

# Rural Settlement Sustainability Study 2011



## Executive Summary

- This study assesses the rural settlements within the District in terms of sustainability. For simplicity, this has been split in to two main categories - services and facilities within a settlement (e.g. post office and school), and accessibility to other services (e.g. employment and hospitals).
- Five settlements score highly in both categories due to a higher number of services and facilities within the settlement and a half hourly bus route serving wider needs. These settlements are Armitage with Handsacre, Shenstone, Fazeley, Whittington and Little Aston.
- Three settlements score highly in terms of services and facilities within the village, but did not score as highly in accessibility due to the lack of a half hourly bus service. These settlements are Alrewas, Fradley and Stonnall. In the previous Study (2008) Alrewas and Fradley received higher scores due to a half hourly bus service, however the timetable has been altered so that the regularity of the bus service cannot be considered half hourly.
- The settlements of Hopwas and Streethay score highly in terms of accessibility due to their position on the edge of larger settlements and thus benefiting from a half hourly bus route. However, in terms of services and facilities within the settlement, they score poorly.

1	Aims of the Study	1
2	Background to Rural Sustainability	3
3	Definition of Rural Settlements	8
4	Settlement Profiles	9
5	Definition of Rural Services	19
6	Delivery of Rural Services	21
7	Inter-relationship Between Rural Settlements & Urban Areas	22
8	Primary Services, Facilities & Jobs	24
9	Key Local Services & Facilities	26
10	Rural Accessibility	32
11	Sustainable Rural Settlement Summary	37
A	Sustainability Matrix: Access, Services & Facilities	41



## 1 Aims of the Study

**1.1** This report has been prepared to assist in the development of policies designed to promote sustainable development within Lichfield District. Information provided within the document will inform the preparation of a Core Strategy for the District as part of the Local Development Framework. In particular this may assist with the consideration of potential development locations within the District and an overall spatial strategy for longer term development having regard to principles of sustainability.

**1.2** This is a revision to the Rural Settlement Sustainability Study published in May 2008, containing updates where relevant and amendments to local services and facilities if they have changed.

**1.3** The Inspector's report following the Public Examination into the District Council's first submitted Core Strategy (withdrawn in 2006), concluded that although there were proposed housing allocations within some of the District's rural settlements, there was a lack of evidence in relation to the suitability of villages in the District to accommodate growth. He considered that the relative sustainability of different settlements should have been assessed as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy. He indicated that an assessment of the sustainability of rural settlements would ensure that the scale and location of development outside the District's two main towns was driven by overall sustainability considerations, rather than simply the availability of previously developed land.

**1.4** As a consequence the Council has been preparing a revised Core Strategy, with an Issues and Options consultation in December 2007, a Preferred Options consultation in December 2008, a Policy Directions consultation in May 2009 and an informal consultation on a draft Core Strategy 'Shaping our District' between November 2010 and February 2011. Many pieces of evidence have been revised and further evidence work undertaken.

**1.5** The purpose of this study is therefore, to assess the sustainability of rural settlements within the District primarily using:

- Data available on key facilities and services present within settlements - i.e. post office, GP surgery, pharmacy, dentist, primary school, community hall, pub and shops;
- Accessibility to other key services and facilities by means of public transport;
- Accessibility to employment, leisure, retail locations and hospitals by public transport.

**1.6** In addition to providing evidence which will assist in the development of a spatial strategy for the District, this Study will also assist in the development of other strategies to improve the overall quality of life for the communities that live within them.

**1.7** In order to keep the process simple, a scoring system has been applied to settlements based on the presence of key services and facilities, as well as accessibility by public transport to other centres for employment, retail, health and leisure (Appendix A). This scoring system has not been altered since the previous study, however more explanation has been given to the scores and it

is recognised that a heavy weighting was previously given to public transport provision. Whilst this is still important, it is also important to recognise the provision of services and facilities within a settlement, and this study places emphasis on both of these elements.

## 2 Background to Rural Sustainability

**2.1** The concept of sustainability can encompass many elements, but in the context of this Study it focuses on the ability of residents within Lichfield District's rural settlements to access employment, retail, health and leisure/entertainment facilities (by public transport) and the extent to which certain key facilities, such as shops, schools, doctors etc. are present within the settlement themselves. This is based on the assumption that better access will minimise the need the travel, contribute to community life, and minimise social exclusion.

**2.2** It is also recognised that many other factors impact on rural community life in terms of quality of life and degree of sustainability of individual settlements, including quantity and quality of the local environment, incidental open space, green spaces and corridors, play areas etc. However, to keep the study manageable it concentrates on a number of key services and facilities. It is recognised that this study does not consider the quality of services or facilities: for example in terms of community halls, a score is awarded if such a building is present but there is no further assessment on quality, type and size of the building in relation to local community requirements.

**2.3** The work carried out as part of this assessment will assist in informing the potential locations for development outside the urban areas of Lichfield and Burntwood. In addition, it will inform considerations that impact on the sustainability of rural services and facilities and help to develop policies to improve them.

### National Framework

#### **2.4 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development**

**2.5** PPS1 was published in 2005 and sets out that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. The PPS states that *"planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:*

- *making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;*
- *contributing to sustainable economic development;*
- *protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;*
- *ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and,*
- *ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community."*

**2.6** The PPS also stresses the importance of social cohesion and inclusion, by stating that *"development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing."* Plan policies should also address *"accessibility (both in terms*

of location and physical access) for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities". It is this particular aspect of sustainability that this study focuses on.

## **2.7 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**

**2.8** PPS 7 was published in 2004, and sets out the Government's objectives for sustainable development specific to the rural areas. The aims of the PPS relevant to this study are set out below:

**2.9** *"To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of:*

- *thriving, inclusive and sustainable rural communities, ensuring people have decent places to live by improving the quality and sustainability of local environments and neighbourhoods;*
- *sustainable economic growth and diversification;*
- *good quality, sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside; and*
- *continued protection of the open countryside for the benefit of all, with the highest level of protection for our most valued landscapes and environmental resources."*

**2.10** The PPS also places an emphasis on community services and facilities stating that people who live or work in rural areas should have reasonable access to a range of services and facilities. Local planning authorities are encouraged to support plans for accessible new services and facilities, and the strengthening of existing services.

## **2.11 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth**

**2.12** PPS 4 was published in 2010 setting out principles and policies for economic development. Within this, there is a specific section on Planning for Economic Development in Rural Areas. Some of the policy recommendations are set out below:

**2.13** *"In rural areas, local planning authorities should:*

- *identify local service centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) and locate most new development in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together;*
- *support the conversion and re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside (particularly those adjacent or closely related to towns or villages) for economic development;*

- *seek to remedy any identified deficiencies in local shopping and other facilities to serve people's day-to-day needs and help address social exclusion;*
- *set out the criteria to be applied to planning applications for farm diversification, and support diversification for business purposes that are consistent in their scale and environmental impact with their rural location."*

## **Regional Framework**

**2.14** On 6th July 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Eric Pickles, duly announced the revocation of Regional Strategies with immediate effect under Section 79 (6) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Following the outcome of a recent High Court decision Regional Spatial Strategies remain part of the development plan, but it is still the intention of the Government to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) through the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. Local Development Frameworks will form the basis for all local planning decisions.

**2.15** The adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (January 2008), highlights from its evidence gathering, that areas within Southern Staffordshire are heavily influenced by proximity to and functional linkages with Major Urban Areas. As part of rural renaissance, the RSS states that, in preparing development plans, local authorities and service providers need to consider the inter-relationship of rural areas with the larger cities and towns that serve many of their higher order service needs and provide important sources of employment.

**2.16** The RSS includes four aspects to be considered in terms of rural renaissance:

- How centres develop complementary roles in service delivery;
- Ensuring policies for housing and other forms of development take into account implications for the provision of services and facilities, including the extent to which new development may help support the provision of local facilities;
- How services and facilities will be provided for in rural areas taking into account the need to retain essential community services to facilitate and provide new and innovative forms of service delivery;
- Local Transport Plans should identify where improved public transport is needed to support rural services.

## **County Level**

### **2.17 Local Transport Plan**

**2.18** The second LTP, is soon to be replaced by LTP 3 which is scheduled to be adopted in April 2011. Some of the key priorities of LTP 3 are described below:

- Stimulating regeneration and supporting areas of deprivation
- Facilitating sustainable access to tourist attractions

- Supporting rural communities by
  - Ensuring the transport network contributes to the attractiveness and vibrancy of towns and villages
  - Maintaining and expanding Staffordshire's public transport network including tailored services and travel incentives
- Improving bus services
  - Including connections and timings
  - Aiming to retain some level of service when commercial bus services are withdrawn especially in rural areas
  - Encouraging bus operators and local planning authorities to adopt minimum standards at key interchanges e.g. seating, lighting, mobility impaired access, static and real time info displays, cycle parking etc.

## District Level

**2.19** The Sustainable Community Strategy for the District of Lichfield (2006 - 2021) aims to bring together various organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in achieving sustainable communities. The principle aim of the SCS is "to make measurable improvements to the quality of life of all people who live in, work in, and visit Lichfield District, through actions to improve their long term economic, social and environmental well-being." Following on from consultations undertaken between 2005 - 2011, the need for better shopping facilities or better access to shopping facilities as well as the need to protect schools, post offices and other amenities was reinforced in relation to rural communities.

