

1a RURAL DEFINITIONS: GENERAL SURVEY

Addendum: August 2005

Most recently, the newly-formed Commission for Rural Communities (CRC - formerly part of the Countryside Agency) published "[The State of the Countryside 2005](#)" ("[SoC 2005](#)") in which the new rural definitions have been employed. This has been helpful, in providing several series of important rural data according to the rural categories that all organisations should now be adopting. The overall 'picture' remains close to the one described using data from the previous "State of the Countryside" report (for 2004). [See Unit 2: "Rural Statistics"]

"SoC 2005" goes beyond the 8- or 5-fold categorisation of rural communities as described earlier. These are employed in the main body of the report.

[CLICK HERE FOR](#) -> "SoC 2005" Section 1: "The Characteristics of Rural England"

Later, however, the new rural definitions are applied at the level of Unitary & Local Authority Districts (UA/LADs), which is the most likely level for 'rural' definitions.

[CLICK HERE FOR](#) -> "SoC 2005" Annex 1: "Rural & Urban Classifications"

Viewing England at this level, the 8- or 5-fold categories are not very helpful, and the rurality of each UA or LA district needs to be more representative on a larger scale than the Output Areas (OAs) of the underlying rural-urban classification. This has been done by creating a 'spectrum' of six UA/LA district classifications:

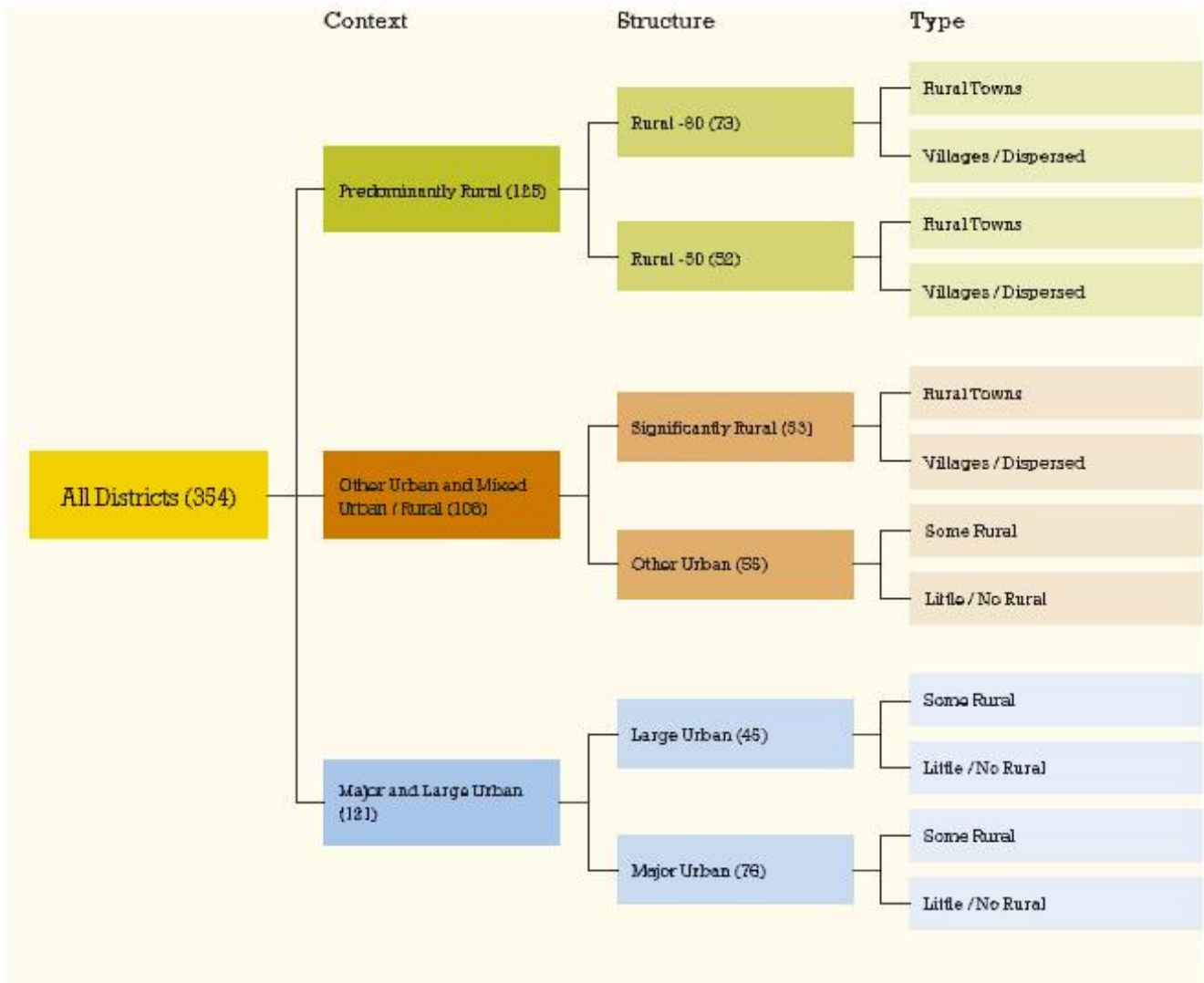
- Major Urban (76 districts): more than 100,000 *or* more than 50% of district population in urban centres greater than 750,000 in size
- Large Urban (45 districts): more than 50,000 *or* more than 50% of district population in urban centres between 250,000-750,000 in size
- Other Urban (55 districts): fewer than 37,000 *or* less than 26% of district population in rural settlements or 'larger market towns'
- Significant Rural (53 districts): more than 37,000 *or* more than 26% of district population is in rural settlements or 'larger market towns'
- Rural-50 (52 districts): 50-79% of district population is in rural settlements or 'larger market towns'
- Rural-80 (73 districts): 80% or more of district population is in rural settlements or 'larger market towns'

