**Chichester Local Plan 2021 - 2039**

**Settlement Hierarchy Update**

**Background Paper**

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# **Introduction**

* 1. Chichester District Council is in the process of preparing the Chichester Local Plan 2021 – 2039, which will cover those parts of the district outside of the South Downs National Park. This background paper has been prepared to support the emerging Local Plan and specifically the Plan’s settlement hierarchy.
	2. The settlement hierarchy informs the spatial distribution across the plan area and the delivery of development that supports the needs of individual communities. Generally larger settlements have the best access to a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities and are able to accommodate higher levels of growth.
	3. This Background Paper sets out the approach taken to categorising settlements in the plan area and grouping together those that have similar characteristics in terms of the availability of, and accessibility to, services and facilities. It is not the role of the Background Paper to determine the development capacity of each settlement or to provide a quantum of new development each settlement should accommodate. The overall level of new development directed to individual settlements will be determined through the Local Plan, taking account of the settlement hierarchy assessment and various other evidence studies.
	4. The Background Paper assesses the availability and accessibility of services and facilities and whether there has been any change since the last update in December 2018. It does not assess existing capacity or where improvements are required to accommodate growth, that is undertaken through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IN01).
	5. The paper is one of several background papers, which set out the evidence that has been used to inform the council’s approach to the preparation of the new Local Plan. For a full understanding of the direction and decisions that have been taken in developing the Local Plan, and in particular the distribution of housing, this paper should be read in conjunction with the separate Housing Distribution Background Paper (BP10).
	6. The background papers and related evidence are available on the council website at [www.chichester.gov.uk/localplanexaminationlibrary](https://www.chichester.gov.uk/localplanexaminationlibrary). This background paper may be reviewed and updates issued during the examination of the Local Plan.

# **Planning Policy Context**

*National Planning Policy*

* 1. National planning policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the accompanying national planning practice guidance (PPG). The NPPF was updated on 19 December 2023, however, under paragraph 230 plans that have reached Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (pre-submission) stage on or before the 19 March 2024 will be examined under the relevant previous section of the NPPF. This means that the changes to the NPPF are not applicable to the council’s approach. All references to the NPPF are related to the 2021 version, which will be used as the basis for the examination of the plan.
	2. Neither the NPPF nor PPG provide specific advice on the production of settlement hierarchies but do provide some broad principles that should be considered when looking at the establishment of a settlement hierarchy and assessment methodology. Paragraphs from the NPPF of particular relevance are set out below.

|  |
| --- |
| **NPPF**Paragraph 8 states that the planning system should seek to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided, by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.Paragraph 9 outlines that: *‘Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.’*Planning should actively manage patterns of growth (paragraph 105):* to focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
* to recognise that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It goes on to state that planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby (paragraph 79).New housing development should be avoided in isolated locations except in particular circumstances (paragraph 84).Planning policies should ensure the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship (paragraph 84).Planning policies should ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services (paragraph 93). |

* 1. The accompanying guidance in the PPG in respect of rural housing*[[1]](#footnote-1)*, recognises the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements. It goes on to state ‘*A wide range of settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas, so blanket policies restricting housing development in some types of settlement will need to be supported by robust evidence of their appropriateness’.*

