

The Village Facilities and Rural Transport Survey

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	3
PART ONE – VILLAGE FACILITIES STUDY	4 - 6
PART TWO – RURAL TRANSPORT STUDY	7 - 8
HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS	9 - 13
APPENDICES:	
Appendix 1: List of Villages Surveyed	
Appendix 2: Sample Letter to Parish Councillors	
Appendix 3: Village Facilities Results	
Appendix 4: Nearest Location of Services and Facilities if not Present in the Village	
Appendix 5: Locations Most Likely to be used for Services and Facilities	
Appendix 6: Sources of Local Employment Opportunity	
Appendix 7: Village Facility and Public Transport Scores	
Appendix 8: Summary of Nearest Location used to Access Services and Facilities by Settlement Surveyed	
Appendix 9: Summary of Locations most Likely to be used if Services and Facilities not Present in the Village	
Appendix 10: Journey Types and Service Specifications	
Appendix 11: Results from Survey of Rural Public Transport Provision	
Appendix 12: Supplementary Survey of Bus Services to and from the 10 Highest Scoring Settlements in the Village Facilities Survey	
Appendix 13: Policy Guidance	
Appendix 14: Internet Accessibility	
Appendix 15: Analysis of Results from the Village Facilities and Rural Transport	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government, in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), makes it clear that the purpose planning is to help achieve sustainable development.
- 1.2 The Local Plan strategy for Wychavon District, Malvern Hills District and Worcester City is to direct new housing development within current development boundaries. Residential development outside defined settlement boundaries maybe permitted if in conformity with other policies in the local plan including essential agricultural or forestry workers, replacement dwellings, the conversion of existing buildings and affordable housing to meet local housing need.
- 1.3 The Village Facilities and Rural Transport Survey (VFRTS) provides technical evidence to the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) **and is not a decision making document**. The process of making decisions about the level of growth directed to individual settlements will have to be informed by the individual constraints and opportunities which exist at each settlement. The amount of development proposal will however not simply be reliant on the VFRTS. Other considerations in particular the availability of suitable land are also decision making factors.

Purpose of this Study

- 1.4 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) is being prepared by Wychavon District Council (WDC), City of Worcester Council (CWC) and Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC). The SWDP set a vision and planning objectives for South Worcestershire for the plan period to 2030. The plan proposes a development strategy which, for sustainability reasons, is urban focused but due to the large amount of rural settlements also needs to allocate development there too.
- 1.5 For the rural areas the plan sets out a settlement hierarchy as part of the emerging SWDP which is based on the VFRTS. The purpose of the VFRTS is to be reviewed periodically to assess the level of local service provision in order to rank the rural setting.

2.0 Part One - The Village Facilities Survey

Methodology

Identifying Sustainable Rural Settlements

2.1 To accord with national and strategic planning policy a sustainable development strategy for rural areas seeks to direct development to those rural settlements which contain a variety of services and community facilities and where reasonable public transport services exist. In order to achieve this, the sustainability of settlements needs to be assessed in terms of the availability of services and facilities and level of public transport provision.

2.2 The results of village service surveys will indicate those rural settlements that have a range of services and facilities and are accessible by public transport. Those settlements with a broader range of services are considered by the SWDP to be a more appropriate location for further growth. This will then enable settlements to be identified which can influence the SWDP and SAP SWDPD, which will filter down to the development strategy in terms of potential locations for future development in rural areas.

2.3 This report outlines the two surveys that have been undertaken by Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils. **Part One describes the methodology for the village survey and Part Two** explains the approach for assessing rural public transport within the District. The final chapter sets out the settlement hierarchy on the basis of the two surveys. The detailed analysis of the village and rural transport survey and the overall conclusions of the Study are detailed in Appendix 15.

Survey Methodology

2.4 Access to the services people need is one of the most important determinants of the quality of life in rural areas. The range, quality, and accessibility of services are all important considerations. A village shop, school, doctor's surgery, and bank are likely to be important to most households depending on their circumstances e.g. age and disposable income.

