CONTENTS

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1
   The Study .......................................................................................................................... 1
   The Task ........................................................................................................................... 1
   Requirements .................................................................................................................... 1

2. Policy Context ............................................................................................................... 3
   National Policy ............................................................................................................... 3
   Regional Policy .............................................................................................................. 5
   Local Policy .................................................................................................................... 9

3. Approach ....................................................................................................................... 13
   Candidate Centres ......................................................................................................... 13
   Geography ....................................................................................................................... 16
   Policy Review ................................................................................................................ 17
   Collection Of Evidence ................................................................................................. 17
   Consultation ................................................................................................................... 20

4. Service Centres .......................................................................................................... 21
   Functional Typology ...................................................................................................... 21
   Strategic Significance ................................................................................................... 29

5. Findings ......................................................................................................................... 31
   Overview ........................................................................................................................ 31
   Employment Roles And Functions ............................................................................... 32
   Retail Roles And Functions .......................................................................................... 44
   Retail Futures ................................................................................................................ 56
   The Sub Regions ............................................................................................................ 62
   Manchester City Region ............................................................................................... 62
   Liverpool City Region ................................................................................................... 65
   Central Lancashire City Region ..................................................................................... 67
   Cumbria And North Lancashire ...................................................................................... 69
   South Cheshire ............................................................................................................... 72

6. Discussion And Recommendations ............................................................................ 74
   Overview ........................................................................................................................ 74
   Towns .............................................................................................................................. 76
   Freestanding Towns ...................................................................................................... 76
   Towns In A Local Network ........................................................................................... 77
   Towns Under A Strong Urban Influence ..................................................................... 78
   Other Towns ................................................................................................................... 82
   Urban Centres .............................................................................................................. 83
   Investment ...................................................................................................................... 84
Appendices........................................................................................................................................86
Appendix 1 : CACI Retail Footprint Classifications........................................................................86
Appendix 2: Housing Market Classification........................................................................................89

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY

1.1. This is the main report for the Key Service Centres - Roles and Functions study for the North West Regional Assembly undertaken by Land Use Consultants in association with Rural Innovation and Jacqui Blenkinship. This report covers the nature of the task, our approach to it, summary findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2. The report is accompanied by five additional reports which cover each of the sub regions identified in The North West Plan - Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England. In each of these reports the findings for each of the sub regions are expanded, and the conclusions and recommendations applied in each sub region.

1.3. The final output of the study is the evidence base – an electronic collection of the data analysis and GIS mapping underpinning the study.

1.4. The work took place between March and September 2006.

THE TASK

Requirements

1.5. Quoting from our brief, the task is defined as follows:

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research study is to identify what the Key Service Centres within the North West are, and to analyse their role and function.

The research will inform the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West and assist in the development and implementation of local development frameworks.

Research requirements

Develop criteria for the definition and identification of key service centres (market towns) within the North West. The criteria will need to be flexible to take account of the variations in the sparsity of rural communities and Key Service Centres within urban areas. The criteria will also need to consider how to approach the classification of the catchment areas of KSCs. In developing the criteria, consideration must be given to existing methodologies (eg those used by Lake District and Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire County Councils).

Identify key service centres to inform the future development of Regional Spatial Strategy and local development frameworks. KSCs should be identified, where appropriate, within the three counties of Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria, as well as within the metropolitan districts of Greater Manchester and Merseyside.
Provide an assessment of the role and function of all the identified key service centres in the North West. There appear to be two basic methods of providing a clear understanding of how settlements function. The first is based on the identification of services and facilities seen as playing an essential role for each centre. The second focuses on modelling how key service centres relate to each other, to their catchment areas and to larger settlements.

1.6. Thus it is clear that the study is expected to:

- provide a definition for Key Service Centres, and thus criteria for their identification;

- identify Key Service Centres; and

- assess the roles and functions of the identified Key Service Centres.

The tasks are, of course, overlapping.

1.7. The following terminology is adopted in the reports. Candidate centres is the term used for all of the 173 of the centres included in the study. An important point is that some of these are towns, but a significant number are urban centres - suburbs in conurbations. This is a distinction discussed below and maintained throughout the reports. It follows that as the brief and the policy in the draft RSS is concerned with towns, then those candidate centres which are towns and which warrant identification in the RSS because they are of sub regional significance are therefore called Key Service Centres. We have also identified urban centres of sub regional significance, and these are called urban centres of sub regional significance. We have also identified local service centres and local urban centres.

1.8. From this point forward in this report, and in the reports for the sub regions, Key Service Centre is abbreviated to KSC.

1.9. The study provides new evidence to assist policy makers, at the regional and local level, in considering the issue of Key Service Centres. It will be for the Regional Assembly and its partners to consider, along with other evidence and relevant considerations, how best to take this evidence forward in developing the RSS.

1.10. This report and its conclusions are solely the responsibility of Land Use Consultants, Rural Innovation and Jacqui Blenkinship. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Regional Assembly or any of the individuals or organisations represented on the Steering Group.
2. POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL POLICY

2.1. Nationally in 2003 the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan\(^1\) set out the key requirements for achieving ‘sustainable communities’ in both urban and rural areas. Striving for sustainable communities is now a cornerstone of planning and wider policy.

2.2. The Government's new policies for spatial planning go beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2004) provides advice on how RSS policies should draw out the links with related policy initiatives and programmes to deliver the desired spatial change. The emphasis on spatial strategy and its close relationship with transport strategy has clear implications for accessibility and relationships between settlements.

2.3. Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (2004) clearly establishes that RSSs should address sub regional as well as regional spatial issues. The first requirement is essentially that sub regions should exist:

The definition of need for a sub-regional approach should be based on an assessment of the functional relationships between settlements, such as journey-to-work patterns, or land uses within the area affected by the same strategic planning issue or issues which may well differ from administrative boundaries. This could include consideration, for example, of how the strategic planning system can assist not only in creating and sustaining the economic competitiveness of a city or a cluster of towns, but in spreading the benefits of a prosperous city to the wider region (the concept of a 'city-region').\(^{1.13}\)

It is significant that functional data is identified as important here.

2.4. The second requirement is that there would be a ‘strategic policy deficit’ were there not sub regional policy in the RSS, and which joint LDDs would not be likely to adequately address.

2.5. Planning guidance for town centres (Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres - 2005) is centred on the need to promote vitality and viability by planning for growth and development of existing centres and encouraging a wide range of services. Regional spatial strategies and local planning authorities are required to develop a hierarchy and network of centres that considers the pattern of provision of different centres. This requires the following points to be reviewed:

- whether there is a need to avoid an over-concentration of growth in the higher level centres;

\(^{1}\) ODPM* (2003) Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future. London: ODPM * now titled the Department for Communities and Local Government
The need for investment and growth to strengthen other centres, especially those needing regeneration; and

the need to address deficiencies in the network by promoting centres to function at a higher level in the hierarchy, or designating new centres.\footnote{para 2.9}

The types of centres are defined in Appendix A and an abbreviation of this is set out in Figure 1. There is clearly the potential for a degree of overlap between all three categories below the city level, and some settlements will not conform to this theoretical division.

**Figure 1: Types of centres and their characteristics (adapted from: Appendix A: Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>City centres are the highest level of centre identified in development plans.</th>
<th>In terms of hierarchy they will often be a regional centre and serve a wide catchment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Town centres will usually be the second level of centres after city centres.</td>
<td>They will often be the principal centre or centres in a local authority area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In rural areas they are likely to be market towns and other centres which function as important service centres to an extensive rural catchment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>District centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore.</td>
<td>They usually have a range of non-retail services, such as banks, restaurants and a local public library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment</td>
<td>Local centres might include shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Large villages may also perform the role of a local centre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6. In rural areas, market towns and larger villages are to be the main service centres, providing a range of facilities, shops and services at a scale that will be appropriate to the needs and size of their catchment areas. PPS6 recognises that many of these towns have declined in recent years and become vulnerable to changing economic and lifestyle patterns.

availability or proximity to services that those in urban areas can anticipate. Thus policy should be concerned with fair access to services.

2.8. **Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas** (2004) reinforces the need for sustainable patterns of development. Thus the RSS and Local Development Documents (LDDs):

> should include policies to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages (including the provision of affordable housing), and include strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment.” para 2

2.9. PPS7 sets an unambiguous spatial strategy for rural development:

> A way from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling. These centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development. para 3

2.10. **In summary**, national policy is now primarily rooted in the notion of sustainable communities. This is strongly linked with the desire to place most new development in locations of greatest strategic significance or strength, and thus to identify a hierarchy of service centres in rural and urban areas. Furthermore, RSSs should identify sub regions and make sub regional policy where this is needed, both because of the diversity of the region and the inability of LDDs to fully address this diversity.

**REGIONAL POLICY**

2.11. KSCs are the third layer in the settlement hierarchy laid out in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (January 2006), below Regional Centres and Regional Towns and Cities.

2.12. In the RSS the policy for KSCs, RDF2, clearly has in mind market towns or other rural settlements acting as service centres for surrounding lesser settlements and households in the open countryside. The policy also identifies the importance of good existing or potential public transport links into the centres.

**Policy RDF2: Key Service Centres**

Plans and strategies outside the county areas of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire should identify Key Service Centres which have:

- The potential to act as service centres for surrounding villages and rural areas, providing a range of services which should include retail, leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services; and
- Good public transport links to surrounding towns and villages, or the potential for their development or enhancement.
Within county areas of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire, plans and strategies should review the list of Key Service Centres against the above criteria. Plans and strategies should give priority to the development of public transport and community, and demand responsive transport, in particular those providing access from rural hinterlands to key service centres. A strategic approach to traffic management should be adopted which aims to improve safety on rural roads, maintain the tranquillity of the countryside, improve local air quality and protect the local environment. Where safety is not compromised, highway engineering measures should reflect the character of the local countryside, including landscape and conservation.

2.13. The draft RSS identifies 57 KSCs across the five sub regions. It has used those already identified in the Cheshire, Cumbria and the Lake District and Lancashire Structure Plans – as shown in Figure 2. However, the basis on which the KSCs have been selected in the Structure Plans is variable, and so the draft RSS contains a commitment to undertake further research on KSCs to establish common ground for the identification across the region, including Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

This study is that research.

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4 The KSCs identified in Table 7.1 in draft RSS for the Central Lancashire City Region represent a combination of the Key Service Centres (Policy 4) and Main Towns (Policy 2) identified in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (March 2005), which have not been identified as a Regional Town or City.
### Figure 2 Draft RSS Settlement Hierarchy

#### Table 7.1 Settlement Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Centres</th>
<th>Regional Towns and Cities</th>
<th>Key Service Centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manchester City Region</strong></td>
<td>Altrincham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Northwich, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Warrington, Wigan</td>
<td>Congleton, Frodsham, Knutsford, Middlewich, Poynton, Wilmslow, Wirral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liverpool City Region</strong></td>
<td>Birkenhead, Chester, Ellesmere Port, Runcorn, Skelmersdale, Southport, St Helens, Warrington, Widnes</td>
<td>Burscough, Ormskirk, Neston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Lancashire City Region</strong></td>
<td>Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, Preston</td>
<td>Accrington (including Oswaldtwistle, Church and Clayton-le-Moors), Adlington, Barrow, Blackburn, Clitheroe, Darwen, Garstang/Catterall, Great Harwood, Kirkham/Wesham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumbria and North Lancashire</strong></td>
<td>Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle, Lancaster</td>
<td>Allonby, Ambleside, Appleby, Askam-in-Furness, Egremont, Great Grange-over-Sands, Kendal, Keswick, Kirkby Lonsdale, Kirkby Stephen, Longtown, Maryport, Milnthorpe, Penrith, Silloth, Ulverston, Whitehaven, Wigton, Windermere/Bowness, Workington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Cheshire</strong></td>
<td>Crewe</td>
<td>Alsager, Nantwich, Sandbach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Key Service Centres (or their equivalents) have been identified in the three county Structure Plans. The selection of those in Cheshire is based on a distinct retail and leisure function, those in Lancashire on their role as centres for transport, employment and services; within regeneration priority areas, those with populations between 25,000 and 70,000 (Main towns) and settlements with a population of 2,000-25,000 (Key Service Centres); and within Cumbria and the Lake District, on service availability and a minimum population of 1,500.

2. Regional Centres of Manchester/Salford is defined in footnote to Policy MC62.

3. Warrington is located within both Manchester and Liverpool City Regions.

4. Ellesmere Port is located within both Liverpool City Region and West Cheshire.
2.14. The KSCs already identified by the structure plans are all market towns, though in a variety of situations. This reflects the rural provenance of the concept and the policies concerned, including RDF2.

2.15. In addition, policy RDF3 dealing with rural areas stipulates that:

“Development in rural areas should be concentrated within Key Service Centres and should be of a scale and nature appropriate to fulfil the needs of local communities for housing, employment and services, and to enhance the quality of rural life.”

and that

“In rural areas adjacent to regional centres, towns and cities, advantage should be taken of the proximity in providing services, employment and a more diverse economic base.”

