

RURAL TOWN CENTRES, 2022: PROJECT PLAN

Project purpose

The State of Rural Services 2021 (Rural England 2022) highlighted changes in retail and service provision in rural areas, caused in part by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated measures to restrict mobility and social interaction, as well as the continuation of longer running trends. This report will focus attention on the socio-economic conditions of rural towns, providing an evidence base of relevance to policy makers and policy influencers at the national and local levels. It will, for instance, be of relevance to considerations of the Government's recent focus on economic growth, investment zones, living costs and restricting government expenditure, as well as to its longer established agendas to level-up, revitalise highstreets and foster recovery in the hospitality sector (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021; Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 2022; Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy 2021), all of which make minimal reference to rural areas (e.g. see Rural Services Network 2021).

Background and context

The socio-economic fortunes of rural towns have long been a subject of concern. In 2001, a Market Town's Initiative was launched by the Countryside Agency, following the Labour Government 2000 Rural White Paper that expressed concern about the future of rural towns. Subsequent research highlighted variations between rural towns, with studies both highlighting economic decline and growth (e.g. Courtney and Errington, 2000). Accounts of the former frequently stressed declines in historically important functional roles within rural economies, such as these towns being sites for the sale of agricultural produce and the supply of goods to agriculture, as well as centres for the provision of retail, financial and welfare services to surrounding rural hinterlands (e.g. Courtney and Errington, 2000; Powe and Shaw, 2004). Changes in agri-food distribution and service rationalisation by government and private sector business, as well as the rise of out-of-town shopping centres, led to significant reductions in the performance of service functions by many small rural towns, although heightened personal mobilities also encouraged a "diverse range of firms and individuals" (Courtney et al. 2007: 1219) to move into some of these settlements. Such movements, along with tourism, often fostered economic vibrancy in some small rural towns, although where movements of people were unaccompanied by business establishments, rural towns were often transformed into so-called dormitory settlements (Smith 2017).

The forces of change in the 2000s continue through to the present, although they have also been supplemented by further transformations that have impacted many other settlements as well. These include the rise of internet shopping, which received a significant boost via the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions on physical mobility and social congregation. Florida et al (2021: 3) have argued that the pandemic forced experimentation in "employment, shopping, workplace and residential choice" which will "leave a legacy" on how these activities are conducted into the future. These legacies might include greater use of local stores and migration from cities to smaller towns, both of which may benefit rural towns. However, the pandemic has also been seen to represent a further challenge to the future of the retail 'high street', which has been seen as being in crisis in many areas of the UK since the financial crisis of 2007-8 (Hubbard 2017). There have been calls to rethink the function of central areas of towns, turning them more into recreational and amenity destinations, as reflected in the Government's *'Build back Better High Streets Strategy'* that refers to supporting "the evolution of high streets into thriving places to work, visit and live" (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021; Grimwood et al. 2021). The extent to which such plans have been implemented as yet remains under-researched, although there is evidence that rural areas in general receive lower levels of government funding per head than regions with extensive urban settlements (Pragmatix Advisory, 2021), as well as concerns that inflation and budgetary restrictions will lead to real term decline in the resourcing of governmental initiatives. A lack of awareness of funding and support available to community organisations and groups may significantly limit engagement with policy initiatives, while

rising energy prices, alongside rises in other costs, are also likely to provide a further challenge to many local authorities, community organisations and businesses, and may particularly impact those located in rural settlements, including small towns.

The impact of the changes created by the pandemic and other forces of change have been seen to be variable (e.g. Rural England 2022), with there not only being spatial variations between different market towns but also inter-sectorial variations. It has, for instance, been identified that pubs, cinemas, theatres and music venues may have been particularly impacted by the pandemic, as have rural bus services, which might act to further undermine rural town servicing of a hinterland, although the relations between service provision and the impact of the pandemic are themselves complex, being mediated in part by both national and local policies and funding decisions. It is also important to recognise that certain social groups may be particularly impacted by changes and included in or excluded from particular policy initiatives. There is, for instance, evidence that poor access to public transport within rural area can impact young people's abilities to access not only leisure opportunities, but also education, training and employment (British Youth Council Select Committee (2010)). Small towns are potentially key sites for addressing such constraints and realising commitments such as the Government's 'Youth Guarantee', although the challenges appear significant and there is a lack of information concerning engagement and levels of success with initiatives such as the 'Youth Investment Fund' run by 'Social Investment Business'.

