



Exploring a New Rural_Urban Classification of Local Authorities for England

John Shepherd
Director RERC
Birkbeck College

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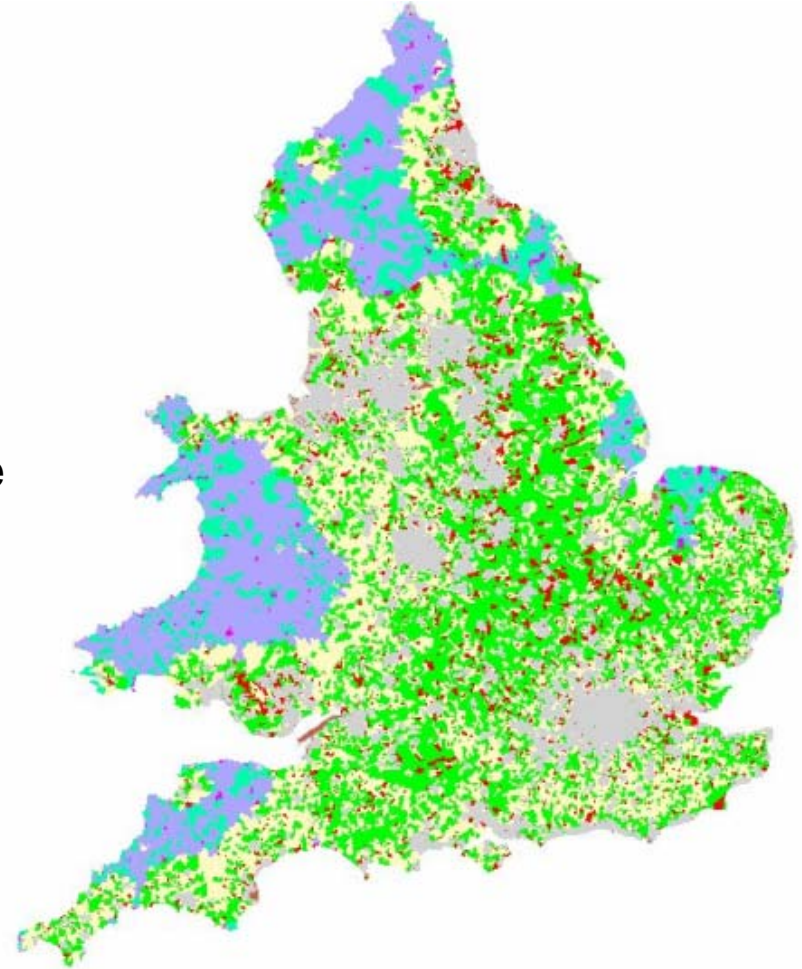
The Remit

To explore a classification of local authorities based upon levels and types of rurality:

- using the new definition of rural areas
- identifying 'rural' within districts otherwise classified as 'urban'

The New Definition:

- builds from Census Output Areas
- classifies Census Output Areas according to majority settlement type
- only applies to populations outside urban areas with more than 10,000 population