2.16. However, although the RSS clearly casts the notion of KSCs as rural, this study, as well as including all such candidate rural settlements in the region, has also included other sorts of candidate centres. The most obvious of these are district centres - centres within the conurbation suburbs which have primarily been identified by local authorities for their retail role. These centres, and the areas around them that they potentially serve, are clearly part of wider built-up areas, and so will not be captured by policy RDF2. However the roles and functions of these centres may be no less strategically significant than those of the rural KSCs, and so they may also need to be covered by policy in the RSS, though the draft RSS currently contains no such policy. Therefore they are also investigated in this study.

2.17. There are also candidate centres which fall between these two types: towns which are very close to one another, or which are close to one of the conurbations. These are also unlikely to have the sorts of role and functions which policy RDF2 anticipates for KSCs, but only by investigating them can we assess whether the RSS needs to give them policy attention.

2.18. Such other types of centre may also fall under Policy W5 – Retail Development, which states:

“Plans and strategies should promote retail investment where it assists in the regeneration and economic growth of the North West's town and city centres. In considering proposals and schemes any investment made should be consistent with the scale and function of the centre, should not undermine the vitality and viability of any other centre or result in the creation of unsustainable shopping patterns.
Manchester and Liverpool City Centres will continue to function as the North West’s regional centres. Comparison retailing facilities should be enhanced and encouraged in the following centres to ensure a sustainable distribution of high quality retail facilities outside of the regional centres:

- Altrincham
- Ashton-under-Lyne
- Barrow-in-Furness
- Birkenhead
- Blackburn
- Blackpool
- Bolton
- Burnley
- Bury
- Carlisle
- Chester
- Crewe
- Kendal
- Lancaster
- Macclesfield
- Northwich
- Oldham
- Preston
- Rochdale
- Southport
- St Helens
- Stockport
- Warrington
- Wigan

Investment in centres not identified above will be encouraged in order to maintain and enhance their vitality and viability, including investment to underpin wider regeneration initiatives, to ensure that centres meet the needs of the local community, as identified by Local Authorities.”

(continues)

2.19. **In summary**, regional policy rolls forward the concept of KSCs from RPG13 as third tier (the lowest) settlements in the settlement hierarchy. It tentatively names KSCs based on those already named in the region’s structure plans. KSCs are an overtly rural concept.

**LOCAL POLICY**

2.20. The most important local policy for the study is that in the three structure plans which has previously identified the KSCs.

2.21. **CHESHIRE** - The settlement hierarchy within the Cheshire Structure Plan is based upon the criteria for KSCs set out within RPG13. The criteria that RPG13 sets are in fact quite scant as it defines KSCs as:

> “smaller towns and large villages which are able to provide a range of services, and which have the potential to provide good public transport links to outlying settlements”. Policy SD3

The Structure Plan defines KSCs as Secondary Town Centres sitting beneath the Primary Town Centres and Sub-Regional centre of Chester. There are eleven KSCs in total – Neston, Winsford, Knutsford, Wilmslow, Poynton, Nantwich, Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Sandbach and Frodsham. Any new development should take place either within or on the edge of the identified town centres and KSCs (Policy GEN1), and these “should be on good lines of communication and well served by existing or proposed public transport”. In the sparsely populated and remoter rural areas LDDs can identify larger villages as KSCs when access to a larger town or KSC is restricted.

2.22. **CUMBRIA** - In the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan (Policy ST5) the choice of towns to be considered as KSCs outside the National Park boundary includes those having the potential for new development to build on existing levels of

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5 Cheshire County Council (December 2005) The Cheshire 2016: Structure Plan Alteration
provision, as well as having good public transport links to the outlying settlements. They must have a minimum population of 1,500 or more. The Structure Plan divides the County into four sub-regions, each having a different development emphasis. A total of twenty-four KSCs are listed, including the regional towns of Carlisle and Barrow in Furness and the six larger towns of Maryport, Ulverston, Whitehaven, Workington, Kendal and Penrith, along with 16 smaller towns.

2.23. The concentration of housing and employment development in KSCs is seen as essential to help minimise journey lengths and to make services more accessible to the rural hinterlands. The minimum level of provision is considered to be a primary school, secondary school, library, doctors’ surgery and a town centre function providing at least a post office and 2000 sq m of retail (A1) floor space. Other towns and villages that fall outside the population limits of KSCs may be defined as local service centres (Policy ST7).

2.24. Within the Lake District National Park (Policy ST6) the three largest settlements of Keswick, Ambleside and Windermere/Bowness have been defined as KSCs since they provide a range of services for both local communities and visitors. However, they do not have the same capacity for further expansion in the same way as the KSC in the rest of the County, and Policy ST7 therefore allows for small scale development to sustain rural communities.

2.25. **LANCASHIRE**: The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan\(^7\) defines its KSCs as market towns with populations of between 2,000 and 28,000, and which have:

- The potential to sustain and transform the economy of the surrounding rural areas.
- The potential to promote social inclusion, i.e. increase access to housing, services, education, healthcare and employment for everyone.
- Distinct settlements which are the largest in a wide rural area serving a larger rural hinterland, not merely commuter or retirement towns.
- The potential to act as service centres for surrounding rural areas.
- The existence of good transport links to surrounding towns and villages or the potential for further enhancement.

6.1.15

2.26. The Plan identifies the 14 settlements of Adlington, Barnoldswick, Burscough, Carnforth, Clitheroe, Garstang/Catterall, Great Harwood, Kirkham/Wesham, Longridge, Ormskirk (including Aughton), Padiham, Poulton-Le-Fylde, Rishton and Whalley as meeting the criteria. These sit below the category of Principal Urban Areas and Main Towns.

2.27. The KSC towns are seen to have an important role in service provision for their local communities, as well as promoting the diversification of wider rural economy. They are also seen as being capable of supporting regeneration and enhancing their role as service centres and public transport hubs. Outside the main urban areas and market towns the policy approach is to encourage regeneration and support the rural economy through farm diversification. Policy 5 (Development Outside of Principal

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\(^7\) Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Borough Council, Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council (March 2005), Adopted Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016
Urban Areas, Main Towns and KSCs) relates to development outside the main urban areas market towns and seeks to resist the loss of local shopping and other service provision to other uses.

2.28. A range of other policies in the structure plans are clearly also relevant to KSCs, but this policy review is deliberately narrow in focusing just on third tier settlements and not on related issues such as wider rural policy.

2.29. The structure plans are widely relied upon for settlement hierarchy amongst the local plans. The more recently revised Local Plans sometimes elaborate. An example is from Copeland Borough Local Plan:

“The Development Strategy is derived from a settlement hierarchy based on size and functions. New development will be concentrated in the towns and larger villages... ... Policy DEV2 identifies Key Service Centres where most new house building, employment and other needs are to be accommodated. The choice of settlements designated as Key Service and Local Centres (Policy DEV3) takes into account their accessibility to different modes of transport and level of service provision which is why the majority lie on the main service routes and close together, on the northern part of the Plan area, dominated by Whitehaven”. [Copeland Borough Local Plan 2001-2006, Second Deposit Version, April 2005]

2.30. In urban areas centre hierarchy is mostly led by retail issues. Thus the City of Salford UDP Draft Replacement Plan defines town centres, followed by the City's eighteen neighbourhood centres, and then by other local shops. The policy for key local centres states:

“The City Council will seek to retain, consolidate and improve Salford’s key local centres. In appropriate circumstances the City Council may assist these centres, with either one or a number of the following measures, especially where they are in association with major improvement activities” and goes on to outline shop facelift, refurbishment, environmental improvements, highway and traffic management schemes [Policy Part 1 S3 City of Salford UDP Draft Replacement Plan 2004-16, January 2006].

The reasoned justification in Part II defines key local centres as “groups of shops within close proximity to each other which contain at least four of the following uses”

- grocer/greengrocer
- butcher
- baker
- post office
- confectioners/tobacconists/newsagents
- chemist

2.31. In Merseyside all the UDPs have a hierarchy that includes town centres, district or local centres, followed by neighbourhood centres. Wirral identifies Birkenhead as a sub-regional shopping centre, and St Helens includes the town as a regional town centre. The same situation applies to Greater Manchester where the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bury, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside identify these towns and sub-
regional centres, with a similar sub-hierarchy of district centres, many of which theoretically serve the same function as KSCs.

2.32. It was noticeable that in some of the Local Plans and UDPs reviewed, particularly those produced at an earlier date, the consideration of a settlement hierarchy is missing, and settlements are only considered within the context of a retail or shopping hierarchy as defined in PPS6. This is despite KSCs being a more sophisticated concept in RPG13 which identifies their wider importance in rural areas.

2.33. Work being undertaken for the transition to the Local Development Framework reveals that more consideration is being given to KSCs. For example, in Ribble Valley the Core Strategy indicates that most new development is to be concentrated in the key market towns of the Borough, Clitheroe and Longridge, as these centres provide the most sustainable opportunities to meet development needs, but a series of rural service centres is also to be identified to act as hubs to accommodate development to meet the needs of the surrounding rural hinterland.

2.34. In summary, the three structure plans are the clear starting point for consideration of KSCs in local policy, so their hierarchy is mostly reflected in the local plans also. The structure plans use a variety of criteria, ranging from a virtual specification of size and services and facilities in Cumbria, through a list of requirements and potentials in Lancashire, to a very simple specification in Cheshire. In metropolitan areas, local plans and UDPs usually undertake to identify a ‘parallel’ hierarchy to KSCs, but for application in an urban context.
3. APPROACH

CANDIDATE CENTRES

3.1. Overall we have 173 candidate centres in the study - all of the 57 KSCs named in the three structure plans plus a variety of additional candidate centres added to the study. This full list of centres provides the basis for the pool of evidence which has been drawn up to complete the tasks set for the study.

3.2. At the outset it needs to be stated that because a large number of the candidate centres which have been added to the study are very clearly not the sort of places which policy RDF2 anticipates (because they are parts of conurbations and not freestanding settlements), that in addition to addressing the four purposes of the research we also need to consider whether the RSS needs additional policies for additional sorts of ‘third tier’ service centres, and which of the candidate centres might be of sufficient strategic significance to be included under such policies.

3.3. The full list of candidate centres can be found in Table 1, grouped by sub region. Those marked with **bold italics** are the centres already identified in the RSS as KSCs. Those highlighted red are those carried into stage four of the study for further analysis - the significance of this is explained below.

3.4. Given the distinct characteristics of the Lake District National Park, and its unique status within the region, a number of smaller settlements are included in the study. This work is being undertaken in partnership with the Lake District National Park Authority.

3.5. Due to an error in the brief Poynton was accidentally excluded from the study. For this reason no evidence is offered on Poynton even though it is named in the RSS.

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8 Below the Regional Centres and Regional Towns and Cities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manchester City Region</th>
<th>Manchester City Region</th>
<th>Manchester City Region</th>
<th>Manchester City Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashton-in-Makerfield</td>
<td>Hale</td>
<td>Milnrow</td>
<td>Stockton Heath/ Thelwall</td>
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<td>Atherton</td>
<td>Harpurhey</td>
<td>Mossley</td>
<td>Stretford</td>
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<td>Hattersley</td>
<td>Newton Heath</td>
<td>Swinton</td>
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<td>Blackrod</td>
<td>Hazel Grove and Bramhall</td>
<td>Northenden</td>
<td>Timperley</td>
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<td>Broadway</td>
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<td>Earlestown/N LW</td>
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<td>Runcorn⁹</td>
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⁹ Runcorn and W idnes are identified as Regional Towns and Cities in draft RSS. Their inclusion in this study reflects the characteristics of Halton in having a large number of local neighbourhood centres below the identified town centres. Their inclusion in this study is not to test their roles as Regional Towns and Cities.
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<th>Central Lancashire City Region</th>
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3.6. The approach to this study was principally framed by policy RDF2, as the brief required. Thus the approach was designed first to look for service centres which have the potential to act as service centres for surrounding villages and rural areas, which is to market towns or larger villages. An important qualification is that we also looked at the employment roles of such places, as although RDF2 only addresses service roles, national policy closely couples this with employment roles. The reasons for, and implications of, this are elaborated below.

3.7. There is an important geographical difference between these sorts of settlements and the candidate centres from the conurbations which have also been included in the study. With apologies for stating the obvious, towns are most often physically distinct settlements, set in open countryside. Thus identifying the extent of a town such as Penrith on the ground, on the map, and in policy is relatively straightforward.

3.8. In contrast, identifying the extent of a suburb such as Stretford is far from straightforward for the simple reason that it is frequently difficult to tell where it ends and the next suburbs surrounding it begin as they are part of a continuous urban area. Of course it is easy to identify the shopping centre of such suburbs, but other services - other shops and employment - will not be so easy to pinpoint yet nonetheless can be seen as making up part of its service centre role, as the services and jobs in a market town but not at its centre certainly are.