**2.20** The Sustainable Environment Partnership, is a new, broad ranging partnership, dealing with issues relating to the built and natural environment including housing, planning and transport issues and broader environmental issues such as pollution, waste, climate change, biodiversity/wildlife conservation and environmental awareness and responsibility within the community. The Partnership will also champion sustainable development within the wider partnership network.

**2.21** The District Council has also drafted a Climate Change Strategy, which aims to reduce carbon emissions throughout the District, prepare Council Services for the impact of climate change and devise a sound monitoring framework to enable sound reporting.

**2.22** In summary, priorities identified by surveys and community forums relevant to rural areas include:

- The demand for better shopping and other amenities for people living in the rural areas;

- To improve public transport links between Burntwood and Lichfield and into outlying areas, especially in the evenings;
- Better engagement of agencies within rural communities.

**2.23** Over recent years, community groups have become more involved in sustainability issues, with some forming organised events and taking a pro-active approach to tackling climate change issues for example. One such group in Lichfield District is Whittington and Fisherwick Environment Group (WFEG).

### 3 Definition of Rural Settlements

**3.1** There are various definitions of rural areas and settlement thresholds that are used in a variety of ways. A national definition used by Staffordshire County Council for the purpose of monitoring includes a maximum population threshold of 3,000 people. The 2004 Rural Strategy (DEFRA) sets out a new way of defining rural settlements, consisting of two parts, firstly the settlement morphology comprising all places under 10,000 population i.e. small 'rural' towns and villages, and secondly, the wider geographic context in which individual settlements are located i.e. whether the wider area is defined as being 'sparsely' populated or not. This definition therefore combines the physical form with the wider geographic context in which individual settlements are located.

**3.2** The context for this study is the nature of settlements within the District boundary. Lichfield and Burntwood are considered the only two urban areas, with the rest of the District considered rural. However, it is recognised that some are closely linked and influenced by their location adjacent to urban areas and thus their characteristics are different. In particular, Fazeley exhibits close links with Tamworth, Streethay with Lichfield, and Little Aston with Sutton Coldfield and Birmingham.

**3.3** This study focuses on service and facility provision within settlements themselves and the availability of public transport to services, facilities, employment, retail and leisure locations as well as hospitals.

**3.4** During the preparation of the Draft Rural Sustainability Study in 2007, all settlements where 50 or more dwellings were present were initially considered as part of the Study. However, it soon emerged early on in the process that in relation to some of the smaller settlements, it was not easy to define a clear boundary due to the dispersed nature of the housing. In addition, because the majority had few or no facilities, were not accessible by public transport, or had limited public transport available, they would score poorly in any event. This study is not intended to ignore other settlements and hamlets within the rural area in terms of addressing sustainability issues, but is focused on those settlements defined as having a settlement boundary in the Local Plan. These settlements vary in size from Armitage with Handsacre with 1,169 dwellings and Harlaston with 156 dwellings (2001 Census). Those settlements excluded from further study are Wall, Shenstone Woodend, Hints, Whittington Heath, Chorley, Haunton, Farewell, Gentleshaw, Pipe Ridware, Thorpe Constantine, Fisherwick and Weeford.

**3.5** Three of the District's larger, more complex settlements, Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley with Mile Oak, and Little Aston with Streetly village, have more than one focus for local services and facilities. When walk time distances were applied to the individual service centres within these settlements, it was evident that the majority of the settlement was accessible within 5-10 minutes walk time. It was decided that these settlements should be considered as a single entity for the purpose of the Study.



## 4 Settlement Profiles

**4.1** All data is taken from the 2001 Census, and therefore it is acknowledged that the figures may be out dated. This is likely to be especially apparent where there have been large amounts of recent growth, for instance at Fradley. Unfortunately data is not available for some of the smaller settlements due to the manner in which the Census data is collected.

**4.2** In all settlements a common trend is an ageing population (in line with national trends), and within the rural settlements there is a lower proportion of people between the ages of 16 - 29 which may reflect the services and jobs on offer, as well as affordability. All settlements have an average household car ownership of more than one car, and the availability of services and facilities generally falls in line with population size.

Alrewas		Age profile	
Population	2,744	0 - 15	18.9%
Number of dwellings	1,169	16 - 29	10.9%
Housing tenure	82.8% owner occupied	30 - 44	22.6%
Average number of cars per household	1.45	45 - 59	22.3%
Transport links	Adjacent to the A38 and A513 with good links to Lichfield and Burton, including Lichfield Trent Valley Station	60 - 85+	25.5%

**Community profile:** Alrewas is the third largest rural settlement in the District, and is located to the north of Lichfield adjacent to the A38 between Lichfield and Burton on Trent. It is a historic settlement that also contains a wide range of services and facilities. It is the only rural settlement that contains a petrol station. According to the 2001 Census 25% of the population are over 60 years of age, however, there is a significant proportion of children aged 0-15 within the village.

Table 4.1

Armitage with Handsacre		Age Profile	
Population	4,903	0 - 15	21.9%
Number of dwellings	1,169	16 - 29	15.2%
Housing tenure	79.6% owner occupied	30 - 44	27.4%
Average number of cars per household	1.37	45 - 59	18.8%
Transport links	Good road links to Rugeley, Lichfield and Stafford	60 - 85+	16.8%

Armitage with Handsacre	Age Profile
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Armitage with Handsacre is the largest rural settlement in the District, after Lichfield and Burntwood. It is comprised of two settlements that have merged together over time so that the services and facilities serve both communities. A major local employer is Armitage Shanks (Ideal Standard) meaning that local people can walk to work. There is a more balanced population structure than in other villages and a lower number of cars on average.</p>	

Table 4.2

Colton		Age Profile	
Population	527	0 - 15	16.3%
Number of dwellings	215	16 - 29	12.7%
Housing tenure	78.5% owner occupied	30 - 44	21.8%
Average number of cars per household	1.69	45 - 59	26.6%
Transport links	Minor road link to Rugeley, and Rugeley Trent Valley Station	60 - 85+	22.5%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Colton lies to the north of the District, in a rural surrounding with links to Rugeley, and a rail connection at Rugeley Trent Valley Station. There is a relatively high car ownership as public transport links are poor.</p>			

Table 4.3

Clifton Campville		Age Profile	
Population	521	0 - 15	18.4%
Number of dwellings	220	16 - 29	12.5%
Housing tenure	75.8% owner occupied	30 - 44	22.5%
Average number of cars per household	1.67	45 - 59	22.8%
Transport links	Minor road links to Tamworth and A42	60 - 85+	27.4%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Clifton Campville lies to the east of the District in a rural surrounding. Tamworth is the closest larger settlement. As with many villages a considerable proportion of the population over 60 years of age. There is a relatively high car ownership as public transport links are poor.</p>			

Table 4.4

Drayton Bassett		Age Profile	
Population	723	0 - 15	20.1%
Number of dwellings	304	16 - 29	10.4%
Housing tenure		30 - 44	26.2%
Average number of cars per household	1.6	45 - 59	24.0%
Transport links	Minor road links to Tamworth	60 - 85+	14.7%

**Community profile:** Although there is a low proportion of 16 - 29 year olds, Drayton Bassett has a fairly high proportion of working age people and children under 15. Drayton Bassett is located to the south of Tamworth and Fazeley, and is poorly connected in terms of public transport with only a once weekly service operating on a Friday.

Table 4.5

Edingale		Age Profile	
Population	426	0 - 15	23.2%
Number of dwellings	171	16 - 29	10.1%
Housing tenure	70.9% owner occupied	30 - 44	22.1%
Average number of cars per household	1.61	45 - 59	24.2%
Transport links	Minor road links to Tamworth, A38 and A42	60 - 85+	21.4%

**Community profile:** Edingale lies to the north east of the District in a rural surrounding. Links can be made to both Lichfield and Tamworth however the settlement is fairly remote. There is a more balanced population structure in Edingale than in other rural settlements and a lower level of owner occupied dwellings. Again there is a relatively high car ownership as public transport links are poor.

Table 4.6

Elford		Age Profile	
Population	581	0 - 15	17.9%
Number of dwellings	245	16 - 29	13.6%
Housing tenure	80.7% owner occupied	30 - 44	20.7%
Average number of cars per household	1.84	45 - 59	29.4%

Elford		Age Profile	
<b>Transport links</b>	Adjacent to the A513 with links to Tamworth, Burton and Rugeley.	<b>60 - 85+</b>	18.4%
<b>Community profile:</b> Elford lies to the north east of the District in a rural surrounding adjacent to the River Tame. Car ownership within the village is high.			

Table 4.7

Fazeley (Mile Oak and Bonehill)		Age Profile	
<b>Population</b>	4,581	<b>0 - 15</b>	19.3%
<b>Number of dwellings</b>	1,963	<b>16 - 29</b>	14.5%
<b>Housing tenure</b>	66.5% owner occupied	<b>30 - 44</b>	20.5%
<b>Average number of cars per household</b>	1.2	<b>45 - 59</b>	21.7%
<b>Transport links</b>	Adjacent to the settlement of Tamworth. Links to the A5 and M42 strategic highway network	<b>60 - 85+</b>	24.0%
<b>Community profile:</b> Fazeley, Mile Oak and Bonehill are located to the south of Tamworth and together they make up the second largest rural settlement in the District after Armitage with Handsacre. There are strong links with Tamworth and good public transport connections to Tamworth and Sutton Coldfield. There is local employment within Fazeley. The close proximity to Tamworth may account for a lower number of cars per household compared to other villages.			

