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## 1: INTRODUCTION

This paper evaluates access to services within Three Rivers. Services assessed are education, health care, shops, post offices and library services, as well as bus and rail services in the district. Issues and locations of need will be identified, and possible future actions to address this considered.

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Proposed Changes document has allocated 4000 additional dwellings to be provided in Three Rivers over the period 2001-2021. This is equal to 12% of the Three Rivers total dwelling stock in 2001<sup>1</sup>, and represents a significant level of development. It is therefore important to assess the impacts that this development would have on the district, including on the requirement for service provision.

The paper will provide background to the Local Development Framework (LDF), and will inform the development or adjustment of policies where appropriate. The production of Local Development Frameworks should highlight where there are gaps in local service provision, and subsequently identify sites suitable for development of services to address these shortfalls. In order to do this planning authorities will need to work closely with the key providers and funders of services, across both public and private sectors.

Poor levels of access to services and facilities have significant consequences for social exclusion. The Government considers that access to employment, health care, education and food retail facilities has the greatest impact on people's life chances. Planning has an important role in addressing these issues. 'Accessibility planning' offers a new way to find and solve local problems, through assessing whether people experiencing social exclusion can reach the services they need, and identifying action to take if they can't<sup>2</sup>. Access to services affects some parts of the community more than others; elderly, disabled, young and people without access to transport are likely to be most affected.

In order to reduce social exclusion, people must be able to access the services they need. This may be achieved through improvements to local transport facilities, as well as to how, when and where services are provided. An integrated approach to dealing with service provision is therefore required in order to be effective in reducing social exclusion. Improvements to accessibility involve ensuring that people are able to reach the services they need- either through being able to travel to the service, or through the service being available where they are<sup>3</sup>. Land use planning policy will be essential to delivering accessibility improvements for the most disadvantaged groups and areas since difficulties in access are often as much due to the location of key services and facilities as to the quality of transport links.

In order to inform planning for accessibility, access to services will be considered through assessment of the index of deprivation 'barrier to services' indicator, a mapping audit of provision within the district, and analysis of the public perception of access to services. This should highlight areas and/ or services lacking provision, which may then be carried forward for detailed consideration in the course of the LDF. The availability of open space and leisure facilities in Three Rivers is considered in a separate assessment.

## 2: POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1: PPS1: DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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<sup>1</sup> Census, 2001

<sup>2</sup> ODPM (2003) *Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion*, Social Exclusion Unit, February 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport (2004) *Guidance on Accessibility Planning*, 2004, p3).

PPS1 emphasises the role of planning in the delivery of sustainable communities. Development should support existing communities and contribute to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services. Service and infrastructure provision should run parallel to economic development and housing. PPS1 states that in the preparation of development plans, authorities should provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shopping leisure and community facilities, open space, and sport and recreation facilities. Access should ideally be on foot, by bicycle or public transport, reducing reliance on the private car, although it is recognised that this may be more difficult to achieve in rural areas<sup>4</sup>.

PPS1 requires local planning authorities to ensure that suitable locations are available for industrial, commercial, retail, public sector (e.g. health and education), tourism, and leisure developments. In order to ensure provision of appropriate facilities, it is necessary to first assess existing service provision and the demand for additional services.

## 2.2: PPS12: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

One of the requirements of PPS12 in the development of Local Development Frameworks is that the policies contained within the documents should be based on assessment of the economic, social and environmental needs of the area and of any constraints to meeting those needs<sup>5</sup>. It is therefore necessary to carry out assessment of facilities to understand needs and inform policies.

## 2.3: PPS3: HOUSING

PPS3 encourages local planning authorities to build in locations which are accessible and well connected to public transport and community facilities and services<sup>6</sup>. In order to achieve this, facilities and services should be assessed before consideration is given to the question of areas to which development should be directed.

## 2.4: PPG13: TRANSPORT

PPG13 requires all major new development to be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. It states that in assessing the suitability of sites for housing development, local planning authorities should consider location and accessibility to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility<sup>7</sup>. This necessitates an assessment of access to services in order to determine appropriate locations for new development.

## 2.5: REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (PROPOSED CHANGES)<sup>8</sup>

The East of England RSS Proposed Changes document has a set of objectives which include

- to ensure that new development fulfils the principles of sustainable communities, providing a well designed living environment adequately supported by social and green infrastructure
- and to promote social cohesion by improving access to work, services and other facilities, especially for those who are disadvantaged.

Core policy SS1 of the RSS seeks to achieve sustainable development and to maximise the potential for people to form more sustainable relationships between their homes, workplaces, and other concentrations of regularly used services and facilities, and their means of travel between

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<sup>4</sup> ODPM (2005) *PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development*, HMSO, London.

<sup>5</sup> ODPM (2004) *PPS12: Local Development Frameworks*, HMSO, London

<sup>6</sup> Communities and Local Government (2006) **PPS3: Housing**, HMSO, London.

<sup>7</sup> DETR (2001) **PPG13: Transport**, HMSO, London.

<sup>8</sup> GO-East (2006) *East of England Plan, the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and Statement of Reasons*, GO-East, Cambridge

them. Development should be well connected in terms of good transport services, and well served by public, private, community and voluntary services.

The Strategy also states that careful examination of how a settlement, or group of settlements, function is required, together with analysis of the service base, in order to determine the best solutions for each area. The RSS therefore demands assessment of facilities in the district to inform the preparation of development documents.

## 2.6: COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2003-08

The Three Rivers Community Strategy states that it will not necessarily advocate the allocation of new resources; it is instead an opportunity to evaluate current activities, identify opportunities for joint working and to target resources to where they will best meet community needs. The Strategy identifies priorities for action in Three Rivers, none of which include the provision of new services. Instead the focus of priorities in the Community Strategy is on the improvement of existing services and facilities, and on improving access to them.

## 3: BARRIERS TO SERVICES

The indices of deprivation (2004) include a combined road distance to services indicator 2001-2003. This indicator measures the distance in kilometres by road from the population weighted centroid (using total population) of lower super output areas to a GP surgery, primary school, post office, and supermarket or convenience store. The average road distances to each service for wards in Three Rivers are shown below.

Table 3.1: Average road distance by ward to services

	GP Surgery	Primary School	Post Office	Supermarket or Convenience Store	Average	Ward Rank in Three Rivers
Abbots Langley	0.87	0.83	1.03	1.63	<b>1.09</b>	<b>10</b>
Ashridge	0.97	0.45	0.61	1.19	<b>0.80</b>	<b>5</b>
Bedmond & Primrose Hill	2.19	1.19	1.16	1.29	<b>1.46</b>	<b>15</b>
Carpenders Park	2.57	0.85	0.81	0.84	<b>1.27</b>	<b>12</b>
Chorleywood East	2.49	1.54	2.38	2.60	<b>2.25</b>	<b>19</b>
Chorleywood West	0.95	0.76	1.12	1.08	<b>0.98</b>	<b>7</b>
Croxley Green	0.73	0.52	0.64	0.60	<b>0.62</b>	<b>1</b>
Croxley Green North	1.03	0.71	0.52	0.88	<b>0.78</b>	<b>3</b>
Croxley Green South	1.22	0.95	0.79	1.20	<b>1.04</b>	<b>9</b>
Hayling	1.35	0.53	0.60	1.15	<b>0.91</b>	<b>6</b>
Langleybury	1.69	0.85	1.00	2.17	<b>1.43</b>	<b>14</b>
Leavesden	1.67	0.73	1.13	1.38	<b>1.23</b>	<b>11</b>
Maple Cross & Mill End	2.41	0.57	1.04	2.20	<b>1.56</b>	<b>16</b>
Moor Park & Eastbury	1.60	1.40	1.52	1.95	<b>1.62</b>	<b>17</b>
Northwick	0.64	0.52	0.70	0.81	<b>0.67</b>	<b>2</b>
Oxhey Hall	1.96	1.60	1.33	1.75	<b>1.66</b>	<b>18</b>
Penn	1.69	0.84	0.70	0.71	<b>0.98</b>	<b>7</b>
Rickmansworth	1.73	1.42	1.32	0.83	<b>1.32</b>	<b>13</b>
Rickmansworth West	0.85	0.95	0.67	0.65	<b>0.78</b>	<b>3</b>
Sarratt	1.90	1.16	1.25	4.88	<b>2.30</b>	<b>20</b>

Although it is recognised that this data only covers four services, the average scores and rank in Three Rivers put Croxley Green, Northwick, Rickmansworth West, Croxley Green North, and Ashridge as the five Three Rivers wards with the shortest road distance to travel to services. Maple Cross and Mill End, Moor Park and Eastbury, Oxhey Hall, Chorleywood East, and Sarratt are the five wards with the greatest road distance to travel to services.

