

## Contents

Section		Page
1.	Scope of the study	1
2.	Background and policy context	1
3.	Assessing access to services and facilities	3
4.	Settlement survey results	9
Appendices		
A1	Identifying the reasons people travel	14
A2	Staffordshire County accessibility mapping	17
A3	Hansen Score mapping for South Staffordshire	22
A4	Services and facilities audit (by settlement)	
A5	Settlement hierarchy scoring	



## 1. Scope of the study

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to offer evidence on the relative level of services and facilities present in settlements within South Staffordshire. This then allows the study to propose a revised settlement hierarchy, which will be consulted upon and tested through the preparation of the Council's Local Plan review. It is important to note that this study does not offer a detailed study of the capacity within existing services and facilities present within these locations. Therefore, the findings of this study should be read alongside the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and any other associated evidence to offer a fuller picture of the capacity of settlements to accommodate future growth.
- 1.2 This study also does not assess other factors which might affect a village's suitability for further housing growth, such as the degree to which a location is constrained by Green Belt, the availability of previously developed land, highways capacity, flood risk and landscape impacts. As such, the findings of this study cannot be taken in isolation when considering the ability of a particular settlement to accommodate a certain level of growth, which will be a matter to be determined having regard to a much wider evidence base.

## 2. Background and policy context

- 2.1 The Council's recently adopted 2018 Site Allocations document (SAD) commits the Council to reviewing the appropriateness of the existing settlement hierarchy set out in the Council's 2012 Core Strategy, in light of the rapidly changing growth pressures now facing the district. The existing settlement hierarchy grouped settlements into Main, Local and Small Service Villages, based upon a 2010 Settlement Study<sup>1</sup>. Since the preparation of that study, three subsequent updates of national planning policy have occurred in 2012, 2018 and 2021, raising further need to review the settlement hierarchy to ensure it is based upon factors consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2.2 Key extracts from the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are highlighted below. These highlight the key national policies covering the consideration of locations for growth based upon the availability of sustainable transport modes, the opportunities to enhance existing rural communities and the services which serve them and the need for an integrated approach to considering the location of sustainable transport infrastructure, housing and economic uses and community facilities and services.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021**

#### **Paragraph 79 (Rural housing)**

*"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."*

#### **Paragraph 80 (Rural housing)**

*"Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside..."*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/doc/171922/name/Settlement%20Study%20December%202010%20b.pdf/>

**Paragraph 93 (Promoting healthy and safe communities)**

*“To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: ... ensure any integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”*

**Paragraph 104 (Promoting sustainable transport)**

*“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that: ... opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised...”*

**Paragraph 105 (Promoting sustainable transport)**

*“...Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes ...”*

*“... [O]pportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”*

**Paragraph 106 (Promoting sustainable transport)**

*“Planning policies should: support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities...”*

2.3 From the above extracts, it is clear that the NPPF 2021 emphasises the importance of the following matters:

- Ensuring locations for housing growth are supported by employment uses and community facilities and services
- Minimising journey lengths to employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities
- Maximising the opportunities to use existing and proposed transport infrastructure,
- Limiting the need to travel, offering a genuine choice of transport modes and maximising sustainable transport solutions
- Avoiding isolated rural development, identifying opportunities for villages or groups of villages to grow where this will support local services

2.4 Having regard to these factors and the available information which the Council has access to, a methodology for assessing the sustainability of settlements is set out in Section 3.

### 3. Assessing access to services and facilities

- 3.1 In determining how to measure the relative sustainability of settlement, a number of key indicators have been recorded on a settlement-by-settlement basis. In determining which factors to record, the study has had regard to the key national policy requirements regarding sustainable rural communities and transport patterns and the local circumstances of the district and its relationship to neighbouring urban areas. The criteria used have also been informed by Department for Transport data regarding the reasons that people undertake trips, as presented in Appendix 1. This ensures that the study has regard to the facilities which will be more likely to prevent car journeys outside of a settlement if residents have pedestrian or public transport access to them.
- 3.2 In summary, the key indicators set out below will be used to indicate the relative sustainability of a settlement within the district:
- Access to food stores
  - Diversity of accessible community facilities/services
  - Access to employment locations
  - Access to education facilities
  - Public transport access to higher order services outside of the village
- 3.3 These indicators will be used to give a consistent high-level indication of the relative amount of facilities and services accessible to existing settlements. Further explanation and justification each of these criteria is set out under the relevant sections below. The information used to score villages against these criteria is set out in the audit included in Appendix 5. The information set out in this audit was recorded from a number of sources, including site visits to each of the settlements in the study, business rates information for facilities in each settlement and accessibility mapping/Hansen scores provided by Staffordshire County Council.

#### A. Access to convenience stores/supermarkets

*How this will be measured:*

- 3.4 A village will be considered to have access to a food store (e.g. a small supermarket or local convenience store) where a grocery-focused retail store is available within the village, allowing residents to undertake small top-up shops to complement larger weekly shops at supermarkets further afield<sup>2</sup>. Given the larger range of goods available from large supermarkets and their relative rarity within the district, these are also recorded.
- 3.5 The following rating system is used to rate this criteria for each settlement in the study.

No convenience store present	
One or more convenience store present	
Larger supermarket present	

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<sup>2</sup> See Mintel definition of convenience stores: <http://store.mintel.com/convenience-stores-uk-april-2016>.

*Justification:*

- 3.6 On average, shopping is the single biggest reason for people to undertake trips (see Department for Transport data in Appendix 1) and convenience stores are increasingly important to ensuring that residents can meet their day to day shopping needs. This reflects the growing trend for people to undertake regular shopping trips 'as and when' required<sup>3</sup>, to replace or complement a single weekly shop. Therefore, villages without walking access to a convenience store risk causing residents to undertake numerous trips out of the village throughout the week, thereby risking a significant increase in private car journeys if development occurs in these locations.

**B1. Diversity of other accessible community facilities/services & B2. Retail centres**

*How this will be measured:*

- 3.7 It is important to consider whether a village contains a variety of community facilities and other services in assessing the relative sustainability of its location. This will require a judgement to be made about the relative level of facilities present, but broadly speaking the greater the variety of community facilities and services on offer, the more sustainable the location will be.

- 3.8 Key examples of facilities to be counted under this indicator are:

- Community centre
- Village/club halls
- Leisure centre
- Public houses
- Cafes
- Restaurants
- Boutique shops
- Specialist shops
- Takeaways
- Newsagents
- Post offices
- GP practices
- Dental practices
- Opticians
- Churches
- Libraries
- Pharmacies
- Banks
- Day nurseries

- 3.9 The audit of each settlement for the above services and facilities is set out in Appendix 4. For the purposes of this measure, the presence of facilities within walking distance but past the built-up boundary of a village will also be considered, where these can be accessed via safe

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example; [‘The Waitrose Food and Drink Report’](#) (2017/18) Waitrose, [‘Back to the future; 50 years of convenience retailing’](#) (2015) The Co-operative Group Ltd and [‘Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017’](#) (2017) J Sainsbury PLC

and legible routes with well-lit footways. Facilities and services up to 1 mile (i.e. 1610m) walk away from the development boundary of a settlement along such routes will be recorded for this purpose. In practice, as set out in the audit findings in Appendix 4, this measure has primarily resulted in reflecting the existing ties between Codsall/Bilbrook and Cheslyn Hay/Great Wyrley. In both of these examples, two large villages are located directly adjacent to each other with no physical separation between their built areas. In these examples, services and facilities from one village will therefore also serve residents from the adjacent village and the distance threshold set out above ensures this is recorded.