Table 4.8

Fradley		Age Profile	
<b>Population</b>	1,689	<b>0 - 15</b>	25.5%
<b>Number of dwellings</b>	727	<b>16 - 29</b>	13.3%
<b>Housing tenure</b>	77% owner occupied	<b>30 - 44</b>	27.5%
<b>Average number of cars per household</b>	1.66	<b>45 - 59</b>	20.8%
<b>Transport links</b>	Adjacent to the A38 with good access to Lichfield and Burton	<b>60 - 85+</b>	13.5%
<b>Community Profile:</b> Fradley village lies to the north of Lichfield City and the area has seen a large amount of development on the former airfield in recent years. As there has been residential development in the early 2000s as well as employment, current population figures are likely to be higher than shown in the table. Fradley has			

Fradley	Age Profile
<p>the highest proportion of children under 15 years of age. There is a large area of employment at Fradley, within the area known as Fradley Park. The Local Centre at Fradley serves the needs of both local people and workers. Public transport at Fradley has declined due to a reduced bus service, however Lichfield Trent Valley Station is fairly close and there are good links by road using the A38.</p>	

Table 4.9

Hamstall Ridware		Age Profile	
Population	N/A	0 - 15	N/A
Number of dwellings	N/A	16 - 29	N/A
Housing tenure	N/A	30 - 44	N/A
Average number of cars per household	N/A	45 - 59	N/A
Transport links	N/A	60 - 85+	N/A
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Hamstall Ridware lies to the north east of Armitage with Handsacre and Hill Ridware in a rural and remote location served by minor roads only. Services and facilities within the village are limited to a Church and pub.</p>			

Table 4.10

Hammerwich		Age Profile	
Population	870	0 - 15	17.9%
Number of dwellings	323	16 - 29	13.5%
Housing tenure	83% owner occupied	30 - 44	18.7%
Average number of cars per household	1.69	45 - 59	25.5%
Transport links	Minor road access to Burntwood and A5 strategic highway network	60 - 85+	24.6%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Hammerwich village is closely related to Burntwood, with Hammerwich Parish extending into part of Burntwood. Whilst Burntwood town is fairly close, services and facilities within the village are very limited, and public transport is poor.</p>			

Table 4.11

Harlaston		Age Profile	
Population	378	0 - 15	19.8%
Number of dwellings	156	16 - 29	9.3%
Housing tenure	78% owner occupied	30 - 44	21.7%
Average number of cars per household	1.86	45 - 59	26.5%
Transport links	Minor road links to Tamworth, A38 and A42	60 - 85+	22%

**Community profile:** Harlaston lies to the north east of the District in a fairly remote setting as per Edingale and Elford. The village has limited services and facilities and a very high car ownership reflects car dependency and poor public transport.

Table 4.12

Hill Ridware		Age Profile	
Population	741	0 - 15	17.8%
Number of dwellings	311	16 - 29	10.8%
Housing tenure	78.5% owner occupied	30 - 44	19.6%
Average number of cars per household	1.55	45 - 59	27.5%
Transport links	Minor road links to Armitage with Handsacre and Rugeley	60 - 85+	24.3%

**Community profile:** Hill Ridware lies to the north of Armitage with Handsacre, and is served by minor roads to Armitage with Handsacre and Rugeley. Facilities within the village are fairly limited, and public transport links are poor.

Table 4.13

Hopwas		Age Profile	
Population	N/A	0 - 15	N/A
Number of dwellings	N/A	16 - 29	N/A
Housing tenure	N/A	30 - 44	N/A
Average number of cars per household	N/A	45 - 59	N/A
Transport links	N/A	60 - 85+	N/A

Hopwas		Age Profile	
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Hopwas lies on the main route (A51) between Lichfield and Tamworth, and therefore benefits from a half hourly bus service. There are limited services and facilities within the village but an employment centre in the north west of Tamworth is walking distance away.</p>			

Table 4.14

Kings Bromley		Age Profile	
Population	1,315	0 - 15	15.3%
Number of dwellings	533	16 - 29	10.4%
Housing tenure	79.6% owner occupied	30 - 44	17.8%
Average number of cars per household	1.68	45 - 59	23.3%
Transport links	A515 and A513 provide links to Lichfield and Rugeley	60 - 85+	33.1%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> A significant proportion of the population are above 60 years of age, giving the highest proportion of older people within the rural settlements. There is also a lower proportion of children in the village. Car ownership is fairly high within the village, which may be due to the lack of a half hourly bus service.</p>			

Table 4.15

Little Aston (incl. Streetly)		Age Profile	
Population	2,486	0 - 15	19.2%
Number of dwellings	998	16 - 29	9.7%
Housing tenure	95.2% owner occupied	30 - 44	16.3%
Average number of cars per household	2.02	45 - 59	26.5%
Transport links	Links within Birmingham and to the strategic highway network	60 - 85+	28.5%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Little Aston is the fourth largest rural settlement and it has close links with the Birmingham conurbation including Sutton Coldfield. Little Aston has the highest level of car ownership in the District, and also the highest level of owner/occupied dwellings, perhaps reflecting the affluent nature of the settlement. Again, the population is largely above the age of 45, with a very low number of people between the ages of 16 and 29.</p>			

Table 4.16

Longdon		Age Profile	
Population	557	0 - 15	15.4%
Number of dwellings	245	16 - 29	10.8%
Housing tenure	86.6% owner occupied	30 - 44	16.7%
Average number of cars per household	1.75	45 - 59	29.1%
Transport links	Minor road links to Lichfield and Rugeley	60 - 85+	28.2%

**Community profile:** Longdon, like other rural settlements, has a higher proportion of older residents, with approximately 50% of the population over the age of 45. Longdon is poorly served in terms of public transport and benefits from only a small level of services and facilities.

Table 4.17

Shenstone		Age Profile	
Population	2,132	0 - 15	18.7%
Number of dwellings	907	16 - 29	9.6%
Housing tenure	85.3% owner occupied	30 - 44	20.1%
Average number of cars per household	1.55	45 - 59	25.8%
Transport links	Lies on the A5127 to Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield. Close to the A5 and M6 Toll strategic highway network. Shenstone train station has links to Lichfield and Birmingham.	60 - 85+	25.6%

**Community profile:** Shenstone lies to the south of Lichfield, and is well linked in terms of roads and rail, as it is the only settlement that benefits from a train station. There is local employment within Shenstone at Lynn Lane Industrial Estate adjacent to the train station, as well as a number of services and facilities. It is the fifth largest rural settlement

Table 4.18

Stonnall		Age Profile	
Population	1,298	0 - 15	16.5%
Number of dwellings	571	16 - 29	10.8%
Housing tenure	90.1 owner occupied	30 - 44	21.5%



Stonnall		Age Profile	
Average number of cars per household	1.72	45 - 59	24.4%
Transport links	Road links to Lichfield, Brownhills and Walsall	60 - 85+	26.2%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> The post office in Stonnall has recently closed, however a number of services and facilities remain in the village. Public transport connections are poor and this is reflected by a high car ownership. Again a high proportion of the population are above the age of 60.</p>			

Table 4.19

Upper Longdon		Age Profile	
Population	399	0 - 15	13.3%
Number of dwellings	175	16 - 29	9.1%
Housing tenure	93.4% owner occupied	30 - 44	17.5%
Average number of cars per household	1.93	45 - 59	33.3%
Transport links	Minor road links to A51 and Lichfield and Rugeley	60 - 85+	27.1%
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Within Upper Longdon there is a high level of car ownership, as the settlement itself is fairly remote and lies adjacent to the Cannock Chase AONB. A large proportion of the population are over 60 years of age, and Upper Longdon has the lowest proportion of children under the age of 15.</p>			

Table 4.20

Wigginton		Age Profile	
Population	N/A	0 - 15	N/A
Number of dwellings	N/A	16 - 29	N/A
Housing tenure	N/A	30 - 44	N/A
Average number of cars per household	N/A	45 - 59	N/A
Transport links	N/A	60 - 85+	N/A
<p><b>Community profile:</b> Wigginton is a small settlement that lies just to the north of Tamworth. There are very limited services and facilities within the village and therefore the population would largely look to Tamworth to provide for their needs. There is a minor road link to Tamworth, but public transport is poor.</p>			

Table 4.21

Whittington		Age Profile	
<b>Population</b>	2,040	<b>0 - 15</b>	17.5%
<b>Number of dwellings</b>	863	<b>16 - 29</b>	10.9%
<b>Housing tenure</b>	86.0% owner occupied	<b>30 - 44</b>	21.1%
<b>Average number of cars per household</b>	1.59	<b>45 - 59</b>	26.0%
<b>Transport links</b>	Minor road links to the A51, Lichfield and Tamworth	<b>60 - 85+</b>	24.5%
<b>Community profile:</b> Whittington lies to the south east of Lichfield between Lichfield and Tamworth. The village benefits from being on a half hourly bus service, and also has a range of services and facilities within the village.			