*Local Planning Policy*

* 1. The adopted Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014 – 2029 sets out the current settlement hierarchy based on four classifications:
* **Chichester city sub regional centre** providing a wide range of higher order services and facilities – employment, shopping, education, health, entertainment, arts and culture – serving a wide catchment area extending outside the plan area.
* **Settlement hubs** are secondary service centres providing a reasonable range of employment, retail, social and community facilities serving the settlement and local catchment areas.
* **Service villages** provide a reasonable range of basics facilities to meet the everyday needs of local residents, or villages that provide fewer of these facilities but that have reasonable access to them in nearby settlements.
* **Rest of plan area** includes the countryside and other small villages, hamlets or other scattered development which have poor access to facilities.
	1. Policy 2 (Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy) sets out which settlements fall into each tier of the settlement hierarchy and indicates the scale and type of development that will be provided in the different settlements.
	2. In the adopted Local Plan, the classification of settlements within the hierarchy is based on their existing characteristics and intended role through the plan period. It takes account of a number of factors including the availability of services and facilities, levels of accessibility and public transport, settlement size and character, identified infrastructure and environmental constraints and potential land availability. The adopted Plan recognises that some Settlement Hubs or Service Villages require the planned provision of additional infrastructure and facilities in order to fully meet the settlement hierarchy definition during the plan, with Tangmere identified as needing additional investment in the form of new local facilities, employment opportunities and improved public transport provision to develop its status as a Settlement Hub.
	3. The Issues and Options consultation (June 2017) sought views on the settlement hierarchy categories and whether they should be carried forward as part of reviewing the Local Plan; if there were any settlements that should be added, removed or changed to a different category; and if neighbouring settlements in the same parish should continue to be treated as one Service Village.
	4. From the responses to the consultation there was significant support for the settlement hierarchy approach and the four settlement categories continuing although a number of respondents questioned the classification of a particular settlement. Comment was also made that in determining an appropriate scale of development the ability of a settlement to absorb development should also be considered. Some respondents suggested that whilst a range of services was important to ensure a settlement was sustainable, if it lacked these consideration should nevertheless be given to development which would bring community and economic benefits.
	5. At Preferred Approach stage (February 2019) there was continued support for the settlement hierarchy. Although a number of suggestions for additional service villages were made, it was considered that there was insufficient justification put forward for changing the hierarchy.
	6. The settlement hierarchy in the Chichester Local Plan 2021 – 2039: Proposed Submission retains the four settlement categories, with the role of each settlement within the hierarchy based on the presence of certain facilities and services.

# **Settlement Hierarchy Background**

* 1. The settlement hierarchy guides the location and distribution of growth and distinguishes between those settlements that are considered the most sustainable (they have the best range of facilities and accessibility) from the least sustainable settlements. Whilst the broad scale of development considered appropriate for each settlement is guided by its position within the hierarchy, there may be other factors that will influence the scale of development considered suitable and appropriate for individual settlements. For example, the availability of suitable sites within each of the settlements and transport, employment, environmental, landscape, heritage and flooding considerations also need to be assessed to determine the potential to accommodate growth.
	2. It will not follow, therefore, that every settlement within each category of the hierarchy will accommodate the same level of growth as opportunities for development will vary. A number of the smallest settlements in the Plan Area with no services and facilities would not be considered appropriate locations for taking further development.

# **Assessment of settlement sustainability**

* 1. There is no prescribed methodology for defining the service role of a settlement nor are there any national guidelines on what services and facilities a settlement should have to be considered sustainable. However, as noted in section 2 above, the NPPF indicates that planning policies should ensure the retention and development of a range of services and community facilities including local shops, meeting places, open space, public houses and places of worship. The assessment, therefore, looks at the availability of these facilities together with education and health facilities.
	2. As shopping habits continue to change, there has been a decline in the numbers of local shops in rural villages. Some larger settlements provide a wide range of facilities and services, for example Chichester city, whereas more rural settlements may have very few or none. In these settlements, residents will usually rely on either internet shopping, or will travel to nearby villages or bigger towns in the plan area, for example Chichester, or beyond, for example in the north east of the plan area to Billingshurst.
	3. The assessment focuses on:
* the number of specific services and facilities available in each settlement
* public transport availability and frequency
	1. The availability and frequency of public transport is a factor in determining the most sustainable locations, particularly in providing a service as an alternative to the car to enable people in rural communities to access services and facilities such as shops, medical facilities, leisure activities and employment opportunities. The assessment is made based on the availability of a regular bus service and service frequency.
	2. Whilst not a determinative factor in the settlement hierarchy another important sustainability consideration is the close proximity to a higher order settlement in terms of access to their level of facilities and service. There are some villages, which although they do not have many services or facilities within it, are relatively sustainable because of their access to facilities and services in nearby settlements.
	3. It is important to note that settlements are assessed for their sustainability based upon the services and facilities they provide and not on the number of people who live there. For this reason, the consideration of population is for contextual purposes only and is not used to inform the final groupings/hierarchy of settlements.
	4. The ranking of settlements uses a quantitative approach, allocating a score to a settlement based on how many of each type of facility and service are available in the settlement together with the frequency of a bus service (if any). This in turn enables the grouping/hierarchy of settlements. In addition to their existing characteristics, the classification of settlements within the hierarchy also takes account of the future role of the settlement through the plan period, taking account of planned development. The scoring is not weighted to make a distinction between what could be a key service, for example a shop or primary school, and other facilities that could be considered less important.
	5. Table 1 below details the services and facilities each settlement has been assessed against.

