A Typology of the Smaller Rural Towns of England

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1   Introduction

1.1   This note describes the development of a typology or classification of the smaller rural towns and larger villages of England based upon the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the people who live in them. The research was begun as part of the work of the Rural Evidence Research Centre (RERC) at Birkbeck College, but has recently been given further impetus and practical support by the Birkbeck Business Relations Unit and Action for Market Towns (AMT).

1.2   This is not, at this stage, a study of market towns in any formal sense but might be seen as a basis for such a study. Here we call the elements of the typology variously 'rural towns', 'rural places' or 'rural settlements' but recognise that none of these terms is an adequate description of the range of settlements included.

1.3   The places classified are officially known as 'urban settlements' from which have been selected those with populations between 1500 and 40,000 in 2001.[1] This is considerably wider than the 2000 to 20,000 population range

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[1] 'Urban Settlements' are defined by the Office for National Statistics as parcels of land that are built over in a 'contiguous' fashion *and* which have a minimum area of 20 ha and a minimum population of 1500.

suggested by DETR/MAFF in the Rural White Paper of 2000 as a definition of a 'market town' and it goes beyond the 30,000 population maximum used in the rural_urban classification to identify the 'Larger Market Towns' included in the calculation of the rural population at local authority district level, although it is close to the range of the smallest and largest towns in the AMT membership i.e. Bishop's Stortford (35,300) and Holt (West Wiltshire (1532).

1.4   As the various population ranges imply, there is no consensus on a population basis for 'market towns'. Depending on geographical and other circumstances a sizeable rural centre may have fewer services than its population alone might suggest; whilst small places – especially those with some specialised function such as tourism or recreation - may have considerably more, and/or different types of services than those required to meet the needs of a local population. Given the social and economic diversity of modern rural England, population size alone cannot hope to capture the range of types of location in which rural services are provided.

1.5   The population range 1500 - 40,000 used in this study has been chosen to include as wide a range of rural settlements and geographical circumstances as possible. Some of the places included will be recognised as services centres but others will be predominantly (or even wholly) residential centres. It could also be argued that many of the places included in this population range should not be called 'rural' in any obvious sense, for example, those located on the fringes of major towns and cities.

1.6   In this paper we are concerned with creating a framework for understanding the character of a particular group of settlements within a wider settlement framework which is more complex than a simple 'rural_urban' dichotomy implies. However, having created the typology and consulted on its interpretation and its potential for application[2], we are in the process of going further, using it as part of a process of classifying smaller towns as service centres. Out of this is likely to emerge a class of places that currently operate as rural service 'hubs' or 'market towns' or which could serve as rural service centres in the future given appropriate investment and/or planning action.

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[2] At the Victoria Hall, Oakham on 20 April 2009. A report of the meeting can be found at http://towns.org.uk/2009/04/09/typology-event/.

2 Rural Towns in Context

2.1 There were 1627 'urban settlements' as defined by ONS in England within the population range 1500 - 40,000 at the time of the 2001 Census. Eighteen of these were military establishments and two were university campuses (Keele and Lancaster). These have population characteristics peculiar to their function and were excluded from the study. This gives a total of 1607 places to be classified.[3]

2.2 The significance of rural towns within the settlement system of England is expressed in terms of population in Table 1. In 2001 the total population of these places was 11.1 million. This was somewhat more than the populations of Greater London (8.5 million) and the West Midlands conurbation (2.3 million) put together. In aggregate, they represent nearly one quarter (22.5 percent) of the population of the country as a whole. Moreover, these are some of the fastest growing settlements. Between 2001 and 2006, the population of rural towns increased by an estimated 565,000 or 5.3 percent - well over twice as fast as the rate of growth of larger towns and cities. [4]

Table 1 Urban Areas in England Total Population by Population Size (millions) 2001

| Urban Area Size	Population 2001	
	Number	Percent
Over 500,000	17.86	36.11
250 - 500,000	4.89	9.89
100 - 250,000	6.31	12.76
40 -100,000	4.82	9.75
1500 - 40,000	11.12	22.48
Rural remainder	4.46	9.02
Total	49.46	100.00

Source: Census 2001 Urban Areas Tables

2.3 Most of the 1607 rural towns and larger villages in the study are small. Just under 45 percent (680) have fewer than 3000 residents and a further 20

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[3] Note this includes Hay on Wye which is in Powys, Wales but has a Herefordshire postcode. Inclusion here makes aspects of data processing simpler.

[4] The figure for growth is arrived at by calculating the number of new addresses within urban settlements and on their immediate periphery and factoring for an average household size of 2.36 persons. See section 6 below.

percent having between 3000 and 5000 residents (Figure 1). Only a small number (67, 4 percent) are over 25,000 in population.

Figure 1: The Size of Rural Places
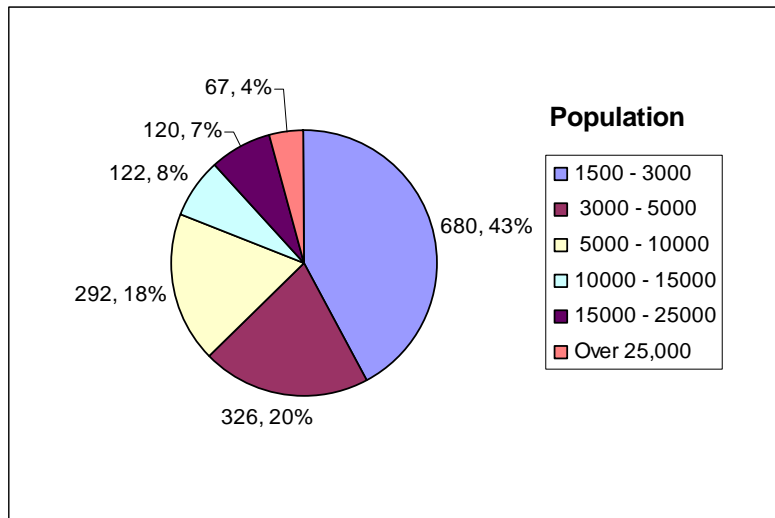
3   The Typology: Preliminary Comments

3.1   The typology of rural towns is constructed using 48 variables from the 2001 Census chosen so as to be representative of the diverse range of demographic, occupational and social characteristics of people living in smaller settlements. The statistical and grouping procedures used in creating the typology places rural towns into 8 main types. Among the types identified are *commuting towns* with relatively high levels of professional and managerial workers, towns with high proportions of *younger households* with families, towns with mainly *retired* persons and towns in which many households are experiencing various forms of *disadvantage and difficulty*.