Table 4.22

### Indicies of Multiple Deprivation

**4.3** The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, looks at particular issues such as employment, crime, living conditions etc. and reports those areas (based on Wards) that fall within the lowest 10% throughout the Country. The rural areas within Lichfield District do not score poorly in this assessment overall, however it is identified that in terms of 'barriers to housing and services', the Colton and Mavesyn Ridware Ward, Mease and Tame Ward and Bourne Vale Ward all fall within the 10% most deprived wards nationally ([Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Staffordshire County Council, 2007](#)).

## 5 Definition of Rural Services

**5.1** There is no single national definition of rural services, however the two most widely used are those of Natural England and DEFRA. In terms of accessibility, DEFRA's targets include improving availability of services for those without access to a car, including the use of locally based community transport solutions, improving access to health care, post offices, banks and ATMs as well as improving accessibility to the internet.

**5.2** This study assesses settlements in relation to the presence of certain facilities and services within them, along with the availability of public transport services to nearby facilities. A score has been awarded for facilities and services, but this study does not consider issues such as quality and size of the facility within the scoring system. It is recognised that provision and availability of other facilities and services also contribute to the sustainability of a community including play areas, open spaces, playing fields and sport clubs. However, these are not included within this study, as this could overshadow any deficiencies in quality and quantity. Also recognised, is the role of Churches within rural settlements, for community based events and often the provision of a Church hall for other groups and clubs. Whilst Churches are recognised as an important asset within a settlement, they have not been included within the scoring, as this would involve an assessment of the type of Church, additional facilities associated with the Church and degree to which they are used by other local organisations. In addition, most settlements within Lichfield District have a Church, and therefore scoring them purely on their presence, would have little impact on the scoring system.

**5.3** Within this Study, basic key rural facilities and services assessed are:

- Post Office
- Doctors Surgery
- Dentist
- Pharmacy
- Primary School
- Community Hall
- Pub
- General Store

**5.4** In addition to services and facilities found within settlements, a score was also awarded in relation to access to employment locations (including accessibility by foot), retail, leisure and hospitals by frequent public transport services (half hourly or better service), along with a score based on the frequency of public transport serving the settlement.

**5.5** Retail, in relation to this study, refers to locations that include retail supermarkets, as well as a variety of local, regional and national retail outlets typically found in larger urban areas. Similarly leisure, in the context of this study, refers to those typically found in large urban areas and includes leisure centres, cinemas and evening entertainment for example.

## 6 Delivery of Rural Services

**6.1** Many of the facilities frequently available within settlements are provided by the private sector and therefore subject to commercial realities. In rural areas, post offices are normally run as commercial enterprises, as part of another commercial enterprise, Post Office Ltd. In recent years, a number of post offices have closed, and since the previous study in 2008, post office closures have occurred in both Hopwas and Stonnall. Kings Bromley has a visiting post office one day per week.

**6.2** GP practices and doctors surgeries are generally under the control of and run by Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), and whilst typically located in the larger settlements and towns, they serve a much wider area. (The Government is currently proposing changes to the Health Service which may result in the re-structure and abolition of PCTs.) Public houses are usually either provided as independent business or as part of a brewery chain. Other facilities are delivered either by the public sector or through voluntary bodies. Community halls are commonly operated and owned by the local parish council, or other community organisations.

**6.3** Primary schools in the rural areas are most likely to be provided by the Local Education Authority, which in the case of Lichfield District is Staffordshire County Council. The delivery of primary education is affected by a number of factors including demographic changes. There are many primary schools within Lichfield District, each with a defined catchment boundary. However, school admissions policies are complex and some resident school children travel to schools outside their immediate catchment and in some cases travel to schools outside the District. It should be noted that within the District a number of private schools and special schools also operate within the rural area, often serving catchments outside the District.

**6.4** Public transport provision in the rural areas of Lichfield District is through a mixture of private operators, public subsidies and community transport schemes. The largest operator of bus services within the District is Arriva. The District Council is involved in the provision of a community bus service, available to community groups upon booking.

## 7 Inter-relationship Between Rural Settlements & Urban Areas

**7.1** Whilst it is acknowledged that there are links between the rural and urban area, quantifying the relationships between settlements and urban areas, and the influence that they exert on one another, is difficult.

### Edge of Urban Settlements

**7.2** Located on the south eastern edge of the District, **Fazeley** (including Mile Oak and Bonehill) has very close ties with neighbouring Tamworth, accessible by a short car journey and by frequent bus services to Tamworth. In addition to the variety of services, facilities and employment found within Fazeley itself, Tamworth provides a convenient location for employment, retail and leisure, along with access to train services.

**7.3** **Little Aston**, located on the southern edge of the District, is bordered by the West Midlands conurbation, specifically Birmingham and Walsall, with which it has close links, similar to those of Fazeley with Tamworth. Similar to Fazeley, Little Aston has two local centres; the largest being that of Streetly village which has a range of services. Its location on a main road and associated passing trade contributes to maintaining the higher number of services and facilities.

**7.4** **Streethay** lies on the north-eastern edge of Lichfield City and is a small settlement lying within the parish of Fradley with Streethay, however, in spatial terms it adjoins Lichfield City. Streethay has close links to Lichfield City and whilst it has no services of its own (other than a pub), residents are able to access all facilities within Lichfield City via a frequent bus service and train service. The lack of services present within the settlement itself result in Streethay performing less well in the sustainability scoring than settlements such as Fazeley and Little Aston, as there are no local facilities within easy walking distance of most residents.

**7.5** The services and facilities within Fazeley, Little Aston and Streethay are influenced by their proximity and links with large urban areas and whilst they are considered as rural settlements in terms of this study, they exhibit some of physical characteristics of suburban parts of larger towns, whilst still retaining local identities.

**7.6** Whilst not directly on the edge of the District, **Armitage with Handsacre** has strong links with Rugeley within Cannock Chase District. Armitage lies on a frequent bus route between Lichfield city and Stafford, and therefore unlike Fazeley and Little Aston, it has links via a direct bus service to services and facilities within Lichfield city (as well as Rugeley).

### Other Settlements

**7.7** Most of the settlements within this study have common links with other settlements due to services that they offer, proximity to each other or existing transport links. This is the case in Lichfield District, but the linkages and strength of dependency on nearby settlements varies and is difficult to quantify. Certain settlements within the District have more obvious links with nearby urban areas largely due to proximity, such as Hammerwich with Burntwood, Hopwas and Wigginton with Tamworth, Stonnall with Aldridge and Colton with Rugeley. With the exception of Hopwas, all of these have less frequent public transport services than their neighbouring larger settlements.

## Isolated Settlements

**7.8** Settlements can appear more isolated in terms of their location away from main urban centres or lack of public transport. Even settlements close to some urban areas can seem isolated where no or infrequent public transport exists. Typically, the more isolated settlements within the District include those in the eastern areas (Elford, Edingale, Harlaston and Clifton Campville), some of the northern settlements (Colton, Hamstall Ridware, Hill Ridware and Upper Longdon) and in the south (Drayton Bassett and Stonnall). Such isolation is clearly experienced more strongly by certain groups within communities who are less mobile or have less access to private transport. It should be noted that whilst this study focuses on those settlements defined in the adopted Local Plan 1998, there are many other smaller hamlets and more dispersed clusters of properties located throughout the rural area which also rely on services provided in some of the rural settlements. It is acknowledged that the access from the smaller villages and hamlets is primarily by car given the lack of available public transport services outside larger defined settlements.

## 8 Primary Services, Facilities & Jobs

### Employment

**8.1** As part of this study it is important to gauge the accessibility of employment destinations for the rural community, essentially by public transport. Employment locations within the District include those settlements with existing industrial estates:

- Lichfield
- Burntwood
- Fradley
- Fazeley
- Shenstone, and
- Armitage

**8.2** Outside the District other employment locations include:

- Rugeley
- Tamworth
- Burton on Trent
- Derby
- Sutton Coldfield
- Birmingham
- Walsall (including Aldridge)
- Cannock, and
- Stafford

**8.3** A 40-minute journey time was applied to the rural settlements and the number of destinations available from each settlement to those listed above was calculated. This time does not take into account time where a change in service is required but it gives a rough picture as to the locations accessible within a reasonable trip by public transport. Typically, those settlements located on the route of a frequent bus service or with access to a train station scored highly. In addition, it was considered that the presence of a large employment centre within or adjacent to a settlement that could reasonably be accessed by foot justified additional weight within the scoring system.



**8.4** It is accepted that access to the West Coast Mainline at Lichfield Trent Valley does provide opportunities for residents to travel to London. However, the overall numbers of residents travelling to London from Lichfield for employment is relatively low in comparison to other destinations with the station most likely being reached in the first instance by car. It was therefore decided not to include this factor as part of this study.

**8.5** It should be noted that research by The Countryside Agency (CRN 47) found that, the location of employment development in larger rural settlements failed to recruit local employees and indeed generated larger numbers of community trips by car. Studies also found that rural residents travel the greatest distance for work, shopping and leisure. However, the nature of this study is about the availability of service and facilities, in providing the opportunities for sustainable lifestyles rather than existing travel patterns to jobs, services and facilities.