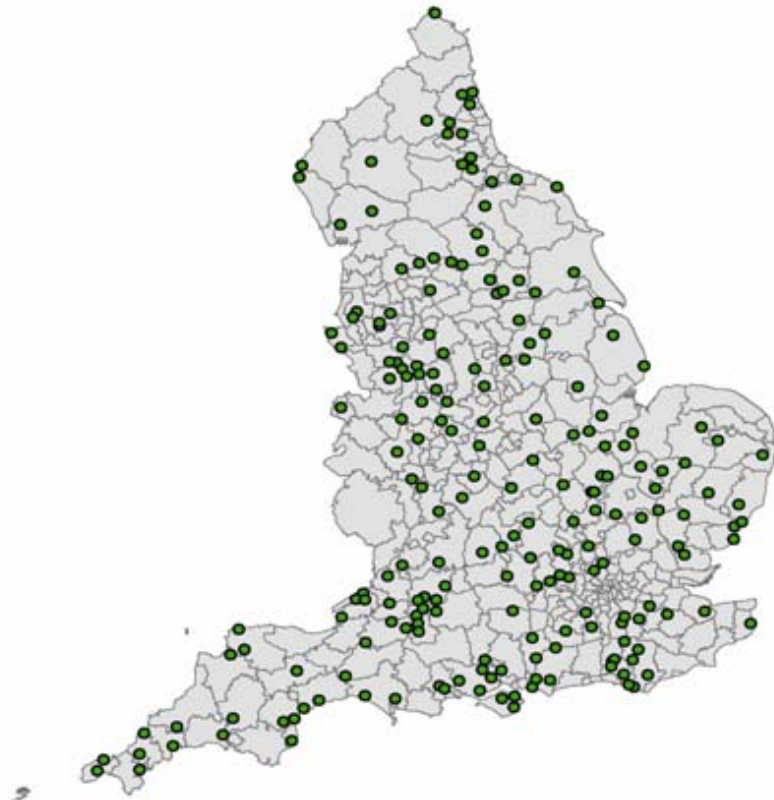
A critical question for a district level classification of 'rural' is whether and how to include market towns with more than 10,000 population.

- the 10,000 limit is arbitrary and, so far as is known, not policy related,
- some towns with clear rural functionality are bigger than 10,000,
- some 'rural' districts have a large proportion of their population in one or more such towns, but
- they are not part of the official rural definition.

There are 284 urban places of between 10,000 and 30,000 population with a total population of 4.9 million.

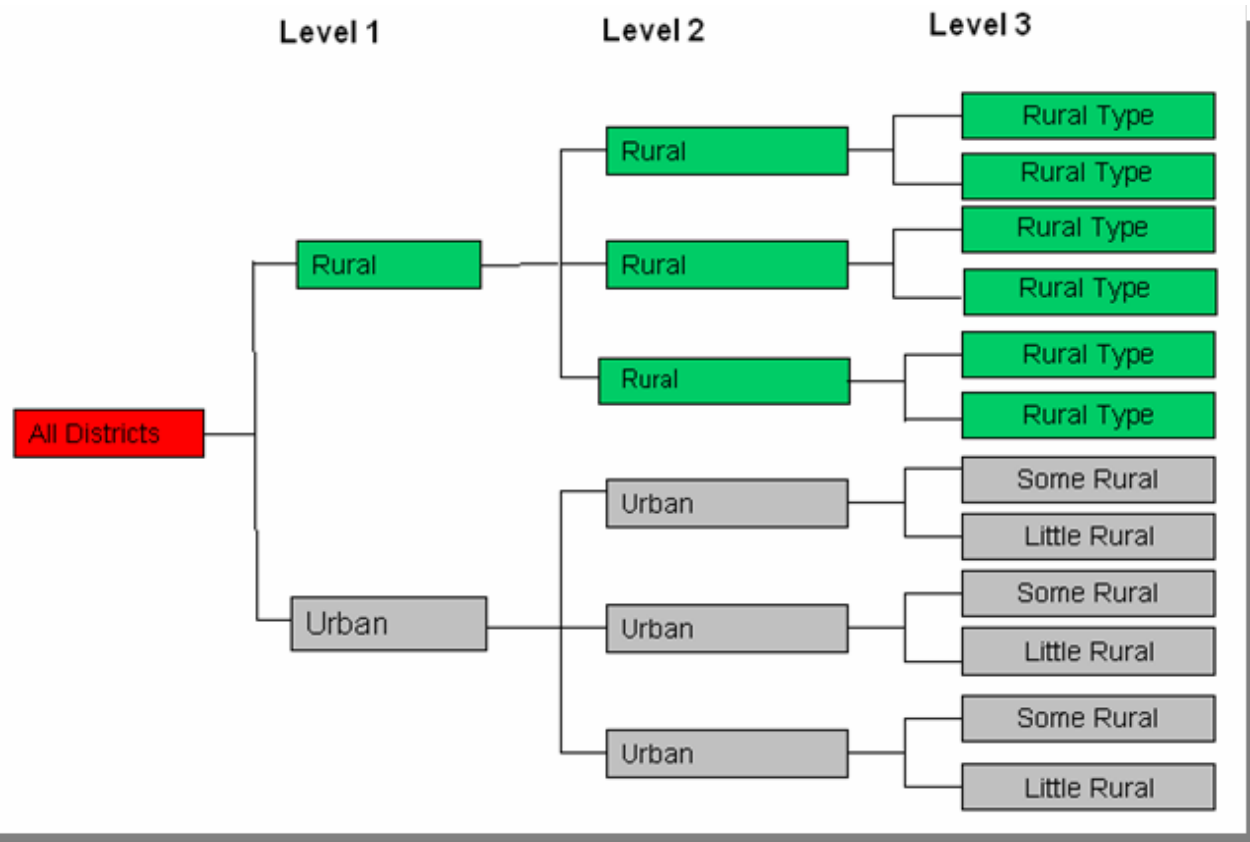
Identifying those with significant 'hinterland serving' functions* gives 207 'larger market towns' (population 3.7 million).