3.2   Reducing the 1607 settlements to 8 types contributes, paradoxically perhaps, to a better understanding of the diversity of the places involved and provides a simplified basis for further analysis, for example, in studies of the patterns of population change or service availability. Each group consists of a recognisable and, in terms of demographic and social processes, a coherent set of characteristics which can be named from an examination of its key input characteristics. It is important, therefore, to bear in mind those aspects of the process of constructing the typology which affect how we

interpret the groups and the way in which they impact upon applications of the typology.

3.3 First, the typology is derived from a selected set of population (mainly household) characteristics taken from the 2001 Census. This selection is designed to be inclusive of the wide range of characteristics and combinations of characteristics that can be met with across all of the settlements in the study. A very different set of measures chosen, say, to reflect mainly age and occupational structure is likely to result in a different classification. With this issue in mind, tests undertaken for this study using different numbers and combinations of the variables selected around the theme of the *general* social and economic structure of places did produce an underlying stability in the results.

3.4 Secondly, the data used in the study refer to the situation of the towns as it was eight years ago at the time of the 2001 Census. Since then many places in the study have changed, especially under the pressure of population growth, although many of these will have evolved in ways that reflects their characteristics in 2001. Given this context of change it is sensible to treat the typology as a 'benchmark' or 'snapshot' of rural settlements at a point in the recent past since which time broad regional and specific local changes have produced an effect on individual towns. However, some towns will have changed more than others.

3.5 Thirdly, although the typology is derived using objective statistical and numerical processes, the critical decision on the number of groups making up the typology is a subjective one. In our case an 'eight group' solution was chosen as a compromise between more *detail* (which reflects the high degree of diversity among small rural towns and implies having as many groups as possible) and more *generality* (which makes the classification more 'user friendly' in the sense that there is a smaller number of groups to deal with). We should also bear in mind that because the groups selected still have significant internal variation, *some* members within a given group will have *some* characteristics which are more like those of members of another group or groups.

4 Producing the Typology

4.1 The statistical and mathematical processes used in the classification process are well established and have been widely applied to many different

types of situation in the social sciences. The description of these processes can be simplified (although it is difficult to remove the technical jargon entirely) and set out in terms of four main stages as follows.

(i) The Selection and Preparation of Variables

4.2 The 48 variables characterizing each place were selected so as to cover 8 main aspects of the demographic, social and economic structure of a town. The 8 groups with examples of the variables within each group are shown in Figure 2. A detailed description of all the variables is given in Annex 1. All the variables are measured as percentages, generally expressed in terms of numbers of households. However, because the *range* of each percentage across the 1607 towns can be widely different for each variable, a *standardized* measure comparable between variables is actually input into the analysis.

Figure 2 The Input Variables

Demography	Economic Activity
8 variables	*6 variables*
age structure	caring/home tending
ethnicity/birthplace	part time
birthplace	unemployed
Households	**Occupation**
8 variables	*7 variables*
size	agric/manufg.
single person	hotel/restaurants
pensioner	financial services
children	wholesale
Housing	**Access and Travel to Work**
7 variables	*4 variables*
social/private	no car
terraced/detached	TTW public transport
central heating	>20km TTW
	home working
Education/Skills	
7 variables	
qualifications	**Health**
students	*1 variable*
occupation type	long term illness

(ii) *Finding Patterns of Variation in the Data*

4.3   Patterns of variation in the data are identified by the way in which groups of variables are related to each other. A statistical technique called *Principal Components Analysis* is used to identify such relationships. At the start, a simple numerical relationship (correlation coefficient) between each variable and every other variable in the data is calculated. The resulting table of relationships displays a more or less complex pattern with some pairs of variables correlating high and positive (high values with high values) with each other and others high and negative (high values with low values) etc. Other pairs of variables will display little relationship.

4.4   This inter-correlation structure is useful because it suggests that certain types of variables are measuring a similar, underlying idea or construct, for example, economic well-being represented by indicators of high income versus disadvantage. Principal Components Analysis brings out these underlying *dimensions* from the inter-relationships between the variables so that the components are unrelated to one another, that is, they represent statistically independent structures within the original data. These structures can be named from the variables of which they are comprised. Usually, a small number of such 'components' will be representative of a large amount of the total variation that exists in the data

4.5   In the case of the 48 measures on the 1607 rural places in this study 5 underlying dimensions summarize just over 62 percent of the total variation in the original data. The first and most general of these components summarizes just over 25 percent of the total variation in the data and contrasts a group of variables suggesting, broadly, *economic well being* (households in professional and non manual jobs, better housing conditions and no children) with, potentially, *less good material conditions* (i.e. low skill jobs, terraced housing with fewer rooms per person and no car). The second component accounts for a further 18 percent of the total variation in the data and broadly contrasts younger with older age groups in different types of economic activity.