3.9. These issues raise a very practical research problem related to how to define the candidate centres in the data. Census Output Areas (COAs), as the smallest geographical unit for which 2001 Census and other data are published, form the building blocks from which the CANDIDATE CENTRES are defined. This means that for each of the candidate centres we had to decide which COAs made it up. Four approaches were adopted within the research, starting with the most preferred and ending with the least preferred:

- candidate centre defined by the 2001 Census geography - a national standard;
- candidate centre defined by Electoral Ward - where Census geography could not be applied;
- estimated candidate centres through inspection of maps - where neither Census geography or Electoral Wards could not be applied; and
- Intersection of COAs and centre extend maps provided by NWRA - where all other methods failed.

To be clear, the problems defining the extent of candidate centres were exclusively encountered in the urban areas, as freestanding settlements are relatively easily defined.

3.10. The other geographies used were wards (migration and ABI) and Postcode Sectors (CACI retail data). Both are considerably bigger 'building blocks' than COAs, which sometimes makes the geography problems, in urban areas in particular, worse.
3.11. A GIS project of the geographies used is part of the electronic evidence base for the study. This means that the assumptions and decisions made in setting out geographies for our data can be freely examined.

POLICY REVIEW

3.12. The research started with a review of the extant national, regional and local policies covering the issue of KSCs. This is summarised above in the Policy Context section.

COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE

3.13. A range of data was collected to illuminate the roles and functions of the candidate centres. The full list of sources is:

Census 2001
- demographics – age structures, household types
- housing – housing stock, tenure
- transport – car ownership
- 2000-2001 migration – flows and balances
- travel to work - flows and balances, modal splits and occupational groups

Land Registry
- 2005 house prices

CACI
- non food and food retail centre classifications, sizes and catchments
- non food and food retail centre sizes and catchments

Annual Business Inquiry
- employees sectoral breakdown (type of industry)
- firms sectoral breakdown (type of industry)
- firms size.

Note that due to licensing restrictions the CACI retail data is only available in aggregated and mapped form, and the ABI data is only available in aggregated form.

3.14. Most data was collected for all of the 173 candidate centres. However, due to the expense of certain parts of the data work, mapping of travel to work, migration patterns and retail catchments and the ABI analysis were conducted for a selection of 70 candidate centres. These were selected to be:

- some typical centres
- some centres that are the most strategically important
- some centres that are otherwise unusual
- centres where specific answers are needed

The 70 were selected by the steering group. They are highlighted in Table 1 above.
3.15. A critical point here is that our approach has been to concentrate on **functional evidence**. There is an important difference between this and the approaches previously taken in the region. Using the presence of selected services, of particular volumes of retail floor space, or the size of settlements to select them as KSCs, requires one significant leap of policy faith. Such characteristics haven to be assumed to mean that the centre has certain roles and functions.

3.16. There are of course links between the presence of services and shops and their use, but recent research\(^\text{10}\) has shown that the nature and strength of these links can be unpredictable. The use of services by people both in larger settlements, and their notional hinterlands, can be very variable, and therefore hard to predict. Travel to work patterns are similarly variable. Data availability is also a constraining factor. Data on the use of public services in particular is hard to secure.

3.17. Characteristic data can only assume centres’ roles and functions, but functional data directly reveals roles and functions by showing how people actually access services, and where they choose to go to work. However, functional data is much less common and more complex to analyse. Nonetheless it brings an essential clarity which characteristic data simply cannot.

3.18. Furthermore, policy seeking the potential of places to fulfil KSC roles, such as RDF2 and the more detailed policy in the Lancashire Structure Plan, needs to base its assessment of potential on evidence. This study is based on the clear view that those places with the greatest potential to fulfil the KSC roles and functions are those which are already strong service and employment centres. It is far more difficult to create a strong service centre out of a weak one than it is to strengthen an already strong one. An exception is the injection of large scale investment, but this is rare, and can easily be specifically identified in policy.

3.19. These points are particularly resonant in a region with such variation in geography. Cumbria, North Lancashire and South Cheshire show a more ‘policy typical’ geography with a few large centres and more market towns, surrounded by villages and hamlets. The middle of the region contains both large conurbations, which have often swallowed up towns, and large areas where many towns are found much closer together (as a result of a different, more industrial settlement history). The roles and functions of the sub regional service centres across such a varying region must also vary. Seeking to predict their roles and functions through characteristic data alone must, therefore, be less dependable. This also alerts us to the need to see whether the roles and functions of the sub regional service centres in the five sub regions are distinctively different.

3.20. There are two areas of functional evidence: employment and retail. Through manipulation of Census 2001 data we can show in precise detail the patterns of travel to work the candidate centres are involved in, and the transport modes used. We can also examine the flows of different types of jobs (occupational groups), and use information on the sectoral distribution of jobs alongside this other data to place the candidate centres in a picture of local labour markets.

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\(^{10}\) The Role of Rural Settlements as Service Centres (2003), LUC for Countryside Agency
3.21. This is the point at which to explain why employment evidence has been added to the study when the history of KSC policy in the region has only been concerned with private and public services (including retail). The explanation is a simple one. National policy (including the current coverage of sustainable communities, and more specifically rural communities in PPS7) has always coupled the concentration of both services and employment in seeking the locations where new development should be located for greatest sustainability benefit. Without also considering employment functionality we suggest that the region’s third tier policy is simply lopsided.

3.22. The employment roles of centres are arguably more significant than service roles, as they mostly involve daily trips. Our earlier work\(^{11}\) has also established that employment and service roles are well correlated (so a strong employment centre is often also a strong service centre). With the exception of data on retail patterns, data on the use of other services is almost wholly unavailable without primary collection. However, we can map patterns of travel to work in considerable detail.

3.23. The retail functional data used for this study is from CACI, and involves manipulation of their models for non food (Retail Footprint) and food (Provision) retail spend in the region. This has involved us calculating both the total spend for candidate centres\(^ {12}\) for both types of retail, and mapping their catchments – the geographical areas this spend comes from. Thus we can understand not just the size of the retail offer, but how far it ‘reaches’ into its surroundings, and how different centres interrelate with each other. CACI also provide a classification of non food centres. For both types of retail the spend data is modelled, not actual.

3.24. Taking both the employment and retail evidence we therefore can build up a picture of the actual strength and influence of centres. These are the principal new areas of evidence the study brings. These are presented as an addition to the work already done on the presence of selected services, as additional strong evidence.

3.25. It is important to be clear that the findings and recommendations of this study are based both on the geography used to identify the candidate centres and on the datasets used. The justifications for this approach are above. However, other geographies may have been used to identify the centres, and other datasets can also be of relevance, but these are not covered by this study.

3.26. We have also collected a body of context evidence, used to help explain and qualify the functional evidence. This covers demographic characteristics and transport characteristics, and summary housing market position assessment.

3.27. The housing supply within settlements is predominantly dictated by historic employment and affects its ability to adapt and change to modern travel to work patterns. Transport links and housing supply are two of the main drivers for housing markets, along with service provision, and depending on connectivity immediate local employment.

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11 The Role of Rural Settlements as Service Centres (2004), Countryside Agency
12 Not all centres are covered by the CACI data – there is sometimes no data for the smallest centres
3.28. The housing market classification used for the KSCs follow the methodology developed within Housing Markets preparing for change\textsuperscript{13}. Each market has been classified, which helps to identify where the settlement would fit within the following three Regional Housing Strategy priorities:

- urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand;
- producing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities; and
- delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods.

3.29. Whilst the classifications of current housing markets provide guidance about which of the Regional Housing Board priorities should be considered, decisions regarding the future direction and development of centres will prompt a review of the housing market within that centre - if the market is one thing at the moment, what must happen in order to meet the housing needs of the settlement in the future?

3.30. Finally we also have to consider future change, to give indications of where the paths of the centres might go next. Data on migration, on future retail trajectories fall under this heading. Estimates of future policy effects are also important - such as those envisaged by economic development strategies. These were not considered for this report. However this report gives a clear benchmark against which to interpolate what might be changed.

CONSULTATION

3.31. The final form of evidence making up the evidence base for the study is the wealth of local knowledge in the region which was accessed through a consultation event held late in the study. A total of 50 representatives of local planning authorities and other partners in the region attended a day-long event late in the study timetable. The reports were also available electronically for those unable to attend.

3.32. At this point all sources of evidence from the study were available, as were draft analysis, discussions, conclusions and recommendations. These were considered on the day, and there was then a two week period for written feedback. All feedback has been incorporated into these final reports.

\textsuperscript{13} Housing Markets Preparing for change, Blenkinship and Gibbons, 2004
4. SERVICE CENTRES

FUNCTIONAL TYPOLOGY

4.1. As has already been stated, the region is diverse and so is the range of sub regional service centres we are likely to find in it. With the understanding that policy RDF2 is unlikely to have captured all types of sub regional service centres that might be in the region, and that for policy to be effective it should capture all types, the candidate centres were divided into an initial typology, based on the findings of similar recent work and local knowledge through consultation with the Steering Group. The typology was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>Urban Centres</th>
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<tr>
<td>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</td>
<td>parts of larger conurbations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Towns in a local network</td>
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<tr>
<td>either with a shared larger hinterland</td>
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<tr>
<td>or with no significant shared hinterland as the principal strategic relationships are just between towns – an agglomeration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Towns under strong urban influence</td>
<td>so no significant hinterland</td>
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The notion of hinterland is crucial to these distinctions – a hinterland is an area in a subsidiary relationship with the town or network of towns in question – i.e. the town or network of towns are the focal point for other settlements in the hinterland.

4.2. The intention was to differentiate between types of sub regional service centres early enough in the study to give us a structure to test in the later stages. The division of the candidate centres across the typology is contained in Table 2 to Table 6 below. This distribution across the typology is the starting point to be tested in each of the sub region reports.

4.3. The structure of the typology reflects the prevailing national and regional policy structure as the conurbations and the suburbs and subsidiary centres that make them up are identified as urban. This principally covers the areas now identified as the Manchester and Liverpool city regions.

4.4. Outside the conurbations the focus is on market towns. There is now an agreed national division between rural and urban settlements at a population of 10,000 between rural and urban. However a significant number of the candidate centres are much larger than this, though clearly still market towns. Conversely, particularly in Lancashire, there are towns of varying sizes close together whose heritage is
essentially an urban one. Indeed the Central Lancashire City Region is a composite of several cities and towns.

4.5. These issues partly serve to illustrate that simplistic divisions between rural and urban cannot be that useful in a world where the distinctions are far more blurred. What is less blurred for this study though is the distinction between the candidate centres which are freestanding settlements - towns, and those which are parts of urban areas - urban centres. This is the basic distinction we will maintain.
### Table 2 Manchester City Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</th>
<th>Towns in a local network</th>
<th>Towns under strong urban influence</th>
<th>Sub-regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
<th>Local centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
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Table 5 Cumbria and North Lancashire

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STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

4.6. As well as the matter of dividing the candidate centres between functional types, the question of strategic significance also arises. RDF2, and the policies of the previous RPG and structure plans, envisage KSCs as centres which provide services for an essentially subsidiary area around them.

4.7. The structure plans named a range of centres, so the question is whether the RSS should also name KSCs. Our brief requires us to do so, but let us briefly consider the issues underlying this requirement.

4.8. KSCs, as third tier centres, are clearly not of regional strategic significance. However PPS11 is clear in suggesting that RSSs should address sub regional issues as well as regional issues. The RSS identifies five sub regions.

4.9. The structure plans had clear geographical targets - their counties. The sub regions are not contiguous with counties, though they are with districts. The sub regions are, however, of similar scale to counties. So if the RSS should name KSCs sub regions may be the correct units in which they should be grouped. PPS11 makes it clear that the main consideration is whether there would be a ‘strategic policy deficit’ if the RSS did not pick up what the structure plans had done in naming sub regionally significant KSCs. PPs11 underlines that functional relationships are the principal means by which to make such an assessment.

4.10. A further issue is how to identify sub regional strategic significance. We propose two simple tests:

- that were the centre not to appear in the RSS that the functionality of the sub region could not be properly understood, hence there would be a ‘strategic policy deficit’

- that the centre, or network it is part of, should play a strategically significant role for a wider area of the sub region when both retail and employment are considered.

4.11. Such a set of tests deliberately goes beyond simple notions of scale, principally set in terms of population. Rightly, it also allows a centre to be considered first in its spatial context. The sub regions in the region differ, and so for Cumbria, for instance, smaller towns tend to have more extensive roles and functions for their own population and that of a surrounding hinterland than is the case in Lancashire. This is because the towns in Cumbria tend to be further apart, and so their influence over their own population and that of the surrounding villages and countryside is more exclusive and stronger. However, in Lancashire the closer proximity of the towns to each other and to larger urban areas means that the influence can face strong completion and so be diffused and weaker.

4.12. As there are centres of sub regional significance there will correspondingly be centres of local significance - those with only local roles and functions. Though the RSS has adopted the historic label of ‘Key Service Centre’ to differentiate service centres of sub regional significance from those of local significance, their roles and
functions can be similar - what is different is the spatial significance of these roles. So although to name them as such would be potentially confusing, there is no reason beyond this that there cannot be local KSCs. For this reason we will talk first about service centres, and then whether they are KSCs or local centres.
5. FINDINGS

5.1. The main purpose of this section is to show how the various sources of evidence were used through the use of examples from each of the sub regions. The fuller findings for each sub region are in the individual sub region reports.

