

Appendix 5: Qualitative Assessment of Selected Settlements

Tadley and Pamber Heath

Tadley and Pamber Heath scores 40 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, in principle, well within the classification of a Rural Service Centre. Nearly all the services and facilities are dependent on Tadley, a District Centre within Basingstoke and Deane Borough abutting the boundary of West Berkshire. The part of the settlement within West Berkshire is not identified as a separate settlement in its own right encompassing only two housing estates. Therefore the role of the part of the settlement in West Berkshire can only be defined as part of the wider community of Tadley which sits within Basingstoke and Deane. The whole settlement is constrained from the outset given its location in the inner consultation zone of the Atomic Weapons Establishment/Detailed Emergency Planning Zone. Due to that constraint the Basingstoke and Deane Borough have decided through their Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029 to meet the housing needs of Tadley elsewhere in the Borough. Given its lack of functionality and the desirability of taking a consistent approach with the Borough at this point on the local authority boundary, it is proposed that this part of the settlement in West Berkshire should not be in the settlement hierarchy either as a Rural Service Centre or a Service Village. There will be further discussion with the Borough Council (and other affected local authorities) with regard to the outcome of the recent changes in the consultation zone.

Compton

Compton scores 31 points overall in the settlement hierarchy matrix just within the range for a Rural Service Centre (RSC). The village also has access to 7 key services and facilities which is the minimum requirement for a RSC but the village has a minimal public transport service not sufficient to service a RSC and given its relative remoteness from other large settlements it is typically 'car centric'. Compton has a relatively small population of 1520 for a Rural Service Centre however it does serve, and is valued by, not only its own community but a wide range of other settlements in the surrounding area, especially with respect to the educational and medical facilities. On balance, the strong position of Compton in the hierarchy with a good core of valued services and facilities justifies its classification as a Service Village but with its lack of public transport/car dependency combined with its relative remoteness it falls short of a Rural Service Centre on sustainability grounds.

Cold Ash

Cold Ash scores 23 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, well within the range for consideration as a Service Village providing for a wide range of other services in addition to the key facilities of post office, two primary schools and village hall. It

shares many of these with Ashmore Green. Many of the other key services are nearby in Thatcham. The settlement falls short with regard to the availability of public transport even though the Parish Council indicate that they would place a high value on it being provided and see it as a priority for improvement. The transport infrastructure is mainly rural roads and the Parish enjoys its rural setting in the AONB but is concerned about congestion. Cold Ash and Ashmore Green have a considerable population of about 2500 with a strong sense of community supporting and using existing local services and facilities. Whilst public transport is poor the close proximity of Thatcham mitigates this aspect of sustainability to some extent (notwithstanding traffic management) and when considered alongside the other criteria, Cold Ash should be classified as a Service Village in the settlement hierarchy.

Chieveley

Chieveley scores 26 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, well within the range for consideration as a Service Village providing for a wide range of other services in addition to the key facilities of post office, primary school, village hall, convenience store and medical services. Chieveley is not well served by public transport although it does have two morning and evening daily services to Newbury that allow some capacity for commuting. However, in addition to its own community, Chieveley serves a number of other communities in a cluster of other settlements in the surrounding rural hinterland such as Brightwalton, Curridge, Peasemore Leckhampstead, East Ilsley, West Ilsley and Hampstead Norreys. For this reason, on balance Chieveley should be classified as a Service Village in the settlement hierarchy.

Streatley

Streatley is situated to the south of the River Thames, on the District's boundary with South Oxfordshire. A bridge over the River Thames links it directly to the separate settlement of Goring which sits within South Oxfordshire. Goring is classified as a "larger village" in South Oxfordshire District Council emerging local plan with an overall strategy of supporting and enhancing its role, and as a Local Centre in its Retail Hierarchy suitable for infill and small scale development. Goring adopted a Neighbourhood Plan in 2019 which includes allocations for housing and policies to maintain and enhance community facilities and the environment.

