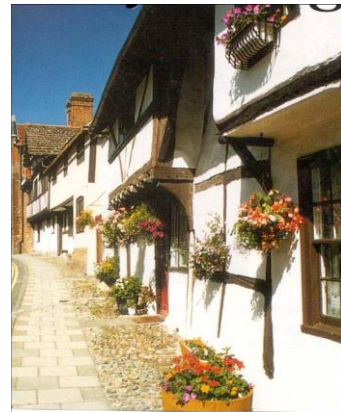
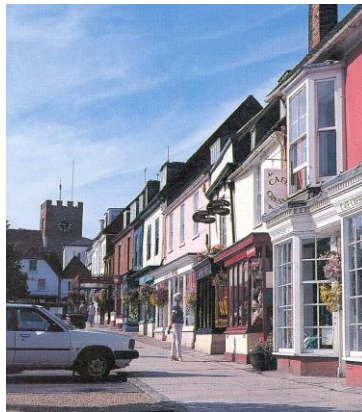


SMALL RURAL TOWNS IN THE SOUTH EAST

A typology & their value to the local economy



South East England Development Agency: 2010

Contents

1. Purpose
2. Background
3. What was studied
4. Methodology
5. The Findings
6. Conclusions

Sources

Annexes

- Annex 1: Oxfordshire Historic Towns with Charters
Annex 2: Tenterden, Kent, Secondary School catchment area
Annex 3: List of major / medium sized urban towns & approximate populations

Tables

- Table 1: Summary Table with towns ranked in order
Table 2: Summary Table in county order with all scores
Table 3: Table of retail and number of businesses
Table 4: Table of population, hinterlands, secondary schools, administrative centres, communications, visitor assets

This study was carried out by Valerie Carter, Rural Director at SEEDA 1999-2010. The original work was carried out during 2003-05 but has been fully updated in 2010

Cover photos on front page include the towns (from left to right and top to bottom) Lewes, East Sussex; New Alresford, Hampshire; Steyning, West Sussex; Wallingford, Oxfordshire; Shanklin, Isle of Wight; Cranbrook, Kent; Cranleigh, Surrey; Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire; and Pangbourne, Berkshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To look at the value of small rural towns to the region and its local economy
- 1.2 To examine the functions of each town and give it a ranking
- 1.3 To formulate a typology for these towns in terms of population size, ranking position, communications and remoteness from major urban and medium sized towns.
- 1.4 To identify the assets a town for attracting visitors
- 1.5 To provide evidence that could be used to influence future policy

2. Background

2.1 An original list of around 170 small rural towns across the South East was agreed in 2004 as part of the SEEDA Small Rural Towns (SRT) programme. The list was agreed by both SEEDA and the South East Rural Towns Partnership Board and all 9 geographical local authority partners after very lengthy discussions. The final list was modified and 179 agreed in April 2005

2.2 These 179 towns were eligible for funding through the SEEDA small rural town programme. Those that accessed the fund are highlighted on Table 2

2.3 These 179 towns are the ones which have been included in this follow-up study for typology and ranking. The work was started originally during 2007 but has been updated as more evidence on the number of businesses became available in 2010. The study was completed by end July 2010

2.4 There is much debate about what is a town. The term 'market town' (Wikipedia) is a legal term originating in the medieval period for a European settlement that has the right to host markets, distinguishing them from a village or a city.

A town may correctly be described as a market town or having market rights even if it no longer holds a market providing the legal right to do so still exists.

The granting of Royal Charters to hold markets or fairs began in the late 12th century although some go back to Norman times. The Royal Commission on Market Rights in 1889 listed all 2713 grants of markets and fairs made between 1199 and 1483.

2.5 Not all settlements which were given a Charter now meet the function required by a 'town'. For example, 26 towns in Oxfordshire were originally granted a Charter to hold a market but only 14 (53.8%) of them now would qualify as a town – see Annex 1.

