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Defra Classification of Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England

A Technical Guide

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Defra Foreword

This document introduces Defra's recommended method for classifying the level of rurality within Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England and indicates an approach that can be used at other geographical levels.

The classification complements the Rural and Urban Area Definition which provides a categorisation system from output area level up to ward level and is available from the Office for National Statistics website (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/geography/products/area-classifications/rural-urban-definition-and-la-classification/index.html>).

However, these two approaches adopt different methodologies designed to reflect the numerical significance of settlement size in different administrative area frameworks. For this reason the classification should not be regarded as a *definition* of the level of rurality within Local Authority Districts. This term is reserved for the level of rurality at smaller geographic scales.

The classification proposed here is seen as a tool for the purposes of presenting and analysing data that are only available at Local Authority District level on a comprehensive national basis. We do not recommend that the classification is used to inform detailed policy design (e.g. for targeting local service delivery).

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper reports on the construction of a classification of local authority districts and Unitary Authorities (LADs) according to the amount and kind of rural population they contain. This is called a classification to distinguish it from the definition of rural areas identified for census areas smaller than LADs which was published in July 2004.
- 1.2 The core of the new classification is a six-fold grouping of LADs called 'Major Urban' (76 LADs), 'Large Urban' (45), 'Other Urban' (55), 'Significant Rural' (53), 'Rural 50' (52) and 'Rural 80' (73). It is advised that this six-fold grouping becomes the de facto rural classification of LADs for most data presentation and analysis purposes at this geographic level. However, the six groups can be aggregated to just three: 'Predominantly Urban' (Major, Large and Other Urban), 'Significant Rural' and 'Predominantly Rural' (Rural-50 and Rural-80). On a more complex level, they can *each* be subdivided into two based upon whether they contain a significant amount of rural population (in the case of the 'Major', 'Large' and 'Other Urban' groups), or a particular type of rurality in terms of numbers of people in the smaller rural settlements (in the case of 'Significant Rural', 'Rural 50' and 'Rural 80').
- 1.3 The classification is built upon the assignment of 2001 Census Output Areas (COAs), to one of the four types of the new rural definition i.e. 'urban', 'rural town and fringe', 'village' and 'hamlets and dispersed'. To the three defined rural types is added a fourth for the purposes of the LAD classification namely 'larger market towns' which are identified as those urban areas having a set of functional attributes that serve a wider rural hinterland. The 'urban' COAs in the new definition are further classified to identify 'major' and 'large urban' types of LAD (i.e. the main strategic elements of the national settlement system), and which enable the identification of significant levels of rural population within such areas. The numerical criteria for grouping areas are derived from a detailed inspection of the distributional characteristics of the data. Note: the classification does not make use of the measure of 'sparsity' found in the new rural definition.

2 Background

2.1 In July 2004, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published new definition of rural areas of England and Wales. This was formally launched alongside the publication of the Rural Strategy by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)¹ The rural definition project was managed by a Board consisting of the Countryside Agency, Defra, the Office for National Statistics, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.2 The design, testing and implementation of the definition was undertaken by the South East Regional Research Laboratory at Birkbeck College and the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield. An on-line validation exercise in which some 200 organisations and individuals took part was conducted by Geowise of Edinburgh.

2.3 The new rural definition is innovative in a number of ways:

- it is grounded in a single, widely recognised, dimension of 'rurality', namely the rural settlement pattern expressed as the density of households outside urban areas with more than 10,000 population,
- the underlying definition is based in a grid of 1 ha squares which displays a typology of rural settlement types (morphology) of small towns and their fringe areas, villages and dispersed dwellings,
- it provides a measure of 'sparsity' alongside that of settlement morphology (e.g. rural towns, villages, dispersed settlements in sparse/non sparse areas) to create a six-fold typology of rural settlement with its 'milieu', and
- it is used to create a hierarchy of census areas classified according to the type of settlement in which the majority (i.e. >50 percent) of the people within a census area live.

2.4 In published form, the areas so far classified include Census Output Areas, Census (2003) Wards and Super Output Areas. A full description of the methodology used to create the definition, a brief user guide and the areas classifications can be found on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/geography/products/area-classifications/rural-urban-definition-and-la-classification/index.html>.

2.5 Although the underlying (i.e. grid-based) element of the new rural definition can, in theory, be applied to any higher level area, the Project Board did not itself wish to take the process of definition beyond the level of Census Output Areas/Super Output Areas and Wards. There was, for example, no recommended definition of 'rural' in terms of local authority districts or unitary authoritiesⁱⁱ or 'LADs', the main reason for this being that if a simple 'majority rule' criterion were to be applied to the 354 LADs in England over 250 would be classified as 'urban'.

2.6 The Project Board set out its reason for not recommending an LAD level rural definition as follows:

'Broadly speaking, the same classificatory principles [i.e. as applied to smaller area], can be applied at larger geographic scales. Morphological classification of local authority districts (LADs) is, however, much less straightforward. For this reason we are not recommending, at this stage, a definitive binary (i.e. rural/urban) classification of LADs, but simply note some issues for further analysis.'

The design of territories for local authorities tends to include a mix of urban and rural areas (typically with a population of 100,000 or more). Just as the dispersed settlement category disappears when moving from the Output Area to the ward scale, a shift to the local authority district scale involves the 'collapse' of most of the rural morphological categories.ⁱⁱⁱ

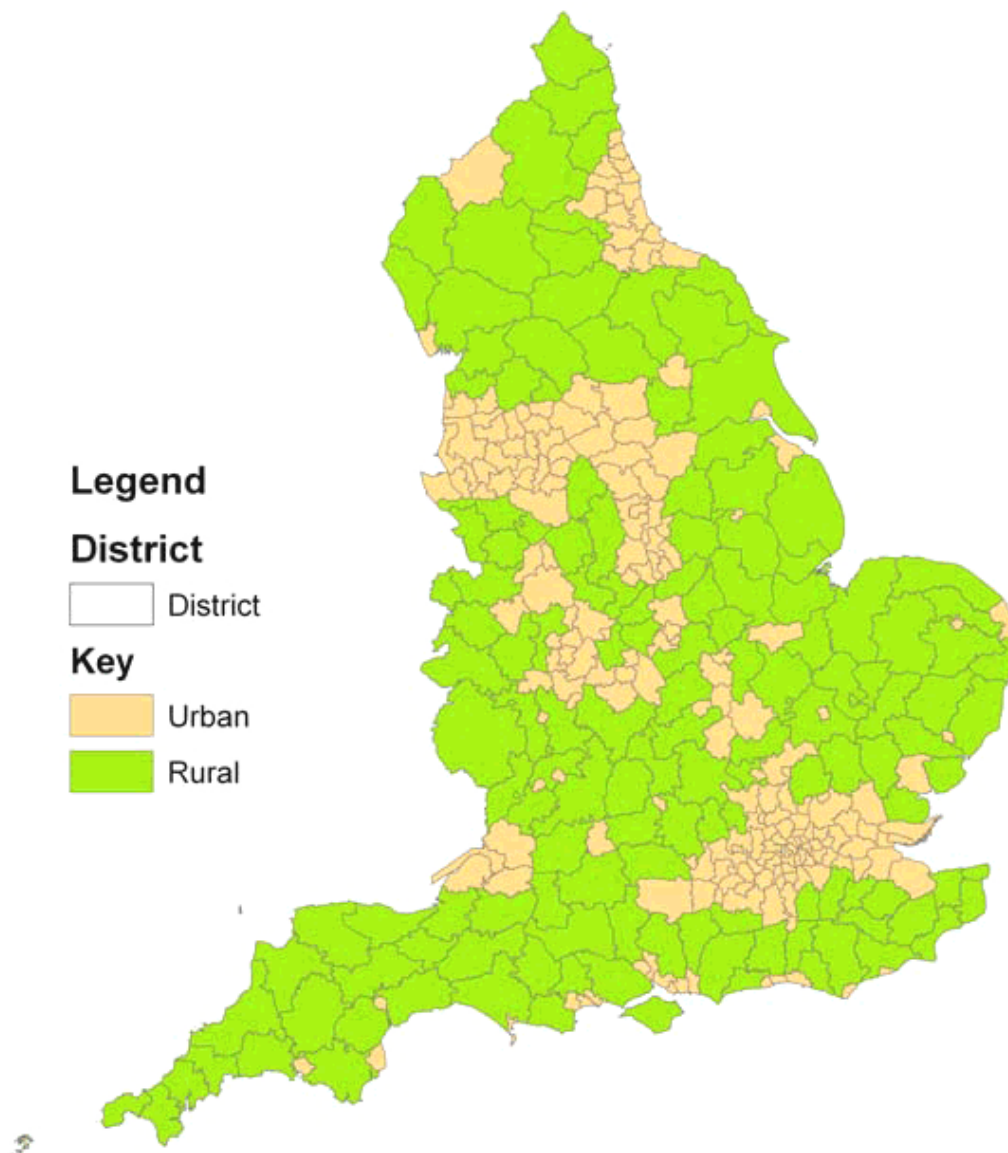
2.7 Even so, the validation exercise conducted for the new rural definition indicated that there was a widespread requirement for a classification of LADs based upon the new rural definition. Two reasons were generally cited in support of such a classification: the need for a means of presenting and analysing the large amount of administrative and other data that were only available at local authority level and the need to identify LADs (and parts of LADs) with particular rural problems.

2.8 In August 2005, the Minister of State for Rural Affairs, Mr Alun Michael, therefore asked the Rural Evidence Research Centre to explore ways in which a classification of LADs might be constructed, including identifying rural areas within LADs which would otherwise be considered to be 'urban'.

3 The Rural Definition Old and New

3.1 Prior to the release of the new definition of rural areas in July 2005, the prevailing official definition of 'rural' was originally developed for research on rural regeneration carried out for the Rural Development Commission^{iv}. The Countryside Agency later merged into this definition elements from three other LAD-based definitions of 'rural'^v. This definition then formed the basis for the presentation of a wide range of information appearing in, for example, the Countryside Agency's State of the Countryside Reports and other government documents (Figure 1).

Figure 1 The Countryside Agency District Level Definition of 'Rural'.



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- 3.2 This definition, a simple rural/urban categorisation of LADs^{vi}, served a useful purpose as a broad identification of 'rural', to which many organisations could subscribe. However, as a practical data analysis tool, the definition suffered from several limitations. These were mainly associated with the fact that the underlying concepts and indicators of 'rural' appeared to combine a number of different criteria. It was therefore impossible on the evidence of the definition alone, to identify how a measure of interest (e.g. the age structure of the population), varied across different types of rural area.
- 3.3 In contrast, the new definition of rural areas offers a distinctly different, potentially more useful and more transparent approach to identifying LADs. On the one hand, it offers a single, clear, underlying concept for classification, namely, the range of settlement types found within an LAD. On the other hand, the numerical criteria for creating the groups within the classification can be clearly stated and presented as simple numbers, thus making it possible for policy makers, researchers and others to interpret their results against a known set of benchmarks within the classification.

A Caveat

- 3.4 Before moving on to a discussion of the approach adopted to identifying 'rural' LADs, a caveat is in order. It may be tempting to view a district level definition of 'rurality' as part of a continuous geographical hierarchy starting with Census Output Areas (COAs) and Wards, moving on to LADs and perhaps to even wider geographic areas. We do not recommend this view, not only because different principles and criteria apply to classifying LADs according to settlement pattern, compared with those existing for smaller areas, but also because very different 'rural' population totals are derived from a district level of aggregation compared to one based upon smaller areas^{vii}.
- 3.5 In formal usage it is suggested that the term 'rural definition' should be reserved for the area covered by the 'rural' COAs and the national rural population is then derived as the sum of the populations of the 'rural' COAs. To avoid confusion, reference to the identification of LADs according to their 'rurality' might therefore be better referred to as a 'classification' rather than a 'definition' to distinguish it from the rural definition at COA level.

4 The Principles Behind the Classification

4.1 Three broad sets of principles have guided the construction of the classification described here. They are concerned with the main purposes for which an LAD level classification is constructed, the embedding of the classification within the wider national settlement pattern and the numerical criteria determining the allocation of LADs to one grouping in the classification or another.