Analysis of individual lower super output areas (LSOA) shows that Chorleywood East has the greatest number of LSOAs in the bottom ten for access to the four services considered. LSOA Three Rivers 004B, in the south of Chorleywood East ward is in the bottom ten for access to each of the four services. Croxley Green ward has the greatest number of super output areas in the top ten for access to services, and LSOA Three Rivers 006A in the south of Croxley Green ward is in the top four for each service. Summaries of the wards with LSOAs in the top and bottom ten for access to services are shown in tables 3.2 and 3.3.

Table 3.2: Wards by the number of LSOAs in the bottom ten for access to GP, primary school, post office or supermarket/ convenience store (greatest road distance)

Ward	Number of LSOAs
Chorleywood East	10
Maple Cross and Mill End	5
Moor Park and Eastbury	4
Rickmansworth	4
Bedmond and Primrose Hill	3
Oxhey Hall	3
Langleybury	3
Carpenders Park	2
Leavesden	2
Croxley Green South	1
Chorleywood	1
Sarratt	1
Abbots Langley	1

Table 3.3: Wards by the number of LSOAs in the top ten for access to GP, primary school, post office or supermarket/ convenience store (shortest road distance)

Ward	Number of LSOAs
Croxley Green	9
Northwick	6
Croxley Green North	4
Ashridge	4
Rickmansworth West	3
Carpenders Park	2
Chorleywood West	2
Leavesden	2
Hayling	2
Croxley Green South	2
Abbots Langley	1
Maple Cross and Mill End	1
Rickmansworth	1
Penn	1

This indicator takes an average value of road distance to each service from the population weighted centroid of each lower super output area, and these values have then been aggregated up to allow assessment at the ward level, however this means that small areas with particular issues in access to services may be masked. Therefore additional methods have been used in order to assess access to services in Three Rivers.

#### 4: ACCESS STANDARDS

In order to determine levels of access to services, it is necessary to define the distance between homes and services, under which the service may be considered accessible. In order to determine reasonable access distance to community facilities, information from 'Sustainable Settlements'<sup>9</sup> and from PPG13: Transport<sup>10</sup> has been used. These provide distance thresholds for different travel modes. This information indicates that:

<sup>9</sup> Barton, H. *et al* (1995), Sustainable Settlements: a guide for planners, designers and developers, UWE, Bristol

<sup>10</sup> DETR (2001) **PPG13: Transport**, HMSO, London.

- Important facilities to which people can usually be expected to walk to should be a maximum of 400m away.
- Local facilities which are ideally accessible by foot should be a maximum of 800m away.
- Local facilities to which it is not reasonable to expect all people to walk to, but which could be walked to by those who choose should be a maximum of 1600m away.
- Facilities which are less local but should be within cycling distance should preferably be within cycling distance should be within 5000m, and no more than 8000m away.

Based on these criteria, it has been decided to use the following standards as ideals

Table 4.1: Distance Thresholds for Accessibility to Services

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Lower Distance Threshold</b>	<b>Upper Distance Threshold</b>
Primary School	400m	800m
Secondary School	1600m	3200m
Bus Stop	400m	800m
Rail Station	800m	1600m
GP	800m	1600m
Convenience Store	800m	1600m
Post Office	800m	1600m
Library	800m	1600m
Pharmacy	800m	1600m

The distances cited assume a flat terrain and direct route as a result of the difficulty in mapping these aspects in the absence of specific origin and destination points.

## **5: AUDIT OF ACCESS TO SERVICES**

Maps have been created showing the distribution of services in Three Rivers and the surrounding authorities. Buffers have then been applied representing the upper and lower distance thresholds of each service as shown in table 4.1.

### **5.1: PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

There are 27 primary schools within Three Rivers, as well as schools in surrounding authorities of South Buckinghamshire DC, Chiltern DC, London Borough of Hillingdon, London Borough of Harrow, St Albans DC, Dacorum BC, Watford BC, and Hertsmere BC. Independent primary schools have not been included in the analysis as the cost involved means these schools will not be available as an option for all Three Rivers residents.

The location of primary schools, with 400m and 800m buffers is shown in Appendix 1. This indicates that primary schools are generally distributed across the district. As would be expected, schools are generally concentrated within settlements. The area of Three Rivers within 400m of a primary school is quite limited, but the majority of built up areas are covered by the 800m buffers. Exceptions to this are in Moor Park, Loudwater, Chorleywood East, Oxhey Hall, areas of Kings Langley and Abbots Langley. Much of Sarratt ward has particularly poor access to a primary school.

Hertfordshire County Council is the body responsible for planning for education in Three Rivers. In the current School Organisation Plan<sup>11</sup> covering 2003-2008, a surplus of primary school places was identified in South Oxhey (17.1% in 2002/03). Review was scheduled for summer 2004, and implementation for 2005. In December 2004, Little Furze Primary school was closed as a result of surplus places at this and surrounding primary schools, and of Ofsted's judgement that the school was not providing quality education for its pupils. The School Organisation Plan also identified a shortage in primary school places in Croxley Green (1.7% in 2002/03).

No new primary schools have been built or planned, and expansion of existing is the most realistic option to cope with gradual increase in demand, for example through small scale infill developments. Larger scale residential development may require provision of new facilities to serve the demands of the development.

## 5.2: SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There are 5 secondary schools in Three Rivers, and additional schools in surrounding authority areas. As with primary schools, independent secondary schools have not been included in the analysis due to the cost, removing these schools as an option for many residents. The locations of secondary schools, together with buffers representing the 1600m accessibility threshold and a 3200m threshold are shown in Appendix 2. The distribution of secondary schools in and around Three Rivers is quite uneven, with schools concentrated in Watford and Rickmansworth areas. The 1600m buffer around these secondary schools therefore often overlaps, while large areas of the district are more than 1600m from a secondary school. The area included within the 3200m buffer covers much of the district, though areas of Sarratt and Maple Cross are excluded.

The School Organisation Plan identifies a shortage of secondary school provision across South West Hertfordshire of 3.2% in 2002/03, projected to rise to 5.7% by 2008/09. All secondary schools in Three Rivers are currently oversubscribed, and places in surrounding authorities are also limited. This means that new secondary places will be required, both in Three Rivers and surrounding areas. Provision for these additional places should be expected to occur through expansion of existing secondary schools rather than creation of new schools.

## 5.3: BUS SERVICES

The largest provider of bus services in Three Rivers is Arriva. Additional services are provided by Red Rose Travel, Carousel, Unò, and Sullivan Buses. School services are provided by a variety of suppliers. Bus routes in the district provide links within Three Rivers for residents to major centres of Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Borehamwood, Northwood, Harefield, St Albans, Luton, Tring, Aylesbury, Chesham and Amersham.

The presence of a bus stop does not necessarily indicate good transport connections, as there are large variations in the extent and frequency of routes in the district. Rural areas may be particularly dependent on a service which is infrequent or operates on a partial timetable, for example route 352 serving Sarratt and Belsize operates at two hour intervals, and the R4 which serves Heronsgate provides just 7 routes a day and doesn't operate past 5.30pm.

As there is such variation in the connections provided by a bus stop, they have undergone further assessment. Each route stopping at a bus stop has been scored according to the criteria in table 5.1. The bus stop total scores then come from adding the scores of every route calling at the stop

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<sup>11</sup> Hertfordshire County Council, School Organisation Plan 5, 2003-2008.

together. Scores have been assigned to ensure that, for example two routes with an hourly frequency score the same as one route of 30 minute frequency, while two partial routes will not equate to a route with an hourly frequency.

Table 5.1: Scoring Criteria for Bus Routes

	Score
Route frequency of greater than 60 minutes, or partial route	1
Route has 30-60 minute frequency	3
Route has 15-30 minute frequency	6
Route has 0-15 minute frequency	12

These scores are shown in Appendix 3, along with a 400m Threshold. Although the main settlements have at least some bus service provision there are areas of the district with no bus service cover, for example Moor Park, Loudwater, and parts of Sarratt, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth West and Eastbury. Other areas have some provision, but low bus stop scores indicate this is limited, for example Heronsgate, Sarratt, Kings Langley, Batchworth and parts of South Oxhey and Croxley Green North. People in these areas may have difficulty in accessing bus services, based on the distances involved and the availability of services.