OVERVIEW

5.2. This study's focus on functional evidence is clearly justified by the brief, and we believe is also justified by the strength of that evidence in bringing perspectives to the notion of KSCs which were not available before.

5.3. We believe that for the towns the employment and retail data has clearly provided the evidence to differentiate between towns with strong roles and functions and those with weaker ones. It has also readily picked out networks of towns, and allowed the place of different towns in the wider spatial context of the sub regions to be seen.

5.4. These are things that quantitative criteria such as settlement size and the presence of selected services simply cannot do. We are sure that an appreciation of these sorts of functional issues exists in local planning departments across the region, but it is hard to translate into evidence and policy as it is probably based on longstanding experience of the locality. What we hope to have done is to have added some evidence-based, region wide substance to this area of policy to be added to what already exists in the local planning authorities.

5.5. For the urban centres we have been asked to tackle a subtly different policy issue, as although the RSS clearly sought to address third tier towns, it has no policy directed at the equivalent urban centres. For reasons explained more fully in the discussion and recommendations, just as the RSS policy for KSCs is not well suited to urban centres we have also found that nor can a research approach intended to give criteria and identify KSCs be a good fit on urban centres. For this reason our recommendations for the urban centres are clearly separated from those for the towns, and are more tentative.

5.6. Nonetheless, for the towns in particular we are content that identifying the KSCs by focusing on their current roles and functions is a robust approach. Such an approach automatically captures the considerable diversity of service centres in the region and their context. It also means that their future planning has a clear and detailed functional starting point as the basis for establishing what sorts and quantities of development can reinforce and extend the functional strengths of the centre to lift the sustainability of their communities.

5.7. A last point is that a functional approach also assists in understanding the difference and relationships between centres of sub regional significance and those of local significance. Instead of simply setting a strategic ‘cut off’, we have differentiated between the two on the basis of roles and functions, which means that we also understand the roles of the local centres and how they relate to other centres. This sophistication should be useful to the region’s LDFs.
EMPLOYMENT ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

5.8. Employment roles and functions were assessed principally through looking at travel to work patterns. Where geography permitted, this was added to thorough analysis of job balance and the sectoral distribution of employment.

5.9. Analysis of the travel to work data (Census 2001) shows us the number of journeys to work that start in the town and the number that finish in the town. This allows us to see:

- the number of jobs hosted in the town; this gives us an idea of the scale of economic activity;
- the net ‘flow’ of workers into / out of the town each day, so giving an idea if the town is a net attractor or supplier of labour;
- the geographical dispersal of travel to work journeys; the area and places from whence people come from and go to. This shows us the main commuting patterns, both into and away from these towns, and gives a strong picture of the relationship between towns; and
- the percentage of labour ‘self containment’, i.e. how many jobs hosted in the town are filled by people that live there. This is an indicator of how ‘sustainable’ a town is in terms of its live / work balance; some market towns have self containment percentages of over 65% - this level of self containment is rare in the North West.

In some of the TTW tables individual Census Output areas are featured (such as 16UBGP0006) where these do not form part of a named settlement.
5.10. In all of the TTW maps the following applies (Kendal is shown as an example in Figure 3):

- red circles represent trips within the town – self containment (diameter proportional to number of employees);
- green lines show flows into the town (width of line proportional to number of employees); and
- blue lines show flows out of the town (width of line proportional to number of employees).

5.11. Detailed and summary data is also available for each candidate centre. Modal split is available for every flow.

5.12. The travel to work analysis includes all economically active people from April 2001, thus it is a very detailed dataset. As 2001 data it is slightly dated, but travel to work patterns are relatively stable unless there are factors such as the opening or closure of major employers, large volumes of new house building and the opening of major new transport infrastructure. All are obvious and can be accounted for. The data cannot account for the activities of people who are not economically active.

5.13. The other datasets used were job balance by occupational groups (again a 2001 Census product but using wards not COAs) – this gives information on whether there are ‘surpluses’ of employees in a centre for particular occupational groups (more than there are equivalent jobs), or ‘deficits’. Data from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) gives a sectoral breakdown of employment and firms (wards once more).

5.14. Sometimes the wards were a poor fit on the candidate centres, meaning that the job balance and ABI analysis were not reliable.
Figure 3: Kendal - outward, inward and self-contained commuting
Freestanding towns

5.15. Penrith is an example of a freestanding town easily identified using the travel to work data. The pattern of travel into the town (green) is from a wide range of other places and thus a hinterland is clearly defined. Travel into the town is of a greater scale than travel out (blue) and thus the town is an employment centre.

5.16. Penrith is 67.2% self contained and imports a net 2074 employees - these are evidence of a strong employment role for both its own residents and a strong hinterland.

5.17. Penrith has a net deficit of employees across all the occupational groups. The greatest deficits are clustered in the more senior occupational groups, ranging from 20% to 40%. Employment in Penrith is service-based, and so manufacturing employment is below the average for the sub region.

5.18. Overall Penrith is a town with a strong employment role and commands a substantial hinterland. There are a disproportionate number of employees from the higher occupational groups living in the hinterland, rather than the town.
Figure 4: Penrith - outward, inward and self-contained commuting
Towns in a network – with a hinterland

5.19. The towns of Lancashire - Barnoldswick, Kirkham (and Wesham), Rawtenstall and Longridge are operating within a local network; they offer a range of services to an identifiable hinterland, have good (or potentially good) public transport linkages, yet share this service centre role with other towns. They can therefore be considered within policy not as the only place where residents can choose to access services, but as an integral part of a 'local network' of service centres.

5.20. **Barnoldswick** operates in a network with Nelson & Colne and Burnley (although it also has a relationship with towns in Craven. Of the 10 most significant origins from trips into Barnoldswick more than 70% begin in the East Lancashire economic zone. Of the 10 most significant destinations from journeys originating in Barnoldswick, 40% finish in areas in Yorkshire and 53% finish within the East Lancashire economic zone.

5.21. **Kirkham (& Wesham)** operates in a network with Blackpool (with which it exchanges over 1100 workers daily) and Preston (700 daily exchange). There is also a substantial exchange with Freckleton / Warton.

5.22. **Rawtenstall** a substantial ‘supply’ relationship to Greater Manchester, but retains a strong daily labour exchange within a network of Rossendale and the East Lancashire towns (Blackburn, Burnley and Accrington).

5.23. **Longridge** operates in a network with both Preston and Blackburn, and also exchanges labour with Clitheroe and Blackpool.
Figure 5 East Lancashire - outward, inward and self-contained commuting
Towns in a network – an agglomeration

5.24. Cleator Moor, Egremont, Maryport, Whitehaven and Workington are in a network in the form of an agglomeration. Whitehaven and Workington are large towns – 24463 and 21526 populations respectively. The others are less than half of their sizes. Only Workington is a net importer of employment, and self-containment is not strong in any of the towns.

5.25. The five towns exchange a total of 3758 employees, and 12164 live and work in one of the towns. This means that 56% of the employees living in all of the five towns also work in one of them. This number is not that high for an agglomeration, but is explained through the maps which show that the ‘leakage’ of employment from the area of the towns is not great, but that amongst the towns there are many additional employment locations – towns, villages, and just industrial concentrations. In addition a total of 4628 employees from the towns work at Sellafield – so arguably the facility is more important to the towns than they are to each other and forms a vital part of this west coast functional picture.

5.26. The job balance data shows that Maryport has surpluses across the occupational groups, with the exception of professionals (11% deficit). Whitehaven is a more complex picture, large surpluses of process, plant and machine operatives (170%) and skilled trades (99%), but general smaller deficits across most of the other groups. As a strong employment centre Workington shows deficits of employees across the groups, but particularly in the more senior occupational groups.

5.27. Overall the functionality of the five towns can only be understood in the context of each other and of Sellafield – the nodes of the network. In addition this is an agglomeration because the network does not command a surrounding hinterland – the functionality is focused on the towns and other local centres.
Figure 6: Cumbria west coast agglomeration - outward, inward and self-contained commuting
5.28. Generally the urban centres have relatively low levels of self-containment, so in the Manchester city region centres such as **Fallowfield, Rusholme** and **Withington** retain a low proportion of workers - between 15% and 20%. However this is not surprising – conurbations are characterised by high mobility and many residents will not work in the neighbourhood they live in.

5.29. **Stretford** has a strong employment role. Its reasonably high self-containment of 40% - 5,738 employees. The centre has a strong relationship with Manchester and Urmston with 5,642 and 2,058 recorded trips to work in these destinations. However, Stretford also has a strong employment role, being the largest importer of workers of the candidate KSCs – 16,915. Trafford Park is included within the centre, significantly boosting its employment role.

5.30. **Hyde** is located to the east of Manchester, with which it is strongly connected in terms of employment. 4,617 people travel into Manchester for work. This accounts for around 49% of all external journeys to work.

5.31. Overall, **Hyde** is a net exporter of employees, losing 1,421 more workers than it gains. The centre is also weakly self-contained, retaining only 33.8% of the journeys which originate there, although this amounts to 4,819 workers. However, Hyde is still an important employment centre employing 12,837. The centre draws the majority of its employees from a combination of neighbouring centres such as Dukinfield, Stalybridge, Glossop and Denton.

5.32. Locally significant centres are functionally distinct in having lower self containment and weaker roles as employment centres. **Openshaw** and **Pendleton** are highly integrated into the inner Manchester conurbation. Both of the centres have a strong positive net employment flow, attracting 3,345 and 1,372 more workers than they lose respectively. The main origin of trips to the two centres is Manchester. However, each of the centres is weakly self-contained, retaining only 15.4 and 19.1% of trips originating there.

5.33. **Kearsley** is located on the north western fringe of the Greater Manchester conurbation. The centre is weakly self-contained and has a negative net flow of employees. Figure 8 shows that the majority of work related journeys are into Manchester.
Figure 7: Hyde - outward, inward and self-contained commuting
Figure 8: Kearsley - outward, inward and self-contained commuting
RETAIL ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

5.34. Two sets of retail data were used - both from CACI. The Retail Footprint deals with non food retail and provision with food retail. The Retail Footprint is built up from a set of defined retail centres which are classified into different types - described in Appendix 1. Sometimes these were the shopping centres of our towns or urban centres, but sometimes they were out of town sites close by. For each of the candidate centres we had to select those forming part of the centre, and then combine the data from them to give a composite representation of the retail offer of the centre.

5.35. Retail Footprint also takes account of the following non-retail services in calculating the total spend in centres: travel agents, building societies, high street banks, opticians, and coffee shops. So when this set of reports refers to the retail roles and function of centres these services are included.

5.36. Provision is based on individual stores, and so this time the task was to capture all the stores in the centres and combine their data.

5.37. For each type of retail we were then able to draw hinterlands for the candidate centres based on the percentage of retail spend accounted for by the centre in surrounding postcode sectors. In this way we were able to show the extent of their influence as well as the total spend in the centres.

Retail Footprint and Provision are both models, extensively calibrated using real expenditure data.

Figure 7 explains the legend used in the maps of retail hinterlands.

The data is % of spend in the postcode sector going to the centre.

The circle for the centres represents their type and the size of retail spend there.
Figure 9: Retail map legend

Non-food retail

- **% of expenditure from postcode sector**
  - >0 - 5
  - >5 - 10
  - >10 - 30
  - >30 - 50
  - >50 - 100

- **Volume of spend in retail centre (indicated by size of point)**
  - >0 - 12,500,000
  - >12,500,000 - 35,000,000
  - >35,000,000 - 70,000,000
  - >70,000,000 - 125,000,000
  - >125,000,000 - 229,386,535

Type of retail centre (indicated by colour of point)
- Fashion Parks & Retail Parks
- Local Centres
- Local Centres & Fashion Parks
- Local Centres & Retail Parks
- Local Centres, Retail Parks & Factory Outlet Centres
- Local Centres, Retail Parks & Fashion Parks
- Major Centres
- Major Centres & Retail Parks
- Metropolitan Towns
- Metropolitan Towns & Retail Parks
- Metropolitan Towns, Retail Parks & Local Centres
- Metropolitan Towns, Retail Parks & Rural Centres

Food retail

- **Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)**
  - >0 - 5
  - >5 - 10
  - >10 - 30
  - >30 - 50
  - >50 - 100

- **Volume of spend in retail centre (indicated by size of point)**
  - £551,246 - £5,000,000
  - £5,000,000 - £25,000,000
  - £25,000,000 - £50,000,000
  - £75,000,000 - £99,194,829
**Freestanding towns**

5.38. Penrith is a relatively large retail centre with a non food spend of £82,755,389 and a food spend of £35,887,633 (see Figure 10). It is classified in the Retail Footprint as a Local Centre. Its non food hinterland is strong and large, serving a large area of this part of the sub region.