3. What was studied

The specific criteria used in 2004 and which has also been used for this study was as follows:

- Firstly, the towns must have a hinterland and this excludes those small towns that are now totally surrounded by larger towns or joined to larger towns
- Secondly, the towns must have a population below 20,000, although there was no lower limit. The figure of 20,000 was agreed in line with the Labour government's first Rural White Paper produced in 2000 which set out policy statements for smaller towns for the first time; highlighted major opportunities for them, and led to new government funding being provided for them, also for the first time, to be delivered through the Countryside Agency and the Regional Development Agencies.
- The third criteria was based on the functions provided by the towns. It was recognised that all towns could not provide all the functions set out below but a number of those functions must be provided to enable the town to be eligible for the SEEDA programme. The list of criteria was:
 - provide a reasonable/good retail centre for itself and hinterland which included:
 - one of the major supermarket outlets
 - presence of magnet traders
 - good range of shops
 - market
 - farmers market
 - provide a centre for local employment for itself and its hinterland
 - provide a secondary school for itself and hinterland. These schools serve a large hinterland and bring in parents every morning and afternoon which could use the services of that town. It is considered that this function is far more important to a 'town' than a primary school which is provided in many lower order settlements. See Annex 2 showing the catchment area for the large secondary school in Tenterden, Kent.
 - is an administrative centre for the District or County or both

4. Methodology

4.1 Each of the functional criteria was assessed and given a score and then a total score for all functions.

- The retail function study looked at the presence of magnet traders such as Boots and Smiths. It originally included Woolworths but has now been amended (29 small rural towns lost a Woolworths); and then looked at the presence of the major supermarkets (Tesco's; Asda; Sainsbury's; Morrison's; Waitrose and Marks and Spencer's) and also others such as the Co-operative; Allday's; Budgens and Somerfields. These were considered to be major assets to the town. Additional points were awarded when a town had a good variety of shops. Points were given for a market or farmers market or both. This information has been updated in June 2010 but needs regularly updating as supermarkets in small towns are being built all the time.
- A database from Business Links and SEEDA listed businesses across the region and has supplied information for the number of businesses in each small town using their Post Code. Villages within that Post Code have been omitted. Each town was given a score based on the number of businesses

- towns which are an administrative centre for their District or county or both have been given a score
- towns with a secondary schools have been given a score.

4.2 The towns were then put into 4 basic rankings:

- Top Ranked Towns which scored above 50 points
- Upper Ranked Towns which scored between 35 and 49 points
- Middle Ranking Towns which scored between 20 and 34 points
- Lower Ranking Towns which scored from 5 to 19 points

4.3 Those towns which scored lower than 5 points are not considered to be 'towns' under this study as they really do not offer the facilities above those of a village

4.4 In addition the potential for attracting visitors has been assessed including:

- National Trust or English Heritage property in a town
- a location on the seaside or coast or River Thames
- landscape setting of town in a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- the historic quality of the built heritage of the town. The Council for British Archaeology in 1964 produced a list of towns of 'historic quality' in Britain. It includes 324 towns in England compiled from a list of over 600 places that possessed some urban quality and recorded antiquity. It regarded 51 of these towns as so splendid and so precious that they are of national quality. The list did not look at 'towns' which were not boroughs or urban districts in 1964.
- town with a Conservation Area.

These assets have been given a visitor attraction score.

4.5 Communications has been looked at.

- towns with a railway station give the town an additional asset and could be important for attracting commuters; and
- towns with easy access to the motorway network provide good communications – either within 5 miles or 10 miles of a motorway junction

These assets have been given a communications score.

4.6 Finally each town has been looked at in relation to its position within the hinterland of a major or medium sized 'urban' town: The information on population growth centres and retail growth centres; primary regional retail centres and secondary retail centres are taken from the Regional Economic Strategy and the South East Plan. All other urban town centres are considered to be minor local centres or London fringe smaller towns. Three categories of where towns lie has been measured:

- within a hinterland of 10 miles (or 16 kilometres) has been plotted on a map for each of the Growth Area; Diamond Areas and Regional Hub's identified the Regional Economic Strategy and the South East Plan
- within a hinterland of 5 miles (or 8 kilometres) has been plotted for each of the secondary retail centres and for other more minor local urban centres

