

Listening Learning Leading

South Oxfordshire LOCAL PLAN 2032

SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND PAPER

PREFERRED OPTIONS

STAGE THREE OF THE PROCESS

JUNE 2016



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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Having a strong understanding of the nature of the towns and villages in South Oxfordshire is a key part of our evidence base and essential to forming a robust strategy for the future in the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032.
- 1.2. This study paper collates information on the services and facilities available in settlements across our district¹. This information is used to assess the relative sustainability of the various settlements.
- 1.3. The results of this study (along with others) has informed the preparation of the June 2016 Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options Consultation Document.
- 1.4. We have taken care in gathering the information in this study to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of our settlements. However, we appreciate that local facilities and services are constantly changing. The Preferred Options Consultation provides a basis for members of the public, local neighbourhoods, parish councils and stakeholders to respond on the information we have gathered. Through this we can draw on your valuable local knowledge and work together to develop the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032.

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Development plan documents, such as the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032, have to be in general conformity with central Government planning policy.
- 2.2The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning should "proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs"². It goes on to state that planning should "take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it".
- 2.3 For rural areas such as South Oxfordshire, the NPPF states that "housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby"³.
- 2.4 It is also stated that all local planning authorities, such as South Oxfordshire District Council, "should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-

¹ The study was undertaken in April 2016.

² Paragraph 17 of the NPPF

³ Paragraph 55 of the NPPF

date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area¹¹⁴.

LOCAL CONTEXT - THE ROLE OF THIS STUDY

- 3.1 We are currently preparing a new local plan called the Local Plan 2032. This is to take account of the increased housing need for South Oxfordshire identified by the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and also to accommodate some of Oxford City's additional housing need, which they may not have enough land to provide for.
- 3.2 Preparing the Local Plan 2032 enables us to plan for the additional growth in the most advantageous and positive way. The plan will set out a strategy for delivering sustainable growth in South Oxfordshire, identify appropriate areas and sites for development, along with the necessary infrastructure to support this growth. The Local Plan 2032 will also set out policies that will be used for determining planning applications.
- 3.3 It is vital that the emerging Local Plan 2032 is sound and appropriate for the district. Therefore to support its preparation, we have commissioned and carried out a range of studies to update our <u>evidence base</u> and provide us with a comprehensive picture of the opportunities and constraints in the district. This Settlement Assessment Background Paper assists in classifying towns, larger villages, smaller villages, and other villages into a proposed settlement hierarchy.
- 3.4The results of this study (along with others) has informed the preparation of the June 2016 Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options Consultation Document. The study will also inform the production of any subsequent Local Plan 2032 consultation documents, and eventually the final plan. Details of the work program and timetables for the production of development plan documents can be found in our Local Development Scheme.

METHODOLOGY

4.1 In the study, we firstly considered the existing settlement hierarchy within the <u>South Oxfordshire Core Strategy</u>⁵. We decided to focus mainly on the settlements categorised in the current Core Strategy as towns, larger villages, and smaller villages⁶. It is assumed that outside of these settlements little development is likely to have taken place since the previous study, and also few facilities and services will be available in these locations due to their size and rural nature.

⁴ Paragraph 158 of the NPPF

⁵ The settlement hierarchy within the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy can be found on page 151.

⁶ Unless stated otherwise, this study only considers and compares information on the district's towns, larger villages, and smaller villages.

- 4.2We then reviewed the existing information on facilities and services gathered through the previous study: the 2011 Settlement Assessment Background Paper.
- 4.3 Desktop research was then used to update and add additional information to the database. By having a wider range of indicators to draw from in assessing settlements, we aim to improve upon our assessment of relative sustainability. Details of sources of information used can be found in section 6 below.
- 4.4We then visited settlements in person to check that the information we had gathered through the desktop assessment was correct.
- 4.5 A scoring system was then developed. This enables us to easily compare the attributes of different settlements. In some places the scoring was weighted to be responsive to the relative greater importance of certain facilities, services and other attributes. For example, some facilities are more essential and used more frequently than others, such as schools and shops, when compared for example to village halls. Details of the scoring system can be found in Appendix 1.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Proposed settlement hierarchy

5.1 It is proposed that at this time the settlement hierarchy will be retained unchanged. However, the Preferred Options document asks whether this is the appropriate approach and also whether a "Medium Sized Village" category should be created. Table 1 shows the current settlement hierarchy, which is unchanged from that in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy.