- 3.10 Using the above information, a judgement has been made for each settlement as to the degree to which community facilities/services on offer to residents are of sufficient quantity and variety to reduce the need to travel outside of the village.

No services present	
Access to a small range of services	
Access to a moderate range of services	
Access to a large range of services	

- 3.11 Since the publication of previous Rural Services and Facilities Audits in 2018 and 2019, the Council has also reviewed and comprehensively updated its evidence base for retail centres within the District. This has led to a new hierarchy of retail centres, which is set out in full in the Retail Centres Study 2021. In summary the study identifies all retail centres in the District and categorises each as one of the following typologies;

- *Large Village Centres*
- *Village Centres*
- *Neighbourhood Centres*

- 3.12 Reflecting the findings of the Retail Centres Study 2021, settlements have been ranked for their access to different retail centres using the following criteria:

Settlement does not contain a recognised retail centre	
Settlement has access to a Neighbourhood Centre	
Settlement has access to a Village Centre	
Settlement has access to a Large Village Centre	

- 3.13 In many of the District's larger villages, multiple retail centre typologies are present. In such cases settlements will be scored according to the largest retail centre accessible from the settlement. E.g. a settlement with access to a Neighbourhood Centre and Village Centre will be scored as having access to a Village Centre.
- 3.14 For the purposes of this criteria, the presence of a retail centre within walking distance but past the built-up boundary or Parish of a village will also be considered, where these can be accessed via safe and legible routes with well-lit footways. Facilities and services up to 1 mile (i.e. 1610m) walk away from the development boundary of a settlement along such routes will be recorded for this purpose. In practice, as set out in the audit findings in Appendix 4, this only affects the village of Bilbrook, due to its close physical and functional relationship with the village of Codsall, where there is a Large Village Centre within 1 mile.

*Justification:*

- 3.15 Department for Transport research (see Appendix 1) indicates that a significant number of trips occur due to the need to access services, including uses such as banks, medical facilities, hairdressers, churches, libraries etc. In addition, it identifies shopping is the single biggest reason for people to undertake trips. Whilst a significant proportion of this demand is likely for food shopping (as reflected in criteria A), the amount of trips generated by retail still suggests that a centres' wider retail offer and function can influence trips. It is therefore important to consider whether a settlement contains a variety of community facilities and services, as well any retail centres present, when assessing the relative sustainability of its location.
- 3.16 This will require a judgement to be made about the relative level of facilities present in one settlement compared to another, but broadly speaking the greater the variety of types of community facilities and services on offer, the more sustainable the location will be. It is also important to consider pedestrian access to facilities outside of the built-up boundary of the village. The NPPF is clear that, in promoting sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. National policy also makes clear that where there are groups of smaller settlements, this may mean that development in one village could support services in a village nearby. However, this also needs to be considered in the context of the need to reduce greenhouse gas and reduce congestion through supporting a pattern of development which facilitates sustainable transport modes.
- 3.17 An indicative distance threshold of 1 mile has been used to consider pedestrian access to services outside of the village, having regard to various national publications. In summary, these publications indicate a range of approximately 800m – 2000m in terms of what could be considered an acceptable walking distance to services and facilities<sup>4</sup>. In particular, an Institute of Highways & Transport (CIHT) publication from 2015 has indicated that around 80% of journeys under a mile are typically undertaken by foot<sup>5</sup>. Therefore a distance of up to 1 mile (i.e. just over 1600m) along well-lit and safe footways from the existing development boundary of a village will be used in assessing a village's performance under this criterion. This is an indicative measure, as there is significant scope for a dwelling's location within a village to cause it to fall outside of the walking catchment of a facility which other parts of the village may be able to access.

### C. Access to employment locations

*How this will be measured:*

- 3.18 Using information provided by Staffordshire County Council, Hansen scores for public transport access to employment opportunities will be considered for each village. This measures the number of destinations that can be accessed within a 60 minutes journey time, the disbenefits of travel in terms of journey time, origin point population and the total number of jobs available at the destination. Therefore, a higher Hansen score will show a greater level of access to and choice of employment opportunities for residents within a certain settlement. Accordingly, settlements have been ranked using the following criteria:

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<sup>4</sup> See Institute of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' (2000), the Department for Transport's 'Manual for Streets' (2007) and Institute of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) 'Planning for Walking' (2015)

<sup>5</sup> See para 2.1 of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) 'Planning for Walking' (2015)



No public transport access to employment	
Very low access to employment (lower quartile Hansen score)	
Low access to employment	
Medium access to employment	
Good access to employment (upper quartile Hansen score)	

- 3.19 The mapping of Hansen scores used to determine each settlement's ranking against these criteria is available in Appendix 3. This mapping also shows the link between rail access and employment opportunities, with train stations being present only in villages with the highest levels of access to employment opportunities, i.e. Bilbrook/Codsall, Cheslyn Hay/Great Wyrley and Penkridge.

*Justification:*

- 3.20 Department for Transport research (see Appendix 1) shows that, aside from shopping, the next most significant generator of trips is commuting journeys. Furthermore, the NPPF encourages that an integrated approach is used in considering the location of housing, employment uses and community facilities and requires plans and decisions to ensure developments that generate significant movements are located where the need to travel will be minimised and use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.
- 3.21 Therefore, it is important that villages provide sustainable transport access to employment opportunities, or otherwise risk causing unsustainable commuting patterns. The availability of public transport access to employment is particularly important in South Staffordshire, which has relatively few employment opportunities within its existing settlements when compared to the centres of adjacent towns/cities which border the district. As such, a settlement's relative level of employment access via public transport is given great weight in the final settlement hierarchy.

#### D. Access to education facilities

*How this will be measured:*

- 3.22 The level of education facilities on offer to a settlement will be measured by recording whether or not there is a primary/first school, secondary/high school or sixth form/college within each settlement.
- 3.23 For the purposes of this measure, the presence of any of these educational facilities within walking distance but past the built-up boundary of a village will also be considered, where these can be accessed via safe and legible routes with well-lit footways. Facilities and services up to 1 mile (i.e. 1610m) walk away from the development boundary of a settlement along such routes will be recorded for this purpose. In practice, as set out in the audit findings in Appendix 4, this primarily affects the villages of Perton and Huntington, due to their access to education facilities in the adjacent urban areas of Wolverhampton and Cannock.

