

# **SETTLEMENT PATTERN METHODOLOGY**

**October 2012**

## **Background to the Pattern Approach**

The concept of using the services and facilities of a community as a means of comparing and grouping settlements has been used by the Council for many years; starting in 1980. This approach is used across the country and is recognised nationally as providing a sound basis for development in Local Plans.

The Core Strategy identifies the roles of the different settlements in the pattern as:

Large Villages are ones that not only provide a range of facilities for their own needs but also provide for some of the needs of smaller villages within their immediate catchment area;

Medium Villages should provide essential services for their populations, and may provide basic services for neighbouring hamlets and smaller villages, but will look to towns and larger villages to provide a greater range of services.

Small villages have a limited range of facilities and look to higher order settlements to meet the majority of their needs.

Whenever the opportunity has arisen, the Council has reviewed the changes that have taken place in the number and types of services and has also looked at the way the assessment is carried out. In recent years, elected members have involved in the process. The assessment considers the availability of key attributes within each settlement, such as the number of shops and other service provision, employment, education, health etc.

Since the last time the settlements of the district were looked at, there have been a number of changes to national and local policy, although these have continued to emphasise the need for development proposals to be informed by a thorough understanding of the ability of that settlement to meet its needs and its relationship to other neighbouring settlements. The level of facilities within individual settlements has also changed over time and so a fresh look is needed in informing the preparation of the Local Plan.

### **Why have a settlement pattern?**

East Lindsey's settlements do not exist in isolation. They form part of a wider pattern that stretches across its borders to include the higher order settlements of Boston, Grimsby and Lincoln. Our settlements are not self-contained units. They have different roles and complement each other in providing a range of services and facilities for all residents across the District. But they are all affected by economies of scale, which means that not all of our 200+ settlements can provide all the services that their

residents need or want. More often, larger settlements have to provide for smaller settlements.

By identifying a settlement pattern we can understand how different towns and villages perform different roles and relate to each other. Only then can we confidently direct new growth to those settlements that can provide the greatest benefits to the greatest number of East Lindsey residents.

### **How have we got to this point?**

Although the overall approach has been used a number of times, the fine detail of the assessment has been reviewed each time it is used. The latest review of the settlement pattern began using a methodology developed with elected members between 2007 and 2008. However, Planning Policy Committee decided that it would look afresh at the methodology used and so a workshop was held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012, to which all elected members were invited.

At the workshop, members discussed the previous methodology, which allots points to different types of community facilities or characteristics. The points being weighted so that the facilities deemed most essential to a community are given the highest points. Members at the workshop agreed that this approach was still the preferred way of establishing the pattern but they wished to look again at the scoring elements and the thresholds between each part of the pattern. Members had an open discussion during which they put forward the facilities and characteristics that should score points and then reassessed, through discussion, how many points each item should score.

Below is a list of the community facilities/characteristics used in the methodology. Those listed in bold italics were added by members at the workshop.

Food shop	4 points
Primary school	4 points
Employment	4 points
<b><i>Large Employer (over 10 employees)</i></b>	4 points
Public House	4 points
Commuter Bus Service	4 points
Pre School Facility	4 points
<b><i>Strategic Road network</i></b>	4 points
Post Office	3 points
Community Hall	3 points
Public Playing field	3 points
Children's play area	3 points
Other shop	3 points
Bank/building society cash machine	3 points
Place of Worship	3 points
<b><i>Mains Drainage</i></b>	3 points
Doctors	2 points
Dentists	2 points
Sports Facilities	2 points

Shoppers bus service	2 points
Petrol filling station	2 points
<b>Vets</b>	1 point
<b><i>In use cemeteries</i></b>	1 point

As the number of facilities in the list had been increased, Members decided to expand the points range to 4, 3, 2 and 1 (from the previous 3, 2 and 1). In respect of the thresholds, Members suggested increased thresholds between the different categories of settlement, but there was some uncertainty as to how the changes to the points awarded and the increase in the number of elements scoring points would impact on the thresholds, so this was looked at by the Planning Policy Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012.

### **Data Behind the Criteria**

The services and facilities in each village were established from questionnaires completed by Parish Council's (approximately 31% of Parish Council's responded), elected members and/or Council Officers. As some of these questionnaires were completed in 2007 and 2008, an additional check has been made to establish if there have been any subsequent changes in the intervening years. Points are awarded for each service or facilities within the settlement. In most cases, awarding the points is a simple matter of fact, either a village has the facility/ies or it doesn't. However, some of the criteria are a little more complex and need further explanation, especially the two employment criteria.

The most readily accessible and comparable data on employment premises is the records of properties registered for non-domestic rates. Although this does not give details of numbers of people employed, and there can be changes as businesses come and go, it does reflect the general level of business activity within a parish. These records were analysed and all the lower value properties (below £1,000) were discounted, as these are of a domestic scale and/or unlikely to generate wider employment (such as a single stable and small storage buildings). In order to provide an objective assessment, it was decided to use a statistical approach. To assess whether a community had a large or small number of businesses, relative to other settlements in East Lindsey, the mean (average) number of business was calculated, which is 12.7. So, to qualify for the employment points in the hierarchy table a community needs to have the mean number of premises, or more, paying business rate.

When Members decided to add the criteria for a large employer, they agreed that this should be related to businesses with ten or more employees. The only data available on the number of employees at a business was a Business Directory compiled by an external source, so the Council used this for its data.

The Commuter Bus Service points are awarded where a daily service exists that allows arrival in the nearest town to start work at 9am and where a return journey can be

made after 5pm. Shoppers bus service points are awarded where, at least once a day, the bus service allows residents to go into the nearest town and allows them enough time to do a weekly shop or equivalent before they have to get a return bus.

## **The Pattern**

Members set the threshold between the different settlement types as:

Large Village	46 points or more
Medium Village	23 points or more
Small Village	12 points or more

These points were deemed to allow sufficient level of services in a community to allow it to fulfil the role outlined in the Core Strategy. There are no set requirements as to what services a settlement needs to meet these points' levels.