Table 1: Proposed settlement hierarchy for the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032.								
	Tov	vns						
Didcot	Didcot Henley-on- Thames		Wallingford					
	Larger	villages						
Benson Berinsfield Chalgrove	Benson Chinnor Goring Watlington Berinsfield Cholsey Nettlebed Wheatley							
Ü	Smaller	villages						
Aston Rowant Aston Tirrold Aston Upthorpe Beckley Berrick Salome Binfield Heath Brightwell-cum- Sotwell Britwell Salome	Dorchester Dunsden Green East Hagbourne Ewelme Forest Hill Gallowstree Common Garsington Great Haseley	Kidmore End Kingston Blount Lewknor Little Milton Long Wittenham Lower Shiplake Marsh Baldon Milton Common Moulsford	Shiplake Cross South Moreton South Stoke Stadhampton Stanton St John Stoke Row Sydenham Tetsworth Tiddington					

Burcot Checkendon Chiselhampton Clifton Hampden Cuddesdon Culham	Great Milton Harpsden Highmoor Cross Holton Horspath Ipsden Other v	North Moreton Nuneham Courtenay Playhatch Rotherfield Peppard	Towersey Warborough Whitchurch Hill Whitchurch-on- Thames
Adwell Albury Baldon Row Bix Brightwell Baldwin Brightwell Upperton Brookhampton Cane End Chazey Heath Christmas Common Collins End Cookley Green Coscote Crays Pond Crocker End Crowell Cuxham Denton	Drayton St Leonard Easington Elsfield Emmington Exlade Street Fulscot Greys Green Hailey Harpsden Bottom Henton Highmoor Hill Bottom Huntercombe End Kingwood Common Latchford Little Haseley Little Wittenham Littleworth Lower Assendon	Maidensgrove Mapledurham Middle Assendon Mongewell Newington North Stoke North Weston Nuffield Park Corner Path Hill Peppard Common Pishill Postcombe Preston Crowmarsh Pyrton Roke Rotherfield Greys Russell's Water Sandford-on- Thames	Satwell Shepherds Green Shillingford Shirburn Sonning eye South Weston Stoke Talmage Stonor Swyncombe Tokers Green Toot Baldon Trench Green Waterperry Waterstock West Hagbourne Wheatfield Witheridge Hill Woodeaton Wyfold Court

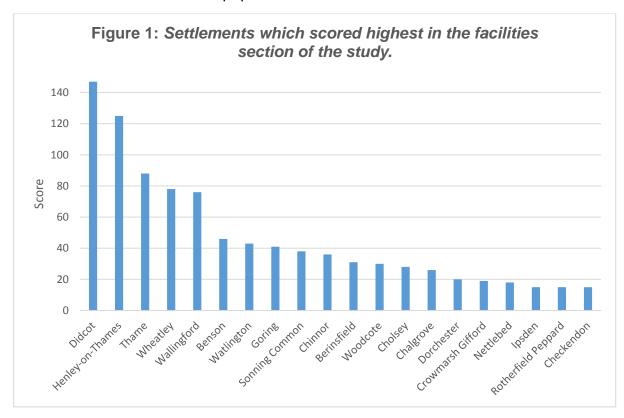
- 5.2 The evidence collected in the study showed that there is potential for adjustments to be made to the settlement hierarchy. However, further research is preferable. Therefore, at this time officers' judgement is that the hierarchy should remain the same for the purposes of the consultation. This will enable further consideration of the results of the study and deeper research to be conducted, using this study as a basis.
- 5.3 The next section of this report provides an analysis of the information gathered in the study. The scores each settlement received in the study can be found in appendix 2 and the full matrix of information gathered in the study can be downloaded here.

ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION COLLECTED

The facilities and services section of the study

6.1 A range of facilities and services are needed to support day to day life and activities in our district. Settlements with a greater range of amenities are more sustainable and are therefore better equipped to support growth.