Primary/first school provision

Settlement does not contain a primary/first school	
Settlement only has walking access to primary/first school in nearby community	
Settlement contains a primary/first school	

Secondary/high school provision

Settlement does not contain a secondary/high school	
Settlement only has walking access to secondary/high school in nearby community	
Settlement contains a secondary/high school	

Sixth form/college provision

Settlement does not contain sixth form/college provision	
Settlement only has walking access to 6 <sup>th</sup> form/college in nearby community	
Settlement contains sixth form/college provision	

*Justification:*

- 3.24 Education is the third biggest generator of trips after shopping and commuting, according to Department for Transport research (see Appendix 1).
- 3.25 It is also important to consider pedestrian access to facilities outside of the built-up boundary of the village. This reflects the steer in national policy that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village could support services in a village nearby. This also needs to be considered in the context of the need to reduce greenhouse gas and reduce congestion through supporting a pattern of development which facilitates sustainable transport modes.
- 3.26 To take account of this factor, an indicative distance threshold of 1 mile has been used to consider pedestrian access to education facilities outside of a settlement, having regard to various national publications. In summary, these publications indicate a range of approximately 800m – 2000m in terms of what could be considered an acceptable walking distance to services and facilities<sup>6</sup>. In particular, a Institute of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) publication from 2015 has indicated that around 80% of journeys under a mile are typically undertaken by foot<sup>7</sup>. Therefore a distance of up to 1 mile (i.e. just over 1600m) along well-lit and safe footways from the existing development boundary of a village will be used in assessing a village's performance under this criterion. This is an indicative measure, as there is significant scope for a dwelling's location within a village to cause it to fall outside of the walking catchment of a facility which other parts of the village may be able to access.

**E. Public transport access to higher order services outside of the villages**

*How this will be measured:*

- 3.27 Using public transport mapping provided by Staffordshire County Council (set out in Appendix 2), public transport (i.e. bus and rail) access to the following five indicators recorded as being indicative of a settlement's access to higher order services:
- Public transport access to Main Centres (weekday)

<sup>6</sup> See Institute of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' (2000), the Department for Transport's 'Manual for Streets' (2007) and Institute of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) 'Planning for Walking' (2015)

<sup>7</sup> See para 2.1 of Highways & Transport's (CIHT) 'Planning for Walking' (2015)

- Public transport access to Main Centres (weekend)
- Public transport access to Hospitals (weekday)
- Public transport access to Supermarkets (weekday)
- Public transport access to Supermarkets (weekend)

3.28 For each settlement surveyed, the above measures have been taken as an indicator of the degree to which a settlement can access key locations within neighbouring urban areas most likely to supply the higher order services not available within many parts of South Staffordshire.

3.29 The above five measures are not necessarily exhaustive of every higher order service that may serve residents, being based on the information available to the district in terms of public transport mapping. However, they are considered to be a robust indicator of the relative degree of public transport access to locations which may offer key services not available in most settlements within the district. As such, each village has been scored against these measures as follows:

No Public Transport Access to higher order services	
Public Transport access to 1 higher order service	
Public Transport access to 2 higher order services	
Public Transport access to 3 higher order services	
Public transport access to 4 higher order services	
Public Transport Access to 5 higher order services	

*Justification:*

3.30 It is well established that much of the district's residents rely on 'higher order' services in the towns and cities outside of the district to meet their needs<sup>8</sup>, given the lack of major towns or cities within the district itself. This reflects the district's relationship to the neighbouring urban areas of the Black Country, Cannock and Stafford, and as such it is important to record the degree to which a settlement has access to the higher order services typically found in these neighbouring areas, or in the district's larger villages.

## 4. Settlement survey results

4.1 To identify the relative sustainability of rural settlements in terms of their relative existing access to services and facilities, the following settlements have been surveyed:

Settlements	
Bilbrook	Coppenhall
Brewood	Enville
Cheslyn Hay	Gospel End
Codsall	Great Chatwell
Great Wyrley	Halfpenny Green
Kinver	Hatherton
Penkridge	Hilton
Perton	Himley

<sup>8</sup> Para 2.6 of the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (2012)

Wombourne	Kingswood
Coven	Langley Road
Essington	Lapley
Featherstone	Lawnswood
Huntington	Lower Penn
Pattingham	New Wood
Swindon	Newtown
Wheaton Aston	Oaken
Bednall	Radford Lane
Bobbington	Saredon
Bishops Wood	Seisdon
Dunston	Showell Lane & Lloyd Hill
Shareshill	Sneyd Lane
Trysull	Springhill
Acton Trussell	Stourton
Blymhill	Stretton
Brineton	Upper Penn (Sedgley Road)
Burnhill Green	Wedges Mills
Calf Heath	Weston-under-Lizard
Codsall Wood	Westcroft

4.2 Given that the remit of this study is to review the existing settlement hierarchy, settlements were selected for assessment only where they form part of the Council's existing settlement hierarchy set out in the 2012 Core Strategy or where an area of residential development exists with a current development boundary. This approach is taken to ensure that the study focuses on all settlements in the district's rural area which may need to consider their ability to accommodate future growth through the Local Plan review. The potential for new settlements or areas of the urban fringe adjacent to neighbouring towns and cities to deliver growth is therefore outside the scope of this study and will be considered separately through the Local Plan review.

4.3 In some cases, a small settlement contained by an existing development boundary may directly adjoin the urban area of a larger town or city outside of the district (such as the Cannock and Black Country urban areas). These small residential areas have not been assessed through this work, as such areas effectively function as small extensions to these larger urban towns and cities, relying on the services and facilities in these adjacent areas.

4.4 On this basis the following settlements were excluded from further analysis in this study:

- Radford Lane
- Upper Penn (Sedgley Road)
- Sneyd Lane
- Westcroft
- Hilton<sup>9</sup>
- Showell Lane/Lloyd Hill
- New Wood
- Langley Road

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<sup>9</sup> Whilst Hilton does not adjoin a neighbouring town or city, it is directly adjacent to the development boundary of a much larger settlement (Featherstone) and as such is not functionally different from this settlement in terms of its services and facilities on offer to its residents

- 4.5 The village of Huntington, despite adjoining Cannock to the south, has not been excluded on this basis. This is because of Huntington's larger size compared to the settlements above, and the relatively high level of existing services and facilities within the village itself. As such, the village can still be considered a substantially sized rural community separate from the adjacent town of Cannock, and can also be considered to rely upon many services and facilities within the village itself. As such, it is appropriate to consider Huntington separately from the urban fringe of Cannock when considering broad locations for growth.

#### **Rural locations outside of existing settlements**

- 4.6 There are locations in the district's rural area with no substantial existing community that have some facilities (for example, farm shops or garden centres within the rural area). Locating future growth where there is no pre-existing rural community would not contribute to the need to locate housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Furthermore, local planning authorities should avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances, such as those set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. Therefore, such locations are not assessed in this study.

#### **Summary of village results**

- 4.7 Using the information recorded in the audit of services and facilities throughout the district and the scoring of each settlement against the criteria set out in section 3 above, the district's settlements have been grouped into 5 tiers. These tiers reflect each settlement's access to services and facilities relative to other settlements within the district. Tier 1 villages have the greatest access to services and facilities and Tier 5 settlements have the least access to services and facilities. The full audit of services and facilities which have informed these judgements are set out in Appendix 4 and the more detailed ranking of individual settlements is set out in Appendix 4.