(a) The Purpose of the Classification

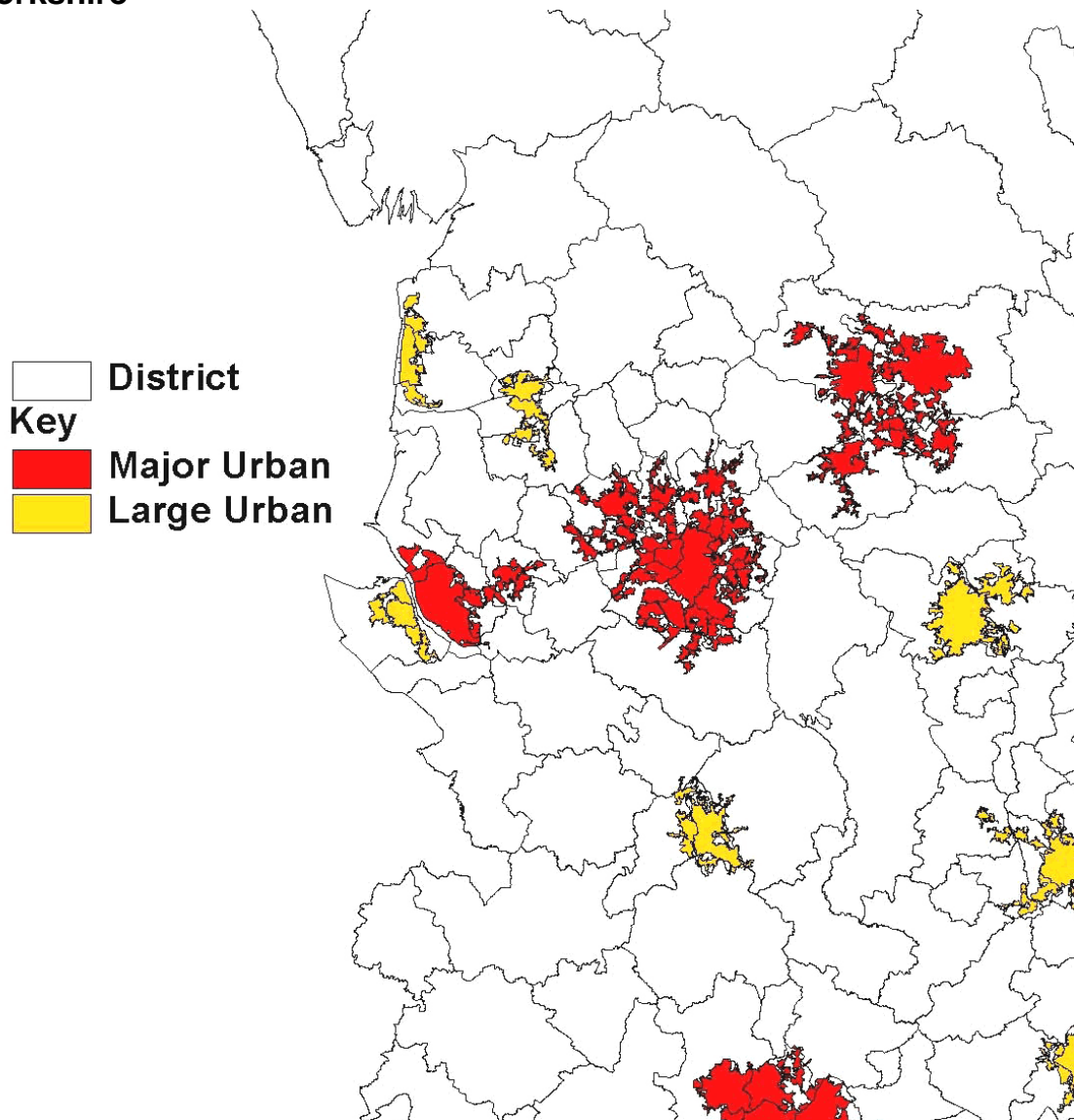
4.2 The purposes that an LAD classification is to serve flow mainly from the fact that a definition of 'rural' now exists in its 'pure' form (i.e. focuses only on settlement and sparsity) in the existing categorisation of Census Output Areas and other sub-LAD units. Given this, an LAD classification is seen primarily as a means of presenting and comparing data that do not exist at the lower levels. Where the relevant small area data exist the new rural definition should be used for analytical purposes. The classification proposed here is Defra's recommended grouping of LADs from a rural perspective and the vehicle for a consistent approach to summarising, communicating and interpreting data at this particular level of aggregation.

(b) The National Settlement Pattern

4.3 Consideration is also given to the strategic settlement pattern of England as represented and perceived within the geographic scale represented by the 'mesh' of LAD boundaries. Viewed in this way, there is at one end of the 'urban/rural' spectrum, a group of districts related to the 23 largest urban areas in the country. These consist of the six former metropolitan areas with over 750,000 population and the 17 large urban areas with between 250,000 and 750,000 population. These are listed in Annex 1 whilst the pattern of LADs and large/medium sized urban areas in Lancashire and West Yorkshire are shown in Figure 2.

4.4 A feature of the LADs comprising major and large urban areas is that some lie *entirely* within the built-up area and some *combine* urban areas with (often extensive) areas of rural settlement in open country. Because of their accessibility to the largest commercial and retail centres and the regime of tight planning constraint that often covers the open countryside of such LADs, we expect the rural settlements here to have aspects of their physical, social and economic structure that are identifiably different from settlements in rural areas further away from the main urban centres. A

Figure 2: Major and Large Urban Areas in Lancashire and West Yorkshire



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4.5 At the other end of the national settlement hierarchy are those LADs which include many rural areas of England. Very broadly, these are areas in which small towns and village settlements predominate. They comprise sizeable areas of the South West and East Anglia, Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland. The new definition of rural areas permits a classification of districts in such areas based upon the degree or 'intensity' of rurality measured as the number and proportions of people in census areas with settlements defined as 'rural' from a (residential) land use point of view.

- 4.6 Outside of these two broad types of area, the pattern of settlement as represented at district level is more varied. It ranges from LADs which comprise the entire or majority part of urban areas with between 100,000 and 250,000 population (e.g. Plymouth, the Medway Towns, Cambridge, Peterborough, Blackburn/Darwen and Doncaster Urban Areas), to those with towns with between 40,000 and up to 100,000 population combined with rural settlement and those with a number of smaller urban areas (i.e. over 10,000 population) and a sizeable (though perhaps not a majority), population in rural towns, villages and isolated settlements.
- 4.7 LADs relating to these types of area are, in a sense, the *pivotal* element of the classification described here. Some, such as many Unitary Authorities, are overwhelmingly 'urban' in population terms. Others are a mix of different proportions of 'urban' and 'rural' and it is a matter of judgement aided by a transparent assessment of the data and the relevance of settlement pattern to service delivery issues as to where the divide falls. Nomenclature is also an issue.

(c) The Numerical Criteria

- 4.8 As indicated above, the classification is based upon the population of LADs found within different types of settlement (Annex 2 gives a list of these data). In most decisions on grouping the LADs both *absolute* (number) and *relative* (percentage) values for the population of settlements within LADs are used. The reasons for adopting this approach lie in the nature of the structure of local government as well as in the aims of the classification exercise itself.
- 4.9 On average, 'urban' LADs are significantly larger in population terms than are 'rural' LADs. In the case of urban LADS with some population in rural settlements, therefore, a percentage figure for the rural population will tend to be small but it might, in some case, represent a significantly large number of people. Since the aim here is to provide a classification that is broadly useful in terms of rural service delivery the use of absolute numbers is seen (again in general terms), as a guide to the overall level of such provision. Percentage values on the other hand denote the intensity of rurality of one district compared with another, relative to total population size^{viii}.
- 4.10 The precise criteria for allocating LADs to classes were derived from an examination of the numerical evidence of the population in rural settlements including the larger market towns (see paragraphs 5.1-5.4 below). This comprised a detailed assessment of the statistical distribution of the data, and experimentation of ways of dividing the distribution. In the case of the 'Mixed Urban' and 'Mixed Rural'

groupings, for example, quintile and quartile 'cut-offs' in relation to the number and percentage population 'rural' were initially explored but the simpler criterion of relation to the national average 'rural' population on *both* the absolute and proportionate numbers was finally accepted.

- 4.11 The important point, however, is not whether one number is, in some sense 'better' than the other (all are, in essence, a matter of judgement), but that the criteria are openly arrived at, clearly stated and transparently applied and that the final classification commands support for the purposes for which it has been constructed.

5 The Larger Market Towns

- 5.1 A further preliminary consideration concerns those urban areas with more than 10,000 population that might also be legitimately considered to be part of what defines the 'rurality' of an LAD. The need to consider such places arises because the remit for the new rural definition specified that it should include urban areas below 10,000 population – the dividing line between 'urban' and 'rural' that has been in place since 1981^{ix}.
- 5.2 In 2001 there were 281 urban areas in England with between 10,000 and 30,000 population, with a total population of 4.87 million^x. Despite the fact that such towns are deemed 'urban' terms of population size, to exclude them from the calculation of rurality at district level would underestimate the level (and nature) of 'rurality' within districts, given the critical economic, social and cultural role many of these towns play within the surrounding rural locality. Identifying larger rural towns necessarily involves a departure from the spirit of the new rural definition to include a measure of the 'function' of settlements.
- 5.3 The approach taken to identifying the larger rural towns is similar to that adopted in the Countryside Agency report^{xi}. It selects those places with a minimum number of 'higher level' services (i.e. relative to the size of town) and for which the numerical indications are that it serves a population significantly larger than the urban area itself. In order to be included in the rural population of an LAD an urban area with between 10,000 and 30,000 had to have at least 3 shops, at least 1 bank or 1 solicitor, at least 1 General Practitioner, at least 3.5 percent of its addresses are 'non residential' (i.e. commercial), in nature, and at least 1.3 shops per 1000 population.
- 5.4 Applying these criteria produces 207 larger 'rural' towns with a total population of 3.72 million). Further details on the application of the criteria and the impact of incorporating larger rural towns in an LAD level definition are given in Annex 3.

6 The Process of Classification

6.1 The first step in the process of classification is to identify the rural and national settlement types within which each COA in England falls, along with its allocation to an LAD. The rural data were derived from the definition of rural areas of England and Wales as it appears in the spreadsheets on the ONS website^{xii}. The national settlement data (i.e. for 'major' and 'large' urban areas and for the 'larger market towns' identified under our own rules), were derived from the ONS 'look up' table associated with the 2001 urban areas data set^{xiii}.

6.2 COAs *not* part of the rural definition were therefore 'flagged' as falling uniquely into one of the following categories:

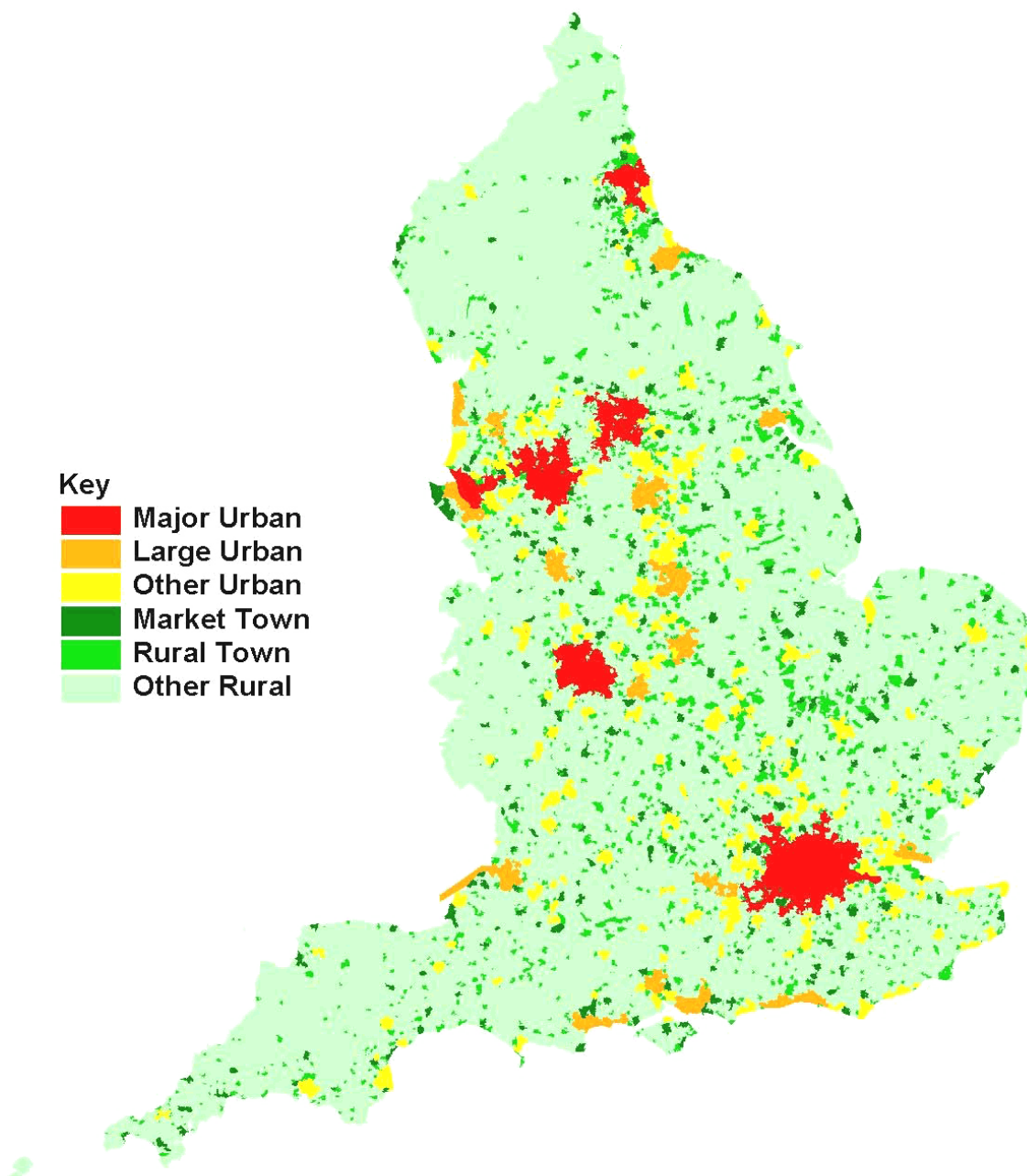
- a 'major' urban area (an urban area with more than 750,000 population in 2001),
- a 'large' urban area (an urban area with between 250,000 and 750,000 population in 2001),
- a 'larger market town' (an urban area with between 10,000 and 30,000 population in 2001 meeting service availability criteria for a 'hub' market town).