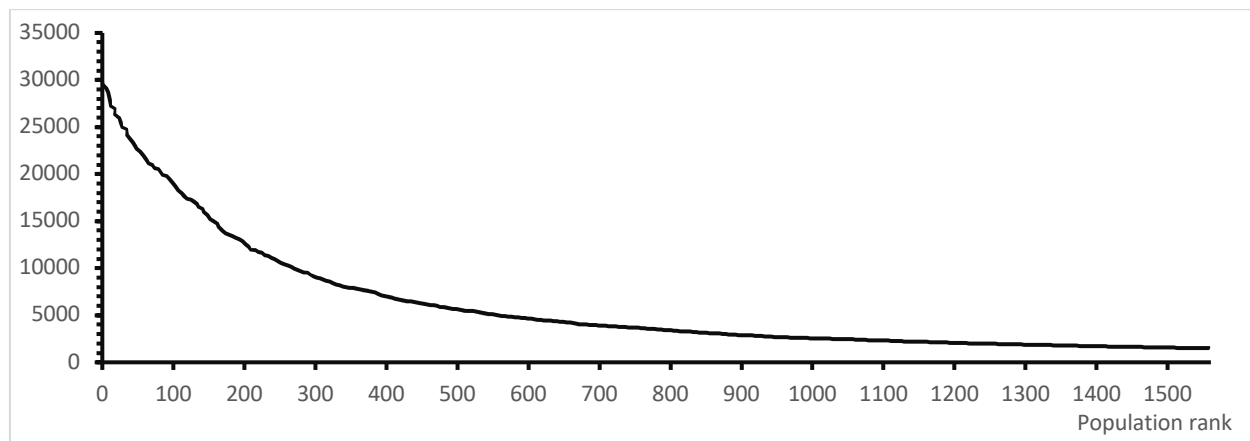
This project will seek to examine the variable state of rural towns within England, through a combination of extensive research addressing the demographic and socio-economic make up of these towns and more detailed case studies of up to 6 of these towns. Due to the release dates of the 2021 Census, the extensive analysis will initially be based on the 2011 Census, although use will also be made of 2020 population mid-year estimates for local authorities, and data on employment, businesses and earnings from Nomis. A link to a questionnaire survey relating to the socio-economic conditions of towns, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and involvement in funding initiatives such as the High Street, Community Ownership and Levelling Up, and Youth Investment funds will also be distributed to people in all the identified small towns, making use of contacts provided via the Rural Service Network's (RSN) 'Market Town Group' and the Principal Councils in RSN membership. Following analysis of the questionnaire, a summary of the condition of rural towns will be created, as well as up to 6 contrasting rural towns selected for more intensive investigation. This will involve site visits, interviews with members of local authorities, and community and business groups. Some interviews may be face to face, but use will also be made of video-conferencing to minimise travel costs. Although the selection of the case studies will be conditioned by the earlier analysis of market towns across England, it is likely to include towns that appear to be performing well economically, as well as ones that might be viewed as in decline or in need of regeneration, as well as at least one coastal settlement.

An early issue to be addressed will be the definition of small rural towns. The Defra/ONS Urban rural classification (Defra 2017b), delimits rural settlements (including rural towns) as having a population of below 10,000, although in its local authority variant, so-called 'hub towns' of between 10,000 and 30,000 are included in the definition of rural, providing they have the potential to act as business and service centres for a surrounding rural area (Defra 2017a). DETR/MAFF (2000) suggested a boundary of 2,000-20,000 for rural market towns, and Shepherd (2009) in his delimitation of 'smaller towns' used a cut off of between 1,500 and 40,000, which encompassed 1,607 locations across England. Employing a similar methodology to Shepherd for the 2011 Census produced a figure of 1,598 locations within England, which was reduced to 1,562 when the maximum is reduced to 30,000. It is proposed here to use the 30,000 maximum employed by Defra (2017a) as this is also employed by the RSN's 'Rural Market Town Group'. Of the 268 settlements that have a population between this maximum and the 10,000 population level taken as the general indicator of a rural settlement (Defra 2017b), just over 68% are classified as 'rural hubs' in Defra (2014), which suggest that almost a third of the settlements with a population of 10,000-30,000 residents do not have a strong service centre role and hence might be characterised as dormitory settlements (see Appendix 1).

Furthermore, as Figure 1 shows, the population of settlements between a population of 1,500 and 30,000 is heavily skewed towards those at the bottom of the population range, with 64% of these places

having a population of under 5,000 and 34% having a population of under 2,500. Looking at this last group of settlement, many of these might well be characterised as large villages rather than small towns (see list of settlements in Appendix 1). Given this it might be appropriate to use a population of 2,500 as a minimum population threshold, which would reduce the number of settlements being studied to 1,029.

Figure 1: Population Distribution of Built-Up Areas between 2,500 and 30,000 residents, 2011



Project objectives

The project objectives are to seek to understand better:

- The socio-economic conditions and contemporary challenges facing rural small towns in England;
- The impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic and changes in retail provisions, agri-food marketing and local government service provision on the central areas of these towns;
- The extent to which local authorities, business and community groups have engaged with central government funding initiatives;
- The potential socio-economic impacts of changes in small towns.
- Policy lessons, resources and recommendations for addressing challenges facing small rural towns.

For the project to remain manageable it is focusing on the central areas of rural small towns, and is conducting a maximum of 6 case studies.

Outline work plan

The project will include the following stages and activities, which in some cases will overlap.

