Rural Services Survey 2012

Background

Community Impact Bucks, working in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group, undertook a Rural Services Survey in the early part of 2012. It was decided to undertake the survey as preparatory work to reviewing and revising the Buckinghamshire and Rural Milton Keynes Rural Strategy.

As the Rural Community Council for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes our work suggests that one of the key issues facing rural communities is access to services. The Rural Services Survey is a key tool to ensure the Rural Strategy is based on up to date information about the services currently provided within our rural communities. It has been many years since comprehensive information about the services available within rural communities was last collected – indeed it was way back in 1999 when it was used to inform the first Rural Strategy. We know that much has changed since then and it is vital that we have a clear picture of what is or is not available.

In January 2012 the Rural Services Survey was distributed in both paper and electronic forms to all rural Parish and Town Councils in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, with the urban areas of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Milton Keynes not included. In the main the survey was completed online and by the end of March 2012 155 Parish and Town Councils had completed forms, an overall response rate of just under 80%. See Appendix 1 for a map of participating Parish and Town Councils.

The overall response rate was good, and similar to that obtained in similar surveys by other Rural Community Councils. However the response rate was not evenly spread over Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes as is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Councils</th>
<th>Number Returned</th>
<th>% Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aylesbury Vale</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiltern</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bucks</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wycombe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buckinghamshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>169</strong></td>
<td><strong>141</strong></td>
<td><strong>83%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bucks and MK</strong></td>
<td><strong>195</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td><strong>79%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response from rural Parish Councils in Milton Keynes was disappointing, although in light of our limited work in that area in recent years this is probably understandable. Follow up action with rural Milton Keynes Parish Councils to increase the level of response was not successful and given the low response rate the decision was taken to focus analysis of the results on Buckinghamshire. The findings set out below relate to Buckinghamshire unless otherwise indicated.

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Summary of Key Findings

The results of the survey present a snapshot of the current extent of local services within rural communities in Buckinghamshire. The survey confirms the vibrancy of many communities which benefit from a broad range of active voluntary and community groups and well used community facilities. However the survey also reveals that many communities, particularly those in the most rural parts of the county, have limited access to what may be regarded as essential services – whether a post office, banking facility, GP surgery, petrol station or bus service.

Using data provided from the survey the map indicates the presence of these five key services. The darkest shading highlights those communities where none of these five services is available and the lighter shading indicates where some or all of the services can be accessed within the community. The pattern of lack of access to services shown in the map complements that already known through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data.

Whilst it is recognised that the data in the Rural Services Survey is not fully comprehensive it helps uncover the services available to rural communities and will act as a baseline for future years.

Post Office and Financial Services

Only a third of rural communities (56 in Buckinghamshire) have access to a Post Office with the chart below showing the type of facility that they have available. See Appendix 2 for a map of Parish and Town Councils with a Post Office. In the main the Post Office is located within other retail premises; although around a quarter still retain standalone post office branches. All but one of the Post Offices are run commercially; with one community run Post Office.
Of those communities with a Post Office, nearly three quarters (44) have the service available for more than 30 hours a week. The remaining quarter (12) have a part time service, with most open for up to 8 hours a week.

Two thirds of rural communities do not have access to a Post Office in their area, although most of these communities have a Post Office within 3 miles. A significant minority of communities (24) have to travel up to 5 miles to access a Post Office.

Virtually all rural communities have a post box within their area, although only two thirds (93) reported a working telephone box.
Rural Services Survey 2012

Just over two fifths (62) of communities have access to some type of banking service within their area (whether a Post Office, bank, cashpoint or PayPoint). See Appendix 3 for a map of Parish and Town Councils with banking facilities. A quarter of rural communities (40) have access to a cashpoint machine in their local area, and a fifth (26) can access a PayPoint facility (usually within a retail premise).

Shops and Other Services

A wide range of shops were reported within rural communities, along with access to mobile services and supermarket (and other) delivery services. The majority of shops are run by private businesses, although 10 community run shops were identified. However 69 communities, nearly half of all rural communities, reported they had no shops.

A small number of rural communities, principally market towns (10) have regular general or farmers markets, mainly weekly or monthly. A small number of rural communities (16) also have a local farm shop.

Over three quarters of communities (105) have a pub, café or take away facility in their area, typically a pub serving food.