6.3 The rural settlement morphology 'flags' were derived from the rural area definition as follows:

- 'other' urban area (an urban area over 10,000 population not in any of the three previous categories),
- 'rural town and fringe',
- 'village', and
- 'dispersed settlement'^{xiv}.

6.4 A map derived from these COA categories is shown as Figure 3.

Figure 3: The COA Categories for the District Classification



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6.5 Data in these categories were then aggregated for all LADs, to produce the information on which the classification is based. A list of these data is given in Annex 1. The classification process then consisted of four main steps carried out in the following order:

Step 1

The identification of LADs which have *predominantly* rural populations in that they have over 50 percent of their population living in COAs classified as 'rural' under the new definition and including the population of the larger market towns.

Step 2

The identification of LADs which are entirely within or which contain a significant amount of population in one of the 6 'major' urban areas (i.e. those with over 750,000 population) and the 17 'large' urban areas (i.e. those with between 250,000 and 750,000). Note: there were no LADs with population in more than one of these classes of settlement.

Step 3

This leaves a group of LADs which are either entirely urban because their boundaries tightly circumscribe or are entirely within, an urbanized area (e.g. Plymouth, Derby, Cambridge), or which to different degrees have mixed 'urban and rural' populations. This group is then divided according to whether the component LADs have a significant number or proportion of their population in rural settlements (including larger market towns).

Step 4

This step consists of the identification of the *amount* of rural population *within* districts classified as 'Major Urban', 'Large Urban' and 'Other Urban' and the *type* of settlement within districts classified overall as 'Significant Rural' or with a predominantly rural population.

7 The Criteria of Classification

- 7.1 The numerical criteria for identifying groups within the classification were derived from detailed scrutiny of the statistical distributions of the absolute and proportionate information on populations within COA coded settlement types. Cut-off points were in most cases chosen on the basis of evidence (statistical and visual) of a 'natural break' in the rank ordered histogram of the relevant distribution.
- 7.2 For example, there are 95 LADs with at least some resident population within a major urban area and three statistical/visual 'break points' in the distribution of population at 338,000, 181,000 and 101,000. Given the shape of the overall distribution the 101,000 'break point' was chosen and this was rounded for simplicity and memorability to 100,000. Similar procedures were applied to derive the 'break points' in other distributions. Further details are given in Annex 4.
- 7.3 The criteria (with associated nomenclature), for identifying groups of LADs were derived from this procedure as follows:

Rural 80 LADs

A district has at least 80 percent of its population in rural settlements (including urban areas with between 10,000 and 30,000 population regarded for this exercise as 'larger market towns'). There are 73 LADs in this group.

Rural 50 LADs

A district must have at least 50 percent but less than 80 percent of its population in rural settlements (including urban areas with between 10,000 and 30,000 population regarded for this exercise as 'larger market towns'). There are 52 LADs in this group.

Major Urban LADs

An LAD is classified as 'Major Urban' if it has a minimum of 100,000 people *or* a minimum of 50 percent of its total population resident within a major urban area (i.e., an urban area with at least 750,000 population). There are 76 LADs in this group.

Large Urban LADs

An LAD is classified as 'Large Urban' if it has a minimum of 50,000 people *or* a minimum of 50 percent of its total population resident within a large urban area (i.e., an urban area with between 250,000 and 750,000 population). There are 45 LADs in this group.

The Remaining LADs

- 7.4 The application of these criteria leaves 108 LADs to be classified. All have less than 50 percent rural population and hence under a simple 'majority rule' criterion could be classified as 'urban'. However, many LADs in this group have substantial rural populations. For example, 29 have more than 40,000 rural inhabitants and a further 9 have between 30 and 40,000. In terms of, say, rural service delivery these can be seen as substantial numbers which justifies dividing this group further.
- 7.5 The aim is to divide this group in such a way that it identifies those LADs in which there is a significant absolute number or, given that many more rural LADs have smaller total populations than average, a significant proportion of their population in rural settlements. Examination of the overall statistical distribution of rural numbers and proportions and of the associated descriptive statistics indicated that the national mean number of rural inhabitants within LADs (37,360) and the (weighted) national percentage of rural inhabitants within LADs (26.8 percent) would be appropriate criteria for a division of this group.
- 7.6 The criteria and nomenclature for creating these groups are as follows:

Significant Rural LADs

LADs with more than 37,000 people *or* more than 26 percent but less than 50 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

Other Urban LADs

LADs with fewer than 37,000 people *and* less than 26 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

8 The Rural Classification of LADs

8.1 The six-fold grouping of LADs formed by applying the processes and criteria just described, constitute the Defra recommended classification of LADs for data presentation and rural analysis purposes appropriate to this geographical and administrative level of aggregation. The structure of the classification at this stage of the process is shown in Figure 4 and its geography is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: The Structure of the Rural Classification

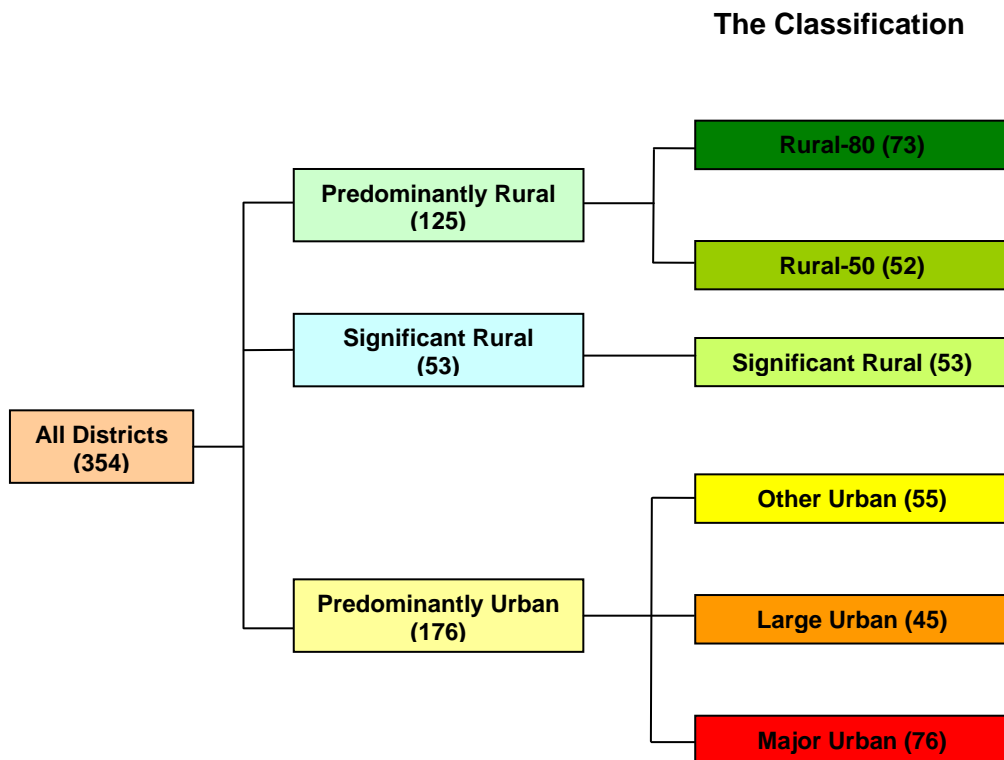
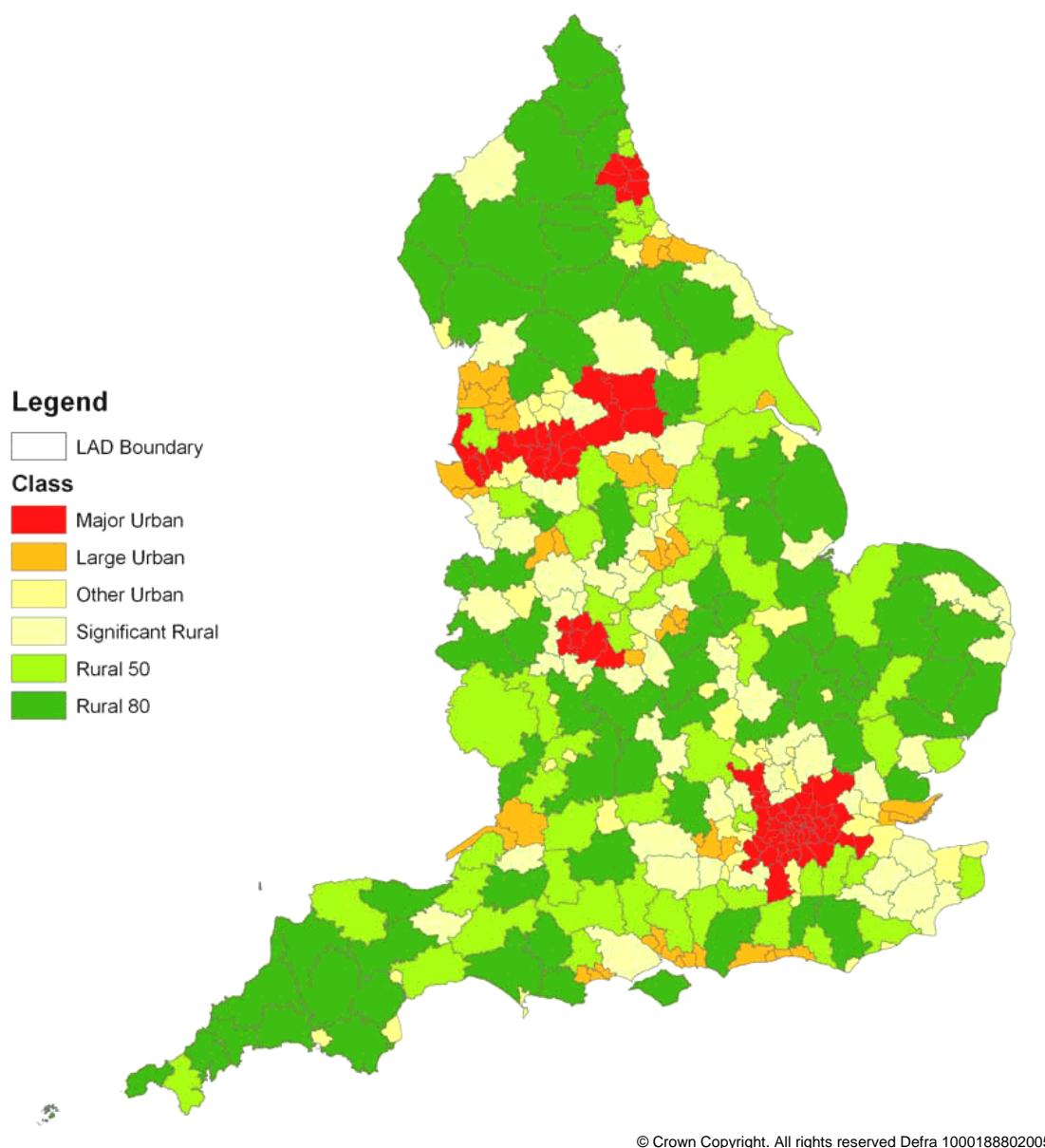


Figure 5 : The Geography of the Rural Classification



8.2 It is emphasised that the ‘core’ of the classification is the six-fold grouping of LADs on the right of Figure 4 and it is this that constitutes the main reporting/analysis element of the classification. Even so, the ‘Level 1’ element of the grouping structure, splitting the six-fold classification into Predominantly Urban, Significant Rural and Predominantly Rural as illustrated in Figure 4, may serve as a strategic representation of the LAD-based settlement structure of England. However, there is considerable variation in terms of amounts and types of ‘urban/rural settlement within the ‘Other Urban and Mixed Urban/Rural’ grouping.