| Criteria | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Primary education | Primary school within the settlement |
| Secondary education | Secondary school within the settlement |
| Health | GP surgery within the settlement |
| Local shop | Access to a local store (village shop, newsagent, supermarket) within the settlement which sell fresh food |
| Public house | A public house within the settlement |
| Community facility | Built leisure/community facilities (village/church halls and community centres) within the settlement |
| Outdoor community facility | Outdoor leisure facilities (playing fields, play areas and village greens, for example) within the settlement |
| Place of worship | Church or other place of worship in the settlement |
| Bus service | Scored according to frequency of bus service3 – bus route operating hourly (Monday to Saturday) or more frequently2 – bus route which operates 4 or more services per day1 – bus journey only once per day (Monday – Friday) |
| Train station | Train station within the settlement  |

**Table 1: Availability of services and facilities assessed**

*Settlement boundaries*

* 1. In the adopted Local Plan, all settlements in the settlement hierarchy classed as Service Villages or above are, with the exception of Plaistow, defined by settlement boundaries. These boundaries indicate the areas where new development will generally be permitted, subject to satisfying other policies in the Plan. Outside of settlement boundaries development is generally restricted to that which requires a countryside location or meets an essential local rural need or supports rural diversification.
	2. To enable this approach, settlements within the hierarchy need to have a pattern of development that generally allows for a well defined built up area to be identified rather than a dispersed settlement form with facilities spread apart. Whilst, in practice, most settlements do have a well defined built up area this may be a consideration in some of the smaller places within the Plan Area.

*Assessment update*

* 1. Under any review, Chichester would remain at the top of the hierarchy. The sustainability credentials of the city are well established in terms of its range of services and facilities and accessibility by sustainable transport means. The update, therefore, focused on those settlements below sub-regional level.
	2. The update used data from the Council’s Community Facility Audit (2019) supplemented by information from other sources including GIS/internet searches e.g. Traveline for up to date bus service information, evidence base studies e.g. Open Space Study and Neighbourhood Plan background information.
	3. The opportunity was taken to ensure that services/facilities which had not previously been recorded were identified, there was no duplication in the services/facilities recorded and how services/facilities were recorded was applied consistently. Although this resulted in some changes to the overall number of services/facilities in particular settlements this was not significant. Appendix 1 summarises the assessment update with Appendix 2 identifying those changes in service/facilities provision between 2018 and 2023.
	4. However, for there to be a change to the tier of settlement that a village or town is in, there would need to be a very significant change to its services or amenities, so that the settlement more closely resembled those of another tier.

# **Settlement Hierarchy**

Sub-regional Centre

* 1. Chichester city is the most sustainable settlement, with a full range of services and facilities, and a good level of accessibility by public transport. Chichester city has a significant population base, offers higher and further education and health facilities, and a broad range of employment, retail, entertainment and cultural opportunities, for a wide catchment area extending outside the district. There are no other settlements within the Plan area which offer such a complete variety of facilities and services, and access to public transport.

Settlement Hubs

* 1. The Settlement Hubs comprise those settlements that have a GP, primary school, convenience store and frequent bus service, as well as access to other services and facilities. They are a main centre for providing services to surrounding communities and have a reasonable size population base to support them.
	2. The assessment update noted that there was no change in the availability of services in Selsey and Southbourne. There was an increase in the total number of services/facilities identified in East Wittering/Bracklesham due to additional convenience stores and places of worship being identified and in Tangmere the number of spaces considered to constitute outdoor community facilities was reassessed.
	3. The identification of East Wittering/Bracklesham, Selsey, Southbourne and Tangmere as Settlement Hubs, therefore, is unchanged.
	4. Whilst Tangmere is currently smaller (in terms of population size) compared to the other three identified Settlement Hubs, its continued identification as a Settlement Hub recognises the high level of committed growth established in the adopted Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014 – 2029 and through the outline planning application[[2]](#footnote-2), which has a resolution to permit subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement.