### **Shopping and Leisure**

**8.6** The rural settlements within the District look to a number of towns for their major shopping and leisure facilities. Whilst most people access these by car, in terms of sustainability it is the pattern of bus services in particular that determines the principal larger service centre that individual villages look towards. Most villages in the eastern part of the District, for example, have bus services focused on Tamworth rather than Lichfield. The study does not specifically examine access to these 'higher order' centres for shopping and leisure, but the pattern in terms of accessibility would be similar to that for access to employment.

**8.7** Leisure in the context of this study is taken to include activities undertaken at leisure centres, and evening entertainment such as cinemas, theatres, and restaurants (typically those activities that are viable in larger towns and cities).

### **Hospitals**

**8.8** Hospitals are located within the larger settlements in and around the District, with Community Hospitals at Lichfield (Samuel Johnson) and Fazeley (Sir Robert Peel).

**8.9** Larger hospital services are located at Queens Hospital (Burton on Trent), Good Hope Hospital (Sutton Coldfield), The Manor Hospital (Walsall), Stafford Hospital and Cannock Chase Hospital (Cannock). The need to access a particular hospital may not just depend on proximity, but on particular services on offer such as Accident and Emergency. There are also specialist hospitals within the District, such as The George Bryan Unit at Fazeley and St. Giles Hospice in Whittington.

## 9 Key Local Services & Facilities

**9.1** Certain facilities are considered to be important within rural settlements; these facilities are considered as key facilities for the purpose of this study. As stated earlier in the document it is accepted that other facilities can contribute to the sustainability of community such as play areas and sports pitches. However, for the purpose of this study the focus is on those key facilities listed below:

- Post Office
- Doctors Surgery
- Dentist
- Pharmacy
- Primary School
- Village Hall
- Pub
- General Store

**9.2** District Councils are not directly responsible for the provision and delivery of any of the above services, however, they can influence key services through planning policies. The co-ordination of strategies (that seek to retain and promote rural services and facilities that are under threat from various influences, such as post offices, shops and health facilities), is an important part of spatial planning and therefore local planning authorities need to consider such policies within their Local Development Frameworks. Ultimately, where services and facilities are operated on a commercial basis their viability is dependent on a certain threshold of continuing trade.

### Post Office

**9.3** Post offices are important due to the range of facilities that they often provide in rural locations; from the typical traditional services such as bill payment and access to money to the sale of everyday general household items. The services and range of goods on sale is dependent on a variety of factors including the physical size of the building, the size of the immediate population and sometimes they are also influenced by the availability of other similar services on offer locally. In addition, post office services offered may also be affected by its location in relation to the strategic highway network, which may generate passing trade.

**9.4** Post offices are influenced and affected by policy at national level, and over recent years this has resulted in many post offices closing as part of a major review of postal services. This review, along with other factors, has impacted on the presence of post offices within Lichfield District. Post offices have closed in several settlements, including Colton, Hill Ridware, Kings Bromley (now has a weekly service), Drayton Bassett, Edingale, Clifton Campville, and since the previous study in 2008, Stonnall, Hopwas and Whittington Barracks.

**9.5** As part of its maintenance of the rural post office network, Post Office Ltd. is looking into alternative ways of post office provision within rural areas. One such method of provision is seen in Kings Bromley, where a limited, once weekly post office operates from the village hall.

**9.6** However, a recent survey of 1,000 people found that two-thirds of those in rural areas relied on their local post office for groceries, with most saying they valued the convenient location. Three out of four people surveyed who used a post office walked there, with most saying they would have to drive or catch a bus if it closed.

**9.7** Such statistics highlight that post offices still remain an important service under threat and in rural areas the closures of such facilities affect the more vulnerable sectors of community; the worst affected include the elderly, disabled people, those on low incomes and those without access to a car.

### **Health (Doctors Surgery - Dentists - Pharmacy)**

**9.8** Access to health facilities for residents living within the District's rural areas can often be difficult, particularly for those residents within rural communities that are reliant on public transport. Doctors in particular, and to a lesser extent dentists, are important key services within a rural area; however these facilities are usually only found in the larger settlements. Within Lichfield District six rural settlements have doctors surgeries location within them; Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley, Shenstone, Whittington and Stonnall; and four have dentists; Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre, Shenstone and Little Aston. Whilst these surgeries will take patients from a wider catchment, some residents are registered with practices in Lichfield and Burntwood and others outside the District.

**9.9** The provision of doctors surgeries is currently under the control of the Primary Care Trust. No new surgeries are currently proposed within rural area although there is potential for such facilities should the need arise. Sites have been identified at Fradley and within the Rugeley Eastern Redevelopment Zone (as part of the redevelopment of part of the Rugeley Power Station site), but none have come forward to date.

**9.10** Access to surgeries by public transport can pose particular difficulties where services are infrequent. Whilst most of those located within Lichfield are located on frequent routes between the larger towns, they are not very accessible by those living in rural communities where public transport is too infrequent.

**9.11** Most rural doctors surgeries incorporate a pharmacy for use by those residents with no direct access to an independent pharmacy. However, pharmacies are also important aside from their direct prescription services; they offer other over-the-counter medication and expert advice on medical issues, as well as providing other general household products. Separate pharmacies are located within Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley, Shenstone, Little Aston and Whittington. The weighting applied to the scoring matrix gives slightly less weight to dentists and pharmacies than to doctors and GP surgeries.

## Primary Schools

**9.12** It is recognised that the presence of a primary school is an important element of rural life, providing easily accessible education for young children, often acting as a community focal point, with some schools offering use of the buildings and grounds for community use. The presence of a primary school is therefore given a high weighting in the scoring matrix.

**9.13** All settlements within this study, with the exception of Hamstall Ridware, Hammerwich, Harlaston, Streethay and Upper Longdon, have a primary school located within them or on the edge. Two of the larger settlements, Fazeley/Mile Oak and Armitage with Handsacre have two primary schools. Typically, some of those schools located close to the edge of the District take pupils from outside the District; equally some children will travel out to schools just outside the District. In addition, the District is home to a number of private and special schools which offer schooling for children of primary school age.

**9.14** Primary schools within the rural area vary in size, with relatively small schools in several of the smaller villages. Such schools have proven to be vulnerable to closure over the years, with closures taking place at Hammerwich, Hamstall Ridware and Harlaston. Local Authority-provided primary schools within Lichfield District are operated by Staffordshire County Council. Nationally school rolls are falling with the exception of certain areas where numbers have been boosted by residential development, and therefore new schools could be proposed as part of large scale future development.

## Community Halls

**9.15** Most settlements have a village or community hall located within them, with the exception of Hamstall Ridware, Streethay, Upper Longdon, and Wigginton (Wigginton's village hall has now been converted to residential development).

**9.16** Village halls vary greatly in size and age, from small old buildings as seen at Clifton Campville to more modern buildings as seen at Colton. As expected, typically larger settlements often have larger halls. In recent years new village halls have been built, at Fradley, Armitage with Handsacre and Colton (replacement), in part utilising contributions from developers of new residential development. Alrewas also has plans to extend and redevelopment part of the village hall site.

**9.17** Village halls and other community buildings can be one of the principal focuses for village life. Halls vary in size, quality, ownership and management and include: rural community centres, Women's Institutes, British Legion halls, memorial halls, halls belonging to churches and chapels including innovative use of a separate part of the church building itself for community activities. Many are not just a place to meet for social occasions such as parties, wedding receptions, guides and scouts and other local clubs. In more recent years nationally, there has been a move towards their use as a venue for other activities such as local health facilities, farmers' markets, lunch clubs for older people, provision of IT facilities and the District Council's mobile play services. In 2007, Kings Bromley Village Hall opened a small weekly post office function to serve local people following 3 years without a service.

**9.18** Surveys of community halls nationally, carried out in the late 1990s, showed that three-quarters of village halls were used by less than half of the residents in the communities they served and that almost 60% of halls were used by less than a quarter of the local population.

However, the way in which the community uses a hall, and the services or facilities the hall has on offer, is vital. The people who use village halls a number of times a week are often those without private transport who cannot travel elsewhere and are at a more vulnerable stage of life, often older people and those with young families and children.

**9.19** Within the District, community halls do not appear to be under significant threat in terms of suffering the loss of the facility to a community, however their need for maintenance and improvement may be a significant financial issue for many communities. Those owners and operators of existing community halls may have longer term aspirations to replace, modernise or extend existing facilities. In terms of this study's methodology, settlements are scored merely on the presence of a community hall within them. Whether there are issues with size, limitations on the uses they can accommodate, the state of the physical fabric etc. in relation to the existing community hall, is not taken into account in the scoring system.

### **Public Houses**

**9.20** Pubs have long been established within rural communities and today still remain an important feature of rural life, not only providing a focal point for social interaction but also more recently the range of services that some provide is changing. Aside from employment opportunities, pubs can also contribute to the local tourist industry. For this reason, public houses were considered to be a key service within the rural community.

**9.21** Work undertaken by DEFRA (2001) concluded that rural pubs are often a 'hub' for a variety of local activities and that some have potential to assume a business and community role in the future for a one-stop shop for essential services.