These towns might then be treated as 'rural' for district definition purposes.



* at least 3 shops, a bank/solicitor, a GP, 3.5 shops/capita, significant commercial functions.

In order to add the refinement of 'within district rurality' a 'multi-level' classification is required; this also makes full use of the detail in the new definition.



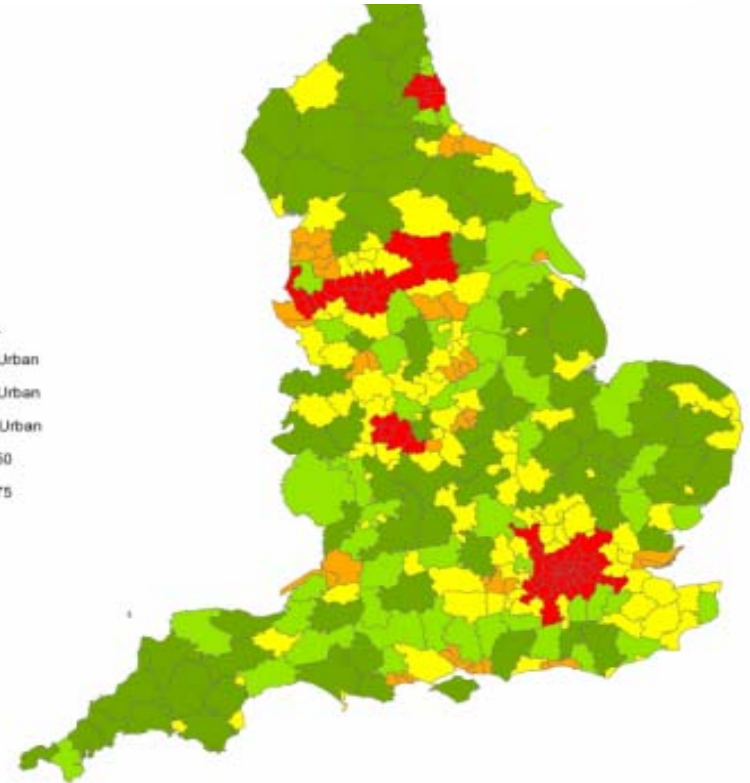
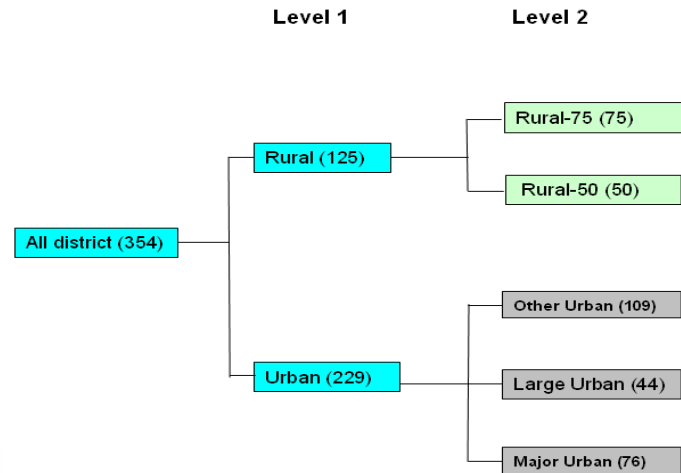
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A Classification of Local Authorities