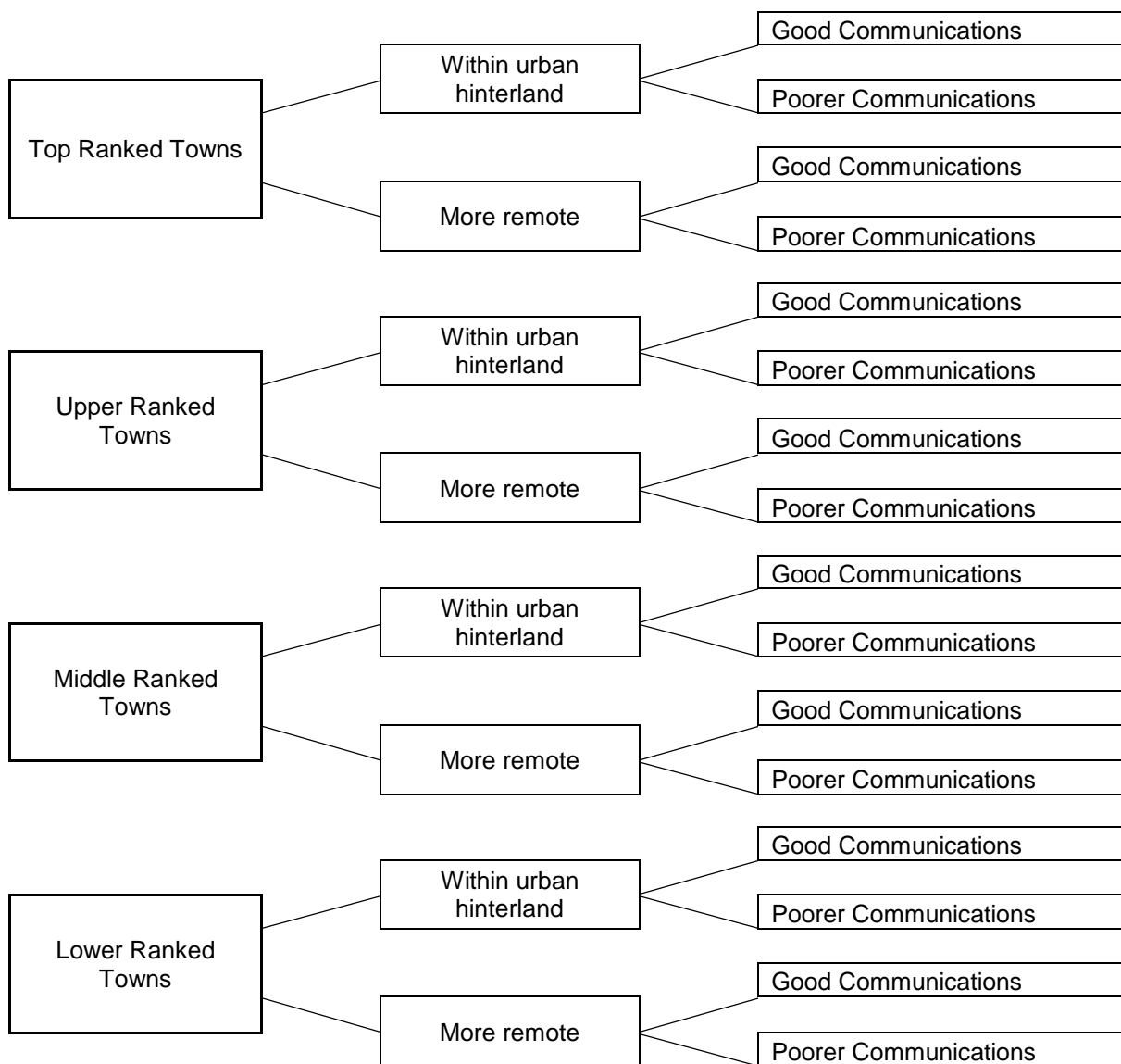
- there are small rural towns which lie outside these areas – some only a little way outside
- but many that are more remote from urban hinterlands

4.7 Towns have been ranked based on their functions with sub rankings for the retail function and the employment function – the top 20 small rural towns in each

4.8 These rankings have been further subdivided into those within urban hinterlands and those that are more remote.

4.9 The third subdivision is those with good communications or those with poorer communications

The diagram below shows how the 16 rankings work



NB: the lowest rankings towns have been omitted

The findings

5.1 There were 179 towns examined in the South East with a population of 1,305,900 – 16.2% of the population of the region.

5.2 Some 14 towns have less than 5 points - the lowest order ranking. They are Kintbury, Shinfield, Stratfield Mortimer & Sunninghill in Berkshire; Little Chalfont in Buckinghamshire; Totland, Isle of Wight; Charing, Hartley, Lydd, Kemsing, New Ash Green, Otford & St Margarets at Cliffe in Kent; and Middleton in West Sussex.

It is considered that these are not settlements which act above village level and if this in depth work had been completed before 2004 they probably would not have been called 'towns' and not included in the SEEDA programme.

5.3 If these 14 towns are no longer included in the study there are 165 'towns' left and the population would be 1,261,600 or 15.8% of population of the region.