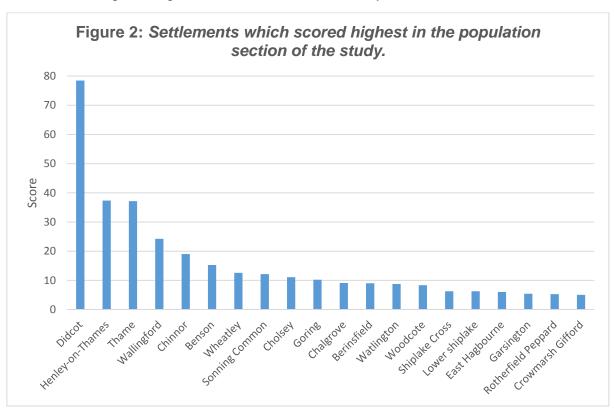
- 6.2 Figure 1 shows the 20 settlements in the district which scored best in terms of the availability of facilities and services. Predictably, the district's four towns each scored highly and can be found within the top five highest scores.
- 6.3 Most of the other settlements featuring within the top 20 scores for facilities and services are currently categorised as 'larger villages', with the exception of: Dorchester, Ipsden, Rotherfield Peppard, and Checkendon.
- 6.4 The 'larger villages' of Crowmarsh Gifford and Nettlebed feature towards the lower end of the top 20 scoring settlements in this section. However if considered proportionally, the amount of facilities in these areas for the given population size is relatively high. When facilities are compared in this way, Didcot has a relatively low amount of facilities for its population size.



6.5 The settlements which scored lowest in terms of the availability of facilities and services are all currently categorised as 'smaller villages': Aston Upthorpe, Burcot, Chiselhampton, Great Haseley, and Kingston Blount. Each of these settlements received a score of 2 or below.

The population section of the study

- 6.6 Population statistics provide a good indication of a settlement's size and sustainability. Generally, larger settlements are more sustainable⁷, as with higher populations, a greater range of services and facilities can be supported.
- 6.7 Figure 2 shows the settlements which scored the highest in the population section of the study. Unsurprisingly, the district's four towns scored the highest.
- 6.8 Other top places in this section are occupied by a similar selection villages to those which scored highest in the facilities section of the study. This emphasises the relationship between and interdependence of population levels and the availability of facilities and services.
- 6.9 One notable difference is the absence of Nettlebed from the top 20 population scores. This is due to the parish's comparatively small population, which has resulted in Nettlebed receiving a low score of just over 2 in this section. This score is more comparable to those received by 'smaller villages' than the scores of other 'larger villages' in this section of the study.



6.10 The settlements which scored the lowest in terms of population were: Britwell Salome, Highmoor Cross, Marsh Baldon and Nuneham Courtenay. These

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⁷ Population statistics are produced by the Office for National Statistics at different levels. Parish level data has been used for the settlement assessment because it is considered to be the most suitable output level for the study at hand. However, it is not possible to distinguish the population levels of individual settlements within a parish. Therefore, caution has been used when comparing different areas using this data.

settlements each received a score of 1 or less in the population section of the study.

The employment section of the study

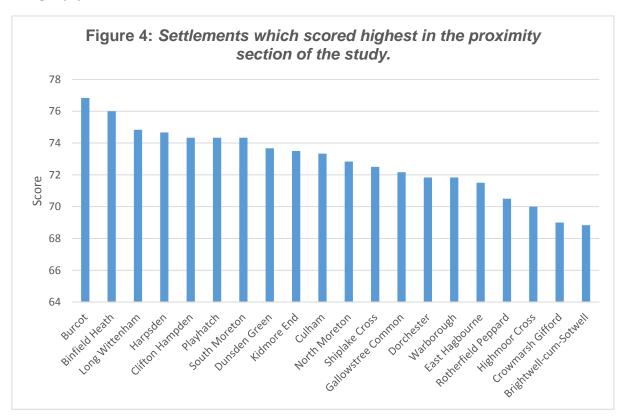
- 6.11 The availability of local employment opportunities reduce people's need to travel by car. Local businesses can also provide economic benefits to their local community as employees and customers may spend money within the area, consequently helping to maintain local shops and services.
- 6.12 Whilst we cannot determine whether businesses have jobs to offer the local community, studying the distribution of economically active people provides a good indication of where these people are choosing to live, and through this, where other economically active people are likely to want to live.
- 6.13 Table 2 lists the settlements which scored the highest in the employment section of the study. The maximum score of 100 in this section was awarded to places with the highest proportions of economically active residents in the district.
- 6.14 The settlement with the highest levels of economically active residents was Benson, with 82% of residents aged 16 to 74 classed as economically active. This is followed by East Hagbourne with 81% and then Didcot with 80%.
- 6.15 With the exception of Henley-on-Thames, all of the district's towns were awarded the maximum score of 100 in this section of the study. Henley-on-Thames scored poorly in this section of the study due to the relatively low levels of economically active residents in the town.

