

No. 5

Sustainability Assessment
of Rural Settlements

(Updated February 2010)



Core Strategy Background Paper

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Revised July 2008

Assessing the Relative Sustainability of Smaller Rural Settlements in Selby District

Context

- 1.1 This issue forms part of the discussion on the distribution of future housing development within Selby District. The broad context is established in The Yorkshire and Humber Plan – the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which places considerable emphasis on concentrating new development in the larger settlements which are considered to be the most sustainable locations for new development. Within Selby District the RSS, therefore, promotes Selby town as the principal focus for new development within the District, with development serving local needs only in the Local Service Centres of Sherburn and Tadcaster. The RSS is not supportive of development in smaller settlements.
- 1.2 Nevertheless consultation on the Issues and Options for the District's Core Strategy has indicated a degree of support for strategy options which allow a degree of development in the smaller settlements outside Selby. This study is aims to investigate the relative sustainability of the smaller settlements within the District as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

Revisions – July 2008

- 1.3 This Background Paper was first published in October 2007 and assisted in the identification of two categories of villages - Service and Non-Service villages. These categories were used to develop draft Interim Housing Policies, to control housing growth in advance of the Core Strategy being adopted. Although the Interim Policies were not proceeded with, many useful comments were received during the consultation exercise in February 2008, which have been used in developing the Core Strategy. For example, while there was good support for the methodology used to identify Service Villages, there were individual comments on particular villages and on the methodology which have resulted in a number of refinements, notably:
- firstly, in response to a number of comments relating to villages below the initial size threshold of 1,100 residents, the analysis has been extended to include villages down to 600 population and
 - secondly, greater recognition has been given to the importance of rail services.

In addition the terms Service and Non-Service have been superseded by Primary and Secondary Villages

East Riding Study

- 1.4 One the most recent and comprehensive studies of the sustainability issues of smaller settlements was undertaken in 2004 by consultants on behalf of the Countryside Agency within the East Riding of Yorkshire District.
- 1.5 The study explored the functional relationships between settlements which it was considered would reveal the underlying reasons why settlements had particular socio-economic characteristics, and therefore, better inform rural planning decisions. The study found that non of the smaller settlements in East Riding fitted the 'local service centre' model in terms of self sufficiency and that the main determinant of how settlements functioned was their relationship with surrounding larger settlements. The study did find, however, that it is possible to differentiate between the suitability of rural settlements as locations for modest amounts of new development, despite them not performing as a local service centre. It therefore suggests that planning should use its limited influence on housing development to:
- Build on existing functional strengths which make positive contributions to local sustainability through limited new development of the right sort (which will vary from place to place); and
 - Secure more affordable housing in rural settlements where a more balanced housing stock would also make a contribution to local sustainability
- 1.6 The study does, however, recognise that the methodology for exploring the functionality of settlements, rather than their basic socio-economic characteristics, is more complex and the data harder to collect. They recommend a very detailed study of journey to work patterns from individual settlements and complemented by household surveys exploring patterns for other types of activities. Resources are not available to duplicate a study of this type immediately and, indeed, the study itself recognises that smaller authorities may need to build up their capacity and evidence base over time rather than expect to collect everything at the first round of plan making. Nevertheless the general tenor of the study's conclusions and the pointers it provides in relation to considering functionality and relationships with larger settlements may still be utilised in a slightly more subjective manner when drawing conclusions on the relative sustainability of settlements in Selby District.

Using this Background Paper

- 1.7 One of the main outcomes of this study is an overall assessment of the relative sustainability of villages within Selby District which is summarised in Table 7. In producing this analysis each indicator of sustainability is treated with equal weight. When using the table to make comparisons between settlements consideration should be given as to whether greater priority/weight should be given to one or more of the individual sustainability indicators which may be particularly relevant to a particular issue. The general sustainability rankings should not be applied uncritically. More examples of interpreting the results of this study in more detail are given at the end of the Paper.