(iii) *Scoring Rural Towns on the Dimensions of Variation*

4.6   The next stage in the process calculates a 'score' on the identified dimensions in the data as if they were variables in their own right – which

they are, but of a much more general nature than the original measures. On the first dimension identified above, for example, New Addington (Greater London), Sheerness (Kent) and Penzance (Cornwall) have scores indicating lower material conditions for many households whilst places like St Leonards (East Sussex), Ravenshead (Nottinghamshire) and West Chiltington (West Sussex) have scores indicating general economic well being.

(iv) Grouping Rural Towns

4.6   The final task is to cluster towns according to their scores on the 5 main dimensions in the data. There are several different types of mathematical clustering method available from which we have selected the so-called *k-means* method, again because it has been tried and tested in various social science applications.

4.7   The *k-means* method of clustering is based upon the numerical 'distances' between the objects (towns) when represented by the scores on the five component dimensions. The number of clusters required is pre-determined and a 'centroid' or centre of these sets of scores is assigned. Distances between the objects and the centroid are calculated and the objects are grouped based upon minimum distances. The process continues until no objects are moved between groups. In essence, the method finds a division within the data in which the towns within each cluster are as close to each other and as far from towns in other clusters as possible. After several iterations of the procedure we chose 8 groups or clusters as a compromise between too much generality and too much detail.

5   The Typology

5.1   In this section we describe the make up of each of the eight types of town in terms of the original input census variables which define them as a group. Each group is given a short name derived from the prevailing character of that group based, where possible, on two types of characteristic displayed: the prevailing demography of the group and the broad economic activities (occupations) of the working population and/or housing type and condition.

5.2   It is important to stress that the description of each group of settlements in terms of the original input variables should not be taken to imply that the rural places comprising that group possess *all* of the characteristics that defined

that group to the same degree. The places in the group are defined by component scores that make them generally more like each other than members of other groups, but the way in which the original census data define the *group* of settlements is via a group *average* which is derived from the values for individual places comprising that group. When interpreting the character of places from their membership of a group it should also be noted that reference to 'occupations' in the descriptions refer to the jobs of people *resident* in a place and does not necessarily mean that the activities involved are carried on *in* that place.

5.3 The groups are now described in a standardized fashion comprising a short name, the number of places in the group and the percentage of the national total of small towns in that group, the key component variables of the group and its aggregate national geography as shown in Figure 3. The groups are mapped separately in Annex 2 for greater clarity whilst more detailed regional maps of the groups cross referenced against population size can be found in Annex 3.

Group 1 : Middle Aged, Managerial Jobs
236 places (14.7%)

This group is characterized by relatively high values on **young/middle age groups (25–44)**, **intermediate and managerial occupations,** people working in **public administration, education and defence**, **detached housing, households with adult children** and a high proportion of **carers**. It has low numbers of residents with **no qualifications**.

Geographically the group is found on the outskirts of the big cities and towns outside London and along the south coast from Essex and Kent and into Devon and Cornwall.

Group 2 : Single Persons, Routine Jobs
261 places (16.3%)

Places in this group are particularly characterized by **persons living alone** (separated/divorced and pensioners), as well as people in **routine and lower supervisory** and **managerial** occupations and people living in **rented accommodation. Car ownership** is low whilst **travel to work by public transport** is relatively high**.**

Geographically this group is well scattered across the rural areas of the country but particularly in the East of England (Norfolk and Suffolk), in the South West (Wiltshire, Cornwall and Devon). There are few examples of this type of place around the main population centres.

Group 3 : Older Persons, Leisure Jobs
123 places (7.7%)

This group is characterized by **older persons**, **single pensioners**, **workers in hotels and restaurants**, and **part time workers**, especially among men. It Also has high numbers of **people working from home** and of **second homes**.

This group of places is found overwhelmingly in coastal areas (for example, on the Isle of Wight and in Devon and Norfolk) and in attractive rural areas (e.g. Hampshire, Gloucestershire and North Yorkshire).
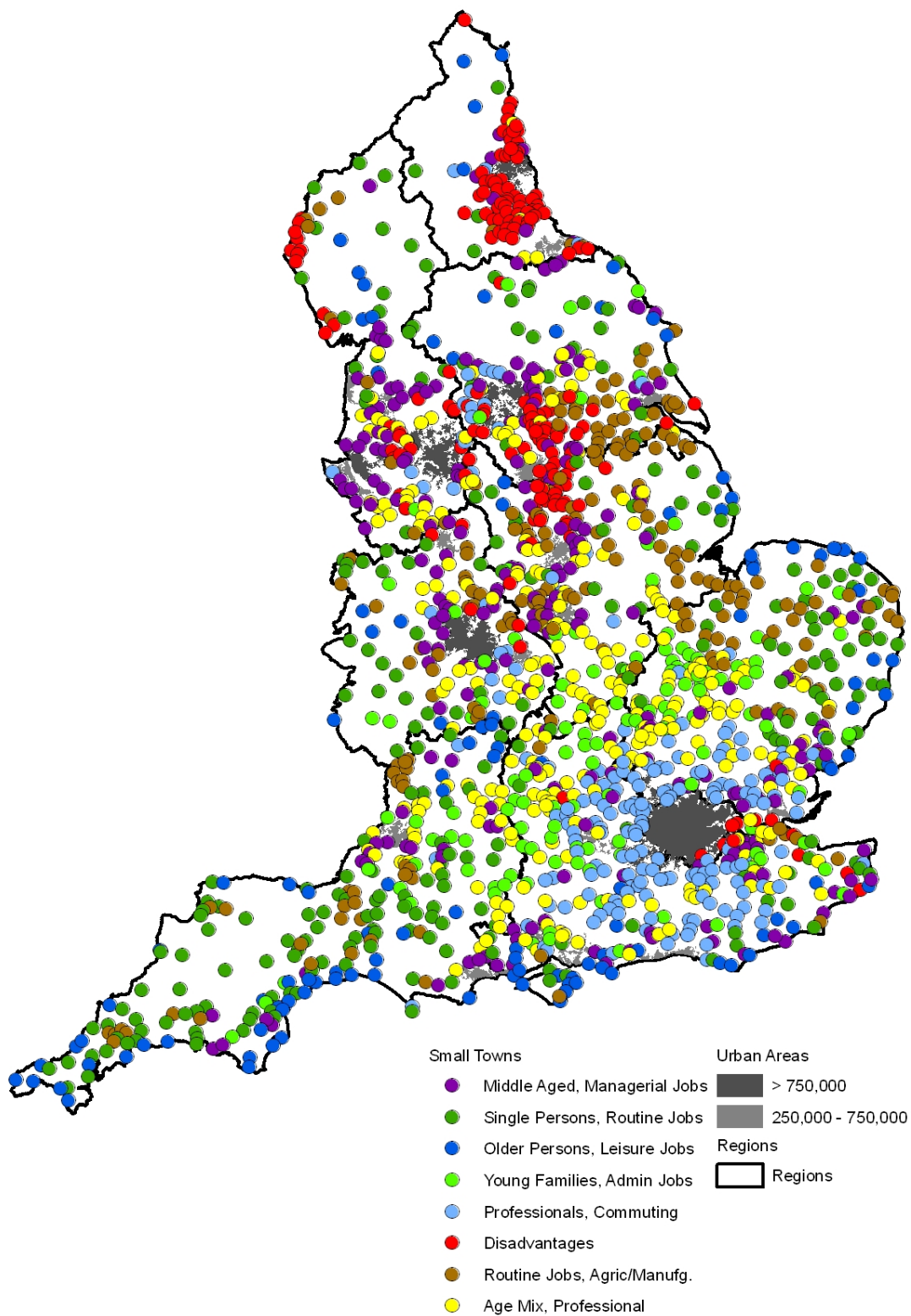
Group 4 : Young Families, Administrative Jobs
129 places (8%)

