

Final Village
Hierarchy Study
August 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is currently preparing its District Plan to help shape a sustainable future for East Herts. This will replace the current 2007 Local Plan Second Review and sets out the spatial planning strategy and policy framework for the District up to 2033. The Council is developing an evidence base to support and inform the preparation of the District Plan.
- 1.2 This paper is the concluding report on The Village Hierarchy Study; it builds on the sustainability work presented in the Village Hierarchy Study: Stage 1 (August 2015) and the methodology used in the Interim Village Hierarchy Study (December 2015). The Final Village Hierarchy Study provides a snapshot in time of both facilities and accessibility to services within the different villages of East Herts to establish their overall level of sustainability.
- 1.3 This study presents the final 'sustainability scores' associated with each village and indicates which villages will be classified as Group 1 and Group 2 villages. This study does not set out the strategy for development across the rural settlements; this will be considered through the Villages Appraisal and presented as part of the updated District Plan.

2. Villages Considered in the Study

- 2.1 East Herts is a rural district, consisting of five market towns and over 100 villages. It would not be appropriate to assess all of the settlements within the District as part of this study.
- 2.2 Villages identified as Group 1 and Group 2 villages in the Draft District Plan¹ and Category 1 and Category 2 villages from the East Herts Local Plan Second Review² (where these differed) were assessed alongside a number of other villages that were identified as Group 3/Category 3 in the respective plans.
- 2.3 The remaining settlements within the District were considered to be of a size where they would not provide sufficient sustainability scores and they are therefore not assessed further.
- 2.4 The 44 villages included in the assessment are listed below in Table 1:

Table 1: Villages Within Study		
Albury	Datchworth	Much Hadham
Anstey	Furneux Pelham	Puckeridge
Ardeley	Great Amwell	Spellbrook
Aston	Great Hormead	Standon
Bayford	Hadham Ford	Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets
Benington	Hare Street	Stapleford
Birch Green	Hertford Heath	Tewin
Bramfield	Hertingfordbury	Thundridge
Braughing	High Cross	Tonwell
Brent Pelham	High Wych	Wadesmill
Brickendon	Hunsdon	Walkern
Cole Green	Letty Green	Wareside
Colliers End	Little Berkhamsted	Watton-at-Stone
Cottered	Little Hadham	Westmill
Dane End		Widford

¹ Draft District Plan Villages: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=29084> – See Chapter 10 ‘Villages’,

² Local Plan Second Review: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=24645> – See Chapter 17 ‘Other Settlements - The Villages’

3. Methodology

3.1 A scoring system was formulated which was used to rank the villages with regard to their overall sustainability. There were two elements to this part of the study. The first was an assessment of the range of services and facilities that a village contains, and the second was an assessment of the village's accessibility to higher order settlements, and the level of public transport provision available.

1. Assessment of Services and Facilities

3.2 Services and facilities were selected and categorised into Primary and Secondary Services and Facilities. Those categorised as Primary Services and Facilities were deemed to be essential or for day-to-day requirements, and therefore the scoring criteria was weighted to reflect their importance.

3.3 The scoring criteria can be seen in Appendix 1. The services and facilities included within the study, as well as their descriptions, can be seen in Appendix 3. Focusing on the importance of services and facilities, and not just on the quantity of services, ensures a more accurate measure of sustainability.

2. Assessment of Accessibility and Public Transport Provision

3.4 The accessibility of villages within East Herts is affected by the levels of public transport provision available to residents. Those villages that are best served by public transport can be considered to be more accessible, and hence more sustainable, than more isolated villages.

3.5 Higher scores were awarded to railway service provision as railways are fixed transport infrastructure, which makes service provision less subject to service level fluctuations and economic circumstances. Higher scores were also awarded to bus service provision which offers peak hour services on Monday-Friday, enabling a day long visit to be made to a higher order settlement for work or educational purposes.

3.6 Appendix 2 displays the accessibility and public transport provision scoring criteria. The table is split into 3 categories; general accessibility, bus provision and railway provision. Appendix 4 contains a further description of each transport and accessibility type.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 As noted at previous District Planning Executive Panel meetings and East Herts Association of Parish and Town Council meetings, the villages and their services and facilities can change over time. The Council has encouraged parishes to identify where changes to services and facilities have occurred during the preparation of The Village Hierarchy Study in order to maintain its overall accuracy. Many parishes have been helpful in doing so throughout the process and have provided useful comments and suggested amendments during the consultation opportunities.
- 4.2 Parish Councillors and Ward Members were consulted between the 6th July and 3rd August 2015 on their respective village profiles. Parish Councils of the Group 3 villages added to the assessment were consulted between 5th and 29th January 2016.
- 4.3 The methodology itself was amended (after Stage 1) to reflect a better picture of what parishes considered key sustainability indicators, particularly regarding accessibility and public transport provision. We have also received a number of updates to sustainability scores since the Interim Village Hierarchy was presented and the final scoring reflects this.