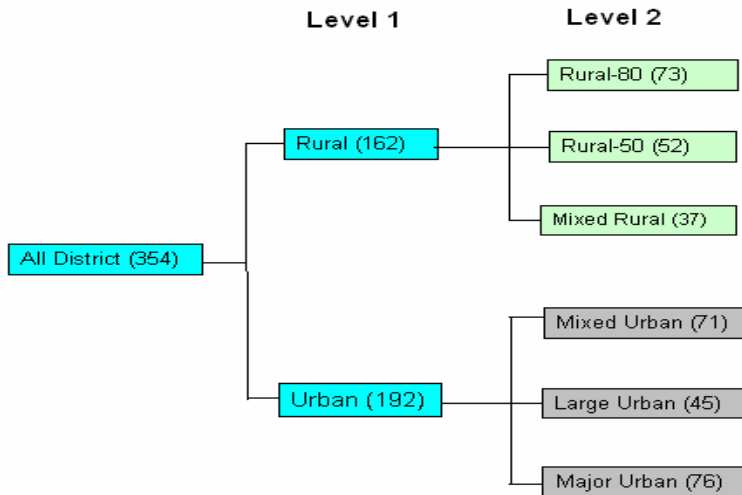
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A 'Commonsense' Approach : 'rural' is anything with at least 50% of the population in rural settlements:

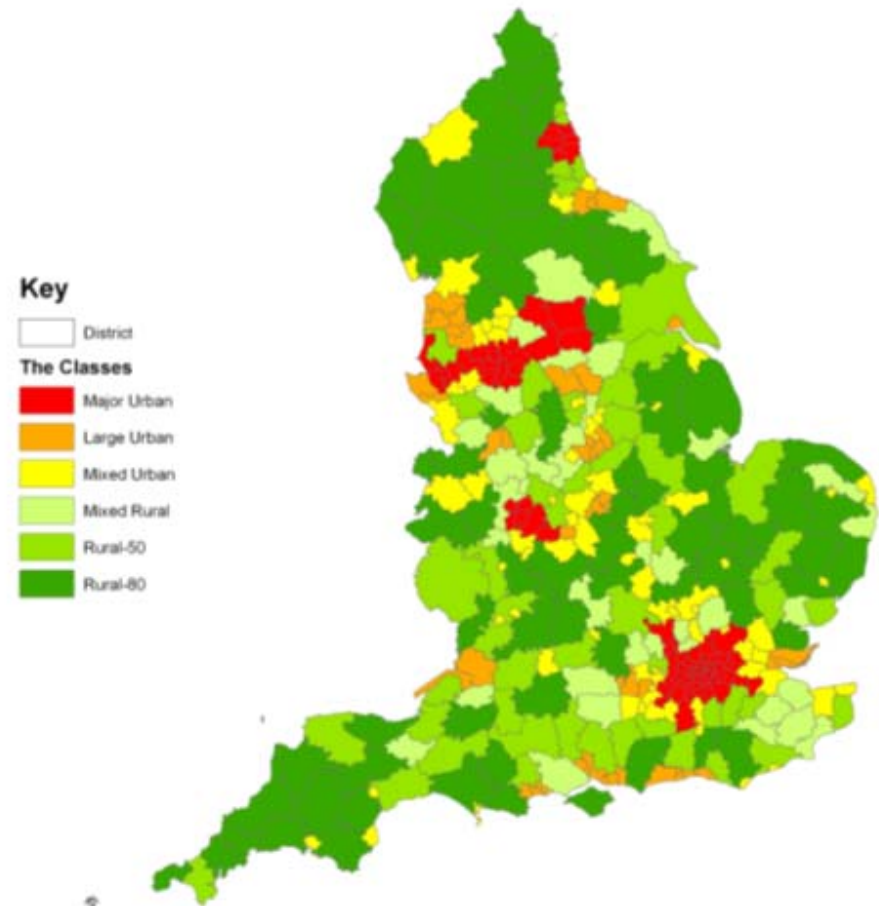
- rejected by the Project Board as too simplistic,
- produces many more 'urban' districts
- creates a number of 'urban' districts on the basis of small urbanized territories (mainly suburbs),
- percentages can mask the importance of numbers to rural delivery,
- lacks analytical value.