The 'larger market towns' used in these definitions are among the 207 urban settlements of 10-30,000 population which have specific & prescribed 'rural' characteristics.

FOR REFLECTION OR DISCUSSION

Why do some people think it is wrong, at the start of the 21st century, to make a distinction between 'urban' and 'rural'?

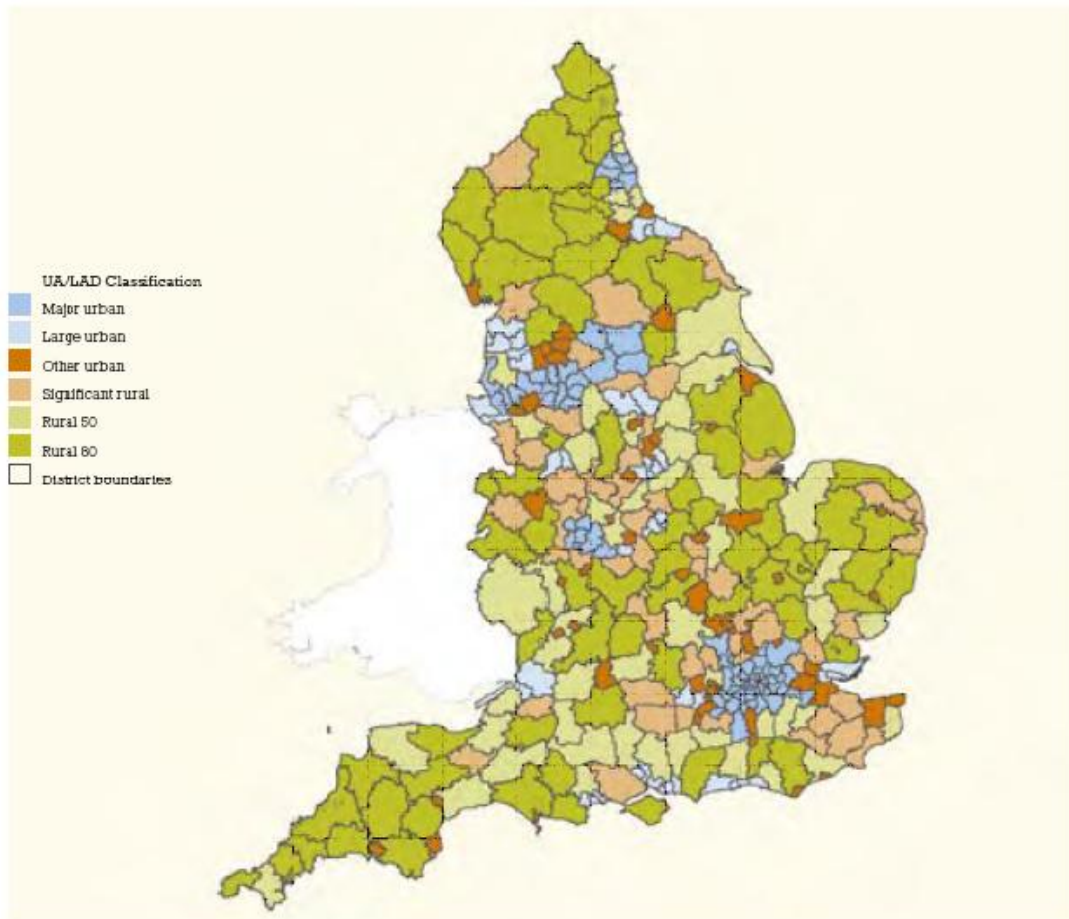
English Unitary & Local Authority Districts
Detailed Structure of the Proposed new District Classifications



Data from Commission for Rural Communities "State of the Countryside 2005"

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for larger image

English Local & Unitary Authority Districts
Based on degree of Rurality



[CLICK HERE](#) -> for larger image

[CLICK HERE FOR](#) ->

**A detailed table of Rural Local
& Unitary Authority Districts
- as of September 2005**

[CLICK HERE FOR](#) ->

**A detailed table of all
207 'Key Market Towns'
- as of September 2005**

It is *these* categories that are likely to be used by local & regional government when formulating future policy. And it is these categories that NGOs & other bodies (including churches) would be expected to employ in their own work with rural communities. Eventually, as indicated earlier, it should be possible to identify the degree of rurality for any single location simply from its postcode. The ONS is already working on such Postcode 'Look Up' databases.

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[CLICK HERE](#) -> to start Unit 1a again

[CLICK HERE](#) -> to go on to Unit 1b "**RURAL DEFINITIONS: CHURCH SURVEY**"

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