Stage		Content	Timescale
1	Project initiation	Review and sign off Project Plan. Sign up Task & Finish Group.	October 2022 to January 2023
2	Determine location of English small rural towns.	Analysis of population of built-up areas as recorded in the 2011 Census	October 2022
3	Analyse socio-economic conditions of small rural	Analysis of demographic and socio-economic structure of small towns from 2011 Census and other datasets (e.g. mid-year population estimates, NOMIS datasets)	October 2022

3	Questionnaire survey	Identify potential participants. Gain ethics approval (University of Leicester). Draft and agree survey questions. Create on-line questionnaire (Survey Monkey via RSN, or JISC on-line survey). Pilot questionnaire. Distribute questionnaire links. Extract response data and analyse.	October to November 2022
4	Case studies	Identify potential case study locations, and interviewees. Prepare semi-structured interview protocol. Conduct interviews. Transcription of interviews. Analysis of interviews.	December 2022 to January 2023
5	Analyse and structure evidence	Methodically review evidence from stages 2, 3 and 4 above. Decide on structure for the report and hence the evidence.	November 2022 to January 2023
6	Draft written project report	Create draft for comment by T&F Group and SG. Then revise / finalise the report. Produce launch and dissemination plan. Have report formatted for publication.	January to February 2023.

Project outputs

The main output from the project will be a written report for publication, setting out the evidence base in a structured way and outlining the main findings, whilst flagging some implications for policy. This report will include a summary.

A dissemination plan will be produced towards the end of the project, to ensure that target audiences are identified and appropriate means to reach them are adopted.

A PowerPoint presentation will also be prepared, based on the report, for use at meetings and events. This will be required in time for the launch of the report.

Project resources

The project will be funded from within RE's own resources which it derives from its supporters' financial contributions. The project will cost £9,433 (excluding VAT), with the salary costs being taken from the money allocated to fund the Research Director. The expenditure has been provisionally calculated as:

12days, Professor Martin Phillips (@£650 per day)	£7,800
7 days, University of Leicester Research Assistant, Niamh McHugh)	£1,178
Expenses (Travel (500 miles at 45p per mile), subsistence (6 days @ £15 per day), accommodation, 2 nights at £70 per night)	£455

Martin Phillips will lead the project and will be involved in all aspects of the research, plus be the main author of the project report. Some help with data collection and analysis will be provided by a Research Assistant based at the University of Leicester, Niamh McHugh). Support will be needed via the RSN 'Market Town Group' in circulating questionnaire details to potential participants, and also potentially in administering the questionnaire via Survey Monkey.

Members of the RE Stakeholder Group are invited to input by supplying evidence or intelligence that their organisations' have gathered about small towns and business/service/policy trends.

A sub-set of the RE Stakeholder Group have been invited to form a project Task and Finish Group, which will provide guidance at key stages (see below). This will involve reviewing documents and the draft final report, as well as being asked for advice where appropriate. Chris Cowcher (Plunkett) and Tom Jones (Heart of the South West LEP) have agreed to participate in this Task and Finish Group; Jo Hobbs (The British Youth Council) has offered to identify a young person to be part of it, and Jon Birtwistle (First Bus) has offered to provide some oversight on the bus service dimensions of the project.

External PR advisers may be commissioned in due course to assist with the project report launch, including any sell-in to the print and broadcast media.

Project timescale

Project activity will commence in October 2022 and will aim to be completed by February 2023, so that the report could be published early in 2023. Some flexibility will be maintained to allow scope for taking on board important evidence throughout the project timeframe.

Management and oversight

The project lead will report on progress and any issues arising to RE Directors. This will ensure the project delivers within the resources available to RE and at a pace which meets plans for the report launch.

As noted above, a sub-set of the RE Stakeholder Group have been invited to form a project Task and Finish Group. They will have an advisory role, offering guidance to the project lead. That is likely to include reviewing key documents and contributing ideas at the report drafting stage, before it is sent round the wider Steering Group, as well as being available for advice or a steer where appropriate.

Martin Phillips
Rural England CIC
Project plan version 1.2
6th October 2022

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Appendix 1: Settlements in England lying within categorisations of small towns, based on 2011 Census and Defra (2014) classification of ‘Hub Towns’.

*Large ‘Small Towns’, including Hub Towns (marked with *): Population 10,000-30,000,*

