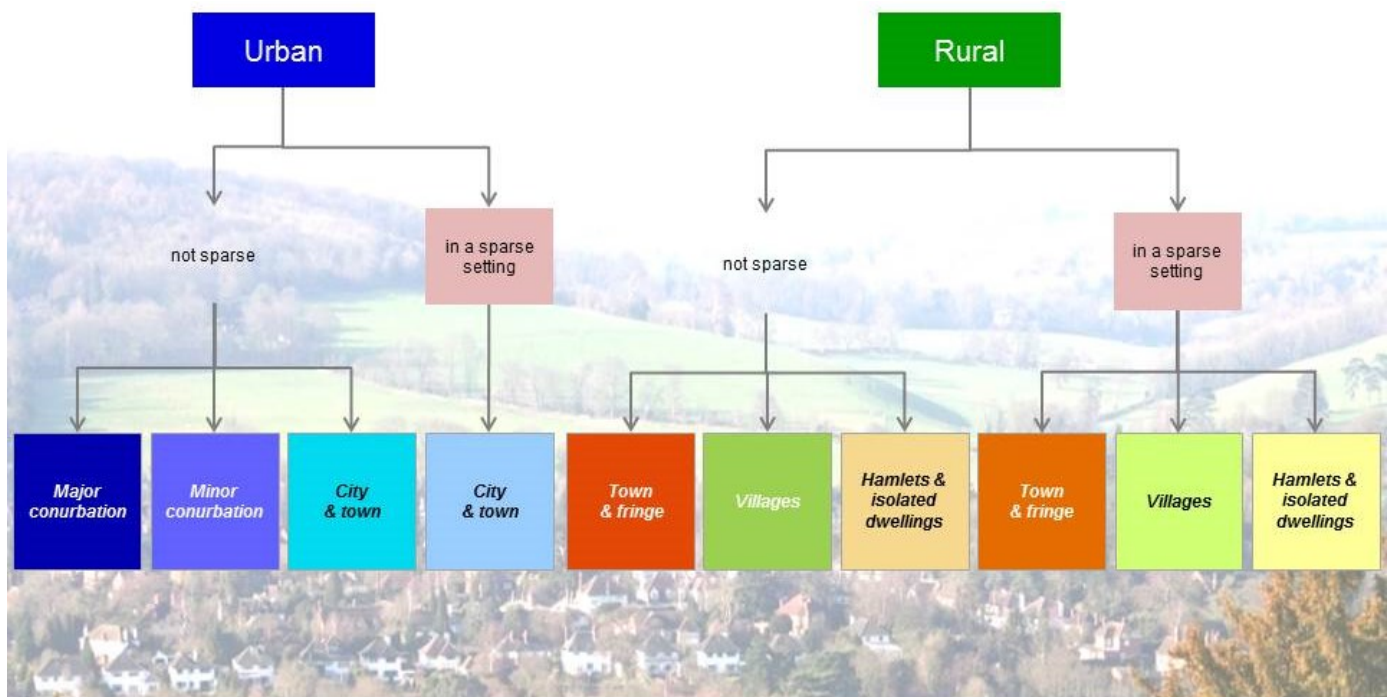


Defining rural areas

Wherever possible, the Rural-Urban Classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas. The Classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population.

Census Output Areas - the smallest areas for which data are available from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses - are assigned to one of four urban or six rural categories:



Those described as “in a sparse setting” reflect where the wider area is remotely populated.