Service Villages

* 1. The Service Villages comprise those settlements that have at least one of either a primary school, GP or convenience store as well as a combination of other facilities including a community meeting place and outdoor community facilities. They act as a local centre for services providing for the villages and wider parish area. These settlements offer an opportunity to allow development to meet local needs and to help support existing services and facilities.
	2. The assessment update noted there was no change in the availability of services/facilities in Bosham & Broadbridge, Hambrook & Nutbourne and North Mundham & Runcton. Taking account of the factors referenced in paragraph 4.13, there were changes to the services/facilities available in a number of villages. The closure of public houses was noted in several villages as was the closure of convenience stores in West Wittering and Loxwood. In the case of the latter, although the convenience store closed, there is still a local butcher shop which provides a range of fresh food and permission has been granted for a retail unit as part of a residential development in the village (although this is not yet implemented). Changes to the frequency of the bus service was noted in West Wittering and Stockbridge (to an hourly or more frequent service) and in settlements in the north east of the Plan Area where the frequency of a bus service was only four days a week.
	3. Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that the identification of the following settlements as Service Villages remains appropriate: Birdham, Bosham & Broadbridge, Boxgrove, Camelsdale & Hammer, Fishbourne, Hambrook & Nutbourne, Hermitage[[3]](#footnote-3), Hunston, Kirdford, Loxwood, North Mundham & Runcton, Plaistow & Ifold, Stockbridge, West Wittering, Westbourne, Westhampnett and Wisborough Green[[4]](#footnote-4).

Rest of the Plan Area

* 1. The settlements within the Rest of the Plan Area, such as West Itchenor, Apuldram and Sidlesham, either do not contain the range of facilities and services to be classified as sustainable or do not have a well-defined built up area with facilities spread apart. These settlements are considered to be within open countryside where development is strictly controlled and subject to the relevant countryside policies of the Local Plan.

# **Proposed Settlement Hierarchy**

* 1. The proposed settlement hierarchy to be included in the Local Plan, with the associated scale of development for each hierarchy designation, is set out below.

|  |
| --- |
| Sub Regional Centre |
| Chichester |
| Settlement Hub |
| Selsey, East Wittering/Bracklesham, Tangmere, Southbourne |
| Service Villages |
| Birdham, Bosham & Broadbridge, Boxgrove, Camelsdale & Hammer, Fishbourne, Hambrook & Nutbourne, Hermitage, Hunston, Kirdford, Loxwood, North Mundham & Runcton, Plaistow & Ifold, Stockbridge, West Wittering, Westbourne, Westhampnett and Wisborough Green |
| Rest of Plan Area |
| Small villages, hamlets, scattered development and countryside |

# **Appendix 1: Table of availability of services and facilities by Plan Area settlements**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Settlement** | **Population 2021 (Census)** | **Total** **2022** | **Place of Worship** | **Built Community** | **GP Surgery** | **Primary School** | **Public House** | **Local shop** | **Outdoor community**  | **Secondary School** | **Bus Transport** | **Railway Station** |
| Chichester City | 33,703 | Not assessed |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Selsey | 10,926 | 29 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Tangmere | 4,000 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| East Wittering & Bracklesham | 7,482 | 23 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Southbourne | 4,967 | 21 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Bosham & Broadbridge | 2,693 | 21 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| West Wittering | 2,221 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Westbourne | 1,938 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Camelsdale & Hammer |  1,645 | 15 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Hambrook & Nutbourne | 3,310 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Loxwood | 1,596 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Boxgrove | 1,011 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Kirdford | 1,053 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stockbridge |  - | 10 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Birdham | 2,190 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Fishbourne | 2,663 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Plaistow & Ifold | 2,617 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wisborough Green | 1,269 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hunston | 1,643 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| North Mundham & Runcton | 1,791 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Westhampnett | 1,238 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

# **Appendix 2: Change in availability of services and facilities 2018 – 2023**



1. Housing needs of different groups - Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 67-009-20190722 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 20/02893/OUT for up to 1,300 dwellings (Use Class C3), an expanded village centre (comprising flexible units suited to Use Class E and pubs or drinking establishments and/or takeaways in Use Class Sui Generis), community uses, primary school, informal and formal open space, playing pitches. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The council do not monitor data specific to Hermitage as it forms part of Southbourne parish and lies adjacent to the village of Emsworth (Havant District). The council considers that its proximity to the services in Emsworth and Southbourne is sufficient to designate Hermitage as a Service Village. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bosham & Broadbridge, Camelsdale & Hammer, Hambrook & Nutbourne, North Mundham & Runcton, and Plaistow & Ifold are all considered to function together as single settlements. They are within close proximity, and residents of either settlement can easily travel to the other settlement for access to services and facilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)