	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Common themes within Tier</b>
<b>Tier 1 (greatest access to services and facilities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilbrook</li> <li>• Codsall</li> <li>• Cheslyn Hay</li> <li>• Great Wyrley</li> <li>• Penkridge</li> </ul>	These settlements typically have food stores, a wider range of services and facilities than other villages, a range of education establishments, access to a train station and good access to employment and wider facilities outside the village via public transport. Codsall/Bilbrook and Penkridge in particular have better retail access, with large village centres within the respective settlements.
<b>Tier 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wombourne</li> <li>• Brewwood</li> <li>• Perton</li> <li>• Huntington</li> <li>• Kinver</li> </ul>	Settlements within this tier typically have a food store and a range of services and facilities and education establishments, but the level of provision will typically be less than Tier 1 villages, with the notable exception of Wombourne, which has a large village centre. All villages in this tier do not have access to rail stations and have lesser levels of employment access than Tier 1 villages. There is still a degree of access to services outside the village via public transport.

<b>Tier 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essington</li> <li>• Coven</li> <li>• Featherstone/Hilton</li> <li>• Swindon</li> <li>• Shareshill</li> <li>• Pattingham</li> <li>• Wheaton Aston</li> </ul>	Settlements within this tier typically have a small food store but generally have far fewer educational facilities in comparison to Tier 1 and 2 villages and generally have less of a range of services and facilities within the village compared to Tier 1 and 2 villages. These villages still have a degree of access to services and facilities outside the village via public transport.
<b>Tier 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Himley</li> <li>• Seisdon</li> <li>• Bishops Wood</li> <li>• Dunston</li> <li>• Bobbington</li> <li>• Bednall</li> <li>• Trysull</li> </ul>	Settlements in this tier have either no or very few facilities. Typically, these settlements will have either a small food store and public transport access outside of the village or contain a limited degree of educational facilities (e.g. a primary school). Access to employment via public transport is much poorer than in the higher tiers and there is also much poorer access to other facilities by public transport, with some villages having no public transport provision.
<b>Tier 5 (poorest access to services and facilities)</b>	Kingswood, Newtown, Springhill, Stourton, Wedges Mills, Acton Trussell, Lapley, Saredon, Hatherton, Stretton, Halfpenny Green, Weston-under-Lizard, Blymhill, Burnhill Green, Calf Heath, Codsall Wood, Gospel End, Great Chatwell, Brineton, Coppenhall, Enville, Lawnswood, Oaken, Lower Penn	Settlements in this tier typically have less facilities and services than settlements in tiers 1-4 (with many tier 5 settlements containing no services or facilities).

### Comparisons with the district's previous settlement hierarchy and updates following the 2018 Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation

- 4.8 The revised settlement hierarchy proposed above is broadly consistent with the previous settlement hierarchy set out in the 2012 Core Strategy, which grouped the district's larger settlements into Main Service Villages, Local Service Villages and Small Service Villages. However, there are some key differences with regards to specific villages in Tiers 1-3, which are discussed below.
- 4.9 Perton, Wombourne, Brewood and Kinver were Main Service Villages in the previous 2012 Core Strategy. However, they performed less well in the revised settlement hierarchy than other settlements previously classified as Main Service Villages (e.g. Codsall/Bilbrook, Cheslyn Hay/Great Wyrley, Penkridge). As such, these three villages have been classified as Tier 2 settlements. This primarily reflects the lower level of access to employment opportunities available in Perton, Wombourne, Brewood and Kinver when compared to other Tier 1 villages, which is in part due to these villages' lack of rail access.
- 4.10 Shareshill was previously classified as a Small Service Village in the 2012 Core Strategy. However, in the revised settlement hierarchy it performed similarly to other villages previously classified as Local Service Villages. Whilst Shareshill doesn't have the range of

community facilities that other Tier 3 settlements does, it is similar to other Tier 3 settlements in that it has a food store (run by the local community), contains a primary school and has good access to higher order services via public transport. It also has better access to employment opportunities than many other Tier 3 settlements (e.g. Swindon, Pattingham and Wheaton Aston). As such, Sharesill has been classified as a Tier 3 settlement.

- 4.11 The 2018 version of this study identified Essington as a Tier 2 settlement. However, representations received to the 2018 Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation highlighted that, if recorded consistently, Essington has a comparable range of community facilities to other Tier 3 settlements (specifically Featherstone). Having considered the overall level of services and facilities in Essington in relation to other Tier 2 and 3 settlements, it is now considered that Essington is more comparable to other Tier 3 settlements by this measure. It therefore is no longer considered appropriate to consider Essington a Tier 2 settlement, as all other Tier 2 settlements have key differences which set them apart from the level of service provision in Essington. Such settlements generally perform better under key criteria including walking access to secondary/high schools and supermarket provision, whilst in many cases also having a substantially wider range of community facilities on offer within their respective settlements. Consequently, Essington has been reclassified as a Tier 3 settlement.
- 4.12 A number of representations to the 2018 Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation also raise the lack of consideration of broadband availability in the 2018 Rural Services and Facilities Audit, noting recent recommendations made in a CLA report<sup>10</sup>. These representations generally raise this issue in order to highlight that a specific settlement in Tier 1-3 of the hierarchy has superfast or better broadband, and as such should be recorded in a higher settlement tier. However, the Ofcom mapping of broadband availability<sup>11</sup> indicated in 2019 that all Tier 1-3 settlements had access to superfast broadband. Therefore, as the purpose of this study is to offer a comparison of the relative level of services and facilities in the District's rural settlements, no change is proposed to the study.
- 4.13 Since the original version of this study was published in 2018 the Council has prepared a Retail Centres Study 2021, identifying the location and function of retail centres within the District. To ensure that this evidence base is reflected in the settlement hierarchy a new criteria has been introduced into this study. This is set out in section 3 of this report.
- 4.14 Finally, residents within the Lower Penn area have highlighted that the village of Lower Penn itself is not directly adjacent to an adjoining urban area as set out in previous versions of this study, and therefore should be assessed as a rural settlement. The study has therefore been updated to assess the village of Lower Penn<sup>12</sup> as a Tier 5 rural settlement.

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<sup>10</sup> Sustainable Villages – Making Rural Communities Fit for the Future: CLA Policy Briefing: England

<sup>11</sup> <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/broadband-coverage> - accessed June 2019

<sup>12</sup> As shown here: <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/doc/179786/name/Lower%20Penn%20SAD%2018.pdf/>

## APPENDIX 1: Identifying the reasons people travel

It is important to understand the reasons why people travel, as an understanding of the facilities which generate the most trips will help to inform which criteria will be key to identifying more sustainable settlements within South Staffordshire. 2019<sup>13</sup> Department for Transport National Travel Survey data<sup>14</sup> monitors data on a number of key purposes for the trips that people make.