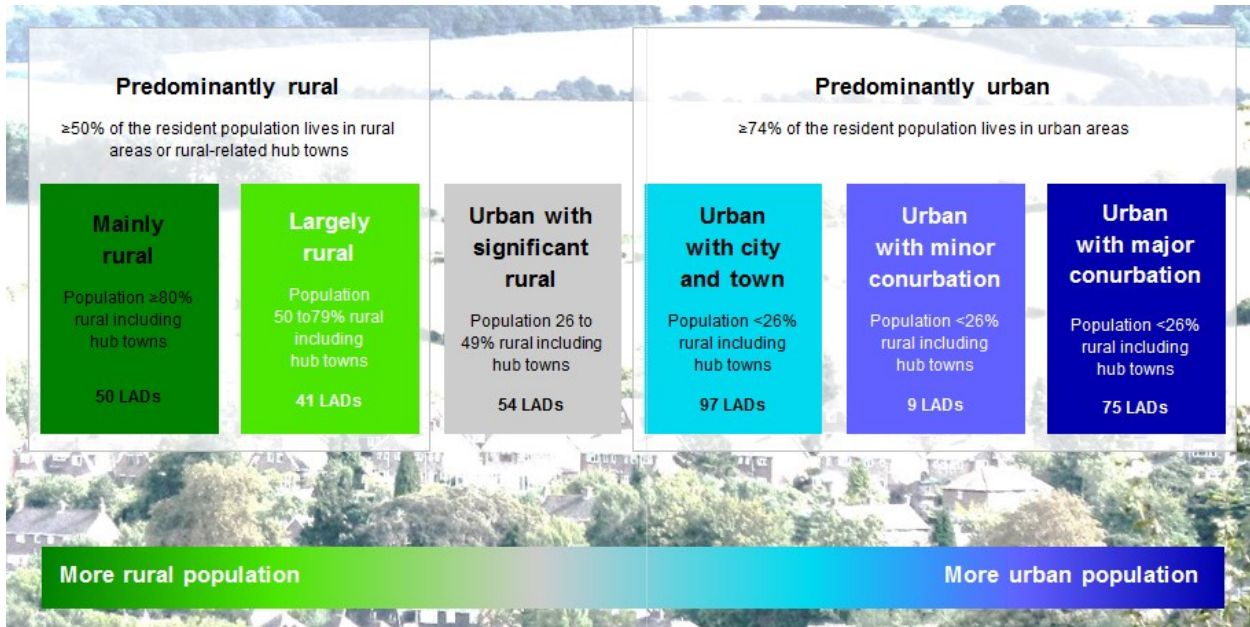
A map is shown overleaf.

When data are not available at a small enough geographical scale, it may be possible to apply the Rural-Urban Local Authority Classification. This classification categorises districts and unitary authorities on a six point scale from rural to urban. It is underpinned by rural and urban populations as defined by the Classification.

However, the Local Authority Classification also considers some urban areas as Hub Towns (with populations of between 10,000 and 30,000). These Hub Towns have met statistical criteria to be considered hubs for services and businesses for a wider rural hinterland and their populations are therefore classified as effectively rural for the purposes of the Local Authority Classification.

Under the classification each Local Authority District is assigned to one of six categories on the basis of the percentage of the total resident population accounted for by the combined rural and Hub Town components of its population and its 'conurbation context'.

The local authority categories are:



The categories are frequently aggregated to *predominantly rural*, *urban with significant rural* and *predominantly urban* as shown.

It should be noted that the classifications are based on populations and settlement patterns, not on how much countryside there is. Authorities classified as urban may have wide areas of countryside and may have sizeable rural populations. The classification has been made according to the proportions of the population residing in urban settlements and outside urban settlements.

A 2011-based Local Authority Classification was published in December 2014 based on the 2011 Census and the detailed 2011 rural-urban classification of Census Output Areas (published in 2013) and this replaces the previous 2001-based Local Authority Classification. The Digest is not updated in its entirety according to the 2011-based classification. Some sections will refer to the previous 2001-based classification.

The 2011-based Rural Urban Local Authority Classification, or RUCLAD11, has fewer Local Authorities categorised as being largely or mainly 'rural'. This is due to an overall increase in population, plus an expansion of certain settlements and the density of those built up areas. The classification is based on the proportion of people living in settlements defined as 'rural' (below 10,000 population), or living in certain 'hub towns' (populations between 10,000 and 30,000) that have been identified as having the potential to serve the wider rural areas. The impact of population changes and settlement patterns is that fewer settlements are defined as 'rural' when compared with the previous Census, and hence proportionately fewer people are regarded as living in rural areas. In some cases this

means that Local Authorities which were regarded as ‘rural’ in the previous classification are no longer classed as ‘rural’.