5.39. The catchment for Penrith is even more significant for food retail, serving a large part of the east of the sub region.

**Towns in a network – with a hinterland**

5.40. The second and third tier of towns in East Lancashire clearly operate as retail service centres, albeit perhaps within smaller geographical catchments. It is interesting to note those where there is reasonable correlation with the scale of employment activity, i.e. Leyland, Clitheroe, Poulton le Fylde and Darwen, and those that appear to host relatively higher levels of retail than employment activity such as Kirkham & Wesham, Longridge and in particular Garstang & Catterall.

5.41. It appears that conversely, Rawtenstall underperforms in non food retail, due perhaps to the influence of Blackburn, Accrington and increasingly Manchester. Barnoldswick also appears to slightly under-perform when compared with the relative scale of economic activity, perhaps due to the limited space and premises available locally and the influence of Nelson, Colne and Burnley.

5.42. The remaining candidate centres appear to offer more limited functionality as retail centres, in particular Rishton. It is perhaps easy to understand why Rishton should retain so limited an offer, given its location adjacent to Blackburn and Accrington.

5.43. Accrington performs a significant retail function in food and non food retail. The significance of both retail sectors is comparable as can be seen in Figure 11.
Figure 10: Penrith - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)

- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)

- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

North West boundary

Kilometers

Sources: Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office. Crown Copyright (C) Licence no. 10077068.
Figure 11: Accrington - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

North West boundary

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Towns in a network – an agglomeration

5.44. Cleator Moor, Egremont, Maryport, Whitehaven and Workington form a network which is an agglomeration. The annual spends are as follows, and clearly show the dominance of Workington and Whitehaven in the network in retail terms, particularly for non food retail:

Table 7 Cleator Moor, Egremont, Maryport, Whitehaven and Workington food summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Service Centre</th>
<th>Retail Types</th>
<th>Annual Comparison Goods Spend</th>
<th>Annual Food Spend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleator Moor</td>
<td>Rural Centres</td>
<td>£1,664,433</td>
<td>£5,784,413</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egremont</td>
<td>Rural Centres</td>
<td>£6,488,188</td>
<td>£7,166,674</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryport</td>
<td>Rural Centres</td>
<td>£6,709,841</td>
<td>£3,018,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitehaven</td>
<td>Regional Towns</td>
<td>£147,027,235</td>
<td>£36,088,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workington</td>
<td>Retail Parks</td>
<td>£170,081,666</td>
<td>£45,890,020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source CACI 2006

5.45. As should be expected, Workington’s non food hinterland is extensive, as too is Whitehaven’s. Both clearly sweep up Cleator Moor and Egremont. The complementary nature of the overlap between the two is also clear.

5.46. In contrast the hinterland for Maryport is very localised.

5.47. As might be expected, the food retail catchments for Workington and Whitehaven are smaller, but Maryport’s remains comparatively small.

5.48. Across both retail types the overlap between the centres is clear, despite the differences in spend. Again the functional form of an agglomeration is clear as the catchments do not extend greatly beyond the network of towns.
Figure 12: Whitehaven - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

North West boundary

Kilometers

0 4.5 9 18

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Figure 13: Workington - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)

- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)

- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

North West boundary

Kilometers

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Figure 14: Maryport - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

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Urban centres

5.49. **Hyde** is a non food retail centre whose role is arguably in excess of the size and significance of its employment role. Figure 15 clearly shows its large catchment, and the annual spend for the centre is £106M – one of the largest in the sub region.

5.50. Hyde’s food retail footprint is much larger but also has a stronger core, reflecting that people tend to do ‘food shops’ more locally. The spend in food is £90M – also high.

Hyde is clearly a retail centre of sub regional significance.

5.51. In contrast a centre such as Didsbury is not. Its annual non food spend is only £8M, but is £28M for food (see Figure 16).

5.52. The centre’s non food catchment is both small and very weak.

5.53. In contrast its food catchment is much bigger and also has a noticeable local core.

What we are seeing here is a typical pattern whereby a local urban centre has a weak non food retail role due to the influence of larger competing centres close by in the conurbation. However food is usually bought locally, hence the uplift in this retail role. People might also buy food in combination with journeys, such as commuting, which may explain the very spread out nature of the food catchment.
Figure 15: Hyde - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30

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Figure 16: Didsbury - retail expenditure, type and catchment

Non-food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

Food retail (% of expenditure from postcode sector)
- >0 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 30
- >30 - 50
- >50 - 100

North West boundary
Retail Futures

5.54. In addition to the detailed data on non food and food retail CACI also supplied the project with snapshot data on the projected future non food retail fortunes of the candidate centres. This data takes account of market trends and the future development pipeline, but not of policy intentions. The end date chosen was 2011 to fit in with the RSS review cycle.

5.55. This data gives us a perspective on the likely retail futures of the centres across the region. The broad national and regional pattern into which these individual trajectories fit is one of the consolidation of non food retail in the centres of large urban areas, and into large out of town centres, which are also part of major conurbations.

5.56. Thus the retail futures of third tier centres are generally ones of relative decline, as the larger retail ‘offers’ are favoured by more and more customers. Such a general picture will, of course, be moderated by local context. On this basis the retail futures are considered by sub region.

5.57. An important point for the interpretation of the data concerns absolute and relative growth. We have calculated spend for the centres for 2011, and compared it with 2006 spend. Non food retail as a whole shows growth, and thus it is not just whether a centre shows growth which is important, but the scale of this growth next to wider trends. This means that centres showing modest levels of growth will still be falling behind the leading centres in relative terms.

5.58. To give examples, Congleton is predicted to see an increase in spend of £23.0M, and to move in the regional rankings from 62 to 48, Penrith is predicted to see an increase in spend of £14.1M and to move from 51 to 47 in the regional rankings, Whitehaven to see an increase of £5.7M but to drop from 24 to 35, whereas Accrington will fall from 21 to 23 despite a £6.0M increase in spending, and Sandbach will drop from 106 to 115 with a corresponding drop of £2.8M in spend.
**Manchester City Region**

5.59. All of the following centres are predicted to see growth, but mostly of a small scale of under 10%. There are clear exceptions where very high rates of growth are expected due to large new developments in prospect such as in Cheetham Hill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atherton</th>
<th>Levenshulme ward</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bramhall</td>
<td>Littleborough</td>
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<td>Cheadle - Manchester</td>
<td>Marple</td>
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<td>Cheadle hulme N&amp;S</td>
<td>Middleton</td>
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<td>Chorlton ward</td>
<td>Pendleton</td>
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<td>Poynton</td>
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<td>Denton N E &amp; W</td>
<td>Romiley</td>
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<td>Didsbury ward</td>
<td>Sale</td>
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<td>Eccles</td>
<td>Stretford</td>
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<td>Edgeley ward</td>
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<td>Fallowfield</td>
<td>Urmston</td>
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<td>Farnworth</td>
<td>Walkden</td>
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<td>Gorton N&amp;S W ards</td>
<td>Westhoughton</td>
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<td>Hazel Grove</td>
<td>W hitefield</td>
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<td>Horwich</td>
<td>W ilmslow</td>
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<td>W ithington Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>W ythenshaw</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5.60. The predicted level of decline of the other centres is also usually modest, but is 17% for Pemberton and 10% for Hale. It is noticeable in the data that generally the smaller centres in terms of spend are those where greatest decline is predicted.

**Liverpool City Region**

5.61. It is extremely noticeable that in the Liverpool City Region a far higher proportion of centres are predicted to decline. Only Formby, Liscard, Ormskirk, Rainford and Widnes are predicted to grow – and only Liscard significantly (26%).

5.62. The remainder of the picture is of decline, of up to 13%. This overall performance contrasts significantly with that of the Manchester City Region where a much higher proportion of centres are predicted to grow.
Central Lancashire City Region

5.63. Most of the towns are predicted to show modest growth:

Accrington  
Barnoldswick  
Chorley  
Clitheroe  
Colne  
Darwen  
Garstang  
Great Harwood  
Kirkham and Wesham  
Leyland  
Longridge  
Lytham St. Anne's  
Nelson  
Padiham  
Poulton-le-Fylde  
W Halley.

5.64. Growth rates are between 1% and 8%, and the rate of decline of the other towns is similarly modest – dipping to only 6% for Garstang, although Rishton is unusual in an anticipated decline of 17%.

Cumbria and North Lancashire

5.65. The following centres are predicted to grow in terms of total expenditure:

Ambleside  
Brampton (Carlisle)  
Cleator Moor  
Dalton-in-Furness  
Egremont  
Kendal  
Keswick  
Longtown  
Millom  
Penrith  
Ulverston  
W Hitehaven  
W Indermere  
W Workington

5.66. Kendal, Penrith and Workington are predicted to show the greatest growth (between 12% and 28%). The remaining centres are expected to decline. Carnforth shows the greatest decline (15%), followed by Maryport (13%).
5.67. However it appears that across the centres the fact that most of them are freestanding towns, or otherwise free from the influence of larger urban areas, means that they are predicted to hold their own as non food retail centres despite their smaller sizes.

**South Cheshire**

5.68. The non food retail spend in Alsager, Nantwich and Sandbach is predicted to drop by between 11% and 9%, despite these being different scales of centre. This is probably because of the overbearing influence of larger nearby urban areas.

**Overview**

5.69. Only 66 of the 173 candidate centres are predicted to show growth in non food retail. The greatest levels of growth (with the exceptions of planned expansions such as at Speke) are generally predicted for freestanding towns, and all types of town in Cumbria. It is also noticeable that centres in the Liverpool City Region are generally predicted to fare badly, as are the smaller urban centres in general. Only seven centres show growth of over 10% - Cheetham Hill, Congleton, Middleton, Penrith, Speke, Urmston and Whitefield.

5.70. In contrast, 16 are predicted to decline by more than 10%. This broad profile, taken with the comments above relating to relative rates of growth and decline being more important than absolute ones, gives an overall picture where most of the centres are predicted to have a declining non food retail role.

5.71. There is a clear general division in the data between towns in the more remote rural areas, which generally perform more strongly, and those in the areas of the region where the influences of large urban areas are greater, where prospects are poorer. The towns in or close to the Lake District National Park appear particularly robust in this respect.

5.72. It is also clear that the majority of urban centres are predicted to decline, as the higher tier centres around them grow.

5.73. Thus a split policy message emerges. For the centres where a relatively bright non food retail future is predicted planning should focus on boosting their retail roles, and so should concentrate on the quality of the retail offer and associated public realm. This applies to towns and urban centres.

5.74. For the other centres, where relative non food retail decline is forecast, it is unlikely that incremental planning decisions will turn the broad tide of the market which does not favour these centres. This does not mean, though, that the roles as broader service centres should necessarily fade, but that planning and investment decisions should look to replace non food retail with other services, such as food and drink, leisure, and other types of diversification and specialisation to give the centres a more sustainable future.
**CONTEXT**

5.75. A limited range of contextual information was collected. This is not evidence of the same importance as the functional evidence, and is intended to further illuminate or qualify the main sources of evidence. For example evidence of older than average people or pensioner households gives clear accent to the service likely requirements of particular towns. It will also affect economic activity rates.

5.76. This brief section highlights how the context evidence was used in the sub regions, and suggests how it might be taken up and used in the preparation of the LDFs.

**Housing**

5.77. We have performed a summary analysis of housing market types based on a variety of variables. This is fully explained in Appendix 2. The types of housing market identified were:

- High Value Integrated
- Low Value Integrated
- Fragmented

5.78. A wide range of factors can create these different market types. High Value Integrated markets are often found in towns in rural areas and in some suburbs. Both will be desirable places to live, with relatively complete housing ladders. The primary intervention needed will be more affordable housing.

5.79. Low Value Integrated markets present the opposite – the housing ladder is still relatively complete but the housing is not as desirable. Here, to create a more balanced market, more higher value housing is needed, and the economic and social conditions to support it (regeneration) is often a central consideration.

5.80. Fragmented markets essentially contain more of a mixture of conditions, and often polarisation. The key tasks here are to make the housing ladder more complete – which also requires the support of wider economic and social change.

5.81. The main way in which these summary distinctions should be used follows the achievement of a better understanding of the roles and functions of a centre. For freestanding towns, they will often mainly form their own local housing market (along with their hinterland). For a KSC town the type of housing market it has gives a clear steer to the priorities for new development.

5.82. Similarly, for towns in a network, just as their service and employment roles form the functional whole of the network (including agglomerations), they are also likely to form a composite housing market. Again the type of housing market concerned should be a principle consideration for new development.

5.83. Towns under a strong urban influence are also very likely to form part of a wider urban-focused housing market. Travel to work and job balance analysis frequently suggest that such places are the preferred home of significant numbers of commuters. Plans for new development need to understand this.
5.84. For the urban centres the picture can be less distinct as the centres will very
definitely be part of a wider urban housing market. As such the local identity of the
market is of less significance than how the wider market works and the place of the
centre within it. It is not entirely sensible to plan for such a housing market from the
‘bottom up’ perspective of the candidate centres alone. However the clear
differences between some of the candidate centres remain important to note.