8.3 Some key characteristics of each group of LADs in the core classification are as follows:

Class 1: Major Urban LADs

- the LADs in this group relate to the 6 continuously urbanized areas of England with over 750,000 population,
- the 76 LADs in this group have a total population of 17.2 million or just under 35 percent of the population of England,
- 62 of the LADs in this group have more than 100,000 people living in one of the six major built up areas of England,
- 72 of the LADs in this group have more than 50 percent of their population within one of the six major built up areas of England,
- 68 of the LADs in this group have more than 70 percent of their population within one of the six major built up areas of England,
- within this group 8 LADs have more than 40,000 population in rural settlements namely Wakefield, Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees (all West Riding Urban Area), Dacorum, Epping Forest (Greater London Urban Area), Wigan (Greater Manchester Urban Area) and St Helens (Liverpool Urban Area)^{xv}, and
- within this group, 6 LADs have more than 20 percent of their population in rural settlements i.e. Mole Valley, Dacorum, Epping Forest (Greater London Urban Area), Wakefield (West Riding Urban Area), Chester le Street (Tyneside Urban Area) and St. Helens (Liverpool Urban Area).

Class 2: Large Urban LADs

- the LADs in this group relate to the 17 continuously urbanized areas with between 250,000 and 750,000 population,
- there are 45 LADs in this group with a total population of 7.3 million or 14.8 percent of the England total,
- 43 LADs in this group have more than 50,000 residents within a large urban area,
- 45 LADs in this group have more than 50 percent of their population within a large urban area,
- 34 LADs in this group have more than 75 percent of their population within a large urban area,

- 13 LADs in the group have a rural population of at least 20,000, for example, Havant (Portsmouth Urban Area), South Gloucestershire (Bristol Urban Area), Wirral (Birkenhead Urban Area), Stockton-on-Tees (Tees-side Urban Area) and Rotherham (Sheffield Urban Area), whilst
- 5 districts have more than 25 percent of their population in rural settlements namely Redcar and Cleveland (Tees-side Urban Area), Fylde (Blackpool Urban Area), Chorley (Preston Urban Area), Eastleigh (Southampton Urban Area), Wyre (Blackpool Urban Area) and Ellesmere Port (Birkenhead Urban Area).

Class 3: Other Urban LADs

- the LADs in this group have fewer than 37,000 people and less than 26 percent of their population in rural settlements (including larger market towns)
- the 55 LADs in this group have a total population of 6.7 million or 13.7 percent of the England total,
- LADs in this group range in size from Medway, Plymouth, Derby and Milton Keynes with over 200,000 population, to Rossendale, Weymouth and Portland and Corby with under 70,000 population,
- 31 LADs in this group have 90 percent or more urban population and all have more than 60 percent urban population,
- the map (Figure 5) suggests three broad types of LADs that make up this group:
 - groups of LADs on the fringes of major urban areas (e.g. Greater Manchester and Greater London),
 - free-standing, territorially extensive LADs (e.g. Darlington, Canterbury, Peterborough and York), and
 - free-standing but ‘tightly bounded’ LADs (e.g. Exeter, Cambridge, Lichfield and Lincoln),
- there are 6 LADs in this group with more than 25,000 people living in rural settlements, namely Warrington, York, South Bedfordshire, Medway, Telford and Wrekin and Canterbury, and

- there are 4 LADs with more than 20 percent of their population in rural settlements, namely, as 'rural' namely South Bedfordshire, Surrey Heath, Weymouth and Portland and Barrow-in-Furness.

Class 4: Significant Rural

- the LADs in this group have more than 37,000 people or more than 26 percent of their population in rural settlements (including larger market towns),
- there are 53 LADs in this group with a total population of 6.4 million or 13.1 percent of the total population,
- the LADs in this group range in population size from Doncaster (287,000), Barnsley (218,000) and Calderdale (192,000), to Bolsover (71,700), Brentwood (68,400) and Boston (55,700)
- the geography of this group is quite distinctive (Figure 5)
 - the majority of LADs in this group lie on the fringes of, or between, major/large urban areas such as Greater London, the West Riding and the West Midlands,
 - several LADs reflect a particular rural settlement pattern where a single urban settlement dominates an extensive area of villages and scattered dwellings e.g. Carlisle, Shrewsbury and Atcham and Ashford or where two or more urban settlements dominate a wider rural area (e.g. New Forest)
- there are 5 LADs in this group with over 60,000 people in rural settlements namely New Forest, Bath and North East Somerset, Harrogate, West Berkshire and Swale, and
- 7 LADs have more than 45 percent of their population living in rural settlements namely Swale, Broadland, Bolsover, Chiltern, New Forest, Bath and North East Somerset and Scarborough.

Class 5: Rural-50

- the LADs in this group have between 50 and 80 percent of their populations in rural settlements,
- there are 52 LADs in the group with a total population of 5.8 million or 11.7 percent of the total population,

- the largest LAD in the group by some way is East Riding (314,000), the next largest are North Somerset (188,500), Herefordshire (175,000) and Aylesbury Vale (166,000); there are three districts with less than 70,000 population, namely, North Warwickshire, South Buckinghamshire, and Wansbeck,
- there are 4 LADs with more than 100,000 people in rural settlements, namely East Riding of Yorkshire, County of Herefordshire, South Somerset and North Somerset), and 2 LADs with less than 40,000 people in rural settlements, namely, Malvern Hills and South Buckinghamshire,
- amongst the LADs in this group the range of the percentage of population in rural settlements is from North Warwickshire and Sedgefield with just over 76 percent to Stroud and Durham with 51 percent.

Class 6: Rural- 80

- the LADs in this group have over 80 percent of their population living in rural settlements,
- there are 73 LADs in the group with a combined population of 5.73 million or 11.7 percent of the total population
- the LADs in this group tend to be noticeably smaller in population than those in the 'Rural-50' group, the largest being Huntingdonshire with 157,000 people, the smallest being Teesdale with under 24,500^{xvi},
- the geography of this group (Figure 5) suggests there are three large 'clumps' of Rural-80 LADs in the South West, East Anglia/Lincolnshire and Cumbria/Northumberland/North Yorkshire, with a further a band of such LADs stretching through Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire
- there are 14 LADs with more than 100,000 people in rural settlements and 8 with less than 40,000 (including the Isles of Scilly),
- there are 54 LADs with over 95 percent of their population in rural settlements.

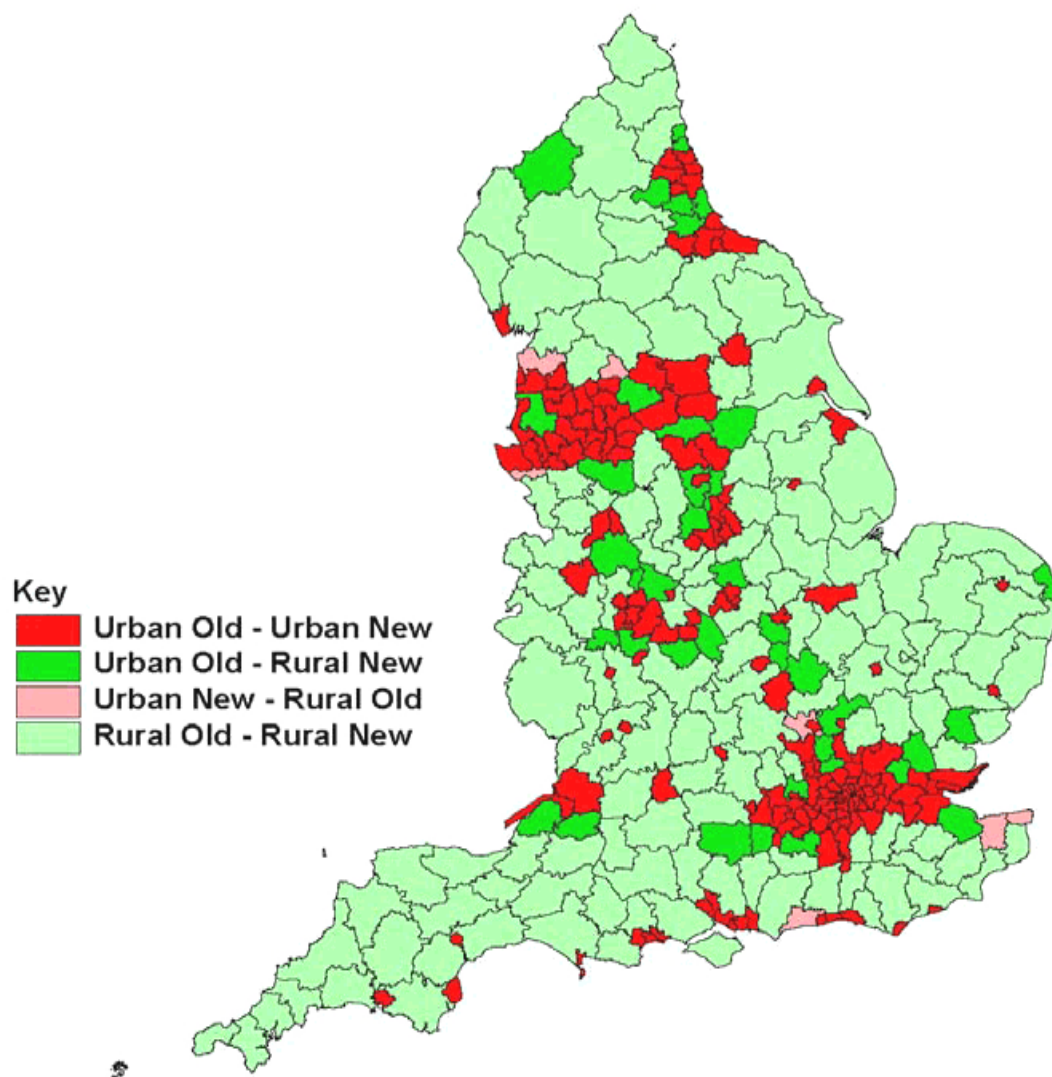
9 A Comparison with the Previous Definition

9.1 A very crude comparison between the old district-level definition of 'rural' and the new classification of LADs by 'rural settlement' can be made by grouping the latter into a dichotomy as groups 1, 2 and 3 (urban) versus groups 4, 5 and 6 (rural). At this level we would expect a good deal of 'congruence' between the two classifications because underlying both, although explicitly expressed in the old definition, is a notion of the population density of LADs. The degree of 'congruence' between the two classifications is shown in Table 1. The congruencies and differences between the two groupings are also shown in map form as Figure 6. Note that this dichotomous split is not recommended for the purposes of analysis, where the three groups Predominantly Urban, Significant Rural and Predominantly Rural should be used.

Table 1 The Congruence of the New and Current Classifications

Old	New	Number	Percent
Urban	Urban	169	47.7
Rural	Urban	7	2.0
Rural	Rural	138	39.0
Urban	Rural	40	11.3
Total		354	100.0

Figure 6: A Comparison Between the Old Definition and the New Classification



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9.2 The number of districts classified in the same way in the two approaches is 307/354 (86 percent). At the crude, dichotomous, level, seven districts switch from 'rural' (old) to 'urban' (new) and 40 switch from 'urban' (old) to 'rural' (new). Amongst the LADs switching from 'rural to 'urban', three (Adur, Ellesmere Port and Neston and Wyre), are classified as 'Large Urban Areas', whilst four (Canterbury, Pendle, South Bedfordshire and Thanet) are classified now as 'Other Urban'.