Trip purposes monitored are by the Department for Transport are:

- Commuting
- Business (i.e. work related trips other than usual commuting)
- Education (i.e. trips to school or college, etc. by full time students, students on day-release and part time students following vocational courses)
- Escort education (i.e. the purpose of a trip for a small child accompanying older children to school)
- Shopping (i.e. all trips to shops or from shops to home, even if there was no intention to buy)
- Other escort
- Personal business (i.e. visits to services e.g. hairdressers, launderettes, dry-cleaners, betting shops, solicitors, banks, estate agents, libraries, churches; or for medical consultations or treatment; or for eating and drinking, unless the main purpose was entertainment or social)
- Visiting friends at private home
- Visiting friends elsewhere
- Entertainment / public activity (i.e. trips to meet friends and acquaintances both at someone's home or at a pub, restaurant etc.; all types of entertainment or sport, clubs and voluntary work, non-vocational evening classes, political meetings etc.)
- Sport: participate
- Holiday: base
- Day trip
- Other including just walk

For the purposes of establishing facilities and services key to the sustainability of a rural settlement, the number of trips each of the above purposes generates is considered to identify which facilities, if present within a village, will have the greatest role to play in reducing the need to travel outside of a village.

<b>Trip purpose</b>	<b>Number of trips undertaken for this purpose on average per person in 2019</b>
Commuting	140
Business	28
Education	68
Escort Education	58
Shopping	181
Other Escort	83
Personal Business	88
Visiting friends at a private home	82

<sup>13</sup> Used in place of available 2020 data due to effects on the COVID19 pandemic on the data's robustness

<sup>14</sup> Table NTS0403: Average number of trips (trip rates) per person per year by trip purpose: England, from 1995/97 (including short walks)



Visiting friends elsewhere	48
Entertainment/public activity	59
Sport: participate	13
Holiday: base	13
Day trip	32
Other including just walking	61

In order to identify which facilities are most important to a location's sustainability, facilities and services have been considered alongside the above trip purposes to identify where a service or facility's proximity to or presence within a village will be important.

<b>Trip purpose</b>	<b>Key facilities and services to which this relates</b>	<b>Reasoning</b>
Commuting	Proximity to a number of employment opportunities	The proximity of a location to a number of employment opportunities is important to consider, as a location nearer to a greater number of employment opportunities is likely to provide more sustainable commuting patterns
Business	None	This concerns trips related to work purposes but not to a place of work, therefore this is not necessarily affected by the location of employment centres in relation to a village
Education & Escort Education	Access to primary and secondary schools	Each trip undertaken for the purposes of these two trip types requires the individual to travel to a place of education, therefore the location of these facilities in relation to a village is important
Shopping	Access to convenience stores and other retail shops	This purposes include trips to all shops, therefore a village's access to shopping facilities is important
Personal Business	Access to other services and community facilities providing services (e.g. churches, village halls, libraries etc.)	This purpose includes trips to a wide variety of services, including community facilities such as libraries, churches and medical facilities
Other Escort	None	These trips can relate to a wide variety of locations, and as such cannot be directly tied to any single category of service or facility
Visiting friends at a private home	None	These trips do not involve a facility or service
Visiting friends elsewhere	None	These trips can relate to a wide variety of locations, and as such cannot be directly tied to any single category of service or facility
Entertainment/public activity	Access to pubs, restaurants, cafes	This purpose includes trips to meet friends and acquaintances both at

		someone's home or at a pub, restaurant etc.; all types of entertainment, clubs and voluntary work, non-vocational evening classes, political meetings etc.
Sport: participate	Access to sports facilities	This trip purpose requires a nearby location which allows sport participation
Holiday: base	None	These trips can relate to a wide variety of locations, and as such cannot be directly tied to any single category of service or facility
Day trip	None	These trips can relate to a wide variety of locations, and as such cannot be directly tied to any single category of service or facility
Other including just walking	None	These trips can relate to a wide variety of locations, and as such cannot be directly tied to any single category of service or facility

The number of trips for purposes which are relevant to village facilities and services are considered in further details below. Using Department for Transport data from 2019 the purposes above which are likely to demonstrate larger numbers of trips have been identified. This is based on the premise that the more trips a person makes to a facility or service on average, the more likely future growth in a village without access to these facilities and services is to result in unsustainable travel patterns.

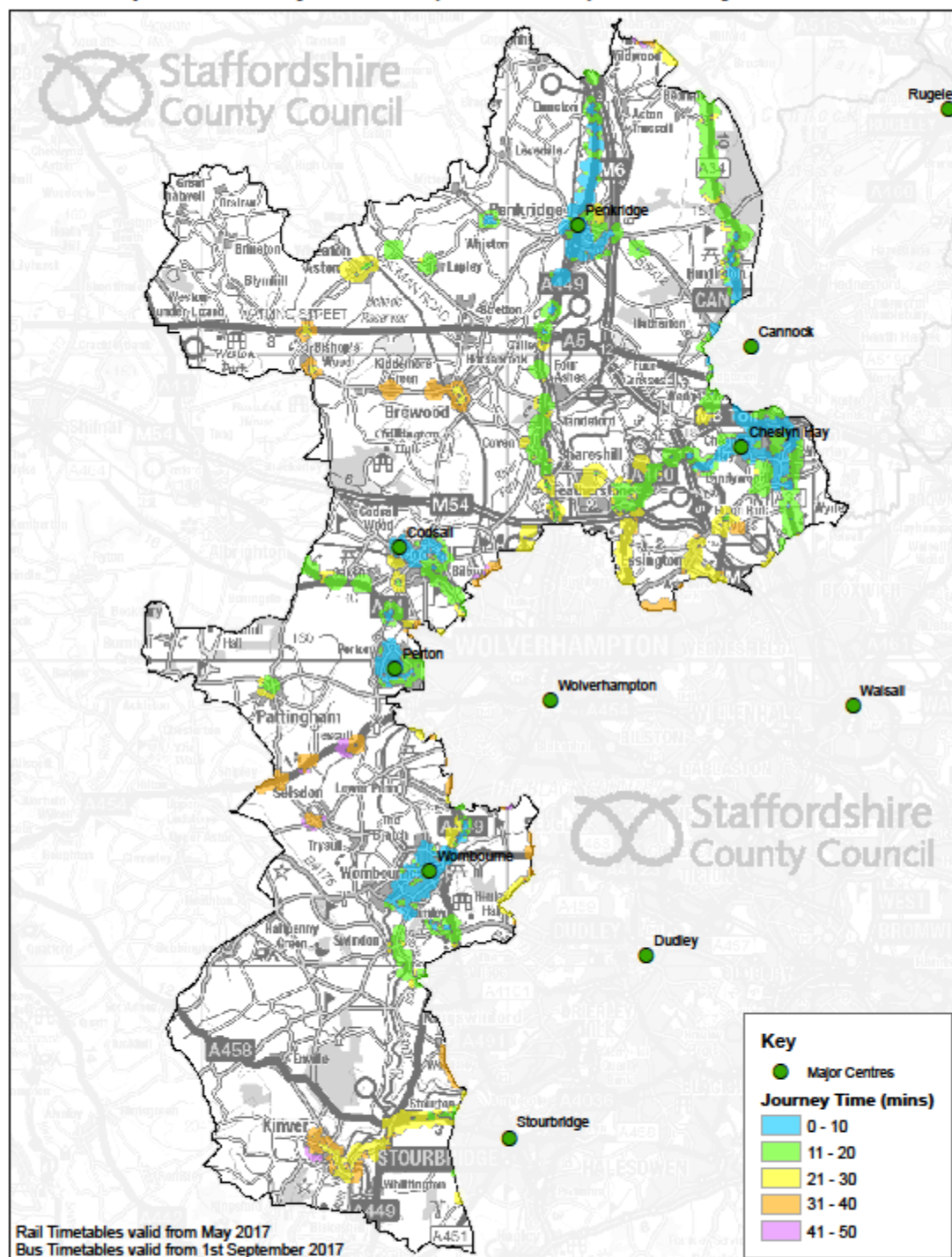
<b>Trip purpose</b>	<b>Number of trips per person in 2019</b>
Shopping	181
Commuting	140
Education & escort education	125
Personal business	88
Entertainment/public activity	59
Sport: participate	13