Demographics and transport

5.85. The main value of these two types of context data is to better explain what the
functional evidence shows. Cumbria has a more elderly population than the regional
average in all candidate centres, with the exception of the large west coast network.
This means that there are different service needs and labour markets, which future
plans for the centres should pick up on.

5.86. In South Cheshire there is a higher than average car ownership, and also high
commuting mobility, mostly by car. Efforts to strengthen the employment and retail
roles of these centres need to include measures to tackle this high car ownership and
use.

Change

5.87. The data on migration provides a snapshot for 2000-2001 of which candidate centres
were growing and those which were not. Some of this growth or decline will be a
development policy outcome, but some will not and will essentially be a result of
social and economic forces. Migration data is clearly linked to housing markets – part
of the pressure in many high value markets comes from in migration. Thus, when
planning for the future of a centre it is useful to also know what direction it is already
going in.
THE SUB REGIONS

5.88. This section gives a brief overview of the findings for each sub region. The detail is in each of the sub region reports.

Manchester City Region

5.89. The Manchester City Region presents a great deal of functional complexity across the candidate centres. The Greater Manchester conurbation shapes the whole city region, however within its influence the candidate centres nonetheless show a variety of functionalities and degrees of urban capture.

5.90. We need to make a clear distinction between the candidate towns and the candidate urban centres. As explained above, the research approach taken by the study is more robust for the towns than it is for the urban centres. Nonetheless we have made recommendations for both types of candidate centre, but those for the urban centres are made in the context of the concern that in order to properly plan for the urban centres in both the Manchester and Liverpool city regions, city region functional evidence bases are needed, and our work cannot fully fill this gap being concerned with the third tier centres alone, which is only one functional component of the city regions.

5.91. Perhaps unsurprisingly the sub region has only two freestanding towns – Congleton and Knutsford, but both appear to be of sub regional significance, despite having shrunken hinterlands due to the overriding functionality of the sub region. A number of towns form strong functional networks in the region, but only Middlewich, Winsford and Leigh carry sub regional significance. The prevailing nature of the network relationships is of an agglomeration, but the network of Middlewich, Winsford Northwich and Crewe do appear to have an appreciable hinterland.

5.92. The rest of the towns are under a strong urban influence, and only Horwich, Ramsbottom and Wilmslow are of sub regional significance, such is the influence of the conurbation over the remaining towns.

5.93. For the urban centres, they have been divided between sub regional and local centres based on their food and non food retail roles, and also taking into account their employment roles. There are more local centres, as should be expected.
### Table 8 Manchester City Region recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</th>
<th>Towns in a local network (mega hinterland)</th>
<th>Towns under strong urban influence (no significant hinterland)</th>
<th>Sub regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
<th>Local centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congleton</td>
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<td>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</td>
<td>Towns in a local network (mega hinterland)</td>
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<td>Sub regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</td>
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Liverpool City Region

5.94. The Liverpool City Region presents a great deal of functional complexity across the candidate centres. The Merseyside and Wirral conurbations shape the whole city region; however within its influence the candidate centres nonetheless show a variety of functionalities and degrees of urban capture.

5.95. We need to make a clear distinction between the candidate towns and the candidate urban centres. As explained in the main report, the research approach taken by the study is more robust for the towns than it is for the urban centres. Nonetheless we have made recommendations for both types of candidate centre, but those for the urban centres are made in the context of the main report’s observations that in order to properly plan for the urban centres in both the Manchester and Liverpool city regions, city region functional evidence bases are needed, and our work cannot fully fill this gap being concerned with the third tier centres alone, which is only one functional component of the city regions.

5.96. No freestanding towns were identified amongst the candidate centres within the Liverpool City Region. However, a number of towns form strong functional networks in the region, but only Ormskirk, Runcorn and Widnes are of regional significance.

5.97. The rest of the towns are under a strong urban influence, with Bootle, Kirkby, Prescot, and Formby classified as being of sub regional significance.

5.98. For the urban centres, they have been divided between sub regional and local centres based on their food and non food retail roles, and also taking into account their employment roles. There are more local centres, as should be expected.
Table 9  Liverpool City Region recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</th>
<th>Towns in a local network</th>
<th>Towns under strong urban influence</th>
<th>Sub-regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
<th>Local centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burscough</td>
<td>Bootle</td>
<td>Allerton Road</td>
<td>Aigburth Road</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Billinge</td>
<td>Bromborough</td>
<td>Broadway</td>
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<td>Hoylake</td>
<td>Earlestown/N LW</td>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>County Road</td>
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<td>Heswall</td>
<td>Formby</td>
<td>Huyton</td>
<td>Lower Bebington</td>
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<td>Moreton</td>
<td>Haydock</td>
<td>Liscard</td>
<td>New Ferry</td>
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<td>West Kirby</td>
<td>Kirkby</td>
<td>Old Swan</td>
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<td>Maghull Lydiate</td>
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<td>Speke</td>
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<td>Ormskirk</td>
<td>Neston</td>
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<td>Woolton</td>
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<td>Runcorn</td>
<td>Prescot</td>
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<td>Westminster</td>
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<td>Widnes</td>
<td>Rainford</td>
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<td>Whitby Ward</td>
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Central Lancashire City Region

5.99. The Central Lancashire sub region offers a mix of rural, semi urban and urban settlements, and is characterised by extensive connectivity between the settlements. As a result, only one town, Clitheroe, operates a classic Key Service Centre as envisaged by Policy RDF2. Whalley also operates as a freestanding service centre, but this is of local significance only. The remainder of towns operate in networks and shared hinterlands. Of these, Great Harwood and Adlington have been determined to be of local significance only, and Riston has been removed from the list altogether.

5.100. There is strong connectivity and mobility between rural and urban settlements in Central Lancashire. There is evidence of local employment zones within the sub-region, with strong mobility between towns and settlements within the local zones.

5.101. These networks can be identified within the Fylde, Central and Eastern areas of Lancashire, and support a substantial daily travel to work exchange. The service centres vary substantively in scale and functionality, many providing elements of service centre functionality within a broader network.

5.102. East Lancashire comprises Nelson, Colne, Barnoldswick, Accrington, Darwen, Great Harwood, Rawtenstall. It also has an influence on Longridge.

5.103. Fylde comprises Blackpool, Poulton le Fylde, Lytham and St Annes, Kirkham & Wesham. It also has influence on Garstang.

5.104. Central comprises Preston, Chorley, Adlington, Leyland and Longridge. It also has an influence on Kirkham & Wesham and Garstang.

All of the networks have some relationship with Greater Manchester.

5.105. There is a clear pattern in the data of employees of a substantial daily labour exchange between towns. This includes those from more senior occupational groups living, but not working, in some of the smaller rural towns, as well as people travelling out of the more urban towns to work elsewhere in the local employment network.
Table 10 Central Lancashire recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</th>
<th>Towns in a local network</th>
<th>Towns under strong urban influence (no significant hinterland)</th>
<th>Sub regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
<th>Local centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adlington</td>
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<td>Clitheroe</td>
<td>Catterall &amp; Garstang</td>
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<td>Chorley</td>
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<td>Whalley</td>
<td>Kirkham and Wesham</td>
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<td>Leyland</td>
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<td>Accrington</td>
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<td>Darwen</td>
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<td>Great Harwood</td>
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<td>Lytham &amp; St Anne’s</td>
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<td>Padiham</td>
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<td>Poulton-le-fylde</td>
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<td>Nelson</td>
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**Cumbria and North Lancashire**

5.106. The Cumbria and North Lancashire sub region is clearly the most rural part of the region. Nonetheless a variety of strategic situations are found there, and the sub region cannot be assumed to be homogeneous. All of the candidate centres which have been found to be of sub regional or local significance are either freestanding towns or towns in a network (be the network one with a hinterland, or an agglomeration). The sub region is not distinctively urban. Its functionality is principally defined by the relationships between cities and towns.

5.107. A variety of towns in different situations have been identified as freestanding towns of sub regional importance on the basis of the combination of their employment and retail roles. In the west coast this has included taking into account the considerable spatial influence of Sellafield as an employment centre.

5.108. In the National Park the functional strength of towns can be disproportionate to their small sizes – both in terms of retail and employment (and the two are linked as a sizeable proportion of the employment in the towns is in retail).

5.109. Towns have also been identified as of local significance. There the employment and retail roles of these towns are simply weaker than those above. All of the towns clearly have local employment and retail roles, but they do not form part of the strategic structure of the sub region.

5.110. Five towns of sub regional strategic significance are in two sorts of network. Ulverston is in a close functional network with Dalton on Furness and Barrow in Furness. Egremont, Maryport, Whitehaven and Workington are the main functional nodes in the close local network on the west coast, which also includes Cleator Moor as a centre of local significance, and critically also is appreciably influenced by Sellafield as a centre for employment. Whitehaven and Workington are the main centres in what appears to be an agglomeration – a network principally defined by the relationships between the towns, and not by a wider hinterland role.

5.111. Brampton and Longtown have been identified as towns under a strong urban influence (Carlisle) of local strategic significance. This leaves Lindale, Braithwaite, Portinscale and Threlkeld which have not been identified as of either sub regional or local strategic significance.

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69
### Table 11 Cumbria and North Lancashire recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</th>
<th>Towns in a local network</th>
<th>Towns under strong urban influence</th>
<th>Sub-regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
<th>Local centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Alston</td>
<td>Dalton-in-Furness</td>
<td>Brampton (Carlisle)</td>
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<td>Ambleside</td>
<td>Ulverston</td>
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<td>Appleby</td>
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<td>Aspatria</td>
<td>Cleator Moor</td>
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<td>Bootle</td>
<td>Egremont</td>
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<td>Broughton in Furness</td>
<td>Maryport</td>
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<td>Carnforth</td>
<td>Whitehaven</td>
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<td>Kirkby Lonsdale</td>
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<td>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</td>
<td>Towns in a local network</td>
<td>Towns under strong urban influence</td>
<td>Sub-regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</td>
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<td>Penrith</td>
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<td>Silloth</td>
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<td>Wigton</td>
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<td>Windermere</td>
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South Cheshire

5.112. This is clearly an area of high mobility, where large numbers of people chose to live in different settlements from where their jobs are, despite centres such as these three containing large numbers of jobs themselves. This is a characteristic functionality or a network which is an agglomeration, and is reflected in the low self containment of the three towns.

5.113. There is a clear pattern in the data of employees of more senior occupational groups living in Alsager and Sandbach, and to a lesser extent Nantwich, but not working there, where employment is biased towards more traditional sectors. For towns of their size they are not strongly self-contained, though the flows between them are the dominant flows.

The strong, but subsidiary, relationship with the Potteries, is likely to be a feature of all settlements as this southern extremity of the region.

5.114. Nantwich and Sandbach both play retail roles that are essentially limited to extent of the network - further afield other centres quickly take over. Alsager is a diminutive retail centre in comparison.

5.115. Crewe is the clear local focus of the network, and thus the whole network is:

- Alsager
- Crewe
- Nantwich
- Sandbach.

Crewe is already named in the RSS as a regional town.
Table 12 South Cheshire recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freestanding towns with hinterlands</th>
<th>Towns in a local network</th>
<th>Towns under strong urban influence (no significant hinterland)</th>
<th>Sub-regional urban centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
<th>Local centres (parts of larger conurbations)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alsager</td>
<td>Nantwich</td>
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<td>Sandbach</td>
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6. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. This section presents the conclusions and recommendations for the region as a whole. The discussion and recommendations in the sub region reports are to be read with this overall discussion and recommendations.

OVERVIEW

6.2. As a reminder the content of policy RDF2, which focuses on KSCs, is:

**Policy RDF2: Key Service Centres**

Plans and strategies outside the county areas of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire should identify Key Service Centres, which have:

- The potential to act as service centres for surrounding villages and rural areas, providing a range of services which should include retail, leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services; and
- Good public transport links to surrounding towns and villages, or the potential for their development or enhancement.

Within county areas of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire, plans and strategies should review the list of Key Service Centres against the above criteria. Plans and strategies should give priority to the development of public transport, community and demand responsive transport, in particular, those providing access from rural hinterlands to key service centres. A strategic approach to traffic management should be adopted which aims to improve safety on rural roads, maintain the tranquillity of the countryside, improve local air quality and protect the local environment. Where safety is not compromised, highway engineering measures should reflect the character of the local countryside, including landscape and conservation.

RDF3 then directs the majority of development outside the Regional Centres and Regional Towns and Cities to KSCs, but also notes that:

In rural areas adjacent to regional centres, towns and cities, advantage should be taken of the proximity in providing services, employment and a more diverse economic base.

6.3. In addition, retail policy W5 also seeks to maintain the vitality and viability of lower order retail centres to continue to meet local needs.

6.4. This policy set, therefore, gives us a perspective which only anticipates finding KSCs serving rural hinterlands, and which also wishes to maintain the viability of a variety of types of lower order retail centre.