Approach to the Study

- 2.1 It is a moot point as to when a settlement becomes truly sustainable. This study aims only to consider **relative** sustainability between settlements. As an initial basis, settlements are ranked in terms of four indicators. Non of these individually provide a definitive guide to relative sustainability but all in some way contribute to or provide an indication of it.
- 2.2 The indicators are:
- Size - broad indicator of local market available, and need, for services, together with potential for developing local community groups etc.
 - Basic local Services – a guide to the strength of the existing service base
 - Accessibility particularly by public transport to RSS Principal Service Centre (or, in the case of York – Sub Regional Centre) and to the Local Service Centres of Sherburn and Tadcaster or Local Service Centres outside the District.
 - Local Employment - a guide to availability of local employment.
- 2.3 A complementary study of journey to work characteristics of different parts of the District has also been undertaken¹. That study is not settlement specific but will nevertheless significantly contribute to the debate regarding sustainability. A further aspect of sustainability to be considered in other work is flood risk.
- 2.4 The distinctive roles played by Selby, as a Principal Service Centre, and the two smaller Local Service Centres of Tadcaster and Sherburn-in-Elmet are already relatively clearly defined. The purpose of this study is to try and identify the most suitable settlements below this level to accept new development, should the Core Strategy identify a need to distribute development more widely.

¹ LDF Core Strategy Background Paper No. 1 – Analysis of Travel to Work Patterns

- 2.5 Bearing in mind the RSS strategy of urban concentration scope for such a distribution will be limited. The study therefore has been kept at a relatively high level and does not attempt to classify the many smaller settlements of less than 600 population (See below).
- 2.6 For each indicator a grouping system, of up to five categories, has been employed to illustrate the relative ranking of each settlement.

The Indicators and Results

1. Size

- 3.1 For simplicity the population figure for the relevant parish in the North Yorkshire County Council's 2006 Population Estimates has been used as the guide to size as the main village is usually the dominant location for housing. There are, however, two instances where the parish figure would be significantly misleading and some adjustment has been made to the following:

a) Barlby

Barlby and Osgodby parish includes the settlements of Barlby, Osgodby and Barlby Bridge and the parish population has been adjusted to produce a figure for Barlby village. The resultant figure of approximately 3,100 is still among the highest village populations.

b) Brayton

A substantial part of Brayton parish could reasonably be interpreted to form part of the built up area of Selby town – being physically, directly related to residential development in Selby and separated from the village by an open 'strategic countryside gap'. However, even after making allowance for this, Brayton village has one of the highest village populations of approximately 3,400.

- 3.2 Distribution diagrams of the 2006 population of existing villages indicate the following:
- Below Selby, Sherburn-in-Elmet and Tadcaster, there is then a significant size gap until a group of villages between 2,000 and 3,500 population which are: Thorpe Willoughby, Barlby, Brayton and Riccall.
 - Below 2,000 population, it is possible to identify a cluster of settlements between 1,700 – 1,900 population, 1,400 – 1,600, 1,100 – 1,300 and 600-1,100 population (See Fig.1 below)
- 3.3 The above figures illustrate a wide variation in the size of village settlements with larger villages having a population of around 2 - 3, 000 persons which is equivalent to approximately 800 to 1,250 dwellings, whilst the smallest settlements may have only 20 or 30 dwellings.
- 3.4 In the initial version of this work (published in October 2007) a significant break point between size clusters was used as a lower

threshold for the analysis - at 1,100 population. However, during the consultation on the Interim Housing Policies (February 2008) comments were made on a number of villages within the 600 – 1,100 size cluster and therefore the analysis has been extended to include all villages above a population of 600 persons.