#### 5.4: RAIL STATIONS

There are 6 rail stations in Three Rivers, Croxley and Moor Park stations on the London Underground Metropolitan line, Chorleywood and Rickmansworth stations on the Metropolitan and Chiltern Railways line services, Carpenders Park on the Silverlink Metro service, and Kings Langley station on the Silverlink County service. There are also rail stations in surrounding authority areas to which Three Rivers residents may have access.

The distribution of rail stations in the district is shown in Appendix 4, and indicates that large areas of the district are outside both the 800 and 1600m thresholds around rail stations. Major settlements of Rickmansworth, Chorleywood, Abbots Langley, Croxley Green and Watford rural have some access to a rail station, although the whole settlement may not be within the 1600m threshold. The 800m threshold covers only a small area of the district due to the limited number of rail stations in Three Rivers. Areas of Sarratt, Bedmond, Maple Cross, Loudwater, Langleybury and Leavesden may have particular issues in accessing rail stations due to the large distances involved in reaching a station.

The proposed Croxley Rail Link would re-route and extend the Metropolitan line to Watford Junction by connecting the Watford branch of the Metropolitan line with Network Rail's disused Croxley Green to Watford Junction branch line via a new viaduct approximately 1km north of Croxley Station. As part of the proposal, new stations would be provided at Ascot Road and Watford West in Watford Borough. The scheme has the strong backing of local authorities, the regional authority, Transport for London and public support; there have been problems in securing funding. There are now tentative plans to make funds available for the project in the period 2009/10 to 2015/16.

Apart from the 5.6km stretch between Watford Junction and Kings Langley stations on the West Coast Main Line, which leaves areas of north Watford more than 2.5km from a rail station, the existing rail network within Three Rivers is generally well served by stations. It is therefore unlikely that new rail stations will be provided within Three Rivers, as the costs and impacts of a new



railway line would outweigh the potential advantages due to the limited number of people who would benefit significantly.

## 5.5: GP SURGERIES

There are 11 GP surgeries in Three Rivers, as well as surgeries in surrounding authorities to which Three Rivers residents may have access. The distribution of these, together with 800m and 1600m thresholds are shown in Appendix 5. The areas within 800m of a GP surgery are limited, and although much of the district falls within 1600m of a GP surgery, areas of Sarratt, Loudwater, Maple Cross, Moor Park, Langleybury and Bedmond may have difficulty in accessing these services based on distance alone.

The mapping of GP surgeries does not take account of opening hours, which may be limited; for example the branch surgery at Sarratt is only available for appointments for two hours on weekday mornings. Difficulty in obtaining an appointment is also not considered through mapping, and this may make a significant contribution to how accessible GP services are to residents.

The East of England Strategic Health authority and West Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust are responsible for planning health care provision in order to ensure the health care needs of the community are met. Development Plan Documents should make appropriate provision for development of new health care facilities where this is appropriate, or for the extension and improvement of existing facilities, however control over opening hours, staffing levels and the effects of these on the accessibility of health care are not issues that can be addressed through the LDF process however, and are rather a matter for the Primary Care Trust.

## 5.6: LOCAL SHOPS

Within Three Rivers, there are shopping parades in Rickmansworth (High Street, Moneyhill Parade), Croxley Green (Baldwins Lane, New Road, Watford Road, Scots Hill Parade), Abbots Langley (High Street, College Road, Katherine Place), Mill End (Uxbridge Road, Church Lane, Tudor Parade), Chorleywood (Main Parade, Lower Road, Station Approach), South Oxhey (Hallows Crescent, Prestwick Road, Little Oxhey Road, St Andrews Precinct), Bedmond (Bedmond Road), and Maple Cross (Oakhill Close). There is also a local shop on The Green, Sarratt, as well as individual small shops throughout the district.

A new supermarket is currently under construction in Rickmansworth Station car park (as identified in the Local Plan) which will provide 2514sqm retail floorspace, and the redevelopment of School Mead in Abbots Langley will include 777sqm of commercial floorspace, not less than 50% of which is to be for A1 retail use on completion.

Appendix 6 shows the distribution of convenience stores in the district, with 800m and 1600m thresholds around them. The School Mead and Rickmansworth station car park developments have also been included with thresholds since these will be important facilities on completion. Shops are concentrated in the main settlements, and areas not within at least 1600m of a local shop/ supermarket are limited to areas of Sarratt, Loudwater, Heronsgate, Bedmond, Moor Park and a small area of West Hyde.

It has not been possible to assess the range of goods available from the shops, nor the prices which may effectively be a barrier to access. Therefore although mapping may indicate shops nearby, there may be difficulty in accessing certain services. This is highlighted in the survey of perceived difficulty of access to services, which shows a difference in ease of access to 'local

shops' and 'shops selling fresh fruit and vegetables'. 66.5% of people responded that Local Shops were 'very easy' to access, while just 45.6% of people responded that it was 'very easy' to access a shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables (see section 6 for further analysis of public perceptions of access to services).

The Council can discourage the loss of existing retail use and designate areas for retail through the LDF process; however market forces will determine how realistic continuing retail use is in an area, and the occupation of units by retailers.

## 5.7: POST OFFICE

There are 16 post offices within Three Rivers, and more in surrounding authority areas. The distribution of post offices, along with 800m and 1600m thresholds is shown in Appendix 7. Although much of the district is within 1600m of a post office, areas of Sarratt, Loudwater, Langleybury, West Hyde, Heronsgate and Pimlico may have difficulty accessing post office services based on the distance involved.

Post Office provision is not under the control of planning, and recently post offices have been affected by payment of pensions and child benefit directly into bank accounts, and the availability of TV licences, driving licenses and passports online and through other retailers. The current network of 14 000 post offices has been described as unsustainable; with some four million fewer people are using their post office each week than two years ago<sup>12</sup>. This indicates the possibility of future post office reorganisation in Three Rivers and surrounding areas. This may have significant impacts on the future ability of certain groups, such as those without access to a car or the internet, to access post office services.

## 5.8: LIBRARY SERVICES

Appendix 8 shows the distribution of libraries in and around Three Rivers. There are relatively few libraries within the district, and services are limited to the main settlements of Abbots Langley, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth, Croxley Green and South Oxhey.

In addition, there are mobile library services which greatly increase the coverage of libraries within the district. The Kings Langley mobile library service includes fortnightly stops at locations in Three Rivers such as Maple Cross, Mill End, Chandlers Cross, Abbots Langley, Bedmond, Kings Langley, Belsize, Bucks Hill, Commonwood and Sarratt. The Watford mobile library service includes weekly stops in Oxhey.

Areas with limited access in terms of the distances involved to library services are Moor Park, Loudwater, Chorleywood East and Leavesden. Access may also be limited by opening times, particularly where an area is served only by a mobile library, for example, although Chandlers Cross, Bucks Hill and Commonwood have a mobile library stops, the service is fortnightly, and is only available for a 20 minute period at each location.

Hertfordshire County Council has responsibility for the supply of Library services within Three Rivers. Provision of a new library is unlikely, and instead resources will be concentrated on upgrade of existing facilities, initially focussing on South Oxhey library which has been identified as most in need of improvement to facilities. Access to library services could instead be improved

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<sup>12</sup> BBC, 2006, *2500 Post Offices to Face Closure*, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6176929.stm>

through extension of the mobile library services; however this would not be a planning issue and would fall under Hertfordshire County Council responsibility.

## 5.9: PHARMACIES

Appendix 9 shows the distribution of pharmacies in and around Three Rivers. As expected, services are concentrated in centres of population. Although much of the district is within 1600m of a post office, areas of Sarratt, Loudwater, Maple Cross and Bedmond may have particular issues in accessing pharmacy services based on distance. Planning may be important to the provision of pharmacies through ensuring facilities provided are sustainable.

## 6: PERCEPTIONS OF EASE OF ACCESS TO SERVICES

Over the summer of 2006 Three Rivers District Council completed a survey of the Citizen's Panel. One of the questions focused on access to services. 899 members responded to the survey providing the greatest evidence of public perceptions of ease of access to services at present. Panel members were asked "From your home, how easy is it for you to get to the following, using your usual form of transport?" Fourteen different types of facilities were listed with a fixed response answer for each to be chosen from: very easy; fairly easy; neither easy nor difficult; fairly difficult; or very difficult. The responses are summarised in table 6.1.