2.5 The purpose of the survey of village facilities is twofold:

- To identify the number of sustainable rural settlements which have a range of facilities;
- To enhance and complement existing information about rural services and facilities held by WDC, MHDC and other agencies.

Identification of Settlements

2.6 A list of villages and other locations was identified for which information on local services and facilities were obtained. The list included those settlements with a defined Development Boundary contained in the Malvern Hills District and Wychavon District Local Plans and settlements that were known to contain some services or facilities were also included. The urban settlements of Evesham, Tenbury Wells, Upton upon Severn, Malvern (including Malvern Wells), Worcester, Pershore and Droitwich Spa were excluded from the survey being significantly larger and clearly offering a more comprehensive range of accessible local service.

Content of the Survey Form

2.7 The survey form requested information about the number and type of services and facilities located within or close to the identified settlements. Information was also requested on both the nearest locations where services and facilities could be accessed if they were not present in the settlement itself and on the location(s) most likely to be used. Details of local employment sources were also requested.

Liaison with Parish Councils

2.8 Parish Councils were sent a copy of the agreed survey form together with detailed instructions and a map for each of the identified settlements for which information was required. Parish Councils were also encouraged to provide information on any other settlements not identified but which the Parish Council considered relevant to the survey.

2.9 A list of Parish Councils and the settlements surveyed is set out in **Appendix 1** of this report. A copy of the survey form and covering letter, as well as a further follow up letter that was sent to Parish Councils, is shown in **Appendix 2**.

2.10 It was stressed to all Parish Councils that the survey would be a 'snap shot', largely based upon their responses. Both MHDC and WDC accept that the survey results would not necessarily be representative of the preferences of all Parish residents.

2.11 To ensure the survey is as up to date as practicably possible Parish Councils have been consulted since 2007. The latest consultation was carried out in September 2011. To ensure a robust study, each Parish Councillor was asked to confirm whether the results of the survey were correct. As evidenced by the settlements listed in the appendices, the majority of Parish Councils responded to the request for information. Following inputting of returned information, Parish Councils were sent a spreadsheet based on their responses to confirm the results are correct. For those settlements for which a completed form was not received, a limited survey was undertaken. This was carried out by either contacting the Parish Councils, County, District and County Councillors, conducting internet searches or through local officer knowledge of settlements, where informed decisions on those services and facilities used outside the settlement were made

2.12 **Appendix 3** contains information received on the number and type of services and facilities in each of the settlements surveyed. **Appendix 4** indicates the nearest location likely to be used to access services and facilities if they are not present within the settlement. **Appendix 5** indicates the locations most likely to be used to access services and facilities. **Appendix 6** sets out information received from the survey in respect of local employment.

2.13 The local services and facilities were identified as being either a 'key service' or a 'secondary service'. Key services are those which are considered as being of more important to the local community in terms of their availability and usage.

Key Services:

- Shop & post office/general store
- Doctor's surgery
- Primary/First/Middle school
- Village/parish hall
- Employment Opportunity

Secondary Services:

- Newsagent
- Mobile Shop
- Petrol Station
- Garage
- Other Shopping Facility
- Bank
- Cash point
- Other financial
- Public House
- Café / Restaurant
- Recreation Ground
- Other Recreational
- Library / Mobile Library
- Church
- Dentist
- Pharmacy
- Veterinary Practice
- Other Health Facility
- Pre School Nursery
- Secondary School
- Adult Evening Classes

2.14 Local employment opportunities were also deemed to be important when considering the sustainability of settlements. The Parish Facilities survey provided further information about the type and number of employment opportunities locally. From these results, only those areas considered as providing a local employment opportunity are provided in **Appendix 6** of this report. For the purposes of the VFRTS survey, 'employment opportunity' consisted of those villages that have access to industrial units and/or large employment sites that are reasonably related to the village or considered to provide local employment opportunities.

