

Appendix C

Key Service Centres Paper to Policy Task and Finish Group (March 2004)

Stage 1 – Scope of Study

In order to try to narrow down the search only those parishes, excluding the towns, with a population of over 1000 would be selected.

Table 1 – Settlements 1000+ Population

Parish	Population	Parish	Population
Ashill	1445	Narborough	1105
Banham	1415	Necton	1895
Beetley	1465	North Elmham	1355
Carbrooke	1300	Old Buckenham	1250
Great Ellingham	1175	Saham Toney	1570
Gressenhall	1050	Scarning	2540
Griston	1170	Shipdham	2210
Harling	2270	Sporle	1025
Mattishall	2785	Swanton Morley	3195
Mundford	1670	Weeting	1845

In addition to those parishes selected above Litcham was also added to the list as it has a high level of education services.

Stage 2 – Criteria for Assessment

In order to determine whether a parish could be considered as a service centre an assessment of its sustainability is necessary. The policy from the draft RSS is included below followed by the supporting text for key service centres:

POLICY SS9: DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Development in rural areas will be focused in market towns and thereafter in key service centres. Local Development Documents (LDDs) will identify market towns and other key service centres with the potential to support rural renaissance and should take account of community-led appraisals.

In order to sustain the viability of and secure revitalisation of the region's market towns, local authorities will consider the need to:

- **accommodate additional housing, employment growth and economic diversification;**
- **enhance the environment of the town centre;**
- **improve the accessibility of the town by public transport from surrounding rural areas;**
- **extend provision for shopping facilities and services in the town centre; and**
- **improve access to high speed communications technology to assist economic diversification.**

In key service centres, local authorities should consider the potential to accommodate new development, sympathetic to local character and of an appropriate scale and nature, to accommodate local employment and housing needs.

In all other rural settlements, local authorities should seek to assist the continued viability of agriculture and other rural economic activities, such as tourism, the diversification of the rural economy and the provision of affordable housing for local needs, and support the sustainability of local services.

Local Development Documents will provide for a range of rural needs between:

- (i) the need to manage development pressures in rural settlements under the influence of**

urban areas which display characteristics of good service provision, relative prosperity, disproportionately high house prices, high incoming urban population, and/or high levels of out-commuting. Under these circumstances, LDDs should seek to protect local character and secure local needs housing; and

(ii) the need to encourage change and enable diversification of the economy, usually in remote areas with poor access to jobs and services, and pockets of deprivation.

Supporting Text

Key service centres are large villages with a good level of services. This could include:

- primary school within the settlement and a secondary school within the settlement or accessible by public transport;
- doctors surgery;
- good range of retail and service provision capable of meeting day-to-day needs, in particular for convenience shopping;
- local employment opportunities; and
- frequent public transport links for work and leisure to higher order settlements.

Decisions about the growth of key service centres need to take account of much more than simply settlement size and level of services. The growth of villages has not been able to halt the closure of village services and rural commuting has increased dramatically. Careful examination of how a settlement or groups of settlements function is required, as well as analysis of the service base, to determine the best solutions for new development and ensure it is directed to locations where it will have the greatest benefits for rural sustainability.

Many villages have very limited or non-existent local services. They are dependent on key service centres, market towns and the main urban areas for everyday needs. The main challenges in these settlements are securing small-scale local employment opportunities and supporting the needs of agriculture, improving public transport access to higher order settlements, providing affordable housing for local needs and supporting the sustainability of local services as identified in community led appraisals.

In accordance with the draft policy above a number of essential criteria would need to be satisfied before a village could be considered as a key service centre. The criteria have been simplified to aid the speed of the process on the basis of what information is available. These are as follows –

1. A primary school
2. A selection of shops including a post office
3. A community facility (eg a village hall, pub, sports club, doctors surgery)
4. Local employment opportunities
5. Adequate public transport provision

Criterion 1 – A primary school

Gressenhall and Griston fail this criterion. This was based on a search of Business Rates information with cross-referencing of Local Plan maps.

Criterion 2 – A selection of shops including a post office

A search of the Business Rates information for shops and post offices was undertaken. To fulfil the criterion it is necessary for the village to have both a post office and at least one other shop. The results are as follows –

Table 2 – Shops and Post Offices

Parish	Shops	Post Office	Combined Result
Ashill	Y	Y	Y
Banham	Y	Y	Y

Beetley	Y	N	N
Carbrooke	N	N	N
Gt Ellingham	Y	Y	Y
Gressenhall	N	Y	N
Griston	Y	Y	Y
Harling	Y	Y	Y
Litcham	Y	Y	Y
Mattishall	Y	Y	Y
Mundford	Y	Y	Y
Narborough	Y	Y	Y
Necton	Y	Y	Y
N Elmham	Y	Y	Y
Old Buckenham	Y	Y	Y
Saham Toney	Y	Y	Y
Scarning	N	N	N
Shipdham	Y	Y	Y
Sporle	Y	Y	Y
Swanton Morley	Y	Y	Y
Weeting	Y	Y	Y

Criterion 3 – A community facility (eg a village hall, pub, sports club)

Business Rates information was used again to determine if there were any parishes that did not have any community facilities. All parishes had at least one community facility. Information from the Rural Community Council was also used to back up the results for this criterion.