**9.22** This study is primarily concerned with whether or not a settlement had a pub within it, and does not go into any further details in relation to the existing functionality of the pub and what services are available. Outside of the urban areas, two rural pubs have closed in both Whittington and Armitage with Handsacre, and other pubs have been granted planning permission for redevelopment such as in Stonnall. As a commercial operation, there remains pressure on the industry, and whilst this may not always result in closure, this is reflected for example in recent proposals for residential development on part of the site of the Public House in Elford.

**9.23** Some settlements have historic public houses, (Shenstone, Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley and Whittington). With the exception of Drayton Bassett, Hammerwich, Fradley and Little Aston, all settlements within the study have at least one pub and at Hamstall Ridware, the pub is the only key service within the village. It should be noted that a number of other public houses are located within the rural area outside of those settlements and are not considered as part of this study.

### **General Stores**

**9.24** As stated earlier, post offices often sell some general daily household items, though the range of products on offer tends to be limited. The presence of a separate general store or range of local stores is considered to be important in influencing the degree to which settlements are sustainable. Typically, general stores are found within the larger settlements where a variety of other shops are also present and some of these larger settlements over recent years have seen larger stores located within the village such as Tesco Express in Shenstone and Fazeley, and the Cooperative in Fradley.

**9.25** Those settlements near to urban areas located on busy routes, such as Little Aston and Fazeley, have numerous shops and services. These are as direct result of the increase in potential patronage due to the adjacent urban population and high levels of car borne trade due to location on a main highway.

**9.26** Other large settlements with range of shops and services include Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre, Shenstone and to a lesser degree Whittington, Stonnall and Fradley (at the new local centre). Trade here is likely to be from a mixture of local residents; patronage from nearby settlements with no such facilities and through-trade dependent on the location of the settlement in relation to the highway network.

### Employment

**9.27** Although most employment is available within the larger urban areas, it is worth noting that there are exceptions of large scale uses that provide employment within the rural area. As well as designated employment sites at Fradley, Shenstone and Fazeley, some rural settlements have existing employment uses within or adjacent to them, such as Armitage Shanks in Armitage with Handsacre, Drayton Manor Park near Fazeley, the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas, St. Giles Hospice and the Barracks in Whittington and Spire Hospital in Little Aston. Depending on planning restrictions such as Green Belt, some of these uses may look to expand in the future, which could increase the level of employment in the rural area. Outside of these areas, and where public transport provision is poor, access to employment is largely dependent on the private car. This is especially evident for workers with irregular shift patterns, for example the operating hours of public transport services may prevent users accessing work.

**9.28** Across the District and also nationally, the level of homeworking is increasing. This is seen as a positive movement as it reduces the need to travel. An increased level of homeworking has been made possible in the last few years due to the expansion of broadband internet, and access to computers. However, it is recognised that broadband connections may be slower or poorer in some areas of the District preventing effective homeworking from taking place.

### Housing

**9.29** Another factor which influences whether a settlement is sustainable, is access to housing and affordability. Housing in rural areas is often desirable and expensive, and there can be a shortage of affordable homes. This has been explored in more detail in the [Rural Housing Needs Survey](#).

### Churches

**9.30** As mentioned in section 5 of this study, it is also recognised within this study that Churches, and other related religious groups, play an important role in the community. They not only provide a community network in themselves, but also by often providing a building for external hire, or a meeting point for local groups. As most of the rural settlements have at least one Church within them it was not considered necessary to include the presence of a Church within the scoring system. The level of community participation may depend on the particular nature of the Church or group, in terms of how active they are in the community and what other facilities they provide.

## **Loss of Services and Facilities**

**9.31** Over the years a number of changes to the types of services and facilities within rural settlements have occurred. These have resulted from a number of influences, most of which are national trends in retailing, financial services provision, and the economics of service provision.

**9.32** Some settlements within the District have seen the closure of shops, post offices and petrol stations. In several villages these closures have occurred despite the construction of significant levels of additional residential development. It is acknowledged that development is just one contributing factor to the success of village services and facilities, and there are other influences such as such as the type of service, and accessibility.



## 10 Rural Accessibility

### National Policy

**10.1** The revised [Planning Policy Statement \(PPS\) 13](#) was published on 3rd January 2011, with the main changes being the removal of minimum parking standards for new developments and the removal of prescriptive car parking charges.

### Public Transport

**10.2** In Staffordshire, most bus services operating on major routes run on a commercial basis, with the company Arriva operating the majority of these services within Lichfield District. However, evening and Sunday services are subsidised, as are most rural services throughout the week and some early journeys on otherwise commercial services by Staffordshire County Council. Non-commercial services are made the subject of a tender exercise undertaken every 3 years in line with a review.

**10.3** The Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Staffordshire includes accessibility strategies and targets for accessibility improvements throughout Staffordshire. Objectives include improving accessibility to everyday facilities for those without access to a car, through improvements to public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks.

**10.4** LTP 2 is due to be replaced by LTP 3, which has recently been out for consultation and is summarised within section 2 of this study. Maintaining and expanding Staffordshire's public transport network is a priority of the LTP.

**10.5** Under the Transport Act 2000 Staffordshire is required to publish a Bus Strategy; the most up to date strategy is dated 2006-2011. The Bus Strategy contributes towards improving accessibility, reducing congestion and improving quality of life. It should be noted that rising costs in the bus industry have put increased pressure on the County Council's ability to replace withdrawn commercial services and extend provision. Operators are tending to concentrate their commercial activities on core urban and inter-urban routes, leaving the County Council to secure services for most rural and many urban fringe areas from limited resources.

**10.6** This Study focuses on both:

- the potential accessibility of rural residents by sustainable (non-car) means, to centres of employment, retail, leisure, and health services outside the settlement; and
- the presence within the settlement of certain key facilities or accessibility by public transport to them (with a 30 minimum frequency).

**10.7** When considering journey times it was decided that a maximum 40-minute journey time was acceptable for accessing employment, retail, leisure etc. In order to collect travel time information, journey times were calculated excluding any transfer time between connecting services where necessary. With this in mind, journeys with transfers are likely to be slower than the estimates used.



**10.8** Bus timetables published in November 2010 by Staffordshire County Council cover bus routes within the District, and these were used to gather detailed information on routes and frequency.

**10.9** Popular services, classed as frequent within this Study, operate every 30-60 minutes throughout the day including peak times (7.00 - 9.00 am and 4.00 - 6.00pm). In addition to these services there are a number of services operating on a less frequent basis, some operating a limited daily service and others operating a single service one day a week. All of the settlements within the study were served by some level of bus service and all of the available services have been categorised as part of the study to demonstrate the pattern of accessibility as a contributory factor to rural sustainability. As largely commercial services, they are subject to future changes.

### **Frequent Bus Services**

**10.10** The most frequent routes operating every 30 minutes within the District run between;

- Tamworth to Lichfield (**765**) - stopping at Hopwas and Whittington
- Lichfield to Stafford (**825**) - stopping at Armitage with Handsacre
- Tamworth to Birmingham (**110, 115,80**) - stopping at Fazeley and Mile Oak
- Lichfield to Burton (**7**) - stopping at Streethay (the service is no longer considered half hourly in terms of stops at Fradley, Alrewas and Kings Bromley due to timetable alterations)

### **Less Frequent Bus Services**

**10.11** All settlements with existing boundaries are served by some level of bus service, the more frequent services listed above typically serve the larger settlements, although this has changed slightly since this study was published in 2008 as the bus service to Fradley, Alrewas and Kings Bromley is no longer considered half hourly. Elsewhere the level of service varies in terms of times and number of services throughout the day and week.

- Lichfield to Burton (**7**) - stopping at Fradley, Alrewas and Kings Bromley (no longer considered half hourly due to timetable alterations)
- Lichfield to Birmingham (**112**) - an approximately hourly service stopping at Shenstone.
- Tamworth to Burton (**813**) - stopping at Elford
- Lichfield to Burntwood (**15**) - stopping at Hammerwich
- The majority of the settlements in the eastern part of the District (Wigginton, Elford, Edingale, Harlaston and Clifton Campville) are served by the same service between Monday and Saturday focused on linking with Tamworth. This service (**82, 84, 87**) operates in a loop stopping at all these settlements before heading to Tamworth at a frequency of approximately one bus every two hours during the day. Due to the nature of these locations and route taken, bus journey times tend to be lengthy.

- The **428** service operates between Lichfield and Uttoxeter and stops at Armitage, Hill Ridware and Hamstall Ridware, with between three and five buses a day between Monday and Saturday.
- The **81** service operates five buses daily between Lichfield and Walsall (via Aldridge). From Lichfield the service stops at Wall, Shenstone and Stonnall before progressing on to Walsall.
- Colton is served by two services a day to and from Rugeley (**12**) on weekdays only.
- The **14** service operating between Rugeley and Lichfield stops at Longdon three times daily, Monday to Friday.
- Of those settlements with a bus service, Drayton Bassett has the least frequent service, with only a single bus on Fridays (**216**).

### Community Transport Initiatives

**10.12** Lichfield District Council operates a Community Transport Scheme. This scheme does not run a regular time-tabled service but provides group transport and operates on a booking basis. Any non-profit making organisation based within the Lichfield District area can contact the scheme and book minibuss transport. The scheme bought a new minibuss in 2008, increasing the fleet to three vehicles. Two of these vehicles are adaptable for disabled users.