*Source: Department for Transport, National Travel Survey, Table NTS0403: Average number of trips (trip rates) per person per year by trip purpose: England, from 1995/97 (including short walks)*

This table shows that shopping, commuting and education are the noticeably bigger generators of average trip numbers per person. Whilst generating less trips, personal business (i.e. accessing a wide variety of services), also appears to be an important consideration. Whilst trips concerning entertainment/public activity are less frequent, they still generate a significant number of trips, although the number of trips generated by sports participation is relatively small.

## APPENDIX 2: Staffordshire County accessibility mapping

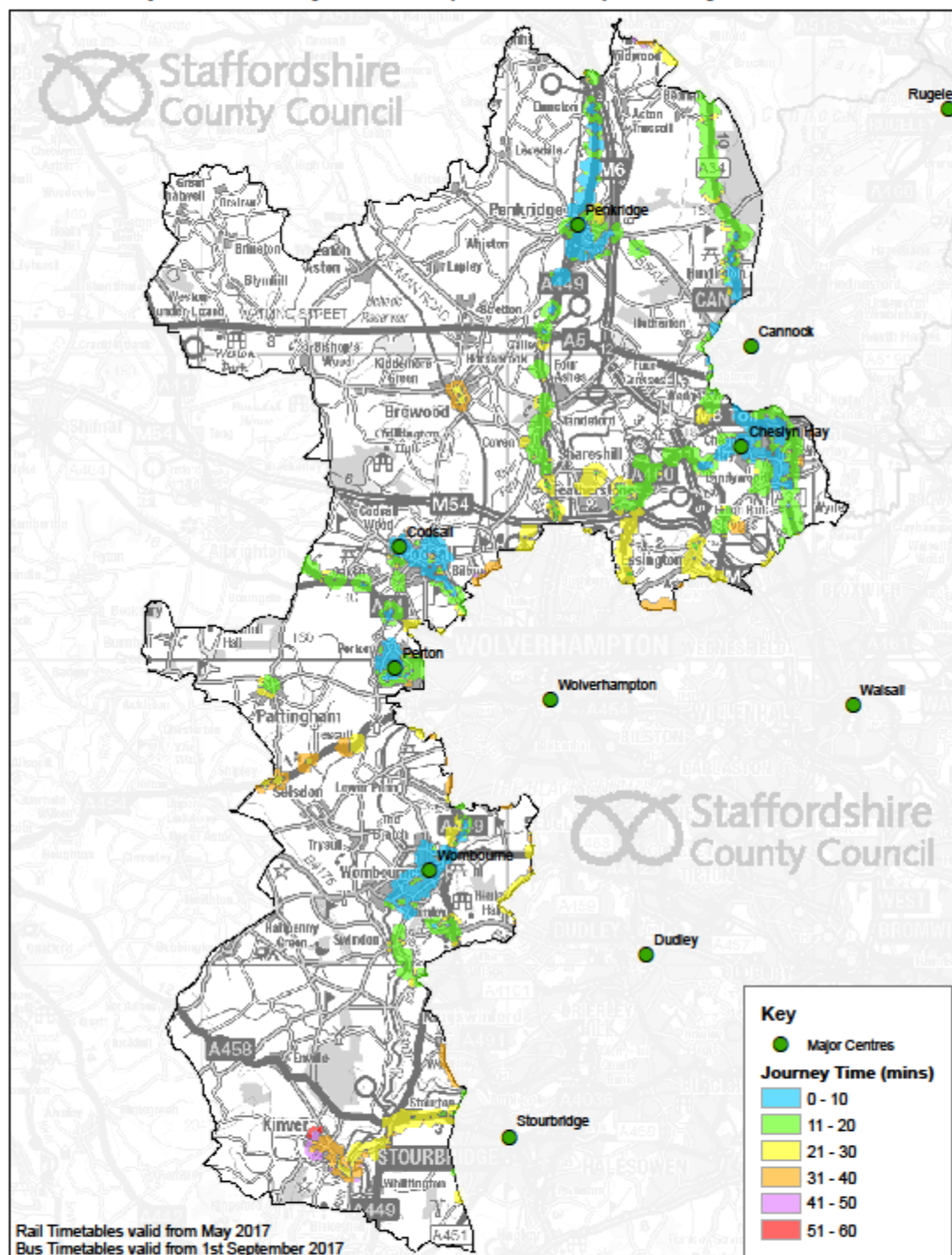
### Public Transport to LTP Major Centres (Bus and Rail) Wednesday 07:00 to 09:00 hours



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**Public Transport to LTP Major Centres (Bus and Rail) Saturday 10:00 to 12:00 hours**