We therefore propose creating a division of the large 'urban' block into 'mixed urban and 'mixed rural' on the basis of numbers (over 40,000) or percentage (over 33 percent) rural.



The Recommended Solution

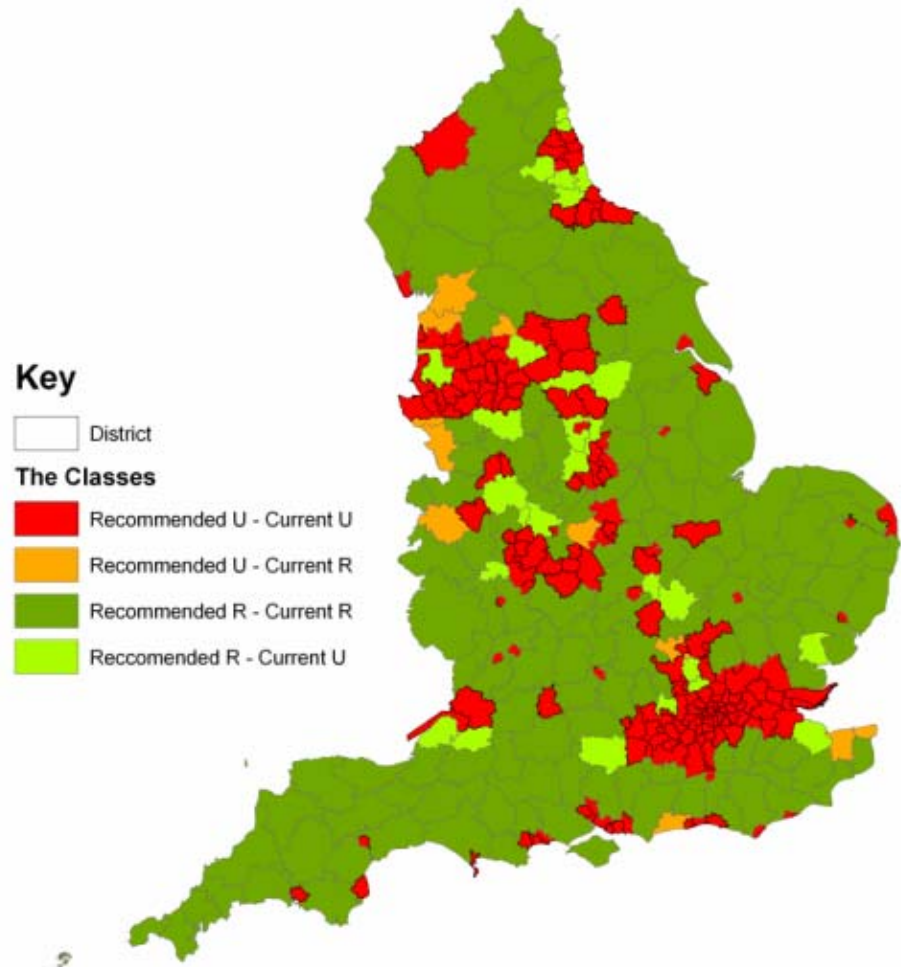