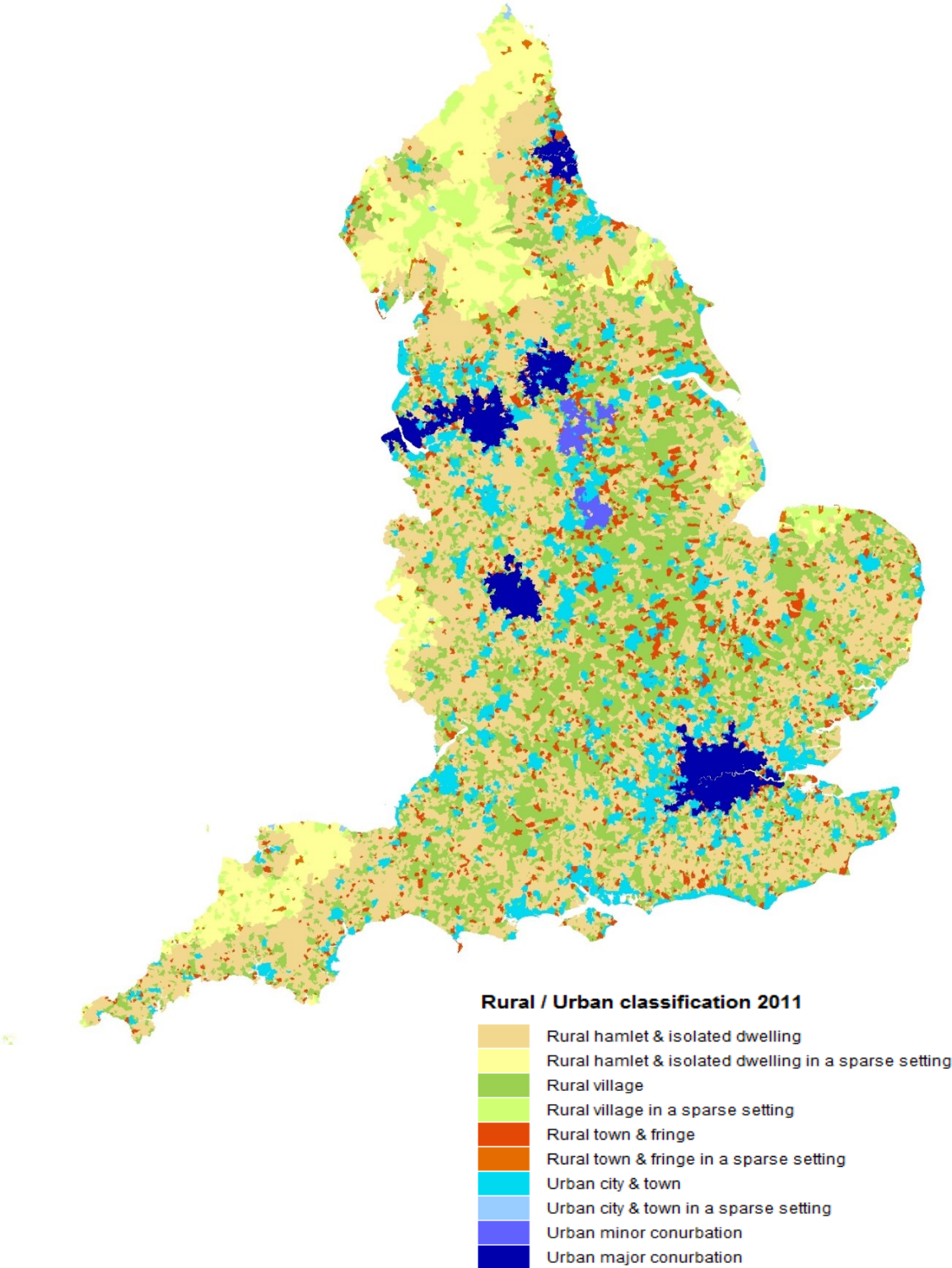
The table below shows the 2001-based Local Authority Classification and its categories on the left, and the 2011-based Local Authority Classification 2011 on the right to show how the categories align for comparison of figures.

2001-based Local Authority Classification	Broader classification	2011-based Local Authority Classification	Broader classification
London	London	London	London
Major Urban	Predominantly Urban excl. London	Urban with Major Conurbation	Predominantly Urban excl. London
Large Urban		Urban with Minor Conurbation	
Other Urban		Urban with City and Town	
Significant Rural	Significant Rural	Urban with Significant Rural	Urban with Significant Rural
Rural-50	Predominantly Rural	Largely rural	Predominantly Rural
Rural-80		Mainly rural	
England	England	England	England

More information on the classifications can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/rural-urban-definition>

2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Census Output Areas in England



2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Local Authorities in England