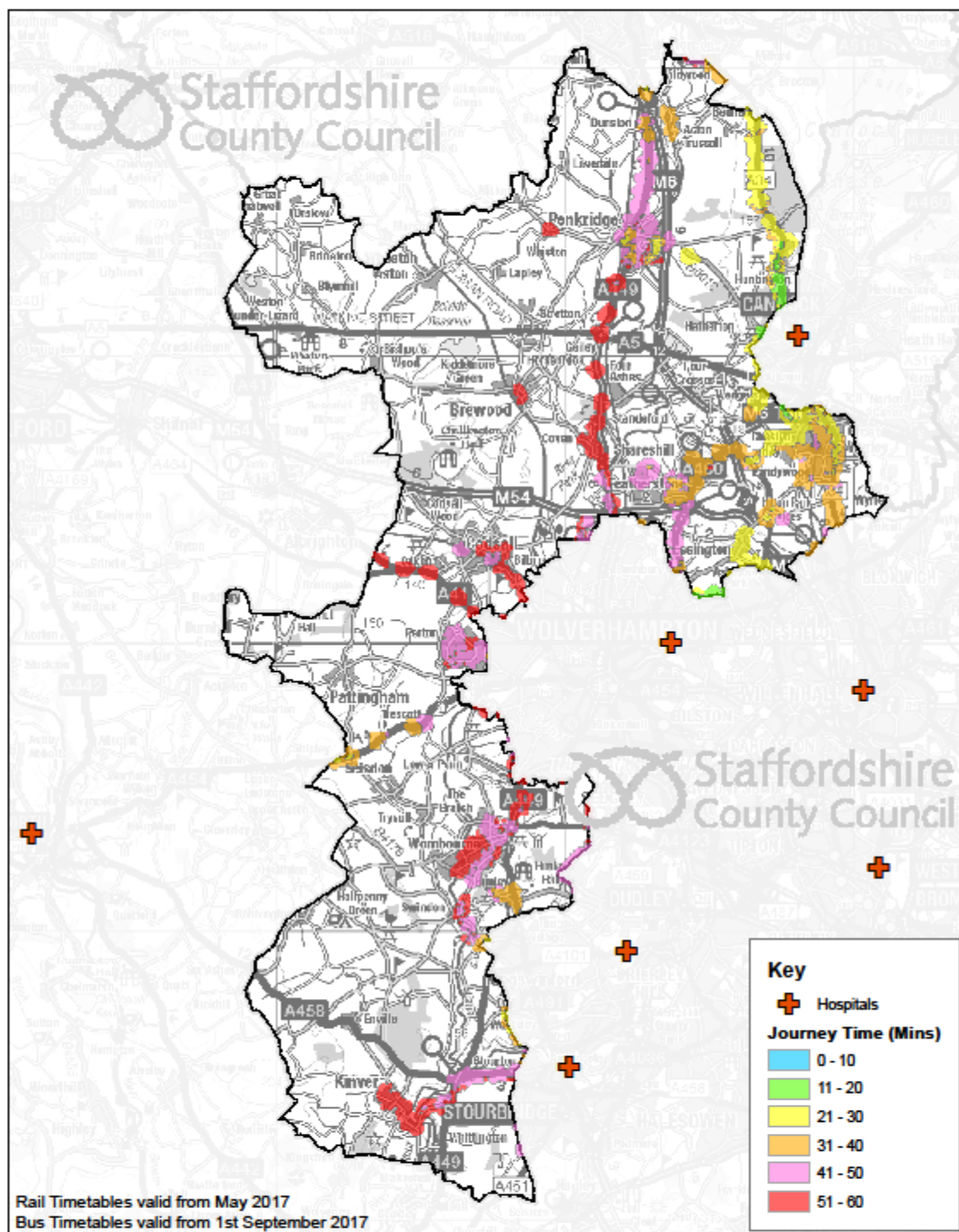


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**Public Transport Access to Hospitals (Bus and Rail) Wednesday 08:00 to 10:00 hours**