Less than a quarter of rural communities (31) are served by a petrol station and half of those communities without a petrol station (53) have to travel over 3 miles to access one. See Appendix 4 for a map of Parish and Town Councils with a petrol station.
Health and Social Care Facilities

About a quarter of rural communities (37) have a GP surgery in their area, and about a fifth (30) have a dental surgery (of which about half provide NHS treatment). See Appendix 6 for a map of Parish and Town Councils with a GP surgery. For communities without a GP surgery, about half (52) have one within 3 miles of their area, with ten communities having to travel more than 5 miles. For communities without a dental surgery two thirds (71) have to travel more than 3 miles to access one, and of these 28 communities have to travel more than 5 miles.

About a quarter (58) of rural communities have a pharmacy or prescription collection point within their area.

Community Facilities

A wide variety of community facilities are provided within rural communities. Nearly all have a church, chapel or other faith related building, and similarly the vast majority of communities have another public building such as a village, church or school hall. Many communities have public open spaces, often with children’s play areas or some form of sports pitch (football, cricket, etc). In addition rural communities support a wide range of social organisations such as scout/guide groups, older people clubs, sports clubs and special interest groups (eg gardening, local history club).

Virtually all rural communities (134) have a public noticeboard used for providing local information. In addition nearly four fifths of rural communities (108) reported having some form of parish newsletter and three quarters (102) have a community related website (often linked to the parish council).

Very few rural communities, less than a fifth (20), reported having public internet access and over a third (40) reported broadband ‘slow’ or ‘not spots’.

Most rural communities, over three quarters (87), have an infant, junior or primary school in their area. Similarly most (95) have a parent/toddler or pre-school group within their local area.

Only a small minority have a police station (less than 10%) and where there is a police station half are open part time. However a significant number of communities are aware of their local Policy Community Support Officers, and have active neighbourhood watch or farm watch schemes.
**Transport**

The majority of rural communities have a scheduled bus service in their area – over 80% (115) reported such a service, and those that have a service reported that the service would enable them to easily visit their closest town without having to make an intermediate change. See Appendix 6 for a map of Parish and Town Councils with a bus service. However as would be expected relatively few rural communities (less than a fifth) benefit from a service that runs on all days of the week.

A small minority of rural communities have a rail station in their area (just over a tenth, 18), and over two thirds of rural communities (61) have to travel more than three miles to access a rail station, with a similar number (58) travelling over 5 miles.
Appendices

1. Map of Parish and Town Councils completing the survey.
4. Map of Parish and Town Councils with a Petrol Station.
7. Rural Services Survey 2012
Appendix 7

Instructions for completing the questionnaire

The information sheet explains that, where possible, the questionnaire should be completed online at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RSS2012

If you cannot fill it in online please complete this paper copy of the questionnaire.

If you have any queries about completing the questionnaire please contact:

Michael Hunt
Community Impact Bucks
Telephone: 0845 3890389
Email: Michael@communityimpactbucks.org.uk

Please mark the boxes with a ✔ or ✗
*Indicates required information

When you have completed the questionnaire please return it in the envelope provided to the address below by 2nd March 2012

Community Impact Bucks (Rural Services Survey)
FREEPOST (SCE 15067)
Aylesbury
HP22 5BR

Section A - About Your Community

*1. Which district/unitary council area do you fall under?

☐ Aylesbury Vale  ☐ Chiltern
☐ Milton Keynes  ☐ South Bucks
☐ Wycombe

*2. a) What is the name of your parish?


*3) What is the name of the village(s) you are completing this survey for?


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Section B – Post Office & Financial Services

4. Is a Post Office service provided in your community?  
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No (if no please go to Question 9)

5. What sort of Post Office service is provided?  
   ☐ Standalone Post Office branch  ☐ Mobile or Outreach Service  
   ☐ Hosted service in a community building e.g. village hall or pub  ☐ Partner service within another retail premises  
   ☐ None  ☐ Other (please specify)  

6. Is the Post Office service managed?  
   ☐ As a private business  ☐ By the community

7. Is the Post Office service open:  
   ☐ Full-time  ☐ Part-time

8. If part-time, how many hours per week is the Post Office service open?  

9. If there is no Post Office service in your community, approximately how far do people have to travel to access the nearest Post Office service?  
   ☐ Less than 1 mile  ☐ 1 to 3 miles  ☐ 3 to 5 miles  ☐ 5 miles+