- 45 (27.3%) of the towns are above 10,000 population
- 62 (37.6%) of the towns are between 5,000 and 9,999 population
- 58 (35.1%) of the towns are below a population of 5,000

5.4 The 166 small rural towns are made up of:

- 17 towns in the Berkshire county area
- 23 towns in the Buckinghamshire county area
- 16 towns in East Sussex
- 32 towns in Hampshire
- 8 towns on the Isle of Wight
- 25 towns in the Kent county area
- 19 towns in Oxfordshire
- 12 towns in Surrey
- 13 towns in West Sussex

5.4 The rankings exercise shows that in the South East of England there are 30 towns which have a good range of services and 9 of these are really good;

- 9 Top rural towns – those which score more than 50 points – they are:
 - Marlow in Buckinghamshire; Lewes in East Sussex; Lymington, Petersfield and Romsey in Hampshire; Henley and Wallingford in Oxfordshire and Dorking and Godalming in Surrey. 4 of them are over 10 miles from a major or medium sized urban town
- 22 Upper ranking rural towns – those scoring between 35 and 50 points:
 - Crowthorne in Berkshire county area; Buckingham, Chesham and Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire county area; Crowborough, Hailsham, Newhaven and Uckfield in East Sussex; Alton, New Milton and Ringwood in Hampshire; Faversham, Hythe and Tenterden in Kent; Thame in Oxfordshire and Caterham, Cranleigh, Haslemere, Horley, Leatherhead and Oxted in Surrey. 13 of them are over 10 miles from a major or medium sized urban town

The remaining 134 small towns are middle or lower ranking with:

- 53 Middle ranking rural towns – those that score between 20 and 35 points
- 81 Lower ranking rural towns – those that score between 5 and 20 points

- 5.5 In terms of ranking compared to size:
- All but 1 of the 9 top towns have a population of more than 10,000
 - All but 3 of the 20 upper towns have a population of more than 10,000
 - All but 2 of the lowest ranking towns which have now been excluded have a population under 5,000
- 5.6 The top 12 retail towns are:
- Beaconsfield and Marlowe in Buckinghamshire
 - Lewes in East Sussex
 - Lymington, Petersfield and Romsey in Hampshire
 - Tenterden in Kent
 - Henley and Thame in Oxfordshire
 - Caterham, Dorking and Godalming in Surrey
- All but one of them has a population of over 10,000
- 5.7 The top 11 employment towns are:
- Beaconsfield, Chesham and Marlowe in Buckinghamshire
 - Lewes in East Sussex
 - Lymington, Petersfield and Romsey in Hampshire
 - Henley in Oxfordshire
 - Dorking, Godalming and Horley in Surrey
- All have a population of over 10,000
- 5.8 For the first analysis of typology overall for the 165 towns there are ;
- 35.1% (58) of the towns were within 10 miles (16 kilometres) of the centre of a major town
 - 6.1% (10) of the towns were within 5 miles (8 kilometres) of the centre of other 'urban' towns
 - 15.8% (26) of the towns were not within either 10 miles or 5 miles of urban towns but were on the edge of them
 - 43.0% (71) of the towns were more remote
- 5.9 In terms of geography of the 71 less accessible towns:
- 11.8% (2) of Berkshire county area towns are more remote
 - 8.7% (2) of Buckinghamshire county area towns are more remote
 - 81.3% (13) of East Sussex towns are more remote
 - 46.9% (15) of Hampshire towns are more remote
 - 62.5% (5) of Isle of Wight towns are more remote
 - 53.8% (14) of Kent county area towns are more remote
 - 63.2% (12) of Oxfordshire towns are more remote
 - 16.7% (2) of Surrey towns are more remote
 - 46.2% (6) of West Sussex towns are more remote
- 5.10 The analysis of the level of communications showed that:
- 99 (60.0%) of towns had very good communications (score of 5,7 or 10)
 - 13 (7.9%) of towns had reasonable communications (score of 2)
 - 53 (32.1%) of towns had poorer communications (no score)
- 5.11 In terms of geography of those 53 towns with poorer communications

- 2 (11.8%) of the Berkshire area towns had poorer communications
- 2 (8.7%) of Buckinghamshire area towns had poorer communications
- 5 (31.3%) of East Sussex towns had poorer communications
- 10 (31.3%) of Hampshire towns had poorer communications
- All 9 of the Isle of Wight towns had poorer communications
- 4 (16.0%) of Kent county area towns had poorer communications
- 11 (57.9%) of Oxfordshire towns had poorer communications
- only 1 (8.3%) of Surrey towns had poorer communications
- 10 (76.9%) of West Sussex towns had poorer communications

5.12 The town assets, such as landscape and quality heritage have shown several towns which have considerable visitor attractions. The top towns are::