The group is typified by high proportions of people in the **25 – 44 age groups** and **women looking after the home**. Occupations tend to be in the **higher managerial and professional groups** and in **public administration** (including defence, teaching and social security).

Most places in this group are located in what geographers have called the 'Golden Belt' a stretch of country going from north Wiltshire, through Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire to Cambridgeshire with an 'offshoot' in Berkshire. This area grew rapidly in the period 1981-2001 and continues to do so. There are few places of this type outside this area but where they do exist they are in the rural areas around sizeable towns.

Figure 3 : The National Pattern of Rural Town Types

Small Towns

- 🟣 Middle Aged, Managerial Jobs
- 🟢 Single Persons, Routine Jobs
- 🔵 Older Persons, Leisure Jobs
- 🟩 Young Families, Admin Jobs
- 🔵 Professionals, Commuting
- 🔴 Disadvantages
- 🟤 Routine Jobs, Agric/Manufg.
- 🟡 Age Mix, Professional

Urban Areas

- ⬛ > 750,000
- ⬜ 250,000 - 750,000

Regions

- ⬜ Regions

Group 5 : Professionals, Commuting
188 places (11.7%)

This group is characterized by high proportions of **professional and higher managerial workers** and by people employed in **intermediate managerial occupations**. There are high proportions of people in **financial service occupations** and people who **commute over 20 kilometers** to work. Use of **public transport** is also proportionately high. There comparatively high proportions of **Asian/British Asian** households relative to the other groups of settlements.

As might be expected from its social and occupational description, this group of rural places is predominantly located within commuting belt around Great London and particularly along the major rail routes into London. There are, however, examples of these types of places around other cities, especially Leeds/Bradford and Greater Manchester.

Group 6 : Disadvantages, Routine Employment[5]
181 places (11.2%)

This group includes high proportions of census measures that have been used to identify social and economic disadvantages of various kinds. These include: **routine and low skill occupations, lack of qualifications, unemployment, long term illness, lone parents, lack of a car** and the presence of **social housing**.

The geography of most of the members of this group is overwhelmingly that of the former coalfield areas, namely, Notts/Derby, South and West Yorkshire and Northumberland/Durham. Other, smaller, geographical clusters of places in this group are the Cumbrian coast, Teesside and east Lancashire. Places not in such clusters include Hayle (Cornwall), New Addington (Greater London) and Withernsea (East Riding of Yorkshire).

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[5] The plural noun is used deliberately to indicate that places in this group, in aggregate and on average, have many of the census characteristics used in, for example, the Index of Multiple Deprivation. This does *not* necessarily mean that either the group as a whole or individual places within it are 'disadvantaged' in a prescriptive or policy sense.

Group 7 : Routine Jobs, Agriculture/Manufacturing
209 places (13%)

This group is similar to Group 6 in that it is characterized by **routine and low skill occupations and lack of qualifications.** However, this also typified by high percentages of people working in **agricultura**l and **manufacturing** occupations and in the **wholesale** trades. Unemployment (in April 2001) was low.

As might be expected this group maps onto two main types of area: rural areas and generally those with labour intensive agricultural production of various kinds (e.g. Norfolk, the Fens, mid Somerset and Lincolnshire/North Lincolnshire) and around the major manufacturing centres of the West and East Midlands, West Yorkshire and Humberside.

Group 8 : Age Mix, Professional Jobs
290 places (18%)

This, the largest single group in the typology, is also typified by **professional and managerial** workers and high levels of **educational qualifications** but is distinguished from Group 1 by a broader **age** range (relatively high numbers of **young people**, but also of **middle aged** and **older people**) and from Group 6 by **lower levels of longer distance commuting**. Also unlike either of these groups there are high proportions of **households in detached houses** and very low levels of **public transport use.**

The geography of this group is similar to Group 4 in that it is mostly concentrated within the 'Golden Belt' of Middle England. However, it is nationally more widespread than Group 4 and includes locations on the outskirts of all the major urban centres outside London with the notable exception of Tyneside where only Castle Morpeth and Coxhoe (both somewhat distant from the conurbation), are of this type.