Adwick le Street, Alsager, Alton (East Hampshire)*, Amesbury*, Amptill*, Annfield Plain, Ashby-de-la-Zouch*, Ashington (Northumberland)*, Atherstone*, Attleborough*, Barnoldswick*, Barton-upon-Humber, Beaconsfield, Beccles*, Bedlington, Belper, Berkhamsted*, Berwick-upon-Tweed*, Biddulph, Bideford*, Biggleswade*, Bishop Auckland*, Bishop's Cleeve, Blackfield, Blandford Forum*, Bodmin*, Bolsover, Bordon*, Bourne*, Brackley*, Bridgnorth*, Bridport*, Brixham*, Brough (East Riding of Yorkshire)*, Buckingham*, Burnham-on-Sea*, Burntwood, Buxton (High Peak)*, Calne*, Carterton*, Chapelton, Chard*, Chatteris*, Cheadle*, Cinderford*, Cirencester*, Clay Cross/North Wingfield, Clevedon*, Clitheroe*, Cobham (Elmbridge), Codsall, Coleford (Forest of Dean)*, Congleton*, Conisbrough, Consett*, Corsham, Cowes*, Cranleigh*, Croesowallt*, Cross Hills, Crowborough*, Daventry*, Dawlish*, Dereham*, Desborough, Devizes*, Didcot*, Dinnington (Rotherham), Diss*, Ditton*, Dorchester (West Dorset)*, Dorking*, Downham Market*, Driffield*, Droitwich*, Dronfield, Dunscroft, Dursley*, Earl Shilton*, Elland, Ely*, Emsworth, Epping, Evesham*, Faversham*, Featherstone (Wakefield), Felixstowe*, Fleetwood*, Formby, Frome*, Gainsborough*, Garforth, Gerrards Cross, Gillingham (North Dorset)*, Godalming*, Goole*, Guisborough, Hailsham*, Halstead*, Hartley, Harwich*, Haslemere*, Haverhill*, Haxby, Hedon, Helston*, Henley-on-Thames*, Heswall, Hexham*, Honiton*, Huntingdon*, Hurstpierpoint, Hythe, Ilfracombe*, Ilkley*, Immingham*, Ivybridge*, Kendal*, Kenilworth, Keynsham, Kidlington*, Kippax, Kirkham, Knutsford*, Leek*, Leominster*, Lewes*, Louth*, Ludlow*, Lymington*, Lymm, Mablethorpe*, Maghull*, Maldon*, Maltby, March, Market Deeping*, Market Drayton*, Market Harborough*, Marlow*, Marple, Matlock*, Melksham*, Melton Mowbray*, Middlewich, Midsomer Norton/Radstock*, Mildenhall*, Minehead*, Minster (Swale)*, Morpeth*, Mountsorrel, Nailsea*, Nantwich*, Neston, New Addington, New Mills, New Rossington, Newhaven, Newmarket*, Newport (Isle of Wight)*, Newport (Telford and Wrekin)*, Newquay*, Newton Aycliffe*, North Walsham*, Northallerton*, Norton-on-Derwent/Malton*, Oakham*, Ormskirk, Oxted, Peacehaven, Penistone, Penrith*, Penzance*, Petersfield*, Ponteland, Portishead, Potters Bar, Prudhoe*, Retford*, Ringwood*, Ripon*, Romsey, Ross-on-Wye*, Royston*, Rugeley*, Ryde*, Saffron Walden*, Saltash, Saltdean/Woodingdean, Sandbach*, Sandown/Shanklin*, Sandy*, Seaford, Seaham, Selby*, Selsey*, Selston/Brinsley, Sevenoaks*, Sheerness*, Shefford, Shephed, Shepton Mallet*, Shevington Vale/Shevington, Shirebrook, Sidmouth*, Sibley/Barrow upon Soar, Skegness*, Skipton*, Sleaford*, Snodland, South Elmsall/South Kirkby*, South Hayling, South Ockendon, South Woodham Ferrers, Spennymoor, St Austell*, St Ives (Huntingdonshire)*, Stamford*, Stanford-le-Hope, Stanley (County Durham), Stocksbridge*, Stone (Stafford)*, Stourport-on-Severn*, Stowmarket*, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Street*, Stubbington*, Sudbury*, Swanage*, Swanley, Tadley*, Tavistock*, Teignmouth*, Tewkesbury*, Thame*, Thetford*, Thornbury*, Thorne*, Thurnscoe/Bolton Upon Dearne, Tiverton*, Todmorden*, Tring*, Truro*, Uckfield*, Ulverston*, Uttoxeter*, Verwood*, Wallingford*, Walton-on-the-Naze*, Wantage*, Warminster*, Wellington (Taunton Deane)*, Wells*, West Kirby/Hoylake, Westbury (Wiltshire), Westhoughton, Wetherby*, Whitby*, Whitehaven*, Whittlesey*, Witham*, Witney*, Wombourne, Wootton Bassett*, Workington*, Wymondham (South Norfolk)*, Yarm, Yatton.

‘Small Towns’: Population 2,500 to 10,000

Ackworth Moor Top, Adderbury, Addingham, Albrighton, Alcester, Alderholt, Alford, Alnwick, Alrewas, Alvechurch, Alveston, Amble, Ambleside, Anna Valley, Anstey, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Arlesey, Armitage, Arundel, Ash (Dover), Ashbourne, Ashburton, Ashington (Horsham), Askam in Furness, Askern, Aspull, Aston Clinton, Aveley, Axminster, Aylesham, Aylsham, Baddesley Ensor, Badsey, Bagshot, Bakewell, Balsall Common, Bampton (West Oxfordshire), Banks, Bar Hill, Bardsey, Barlborough, Barlestone, Barnard Castle, Barrow upon Humber, Barton-le-Clay, Barton-under-Needwood, Barwick in Elmet, Battle, Bawtry, Bayston Hill, Beaminster, Bedale, Belton (Great Yarmouth), Belton (North Lincolnshire), Bembridge, Benson, Berinsfield, Bewdley, Bicknacre, Bidford-on-Avon, Bignall End/Audley, Billinge, Billingshurst, Bilsthorpe, Bingham, Bircotes, Bishop's Waltham, Bishopthorpe, Blidworth, Bloxham, Bluntisham, Bolton-le-Sands, Boreham, Boroughbridge, Bosham, Boston Spa, Bottesford, Bourton-on-the-Water, Bovey Tracey, Bovingdon, Bowburn, Bracebridge Heath, Bradford on Avon, Bramhope, Bramley, Brampton (Carlisle), Brampton (Huntingdonshire), Brandon (County Durham), Brandon (Forest Heath), Bransgore, Branston, Braunton, Bream, Brewood, Brierley, Brigg, Brightlingsea, Bristol, Brixworth, Broadway, Brockenhurst, Brockham, Bromham (Bedford), Bromyard, Brookmans Park, Brotton, Broughton (North Lincolnshire), Broughton Astley, Brundall, Bruton, Buckden, Buckfastleigh, Bude, Budleigh Salterton, Bugbrooke, Bugle, Bungay, Buntingford, Burghfield Common, Burnham-on-Crouch, Burnopfield, Burscough, Burton Joyce, Burtonwood, Burwell, Caddington, Caister-on-Sea, Callington, Calverton, Cambourne, Capel St Mary, Carlton in Lindrick, Carnforth, Castle Cary, Castle Donington, Castleside, Catterick, Chalfont St Giles, Chalgrove, Chapel-en-le-