- Lewes, East Sussex (20 points)
- Lympington, Hampshire and Burford, Oxfordshire (17 points)
- Rye, East Sussex and Faversham, Kent (15 points)
- Amersham and Marlow, Buckinghamshire; Seaford, East Sussex; Shanklin and Ventnor on the Isle of Wight; Sandwich in Kent; Chipping Norton, Henley, Thame and Wallingford in Oxfordshire; Arundel and Midhurst in West Sussex (all of them with 12 points)

5.13 The final rankings with typology show there are:

Rank 1:

- (i) 5 **top ranked towns** are within an urban hinterland with all of them with good communications
- (ii) 4 **top ranked towns** are more remote from urban hinterlands with all of them with good communications

Rank 2:

- (iii) 9 **upper ranked towns** are within an urban hinterland with all of them with good communications
- (iv) 13 **upper ranked towns** are more remote from urban hinterlands with 8 of them with good communications and 5 which have poorer communications

Rank 3:

- 24 **middle ranking towns** are within an urban hinterland with 19 of them with good communications and 5 which have poorer communications
- 29 **middle ranking towns** are more remote from urban hinterlands with 13 of them with good communications and 16 which have poorer communications

Rank 4:

- 56 **lower ranked towns** are within an urban hinterland with 40 of them with good communications and 16 which have poorer communications
- 25 **lower ranked towns** are more remote from urban hinterlands with 14 of them with good communications and 11 which have poorer communications

The 13 lowest ranked towns have not been included in the above list.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The towns with the best functions are ones where nearly all have a population above 10,000.

- 8 of 9 (88.9%) top ranked towns have a population above 10,000
- 18 of the 21 (85.7%) upper ranked towns have a population above 10,000.
- 12 out of the 53 (22.6%) middle ranking towns have a population over 10,000.
- but there only 3 of the 83 (3.6%) lower ranking towns have a population over 10,000

6.1 More than half of the lower ranking towns - 43 towns out of 83 - have a population below 5,000

6.3 The towns in the top two rankings demonstrate more sustainability criteria by providing a good range of convenience shopping and local employment for both themselves and their immediate hinterland of villages and hamlets where travel journeys are quite short.

6.4 There are a considerable number of towns that are over 10 miles (or 16 kilometres) away from the centre of major or medium sized urban towns and more remote from their urban dominance. 17 of the top ranking towns fall into this category (4 or 44.4% of the 9 top towns and 13 or 61.9% of the 21 upper towns)

These more remote towns – particularly the two rankings which have a good or very good range of services are vital to the well-being of their hinterland of surrounding villages and countryside. These towns should be supported by policies which will maintain their important role as rural service centres and enable them to remain more sustainable rural settlements.

Sources:

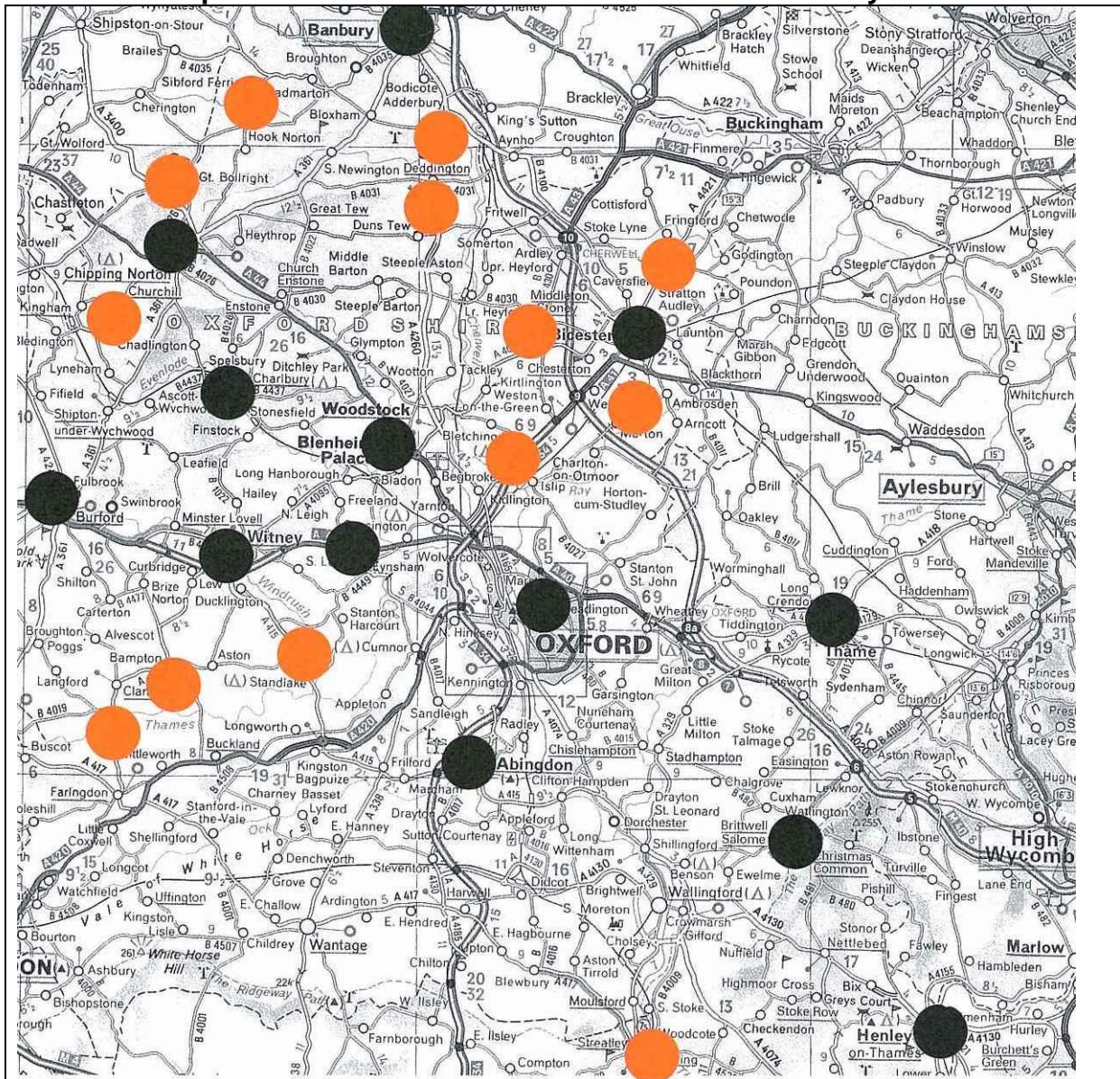
All 179 towns have had site visits

Other sources used are as follows:

- *District Centres and Town Councils: Local Government Handbook and the Internet*
- *Population: 2001 Census and Commission for Rural Communities data*
- *Retail data: Yellow Pages business database from the Internet and site visits*
- *Number of Businesses: Customer Relation Data base held by SEEDA / Business Links. The database list does not necessarily include all businesses in the region but it does give the scale of number of businesses which provides a comparison between settlements*
- *Secondary Schools: Yellow pages business database and the Internet*
- *Landscape setting: maps of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*
- *Heritage: List of top historic towns in England from British Council of Archaeology 1964 and Unitary, Borough or District websites*
- *Accessibility: Ordnance Survey maps 1:50,000 and AA Road Atlas*

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Map and list of towns with Charters and towns today in Oxfordshire