9.3 Of the 40 LADs switching from 'urban' to 'rural' under the new classification, 29 are in the Significant Rural category, 10 are in the Rural-50 category and one is in the Rural-80 category. Most of these 40 LADs are on the fringes of major urban areas, where complex patterns of built up land use are interspersed with sizeable tracts of open country with rural settlements with, in aggregate, sizeable

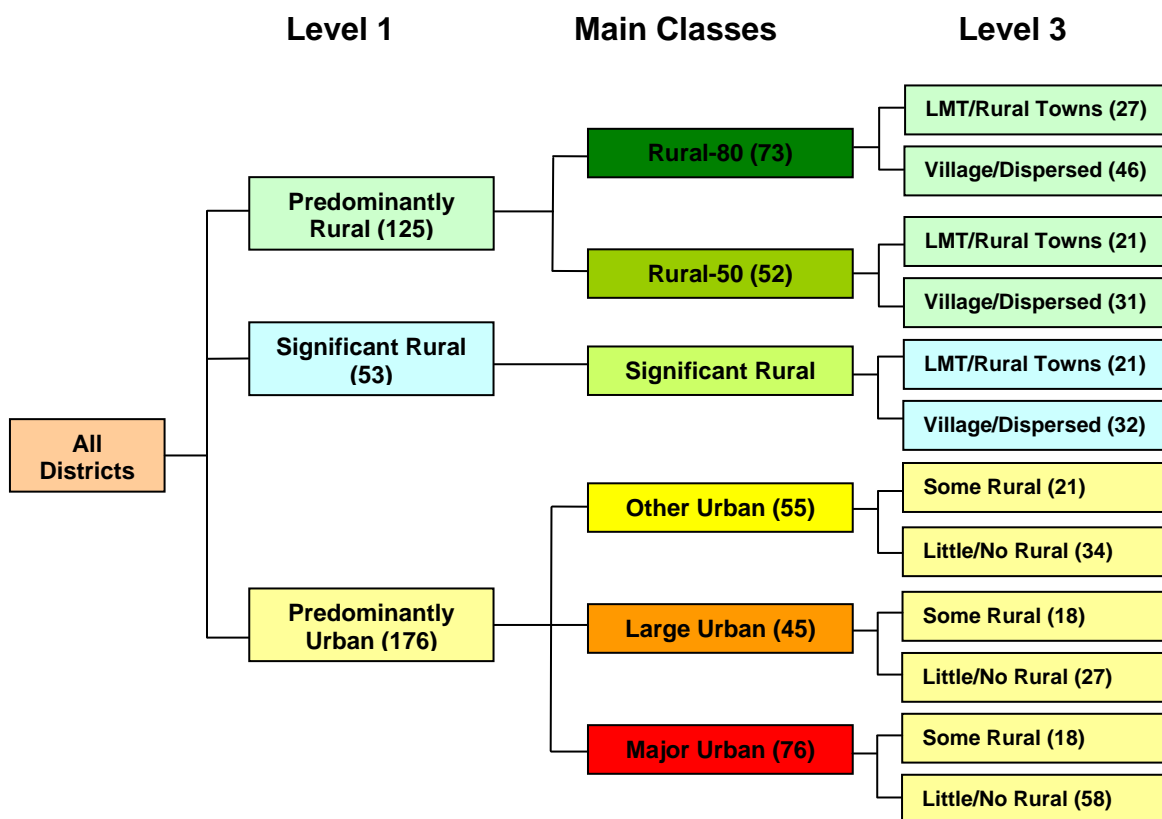
populations (Figure 6). However, a number are LADs with a single, large (e.g. over 50,000 population) urban area surrounded by tracts of open country with a few small towns, villages/hamlets and scattered dwellings. Basingstoke and Deane, Carlisle, Colchester and Lichfield fall into this category, and can be identified as having a 'significant' level of rural population because the new definition has clearer and more definitive criteria than the old.

- 9.4 The full list of LADs switching between the urban/rural categories of the old definition and the 'predominantly/significant' rural and urban categories of the new classification are given in Annex 5.

10 A Further Division of the Main Classification

- 10.1 The following section gives a more detailed analysis of the Classification, based on its relationship with the new rural definition (discussed in section 3).
- 10.2 One of the advantages of the fact that the new rural definition focuses on a single dimension of rurality (i.e. settlement), is that it permits a further transparent division of each of the six groups of LADs in the main classification. Such a division is given here as an indication of additional valuable information that can be derived from the new definition and does not form part of the recommended classification of LADs.
- 10.3 The approach divides each of the six main classes into two groups, on different criteria depending on whether we are dealing with the broad 'predominantly urban' classes (1, 2 and 3) or the 'significant rural' (4) and 'predominantly rural' classes (5 and 6) in the main classification. The reason for this lies in the numbers of inhabitants of rural settlement involved in either grouping which determine the amount of detail that can be usefully derived from the data.
- 10.4 In the case of the urban groups of the main classification, the division is made on the basis of the number of inhabitants in an LAD who live in *all* rural settlements. This might be interpreted as representing the 'baseload' of rural inhabitants to be served from the 'urban' core of the LAD. In the case of the rural groups in the main classification, the division is made on the basis of the number of inhabitants in different *types* of rural settlement, namely, Larger Market Towns/Rural Towns on the one hand and Villages/Dispersed Dwellings on the other. Focusing on the latter, this might be interpreted as reflecting the higher costs of serving more scattered rural populations.
- 10.5 The structure of the rural classification that emerges after applying the criteria is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The Structure of a Three Level Classification



10.6 As in the case of the main classification, the numerical criteria for identifying sub-groups have been derived from the distribution of the data within each of the six main groups. For the three urban groupings, we distinguish those LADs with ‘some’ rural population and those with ‘little or no’ rural population. The criteria here are as follows:

Major Urban: ‘some’ rural = more than 15,000 inhabitants in rural settlements (Chester-le-Street has 15,600, the next highest being Dartford with 10,600).

Large Urban: ‘some’ rural = more than 10,000 inhabitants in rural settlements (e.g. Arun has 10,200, the next highest being Sheffield with 9,400).

Other Urban: ‘some’ rural = more than 10,000 inhabitants in rural settlements (e.g. Rossendale has 10,100, the next highest being Hyndburn with 8,700).

10.7 In the case of the predominantly and significant rural classes of LADs, the criteria identify LADs with more than a minimum number (relative to the particular class) of people living in villages and dispersed settlements. These criteria are as follows:

Significant Rural: 'village/dispersed' = more than 15,000 inhabitants living in villages and dispersed settlements^{xvii} (e.g. South Staffordshire has 17,700 people in such settlements whilst Chiltern has 15,500),

Rural - 50: 'village/dispersed' = more than 23,000 inhabitants living in villages and dispersed settlements (e.g. West Lancashire has 23,200 people in such settlements, West Wiltshire has 20,800),

Rural - 80: 'village/dispersed' = more than 25,000 inhabitants living in villages and dispersed settlements (e.g. East Cambridgeshire has 25,400 people in such settlements, West Devon has 24,800).

10.8 Example maps produced from such classifications are shown as Figures 8 and 9^{xviii}. Note that on these maps the colour green identifies a Level 2 urban or rural *type*, i.e., Major/Large/Other Urban or Significant Rural/Rural 50/Rural 80. The gradations within green indicate a notable *total* rural population for each urban Level 2 class (i.e., in the case of Figure 8), or a notable population amount in *villages and dispersed settlements* for each rural Level 2 class (i.e., in the case of Figure 9).

Figure 8 LADs Classified as 'Urban' with a large Rural population Component

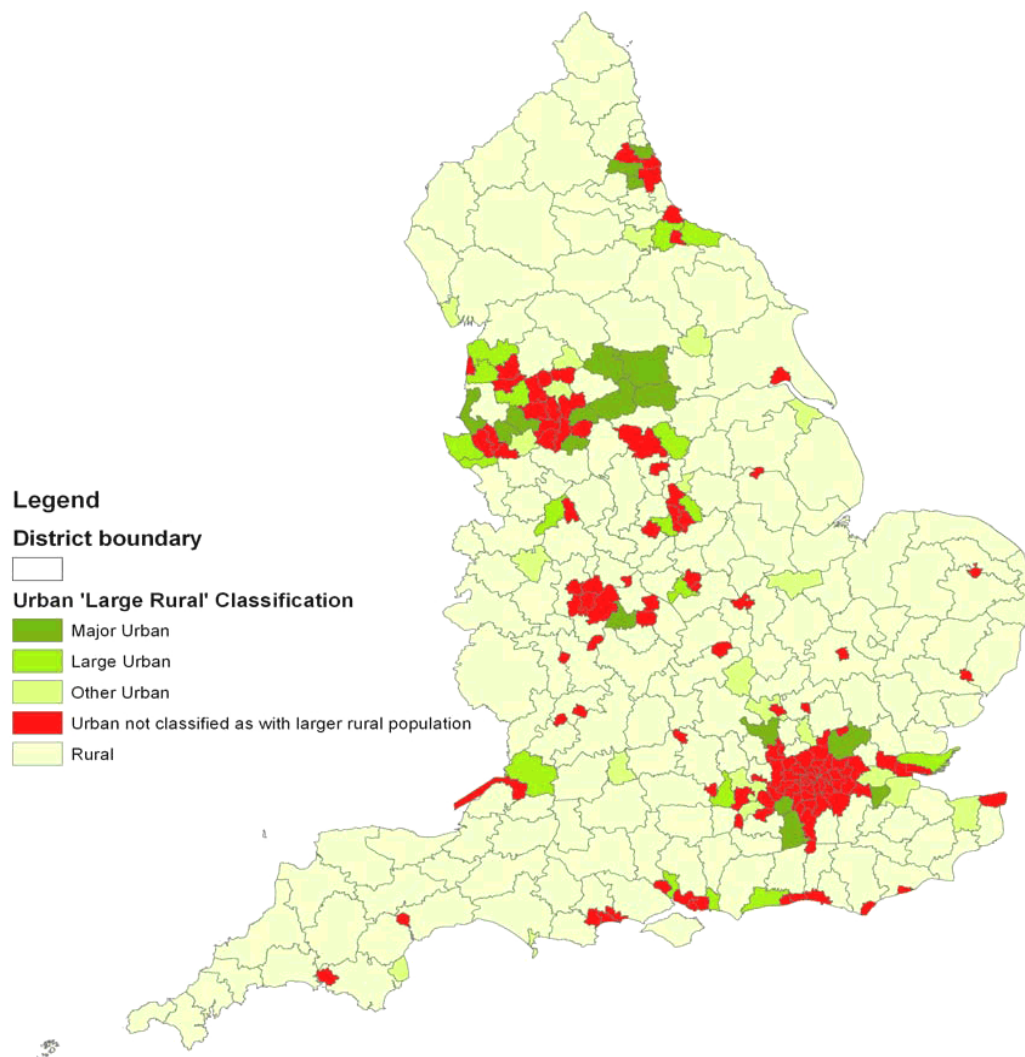
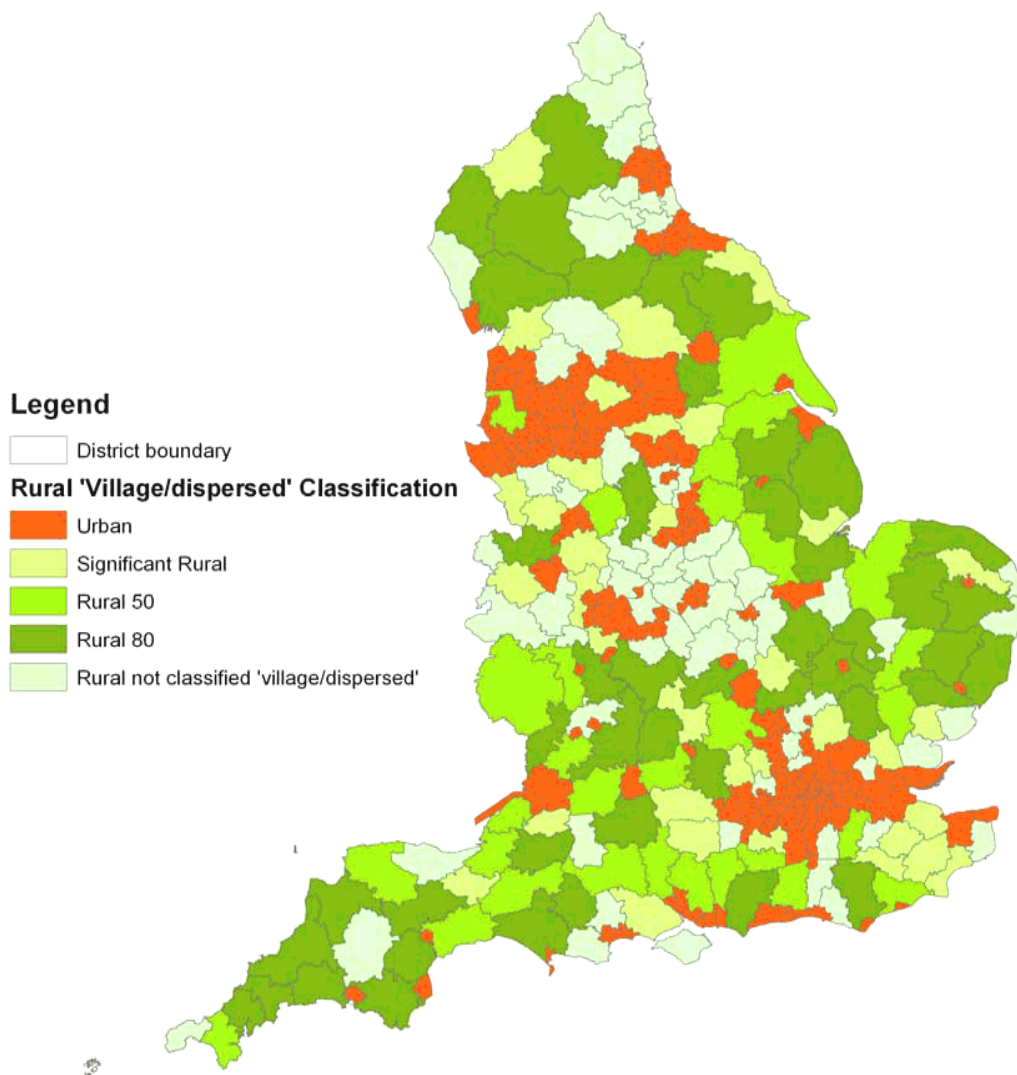


Figure 9 LADs Classified as 'Significant Rural' and 'Predominantly Rural' with a Large Village and Dispersed Population Component



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11 Conclusion

11.1 The work described here suggests that a plausible, useful and transparent classification of 'rural' LADs can be constructed based upon the new rural definition and derived from data at COA level. In addition, certain assumptions regarding the identification of larger market towns and the careful assessment of the numerical evidence produced have to be made.