Frith, Charlbury, Charvil, Cheddar, Cheddleton, Cherry Willingham, Chilton (County Durham), Chinnor, Chipping Norton, Chipping Ongar, Cholsey, Chopwell, Chudleigh, Church Stretton, Clapham (Bedford), Claydon, Cleator Moor, Cleobury Mortimer, Cliffe Woods, Cliffs End, Clowne, Clutton/Temple Cloud, Cockermouth, Coggeshall, Colburn, Colden Common, Coleshill (North Warwickshire), Collingham, Colyton, Combe Martin, Compton/Otterbourne, Copmanthorpe, Coppull, Corbridge, Cornforth, Cotgrave, Cottenham, Coundon, Countesthorpe, Coven, Coxheath, Coxhoe, Cranbrook, Cranfield, Craven Arms, Crediton, Creswell, Crewkerne, Cricklade, Crofton, Cromer, Crook, Croston, Crowland, Crowle (North Lincolnshire), Cuckfield, Cuffley, Culcheth, Cullingworth, Cullompton, Culverstone Green, Cuxton, Dalton-in-Furness, Danbury, Dartmouth, Datchet, Deanshanger, Denby Dale, Denham Green, Denholme, Denmead, Dersingham, Desford, Dickens Heath, Doddinghurst, Donington, Dormansland, Downton, Dunnington, Dymchurch, Earby, Earls Barton, Earls Colne, Easington (County Durham), Easingwold, East Ayton, East Goscote, East Horsley, East Leake, East Tilbury, East Wittering, Eaton Bray, Eccleshall, Eccleston, Edenbridge, Edwinstowe, Egremont BUA, Ellesmere, Ellington/Lynemouth, Elmswell, Elstead, Epworth, Esh Winning, Etwall, Exminster, Eye (City of Peterborough), Eye (Mid Suffolk), Eynsford, Eynsham, Fairfield Park, Fairford, Fakenham, Faringdon, Farnsfield, Featherstone (South Staffordshire), Felsted/Bannister Green, Feltwell, Fenstanton, Fernhill Heath, Ferryhill, Filey, Finedon, Finningley, Fishburn, Fleckney, Fordham (East Cambridgeshire), Fordingbridge, Fortuneswell, Four Marks, Fradley South, Framlingham, Freckleton, Fremington, Freshwater, Frodsham, Gamlingay, Garstang, Gilberdyke, Glastonbury, Glemsford, Gnosall, Gobowen, Godmanchester, Godstone, Goring, Grange-over-Sands, Grayshott, Great Ayton, Great Dunmow, Great Glen, Great Leighs, Great Lumley, Great Torrington, Great Wakering, Grimethorpe, Gunnislake, Haddenham (Aylesbury Vale), Haddenham (East Cambridgeshire), Hadleigh, Hadlow, Hadston, Halesworth, Haltwhistle, Hamble-le-Rice, Hardwick (South Cambridgeshire), Harefield, Harleston, Hartley Wintney, Haslington, Hatfield Peverel, Hawkhurst, Hawkinge, Hayle, Headcorn, Heage/Crich, Healing, Heathfield (Wealden), Hebden Bridge, Heckington, Helsby, Hemsby, Hemsworth, Henfield, Henley-In-Arden, Hertford Heath, Hethersett, Higher Folds, Higher Wincham, Highley, Highworth, Hilton (South Derbyshire), Hinton, Holbeach, Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, Holmes Chapel, Holsworthy, Holt (North Norfolk), Holton le Clay, Holywell Green, Hoo St Werburgh, Hook (Hart), Hopton on Sea, Horncastle, Hornsea, Horsford, Hoveton, Howden, Hungerford, Hunmanby, Hunstanton, Hurworth-on-Tees, Ibstock, Ightham, Ilminster, Indian Queens, Ingatestone, Irchester, Irthlingborough, Istead Rise, Iver Heath, Iwade, Jaywick, Keele, Kegworth, Kelsall, Kelvedon, Kempsey, Kessingland, Keswick (Allerdale), Keyworth, Kibworth Harcourt, Kilburn, King's Hill, Kingsbridge, Kingsbury, Kingsclere, Kingskerswell, Kington, Kinsley, Kinver, Kirkbymoorside, Kirton (Boston), Kirton in Lindsey, Kiveton Park, Knebworth, Laceby, Lakenheath, Lambourn, Lanchester, Lane End, Langford (Central Bedfordshire), Langley Park, Langport, Langwith, Launceston, Lechlade-on-Thames, Ledbury, Leeming, Leiston, Leysdown-on-Sea, Lightwater, Lingfield, Lingwood, Linton, Liphook, Liskeard, Liss, Little Clacton, Little Paxton, Littleport, Loddon, Loftus, Loggerheads, Long Ashton, Long Buckby, Long Lawford, Long Melford, Long Stratton, Long Sutton (South Holland), Longridge, Looe, Lostwithiel, Lower Stondon, Ludgershall (Wiltshire), Lutterworth, Lydd, Lydney, Lyme Regis, Lytchett Matravers, Madeley, Malmesbury, Manningtree, Marchwood, Market Rasen, Market Warsop, Market Weighton, Markfield, Markyate, Marlborough, Marsden, Marske-by-the-Sea, Marston Moretaine, Martham, Martock, Maryport, Mayland, Measham, Melbourn, Melbourne (South Derbyshire), Meltham, Meopham (North), Mere, Messingham, Metheringham, Mickletown, Middleton Cheney, Middleton St George, Midhurst, Milborne Port, Milford on Sea, Millom, Minster (Thanet), Mitcheldean, Moreton-in-Marsh, Morgan's Vale, Mortimer, Mulbarton, Mundesley, Murton (County Durham), Mytholmroyd, Nanpean, Navenby, Needham Market, Netley, Nettleham, New Alresford, New Marske, New Ollerton, New Romney, New Waltham, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Newbold Verdon, Newent, Newick, Newton (Bolsover), North Baddesley, North Petherton, North Walney, North Weald Bassett, Northampton (South Northamptonshire), Norton Canes, Oakley (Basingstoke and Deane), Odiham, Offenham/South Littleton, Okehampton, Olney, Ormesby St Margaret, Otford, Ottery St Mary, Oughtibridge, Oundle, Over, Overton (Basingstoke and Deane), Paddock Wood, Pangbourne, Papworth Everard, Parbold, Peasedown St John, Peaslake, Pegswood, Pembury, Penkridge, Perranporth, Pershore, Petworth, Pevensey Bay, Pewsey, Pickering, Pitstone, Pocklington, Polesworth, Poringland, Porthleven, Potton, Preesall, Prestwood, Princes Risborough, Puckeridge, Purton, Radcliffe on Trent, Radlett, Rainworth, Ramsey (Huntingdonshire), Ratby, Raunds, Ravenshead, Read, Red Lodge, Redbourn, Rendlesham, Repton, Richmond, Ringmer, Ripponden, Rishton, Rocester/Denstone, Roche, Rothwell, Rowlands Gill, Ruskington, Rye, Ryhill, Sacriston, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Saltford, Sandiway, Sandwich, Saughall, Sawston, Sawtry, Saxilby, Saxmundham, Scotter, Seaton (East Devon), Seaton Delaval, Seaton Sluice, Sedgefield, Seghill, Settle, Shaftesbury, Shalmsford Street, Sharlston, Shenley, Shepley, Sherborne, Sherburn (County Durham), Sherburn in Elmet, Sheringham, Shifnal, Sildon, Shipston-on-Stour, Shipton under Wychwood, Shorne Ridgeway, Shrivenham/Watchfield, Sible Hedingham, Silloth, Silsden, Silver End, Skellingthorpe, Skelmanthorpe/Clayton West, Skelton (Redcar and Cleveland), Smallfield, Snaith, Snettisham, Soham, Somersham (Huntingdonshire), Somerton (South Somerset), Sonning Common, South Brent, South Cave, South Cerney, South Darent, South Molton, South Petherton, Southam, Southminster, Southwater, Southwell, Southwold, Spencers Wood, Spilsby, Spixworth, Springvale, St Agnes, St Blazey, St Columb Major, St Day,