6 Applying the Typology, some examples

6.1 In this section we present three applications of the typology to demonstrate its value in the analysis of a range of other attributes of smaller rural settlements. Each example is, however, of more than passing interest and merits more detailed examination for the light it sheds on the settlement and population

structure of rural England and for its implications for a range of planning and development policies. The first looks at the size of places within the groups of the typology, the second presents estimates of recent population growth based upon a proxy for changes in the number of households, whilst the third investigates the distribution of places without General Practitioner surgeries. Data are taken from the extensive RERC database on small towns and larger villages.

(i) The Population of Rural Towns.

6.2   The overall size distribution of the places in the study is decidedly 'skewed' towards smaller settlements – just over 1000 places (63 percent) had a resident population of under 5,000 in 2001 and only 189 (11.8 percent) had a resident population of more than 15,000 (Figure 1). However, the significance of this is tempered by the fact that whilst the total population of the smaller places in 2001 was 2.7 million, that of the larger places was some 4.5 million.

6.3   There is considerable variation across the typology in the size of settlements comprising a group (Figure 3). Group 7 (Routine Jobs, Agric/Manufg.), consisting mainly of places in deeper rural areas, has the largest share of smaller places. Just over 80 percent (170) of places in this group are in the population range 1500 – 5000. This is, closely followed by two groups with a very different social and economic character. Group 1, ('Middle Aged, Managerial Jobs') and Group 8 ('Age Mix, Managerial Jobs') have more than three quarters of their settlements in the smallest size ranges. Both of these groups have a significant 'white collar' element in their social make up and both are generally located on the outskirts of the major and large cities which tend to be areas of planning constraint.

6.4   At the other end of the size spectrum the two groups with more than their national share of larger places are characterized by jobs of a routine nature and/or they have more households experiencing disadvantages of various kinds. Group 2 (Single Persons, Routine Jobs) and Group 6 (Disadvantages, Routine Jobs) have proportionately more places in the two largest size categories compared with the country as a whole. The tendency for the characteristics defining these two group to be associated with larger places is confirmed by their over representation in the mid-range size classes i.e. 5-10,000 and 10-15,000 and a disproportionately lower frequency of appearance among the smallest rural places.

(ii) The Recent Physical Growth of Rural Towns

6.5 Assessing the recent growth of smaller rural towns using official data sources is limited by the fact that these sources – for example, the Office for National Statistics 'small area' population estimates - relate to wards which for most places are larger (and sometimes very much larger) than the 'built on land' representation of a place used in the typology. Furthermore, these data do not allow us to identify more detailed aspects of growth which are especially significant in the case of small settlements, namely, the extent to which growth has occurred *within* a place compared with growth on its *periphery*.[6] In order to make population estimates of this kind we must turn to different sources of data.

6.6 Royal Mail's *Postcode Address File* (PAF) is a list of standard addresses. Each address (or 'residential delivery point' (RDP) in Royal Mail terminology) roughly equates to a dwelling and has a full postcode which can be converted to an Ordnance Survey grid reference. The grid references allow us to locate the postcode and its component RDPs with great accuracy. Moreover, the PAF is updated on a quarterly basis making it possible to estimate changes in the number of dwellings in an area.[7]

6.7 In order to compare broadly *internal* with *peripheral* growth we establish two areal definitions for each town. One is the official urban area boundary which represents the extent of contiguously built up land in 2001. The other, in the jargon of GIS, is a 'buffer' of 500m around the 2001 built up area. These two areas – the extent in 2001 and an area of potential external development - are used to 'capture' those postcodes (with their component RDPs or 'households') which were present in April 2001 and 2006. The change in the number of residential delivery points can then be partitioned between that part associated with the *intensification* of the urban area as it existed in 2001 and that part between the urban area boundary and the buffer indicating peripheral *expansion*.

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[6] This was an important theme of the Taylor Report which referred to the 'dough-nutting' of market towns by the addition on their outskirts of 'anonymous housing estates without community facilities …[etc] ' *Living Working Countryside, Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing*, DCLG 2008

[7] In converting the number of dwellings estimated from PAF into households and hence population certain adjustments would be required including for the relationship between the rate at which Royal Mail adds new postcodes compared to deleting old ones (the latter tends to be slower), the number of second home addresses in a place and the number of residential units at non residential postcodes. A postcode based estimate of household growth is an indication of *trend* and needs careful interpretation in relation to individual places.

6.8 Table 2 shows the growth in the number of households allocated to *intensification* and *expansion*. In total there was an estimated growth of some 251,000 dwellings in rural towns between 2001 and 2006. Just over 154,000 of these estimated new addresses/households were accommodated within the 2001 urban area, whilst nearly 97,500 were accommodated in town expansions. Relative to the pre-existing number of households in these areas these represent growth rates of 3.5 per cent for 'intensification' and 18.6 percent for 'expansion', though there were generally many more household units involved in the former.

6.9 Differences among the typology groups in terms of rates of urban *intensification* are relatively small, although those for groups 2 (Singles, Routine Jobs), 4 (Families, Managerial Jobs) and 7 (Routine Jobs, Agriculture/Manufacturing) are above the average for all rural towns. Differences among the typology groups in rates of urban *expansion* are all several times higher compared with the rate of infilling and two groups stand out in particular. The 'Young Families, Managerial Jobs' group with an expansion growth rate of 32.4 percent and located mainly in the Wiltshire to Cambridgeshire belt expanded at nearly twice the rate of expansion for all towns, whilst the 'Singles, Routine Jobs' group located in the more deeply rural areas of Norfolk, Suffolk, Wiltshire, Cornwall and Devon experienced 25 percent expansion growth.