11.2 Compared with the previous definition of rural areas at LAD level, the proposed classification has the following characteristics:

- a single, clearly identified underlying measure of rurality, namely the number and/or proportion of people in rural settlements,
- a differentiation of the urban element of the LAD classification into 'Major', 'Large Urban' and 'Other Urban' which creates the national settlement context for the rural element of the definition,
- a differentiation of the more rural element into 'Significant Rural' 'Rural 50' and 'Rural 80' derived from the number and percentage of people living in rural settlements,
- a differentiation of 'Major', 'Large' and 'Other Urban' LADs according to the number of people living in rural settlements of all kinds within those LADs, and
- a differentiation of significant and predominantly rural areas according to the number of people living in villages and isolated dwellings.

Annex 1: Major and Large Urban Areas Used in Classifying LADs

Major Urban Areas

Code	Name	Population 2001
K60200	Greater London Urban Area	8,278,251
G90700	West Midlands Urban Area	2,284,093
D90200	Greater Manchester Urban Area	2,244,931
D41300	West Yorkshire Urban Area	1,499,465
B81100	Tyneside	879,996
D84100	Liverpool Urban Area	816,216

Large Urban Areas

Code	Name	Population 2001
F90800	Nottingham Urban Area	666,358
E17000	Sheffield Urban Area	640,720
K24600	Bristol Urban Area	551,066
M83700	Brighton Urban Area	461,181
M61700	Portsmouth Urban Area	442,252
H07200	Leicester Urban Area	441,213
M54500	Bournemouth Urban Area	383,713
K56800	Reading/Wokingham	369,804
C35000	Teesside	365,323
E83200	The Potteries	362,403
H07000	Coventry/Bedworth	336,452
D82300	Birkenhead Urban Area	319,675
M66600	Southampton Urban Area	304,400
D70400	Kingston upon Hull	301,416
K80400	Southend Urban Area	269,415
D21500	Preston Urban Area	264,601
D20300	Blackpool Urban Area	261,088

Annex 2: Data From the Classification Process

For each of 354 districts the following data were assembled. The corresponding column name shown in the classification spreadsheet (LAClassification_datasetregions.xls) is given in brackets:

1. LAD name (Name)
2. Region (Region)
3. District code (District Code)
4. The total population of a district derived from summing the populations of Census Output Areas in that district derived from their allocation to major urban areas, large urban areas, urban areas over 10,000 population and the populations of Output Areas classified as 'rural' (Total Population).
5. The number of people in Census Output Areas defining a Major Urban Area (Major Urban Population).
6. The number of people in Census Output Areas defining a Large Urban Area (Large Urban Population).
7. The number of people in Census Output Areas defining Other Urban Areas (Other Urban Population).
8. The number of people in urban Output Areas (Total Urban Population (excluding Large Market Town population))
9. The number of people in Census Output Areas defining Larger Market Towns (Large Market Town Population).
10. The number of people in Census Output Areas classified as 'Rural Towns' in the new rural definition (Rural Town Population).
11. The number of people in Census Output Areas classified as Larger Market Towns and Rural Towns (Rural Town Population (including Large Market Town population)).
12. The number of people in Census Output Areas classified as 'Village' under the new definition (Village Population).
13. The number of people in Census Output Areas classified as 'Dispersed' under the new definition (Dispersed Population).
14. The number of people in Census Output Areas in all rural settlement categories under the new definition and in Larger Market Towns (Total Rural Population (including Large Market Town population)).
15. The percent of people in the district living in Census Output Areas classified as rural or Large Market Towns (Rural% (including Large Market Town population))
16. The main 6-fold LAD classification (Classification)

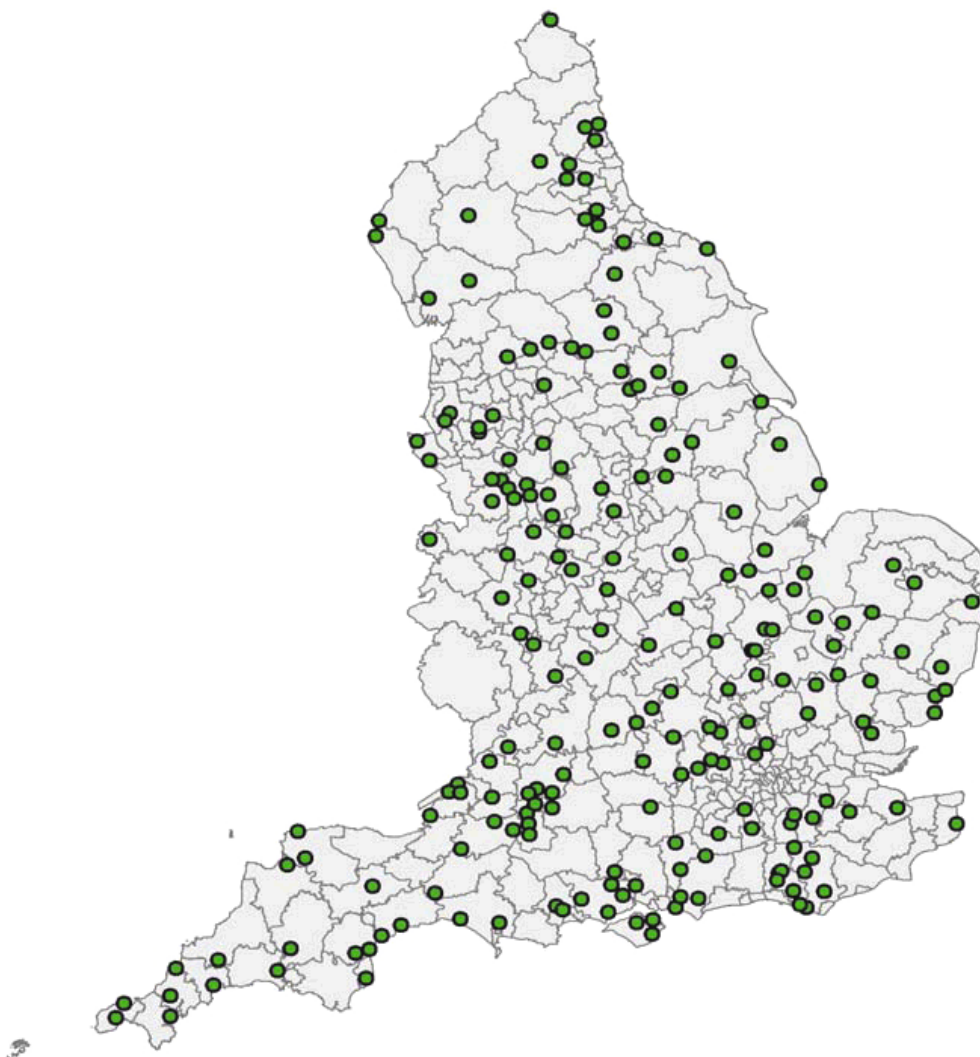
17. The numerical code for the main 6-fold LAD classification (Numerical classification)
18. The (Level 1) 3-fold LAD classification (Grouped Classification)

Annex 3: Identifying the Larger Market Towns

1. The need to identify the larger market towns arises because the new rural definition relates only to urban areas below 10,000 population, even though there are many places above this limit which serve a rural population. This is recognised, for example in the Rural White Paper 2000 where a population range of 2000 – 20,000 is used to delimit market towns.
2. To leave larger rural places out of a LAD classification based upon rurality will lead to an under-estimation of the aggregate rural population. For example, West Wiltshire District, has three such towns - Melksham, Westbury and Warminster – with a total population of 49,300 representing just over 40 percent of the LAD population.
3. If the need for adding the populations of the larger rural (market) towns is accepted, it becomes necessary to identify those places which appear, on the basis of the available evidence, to act as employment and service foci for a wider rural hinterland. Our approach to this task is via an updated and slightly modified approach to that used to identify ‘hub’ market towns in a recent report to the Countryside Agency. Following the example of the latter piece of research, we extend the upper limit on the population criterion to 30,000.
4. The criteria for assessing whether a town (urban area) was likely to serve a wider area were that it should have the following criteria:
 - at least 3 shops,
 - at least 1 bank or a solicitor,
 - at least 1 General Practitioner,
 - at least 3.5 percent of its addresses were ‘non residential’ i.e., commercial in nature, and
 - at least 1.3 shops per 1000 population.
5. Sensitivity testing of these criteria indicated that, when slightly relaxing the criterion for each measure separately, they identified a consistent set of larger (market) towns. However, it is recognised that different criteria might identify a different set of places. A more wide ranging exercise, perhaps incorporating travel to work data or a wider range of services could, in time, be employed. Given the relatively urgent need for a classification of rural LADs, however, the criteria set out above create an acceptable set of larger market towns.

6. There are 281 urban areas in England between 10,000 and 30,000 population with a total population of 4.87 million. Of these, 207 (total population 3.72 million), were identified on the above criteria as having 'larger rural town' functions. Map 1 shows the geographic distribution of such towns.

Map A1: Larger Rural (Market) Towns Over 10,000 Population



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The Impact of Excluding the Population of Larger Rural Towns from a Classification

7. The impact of excluding the larger market towns from a classification was assessed upon the 125 districts with more than 50 percent rural population. Subtracting the population of these towns produces 44 districts which would fall below a 50 percent criterion. These have a total population of 4.5 million. The districts involved are listed in Annex Table 1.

Annex Table 1: Rural Districts Changing from Rural to Urban on Exclusion of Larger Rural Towns.