St Ives (Cornwall), St Leonards, St Mary's Bay, Stakeford, Stalham, Stamford Bridge, Stansted Mountfitchet, Staplehurst, Steyning, Stocksfield, Stokenchurch, Stokesley, Stonebroom, Stoney Stanton, Storrington, Stotfold, Stratton, Strensall, Studley, Sturminster Newton, Sturry, Sutton (East Cambridgeshire), Sutton Bridge, Swaffham, Swanmore, Swillington, Tadcaster, Takeley, Tangmere, Tarleton, Tarporley, Tenbury Wells, Tenterden, Terrington St Clement, Tetbury, Teynham, Thaxted, Theydon Bois, Thirsk, Thorngumbald, Thorpe Willoughby, Thrapston, Thurcroft, Thurston, Tibshelf, Tickhill, Timsbury, Tiptree, Toddington, Tollesbury, Torpoint, Totnes, Towcester, Treeton, Trimdon, Tutbury/Hatton, Tuxford, Twyford (Wokingham), Upper Poppleton, Upper Tean, Uppingham, Upton (Wakefield), Upwell, Ushaw Moor, Ventnor, Wadebridge, Wadhurst, Waltham Chase, Warboys, Wareham, Wargrave, Washingborough, Watchet, Water Orton, Waterbeach, Watton, Weaverham, Weedon Bec, Wellesbourne, Welton (West Lindsey), Wem, Wendover, West Bergholt, West Chilton Common, West Clandon, West Kingsdown, West Mersea, West Wellow, West Winch, Westcott, Westergate, Westerham, Weston (Weymouth and Portland), Weston Rhyn, Whaley Bridge, Whalley, Wheathampstead, Wheatley Hill, Whitchurch (Basingstoke and Deane), Whitchurch (Shropshire), Whitwell (Bolsover), Wickham Bishops, Widdrington Station, Wideopen, Wigton, Willand, Willaston, Willingham, Willington (County Durham), Willington (South Derbyshire), Williton, Wilsden, Wilton (Wiltshire), Wimlington, Wincanton, Winchcombe, Windermere, Wing, Wingate, Winscombe, Winslow, Winterbourne Gunner/Porton, Winterton, Wirksworth, Withernsea BUA, Witley, Wivenhoe, Wollaston, Wolsingham, Wolston, Woodcote, Woodhall Spa, Woodstock (West Oxfordshire), Wool, Woolton Hill, Wootton (Bedford), Wootton (Isle of Wight), Wotton-under-Edge, Writtle, Wroughton, Yapton, Yarnton, Yaxley, Yelverton, Yorkley.

