

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).
 The form must be completed and passed to Service Manager (Committee & Administrative Services) no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Head of Members' Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To approve the removal of Shortstown from the Council's Rural Settlements List and to approve the revised Rural Settlements List for 2017/2018, as shown at Appendix A to the attached report, for publication.

2. Date of decision

2 December 2016

3. Reasons for decision

- i. Based on the information available it is considered that by 31 December 2016 the population of Shortstown will exceed 3,000 and, therefore, can no longer be entered in the Council's Rural Settlements list.
- i. To comply with the statutory requirement to determine the Rural Settlements List for Bedford Borough Council in order to enable awards of rural rate relief in 2017/2018.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The determination and publication of the rural settlements list is a statutory requirement.

5. How decision is to be funded

The reduction in rates yield due to the award of rural rate relief is taken into account in determining the non-domestic rates yield for each financial year.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

2 December 2016 *DM.*

Signed *M P Healdy* Date: 2 December 2016 Name of Decision Taker *CLLR MICHAEL HEADLEY*

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Service Manager (Committee & Administrative Services) as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: *6th December 2016*

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: *14th December 2016*

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO)

Bedford Borough Council – Finance Portfolio Holder

November 2016

Report by the Assistant Chief Finance Officer

Subject: BOUNDARIES OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF RURAL RATE RELIEF 2016/2017

1. Executive Summary

To review and determine the rural settlements in the Borough for the purposes of administration of Rural Rate Relief in accordance with section 42B of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

2. Recommendation

The Portfolio Holder is recommended approve the removal of Shortstown from the Council’s Rural Settlements List and to approve the revised Rural Settlements List for 2016/2017, as attached at Appendix A, for publication.

3. Reason for Recommendation

- i. It appears that by 31 December 2016 the population of Shortstown will exceed 3,000 and, therefore, can no longer be entered on the Council’s Rural Settlements list.
- ii. To comply with the statutory requirement to determine the Rural Settlements List for Bedford Borough Council in order to enable awards of rural rate relief in 2016/2017.

Key Implications

4.1 Legal Issues

The Council is required to determine annually the rural settlements within its area where the population of the settlement is less than 3,000 and to publish a list of settlements before 31 December each year.

Non-Domestic properties situated within such a designated rural settlement that meet certain qualifying criteria are eligible for relief from payment of the Non-Domestic Rates.

4.2 Policy Issues

To be eligible for mandatory rural rate relief a business must be located in a qualifying rural settlement which has a population of no more than 3,000 and falls wholly or partly in a rural area designated for the purposes of the rate relief scheme by the Secretary of State. It is the responsibility of the local authority to determine which settlements in its area meet these criteria and place them on the authority's Rural Settlements List.

The current Rural Settlements List has been reviewed to take account of the latest population statistics available.

The Council has an agreed policy for the award of discretionary rate relief to small businesses in rural settlements and the determination of the Rural Settlements List is also necessary in order for the Council to exercise its discretion in accordance with the policy.

4.3 Resource Implications

The Rural Settlements List currently facilitates the award of rate relief worth **£117,000** in 2016/2017 for small rural businesses. This consists of **£51,000** in mandatory rural rate relief and **£66,000** in discretionary rate relief.

Awards of rate relief reduce the overall rates yield and, since the localisation of business rates from 1 April 2013, result in a corresponding reduction in the Council's retained share of 49% of the rates yield. The effect of rural rate relief is taken into account when determining the non-domestic rates yield for the forthcoming financial year as part of the Council's budget setting process.

4.4 Risk Implications

It is a legislative requirement to determine and publish the list of rural settlements before 31 December in each year. Should the list not be published the Council may be unable to award rural rate relief resulting in small rural businesses being required to pay the full amount of business rates.

4.5 Environmental Implications

There are no identifiable environmental implications.

4.6 Equalities Implications

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010.

A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that the activity has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An equality analysis is not needed.

5. Details

- 5.1 The Council is required to determine those settlements within its area which it considers to be rural settlements for the purposes of awarding rural rate relief.
- 5.2 To be designated as a rural settlement the settlement must have a population of no more than 3,000 and fall wholly or partly in a rural area designated for the purposes of the rate relief scheme by the Secretary of State.
- 5.3 The current Rural Settlements List has been reviewed to take account of the latest population available to the Council and any changes in the composition of rural settlements. There has been a significant increase in the population of Shortstown in recent years due to the construction of new dwellings and it appears the population of that settlement will exceed 3,000 by 31 December 2016. Therefore, the settlement of Shortstown can no longer be entered into the Council's Rural Settlements List from 2016/2017. The revised Rural Settlements List proposed for 2016/2017 is shown at **Appendix A**.

6. Summary of Consultations and Outcome

The following Council Units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Management Team
Relevant Officers

No adverse comments have been received.

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File Reference: L.6(d)

Previous Relevant Minutes: None

Background Papers: None

Appendices: A – Proposed Rural Settlements List as at 31 December 2016

**LIST OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS UNDER SECTION 42B OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2016**

In the Parish of:	Rural Settlements	In the Parish of:	Rural Settlements
Great Barford	Great Barford	Melchbourne & Yielden	Melchbourne
Little Barford	Little Barford		Yielden
Biddenham	Biddenham	Milton Ernest	Milton Ernest
Bletsoe	Bletsoe	Oakley	Oakley
Bolnhurst & Keysoe	Bolnhurst	Odell	Odell
	Keysoe (except Keysoe Row)	Pavenham	Pavenham
	Keysoe Row	Pertenhall	Pertenhall
Bromham	None	Podington	Podington
Cardington	Cardington		Farndish
Carlton & Chellington	Carlton & Chellington		Hinwick
Clapham	None	Ravensden	Ravensden (excluding Church End)
Colmworth	Colmworth		Church End, Ravensden
Cople	Cople	Renhold	Renhold (excluding Salph End)
Dean & Shelton	Lower Dean		Salph End
	Upper Dean		Renhold
	Shelton	Riseley	Riseley
Eastcotts	Cotton End	Roxton	Eaton Socon
	Wilshamstead (See also Wilshamstead Parish)		Wyboston (See also Staploe & Duloe Parish)
	Old Harrowden		Chawston
			Colesden
Elstow	Elstow		Begwary (See also Staploe & Duloe Parish)
	Abbeyfields		Roxton
Felmersham	Felmersham	Sharnbrook	Sharnbrook
	Radwell	Stagsden	Stagsden
Great Denham	Great Denham	Staploe & Duloe	Colmworth (See also Colmworth Parish)
Harrold	Harrold		Bushmead
	Little Odell		Duloe
Kempston Rural	Kempston Hardwick (See also Stewartby Parish)		Honeydon
	Church End/Green End/Cemetery Rd		Staploe
	West End/Box End		Begwary (see also Roxton Parish)
	Wood End	Upper Staploe	
	Gibraltar Corner/Ridge Road	Wyboston (See also Roxton and Wyboston Parishes)	
Knotting & Souldrop	Knotting	Little Staughton	Little Staughton
	Souldrop	Stevington	Stevington

In the Parish of:	Rural Settlements	In the Parish of:	Rural Settlements
Stewartby	Stewartby	Wilshamstead	Wilshamstead
	Kempston Hardwick (See also Kempston Rural Parish)	Wixams	Wixams
Swineshead	Swineshead	Wootton	Hall End
Thurleigh	Thurleigh	Wyboston, Chawston, and Colesden	Wyboston (See also Staploe & Duloe Parish)
Turvey	Turvey		Chawston
Wilden	Wilden		Colesden
Willington	Willington	Wymington	Wymington