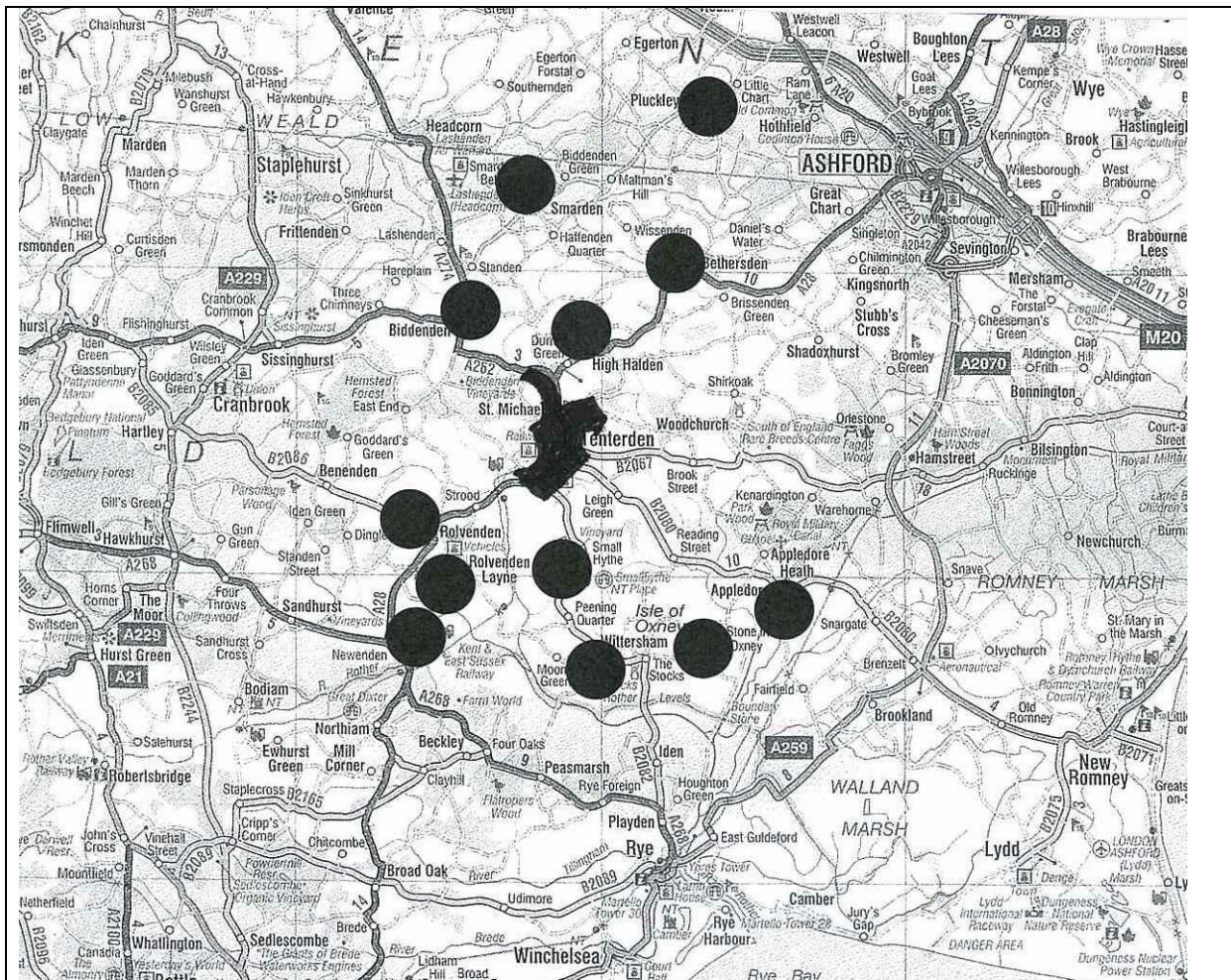


- Oxford, the county town was given a Charter in 1086.
- 3 other larger towns today were given Charters – Abingdon in 1086; Banbury in 1138; Bicester in 1239.
- There are 7 Charter towns that remain small towns today – Burford in 1100; Charlbury in 1256; Chipping Norton in 1253; Eynesham in 1135; Thame in 1184; Henley in 1259; and Watlington in 1252
- The remaining 14 towns (in red) that were given Charters in the Middle Ages are just villages to day. These are: Bampton 1086, Wootton 1154, Deddington 1190, Middleton Stony 1202, Adderby 1218, Standlake 1230, Whichurch 1245, Islip 1245, Great Rollright 1253, Radcot 1272, Stratton Audley 1318, Churchill 1327, Bignell 1377, and Hook Norton 1435.

Source: A History of Oxfordshire by Mary Jessop: ISBN 0 85033 206 0

NB: The boundaries of historic Oxfordshire are not the same as those today

Annex 2: Map and list of hinterland of secondary school in Tenterden Kent



Tenterden in Kent is a small town with a population of 7,000 and its secondary school has 12 villages as feeder schools with a combined population of 8,800 made up of Biddenden (1,000); Smarden (1,100); Pluckley (1,000); High Halden (1,100); Bethersden (1,400); Rolvenden (1,000); Rolvenden Layne (400); Newenden (200); Smallhythe (200); Wittersham (1,000); Stone in Oxney (400) and Appledore (1,000) as well as serving numerous hamlets and countryside.;