Small rural towns/large villages: Population 2,000 to 2,500

Acle, Aldeburgh, Alderbury, Alresford, Arnside, Asfordby, Aspatria, Aston-on-Trent, Axbridge, Bassingbourn, Bere Alston, Berkeley, Billingham, Bishops Lydeard, Bishopsteignton, Bletchingley, Bottisham, Boughton Under Bleau, Bozeat, Brantham, Brinscall, Broughton (Kettering), Brownhills West, Burgh le Marsh, Burton upon Stather, Caistor, Camblesforth, Camelford, Cannington, Carnon Downs, Caton, Charfield, Chiddingfold, Chilcompton, Chipping Campden, Chiseldon, Clare, Cliffe, Clophill, Coates (Fenland), Coleford (Mendip), Coltishall, Comberton, Cotford St Luke, Credenhill, Cromford, Crossways, Darenth, Debenham, Drayton (Vale of White Horse), Dunchurch, Duxford, East Bergholt, East Harling, East Peckham, Eastry, Edgworth, Elsenham, Eton Wick, Fernhurst, Flexbury, Fowey, Galgate, Glapwell, Goostrey, Goxhill, Great Barford, Great Horkesley, Great Houghton (Barnsley), Grimston, Halton, Hambleton (Wyre), Harbury, Harlington, Hathersage, Hatton, Haxey BUA, Hemingbrough, Hermitage, Hightown, Hingham, Horam, Ilchester, Ipplepen, Isleham, Ixworth, Keadby, Keelby, Kelvedon Hatch, Keyingham, Kineton, Kings Sutton, Kingston Bagpuize, Kintbury, Langho, Langold, Langtoft (South Kesteven), Larkhill, Leconfield, Lenham, Leven, Leyburn, Lindholme, Little Dunmow, Little Haywood, Long Bennington, Long Crendon, Long Hanborough, Longstanton, Longtown, Lowdham, Luddenden Foot, Lyndhurst, Manea, Maple Cross, Marden (Maidstone), Market Bosworth, Market Lavington, Mattishall, Maulden, Mawsley Village, Mayfield (Wealden), Meden Vale, Mellor Brook, Mevagissey, Millbrook, Milnthorpe, Moberley, Moira, Morton (South Kesteven), Much Wenlock, Nafferton, Needingworth, Netherton, New Arley, Newington, Newport (Uttlesford), Norton (Doncaster), Oakley (Bedford), Padstow, Pannal, Partridge Green, Pucklechurch, Reepham, Renishaw, Riccall, Rickinghall, Roade, Robertsbridge, Rode Heath, Rothbury, Sapcote, Scholes, Seamer (Scarborough), Sedbergh, Severn Beach, Shawbury, Shenstone, Shortstown, South Wonston, St Dennis, St Margaret's at Cliffe, St Martin's, St Osyth, St Stephen, Stalbridge, Stanford in the Vale, Stanton (St. Edmundsbury), Steeple Claydon, Stilton, Stoke sub Hamdon, Stone (Aylesbury Vale), Stow-on-the-Wold, Sutton Valence/Langley Heath, Swavesey, Sway, Swineshead, Tarvin, Tatworth, Thornley, Thurlby, Tisbury, Tow Law, Trimdon Colliery, Uffculme, Wanborough, Wateringbury, Watlington (King's Lynn and West Norfolk), Watlington (South Oxfordshire), Watton at Stone, Wells-next-the-Sea, West Malling, West Rainton, Westham, Weston Turville, Westoning, Westwoodside, Whitley (Wiltshire), Whittington (Lichfield), Wickham, Wickham Market, Wilstead, Winwick, Witchford, Witham St Hughs, Wiveliscombe, Woolavington, Wynyard Village.