10. Is there a post box in your community?  
    ☐ Yes  ☐ No

11. Is there a working telephone box in your community?  
    ☐ Yes  ☐ No

12. Are there any banking facilities in your community?  
    ☐ A cashpoint machine  ☐ Post Office counter  ☐ A bank/ building society  ☐ None

13. If there is a cashpoint machine service is it free of charge to use?  
    ☐ Yes  ☐ No

14. If there is a cashpoint machine, where is it located?  
    ☐ Internal (e.g. in a shop, pub or bank)  ☐ External (e.g. an ATM machine on a wall)

15. Is there a PayPoint facility\(^1\) available in your community?  
    ☐ Yes  ☐ No

\(^1\)PayPoint is a retail network for the local payment of household bills, mobile top-ups and cash withdrawals from in-store LINK cash dispensers.
Section C – Shops & Other Services

16. What shops operate in your community? (Please tick all that apply and indicate whether they are managed privately or by the community)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Store</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemist/Pharmacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsagent/Confectioners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers / Beauty Salon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. What mobile shops or delivery vans visit your community? (Please tick all that apply)

- [ ] Baker
- [ ] Butcher
- [ ] Fishmonger
- [ ] Supermarket deliveries
- [ ] Milk and other dairy, soft drinks etc.
- [ ] None

18. Does your community have a farm shop?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

19. If there is a farm shop does it have an alcohol licence?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

20. Does your community have a market? (Please tick all that apply)

- [ ] General Market
- [ ] Farmer’s Market
- [ ] None
- [ ] Other (please specify)

21. If you have a market how often does it take place?

- [ ] Daily
- [ ] Weekly
- [ ] Other (please specify)

22. Are there any pubs, cafés, restaurants or take-aways in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

- [ ] Restaurant(s)
- [ ] Hotel(s) serving food
- [ ] Café(s)
- [ ] Pub(s) serving food
- [ ] Take-away(s)
- [ ] None
23. Is there a petrol station in your community?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

24. If not, approximately how far is the nearest petrol station?  
☐ Less than 1 mile  ☐ 1 to 3 miles  ☐ 3 to 5 miles  ☐ 5 miles+

25. What recycling facilities are there in your community? (Please tick all that apply)  
☐ Kerbside collection  ☐ Clothes & textiles bank  
☐ Paper bank  ☐ Can / tin bank  
☐ Plastics bank  ☐ None  
☐ Bottle bank  
☐ Other (please specify) 

Section D - Health & Social Care Facilities

26. Is there a doctor’s surgery in your community?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

27. If yes, is it:  
☐ A permanent surgery  ☐ A visiting surgery  
☐ Other (please specify):

28. If no, approximately what is the distance from your community to the nearest doctor’s surgery?  
☐ Less than 1 mile  ☐ 1 to 3 miles  ☐ 3 to 5 miles  ☐ 5 miles+

29. Is there a dental practice in your community?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

30. If yes, does it offer NHS treatment?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

31. If no, approximately what is the distance from your community to the nearest NHS dental practice?  
☐ Less than 1 mile  ☐ 1 to 3 miles  ☐ 3 to 5 miles  ☐ 5 miles+

32. What other health services are provided in your community? (Please tick all that apply and indicate whether they are visiting or permanent services)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Visiting</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription collection point</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiropody</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optician</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
33. Are there any adult residential homes or other care facilities in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Residential home
☐ Nursing Home
☐ Day-care centre
☐ Lunch club
☐ Other (please specify):

☐ Sheltered housing
☐ Over 60s club
☐ Meals on wheels

34. Are there any places of worship in your community that are still in use? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Church / chapel
☐ Other (please specify):

☐ None

35. What meeting places do you have in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Village hall / community centre
☐ School hall
☐ Other (please specify):

☐ Church hall

36. Does your community have any of the following amenities? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Sports field
☐ Pavilion
☐ Allotments
☐ A social club
☐ Pocket park / nature reserve

☐ Sports hall
☐ Children’s play area (without equipment)
☐ Children’s play area (with equipment)
☐ Village green/public open space