ANNEX 3

List of urban towns and their hinterlands

Referred to in paragraph 4.8

Country Area	Urban Town	Pop.	Growth Areas RES/SE Plan			Retail centres			
			Diamonds for Growth in RES	Growth Areas	Regional Hubs	10 mile radius		5 mile radius	
						Centres for Retail Growth	Primary Region Centres	Secondary Regional Centres	Minor Local Centre/London
BE	Bracknell	77,900						Secondary	
BE	Maidenhead	47,700						Secondary	
BE	Newbury	56,000						Secondary	
BE	Reading/Purley	149,500	Reading		Hub		Primary		
BE	Sandhurst	18,000							Minor
BE	Slough	119,000	Reading		Hub		Primary		Minor
BE	Thatcham	22,800							Minor
BE	Windsor	47,700						Secondary	
BE	Wokingham	79,600							Minor
BU	Aylesbury	69,000		Growth	Hub	Retail G	Primary		
BU	High Wycombe	81,100			Hub		Primary		
BU	Milton Keynes	159,000	M Keynes	Growth	Hub	Retail G	Primary		
ES	Bexhill	41,000							Minor
ES	Brighton & Hove	248,000	Brighton		Hub		Primary		
ES	Eastbourne	69,500					Primary		
ES	Hastings/St Leonards	85,000			Hub			Secondary	
HA	Aldershot	40,900						Secondary	
HA	Andover	49,000						Secondary	
HA	Basingstoke	93,000	Basingst.		Hub		Primary		
HA	Eastleigh	72,000	PUSH					Secondary	
HA	Fareham	34,000	PUSH					Secondary	
HA	Farnborough	50,000						Secondary	
HA	Fawley	13,000							Minor
HA	Fleet	22,100							Minor
HA	Gosport	64,800	PUSH						Minor
HA	Havant/Waterlooville	90,589	PUSH						Minor
HA	Hedge End	13,700							Minor
HA	Portsmouth	186,700	PUSH		Hub	Retail G	Primary		
HA	Southampton	217,500	PUSH		Hub	Retail G	Primary		
HA	Totton	28,000							Minor
HA	Winchester	56,000						Secondary	
IW	Newport	27,500						Secondary	
IW	Ryde	17,800							Minor
KE	Ashford	59,000		Growth	Hub	Retail G			
KE	Canterbury	45,000			Hub		Primary		
KE	Dartford	63,700	Thames G.					Secondary	
KE	Deal/Walmer	28,800							
KE	Dover	41,300						Secondary	
KE	Folkestone	45,100						Secondary	
KE	Gravesend/Northfleet	79,000	Thames G.					Secondary	
KE	Herne Bay	20,500							Minor
KE	Larkfield/Ditton	12,332							Minor
KE	Maidstone	93,300			Hub		Primary		
KE	Medway Towns	272,500		Growth	Hub	Retail G	Primary		
KE	Sevenoaks	22,500						Secondary	
KE	Sittingbourne/Milton	41,600		Growth				Secondary	
KE	Swanley	20,900							Minor
KE	Thanet towns	120,800						Secondary	

Country Area	Urban Town	Pop.	Growth Areas RES/SE Plan			Retail centres			
			Diamonds for Growth in RES	Growth Areas	Regional Hubs	10 mile radius		5 mile radius	
						Centres for Retail Growth	Primary Region Centres	Secondary Regional Centres	Minor Local Centre/ London
KE	Tonbridge	36,100							Minor
KE	Tunbridge Wells	52,400			Hub		Primary		
KE	Whitstable/ Seasalter	21,000							Minor
OX	Abingdon	27,500							Minor
OX	Banbury	41,800					Primary		
OX	Bicester	28,700							Minor
OX	Didcot	23,500							Minor
OX	Oxford	134,300	Oxford		Hub	Retail G	Primary		
OX	Witney	22,800							Minor
SU	Addlestone	21,700							Minor
SU	Ashford	28,900							London
SU	Ashtead	13,500							Minor
SU	Camberley	34,400						Secondary	
SU	Chertsey	16,000							London
SU	Egham	15,000							London
SU	Epsom	52,000						Secondary	
SU	Esher/Claygate	12,800							London
SU	Ewell	15,000							London
SU	Farnham	37,000							Minor
SU	Guildford	69,400			Hub	Retail G	Primary		
SU	Redhill/Reigate	87,300	Gatwick		Hub	Retail G	Primary		
SU	Staines	14,000						Secondary	
SU	Sunbury	19,700							London
SU	Thames Ditton	30,200							Minor
SU	Virginia Water	6,000							London
SU	Walton on Thames	22,800							London
SU	Weybridge	7,900							London
SU	Woking	89,800			Hub	Retail G	Primary		London
SU	Wokingham	21,000							Minor
WS	Bognor Regis	21,000						Secondary	
WS	Burgess Hill	28,800	Gatwick						Minor
WS	Chichester	23,700						Secondary	
WS	Crawley	99,700	Gatwick		Hub	Retail G	Primary		
WS	East Grinstead	22,900						Secondary	
WS	Haywards Heath	22,800						Secondary	
WS	Horsham	67,200						Secondary	
WS	Littlehampton	23,000							Minor
WS	Shoreham	30,000							Minor
WS	Worthing/Lancing	95,600					Primary		

The following 4 tables contain all the information used in the analysis

Tables

Table 1 Summary Table of 166 towns ranked in order alphabetically

Table 2 Summary Table of all 179 towns listed by county, unitary and district areas

Table 3: Retail and Business

Table 4: Population, hinterlands, communications and visitor attractions