Streatley scores 21 in the settlement hierarchy matrix, comfortably within the range for consideration as a Service Village with 4 key services and facilities in the form of post office and convenience store (in Goring), primary school and village hall. The village has a limited number of other community facilities and services. Access to public transport is good with respect to train services (also in Goring) but poor in the case of bus services. Streatley is not mentioned as a destination of choice for its services and facilities from other settlements in West Berkshire whereas Goring is so.

Without the benefit of the post office, train station and convenience store in Goring Streatley's overall score would reduce to 12, the post office would no longer be counted as a key service and facility and quality of access to public transport would drop significantly. If discounted, then Streatley could not be justified as a service village in the settlement hierarchy.

The Parish has made a strong representation that the classification of Streatley as a smaller village below the hierarchy should remain on the grounds that the Planning Inspectorate report following examination in 2012 of the Core Strategy 2006 – 2026 specifically addressed the role of Goring and confirmed this classification, No material change regarding access to services and facilities has taken place since, other than a further reduction in bus services. The Inspector stated in his report in 2012 that, "given the separation of these 2 settlements by the Thames and the single bridge linking them over the river, Goring does not justify any particular role in the settlement hierarchy of West Berkshire". Following deliberation, Council members with oversight of the Council's planning portfolio confirmed that the argument remained valid and strongly advised that Streatley should remain a smaller village below the hierarchy.

Bradfield Southend

Bradfield Southend scores 21 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, comfortably within the range for consideration as a service village providing for a wide range of other services in addition to the key facilities of post office, primary school, village hall and convenience store. The community tends to use all its services and facilities that are within the village and places a generally high level of importance on all of them with the post office and village shop, the village hall, the playing field and children's playing area being the most valued. The community otherwise tends to use primarily Theale and but also Thatcham for its other services except the secondary school at Compton. The population is relatively low at 770 although the parish population as a whole is 2177.

However, the availability of public transport is poor even though the Parish Council indicate that they would place a high value on it being provided and see it as a priority for improvement. The transport infrastructure is mainly rural roads and the Parish enjoys its rural setting in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) but is concerned about the number of vehicle movements, the speed of traffic and the state of the local roads. Dependency on cars appears to remain strong. Since 2010 the bus service has been reduced from a more regular Monday to Saturday service to Newbury, Tadley and Calcot, to a level of frequency not suitable for commuting.

In conclusion, the population of Bradfield Southend and its surrounding area appears to support its role and function as a Service Village but its future sustainability would be more secure with improved public transport services.

Aldermaston Village

Aldermaston Village scores 18 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, just inside the category of service village. It has access to four key services and facilities in the form of a primary school, village hall, convenience stores and employment land, not least Atomic Weapons Establishment. Its remaining community services are limited. The village itself has a relatively low population of 590. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy the village has lost access to a local post office and regular bus services.

The community tends to travel to Tadley in Hampshire for key services such as a supermarket, bank, post office and doctors. There are no bus services that cross the County boundary.

The village services are not a destination of choice from surrounding settlements and with the loss or reduction of key services and facilities in the last 10 years, Aldermaston no longer functions as a Service Village.

Woolhampton

Woolhampton scores 23 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, comfortably within the category of service village. Although it has access to only three of the key services and facilities, a primary school, convenience store and village hall, it benefits from excellent access to public transport by both rail and bus services. It has reasonable access to other community services and facilities. These services are also accessed by surrounding settlements particularly Midgham. Other services and facilities not available in the village are accessible in Thatcham with Newbury just beyond. The range and accessibility of local services and facilities and other services in the towns are important and valued by the local community. The population of Woolhampton is only 550 but its location on the main transport corridor between Reading and Newbury offers a sustainable location for a Service Village. Therefore the lack of a qualifying key service or facility should not outweigh the strong overall score and sustainability credentials.

Stockcross

Stockcross scores 21 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, within the category of service village. It has access to four key services and facilities in the form of a post office, primary school, convenience store and village hall. Its remaining community services are limited and its public transport links are minimal. It has a very small population of 260. Its size relative to the major urban area of Newbury which is only 3 miles away mitigates against the potential for the village to function as a stand alone service village to the surrounding area. It should be classified as a smaller village outside of the settlement hierarchy.