Table 2: Settlements which	ch scored highest in the en study.	nployment section of the					
Settlements	s achieving the maximum sc	ore of 100					
Benson Chiselhampton Crowmarsh Gifford Didcot Dunsden Green East Hagbourne	Ewelme Great Haseley Lewknor Little Milton Playhatch	South Moreton Stadhampton Tetsworth Thame Wallingford					
- U	Settlements achieving a high score of 75						
Aston Upthorpe Berinsfield Binfield Heath Chalgrove Chinnor Cholsey	Forest Hill Great Milton Horspath Little Milton Long Wittenham Marsh Baldon	Milton Common South Stoke Sydenham Tiddington Towersey Wheatley					

6.16 The lowest scoring settlements in this part of the study were: Henley-on-Thames with 57% of residents aged 16 to 74 classed as economically active, Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake with 63% respectively, and Cuddesdon with 64%.

The proximity section of the study

- 6.17 The network of major settlements across our district, and also those close by such as Oxford and Reading, help in supporting daily life and the sustainability of other settlements. Being within close proximity to a major settlement supports sustainability as it enables easy access to the range of facilities and services it has on offer and reduces the need to travel by car.
- 6.18 Figure 4 shows the 20 places in the district which scored highest in terms of their proximity to major settlements. All of the settlements featuring in this graph are currently categorised as 'smaller villages', with the exception of Crowmarsh Gifford.



6.19 With the exception of Crowmarsh Gifford, the town and larger villages scored low in this part of the study. This is reflective of the rural nature of South Oxfordshire, as major settlements are spread across the district and generally have low proximity to each other. The lowest scoring settlements in this part of the study were: Beckley, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Watlington and Wheatley.

The public transport section of the study

- 6.20 Public transport provides a vital lifeline for some people within the district. Therefore it is an important consideration in assessing our settlements.
- 6.21 Table 2 below lists the settlements in South Oxfordshire which performed the best in terms of public transport provision.
- 6.22 Settlements in table 3 which have a score of 50 have a good frequency of buses⁸ to and from the settlement. Whereas, settlements which received the highest score of 100 have a good frequency of buses and also a railway station.

Table 3: Settlements which scored highest in the public transport section of the study.						
Settlements	s achieving the maximum sc	ore of 100				
Cholsey	Goring	Lower Shiplake				
Didcot	Henley-on-Thames	Thame				
Sett	lements achieving a score of	50				
Aston Rowant	Gallowstree Common	Rotherfield Peppard				
Benson	Garsington	Shiplake Cross				
Berinsfield						
Binfield Heath	Heath Great Milton South Stoke					
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	m-Sotwell Holton Stanton St John					
Burcot	Horspath Sydenham					
Chinnor	nnor Kidmore End Tiddington					
Chiselhampton Kingston Blount Towersey						
Clifton Hampden Lewknor Wallingford						
Crowmarsh Gifford Little Milton Warborough						
Culham	Nettlebed	Watlington				
Dorchester	Nuneham Courtenay	Wheatley				
Dunsden Green						
Ewelme						

TYPES OF INFORMATION GATHERED AND SOURCES USED

The facilities section of the study

- 7.1 Information for the facilities section of the study was collected on a variety of different publically accessible facilities, services and amenities. A list can be found in table 4.
- 7.2 Information was gathered from a number of sources. Firstly, information was lifted from the previous settlement assessment to form a starting point. Google Street View was then used to update this information through performing virtual tours of each settlements within the study. The information collected was then checked in person to ensure accuracy.

⁸ A 'good frequency of buses' is relative for the district. For the purposes of this exercise, it was considered to be 10 or more buses inbound and 10 or more buses outbound per day, on most days of the week. More information on the scoring system used can be found in appendix 1.

Table 4: The ty	pes of facilities, services and amenities recorded and used within the study.
Businesses falling under the use classes A1 to A5 ⁹	 A1 -Shops such as: supermarket and convenience stores, post offices, pharmacies, and hairdressers. A2 - Financial and professional services, such as: banks and building societies, and estate and employment agencies. A3 - Restaurants and cafés where food and drink can be consumed on the premises. A4 - Drinking establishments such as: pubs, and wine and cocktail bars. A5 - Hot food takeaways, where food sold is intended to be eaten away from the shop. For example: a fish and chips shop.
Education facilities	Such as: • primary schools, • secondary schools, and • other / further educational institutions.
Healthfacilities	Such as:hospitals,doctors surgeries / clinics, anddentist surgeries.
Community facilities	Such as: crèches and nurseries, libraries, and community / village halls.
Leisure facilities	Such as: cinemas, theatre venues, leisure centres / gyms, and sports clubs.
Outside space	Such as: • public parks / gardens • sports pitches, and • playgrounds.