Table 2 Rural Town Growth 2001 – 2006 by Urban Intensification and Expansion.

Group	INTENSIFICATION			EXPANSION		
	Urban Area 2001	Change 2001-06		Buffer 2001	Change 2001-06	
		Number	*Percent*		*Number*	*Percent*
Middle Age, Managerial	425.0	10.3	2.4	64.9	5.5	8.4
Singles, Routine Jobs	1018.5	46.6	4.6	110.9	27.8	25.0
Older Persons, Part Time	287.3	10.8	3.8	30.5	4.6	15.1
Families, Managerial	386.1	17.1	4.4	38.8	12.5	32.4
Professionals, Commuters	679.8	21.6	3.2	69.3	11.2	16.2
Disadvantages	738.5	13.5	1.8	97.8	15.6	16.0
Routine, Agric-Manufg	344.4	14.5	4.2	52.6	9.5	18.0
Age Mix, Managerial	504.7	19.5	3.9	59.6	10.7	18.0
Total	**4384.2**	**153.7**	**3.5**	**524.4**	**97.4**	**18.6**

(iii) General Practitioner Surgeries in Rural Towns

6.10   Finally, we examine the distribution of GP surgeries across the groups comprising the typology. Data on the locations of GP surgeries were taken from the current ONS Neighbourhood Statistics website and were compared against entries in other web sources for obvious anomalies. The OS grid reference for a surgery was derived from the postcode and allocated to an area within 500m of the 2001 urban settlement boundary so as to take account of town expansion and the location of surgeries outside the main settlement area. The present analysis is concerned only with the location of GP practices and does not take into account the number of GPs working in a practice or the quality of the service provided. [8]

6.11   Decisions on investment in existing or new GP surgeries are made by the Primary Care Trust. Criteria for new provision include an above average patient list (the national average is 1750), social and economic deprivation and high levels of ill health and disease. Amongst the settlements in this study 1345 (84 percent) have at least one GP surgery and 262 (16 percent) have no surgery. The largest places *without* a surgery are Guide Post (pop. 9,350) and Seaton Delaval (pop. 7062), both in the North East. The smallest places *with* a GP surgery are Harrietsham (Kent), Steventon (Oxfordshire) and Abridge (Essex) each of which had a population of 1500 in 2001. The average size of a place with a GP surgery is 2,200. The total population of places without a GP surgery was just over 577,00 .in 2001.

6.12   The numbers and percentages of places and average size of place without a GP surgery within the groups of the typology is shown in Table 3. Three groups stand out: Group 1 (Middle Aged, Managerial Jobs), Group 7 (Routine Jobs in Agriculture and Manufacturing) and Group 8 (Age Mix, Managerial Jobs).

6.13   Although these groups have a recognisable geography (see Section 5 above), the geography of places *within* groups with no GP surgery would benefit from further examination and interpretation. Many such places in Groups 1 and 8 are in the fast growing Wiltshire – Cambridgeshire belt (although a number, again of both types are on the outskirts of the bigger cites), whilst those without a GP surgery in Group 7 are clearly within the

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[8] As this paper was being completed research undertaken by the NHS Information Service suggested that rural GPs are better paid than their urban counterparts, probably because of the additional income earned from sales in associated pharmacies which are more prevalent in rural areas.

more deeply rural, low density and hence generally less accessible parts of the country.

Table 3 : Rural Towns Without a GP Surgery

GROUP	Number of Places	Without GP Surgery		
		Number	Percent	Pop Average
Middle Age, Managerial	236	57	24.2	1966
Singles, Routine Jobs	261	11	4.2	2376
Older Persons, Part Time	123	10	8.1	2105
Families, Managerial	129	20	15.5	2382
Professionals, Commuters	188	18	9.6	2204
Disadvantages	181	14	7.7	3060
Routine, Agric-Manufg	209	50	23.9	2127
Age Mix, Managerial	280	82	29.3	2215
Total	**1607**	**262**	**16.3**	**2204**

7 Conclusion

7.1   In this paper we have put forward a typology of the rural towns and larger villages of England based upon a representative range of social and economic data taken from the 2001 Census. This classification of 1607 places into 8 groups has been assessed for its stability in terms of its input variables and for the criteria upon which individual places are allocated to groups. The groups identified have a good degree of conceptual and geographic coherence.

7.2   This is not to say that the typology is, in any sense, a *definitive* classification of smaller rural places. Other data, other methods and different choices about the number of groups into which to place individual towns are likely to result in a different type of grouping of places.

7.3   The key to the usefulness of the classification presented here will lie in its broad *acceptance* by a body of people with an interest in smaller rural towns. At the same time, those using the classification must be alert to the *caveats* outlined in section three above and will, where possible, share their experience with other users.

7.4   The meaning and implications of the typology for users were discussed in depth at an open meeting of members of the AMT in the Oakham discussion in April 2009. At this meeting the typology met with general approval on a number of levels, including the usefulness of the typology as a valid summary of the diversity of small rural towns, the need for a typology of this sort as a basis for benchmarking change, and its value in comparing service levels and for contextualising and assessing 'best practice' activities. There was also general agreement that the typology would benefit from the addition of data on functions and services. [9]

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7.5   The work described here is therefore the first stage in a process of research directed towards understanding the role of smaller rural towns within the settlement system of England, including linkages between smaller towns and larger towns and among the smaller towns themselves. The second stage of the project, which is now under way at the RERC is concerned with relating the typology to the functional characteristics of smaller settlements as a contribution to the debate on the delivery of services and the sustainable accommodation of population growth in rural England.