5. Scoring Results

- 5.1 Table 2 presents the final scores of the (see 5.2 below) villages that were assessed against the sustainability criteria. The villages with higher sustainability scores are at the top and those with lower scores, and therefore deemed less sustainable, are at the bottom. See Appendix 5 for a full matrix on individual village sustainability scores.
- 5.2 The final results only display 42 villages as the villages of Standon and Puckeridge as well as Thundridge and Wadesmill have been combined. Village proximity and service distribution means that they function as one settlement rather than separate villages.

Table 2: Village Scores			
Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets	126	Tonwell	31
Watton-at-Stone	88	Benington	30
Standon and Puckeridge	80	Hare Street	28
Much Hadham	58	Hertingfordbury	27
Braughing	55	Bayford	26
Hunsdon	50	Little Hadham	26
Walkern	50	Birch Green	24
Hertford Heath	50	Furneux Pelham	23
Datchworth	45	Wareside	23
Great Amwell	44	Brickendon	22
Thundridge and Wadesmill	44	Great Hormead	21
Tewin	41	Colliers End	20
Dane End	40	Cottered	19
Aston	38	Little Berkhamsted	19
High Wych	38	Anstey	17
Spellbrook	38	Bramfield	17
High Cross	37	Albury	14
Stapleford	36	Ardeley	14
Hadham Ford	33	Cole Green	11
Widford	33	Brent Pelham	9
Westmill	32	Letty Green	5

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The sustainability scores have resulted in three distinct groupings of villages. Eight Group 1 Villages (Table 3) were identified and are considered to be the most sustainable villages in East Herts.

Table 3: Group 1 Villages			
Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets	126	Braughing	55
Watton-at-Stone	88	Hunsdon	50
Standon and Puckeridge	80	Walkern	50
Much Hadham	58	Hertford Heath	50

- 6.2 29 Group 2 Villages (Table 4) were identified which share some similarities with the Group 1 Villages but do not have the same quantity or range of services and facilities and therefore score fewer points overall.

Table 4: Group 2 Villages			
Datchworth	45	Hare Street	28
Great Amwell	44	Hertingfordbury	27
Thundridge and Wadesmill	44	Bayford	26
Tewin	41	Little Hadham	26
Dane End	40	Birch Green	24
Aston	38	Furneux Pelham	23
High Wych	38	Wareside	23
Spellbrook	38	Brickendon	22
High Cross	37	Great Hormead	21
Stapleford	36	Colliers End	20
Hadham Ford	33	Cottered	19
Widford	33	Little Berkhamsted	19
Westmill	32	Anstey	17
Tonwell	31	Bramfield	17
Benington	30		

6.3 Five villages (Table 5) resulted in very low sustainability scores and were therefore not identified as either Group 1 or 2 Villages. These villages share more similarities with Group 3 Villages and will be categorised as such in the District Plan.

Table 5: Group 3	
Albury	14
Cole Green	14
Ardeley	11
Brent Pelham	9
Letty Green	5

6.4 These village groupings will now be taken forward to inform the village development strategy within the District Plan.

Appendix 1

In order for a service or facility to count towards a village's total, it must be within a 750m radius of the built-up area; this represents a 10 minute walking distance. A point (or more where applicable) is awarded for each service, e.g. if there were four A1 shops within a village, 4 points would be awarded etc. Appendix 1 contains a description of each facility and service included within the study.

Facility Type	Facility	Number of Points for each Facility (all within settlement)
Primary Facilities	Post Office Facility	1pt – Part-time 2pts – Full-time
	Doctor's Surgery Facility	
	Primary School	2 pts
	Community Building	1pt each
	Convenience Shop	
	Children's Play Area	
Public Playing Field		
Secondary Facilities	Dentist	1pt – Part-time 2pts – Full-time
	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	1pt each
	Place of Worship	
	Public House	
	Other A1 Shop	
	Pre-school/Nursery	
	Pharmacy/Chemist	
	Private Recreational Facilities	
	Allotments	
Petrol Station		

Facility Type	Additional Weighting (basic number multiplied by)
All Primary	x3
All Secondary	Remains the same

Appendix 2:

Transport Type	Indicator	Scoring Criteria
General Accessibility	Proximity to nearest Service Town ³ (in miles)	0.0 – 2.0 = 8pts 2.1 – 3.0 = 6pts 3.1 – 4.0 = 4pts 4.1 + = 2pts
Bus Service Provision	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	1 – 4 = 2pts 5 – 9 = 4pts 10 – 14 = 6pts 15 – 19 = 8pts 20 + = 10pts
	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	1 – 4 = 1pt 5 – 9 = 2pts 10 – 14 = 3pts 15 – 19 = 4pts 20 + = 5pts
	Sunday Service (Any time/number)	2pts
	Bus Service suitable for commute ⁴	5pts
Railway Service Provision	Railway Station within Village	10pts

³ All distances measured in miles, from centre of village to centre of service town. Centre refers to centre of development/built up area in both cases; not perceived centre of village/town.

⁴ Bus service arriving in Service Town before 9am and departing after 5pm (includes the 5 market towns within East Herts in addition to Harlow, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City)

Appendix 3:

Facility Type	Facility	Reason for Inclusion/Criteria
Primary Facilities	Post Office	<p>Post offices have traditionally provided a valuable service to rural areas allowing access to a wide range of services. Especially important to the elderly who may not be able to easily travel outside the settlement and/or may not have access to internet services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes independent Post Offices, part-time Post Offices and Post Offices within a shop.
	Doctor Surgery	<p>Access to a doctor is important to provide for the on-going health needs of residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes both permanent surgeries and part-time surgeries.
	Primary School	<p>Reduces the need for children and parents to travel long distances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not include privately funded schools. - Or schools which only cater for a select type of student, (e.g. Students with learning difficulties) as this does not directly serve local need.
	Community Building	<p>Provides a location for community activities and events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indoor hall or larger building, most often used for community events but can also be privately hired.
	Convenience Shop	<p>A general convenience store with a range of food and general goods is seen as a basic requirement and important in determining the sustainability of a settlement. Convenience stores will provide a daily 'top-up' shop of essentials, thus reducing the need to travel.</p>
	Children's Play Area	<p>Designated area for children to play in. Might include climbing frames of varying materials and/or an area of softer flooring.</p>
	Public Playing Field ⁵	<p>Provides green space or recreational facilities for public use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing fields, nature reserves, equipped play areas, tennis courts, and sports pitches with

⁵ In some cases Public and Private Recreational Facilities overlap, every effort has been made to separate and count individually; however in some cases the provision of the facility may be large enough that it is counted both as a Public facility and as (below) a Private facility.

		<p>changing rooms etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilities that can be accessed by the community, without having membership to a privately run organisation. - In some cases these facilities can be publically accessible but may require a charge. - Includes both indoor and outdoor facilities.
Secondary Facilities	Dentist	<p>Dentists are an important healthcare facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes both permanent and part-time surgeries.
	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	<p>Provide residents with a choice of food outlets as well as providing employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In some cases Café/Restaurant is deemed to offer separate service despite being within same unit as shop/pub, therefore has been added to the assessment.
	Place of Worship	<p>Plays an important role in community cohesion.</p>
	Public House	<p>Can often be the heart of a local community. In smaller, more isolated settlements pubs may be able to diversify and provide other essential services.</p>
	Other A1 Shop	<p>A variety of shops and retail which again lower the need to travel outside of the village, they differ from other shops by providing comparison goods and some services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes any shop within the A1 use-class.
	Pre-school/Nursery	<p>Local childcare can be particularly important for working families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment includes both private childcare facilities as well as nurseries and Pre-school associated with schools.
	Pharmacy/Chemist	<p>Access to a dispensary prevents journeys outside that some may find difficult and is important to the on-going health needs of the residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes both pharmacy and dispensary.
	Private Recreational Facilities	<p>Provides access for club members to facilities such as a bowling green, cricket pitches, football pitches, tennis courts, changing rooms etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilities either not normally accessible to the public or where a membership fee is required.

	Allotments	- Provide a timeless service that still remains very popular in villages within East-Herts.
	Petrol Station/Garage	Can offer a valuable choice to residents and provide local employment opportunities. Petrol stations will typically provide a range of comparison and convenience goods as well.