⁹ The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes', more information can be found on the <u>Planning Portal</u>.

The population section of the study

7.3 Population data was sourced from the Office for National Statistics. The dataset 'Age Structure, 2011 (KS102EW)' was used for this section of the study. This particular data set provides information on the age structure and numbers of usual residents in England and Wales as of the census day 27 March 2011.

The employment section of the study

7.4 Data on employment levels was also sourced from the Office for National Statistics. Information on the levels of employment were formed using the data set 'Economic Activity, 2011 (KS601EW)'.

The proximity section of the study

- 7.5 The proximity section of the study is concerned with the distance from the centre of settlements within the study to various major settlements. For each settlement, three different proximity distances were collected: the distance to the nearest town or city outside of the district, the nearest town within the district, and the nearest large village within the district.
- 7.6To ensure that the study was realistic, <u>Google Maps</u> was employed to select the shortest or most appropriate routes and also calculate the distance by road from one settlement to another.

The public transport section of the study

- 7.7 Information on the availability and frequency of public bus services was taken from the <u>Traveline South East and Anglia</u> website.
- 7.8 The locations of rail stations within the district were confirmed using Google Maps.

APPENDIX 1: THE SCORING SYSTEM USED IN THE SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT STUDY

The facilities section of the study

This section of the study was weighted to be responsive to the relative greater importance of certain facilities, services and other attributes. Those seen as more important to daily life were given a greater score each.

A score of 2 was given for each of the following facilities a settlement had:

- primary school,
- secondary school,
- further / other educational institution,
- hospital,
- doctors surgery or clinic,
- dentist surgery,

- creche / nursery,
- supermarket / convenience store,
- post office,
- · pharmacy, and
- other shops falling under the A1 use category.¹⁰.

A score of 1 was given for each of the following facilities a settlement had:

- shops providing financial or professional services, such as a bank.
- restaurant / café,
- drinking establishment, such as a pub,
- hot food takeaway,
- library,

- village / community hall,
- cinema,
- theatre,
- leisure centre,
- sports club,
- public park / garden,
- sports pitch, and
- playground.

A half score was awarded to each facility in instances where they are known to share a building. For example, in Stanton St John the post office is within the convenience store.

The population section of the study

The scores within the population section of the study were produced using Office for National Statistics data.

Firstly, the population of the parish/settlement was calculated as a percentage of the district's total population. This result was then multiplied by 4 to form a more easily readable score for the parish/settlement.

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¹⁰

The employment section of the study

Using Office for National Statistics data, the percent of residents aged 16 to 74 who are economically active was calculated for each parish/settlement. As the range of values produced was narrow, the interquartile ranges¹¹ for the data was calculated. The

Percentages falling below the lower quartile in the data set were awarded the lowest score for this section of 25. Percentages forming the lower quartile were awarded a score of 50. Those forming the upper quartile in the data set were given a score of 75. Percentages in the dataset with values beyond the upper quartile were awarded the highest score of 100 in this section of the study.

The proximity section of the study

For each of the settlements, the following distances were found:

- to the nearest town or city outside of the district,
- the nearest town within the district, and
- the nearest large village within the district.

In this section of the study, a lower proximity distance is more desirable than a greater distance. As a consequence, it was necessary to convert the distances in miles into scores. Greater distances were exchanged for low (poor) scores, and low distances were exchanged for high (good) scores.

The inverted scoring for this section was developed by firstly assigning the greatest distance in the data set the lowest score of 0, and then giving the smallest distance in the data the highest score of 100. These values were then plotted on a scatter graph and a line of best fit was added between the two points. The line of best fit was then used to convert each of the distances within the data into scores.

The method of creating an inverted scoring system described above was performed separately for the three sets of proximity distances gathered. This enabled the scoring to be sensitive to the range differences in the data sets.

The final score for each settlement within the proximity section of the study is the average of the three different scores given. Where settlements being investigated are themselves a town or larger village, only two proximity scores were given. In these instances the final score for that settlement is an average of the two proximity scores given.

¹¹Calculating interquartile ranges enables datasets to be divided into 4 parts. The median value of the data is used to divide the data into two halves. The lower quartile then divides the bottom half of the data into two parts, and the upper quartile also divides the upper half of the data into two halves.