Curridge

Curridge scores 20 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, within the category of service village. It has access to four key services and facilities in the form of a primary school, convenience store, two village/community halls and employment land at Red Shute Hill. Its remaining community services are fairly limited and its public transport links are minimal. The population is relatively small and the close proximity of the larger and better serviced settlement of Hermitage acting as a hub including the sharing of employment opportunities, means that it does not offer sufficient additional functionality as a Service Village for the surrounding area. Chieveley Parish Council within which Curridge is located are of the opinion that it should remain outside the settlement hierarchy.

Ashmore Green

Ashmore Green scores 20 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, within the category of service village. It has access to four key services and facilities in the form of a post office, convenience store, primary school, and village hall. Its remaining community services are limited and its public transport links are poor. It has a small population of only 400. The very close proximity of the larger and better serviced settlement of Cold Ash means that nearly all of its services and facilities are shared and, in fact, located in Cold Ash. It does not offer any additional functionality as a service village for the surrounding area and therefore should be categorised as a smaller village outside of the settlement hierarchy.

Upper Bucklebury

Upper Bucklebury scores 19 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, within the category of service village. It has access to key services and facilities in the form of a highly valued primary school and village memorial hall as well as a convenience store and employment land at the Colthrop Estate in Thatcham. Its remaining community services are fairly limited and in particular, its public transport links are poor. Other services not available are provided by Thatcham and Newbury with medical services being available at Chapel Row and the secondary school at Compton, all requiring a car. There is little evidence from other Parishes that Upper Bucklebury is accessed in any great capacity by other settlements as a service village. Combined with the close proximity of the urban area of Thatcham and Newbury beyond including the sharing of employment opportunities means that it does not have a robust functional relationship with the surrounding area as a Service Village.

Aldermaston Wharf

Aldermaston Wharf scores 21 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, within the category of service village. The community has access to only three of the key services and facilities, a village hall, convenience store and the Protected Employment Area it shares at Beenham Industrial Area, but it benefits from excellent

access to public transport by both rail and bus services. It has reasonable access to other community services and facilities. It is not evident that the settlement offers any additional functionality for the surrounding area. Despite its location on the main transport corridor between Reading and Newbury which indicates a sustainable location, the lack of other key facilities means that the settlement should not be classified as a Service Village.

Burghfield Village

Burghfield Village scores 17 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, just within the category of service village. It supports a good bus service and enjoys reasonable access to community facilities. However, it has access to only two key services and facilities in the form of a primary school and village hall. The village has a small population and with the close proximity of the much larger settlement of Burghfield Rural Service Centre, Burghfield Village does not offer any additional functionality for the surrounding area and therefore should be classified as a smaller village outside of the settlement hierarchy.

Yattendon

Yattendon scores 18 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, just within the category of service village. It has access to four key services and facilities in the form of a post office, convenience store, primary school, and village hall all of which are highly regarded locally. Its remaining community services are limited and its public transport links in particular, are poor. There are some small local opportunities for employment in relation to agriculture, equestrian and a small brewery. For those services not available locally the main destination is Pangbourne as a Rural Service Centre and additionally Chieveley for medical services and Compton for the Secondary School. It has a small population of only 380. The size of Yattendon and its poor public transport links suggest it is better classified as a smaller village outside of the hierarchy.

Hampstead Norreys

Hampstead Norreys scores 16 points in the settlement hierarchy matrix, just within the category of service village. Access to public transport is adequate but has access to only three key services and facilities in the form of a convenience store, primary school, and village hall all of which are highly regarded locally. Its remaining community services are limited. For those services not available the neighbouring service villages of Compton, Chieveley and Hermitage are frequented but also Yattendon to a lesser extent. Given the proximity of other service villages, Hampstead Norreys offers no additional functional purpose by being a service village as well and therefore should be classified as a smaller village outside of the hierarchy.