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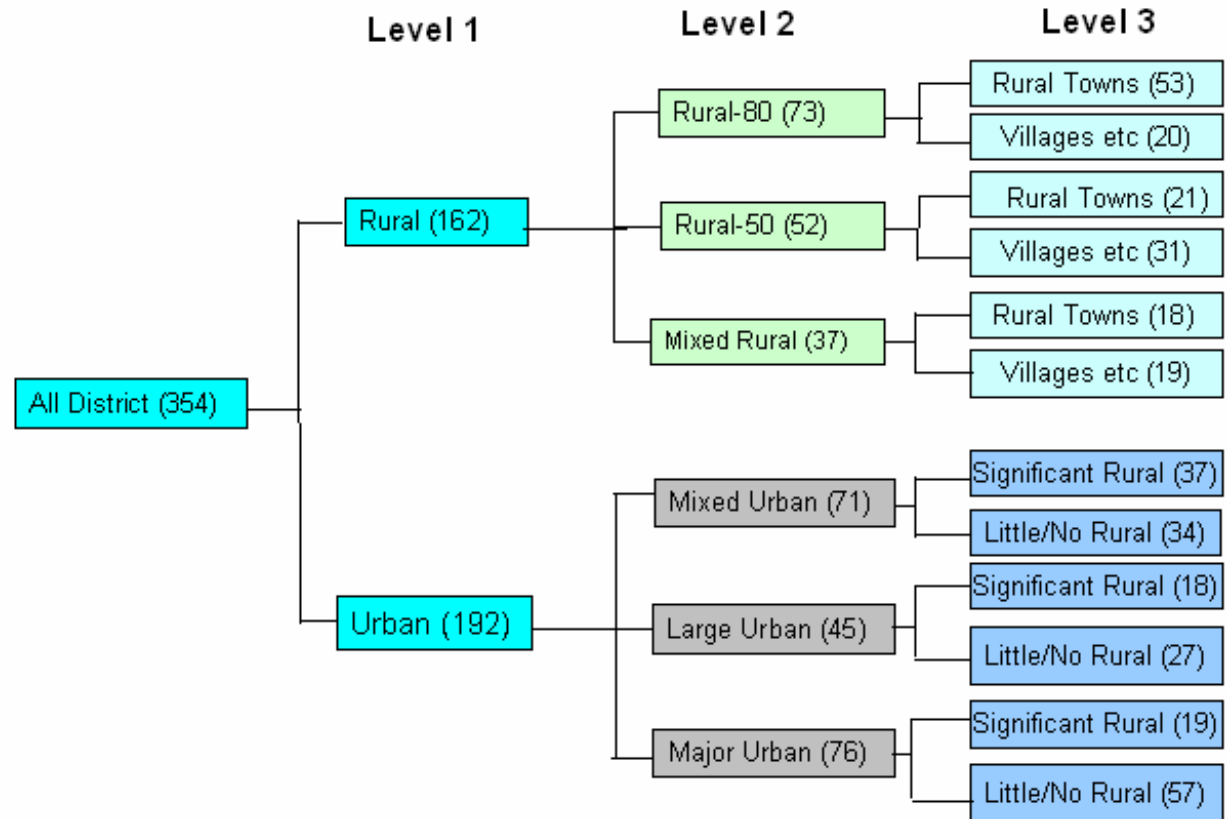
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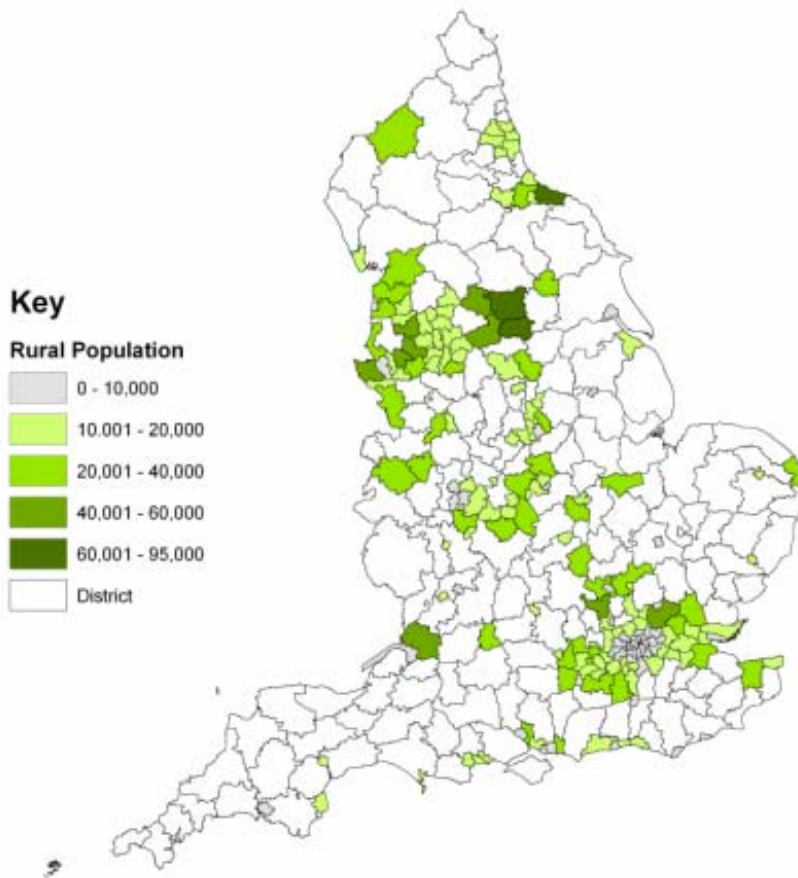
A Comparison of the Current Definition with the Proposed Classification