3.5 The classification of smaller settlements based on size is therefore as follows:

Settlement Classification By Size Table 1

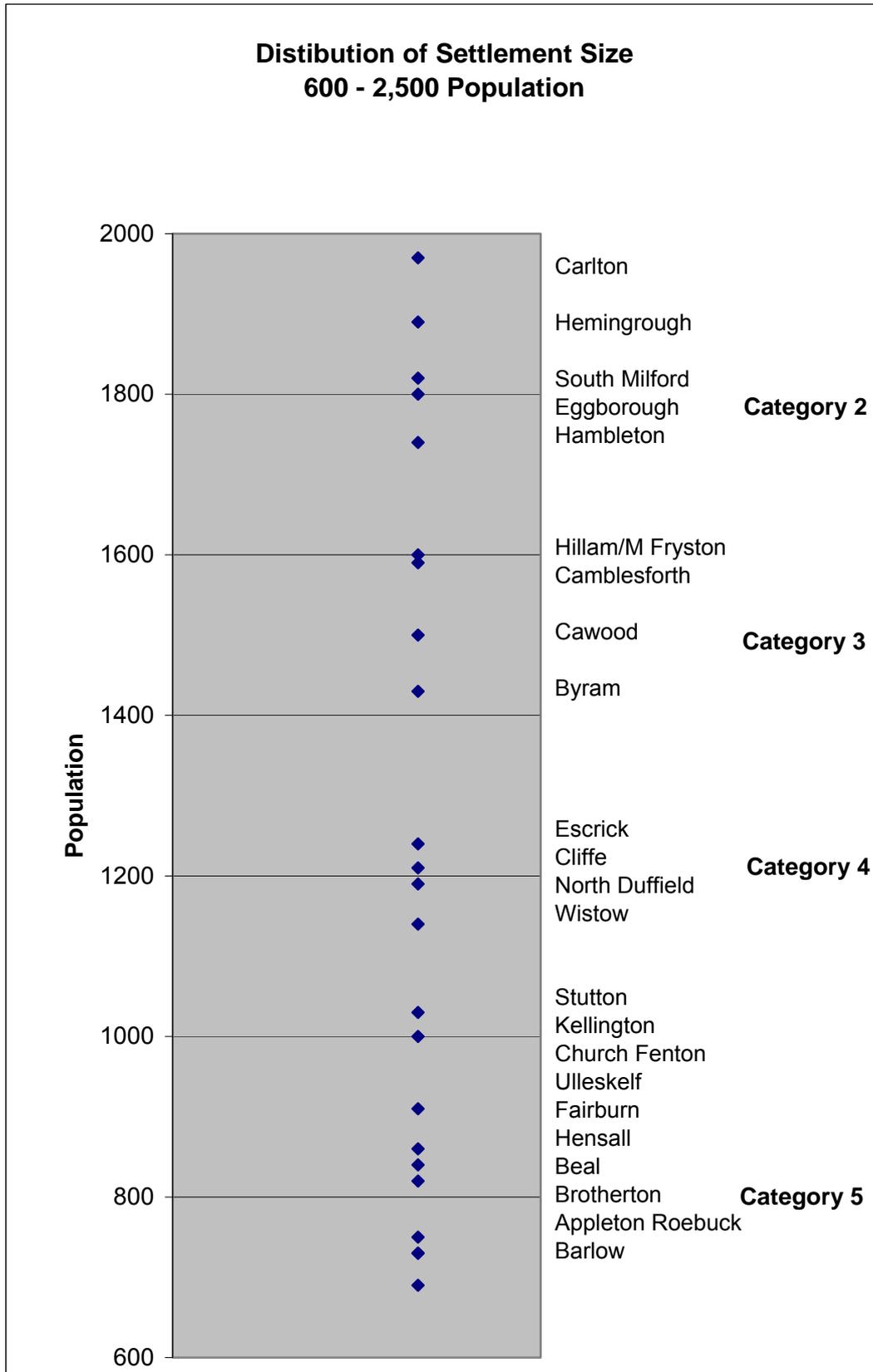
Estimated 2006 Population*	Settlements
1. 2000 - 5000	Brayton, Barlby, Riccall, Thorpe Willoughby
2. 1700 – 1900	Carlton, Eggborough, Hambleton, Hemingbrough, South Milford
3. 1400 - 1600	Byram, Cawood, Camblesforth,
4. 1100 - 1300	Cliffe, Escrick, North Duffield, Wistow
5. 600 - 1100	Appleton Roebuck, Barlow, Beal, Brotherton, Church Fenton, Fairburn, Hensall, Hillam, Kellington, Monk Fryston, Stutton, Ulleskelf, Whitley,

*NYCC estimates

2. Basic Local Services

3.6 Availability of four local services within the settlement were assessed. These were: post office; general store; primary school and doctor’s surgery. (NB post office and general store are often located together in the same premises, but are counted as separate services). The last three of these are recognised by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) as the most important services to be available within village settlements². The Countryside Agency study also listed a number of other essential services (mainly medical e.g. hospital) to which easy accessibility was needed. Of these, only Post Offices, are considered to be traditionally village based and they have therefore also been included in the analysis. The number of services available in each settlement and the resultant classification is set out in Table 2 (below):