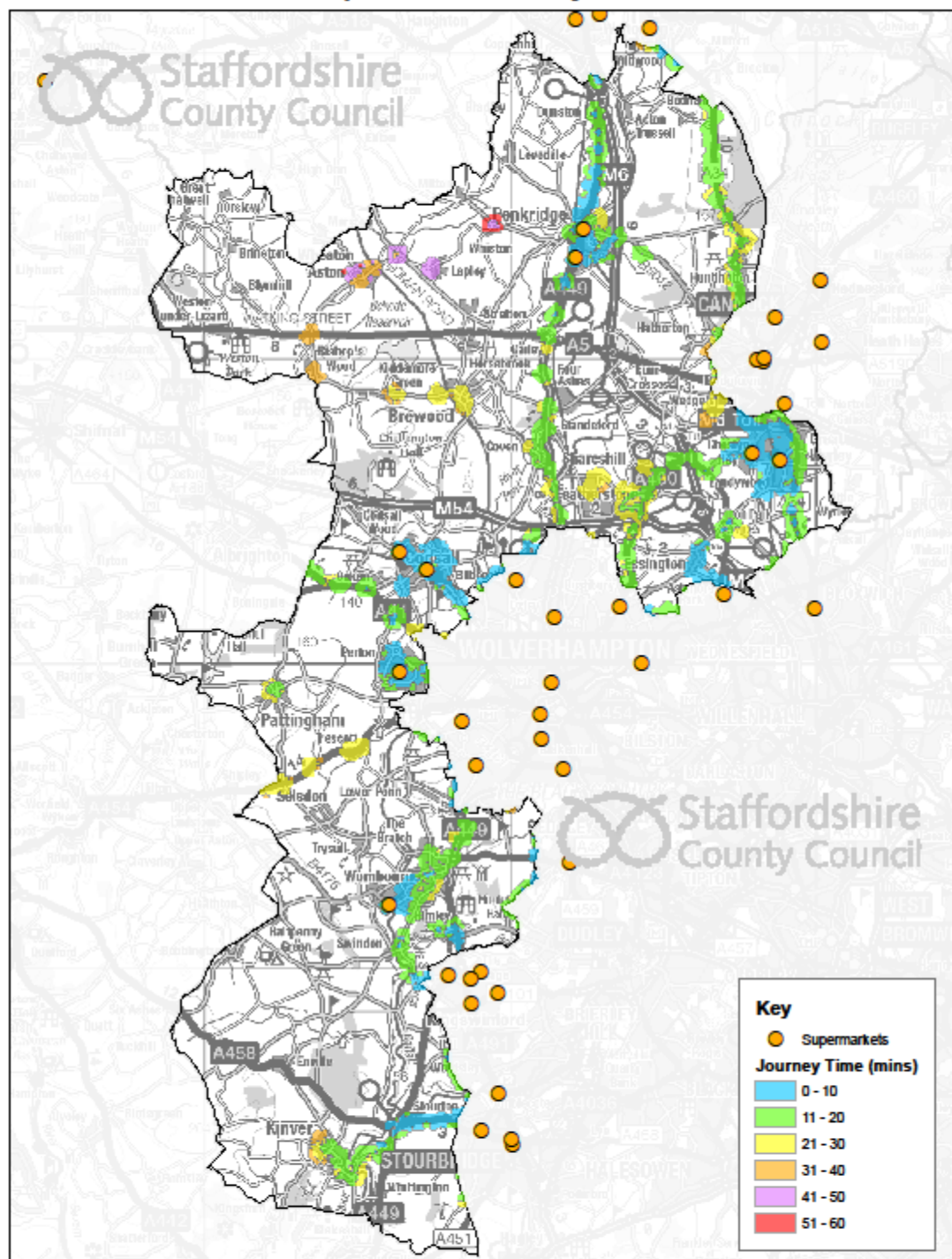


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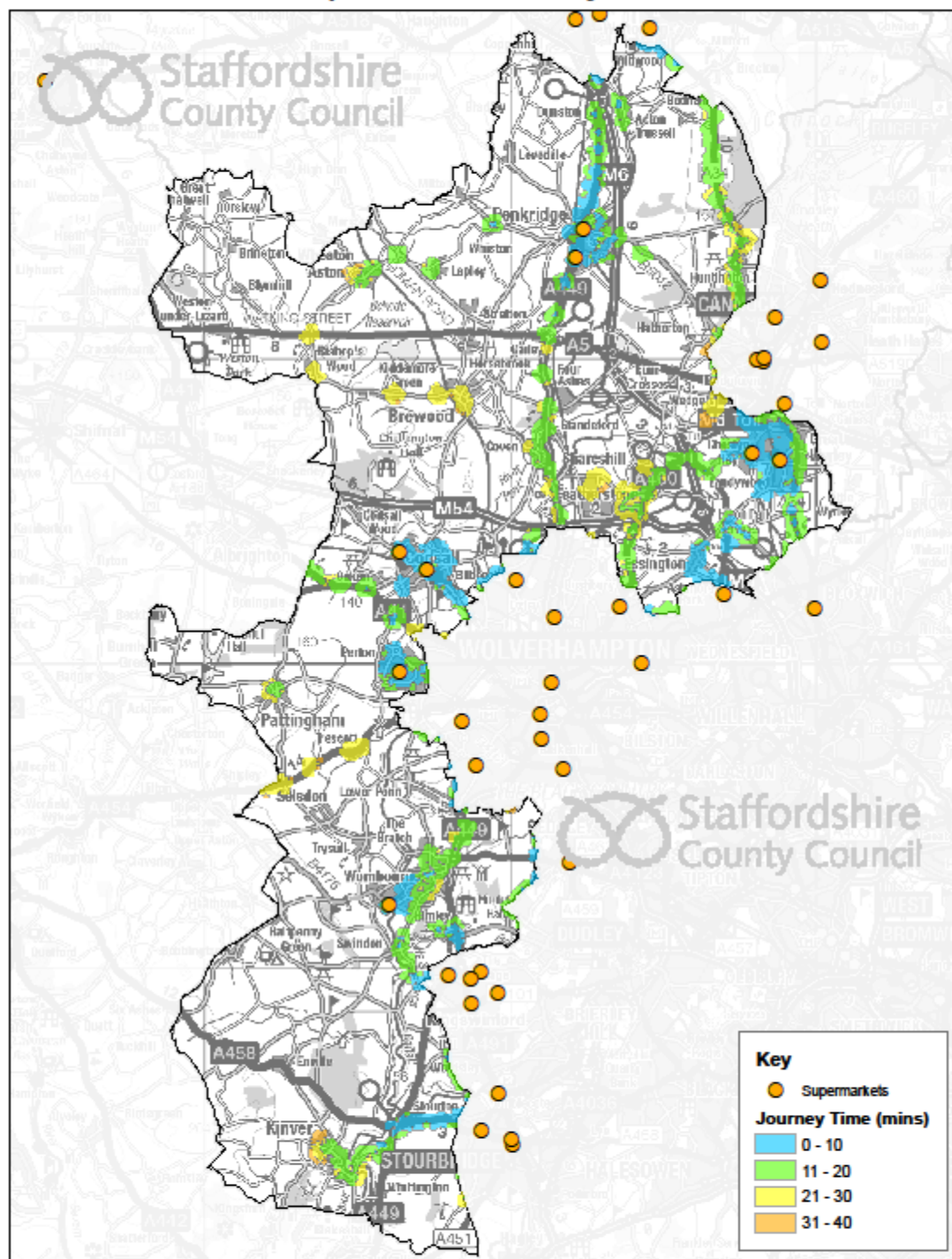
### Bus Access to Supermarkets Saturday 10:00 to 13:00 hours



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### Bus Access to Supermarkets Wednesday 10:00 to 13:00 hours



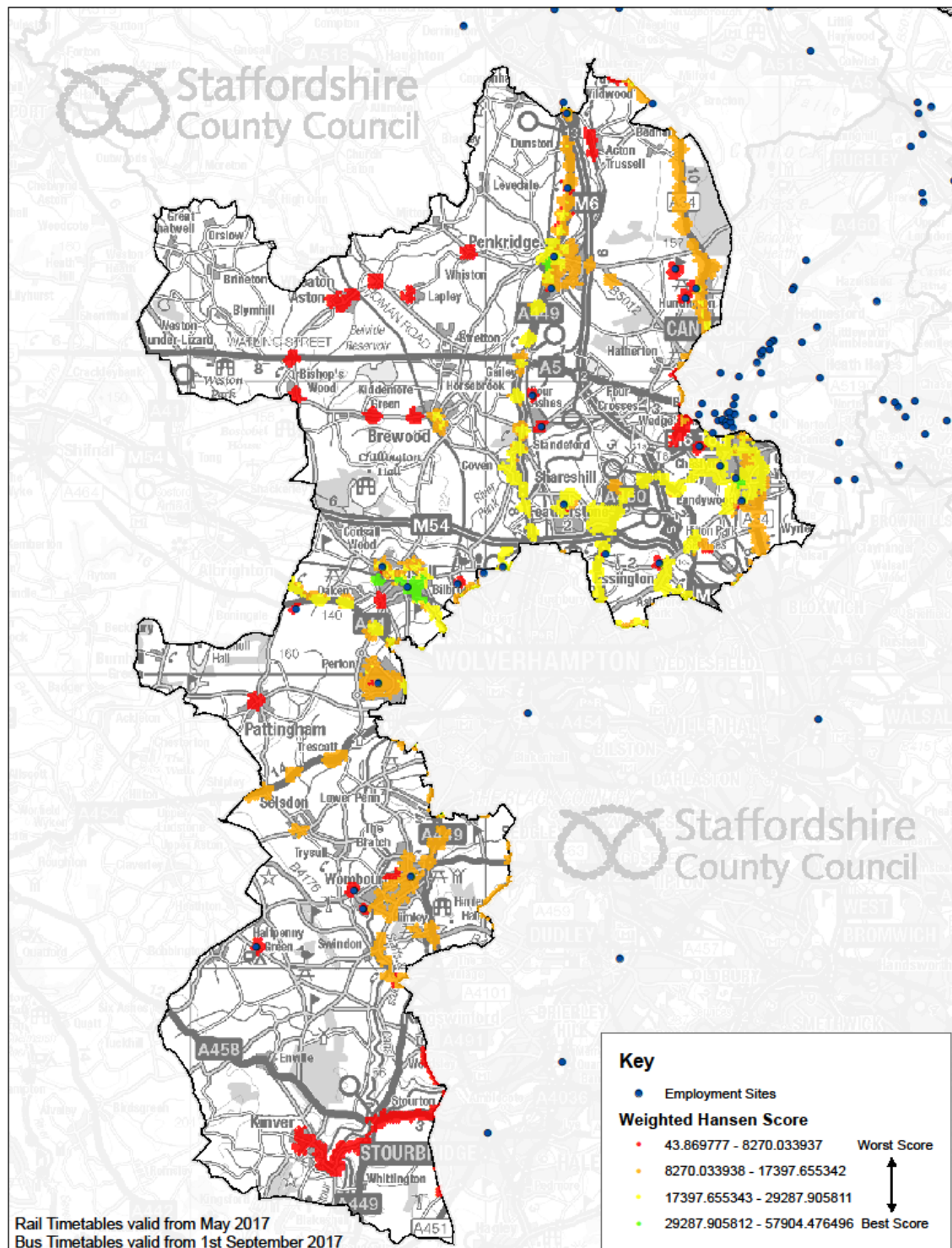
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## APPENDIX 3: Hansen Score mapping for South Staffordshire

Public Transport Access to Employment Centres (Bus and Rail) Wednesday 07:30 to 09:30 hours



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