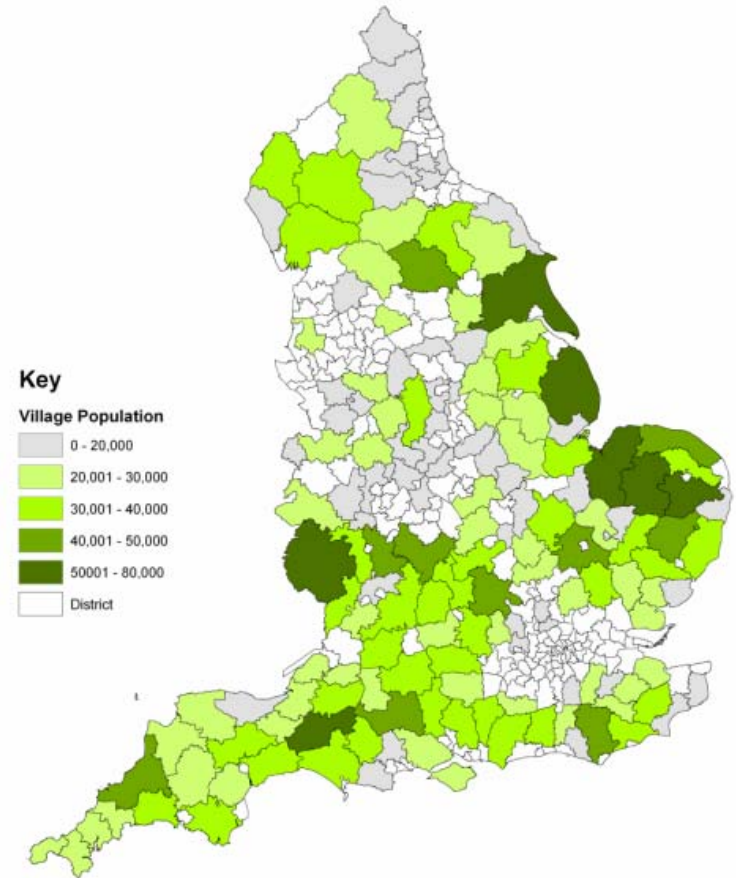
The Proposed Overall Structure



Rural in Urban



Rural Type (Village Population)



Issues:

- is the proposed 'multi-level' approach satisfactory?
- is the division of the 108 'other urban' districts into 'mixed urban' and 'mixed rural' appropriate given the latter have less than 50 percent 'rural' population?
- should the Larger Market Towns be included/excluded from the rural population; is the method of identification satisfactory?
- next steps?