purposes of this study, these were classed as settlements containing all of the higher-order services listed or which had most of these services and demonstrated qualitative characteristics meaning that it should be classified as a higher-tier settlement.
Indoor sports/leisure centres	To be counted, these had to be local authority-provided multi-purpose sports/leisure centres (so, for example, a swimming pool with other facilities would be counted but a private-run gym or a badminton centre would not be).
Key services	Services which were considered to be essential for the day-to-day functioning of a settlement. For the purposes of this study, these were considered to be a post office; food shop;

	primary school; GP surgery; pub; village/community hall; recreation ground/playing fields; and access to high-speed broadband.
Output areas	Mapping area of settlement which is the lowest level of area-based analysis used in the Census.
Secondary schools	These included upper and grammar schools where appropriate. However, for the purposes of this study, the presence of either one or other types of secondary school were noted, rather than it being necessary to have both.
Settlement	A community where people live, including hamlets, villages, towns and cities. For the purposes of this study, settlements were classified as those places with a population of more than 100.
Settlement hierarchy	A table showing different 'tiers' of settlement assessed according to various criteria specified in the study methodology.
Tier	Level or grouping of settlements according to their performance in the settlement audit.

