

(Attachment 1)

KINGS CAPLE PARISH COUNCIL

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY QUESTIONNAIRE

Additional Statement

The following comments are made in amplification of the completed questionnaire.

1 BUS SERVICES

The data in the *Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper* (2010) and the scoring factor generated from it were incorrect, and, in any case, are now seriously out of date.

At the time of the *RSHBP* survey there was a peak and off-peak service at some distance in Hoarwithy– the 37 (later re-numbered 44) from Ross to Hereford via Hoarwithy. This provided four buses each way every weekday, the first bus into Hereford stopping at The Harp Inn in Hoarwithy at 0750, the last service out of Hereford leaving the County Bus Station at 1720. However, this bus service did not pass within 800 meters of the Kings Caple core settlement. The core settlement is defined in the *RSHBP* as consisting of 84 dwellings, which demonstrates it is almost identical to the area defined within the settlement boundary of the NDP. The bus route also ran throughout its journey until it crossed the Wye in Hereford through HR9 and HR2 postcodes, whereas Kings Caple is entirely within HR1 4 postcodes. The *RSHBP* accession map suggests that, though in a different postcode area from Hoarwithy and well outside the core settlement of Kings Caple, dwellings in the Ruxton area have been interpreted as being served by a peak-time service. However only nine dwellings are located here – about 6% of the parish total. (See *RSHBP* pages 4 & 7, also appendices 5, 7 & 9.)

The allocation of the maximum score for public transport (3) was thus even ten years ago wholly incorrect. However the service has deteriorated markedly in the period since then. Firstly the 44 route was truncated to extend from Ross to Kingdsthorne, thus requiring a change of bus to access Hereford and doubling the total journey time. Then the service was reduced from four to two buses each way per day, both at off-peak times. There has since last September been some improvement, by opening the school bus for John Kyrle High School to public use – now numbered as one of the 44 buses and running through the centre of Kings Caple. It does not of course access Hereford. As it runs only on school term days and the return bus each afternoon leaves Ross at 1525, it is an off-peak service.

The two buses passing through the village for shoppers travelling to Hereford at mid-morning and returning at lunch-time on Wednesdays and Saturdays respectively remain in service.

The scoring for bus service provision in *RSHBP* should have been recorded as 1, and, if the same methodology is employed in the current exercise, the scoring of 1 would also be appropriate.

Relevant current bus timetables are attached as 2a, 2b and 2c.

2 VILLAGE HALL

Kings Caple's village hall, known as the Old School, is a small refurbished stone-built dame school constructed around 1840. Though it is attractive and has a small kitchen and toilets, its meeting room is small. It is suitable for parish council meetings, lectures and other small gatherings but has a maximum permitted capacity of 30. A single scoring for village halls (3 in *RSHBP*) fails to take account of the wide disparity of size and facilities between relatively small meeting rooms and large event venues with stages that allow for dances, pantomimes etc.

3 LIBRARY

Herefordshire Council has withdrawn the mobile library service.

4. OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES

The *RSHBP* notes the presence of environmental constraints to development within settlements. These include location of all or part of a settlement within a flood risk zone or an AONB. (See pages 9-10 and appendix 8.) These two constraints are not scored but para 6.24 makes clear that allocations of residential development should take them into account.

The apparent intention of *RSHBP* was to prepare for the development of a list of settlements suitable for residential development, defined by their possessing a minimum number of facilities and services including good public transport and at least four other defined key day-to-day services. It should be noted that Kings Caple neither has nor had in 2010 good public transport and now has and had in 2010 only two of the identified key services. Had the logic of *RSHBP* been pursued, a list of main villages would have been generated similar to, though probably slightly larger than, the list of main villages in the UDP. These villages would have properly merited identification as being suitable for sustainable development.

When the Rural Housing Background Paper was produced in 2013 the approach emerging in *RSHBP* was abandoned in favour of a crude statistically driven model. Rural settlements were grouped into seven rural housing market areas. Every settlement with a number of dwellings which equated to or exceeded the median for its housing market area was identified as suitable for sustainable proportionate development of market housing. The tables of settlements in *RHBP* (pages 29-37) include the services and facilities scoring but appear to disregard them except in a few cases to justify the elevation of a settlement of below median size to the category of suitability for proportionate development. The constraints of flood risk and AONB status are also cited but without any relaxation of the statistical growth target. The justification for this change of approach in *RHBP* is perfunctory.

This change of approach has had the effect of more than doubling the number of rural settlements expected to support market housing development over that established in the UDP. Such a state of affairs has seriously discredited the term sustainable development in Herefordshire, and, if the current review exercise is to have any credibility, it will need to ensure that a services and facilities audit genuinely plays a role in helping determine the rural settlement hierarchy.

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