RERC/Birkbeck, May 2009
(v1.1, August 2009)

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[9] See http://towns.org.uk/2009/04/09/typology-event/

Annex 1 The Variables Used in the Grouping Analysis

Variable Name	Description
A014	%pop aged 0-14
A2544	%pop aged 25-44
A4564	%pop aged 45-64
A6574	%pop aged 65-74
A75	%pop aged 75+
ASIAN	%pop asian/british asian
BLACK	%pop black/british black
NOUK	%pop not born in uk
SEPDIV	%16+ not living in couple who are separated/divorced
ONENOPE	%HH single person (not pensioner)
ONEPEN	%HH single pensioner
LPDEPS	%HH lone parent with dependent children
CONOKID	%HH couple no children
ADULKID	%HH one family with non-dependent children resident
PUBLIC	% all occ HH spaces rented privately or lived in rent free
PRIVATE	% all occ HH spaces rented from council/social
TWOHOME	% unoccupied HH 2nd residence/holiday homes
TERRA	%HH terraced
DETAT	%HH detatched
FLATS	%HH flat, maisonette, apartments
NOCH	%HH with no central heating
HHSIZE	Average HH size
ROOMS	Average rooms per HH
NOQUAL	%16-74 with no qualifications
ROUOCC	%16-74 employed semi/routine occs
HIOCC	%16-74 employed in higher managerial/professional occs
INTOCC	%16-74 employed in intermediate occs
LMANOCC	%16-74 employed in lower managerial/professional occs
LSUPOCC	%16-74 employed lower supervisory/technical occs
NOCAR	%HH without car
PT	%16-74 employed week before census travel to work mainly using public transport
FH	%16-74 employed week before census working from home
TTW20	%16-74 employed week before census travel 20km+ to work
LTILL	%16-74 with limiting long term illness
CARE	% all people in HH who provide unpaid care
STUD	%16-74 students
UNEMP	%16-74 eco. Active who are unemployed
LTUNEM	%16-74 never worked/LT unemployed
MENPT	%16-74 eco. Active men who work part time
FEMLAH	%16-74 eco. inactive women who look after the home
FEMPT	%16-74 eco. Active women who work part time
AGRICU	%16-74 employed week before census working in agriculture
MINING	%16-74 employed week before census working in mining/quarrying
MANU	%16-74 employed week before census working in manufacturing
HOTEL	%16-74 employed week before census working in hotels/restraunts
PADMIN	%16-74 employed week before census working in public admin/defence and social security
FINAN	%16-74 employed week before census working in financial intermediation
WHOLE	%16-74 employed week before census working in wholesale/retail

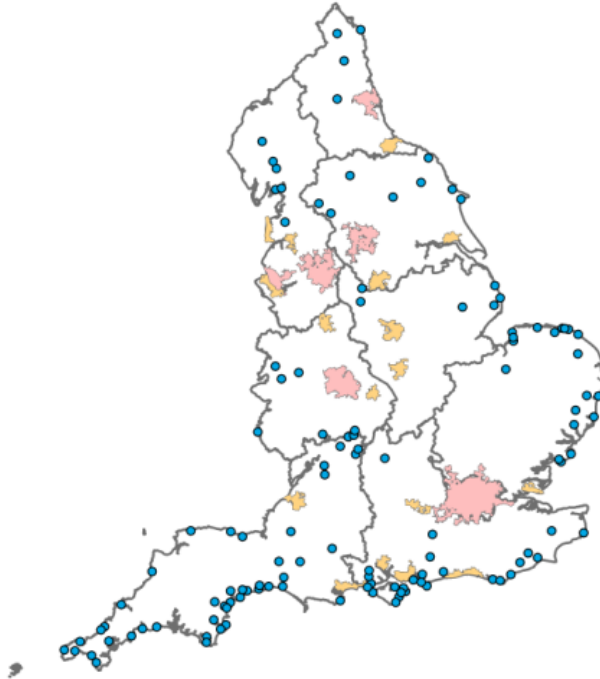**Annex 3: The National Pattern of Individual Types**
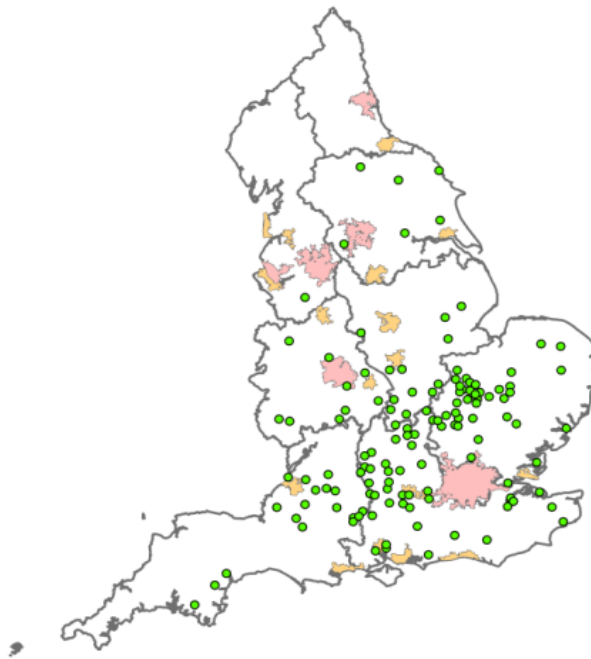
Group 1 : Middle Aged, Managerial Jobs
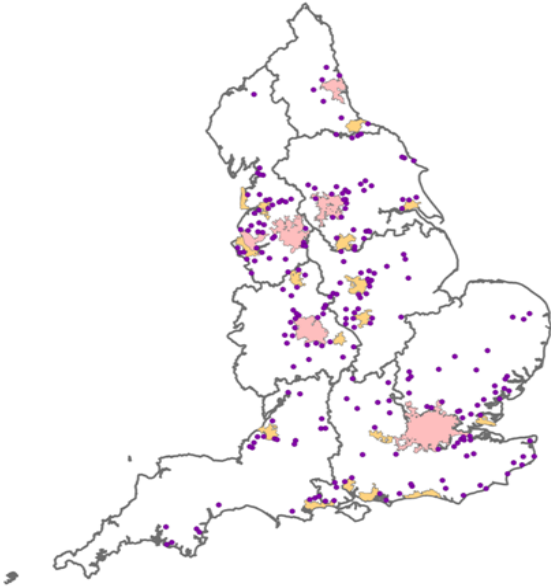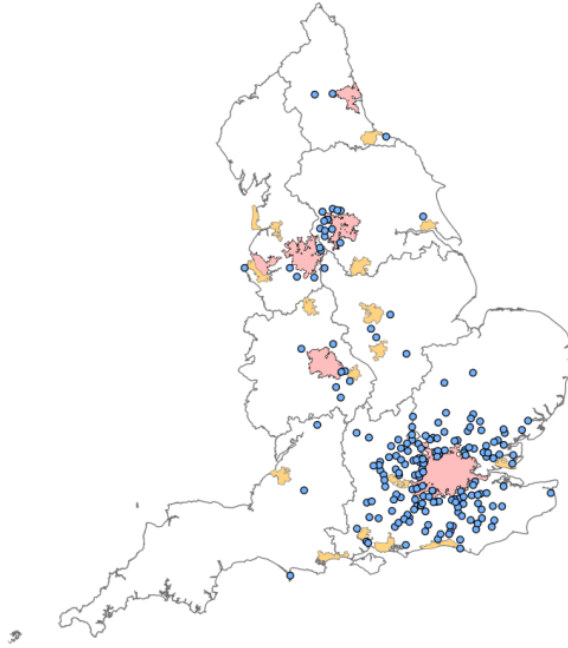