This study has identified a wider range of types of service centres than this, and therefore the policies in the draft RSS can be seen as deficient in terms of the reality of sub regional service centres across the region.
6.5. Our first task is to provide **criteria** for the identification of KSCs in the region. Across the relevant national, regional and local policy the following factors emerge:

- that KSCs should contribute to more sustainable communities;
- that KSCs should be a broad spatial concept, linking to areas of policy and action beyond land use planning;
- that KSCs should be a focal point for the access to public and private services, and employment - for rural areas this means that they should serve an extensive hinterland;
- that KSCs should therefore have good transport links, especially public transport;
- that, because KSCs are focal points, they should be the main locations of new development outside the larger urban settlements. In the Lake District National Park development opportunities are constrained and limited to development which would enhance the service role of the three KSCs;
- that functionally weaker places should not be identified as KSCs - such as ‘retirement or commuter’ towns; and
- previous criteria have ranged from the straightforwardly quantitative (population size or the presence of selected services), to more qualitative judgements of broader roles and functions, or the potential for such roles and functions.

6.6. These factors are almost exclusively concerned with **towns**, not **urban centres**, reflecting that the regional policy set does not give urban centres the same attention. However, PPS6 draws attention to the need to consider the full hierarchy retail centres in urban areas. Towns and urban centres are separated from this point forward because they are clearly not the same sort of centre and thus cannot be dealt with through a single policy.

6.7. A further dimension is that the findings have clearly backed our identification of different types of service centre, so the question here is whether the same criteria should be the same for all types of service centre.

6.8. A final critical issue is the identification of KSCs of sub regional significance and those of local significance. As explained above, we believe that there is a need for this distinction to be made and for the RSS to name towns and urban centres of sub regional significance and include them in sub regional spatial strategies to coordinate the LDDs.
TOWNS

6.9. At the risk of stating the obvious, the principal identifier of a service centre is that is should be a focal point for service use, and employment (as justified above) for a wider population. This then should be the principal criterion for the identification of a KSC:

**A KSC town is a strong focal point for service use, and employment for a wider population**

6.10. This study has focused on functional data to shed light on these service and employment roles and functions, in order to find out how significant these roles are across the candidate centres included in the study. Earlier work has concentrated on selecting characteristics of a centre likely to indicate a strong service role. We have, instead, focused on how the centre is actually used, and have therefore had to look at aspects of the service centre role where such data is available.

6.11. Although currently RSS policy identifies the ‘potential to act as service centres’ as a criterion for KSCs, we wish to question this wording. All centres have a theoretic potential to act as stronger service centres, but the findings have clearly distinguished between those which are actually stronger centres and those which are not.

6.12. So in this context what does ‘potential’ actually mean? The reasons for centres to be weaker or stronger are well embedded in the social and economic choices already made by their residents, those who work there, and local service providers and businesses. Such established functionalities are not easy to change. Land use planning has a measure of fairly limited influence to existing functionality. Probably only dramatic investment and change can transform established functionalities, and thus ‘potential’ is rather meaningless.

6.13. We feel it far more reliable that KSCs be identified through existing roles and functions, with the only exception being where dramatic investment and change are planned.

6.14. The remaining criteria are used to identify the towns which are strong focal points for service use, and employment for a wider population. This cannot be a matter just for arbitrary quantitative criteria because threshold populations, or the presence of selected services, will not produce the same outcomes across a region whose geography is so variable. Instead we suggest that the identification of KSCs is a matter for a more sophisticated combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, and judgement which also takes into account essential matters of context.

**Freestanding towns**

6.15. Freestanding towns are perhaps the least complex type of KSCs, and what RDF2 anticipates. They should have a strong employment role, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, and acting as an employment centre for a surrounding hinterland. Thus they should have relatively high self containment and also be net importers of employees.
Freestanding town KSCs should be strong local employment centres, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, and acting as an employment centre for a surrounding hinterland

6.16. In terms of retail roles, for non food retail KSCs should be strong centres, and serve a significant hinterland. Such a functionality should also be expected for food retail, though the hinterland may be diminished through the influence of neighbouring smaller centres.

Freestanding town KSCs should be strong non food and food retail centres, serving a significant hinterland

6.17. This study did not consider other services, as functional data is not available for these and so it is necessary to rely upon assumed links between the presence of services and their use. This does not mean, however, that such an approach is entirely without value.

Freestanding town KSCs should provide a range of services which should include leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services

Towns in a local network

6.18. We now move beyond what RDF2 anticipates. What has changed is that the towns are no longer freestanding but form networks, either with a larger shared hinterland or with no significant hinterland where the towns’ main functional relationships are with each other (usually because they are closer together).

6.19. KSC towns in a local network should still have a strong employment role in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town. However self containment can lower due to employee flows between the towns whilst the strength of the network as a whole is maintained. Also, although the network as a whole should also be net importers of employees, individual towns may not be.

KSC towns in a network should be strong local employment centres, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, and as the main centres of employment in the network.

6.20. A critical point is that the network may also contain second tier centres - regional towns and cities.

6.21. In the same way that employment functionality is partly pooled in networks, so is retail functionality. Thus the centres should not be expected to be equal partners and may play complementary roles to each other. There will be leading non food retail centres in particular.

KSC towns in a network should be strong non food and food retail centres, and the focal point for retail in the network
6.22. On other services:

Each of the KSCs in the network should provide a range of services which should include leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services.

As for retail roles, it can be expected that the service roles of towns in a network may be complementary to each other.

6.23. Networks will contain sub regionally significant centres, locally significant centres, and may also contain regional towns or cities. The task for sub regional policy is to pick out and set policy for the sub regionally significant centres, and to lay out the need to a network approach to be carried over into local policy, where the local centres will be dealt with.

6.24. An important point is that a particular sort of network (agglomerations) is also relatively common in the region, driven by high mobility and connectivity, and close proximity of certain groups of towns. The defining functionalities of agglomerations are that the strength of relationships between the towns, and the lack of a strong hinterland. In these instances, in seeking to maximise the sustainability of the network as a whole, focus should be on the relationships between the towns and how the ‘sum of their parts’ makes up a distinctive strategic entity.

6.25. Again the task for sub regional policy is to pick out and set policy for the sub regionally significant centres, and to lay out the need to an agglomeration approach to be carried over into local policy, where the local centres will be dealt with.

Towns under a strong urban influence

6.26. Towns under a strong urban influence are, by definition, much less likely to be identified as KSCs because the main effects of the urban influence are often to draw employment and services from the town. By the same token, hinterlands are also ‘diverted’ to become part of a larger urban hinterland. Policy RDF3 makes a somewhat sideways reference to this type of centre, but it is not clear what ‘advantage should be taken of the proximity in providing services, employment and a more diverse economic base’ in such circumstances means.

6.27. On this basis the principal consideration is the town’s role for its own population and businesses, and the identification of a town as a KSC hinges on the extent, despite the strong urban influence, to which it maintains strong service and employment roles.

KSC towns under a strong urban influence should be strong local employment centres, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, as the main centres of employment for their own population.
6.28. In terms of retail KSCs should be strong centres for their own population, even though they are unlikely to serve a significant hinterland. Increasing the linkages with nearby urban areas will weaken this key functionality.

**KSC towns under a strong urban influence should be strong non food and food retail centres, for their own population**

6.29. On other services:

**KSC towns under a strong urban influence should provide a range of services which should include leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made for Policy RDF2 in the RSS. These are the requirements for change to the policy, but not a suggested policy wording:

**Recommendation 1** - the policy should continue to use the term “Key Service Centres” for third tier towns, but it should be made clear that it applies to a variety of types of towns of sub regional strategic significance, and looks for:

- freestanding towns with a hinterland;
- towns in networks; and
- towns under strong urban influence.

RDF3 should be changed to state that ‘Development in rural areas should be concentrated in Key Service Centres and should be of a scale and nature required to reinforce and extend the functional strengths of Centres and the networks they form, in order to further sustainable communities in them and their hinterlands.’

**Recommendation 2** - the scope of the policy should be expanded to include the employment roles of towns. Thus the policy should contain the definition:

‘A KSC town is a strong focal point for service use and employment for its own and a wider population’.

**Recommendation 3** - the reference to ‘the potential to act as service centres’ should be removed from the policy and replaced ‘whose existing roles and functions show them to be sub regional service centres’.

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79
**Recommendation 4** - the supporting text for the policy should explain that KSCs of sub regional significance are identified in the RSS in order to enable effective spatial planning of the sub regions. The requirements for identification of a KSC of sub regional significance are:

- that were the centre not to appear in the RSS that the functionality of the sub region could not be properly understood - hence there would be a ‘strategic policy deficit’

- that the centre, or network it is part of, should play a strategically significant role for a wider area of the sub region when both retail and employment are considered.
**Recommendation 5** - the following criteria for the identification of KSCs should be identified in the policy for each type of town. The criteria are not hierarchical – centres should satisfy all criteria:

| **Freestanding towns** | KSCs should be strong local employment centres, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, and acting as an employment centre for a surrounding hinterland.  
KSCs should be strong non food and food retail centres, serving a significant hinterland.  
KSCs should provide a range of services which should include leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services.  
Future development should aim to reinforce and extend the roles and functions of the town in its hinterland. |
|---|---|
| **Towns in a local network** | KSCs should be strong local employment centres, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, and as centres of employment in the network.  
KSCs should be strong non food and food retail centres, and a focal point for retail in the network.  
Each of the KSCs in the network should provide a range of services which should include leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services.  
Future development should aim to maximise the functional strength of the network as a whole. |
| **Towns under a strong urban influence** | KSCs should be strong local employment centres, both in terms of the number of jobs hosted in the town, as the main centres of employment for their own population.  
KSCs should be strong non food and food retail centres, for their own population.  
KSCs should provide a range of services which should include leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services.  
The leading objective for such towns should be to secure development which would strengthen their employment and service roles, and not strengthen links between it and nearby urban areas. |
Other towns

6.30. As discussed above, there will be freestanding towns with hinterlands, towns in a local network and towns under strong urban influence which are not of sub regional significance, and are therefore of local significance. It is entirely right that these centres should not be the subject of concentrations of development outside the Regional Centres and Regional Towns and Cities, as stated in policy RDF3, but at present the RSS lacks any acknowledgement that more limited development in local centres could assist their sustainability, provided that it is the right sort of development in the right quantities. Affordable housing to balance local housing markets is probably the leading example of this. In some of the smaller local centres, development to allow the town to evolve might be achieved by the change of use of existing sites and buildings, rather than through provision of new development.

6.31. A full understanding of the roles and functions of local centres is the key to understanding what sort and how much development could make them more sustainable. Again there are no simple rules here as centres cannot be relied upon to be alike. What is needed in the RSS though is a policy which anticipates the need to do this.

6.32. Although local centres, either as freestanding towns, towns with hinterlands, towns in a local network, or towns under strong urban influence, will have quite different roles and functions, there is a need to make the link between their spatial planning and that of the centres of sub regional and regional significance.

Recommendation 6 - Policy RDF5 should be added to the RSS, addressing local centres. It should state that although development will not be concentrated in the local centres, planning for local centres (rural and urban) should determine, through an understanding of the roles and functions of the centres, both the types and amounts of development that would:

- reinforce and extend the sustainability of the town and its hinterlands for freestanding towns;
- reinforce and extend the sustainability of the network as a whole; and
- reinforce and extend the sustainability of the town and not strengthen links between it and nearby urban areas for a town under a strong urban influence.
URBAN CENTRES

6.33. For the urban centres, or district centres, the findings clearly show that the employment evidence is of reduced significance and that retail and services evidence is of enhanced significance. This is because in continuous urban areas although there are clear centres where shops and services are grouped, employment will not necessarily be so grouped, or may be grouped in different locations. This means that these roles may be separated in ways that they are not in towns.

6.34. Thus, whereas for towns both strong employment and service roles are important for the identification of KSCs, for urban centres the service role is essential, but the employment role is not.

6.35. A broader issue is whether the concept of KSCs transfers satisfactorily into the urban centres. Outside the region's large urban areas strategic functionality is essentially understood firstly though the towns and then outwards through smaller settlements, and thus has been captured by this study. However, the strategic functionality of the conurbations, and therefore their district centres, is clearly driven by their overall structures and main centres. It is questionable whether this bigger picture can be properly understood through only looking at their potential third tier centres.

6.36. We have been able to represent the size of their non food and food retail markets and their extents as catchments. This is very useful information. We have also been able to represent employment roles, though sometimes compromised by the issues of geography described above. However we have not been able to fully fit them into the bigger picture of how the conurbation functions.

6.37. We suggest a clear separation between the concept of KSCs, which should address towns, and that of urban centres. Though both should be focal points for service use, this is where the functional similarity ends. Whereas the policies of the RSS need to be expanded to cover the full range of types of KSCs which towns can be, if urban centres are to be covered by the RSS, and there is a clear case to do so, they should be the subject of a separate policy area.