37. What other sports facilities are there in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Tennis courts
☐ Cricket pitch
☐ Rugby pitch
☐ Floodlit / multipurpose sports pitch
☐ Other (please specify):

☐ Football pitch
☐ Hockey pitch
☐ Bowling green

38. Does your community have any of the following organisations? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Youth organisations (e.g. Scouts, youth club, church club)
☐ Special interest / hobby groups (e.g. W.I, gardening club, local history group)
☐ Environmental groups (e.g. conservation group)

☐ Older people’s clubs / groups
☐ Sports clubs / groups (e.g. football team, tennis club)
☐ Health or fitness group (e.g. Yoga class, slimming group)
Section F - Communication & Information Services

39. What library services are available in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ A permanent library  ☐ A mobile library van
☐ A Library Access Point  ☐ A community-run library (e.g. book café)
☐ Other (please specify) _______________________________________________________________________

40. Which of the following information services are there in your community? (Please tick all that apply and provide additional information as requested)

☐ Public notice boards
☐ Community website(s) e.g. Parish Council website, village website

Please give the website address(es): _______________________________________________________________________

☐ Village Newsletter(s) / Parish Magazine(s).

Please give the names of publications & website address(es) along with contact details (incl email) for publisher/editor where applicable

41. Does your community have any of the following? (Please tick all that apply):

☐ Internet access for public use  ☐ Broadband coverage
☐ Broadband ‘not spots’ or ‘slow spots’

Section G - Childcare & Education

42. Which of the following childcare facilities are available in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Parent and toddler group(s)  ☐ Pre-school playgroup(s)
☐ Nursery(ies)  ☐ None
☐ Childminder

43 Is there an adult education provider in your community?  ☐ Yes ☐ No

44. If no, approximately what is the distance from your community to the nearest adult education provider?

☐ Less than 1 mile  ☐ 1 to 3 miles  ☐ 3 to 5 miles  ☐ 5 miles+

45. Is there a school in your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Infant (Reception to Year 2)  ☐ Junior (Year 3 to 6)  ☐ Primary (Reception to Year 6)
Section H - Transport

46. Is there a scheduled bus service in your community?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

47. If yes, what is the service number?  

48. If there is a bus service, please tell us on what days it operates. (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Monday  ☐ Tuesday
☐ Wednesday  ☐ Thursday
☐ Friday  ☐ Saturday
☐ Sunday

49. If there is a bus service, how often does it run? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ At least once in the morning  ☐ At least once in the afternoon
☐ All day  ☐ Hourly

50. Does your bus service allow you to easily visit your closest town?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

51. Is there a direct bus service to your closest town or do you have to change buses to get there?

☐ Direct  ☐ One change  ☐ Two changes  ☐ Three or more changes

52. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the bus service in your community?


53. What community / voluntary transport schemes service your community? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Community minibus  ☐ Car sharing scheme
☐ Community car scheme  ☐ Taxicard scheme
☐ Dial-a-Ride (either bus or car)  ☐ None
☐ Don’t know
☐ Other (please specify):  

54. If there aren’t any community transport services in your area, would you like more information on how they can be set up?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

55. Is there a rail service in your community?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

56. If no, approximately what is the distance to the nearest rail station?

☐ Less than 1 mile  ☐ 1 to 3 miles  ☐ 3 to 5 miles  ☐ 5 miles+
Section I - Crime Prevention

57. Do you have a police station in your community?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

58. Is the police station:  
☐ Permanent  ☐ Part-time  ☐ Mobile police station

59. Does your community have any of the following? (Please tick all that apply)  
☐ Police Community Support Officer(s)  ☐ A Farmwatch scheme  
☐ Neighbourhood / Home Watch scheme  
☐ Other (please specify):  

Section J – Additional Services

60. Are there any other services provided in your community that are not mentioned elsewhere in this questionnaire? If yes, please list below.
Section K - Contact Details

Please can you provide your name and a daytime telephone number in case we need to contact you with any queries about the responses you have given. (All personal information is kept confidential)

*Name: 

*Daytime telephone number (including area code): 

*Address: 

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire.

Please return it in the envelope provided to the address below by 2nd March 2012.

Community Impact Bucks (Rural Services Survey)
FREEPOST (SCE 15067)
Aylesbury
HP22 5BR