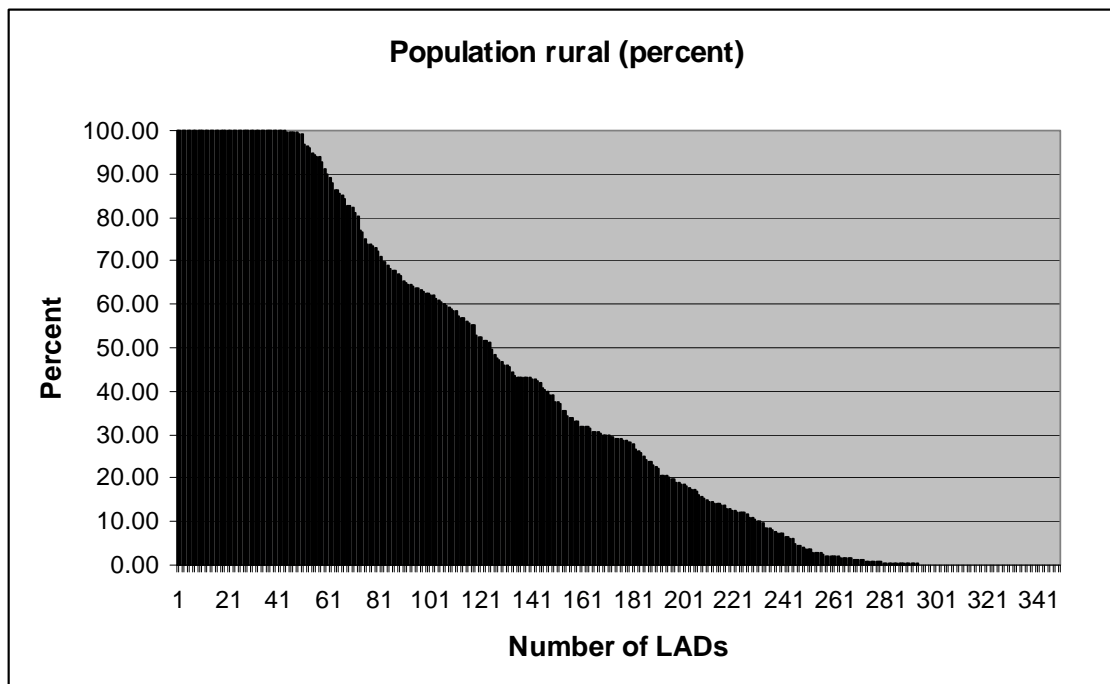
Name	Population	Percent Rural	
		With Larger Rural Towns	Without Larger Rural Towns
Forest Heath	55,452	100.0	48.1
Melton	47,939	100.0	46.7
Carrick	87,834	100.0	45.5
Derwentside	85,010	100.0	36.4
Mid Sussex	127,210	100.0	26.2
Congleton	90,488	96.7	19.2
Teignbridge	120,954	91.3	49.5
Wealden	139,931	87.9	48.7
Isle of Wight	132,863	85.6	36.3
Fenland	83,706	85.1	32.9
Suffolk Coastal	115,175	82.5	47.5
Sedgefield	87,365	76.4	27.2
Easington	93,923	74.9	42.8
East Dorset	83,632	73.3	23.7
Wansbeck	61,127	72.9	28.4
Sevenoaks	109,356	69.8	45.4
Waverley	115,568	68.9	41.9
Braintree	132,269	68.0	42.5
East Hampshire	109,155	67.8	41.1
South Kesteven	124,746	67.6	32.4
High Peak	89,574	66.8	43.5
Sedgemoor	105,907	65.4	45.1
Lewes	92,229	64.6	22.9
Staffordshire Moorlands	94,672	64.3	33.1
North Wiltshire	125,384	64.2	44.5
Bassetlaw	107,577	63.8	44.0
Vale Royal	122,163	63.4	39.2
Tonbridge and Malling	107,626	63.0	40.4
Dover	104,480	62.6	34.6
St. Edmundsbury	98,138	62.4	39.9
West Lancashire	108,468	62.2	40.5
Vale of White Horse	115,483	61.2	45.2
Tendring	138,615	60.9	34.5
West Wiltshire	117,992	59.7	29.2
Lichfield	93,171	59.3	28.8
South Bucks	62,051	58.5	30.0
North West Leicestershire	85,363	57.2	43.7
Kerrier	92,549	56.9	43.6
Blyth Valley	81,314	55.9	20.7
Tandridge	79,463	55.3	38.3
Tewkesbury	76,512	55.3	35.0
North Somerset	188,338	55.0	22.9
Test Valley	109,912	52.6	36.8
Stroud	107,814	51.6	39.2

Annex 4: The Rural LAD Classification Process and Criteria Selection (Ordered)

Step 1: Select LADs with Rural Population > 50 Percent

Rural population = sum of Census Output Area populations in large market towns, rural towns, villages and hamlets and dispersed settlements.

Diagram 1: The distribution of LADs by percentage rural



Step 2 Divide Rural at 80 Percent

Table 1: LADs at the Margins of the 80 percent Rural Criterion

Name	Rural	Percent
Tynedale	58,808	82.4
Mid Bedfordshire	121,024	81.0
North Kesteven	94,024	80.4
North Warwickshire	61,860	76.9
Sedgefield	87,206	76.4
Easington	93,993	74.9
North East Derbyshire	96,940	73.9
East Devon	125,520	73.8
East Dorset	83,786	73.3

Step 3 Identify Major Urban LADs

Diagram 2a The Number of People in Major Urban Areas by LAD

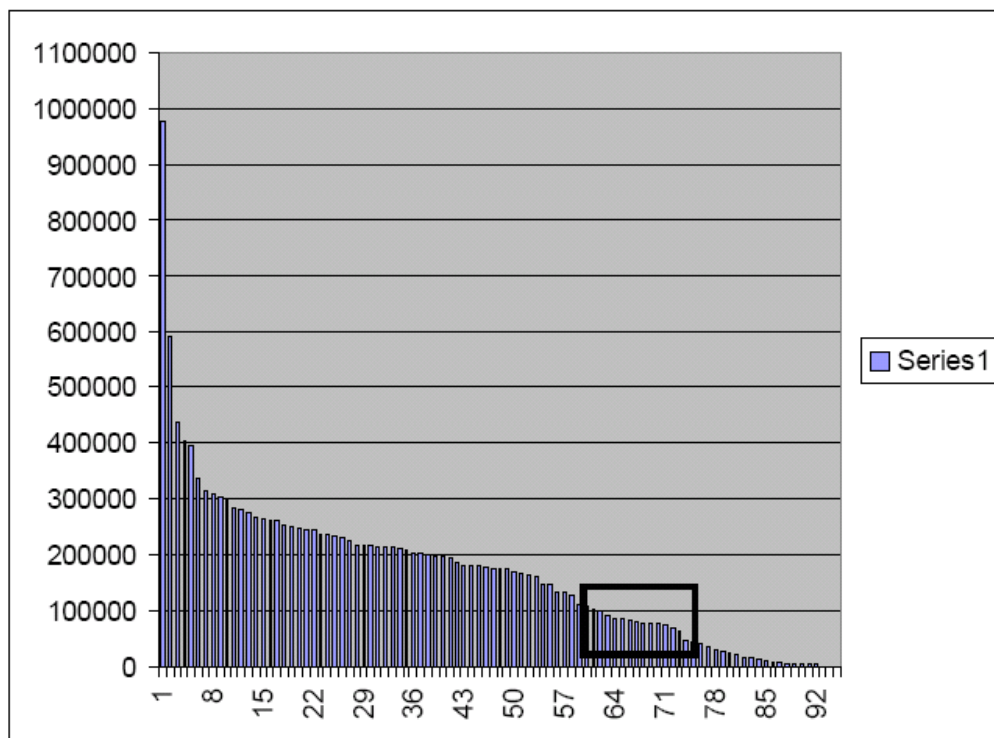
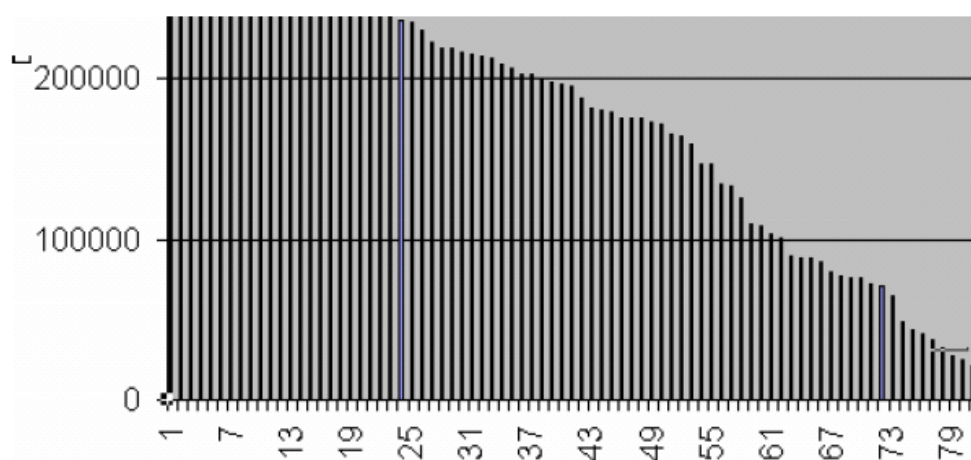


Diagram 2b Inset



Rank 1 (Birmingham)

Rank 62 (Sunderland) = 101,285

Rank 63 (Spelthorne) = 89,485

Mean: 168,411

Top Quartile (Redbridge) = 238,819

Total population of LADs > 100,000 = 14,769,213 = 92.3% of total in MUAs

62 LADs selected on the >100,000 rule

Table 2: LADs selected as 'Major Urban' on the >50% Criterion:

Name	Major Urban Population	Major Urban percent
Watford	79,693	100.00
City of London	7,199	100.00
Spelthorne	89,485	99.03
Broxbourne	85,249	97.98
Woking	87,792	97.87
Epsom and Ewell	64,594	96.20
Runnymede	72,397	92.63
Three Rivers	76,650	92.53
Dartford	70,659	82.31
Gravesham	76,426	79.96
Dacorum	88,563	64.33
Epping Forest	76,265	63.13
Mole Valley	41,349	51.48
Chester-le-Street	27,275	50.94

Step 4 Identify Large Urban LADs

Diagram 3a: Number of People in Large Urban Areas by LAD

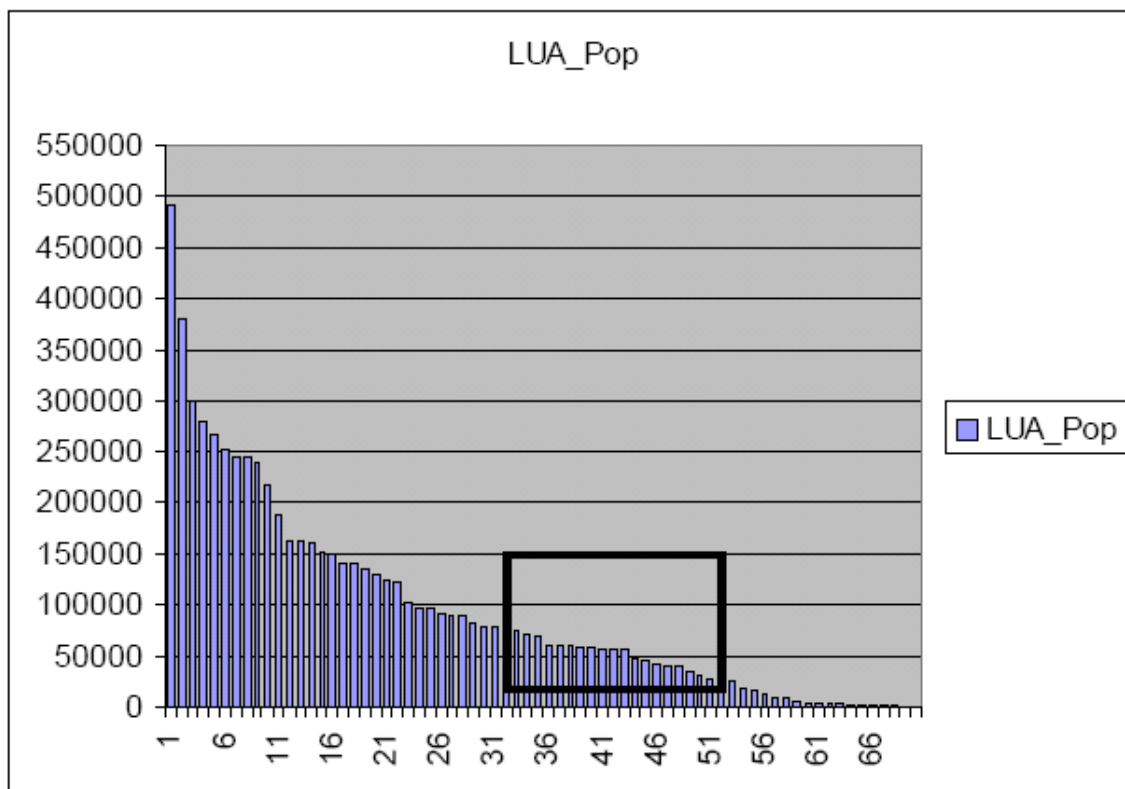
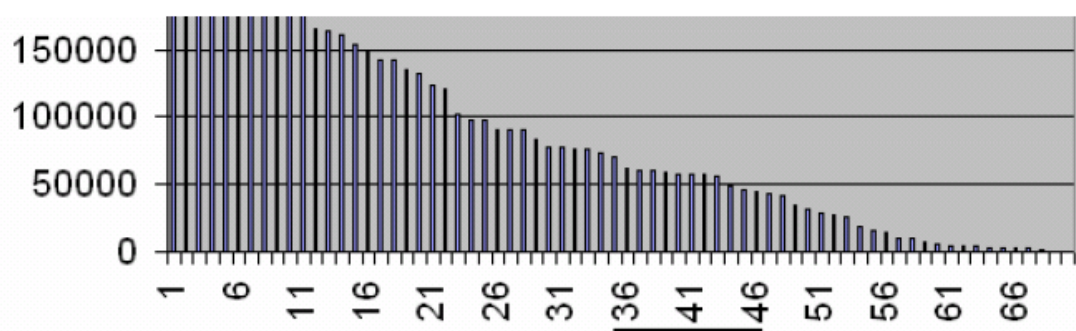