Large villages: Population 1,500 to 2,000

Aberford, Abridge, Acton, Alconbury, Aldbourne, Alveley, Ambrosden, Ashwell, Aslockton, Audlem, Badersfield, Balsham, Banwell, Bardney, Barlaston, Barnburgh, Barnetby le Wold, Barrow (St. Edmundsbury), Barrowby, Baschurch, Bean, Biddulph Moor, Billingborough, Bishop's Castle, Bishop's Itchington, Bishop's Tachbrook, Black Notley, Blakedown, Blakeney (Forest of Dean), Blewbury, Blisworth, Brading, Bradninch, Bramham, Branton, Braunston, Bredon, Bridge, Broadmayne/West Knighton, Brompton, Brompton-on-Swale, Buckingham Park, Burbage, Burniston, Burstwick, Buxted, Caldecote, Campsall, Carlton (Selby), Charing, Cheddington, Chilworth, Chinley, Clenchwarton, Cockfield, Collett's Green, Compton (West Berkshire), Cookley, Cornholme, Creech St Michael, Crick, Croft (Blaby), Cropwell Bishop, Curry Rivel, Dearham, Deddington, Delabole, Ditchingham, Donisthorpe, Doveridge, Duckmanton, Earith, East Bridgford, East Hendred, Easton (South Norfolk), Eccles, Eggborough, Elmstead Market, Emsay, Evenwood, Evercreech, Everton (New Forest), Ewhurst, Exton (East Devon),

Eythorne, Fairlight, Feniton, Findern, Findon, Five Oak Green, Flamborough, Flexford, Flimby, Freeland, Friston, Frizington, Gargrave, Geddington, Glington, Goldsithney, Gosberton, Gotham, Grain, Grassington, Great Barton, Great Bentley, Great Broughton (Allerdale), Great Ecclestone, Great Haywood, Great Yeldham, Greenfield, Griston, Hale, Hambleton (Selby), Hampton Magna, Hamstreet, Hanslope, Hapton, Harrold, Harston, Harthill, Hartlebury, Hartwell, Harvington, Harwell, Haslingfield, Hatfield Heath, Hatherleigh, Hathern, Haverigg, Hawley, Haydon Bridge, Hayfield, Heathfield (Teignbridge), Helmsley, Hemyock, Henstridge, Hibaldstow, High Bentham, High Halstow, High Littleton, Highnam, Hixon, Hockley Heath, Holt (Wiltshire), Hook Norton, Horndon on the Hill, Horsmonden, Houghton on the Hill, Howden-le-Wear, Huncote, Hutton Cranswick, Hutton Rudby, Ingleton, Ingrave, Inkberrow, Kedington, Kelloe, Ketton, Kingsdown (Dover), Kingsley (Cheshire West and Chester), Kingswood (Maidstone), Kirkby Lonsdale, Kirkby Stephen, Knighton (South Hams), Knockholt Pound/Halstead, Knowle, Landkey, Layer-de-la-Haye, Leasingham, Little Downham, Little Kingshill, Littlebourne, Littleton Panell, Locking, Long Itchington, Low Etherley, Lower Kingswood, Lower Quinton, Lugwardine, Lydbrook, Lyminge, Lymne, Lymstone, Marcham, Meldreth, Meppershall, Meriden, Merriott, Mickle Trafford, Mickleton (Cotswold), Middle Barton, Middle Winterslow, Minsterley, Misterton, Mistley, Monk Fryston, Moulton (South Holland), Mount Hawke, Mullion, Mundford, Necton, Nether Heyford, Newport (East Riding of Yorkshire), Newton Longville, Newton Poppleford, Newton-with-Scales, North Leigh, North Somercotes, North Tawton, Northiam, Northleach, Oakington, Old Stratford, Oxenhope, Painswick, Patrington, Pattingham, Pensilva, Penwithick, Point Clear, Pontesbury, Pool, Potterne, Probus, Puriton, Rackheath, Radley, Ramsey (Wiltshire), Ravenstone, Rawcliffe, Richings Park, Roydon, Ruardean, Rudgwick, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Salcombe, Scawby, Seahouses, Seascale, Sharnbrook, Shepherdswell, Sherfield on Loddon, Shilbottle, Shipdham, Shipton Bellinger, Shotley Gate, Shrewton, Shurdington, Silkstone, Silsoe, Silverstone, Skelton (York), Skinningrove, Sleights, South Hiendley, South Milford, South Nutfield, South Witham, Southwick (Wiltshire), St Bees, St Cleer, St Just, Stanhope, Stanwick, Starcross, Stewkley, Stoke Golding, Stoke Prior, Stonesfield, Stretham, Sudbrooke, Sutton Lane Ends, Tattenhall, Templecombe, Tetney, Thorney, Thornton-le-Dale, Thorp Arch, Ticehurst, Tickton, Tideswell, Tollerton (Rushcliffe), Town Row, Ulceby, Upton upon Severn, Waddesdon, Wainfleet All Saints, Walkern, Walkington, Weeting, West Haddon, West Hill, West Horndon, West Walton, Westfield (Rother), Westonzoyland, Wetheral, Whaplode, Wheaton Aston, Wheelton/Great Knowley, Wheldrake, Whittlesford, Wick (South Gloucestershire), Wickwar, Wilberfoss, Winford (Isle of Wight), Winsley, Woldingham, Wood End (North Warwickshire), Wood Street Village, Woodborough (Gedling), Woodbury, Woodhouse Eaves, Woodsetts, Wooler, Woolpit, Wormley, Wragby, Wrington, Wrotham, Wroxall, Wye, Yealmpton, Yoxall.