² The Countryside Agency – Parish Accessibility Audit



Settlement Classification By Local Services					Table 2
Village	Primary School	General Store	Post Office	Doctor's Surgery	Overall Classification
Brayton	√	√	√	√	1
Thorpe Willoughby	√	√	√	√	1
Riccall	√	√	√	√	1
Carlton	√	√	√	√	1
Hemingbrough	√	√	√	√	1
South Milford	√	√	√	√	1
Cawood	√	√	√	√	1
Escrick	√	√	√	√	1
Monk Fryston	√	√	√	√	1
North Duffield	√	√	√	√	1
Barlby Village	√	√	√	-	2
Byram	√*	√	√	-	2
Camblesforth	√	√	√	-	2
Eggborough		√	√	√	2
Kellington	√	√	√	-	2
Wistow	√	√	√	-	2
Church Fenton	√	√	√	-	2
Hensall	√	√	√	-	2
Fairburn	√	√	√	-	2
Hambleton	√	√	-	-	2
Ulleskelf		√	√	-	2
Brotherton	√	-	-	-	3
Appleton Roebuck	√	-	-	-	3
Barlow	√	-	-	-	3
Cliffe	√	-	-	-	3
Whitley	√	-	-	-	3
Hillam	√*	-	-	-	3
Beal	-	-	-	-	4
Stutton	-	-	-	-	4

*Good access for pedestrians to primary school in adjacent village

Conclusion on Basic Services

- 3.7 Most of the larger villages have at least 3 of the 4 basic services and where one is missing it is usually the doctor's surgery. Of the larger villages two settlements did not have primary schools within their boundaries, but in each case had schools immediately adjacent to their boundaries. Brotherton primary is considered sufficiently accessible from Byram to justify it counting as within the village. Similarly Monk Fryston school is conveniently situated for easy pedestrian access from Hillam. Whitley primary school, however, is considered to be not as conveniently located in relation to the larger and more dispersed village of Eggborough, being located to the south of the M62 and readily accessible by pedestrians only from the southern extremity of the village. Consequently Eggborough is only included in the second highest category with regard to services.
- 3.8 In the smallest category of villages, Beal, Ulleskelf, and Stutton do not have a primary school (Hillam is adequately served by Monk Fryston Primary School) and Beal and Stutton have none of the three basic services being assessed in this study.
- 3.9 Most villages had a variety of other services such as village halls, churches, chapels and a various types of recreational facilities. The number and type of such facilities may be significant in assessing the strength of the role individual villages within a locality. However, because the types of facility available vary from village to village and the significance of the role of the facilities is also difficult to weight, it is considered that concentration on basic facilities catering for everyday needs is the most helpful in this current exercise. Provision of most of the basic services is considered to be the best and most objective measure of the primary service role of villages within their locality. However, in interpreting this study further in order to categorise the settlement status of villages for more detailed planning purposes, those villages with a lower overall ranking in this exercise will be assessed in more detail as to how their full range of services meet the relevant planning objectives .

3. Accessibility to Service Centres by Public Transport

- 3.10 The previous version of this paper did not take into account the availability of rail services. This updated analysis responds to comments made on the classification of Service Villages in connection with the previous consultation on Interim Housing Policies and Church Fenton and Ulleskelf, both of which have rail services to York and Leeds, are now included. In addition some recognition is also given to rail connections to larger settlements for travel to work purposes, even when general service throughout the day is relatively poor. As a result availability of rail services are recognised where appropriate.

- 3.11 Accessibility by bus has been assessed from individual settlements to York (Sub-regional Centre) and the Principal Service Centres of Selby, Goole and Pontefract (in Wakefield Metropolitan District) based on 20, 30 and 40 minute isochrones and on the basis of 2 service frequencies of 1/2hr or greater, and ½ to 1 hourly. Castleford was found not have any services to the District. Services with frequencies of above hourly were considered to be too poor to be included in the exercise, although this eliminated certain settlements such as Cawood and Wistow from the analysis. Although bus service levels are subject to regular review, it is considered that current frequency levels are the best indication available of the ease of provision of future bus service levels. The potential for service improvements would need to be considered if other factors pointed to an otherwise sustainable location for future development.
- 3.12 Services to the local centres of Sherburn-in-Elmet, Tadcaster, and adjacent Knottingley (in Wakefield Metropolitan District) were classified on the basis of 10 and 20 minute isochrones and frequency as above.
- 3.13 Initially an analysis was undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council, using 'Accession' software to produce isochrones, which give the public transport travel times including an allowance for walking and waiting times. However, the software does not consider the effect of frequency on accessibility and therefore some settlements were eliminated on the basis of low service frequency.
- 3.14 The accessibility categories are defined as follows based on a combination of the level of services available at the centre and the journey time involved:

Accessibility to Service Centres

Table 3

	Accessibility Category 1	Accessibility Category 2	Accessibility Category 3	Accessibility Category 4
Accessibility to York, Leeds and Principle Service Centres				
Settlements with frequencies of ½ hr or greater	Within 20 minute isochrone	Within 20 – 30 minute isochrones	Within 30 – 40 minute isochrones	
Settlements with frequencies of between ½ and 1 hr.	-----	Within 20 minute isochrone	Within 20 – 30 minute isochrones	Within 30 – 40 minute isochrones
Settlements with lower frequency services but with at least one service for morning and evening commuting	-----	-----	-----	Within 1hr isochrone
Accessibility to Local Service Centres				
Settlements with frequencies of ½ hr or greater	-----	Within 20 minute isochrone	Within 20 – 30 minute isochrones	
Settlements with frequencies of between ½ and 1 hr.	-----	-----	Within 20 minute isochrone	Within 20 – 30 minute isochrones
Settlements with lower frequency services but with at least one service for morning and evening commuting	-----	-----	-----	Within 40 minute isochrone

3.15 The results of the analysis were as follows:

Classification of Settlements by Accessibility by Public Transport to Service Centres **Table 4**

Category 1	High	Barlby, Brayton, Thorpe Willoughby
Category 2	Medium	Hambleton, Riccall, Byram, South Milford, Escrick, Stutton, Church Fenton (R), Brotherton, Hillam, Monk Fryston, Ulleskelf (R)
Category 3	Low	Camblesforth, Carlton, Eggborough, Hensall, Kellington, Whitley
Category 4 (but at least one commuting service available)	Poor	Hemingbrough, Cawood, Cliffe, North Duffield, Wistow, Fairburn, Beal, Barlow, Appleton Roebuck

* R denotes level of accessibility achieved by rail travel to York

Conclusion – Public Transport Accessibility

3.16 All villages above 600 population had some form of service which allowed at least one commuting trip to a Principal or Local Service Centre. However, less than 50% of the villages had what is considered to be a medium to high standard of accessibility i.e. at least an hourly service to a Principal Service Centre over the working day. (Hillam and Monk Fryston’s level is related to a Local Service Centre - Sherburn in Elmet - with a lower level (because of distance and travel time) operative to Selby.

4. Access to Local Employment Opportunities

3.17 Relative access to employment opportunities is a difficult indicator to measure. Local employment opportunities vary greatly in terms of the variety of jobs offered, which is difficult to take into account. Some large local employers such as power stations tend to be very specialised, whilst others, such as agriculture and horticulture, offer more part time jobs.

3.18 Within the District, Selby offers by far the greatest quantity and range of employment opportunities, matched only by larger centres adjacent to the District such as Pontefract, Castleford and York.

3.19 Access to employment opportunities, in this case, is measured by distance and has not been constrained by public transport services. To have done so would have made the indicator too similar to the ‘Access to Service Centre’ indicator above, as it is in the service centres where the dominant employment opportunities are located.

3.20 This indicator is intended to emphasise proximity of homes to jobs and the length of the commuting journey.

- 3.21 Employment data has been taken from the Department of Employment's Business Employment Inquiry 2005. The total number of jobs recorded in each area – both full and part-time - has been used and the areas classified into three distinct categories based on the number of jobs present in each.
- 3.22 The relevant employment opportunity areas have been classified as below.

Employment Locations **Table 5**

Major Employment Locations* (8000+ jobs)	Selby, York, Castleford, Pontefract, Goole
Intermediate Employment Locations (3000 – 6000 jobs)	Tadcaster, Sherburn, Kellingley/Eggborough/Hensall/Heck, Knottingley, Thorpe Arch
Smaller Employment Locations (800 – 1000 jobs)	Escrick, South Milford, Drax, Burn/Gateforth

* Although many Selby residents travel to other employment centres outside the District, particularly Leeds, they have not been included as no part of the District is within 5 miles of the main employment locations.

- 3.23 Settlements have been classified on the following basis:
- Category 1 Within 2 miles of Major Employment Location
 - Category 2 Within 5 miles of Major Employment Location
 - Category 3 Within 5 miles of Intermediate Employment Location*
 - Category 4 Within 5 miles of Smaller Employment Location**

*Given the considerably reduced range of opportunities at Intermediate Employment Locations compared with Major Locations, the difference between access distances of within 2 or 5 miles was not considered to be significant. Extending the 'within 2 mile category' to 'within 5 miles', only included one additional settlement.