Diagram 3b Inset



Rank 1 (Sheffield) 490,470
 Rank 43 (Oadby and Wigston) = 55,706
 Rank 44 (Castle Point) = 48,562
 Mean: 96,312
 Top Quartile (Reading) = 142,653
 Total > 50,000 = 6,262,206 = 92.9% of total in LUAs
 42 LADs selected on the >50,000 rule

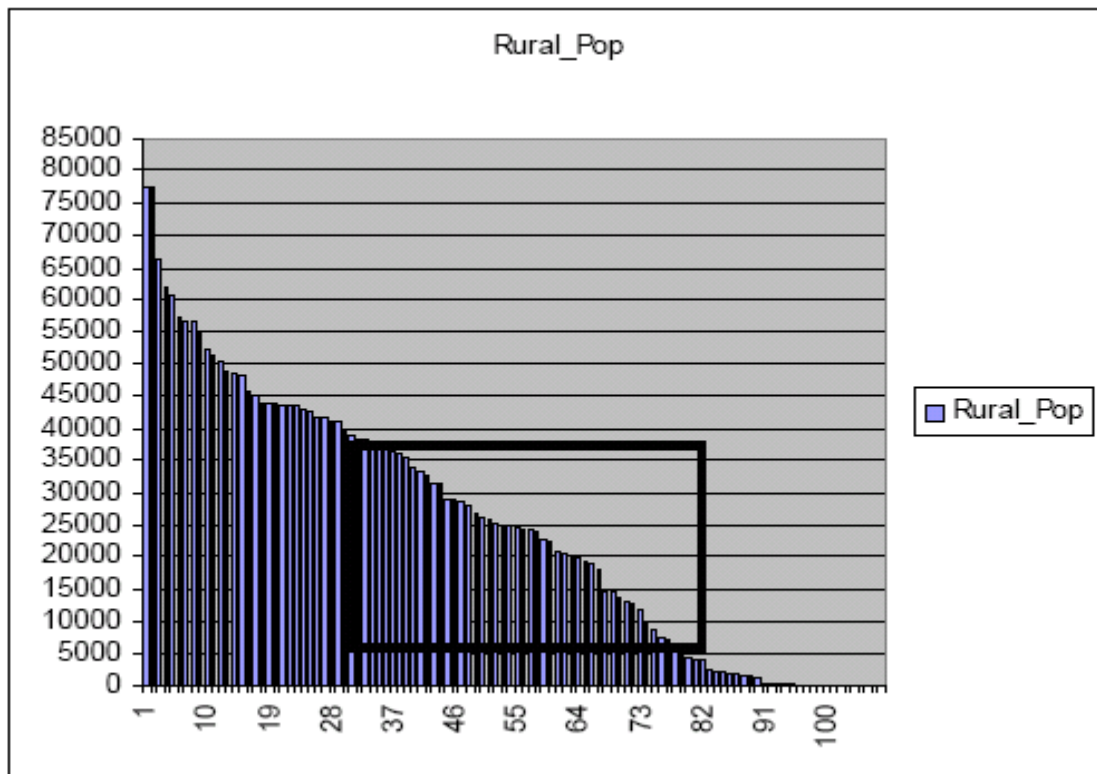
Table 3: LADs selected as ‘Large Urban’ on the >50% Criterion:

Name	Large Urban Population	Large Urban percent
Christchurch	44,179	98.60
Fylde	42,500	58.06
Castle Point	48,562	56.04
Rushcliffe	45,574	43.16

Note: East Riding of Yorkshire has 57,892 population in LUA but not considered on priority of >50% rural population rule.

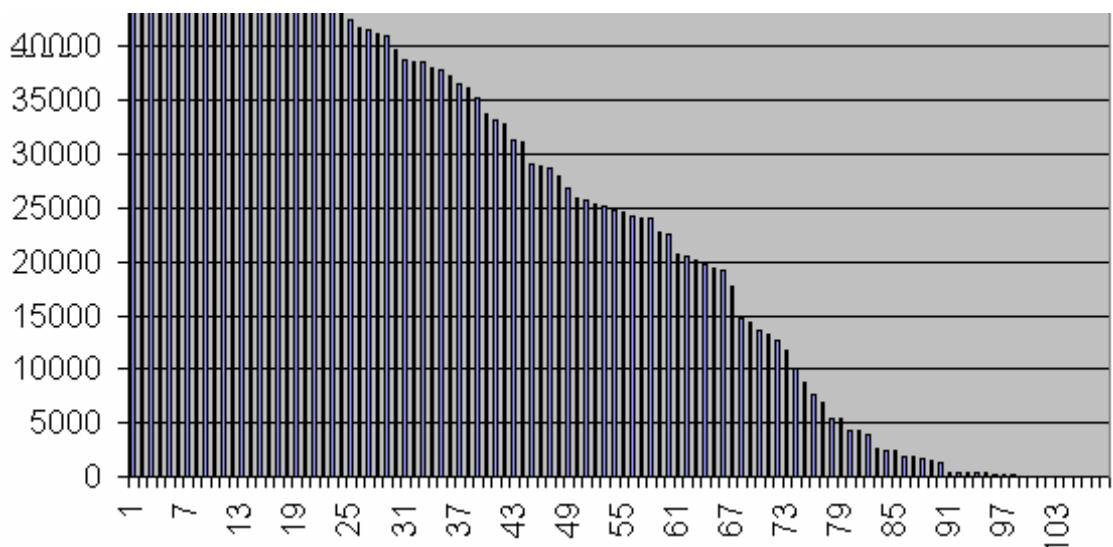
Step 5 Divide the Remaining 108 LADs on 'Significance' of Rural Population

Diagram 4a: Distribution Rural Population Numbers in Remaining 108 LADs



The division is made at the national average of rural population within LADs and the (weighted) average percentage of rural population within LADs. The criteria are: 37,000 or 26 percent.

Diagram 4b Inset



36 LADs are classified 'Significant Rural' on the 37,000 criterion
17 LADs are classified 'Significant Rural' on the 26 percent criterion

Table 4: LADs Selected on the 26 Percent Rural Criterion

Name	Other Urban Pop	Other Urban %	Rural Pop	Rural %
Bolsover	37,947	52.88	33,815	47.12
South Derbyshire	46,398	56.80	35,295	43.20
Shepway	60,125	62.46	36,140	37.54
Boston	34,933	62.80	20,693	37.20
Cannock Chase	60,988	66.07	31,320	33.93
Wellingborough	48,095	66.14	24,622	33.86
North Hertfordshire	80,300	68.68	36,620	31.32
Hart	57,877	69.16	25,810	30.84
Bromsgrove	39,581	45.04	26,883	30.59
Brentwood	47,874	69.97	20,548	30.03
Shrewsbury and Atcham	67,209	70.06	28,723	29.94
Kettering	57,818	70.65	24,020	29.35
Hinckley and Bosworth	61,211	61.00	29,093	28.99
Carlisle	71,718	71.23	28,961	28.77
Chester	80,893	68.36	33,165	28.03
Great Yarmouth	66,765	73.47	24,109	26.53
Rugby	62,042	70.93	22,822	26.09

Annex 5: Districts Changing Broad Type Between New and Previous Classification

'Old' Urban to New Rural¹

South East

Basingstoke and Deane	Significant Rural
Guildford	Significant Rural
Hart	Significant Rural
South Bucks	Rural 50
Swale	Significant Rural

South West

Bath and North East Somerset	Significant Rural
North Somerset	Rural 50

East

Bedford	Significant Rural
Brentwood	Significant Rural
Chelmsford	Significant Rural
Colchester	Significant Rural
Great Yarmouth	Significant Rural
Hertsmere	Significant Rural
North Hertfordshire	Significant Rural
St. Albans	Significant Rural

East Midlands

Amber Valley	Significant Rural
Bolsover	Significant Rural
Charnwood	Significant Rural
Kettering	Significant Rural
North East Derbyshire	Rural 50
Wellingborough	Significant Rural

¹ Crudely defined here as those districts classified as R80, R50 and Significant Rural. Note this is not a recommended grouping for analysis (see Fig.4, p.20)

West Midlands

Bromsgrove	Significant Rural
Cannock Chase	Significant Rural
Lichfield	Rural 50
Rugby	Significant Rural
Stafford	Significant Rural
Warwick	Significant Rural

Yorkshire and Humber

Barnsley	Significant Rural
Calderdale	Significant Rural
Doncaster	Significant Rural

North West

Carlisle	Significant Rural
Macclesfield	Significant Rural
West Lancashire	Rural 50
Wyre Forest	Significant Rural

North East

Blyth Valley	Rural 50
Derwentside	Rural 80
Durham	Rural 50
Easington	Rural 50
Sedgefield	Rural 50
Wansbeck	Rural 50

Rural to Urban

South East

Arun	Large Urban
Canterbury	Other Urban
Thanet	Other Urban

East

South Bedfordshire	Other Urban
--------------------	-------------

West Midlands

Wyre	Large Urban
------	-------------

North West

Ellesmere Port and Neston	Large Urban
Pendle	Other Urban

ⁱ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *Rural Strategy 2004*, July 2004, Annex A.

ⁱⁱ In the remainder of this paper we refer to both districts and unitary authorities as 'LADs' as a shortened form of 'local authority districts'.

ⁱⁱⁱ A further, more technical reason for not proceeding to an LAD classification at this stage was that the methodology for defining rural areas was applied only to towns (i.e. Ordnance Survey defined 'urban areas'), with less than 10,000 population. However, there are a number of towns above this population limit which are 'rural' in the sense that they exist mainly to serve a hinterland of rural settlements. Further work was required to identify such towns so that they could be included in the 'rural' population of the districts in which they are located. This is described in Annex 2.

^{iv} Tarling, R et. al. *The Economy of Rural England*, Rural Development Commission, 1993.

^v See: www.countryside.gov.uk/EvidenceAndAnalysis/. The definition was subsequently used, via a process of statistical manipulation of LAD level data, to create a rural/urban categorisation of wards.

^{vi} Although the 'rural' districts were further sub-divided into 'accessible' and 'remote' districts. However, the criteria for 'accessibility/remoteness' were not formally established as part of the definition.

^{vii} Thus the population of England counted as 'rural' under the definition based upon COAs is 9.5 million (Census 2001), whereas the aggregate population of LADs identified here as having at least a 'significant' level of rural population is 17.9 million. Since this figure is derived from the populations of entire LADs, it includes the population of settlements classified as 'urban' under the new rural areas definition.

^{viii} There are many districts with larger than average populations and a clear (proportional) majority of people in urban settlements but which also have a large rural population. In several cases the latter is larger than in districts with proportionately more people in rural settlements.

^{ix} The Rural Development Commission had previously adopted a figure of 10,000 as the limit for 'urban' as opposed to 'rural' towns and this was also used by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys as the figure for the publication of detailed statistics on urban areas from 1981 onwards. However, so far as is known, there was no attempt to assess the *functional* characteristics of the larger rural towns (i.e. whether they served a primarily rural hinterland) until the Countryside Agency commissioned work in response to the requirement, in the Rural White Paper, to develop an indicator of market town prosperity. 'Market towns were here defined as urban areas with between 2000 and c. 20,000 population and the research showed that many places in the upper part of this range were, indeed, 'rural' in functional terms (SERRL/Bbk, *Constructing and Assessing Indicators of Market Town Prosperity*, Countryside Agency, February 2004.

^x The upper limit of 30,000 follows that used in the SERRL/Bbk research (op cit). Again, any upper limit is arbitrary. We simply note that within the population range 20,000 to 30,000 there are 71 urban areas and among them are places such as Thetford, Evesham, Newport (IoW) and Spalding, all of which could be said to serve a 'rural' function.

^{xi} See endnote 9.

^{xii} See www.statistics.gov.uk/nrudp.asp

^{xiii} see www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/ks_ub_ad.asp

^{xiv} Note that in the case of the new rural definition settlement, COAs are allocated to a settlement type based upon the settlement of residence of the *majority* of people living in a COA.

^{xv} i.e. including the population of any places identified as 'Larger market Towns' within an LAD.

^{xvi} Actually, the smallest is Isles of Scilly with 2153 inhabitants.

^{xvii} Strictly, living in Census Output Areas which have more than 50 percent of their population living in villages and dispersed settlements.

^{xviii} It is worth noting, for example, that Wakefield, Leeds and Bradford – all in the 'Major Urban' category – have a rural population larger than 21 LADs in the 'Rural-80' category, whilst Dacorum has a rural population greater than 15 LADs in this category. The former also have a rural population greater than *all* LADs identified here as 'Significant Rural'. The ability to identify 'rural within the urban' is an important advantage of the new approach over the old.