6.38. The case to include sub regional urban centres as third tier service centres in the RSS is primarily that the retail and employment roles appear to be equally strategically significant to those of the town KSCs. These sorts of centres are only found in the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions, because they are effectively part of these two conurbations.

6.39. Although the policies of the RSS clearly cover aspects of such places, the question here is whether there is a need for the RSS to specifically identify them and plan for them. First, policy RDF1 would require a brief addition to the effect that identifying sub regional urban centres, and their roles and functions within the city regions, is a key activity in understanding and planning for the two city regions as a whole.
6.40. Second, the separate chapters for the city regions should identify these sub regional centres, and their roles and functions within the city region as a whole. This would give a greater coordinating spatial structure that currently exists in these chapters. Objectives could be set on the basis of the roles and functions to ensure that development in the centres was of a type and scale best suited to furthering the sustainability of the city region as a whole.

6.41. **We have not made a recommendation for sub regional urban centres.** Our recommendations for freestanding towns, towns in a network and towns under strong urban influence all extend policy already in the RSS, but policy for sub regional urban centres would be entirely new. We feel this policy is needed, but as stated above do not feel that this study has been able to fill in the full strategic picture concerned.

6.42. **What is needed to fill in this strategic picture is work which looks at the whole functionality of the conurbations, which has not yet taken place. This needs to encompass the roles of their centres, and of other foci for services and employment. This does not mean just the urban centres such as those considered in this study, but also features such as major service locations, be they public sector ones such as hospitals, or leisure and entertainment facilities, or large retail centres and parks or areas of employment not really attached to any traditional urban centre.**

6.43. **How these are all joined up by transport is a leading issue. Conurbation issues such as green infrastructure are also important. For the urban centres the key point is the need to understand the conurbations and city regions as whole spatial systems and thus where in them the third tier centres sit. Looking at the urban centres alone cannot do this.**

6.44. **Local urban centres** are a tier below sub regional urban centres, and so should not be identified in the RSS. However should the RSS add policy addressing sub regional urban centres, this policy should also set in place the need for local policy to take up this spatial structure, and join it with an understanding of the roles and functions of the local centres linked to the sub regional centres in the conurbations.

**Investment**

6.45. Throughout the study a consistent concern expressed by those assisting us has been that if centres are not ‘named’ in the RSS that they will therefore be denied necessary investment in favour of those centres that are named. Thus in consultation we had ample objections that centres had not been identified as of sub regional significance, but few requests to move sub regional centres to local centres.

6.46. **The basis on which we have made the distinctions between the different types of sub regional centres and local centres is justified above. The evidence we have used is transparent and available. This study has had as its clear focus the RSS – a statutory spatial planning policy document. Thus our concern has been the future planning of these the centres. Of course spatial planning is now much more closely linked with other forms of strategic planning and intervention, but to be clear we have never been asked or sought to answer**
the question ‘which of the candidate centres are the best places for public investment?’ This is a different sort of question to those we have answered in this study, though related.

6.47. Thus it needs to be stated emphatically that this study should not be taken as answering such a question. It should also be pointed out that one of the questions that the study did address is where new development should be directed to and what sort of development it should be. In dealing with this question we pointed out that in addition to development being needed in sub-regional service centres, development would also be needed in local service centres, and that the two are often closely functionally linked.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CACI RETAIL FOOTPRINT CLASSIFICATIONS

1. **Major Centres**: Large traditional high street centres located in the centre of large towns or ‘secondary’ regional cities.
   - **Premium Centres**: High proportion of premium quality retail provision (<50%) and a large number of shoppers.
   - **Quality Centres**: Contain a relatively high proportion of premium quality retailers (<10%), but have a smaller number of retailers.
   - **Average Centres**: Display neither a premium nor value retail provision bias. Typical mass-market centres.
   - **Value Centres**: Display a high proportion of value retailers (<35%), or a slightly lower proportion of value outlets with no premium retailers.

2. **Metropolitan Towns**: Located just outside the suburban fringe of city centres.
   - **Premium Metropolitan Towns**: Premium retailer proportion greater than 16%. Over 15% of store types are represented by clothing or footwear.
   - **Quality Metropolitan Towns**: Smaller retail centres with an upmarket bias.
   - **Average Metropolitan Towns**: Display neither a premium nor value retail provision bias.
   - **Value Metropolitan Towns**: Display bias towards value retailers in greater proportions than other Metropolitan Towns (<45%) and have no premium retail provision.

3. **Regional Towns**: Often called market towns, they tend to be the dominant centres in suburban areas, and as such are the main destination for a large share of shoppers in the immediate areas around the centre.
   - **Quality Regional Towns**: Upmarket destinations: Value provision less than 30% and premium greater than 10% of all outlets.
   - **Average Regional Towns**: Mass retailer dominated (<60%) and represent the average within this class.
   - **Value Retail Towns**: below average regional town destinations, which supply a high proportion of value retail (<30%).

4. **Urban Centres**: Urban Centres by definition are located in large urban areas. The size of centre varies considerably. The share of the resident population visiting the centre is low due to the close proximity of more dominant centres.
   - **Average Urban Centres**: These Urban Centres vary considerably in size reflecting the dense urban areas of their locations and their local offer. The value provision for these centres is less than or equal to 25% of the retail on offer.
   - **Value Urban Centres**: These centres by definition are located in large urban areas. They vary considerably in size and the value provision for these centres is greater than or equal to 20% of the retail on offer.
5. **Local Centres** - Located within easy striking distance of a city centre, but outside of the core urban area illustrating their difference from Urban Centres. They tend to have fewer comparison outlets and are lower in the local shopping hierarchy.

   - **Better Local Centres** - These centres have a bias towards a mass retail offer, with value provision making up less than 25%.
   - **Average Local Centres** - These centres display neither a premium nor value retail provision bias.
   - **Small Local Centres** - The majority of these centres are very small with a very limited retail offer.

6. **Rural Centres** - Rural Centres are located in similar areas to Regional Towns. However, they have a lower level of retail provision. These isolated centres tend to serve the local community effectively but do not have the mix of outlets to encourage shoppers from afar.

   - **Rural Centres**
   - **Small Rural Centres**

7. **Out of Town Regional Malls**: Out of Town Regional Malls, such as the Trafford Centre located in ‘non-traditional’ retail locations, usually on the edge of large urban areas. They tend to offer a strong core range of comparison outlets within a confined centre. These centres often have a catchment which covers a very large physical area.

   - **Average Out of Town Regional Malls** - These centres display neither a premium nor value retail provision bias.
   - **Small Out of Town Regional Malls** - These centres are small regional malls.

8. **Purpose Built District Centres**: Purpose Built District Centres are essentially smaller regional malls serving a more localised area. They are located in areas serving several towns or districts.

   - **Average Purpose Built District Centres** - These centres make up the majority of District Centres offering major retailers for a mass localised market.
   - **Value Purpose Built District Centres** - These centres have a higher proportion of value retailers with value provision greater than 35%.

9. **Factory Outlet Centres (FOCs)**: Factory Outlet Centres offer a distinct retail mix, focused around providing branded goods at discounted prices. Because the full range of comparison goods is not available, shoppers tend to only visit such centres for a minority of their shopping trips.

   - **Major FOCs Premium Dominated** - These centres are totally dominated by premium retailers with 75% or greater outlets with this quality allocation.
   - **Major FOCs Premium Brands** - Centres such as these have a majority of premium brands compared to the value and mass provision.
   - **Major FOCs Mass Market** - Centres in this class have a majority of mass-market retailers compared to the value and premium provision.
   - **Medium Sized FOCs** - Smaller FO Cs.
   - **Small Sized FOCs** - These are the smallest FOCs and tend to take the form of ‘under-one-roof’ concessions.

10. **Fashion Parks**: Offer a fashion based out of town location, focused on providing a shopping destination for High Street non-discount comparison goods.
• **Super Parks** - These are large Fashion Parks with significant High Street retailer sheds.

• **Major Shopping Parks** - These parks make up the majority of Fashion Parks. The Retail Footprint scores are greater than 40 and fashion retailers make up over 60% of outlets.

11. **Retail Parks** Retail Parks tend to be located in edge of town locations. They offer a very different retail mix from traditional High Streets, with more outlets serving the household goods market (furniture, large electrical) than the comparison goods market.

• **Retail Parks with Fashion** - These are retail parks with a fashion or/and other comparison offer.

• **Retail Parks** - These are traditional bulky goods parks usually containing retail sheds offering household goods such as furniture and large electrical products.
APPENDIX 2: HOUSING MARKET CLASSIFICATION

The housing market classification used for this project follow the methodology developed within Housing Markets preparing for change\textsuperscript{14}.

This 2004 research identified three housing market types: high value integrated markets; low value integrated markets and fragmented markets. Each market type had specific strengths and weaknesses, specific social characteristics and specific risks and opportunities.

A desktop exercise has been undertaken using key data: property type, tenure and price, to assess the housing market type of the KSC settlements. The general principles used to classify markets are:

**High value integrated markets:**
- Tend to be attractive rural and semi-rural settings, or suburban.
- There are a range of different types of home within the settlement, and no single house type or tenure dominates.
- The rungs on the housing ladder start high, but the ladder is relatively complete.
- The cost of entry into owner-occupation - the first rung - is beyond what most people on local wages can afford.
- There is often little to bridge the gap between social renting and the very high cost of buying a first home.
- In some markets local people have difficulty moving up a housing ladder, because the next step on the rung is too expensive.
- Where planning restrictions limit new development, there is often an absolute shortage of properties on the market.
- Intense competition between highly-paid commuters and those in search of a second, holiday, or retirement home forces up prices.
- High value integrated markets tend to have good local schools, and relatively low levels of social deprivation.
- Local services benefit from the spending power of better-off households, and reflect their tastes. This reinforces the attraction of these settlements, and they tend to become even more prosperous and exclusive over time.

**Low value integrated markets:**
- Tend to have large numbers of homes at the bottom end of the housing ladder.
- Along with a severe shortage, or absence, of high value homes.
- They are characterised by large social housing estates and/or large numbers of terraced homes, often provided initially for workers in dominant local industries.
- The social profile of areas dominated by social housing estates, and larger swathes of terraced housing tends to show high concentrations of deprivation.
- Certain pockets experience high turnover and a high incidence of social problems.

\textsuperscript{14} Housing Markets Preparing for change, Blenkinship and Gibbons, 2004
Low value integrated markets may have positive features, such as an historic town centre, easy access to high-quality landscape, or good transport links, but the lack of attractive, high-value housing, and the dominance of social housing estates or swathes of terraced housing prevent them from capitalising on their strengths.

**Fragmented markets**
- Tend to be settlements with an industrial history close to high-quality rural areas or good infrastructure links.
- Often within commuting distance of major centres of employment, and often between high value and low value settlements.
- They often have large numbers of very low value homes, usually small terraced houses built originally for workers in local industries; and a high proportion of social housing.
- The housing ladder often lacks middle rungs, but there are some high-value ‘executive’ style homes, or apartments often segregated from the terraced and social housing.
- The older terraced homes may be occupied by older people who are unable to invest in them, or rented privately by younger, mobile households.
- Increasingly smaller properties in fragmented markets are providing a desirable first rung on the property ladder.
- The social profile of fragmented markets is similarly divided. High levels of deprivation in social housing/smaller terraces co-exist with the prosperity of executive estates or apartment blocks.
- As in low value integrated markets, the availability of cheap terraced housing has recently attracted individual small investors into the buy to let market.

**The relevance of classification**

Each KSC has been classified, which helps to identify where the settlement would fit within the following three Regional Housing Strategy priorities:

- urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand;
- producing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities; and
- delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods.

Low Value Integrated markets will undoubtedly need to address the issues of changing demand, in places on a smaller scale than urban areas, but with the same issues – a dominance of lower valued properties or an oversupply of social rented homes, concentrating deprivation in settlements.

Where KSCs have been classified as High Value markets there will undoubtedly be affordability issues and the policy direction for new development will be the provision of affordable homes to maintain balanced communities – either social rent or intermediate subsidised sale. The development of smaller open market dwellings may also help to create a more evenly distributed housing ladder.

Fragmented markets are the areas which require most strategic co-ordination. They represent markets which are neither one of the above, but with untimely or
inappropriate development, be that economic, infrastructure or housing could be moved to either of the other market classifications.

As the exercise for this research was desktop and limited, some markets which are displayed as fragmented could in fact be perfectly balanced markets - any significant changes brought about through planning policy could unbalance such markets.

**Future change**

The way the housing market behaves in any particular settlement depends on the dynamic interaction between the following; housing market drivers:

- The characteristics of the settlement, and a range of social and economic factors, which are sensitive to change, in accordance with national, regional and local trends.
- The types of households wishing to live there, and their housing needs and aspirations.

High value markets are mainly - though not exclusively - influenced by national and regional factors. In low-value and fragmented markets local factors are more important, and this tends to expose them to greater risks.

By predicting what changes - social, economic, or environmental - are likely, and assessing the impact of planning policy, it is possible to develop new, or amended housing market drivers, and to model how local housing markets may behave in the future.