**10.13** At present the scheme is booked and used regularly for a number of groups including lunch clubs, shopping trips and social clubs and these groups are based predominantly within Lichfield City and Burntwood. However the scheme is used by groups in the rural areas, and in particular by groups in Fazeley/Mile Oak, Armitage with Handsacre, Whittington, Alrewas, Kings Bromley and Mavesyn Ridware.

### Train Services

**10.14** Within Lichfield District there are four train stations: Lichfield City, Lichfield Trent Valley, Shenstone and Rugeley Trent Valley. Tamworth station and Blake Street are on the edge of the District and therefore accessible to some residents. The service provided on the rail routes are:

- Central Trains operate a frequent train service between Lichfield Trent Valley and Redditch passing through Birmingham New Street, via Lichfield City and Shenstone stations with several stops within Birmingham. Journey times from Lichfield to Birmingham New Street are around 40 minutes.
- Virgin Trains operate services between London and Glasgow via Lichfield Trent Valley on the West Coast Mainline. This direct service to London Euston stops at Lichfield twice daily (twice in the morning to London, and twice in the evening from London).
- London Midland also operate services between Liverpool Lime Street and London Euston via Lichfield Trent Valley on the West Coast Mainline. This direct service stops at Lichfield 11 times daily every hour from 8:40am.

- Central Trains operate an hourly service between Stafford and Birmingham via Rugeley Trent Valley station. This service takes 15 minutes to Stafford and 1 hour to Birmingham from Rugeley Trent Valley.
- A further service operates between Stafford and Birmingham stopping at additional stations between Walsall and Birmingham.
- The service operating through Tamworth between Burton and Birmingham operates several trains an hour during peak times.

### Access by Foot

**10.15** The presence of a range of facilities within settlements is important in that it benefits all local residents who are able to access them by foot and is not dependent on public or private transport. Thus services are available to those who might otherwise be disadvantaged by public transport costs. For this reason, an additional score was applied within the matrix where there were a range of facilities within walking distance.

**10.16** 5-10 minute walk times were applied to settlements, starting from those areas where facilities are concentrated. When these walk times are applied, the majority of all settlements were within a 5-10 minute walk time of the settlement 'service' centre.

### Cars

**10.17** Car travel has not been included in this study, since the study concentrates on indicators of sustainability within rural settlements, with a particular objective of contributing to strategies that minimise the need for private car journeys and reduce their distance.

**10.18** Car ownership is an indicator of wealth and can also to a certain extent reflect the availability of accessible and frequent public transport. Generally within Lichfield District, car ownership is above the national average. However, there are some clear variations in car ownership levels and households with no car. Little Aston for example has an average car ownership level of above 2 cars per household, whereas Fazeley has 1.2 (Section 4: Settlement Profiles, provides information on car ownership levels).

**10.19** In those rural areas where public transport is infrequent, those with no access to the private car are severely disadvantaged in terms of access to employment, service and facilities. Similarly, a number of households with access to one car can also experience the same disadvantages where the only household car is used for work trips by one member of the household.

### Commuting - Travel patterns for employment

**10.20** Commuting patterns are often complex, influenced by a number of factors including proximity and accessibility to the strategic and main highway network, availability, accessibility and frequency of public transport services and house prices in relation to employment skills and type. Within Lichfield District, aside from those who work in the District itself, many residents commute out of the District to employment at the same time as others travel from outside to work within Lichfield District. Urban areas which have close links in terms of employment for Lichfield residents include Birmingham, Walsall, Cannock, Burton and Tamworth.

**10.21** The majority of rural residents in employment within Lichfield District travel to employment within the rural areas. The 2001 Census reported that out of a total of 17,806 rural residents in employment, 6,067 travel to work within the rural areas , 2,997 travel to Birmingham, 1,316 travel to Tamworth, 1,583 travel to Lichfield City, 948 travel to Walsall, 773 travel to Cannock Chase and 650 travel to East Staffordshire. This means that the greatest proportion of rural residents in employment, actually travel to work within the rural area itself.

**10.22** In terms of mode of transport, travel by car far exceeded all other modes of transport.

## 11 Sustainable Rural Settlement Summary

**11.1** Map 1.1 (Appendix A) shows the location of the key services and facilities identified within the settlements surveyed, together with their location in relation to the public transport network within the District.

### **Sustainability Score based on Existing Facilities and Services within Settlements**

**11.2** As shown in Table 1.1 and Map 1.2 at Appendix A, six settlements score particularly well, due to the presence of, and accessibility to, a range of shops, key services and facilities. These settlements are listed below with the corresponding scores:

- Armitage with Handsacre (49)
- Shenstone (49)
- Fazeley (43)
- Whittington (43)
- Alrewas (36)
- Little Aston (35)

**11.3** Some of the services, facilities and total number of shops present in some of these settlements are influenced by through-trade from car users (particularly where these are accessible and visible from the main roads). Proximity to a larger urban area, which allows access to a wider population. This is particularly apparent in the settlements of Fazeley and Little Aston.

**11.4** The other settlements which scored fairly highly are Stonnall, which has a small cluster of shops, a primary school and GP surgery, and Fradley, which has a post office and primary school, and the opening of the new local centre in 2010 has provided a general store, café and hairdressers.

**11.5** Most other villages only have three or four key facilities. Longdon and Kings Bromley have four facilities (however the post office service in Kings Bromley is only once a week), but neither are located on frequent public transport routes, making it very difficult to use public transport for employment, leisure and retail trips. Those settlements with three key facilities include Clifton Campville, Colton, Edingale, Harlaston, Hill Ridware and Hopwas. Settlements with only two key facilities are Wigginton, Hammerwich and Drayton Bassett, which again are not located on frequent public transport routes. Hamstall Ridware and Upper Longdon each have only a single key service (pub) and again neither are located on frequent public transport routes.

### **Sustainability Score based on Accessibility by Public Transport to Employment, Retail, Leisure and Hospitals**

#### **Employment**

**11.6** A simple scoring system was used to assess the relative sustainability of the rural settlements in respect of the above. In relation to employment, scores were awarded based on accessibility to employment locations, such as at Lichfield, Burntwood, Fazeley, Fradley, Armitage with Handsacre, Little Aston, Tamworth, Walsall, Aldridge, Sutton Coldfield, Burton and Birmingham. Where rural settlements have access to public transport, and especially to the rail network the choice of employment destinations increases. Scores were awarded dependent on the number of employment destinations accessible. If an employment location is within walking distance of a settlement, an additional score is awarded, as in the case of Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley, Fradley, Hopwas, Shenstone and Streethay.

### **Retail and Leisure**

**11.7** In terms of access to retail and leisure, this typically followed a similar pattern to that of employment locations in terms of the larger towns and cities. A similar scoring system has been applied with higher scores awarded to those settlements with greater choice of retail and leisure locations.

### **Hospitals**

**11.8** Hospitals are located at Burton, Stafford, Fazeley, Lichfield, Sutton Coldfield and Walsall. Whilst it is accepted that hospitals are not typically used frequently by the majority of the population on a regular basis, they are considered to be a key service.

### **Public Transport**

**11.9** Table 1.2 and Map 1.3 at Appendix A, considers and awards points based on the availability of public transport in terms of frequency of services. This additional score differentiates between those served by a half-hourly, hourly, limited daily service, weekly service and no service at all. In addition those settlements that have access to train stations within 20 minutes on an hourly or better service are also scored.

### **Score Summary**

**11.10** As shown in Table 1.2, seven settlements scored highly in terms of accessibility by public transport to services and facilities. These are listed below with their corresponding scores:

- Fazeley (31)
- Shenstone (31)
- Streethay (31)
- Hopwas (31)
- Whittington (30)
- Armitage with Handsacre (29)
- Little Aston (27)

**11.11** The scores show that some of the smaller settlements that do not contain key services or facilities within them, score highly on the accessibility analysis due to their location on the edge of larger settlements on main transport links. This is apparent in the case of Streethay located on the edge of Lichfield City, and Hopwas located near to Tamworth.

**11.12** Since the previous study was undertaken, the bus route through Kings Bromley, Alrewas and Fradley has seen timetable alterations meaning that the route can no longer be considered half-hourly. This has obviously impacted on the accessibility by public transport to services and facilities from within these settlements.

## **Final Summary**

**11.13** The analysis finds that there are a group of larger villages within the District with characteristics in terms of accessibility and facilities that suggest a degree of local sustainability in the context of rural living. These villages are Shenstone, Armitage with Handsacre, Alrewas, Fazeley, Whittington and Little Aston.

**11.14** As stated previously, even within these more 'sustainable settlements' there are other factors which contribute to the presence of, and higher number of, services and facilities - this can be seen in relation to Fazeley and Little Aston where there is a clear relationship with adjoining urban areas. The other more sustainable settlements arising out of this study are typically the settlements with the larger populations in the District: Armitage with Handsacre (4,903), Alrewas (2,744), Whittington (2,040), and Shenstone (2,132), and as such are able to support a certain number of services. However, other influences are likely to arise from passing trade and potentially an element of tourist-related business particularly in terms of pub trade.