The public transport section of the study

As a 'good frequency of buses' is relative for the district, a scoring system was devised for the public transport section of the study and can be found in table 5. The study took into account both buses to the settlement and also those within 20 minutes walking distance of the centre of the settlement.

The maximum score achievable in this section of the study was 100. This was given to settlements which have both a good frequency of buses and also a railway station.

Table 5: Scoring categories within the public transport section of the study.				
Score	Explanation			
50	A score of 50 was given to settlements which have a railway station.			
0	A score of 0 was given to settlements which are not served by public buses.			
10	A score of 10 was awarded to settlements which have a low frequency of buses: less than 5 buses inbound and outbound per day.			
25	A score of 25 was given to settlements which had an average frequency of buses: around 5 to 9 buses inbound and outbound per day.			
50	A score of 50 was given to settlements which have a good frequency of buses. This was considered to be 10 or more buses inbound and 10 or more buses outbound per day, on most days of the week.			

APPENDIX 2: SCORES OF EACH SETTLEMENT IN THE STUDY

This appendix shows the scores each settlement received in the study. The full matrix of information gathered in the study can be <u>downloaded here</u>.

Settlement	Facilities score	Population score	Employment score	Proximity score	Public transport score
Aston Rowant	7	3	50	51	50
Aston Tirrold	4	1	25	66	10
Aston Upthorpe	1	3	75	68	10
Beckley	5	2	75	39	0
Benson	46	15	100	67	50
Berinsfield	31	9	75	42	50
Berrick Salome	5	1	50	65	10
Binfield Heath	4	2	75	76	50
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	13	5	50	69	50
Britwell Salome	5	1	50	49	10
Burcot	1	2	25	77	50
Chalgrove	26	9	75	37	25
Checkendon	15	2	50	57	10
Chinnor	36	19	75	48	50
Chiselhampton	1	3	100	61	50
Cholsey	28	11	75	64	100
Clifton Hampden	15	2	25	74	50
Crowmarsh Gifford	19	5	100	69	50
Cuddesdon	4	2	25	59	10
Culham	12	1	25	73	50
Didcot	147	78	100	65	100
Dorchester	20	3	25	72	50
Dunsden Green	4	1	100	74	50
East Hagbourne	9	6	100	72	10
Ewelme	9	3	100	59	50

Settlement	Facilities score	Population score	Employment score	Proximity score	Public transport score
Forest Hill	3	3	75	57	25
Gallowstree Common	3	4	25	72	50
Garsington	9	5	25	59	50
Goring	41	10	25	45	100
Great Haseley	2	2	100	55	50
Great Milton	7	3	75	59	50
Harpsden	4	2	25	75	0
Henley-on-Thames	125	37	25	58	100
Highmoor Cross	3.5	1	50	70	10
Holton	8	2	50	60	50
Horspath	11	4	75	61	50
Ipsden	15	1	50	59	0
Kidmore End	3	4	25	74	50
Kingston Blount	2	2	50	57	50
Lewknor	3	2	100	46	50
Little Milton	10	2	100	58	50
Long Wittenham	15	3	75	75	10
Lower shiplake	13	6	25	69	100
Marsh Baldon	7	1	75	66	10
Milton Common	5	2	75	58	10
Moulsford	11	2	50	55	10
Nettlebed	18	2	50	50	50
North Moreton	5	1	50	73	10
Nuneham Courtenay	6	1	50	66	50
Playhatch	4	1	100	74	50
Rotherfield Peppard	15	5	25	71	50
Shiplake Cross	14	6	25	73	50
Sonning Common	38	12	50	66	50
South Moreton	5	1	100	74	10

Settlement	Facilities score	Population score	Employment score	Proximity score	Public transport score
South Stoke	8	2	75	61	50
Stadhampton	12	3	100	63	10
Stanton St John	11	1	50	55	50
Stoke Row	11	2	50	60	10
Sydenham	7	1	75	63	50
Tetsworth	5	2	100	47	10
Thame	88	37	100	59	100
Tiddington	4	2	75	60	50
Towersey	3	1	75	68	50
Wallingford	76	24	100	66	50
Warborough	14	3	25	72	50
Watlington	43	9	50	21	50
Wheatley	78	13	75	42	50
Whitchurch Hill	3	4	25	56	0
Whitchurch-on-Thames	13	3	25	55	10
Woodcote	30	8	50	51	50



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