Group 2 : Single Persons, Routine Jobs
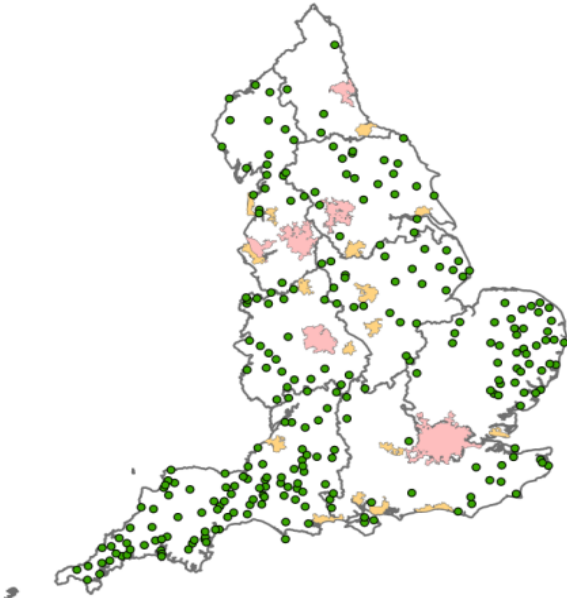
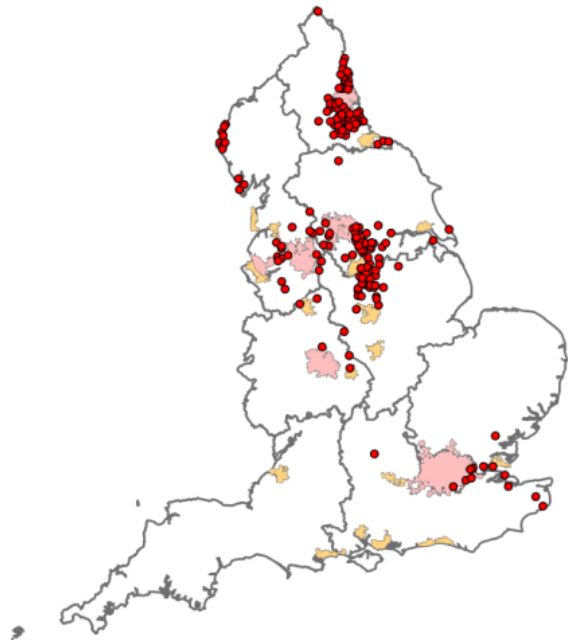## Group 3 : Older Persons, Leisure Jobs

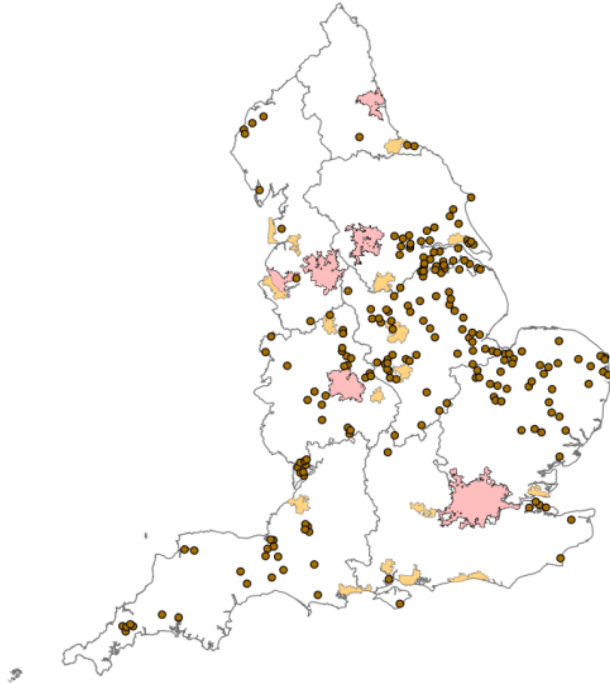## Group 4 : Young Families, Administrative Jobs

Group 5 : Professionals, Commuting

Group 6 : Disadvantages

Group 7 : Routine Jobs, Agric/Manuf

Group 8 : Age Mix, Professionals