Appendix 4:

Accessibility/Transport Type	Accessibility Criteria	Reason for Inclusion/Criteria
General Accessibility	Proximity to nearest Service Town ⁶	Being within close proximity to a service town enhances the sustainability of a location. It shortens the travel time to employment, schooling and services that a rural community may not be able to provide.
Bus	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	Where a settlement has a more frequent bus service, it can be considered more sustainable as they provide residents with a higher level of accessibility to urban areas.
	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	For residents working during weekdays, a frequent Saturday bus service can provide residents with access to urban areas on the weekends, outside of working hours.
	Sunday Service (Anytime/Number)	An additional service, often symbolic of a more substantial bus service throughout the week.
	Bus Service suitable for commute	A bus service that runs from Monday to Friday and arrives within a town before 9am and has a return service from the town after 5pm provides opportunity to commute to work, this is more sustainable than driving.
Train	Train Station within Village	Faster alternative to bus service also provides access to a broader transport network. As with all train lines in East Herts the service feeds into London, an important commuter service.

⁶ In this case, the term *service town* refers to the 5 towns within East Herts (Bishops Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware) as well as the towns of Harlow, Stevenage and Welwyn G.C. outside of East Herts.

	Facilities																Facility Total	Accessibility						Accessibility Total	Total	
	Primary Facilities						Secondary Facilities											Proximity to Nearest Service Town	No. of Daily Returns (Mon-Fri)	No. of Daily Returns (Sat)	Sunday Service (anytime/number)	Bus Service Suitable for Commute	Railway Station within Village			
	Post Office Facility	Doctor's Surgery Facility	Primary School	Community Building	Convenience Shop	Children's Play Area	Public Recreation Area	Dentist	Café/Restaurant/Take-away	Place of Worship	Public House	Other A1 Shop	Pre-school/Nursery	Pharmacy/Chemist	Private Recreational Facilities	Allotments										Petrol Station
Albury	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	14
Anstey	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	13	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	17
Ardeley	0	0	6	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	14
Aston	0	0	6	9	0	3	6	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	31	4	2	1	0	0	0	7	38
Bayford	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	19	4	2	1	0	0	0	7	26
Benington	0	0	6	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	17	2	4	2	0	5	0	13	30
Birch Green	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	17	4	2	1	0	0	0	7	24
Bramfield	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	4	2	0	0	0	0	6	17
Braughing	6	0	6	9	3	3	3	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	38	4	6	2	0	5	0	17	55
Brent Pelham	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	9
Brickendon	0	0	0	3	0	3	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	15	4	2	1	0	0	0	7	22
Cole Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	4	1	0	0	0	9	11
Colliers End	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	6	2	0	5	0	15	20
Cottered	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	6	4	1	0	0	0	11	19
Dane End	6	0	6	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	28	2	4	1	0	5	0	12	40
Datchworth	3	0	6	6	3	9	6	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	41	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	45
Furneux Pelham	3	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	16	2	4	1	0	0	0	7	23
Great Amwell	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	14	8	10	5	2	5	0	30	44
Great Hormead	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	12	6	2	1	0	0	0	9	21
Hare Street	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	6	6	2	0	5	0	19	28
Hadham Ford	3	3	0	3	0	6	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	4	4	1	0	5	0	14	33
Hertford Heath	0	0	6	3	6	3	3	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	28	8	6	3	0	5	0	22	50
Hertingfordbury	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	9	8	4	1	0	5	0	18	27
High Cross	0	0	6	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	16	6	8	2	0	5	0	21	37
High Wych	3	0	6	3	3	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	27	8	2	1	0	0	0	11	38
Hunsdon	6	3	6	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	34	2	8	1	0	5	0	16	50
Letty Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	5
Little Berkhamsted	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	2	2	1	0	0	0	5	19
Little Hadham	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	8	2	0	5	0	19	26
Much Hadham	6	6	6	6	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	2	1	0	45	2	4	2	0	5	0	13	58
Spellbrook	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	8	10	5	2	5	0	30	38
Standon and Puckeridge	6	6	12	6	9	3	3	0	2	3	4	2	3	1	0	1	1	62	2	8	3	0	5	0	18	80
Stanstead Abbotts and St Margarets	6	6	6	12	12	12	3	2	5	2	3	12	4	1	3	1	0	90	6	10	5	0	5	10	36	126
Stapleford	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	19	4	6	2	0	5	0	17	36
Tewin	3	0	6	6	3	3	3	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	1	0	33	6	2	0	0	0	0	8	41
Thundridge and Wadesmill	0	0	6	3	3	3	3	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	25	6	6	2	0	5	0	19	44

Tonwell	0	0	6	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	14	6	4	2	0	5	0	17	31
Walkern	6	3	6	3	3	3	3	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	37	2	4	2	0	5	0	13	50
Wareside	0	0	6	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	6	2	0	0	0	0	8	23
Watton-at-Stone	6	6	6	12	6	6	3	2	1	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	0	63	2	6	2	0	5	10	25	88
Westmill	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	14	8	4	1	0	5	0	18	32
Widford	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	20	2	4	2	0	5	0	13	33