**11.15** The matrix has also highlighted four other settlements where the factors result in a positive score with the system used: Fradley, Hopwas, Streethay and Stonnall. It is acknowledged that Hopwas does in fact gain a higher score than Alrewas overall, due to the large amounts of points awarded in the study to access to public transport. Hopwas lies to the west of Tamworth on the main highway route between Tamworth and Lichfield, resulting in it benefiting from a frequent bus route, however the settlement itself has very few services (a primary school, community hall and two public houses). It is considered that although Alrewas no longer benefits from a half hourly bus route, the settlement itself does have a thriving service centre, including shops, butchers, primary school, dentist, GP surgery, post office, public houses, and is also the only rural settlement to contain a petrol station.

**11.16** The score for Fradley has altered both positively and negatively since the previous study. Fradley receives fewer points for public transport due to the reduction of the bus timetable, but at the same time, it receives higher points for the increased level of services and facilities within the settlement. Since the opening of the Local Centre in 2010, Fradley has a convenience store, hairdressers, café and fish and chip shop, as well as the existing post office, school, village hall and extensive employment area.

**11.17** Whilst this scoring system quantifies sustainability of those settlements assessed as having the potential for a degree of sustainability, the system has to be treated with some caution, for example since it implies prioritisation of the factors used. However, research carried out by Natural England into sustainability stresses that whilst approaches vary from simple written assessments to complex matrices, scoring systems and capacity analysis, most approaches give

similar outcomes and that new development should be directed towards those villages with the greatest range of services and facilities, the highest degree of accessibility and the fewest development constraints.



**Appendix A Sustainability Matrix: Access, Services & Facilities**







Service or facility	Post Office			GP Surgery			General Store			Pharmacy			Dentist			Primary School		Community Hall		Pub		Score outside settlement	Total Matrix Score
	None	Present	Access to	None	Present	Access to	None	Present	Access to	None	Present	Access to	None	Present	None	Present	None	Present	None	Present			
Score	-5	5	3	-5	5	3	-5	5	3	-3	3	2	-3	3	2	-4	6	5	5	4	36	36	
Alrewas		5			5			5			3			3			6	5	5	4			
Armitage with Handsacre		5	3		5	3		5	3		3	2		3	2		6	5	5	4	36	49	
Colton	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-6	-6	
Clifton Campville	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-6	-6	
Drayton Bassett	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5		-10	-10	
Edingale	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-6	-6	
Elford	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-6	-6	
Fazeley	5	3	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	3	2	2	-3				6	5	5	4	30	43	
Fradley	5			-5				5		-3							6	5	5		10	10	
Hanshall Ridware	-5			-5						-3										4	-21	-21	
Hammerwich		5		-5						-3							6	5	5		-10	-10	
Hareston		5		-5						-3										4	-6	-6	
Hill Ridware	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-6	-6	
Hopwas	-5	3	3	-5		3	-5		3	-3	2	2	-3				6	5	5	4	-6	7	
Kings Bromley		3		-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-1	2	
Little Aston	5	3	3	-5	3	3		3	3			2		3	2		6	5	5		22	35	
Longdon	5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	4	4	
Shenstone		5	3		5	3		5	3		3	2		3	2		6	5	5	4	36	49	
Stonall	-5				5												6	5	5	4	14	14	
Streethay	-5	3	3	-5		3	-5		3	-3	2	2	-3							4	-21	-8	
Upper Longdon	-5			-5						-3										4	-21	-21	
Wigington	-5			-5						-3							6	5	5	4	-11	-11	
Whittington		5	3		5	3		5	3		3	2	-3				6	5	5	4	30	43	





Table 1.1 Services and Facilities by Settlement



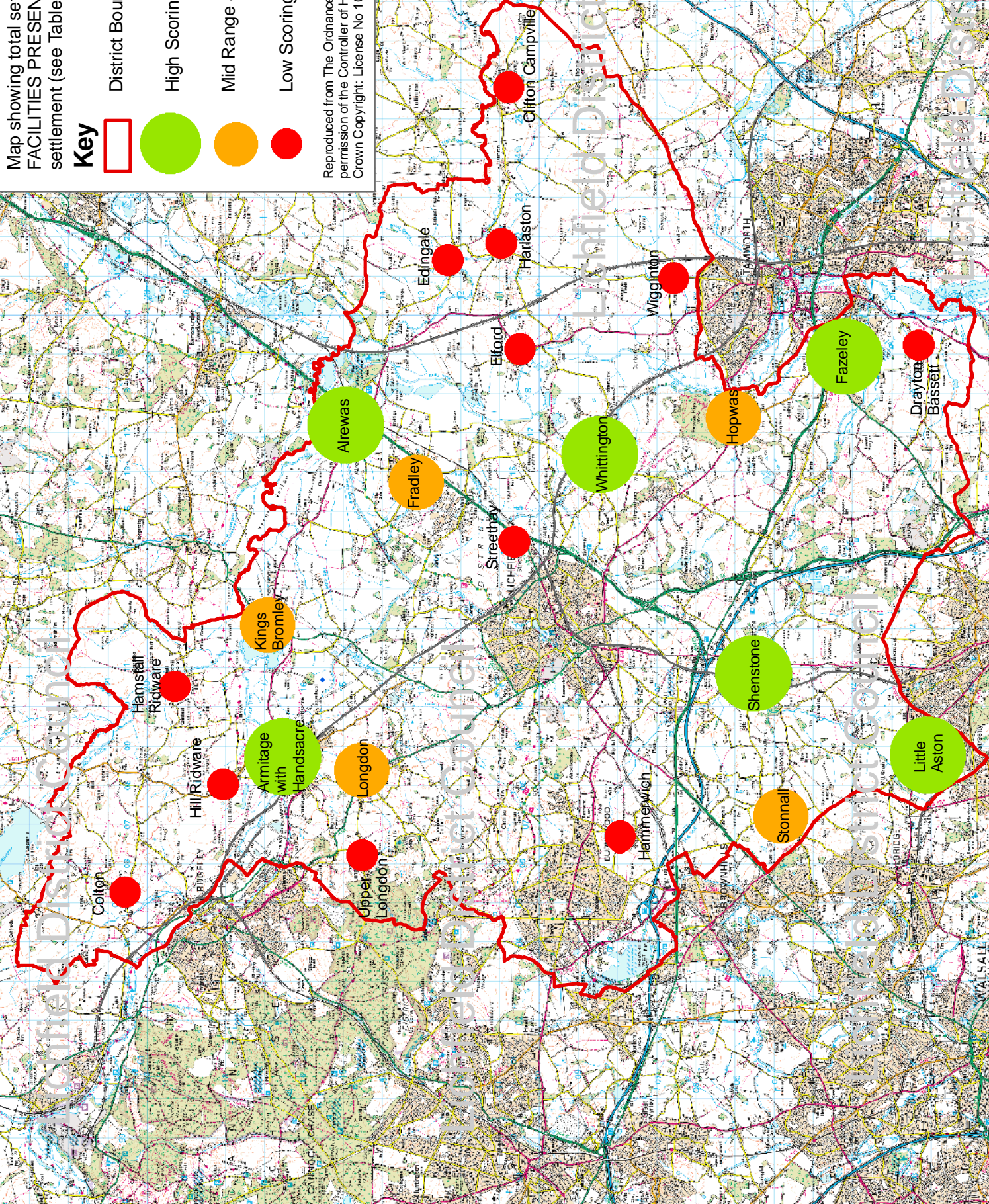
MAP 1.2

Map showing total settlement scores for FACILITIES PRESENT within each rural settlement (see Table 1.1)

Key

-  District Boundary
-  High Scoring Settlements
-  Mid Range Scoring Settlements
-  Low Scoring Settlements

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Service or facility	Access to employment - 40 mins			Access to retail and leisure			Access to hospitals			Access to employment by foot by foot min	Access to bus services				Access to station by bus (20 mins or less) - 60 min minimum service	Total Matrix Score	
	None	1	2 - 4	5+	None	1	2 - 4	5	None		1	2+	30 mins	Hourly			Limited daily service
Score	-5	1	3	5	-5	1	3	5	-5	3	5	10	5	2	1	-5	-10
Alrewas	-5				-5				-5				5				-10
Armitage with Handsacre				5			3			3		10				5	29
Colton	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Clifton Campville	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Drayton Bassett	-5				-5				-5						1		-14
Edingale	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Elford	-5				-5				-5				5				-10
Fazeley				5			3			5		10				5	31
Fradley		1			-5				-5				5				-1
Hamstall Ridware	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Hammerwich	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Hariaston	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Hill Ridware	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Hopwas				5			3			5		10				5	31
Kings Bromley	-5				-5				-5				5				-10
Little Aston			3				3			5		10				5	26
Longdon	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Shenstone				5			3			5		10				5	31
Stonnall	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Streethay				5			3			5		10				5	31
Upper Longdon	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Wigington	-5				-5				-5					2			-13
Whittington				5				5		5		10				5	30

Table 1.2 Accessibility to Services and Facilities by Settlement



MAP 1.3

Map showing total settlement scores for ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES (see Table 1.2)

**Key**

 District Boundary

 High Scoring Settlements

 Mid Range Scoring Settlements

 Low Scoring Settlements

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