Criterion 4 – Local employment opportunities

Information about the number of businesses paying business rates with a class and description of the business was assessed. This information does not however give information about the number of people employed and so can only be used to give a general guide as to which parishes fulfil this criterion.

A number of classes of businesses offer little or no employment opportunities and were excluded. These included cemeteries and communication stations, as these were generally mobile phone masts, and sewage treatment works.

A balance between employment opportunities and new housing is a key component of sustainability and therefore is given greater weight. A parish that has a large number of businesses but a narrow range of types of business will not be as sustainable as a parish with a smaller number of businesses but has a wider range of types of business. A strategy that directs growth to a village with one large employer would not be sustainable if that employer closed down or relocated. To reflect this the number of classes was multiplied by the number of businesses. The parishes were then ranked by this score. From the table below it can be seen that there are seven parishes that offer significantly fewer employment opportunities in a smaller range of businesses than the others and a further three that provide more opportunities but possibly not sufficient to fulfil the criterion.

Table 3 – Local Employment Opportunities

Parish	No of Businesses	No. of Classes	Score
Harling	47	5	235
Shipdham	46	5	230
N Elmham	45	5	225
Mattishall	39	5	195
Banham	47	4	188
Weeting	32	5	160
Narborough	31	5	155

Swanton Morley	30	5	150
Gt Ellingham	36	4	144
Necton	28	5	140
Old Buckenham	25	5	125
Scarning	28	4	112
Beetley	26	4	104
Saham Toney	25	4	100
Mundford	19	5	95
Griston	30	3	90
Ashill	21	4	84
Gressenhall	15	4	60
Carbrooke	13	4	52
Litcham	13	4	52
Sporle	10	4	40

Criterion 5 – Adequate public transport provision

Norfolk County Council have set out in their recently published Norfolk Bus Strategy a target level of service for rural areas. It is based on population and is divided into five levels. The higher the level the better the services are required to be. The villages mostly fall into either level 3 or 4, see table below. To meet level 3 a five day shopping service and a journey to work service is required. The bus strategy only identifies where services need to be improved and so it must be assumed that unless a village is identified in this way it meets the target level of service. All those that meet level 3 have an adequate level of public transport to fulfil the criterion.

Those settlements that do not meet the target are all on the higher levels and require improved evening services to satisfy level 4. Swanton Morley is listed with Matishall and Shipdham as requiring evening services to Dereham and only meets level 3, but it should reach level 5. Litcham only meets level 2 and as such is not sufficiently well served by public transport to fulfil the criterion.

Table 4 – Public Transport Provision

Parish	Target Level	Reached Target?	Notes
Ashill	3	Yes*	
Banham	3	Yes*	
Beetley	3	Yes*	
Carbrooke	3	Yes*	
Gt Ellingham	3	Yes*	
Gressenhall	3	Yes*	
Griston	3	Yes*	
Harling	4	Yes*	Is also served by Harling Road Station
Litcham	2	Yes*	
Mattishall	4	No	Meets level 3
Mundford	4	Yes*	
Narborough	3	Yes*	
Necton	4	Yes*	
N Elmham	3	Yes*	
Old Buckenham	3	Yes*	
Saham Toney	4	Yes*	
Scarning	4	Yes*	
Shipdham	4	No	Meets level 3
Sporle	3	Yes*	
Swanton Morley	5	No	Meets level 3
Weeting	4	Yes*	

* No service improvements identified.

Conclusion

12 parishes meet all of the criteria and could be considered to be sustainable and therefore can be considered as Key Service Centres. There is a question over the initial selection on the criteria of having a population over 1000 as about half the parishes remain after applying the criteria. There is nothing preventing other settlements being assessed but any smaller parishes would be less likely to meet the criteria and consequently could not be considered to be consistent with the RSS.

The following table summarises the results –

Table 5 - Summary

Parish	Sustainability Criteria					Result
	1 School	2 Shop & Post Office	3 Community Facility	4 Employment	5 Public Transport	
Ashill				X		X
Banham						
Beetley		X		?		X
Carbrooke		X		X		X
Gt Ellingham						
Gressenhall	X			X		X
Griston	X			X		X
Harling						
Litcham				X	X	X
Mattishall						
Mundford				X		X
Narborough						
Necton						
N Elmham						
Old Buckenham						
Saham Toney				?		
Scarning		X		?		X
Shipdham						
Sporle				X		X
Swanton Morley						
Weeting						