2.15 A scoring system was then applied to both key and secondary services. Three points were awarded to each key service available whilst a score of one point was applied to each secondary service present. The presence of more than one type of key service did not result in any additional scores being given. **Appendix 7** outlines the scores given to each service within a settlement .

3.0 Part Two - Rural Public Transport Survey

Methodology

Introduction

3.1 It is recognised that people's travel patterns are varied and differ markedly between urban and rural areas. In rural areas, where services and facilities are not provided locally, public transport to a local service centre may be a vital lifeline.

3.2 Public transport in the rural area is limited relative to the urban areas. For those who do not have access to private transport. To assist in the identification of sustainable rural settlements, an analysis of rural public transport was undertaken.

3.3 The purpose of undertaking the survey was twofold:

- To assist in the identification of accessible rural settlements which meet various travel needs; and
- To enhance and complement existing information about rural public transport held by the District Council and other agencies.

Survey Methodology

Identification of Settlements and Rural public transport

3.4 The list of settlements surveyed (see **Appendix 1**) for the Village Facilities Survey was also utilised for the survey of rural public transport to help ensure consistency between the two surveys.

3.5 Bus and rail timetables covering all rural services within Wychavon and Malvern Hills District, published by Worcestershire County Council & the Traveline website (www.travelinemidlands.co.uk) was the primary source of data for the survey.

3.6 Specialised rural public transport such as community buses, supermarket buses, taxis, bicycle lend schemes and dial-a-ride were not included in the survey. This was due to a lack of comprehensive information and their relative infrequency to normal bus service timetables.

Identification of Journey Types

3.7 To assess the accessibility of rural settlements, common journey types were identified for which public transport may be used. The following journey types represent activities which could reasonably be accessed by bus, over a typical week:

- Journey to work
- Food shopping
- Doctor's appointment
- Hospital appointment
- Social event (day)
- Social event (evening)
- Sport/Recreation (day)
- Sport/Recreation (evening)
- Journey to school/college/Higher Education

3.8 A specification for each of the journey types was established which defined the days of operation and the time required at destination. For example, the journey specification for food shopping stated that the service should run to a town centre on at least two days from Monday to Saturday and allow 2 to 4 hours at the destination, with the outgoing journey taking place after 9.30am.

3.9 The location of the following services (located both within and outside of Wychavon and Malvern Hills District) were also defined for assessment purposes:

- Designated town centres
- Supermarkets
- Doctors surgeries
- Hospitals
- Sport grounds
- Leisure centres

3.10 Rural public transport services were then assessed against the chosen journey types to see if it was possible to access a service or activity located elsewhere, using a local rural public transport as a method of transport.

3.11 **Appendix 10** outlines the chosen journey types, the possible locations to access the defined service or activity and the minimum service specification for each journey type. It is accepted that whilst some of the service specifications are similar, the categorisation of different journey types would allow an assessment to be made of the ability of a settlement to access different services and facilities located elsewhere. **Appendix 11** illustrates the rural transport results using the methodology described above. The 'notes' column relate to limitations of the accessibility of selected services and any assumptions made based on these limitations.

3.12 Many of the journey types identified for the public transport survey are located in town centres; therefore only limited information would be gained on public transport links between settlements in rural areas. To analyse the level of relative sustainability in the rural areas, a supplementary survey examined public transport to the ten highest scoring settlements identified through the Village Facilities Survey. This would help provide an indication of their accessibility by public transport from surrounding settlements. **Appendix 12** outlines the results from the supplementary survey of rural public transport to the ten rural settlements, which according to the results of the Village Facilities Survey had the highest scores for services and facilities. The schedule indicates those rural settlements with a daytime and evening rural public transport service to the identified settlement.

4.0 Hierarchy of Settlements

4.1 The results of both the Village Facilities Survey and the Rural Public Transport Survey enable the various settlements surveyed to be ranked as follows:

Category 1

Settlements in this category have at least four key services and score at least 16 points in the Village facilities Survey. In addition they have access to all daytime journey types (A,B,C,D,E,G and I).