**In practice, the Smaller Employment Locations category was superfluous, as non of the settlements considered in this study (over 600 population) fell only within Group 4 – all were also within a higher category.

3.24 The classification of settlements is given in Table 6 below:

Classification of Settlements by Access to Local Employment Opportunities **Table 6**

Settlement	Category	Settlement	Category
Brayton	1	Escrick	2
Barlby	1	Kellington	2
Beal	1	Fairburn	2
Brotherton	1	Barlow	2
Thorpe Willoughby	2	Carlton	3
Riccall	2	North Duffield	3
Hambleton	2	South Milford	3
Hemingbrough	2	Eggborough	3
Byram	2	Stutton	3
Cawood	2	Church Fenton	3
Camblesforth	2	Ulleskelf	3
Cliffe	2	Hensall	3
Wistow	2	Appleton Roebuck	3
Kellington	2	Hillam	3
Fairburn	2	Monk Fryston	3
Cliffe	2	Whitley	3
Wistow	2		

Conclusion on Access to Local Employment

3.25 The aim of this indicator is to demonstrate the level of access to a choice of jobs locally, without encouraging longer distance commuting journeys, whether by private or public transport. Where available, rail services providing relatively short journey times to major employment centres may be considered an offsetting factor and, in cases where there is some doubt over the final classification of villages, the attractiveness of these services will need to be considered on an individual basis. It has to be remembered that the availability of a rail service does not supersede the fact that, even in these cases, the majority of travel to work will continue to be by private car, particularly where bus services are limited.

Overall Conclusions

- 4.1 An overall ranking of settlements has been produced based on their classification under the four separate indicators. The ranking is based on the following:
- 1 Most sustainable - All four indicators in highest two categories.
 - 2 More sustainable - Three indicators in highest two categories
 - 3 Less sustainable - Two indicators in highest two categories
 - 4 Least sustainable - One or no indicators in highest two categories.
- 4.2 The process and results are set out in Table 7.

Interpretation

- 4.3 The table represents a broadly based, theoretical analysis of the relative, overall sustainability of the main villages within the District using four factors – population size (reflecting potential local market), availability of local services in the village, accessibility to principal and local service centres by public transport, and proximity of local employment opportunities. In this analysis the four indicators are given equal weight.
- 4.4 This overall sustainability ranking assists the classification of villages for the purposes of differentiating between them, where required within Core Strategy housing and other policies.
- 4.5 However, as indicated at the beginning of this paper, it may be appropriate to consider amending the priority/weight given to individual indicators depending on the particular circumstances in which the analysis is being used. For example, if the objective is to allocate relatively small amounts of development to support a well distributed network of settlements which provide services for their immediate local area, higher weighting would be attached to Indicators 1 and 2 (size and existing services), with accessibility to higher order services and employment not particularly significant. On the other hand searching for locations appropriate for a relatively large amount of growth, not necessarily locally based and sufficient to generate new local services, would require emphasis on accessibility to a high level service centre and a wide range of employment in order to minimise the amount of travelling generated by the development.

Summary of Relative Sustainability Ranking by Settlement Table 7

N.B Figures show number of times a settlement is ranked within each category (not all indicators had four/five categories) e.g Brayton is ranked in the first category for all four indicators.

Settlement	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Overall Ranking
Brayton	4	0	0	0		1
Barlby	3	1	0	0		1
Thorpe Willoughby	3	1	0	0		1
Riccall	2	2	0	0		1
Hemingbrough	1	2	0	1		2
Byram	1	2	1	0		2
South Milford	1	2	1	0		2
Hambleton	0	3	1	0		2
Carlton	1	1	2	0		3
Cawood	1	1	1	1		3
Escrick	1	1	1	1		3
Brotherton	1	1	1	0	1	3
Monk Fryston	1	1	1	0	1	3
Camblesforth	0	2	2	0		3
Eggborough	0	2	2	0		3
Kellington	0	2	1	0	1	3
Ulleskelf	0	2	1	0	1	3
Church Fenton	0	2	1	0	1	3
Wistow	0	2	0	2		3
Fairburn	0	2	0	1	1	3
North Duffield	1	0	1	2		4
Beal	1	0	0	2	1	4
Cliffe	0	1	1	2		4
Stutton	0	1	1	1	1	4
Barlow	0	1	1	1	1	4
Hillam	0	1	1	1	1	4
Hensall	0	1	2	0	1	4
Whitley	0	0	3	0	1	4
Appleton Roebuck	0	0	2	1	1	4