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	WYCHAVON DISTRICT
Abberley Common	Broadway
Clifton-on-Teme	Ombersley
Great Witley	Wychbold
Hallow	Inkberrow
Hanley Swan	Bredon
Kempsey	Badsey
Lower Broadheath	Honeybourne
Martley	Hartlebury
Welland	Offenham

Category 2

Settlements in this category have at least two key services including a shop and have access to at least daily services for employment and shopping purposes (A and B journey types).

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	WYCHAVON DISTRICT
Bayton	Ashton Under Hill
Broadwas	Beckford
Callow End	Bretforton
Clows Top	Cropthorne
Leigh Sinton	Drakes Broughton
Powick & Colletts Green	Eckington
Rushwick	Fernhill Heath
Suckley	Fladbury

	Flyford Flavell
	Harvington
	Overbury
	Pinvin
	Sedgeberrow
	South Littleton
	Upton Snodsbury

Category 3

Settlements in this category have at least one key service (other than a parish/ village hall) and have access within the settlement to at least a daily bus service to a “designated town”, or three of the journey types.

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	WYCHAVON DISTRICT
Astley	Bishampton
Bransford	Blackminster
Corse Lawn	Broad Marston
Eardiston	Church Lench
Grimley	Cleeve Prior
Hanley Castle	Conderton
Holt Heath	Cutnall Green
Knightwick	Crossway Green
Lindridge	Crowle
Longley Green	Defford
Mamble	Elmley Castle
Pendock	Hanbury
Ripple	Himbleton
Ryall & Holly Green	Kemerton
Shrawley	Littleworth
Tunnel Hill	Lower Moor
Upper Broadheath	North and Middle Littleton
Upper Welland	Norton-Juxta-Kempsey
	Pebworth
	Peopleton

	Stoke Prior
	Tibberton
	Upton Warren
	Whittington

Lower Categories:

4A The following settlements have access to services although there is limited or no bus service provision:

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	WYCHAVON DISTRICT
Abberley Village	Abberton
Astley Burf	Aston Somerville
Berrow	Bredon's Norton
Broadheath	Broughton Hackett
Bushley (including Bushley Green)	Childswickham
Dunley	Dunhampstead
Earls Croome	Great Comberton
Guarlford	Little Comberton
Hanley Childe	Hampton Lovett
Kerswell Green	Hindlip
Knighton-on-Teme	Kington
Longdon	Stock And Bradley
Madresfield	Throckmorton
Menithwood	White Ladies Aston & Sneachill
Pensax	Wickhamford
Rochford and Upper Rochford	
Sinton Green	
Smith End Green	
Stanford on Teme	
Stoke Bliss	

4B The following settlements have low/medium level of public transport provision and low services/facility provision:

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	WYCHAVON DISTRICT
Alfrick Pound	Abbots Morton
Alfrick	Aldington
Bayton Common	Bevere
Clifton	Birlingham
Eastham	Bredon's Hardwick
Leigh	Charlton
Little Witley	Cookhill
Newland	Grafton Flyford
Newnham Bridge	Hinton On The Green
Severn Stoke	Kinsham
Shelsley Beauchamp	Martin Hussingtree
Stockton on Teme	Northampton
Wichenford	Norton & Lenchwick
	Oldfield
	Rous Lench
	Sale Green
	Stoulton & Hawbridge
	Strensham
	Summerfield
	Wadborough
	Westmancote & Lower Westmancote
	Wick
	Wyre Piddle

Villages considered in the open countryside

The following settlements have no key services and limited or no bus provision:

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	WYCHAVON DISTRICT
Baughton	Atch Lench
Birts Street	Hadzor
Brockamin	Hatfield
Castlemorton	Huddington
Cotheridge	Naunton Beaucamp
Frith Common	Netherton
Gilberts End	Oddingley
Green Street	Sytchampton
High Green	Uphampton
Kinnersley	
Lower Sapey	
Monkwood	
Naunton	
Rye Street	
Shoulton	
Stanford Bridge	
Stonehall	
Uckinghall	