In terms of the types of facilities which are perceived as difficult to access, 'cultural/ recreational facilities', and 'local hospital' stand out as having the highest proportion of residents indicating difficulty of access. In each case, over 30% of respondents indicated some level of difficulty in access.

Table 6.1: Percentage of Responses to Ease of Access to a Variety of Facilities by Response Category

	Facility	Very Easy	Fairly Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Fairly Difficult	Very Difficult
1	Cultural / recreational facility	9.2%	30.0%	25.8%	24.2%	10.7%
2	Local hospital	10.3%	32.8%	23.3%	25.1%	8.5%
3	Sports / leisure centre	26.9%	38.7%	18.6%	11.3%	4.5%
4	Council or neighbourhood office	32.5%	39.6%	15.0%	8.0%	4.9%
6	Shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables	45.6%	30.6%	12.3%	8.1%	3.3%
6	Bank or cashpoint	40.5%	37.2%	10.9%	8.3%	3.1%
7	Shopping centre or supermarket	37.1%	41.9%	12.3%	6.3%	2.4%
8	Public transport facility	48.7%	34.3%	8.7%	5.0%	3.4%
9	Post office	60.0%	24.9%	8.0%	5.2%	1.9%
10	GP	57.1%	27.9%	9.1%	4.8%	1.0%
11	Library	54.3%	31.9%	8.2%	3.6%	2.0%
12	Chemist or pharmacy	63.6%	24.9%	7.2%	3.1%	1.3%
13	Local shop	66.5%	23.9%	5.5%	2.6%	1.5%
14	Publicly accessible green space	58.8%	28.9%	8.8%	1.8%	1.6%

Statistical analysis was performed to assess the significance of variations in responses by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, household income and ward of residence.

When data was compared by ward of residence, there was a strong significant difference in ease of access to all facilities, except 'shopping centre or supermarket'. The two wards with responses most commonly above the district average for difficulty in accessing facilities were Bedmond & Primrose Hill, and Sarratt.

The perceived ease of access to each service assessed in the survey, and responses mapped by ward are shown below.

Figure 6.2: Mean response for each facility by ward (1; very easy, to 5: very difficult)

	Ward																				Total
	Croxley Green	Langleybury	Maple Cross and Mill End	Northwick	Carpenders Park	Oxhey Hall	Sarratt	Rickmansworth	Croxley Green South	Moor Park and Eastbury	Leavesden	Penn	Rickmansworth West	Croxley Green North	Chorleywood West	Abbots Langley	Bedmond and Primrose Hill	Chorleywood East	Ashridge	Hayling	
Local shop	1.28	1.79	1.40	1.40	1.42	1.65	1.53	1.57	1.42	1.73	1.57	1.50	1.51	1.62	1.36	1.26	1.82	1.98	1.17	1.24	<b>1.49</b>
Shopping centre or supermarket	2.01	1.98	1.87	1.97	2.14	2.03	2.35	1.57	2.06	2.12	2.10	2.09	1.73	2.24	1.85	1.71	2.06	1.98	2.04	2.06	<b>1.95</b>
Post Office	1.44	1.87	1.70	1.49	1.47	1.55	1.47	1.77	1.48	1.82	2.50	1.87	1.75	1.68	1.34	1.28	2.15	2.10	1.39	1.24	<b>1.64</b>
GP	1.41	1.66	1.60	1.30	1.51	2.17	2.06	1.90	1.90	2.17	2.17	1.87	1.53	1.76	1.33	1.25	1.97	1.88	1.48	1.41	<b>1.65</b>
Chemist or Pharmacy	1.30	1.60	1.69	1.40	1.40	1.77	2.29	1.58	1.94	1.63	1.77	1.57	1.34	1.62	1.32	1.25	1.91	1.78	1.35	1.24	<b>1.53</b>
Shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables	1.80	2.19	2.19	1.57	2.02	1.90	2.18	1.58	2.26	2.28	2.37	2.52	1.97	1.85	1.54	1.53	2.66	2.00	1.78	1.47	<b>1.93</b>
Local hospital	2.39	3.21	2.87	2.80	3.18	2.35	3.56	2.78	2.42	2.82	3.33	3.17	2.98	2.35	3.14	2.91	3.06	2.80	2.96	2.53	<b>2.87</b>
Publicly accessible green space	1.44	1.67	1.45	2.12	2.25	1.45	1.59	1.48	1.39	2.06	1.40	1.74	1.53	1.79	1.26	1.23	1.75	1.61	1.96	1.29	<b>1.58</b>
Public transport facility	1.39	2.00	1.79	1.74	2.10	1.79	2.81	1.78	1.48	2.00	2.10	1.91	1.76	2.18	1.48	1.54	2.13	2.03	1.78	1.88	<b>1.80</b>
Library	1.25	1.80	1.81	1.34	1.88	1.69	2.47	1.60	1.81	2.10	2.17	1.96	1.73	1.65	1.30	1.31	1.91	1.85	1.70	1.47	<b>1.66</b>
Sports / leisure centre	2.76	2.57	1.70	1.80	2.08	2.00	2.81	2.53	3.13	2.52	2.07	1.57	1.87	3.30	2.18	2.23	2.50	2.15	2.00	2.06	<b>2.28</b>
Cultural / recreational facility	2.88	2.62	2.95	3.27	3.47	2.79	3.12	3.24	3.16	3.10	2.04	3.24	2.98	3.50	3.04	2.29	2.87	2.98	3.32	3.50	<b>2.97</b>
Bank or cashpoint	2.40	1.77	1.94	1.69	2.31	2.13	3.06	1.58	2.26	1.94	2.03	2.09	1.76	2.68	1.63	1.34	2.67	2.07	1.78	1.35	<b>1.97</b>
Council or neighbourhood office	2.01	2.24	2.11	1.56	2.56	2.08	2.81	1.73	2.35	2.48	2.78	1.95	1.86	2.35	2.41	1.78	2.82	2.03	1.73	1.69	<b>2.13</b>

Table 6.3: Ward Identification Codes for Mapping of Perceived Access to Services

Code	Ward
1	Bedmond and Primrose Hill
2	Abbots Langley
3	Leavesden
4	Langleybury
5	Sarratt
6	Chorleywood East
7	Chorleywood
8	Maple Cross and Mill End
9	Penn
10	Rickmansworth West
11	Rickmansworth
12	Croxley Green North
13	Croxley Green
14	Croxley Green South
15	Moor Park and Eastbury
16	Oxhey Hall
17	Hayling
18	Northwick
19	Ashridge
20	Carpenders Park

Figure 6.1:

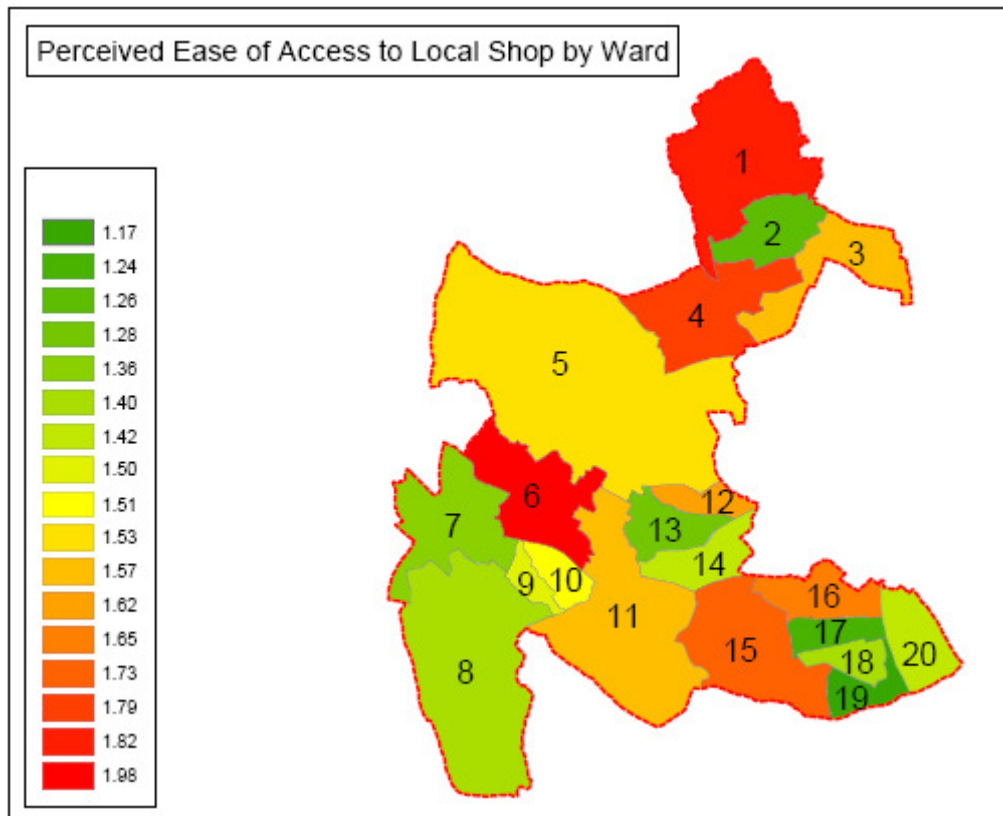


Figure 6.2:

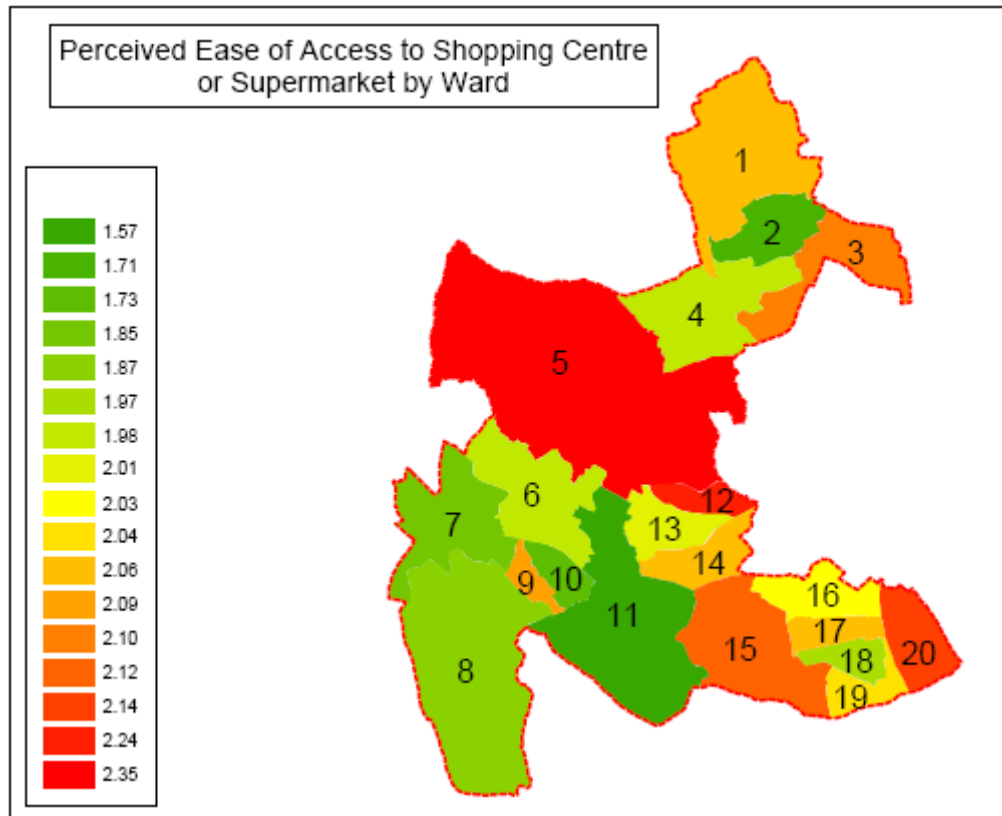


Figure 6.3:

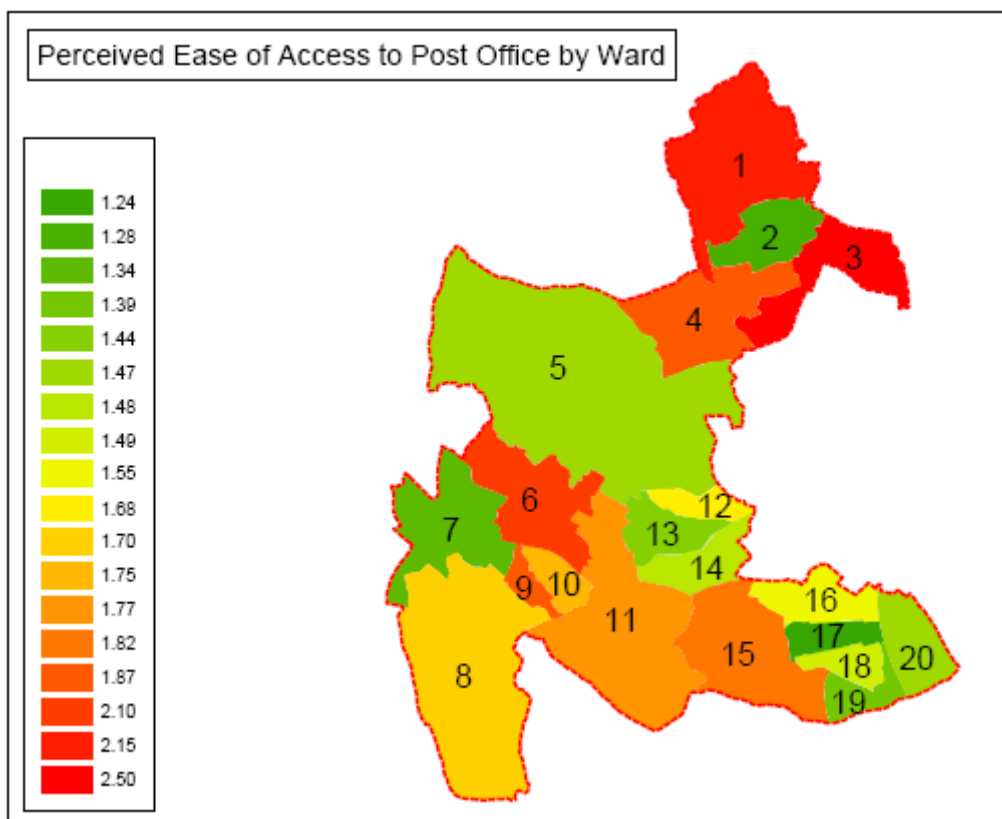


Figure 6.4:

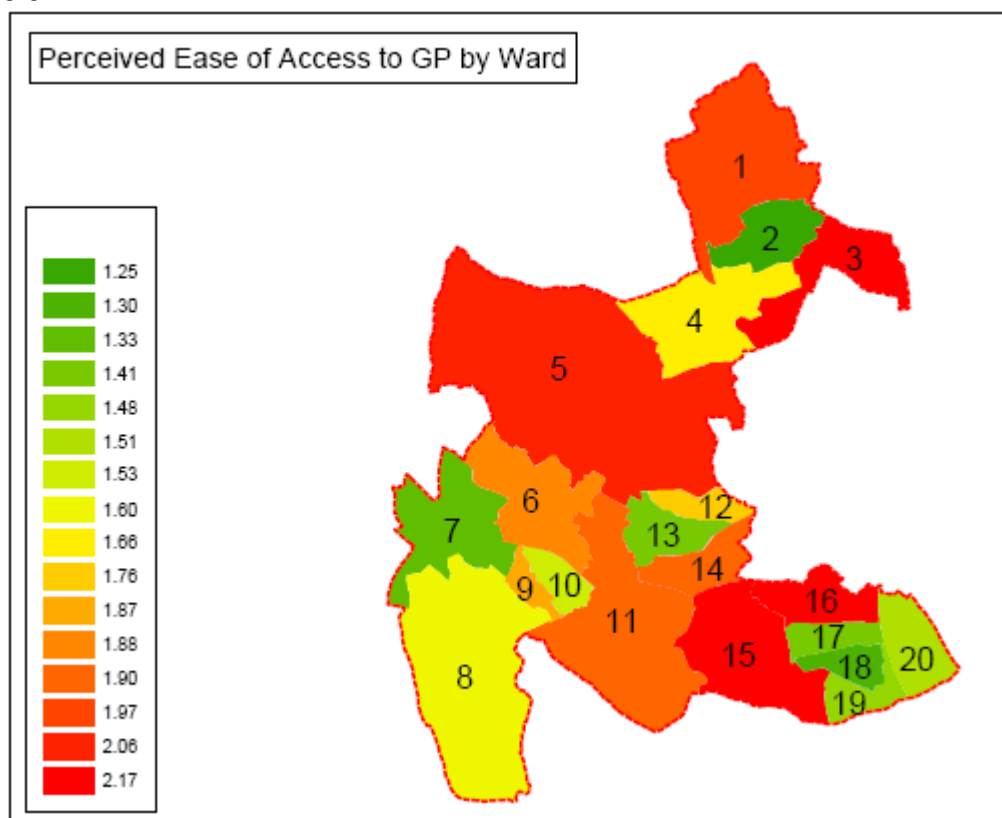


Figure 6.5:

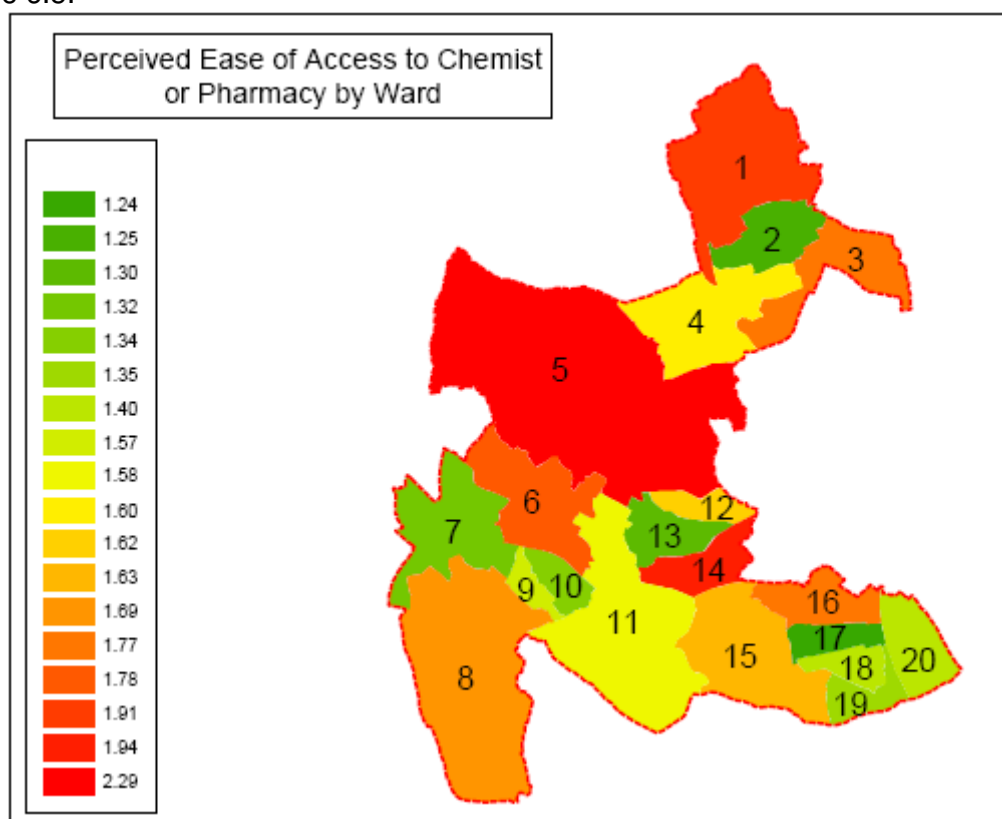




Figure 6.6:

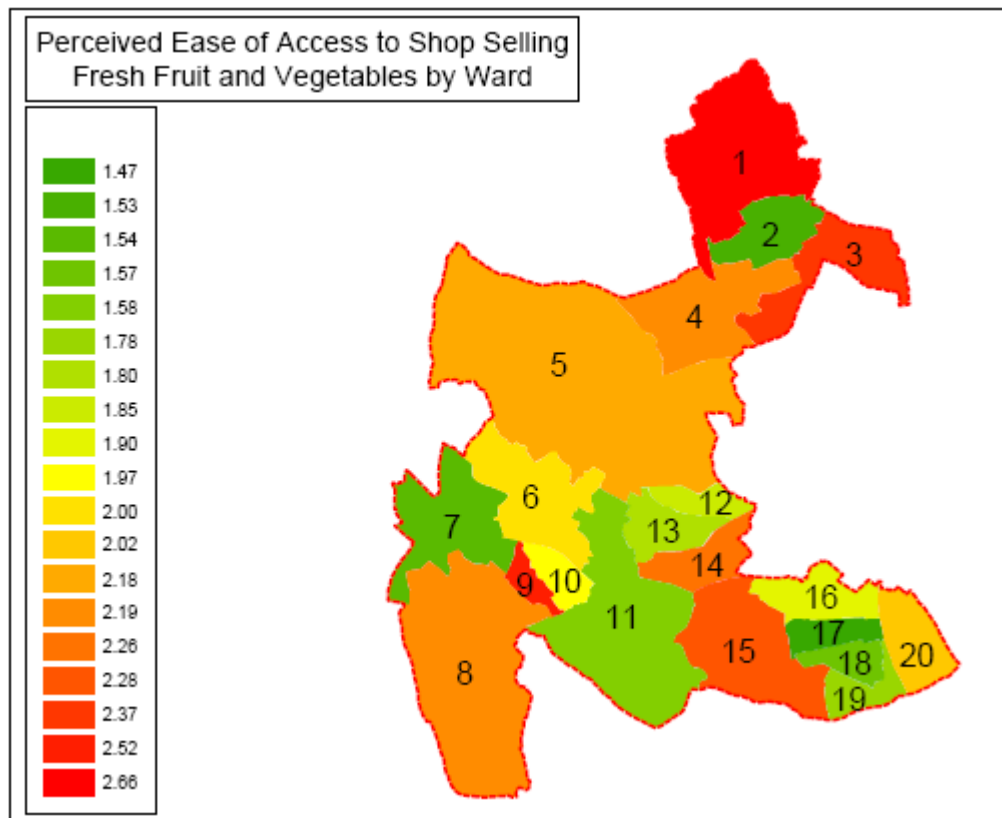


Figure 6.7:

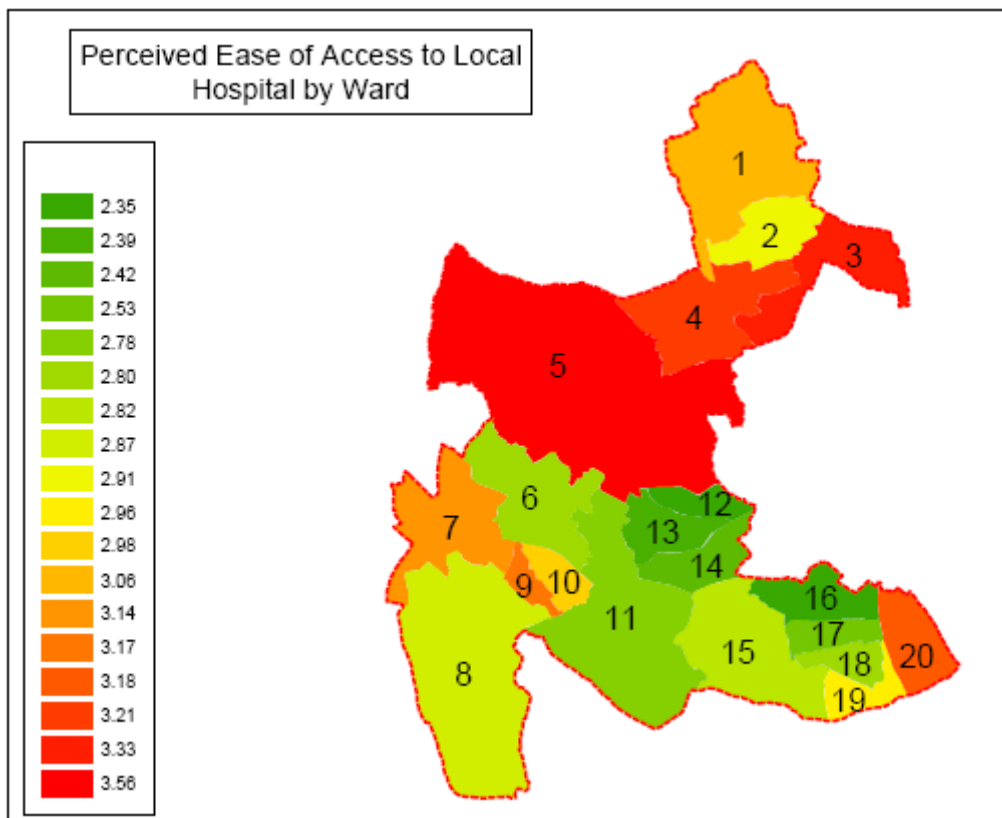


Figure 6.8:

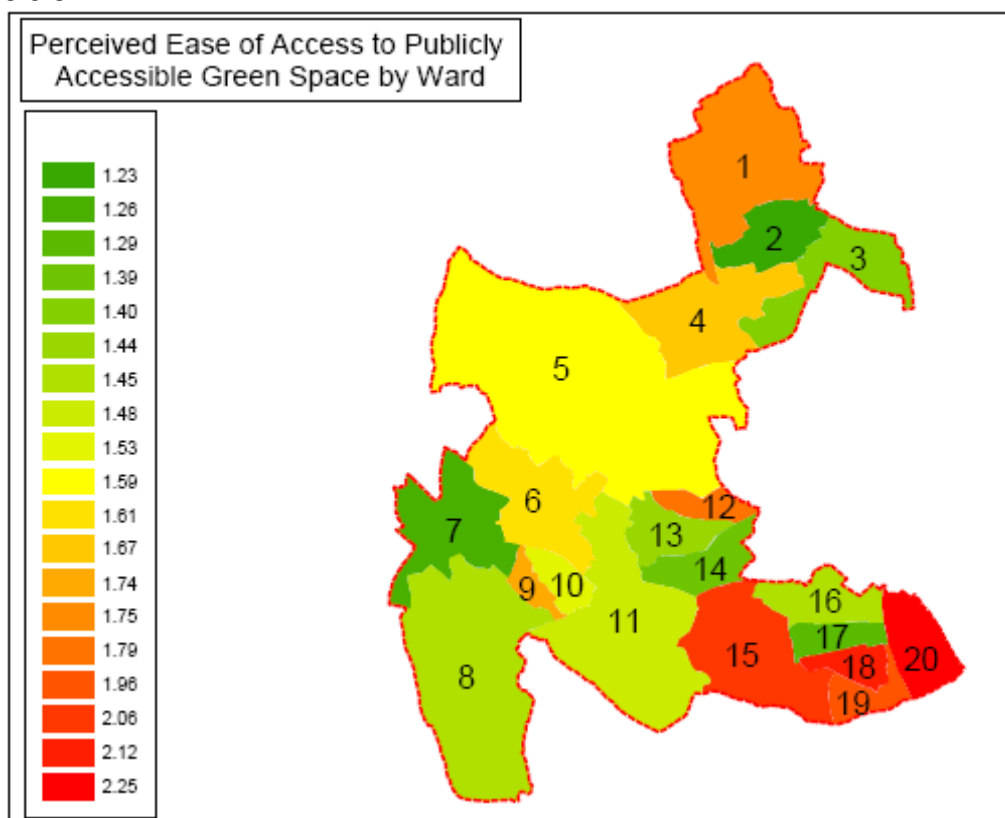


Figure 6.9:

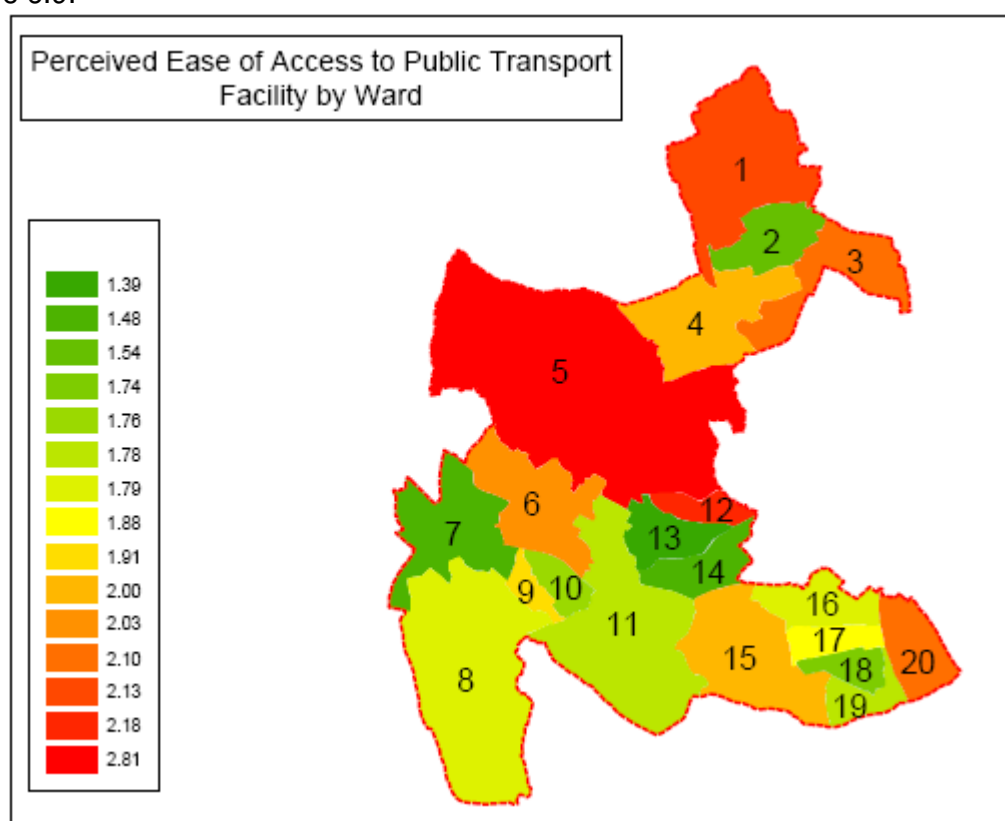


Figure 6.10:

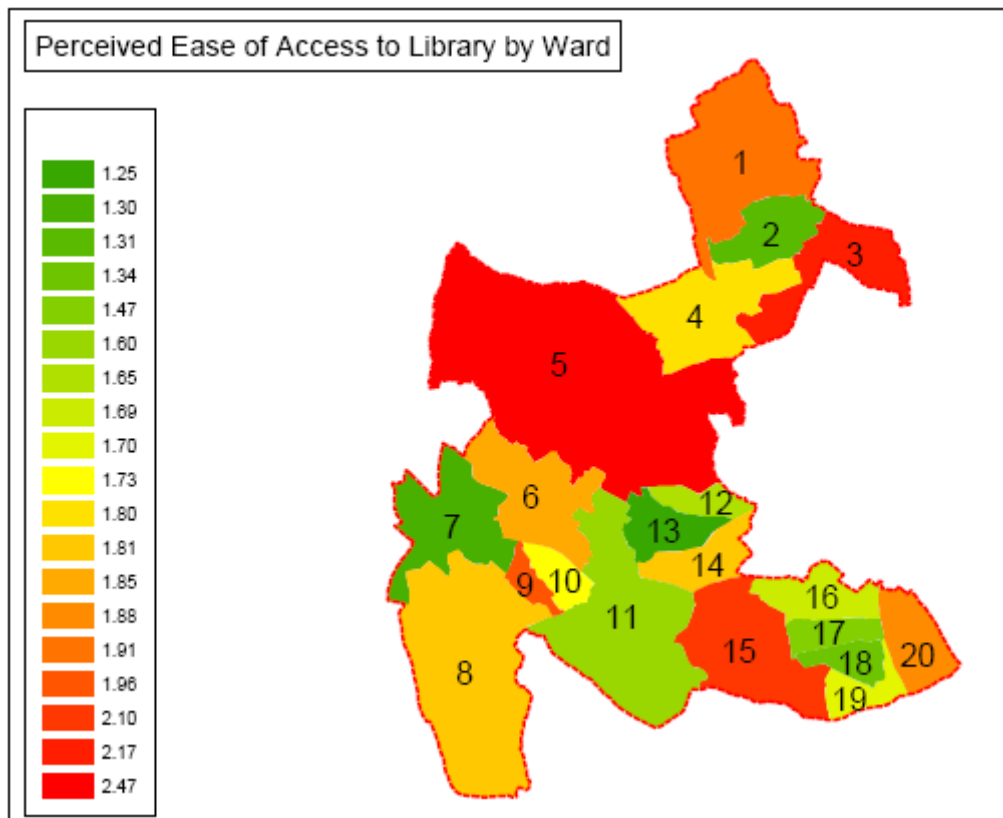


Figure 6.11:

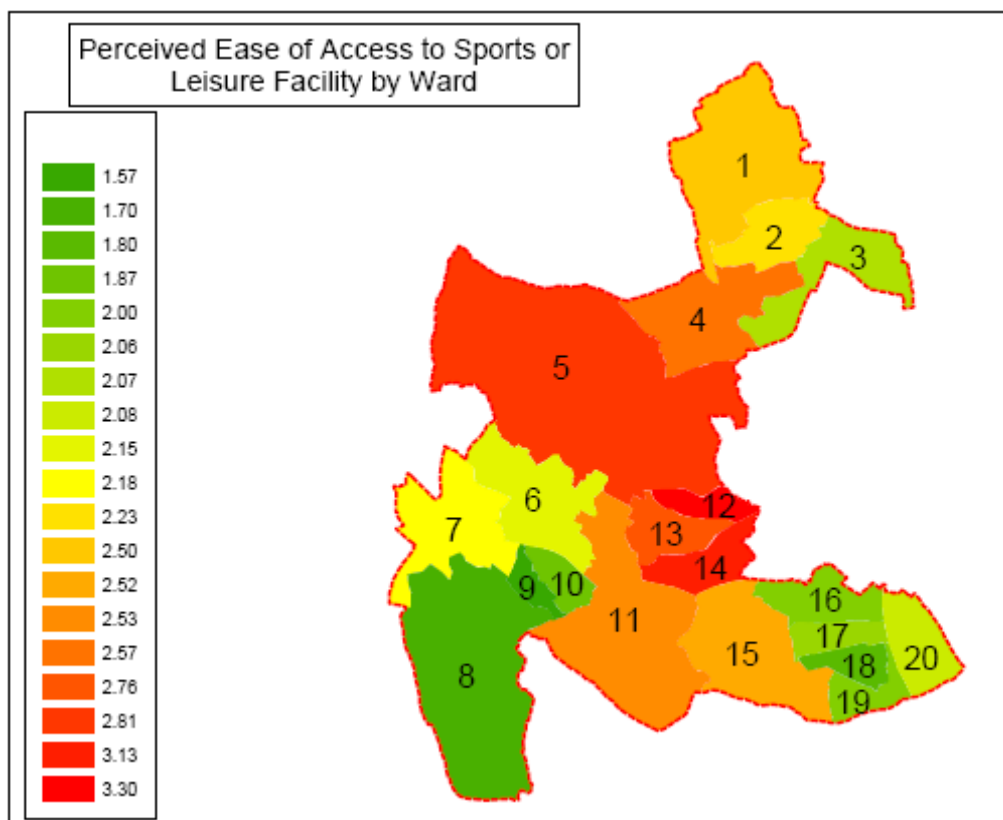


Figure 6.12:

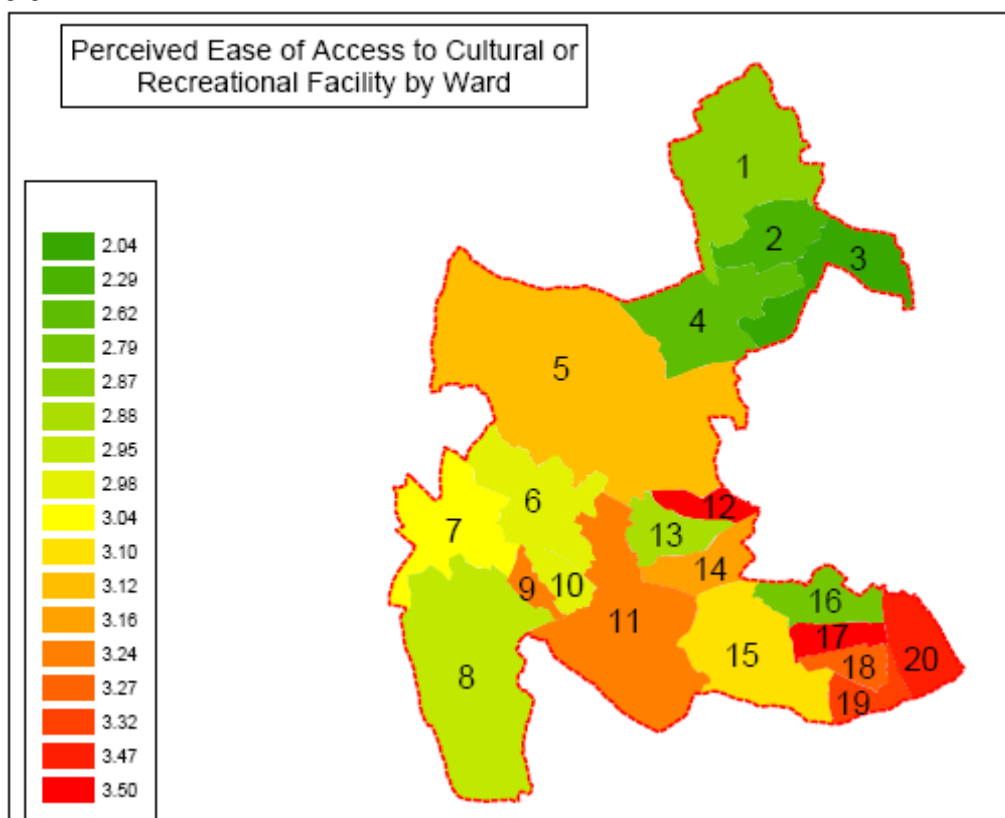


Figure 6.13:

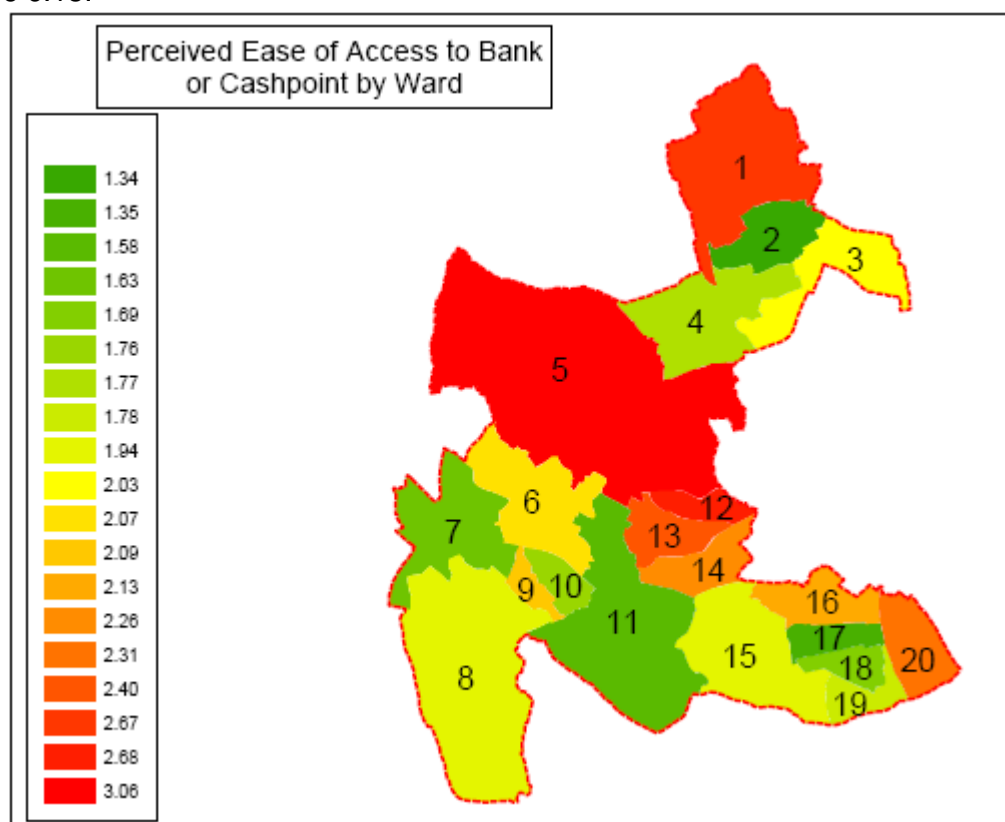


Figure 6.14:

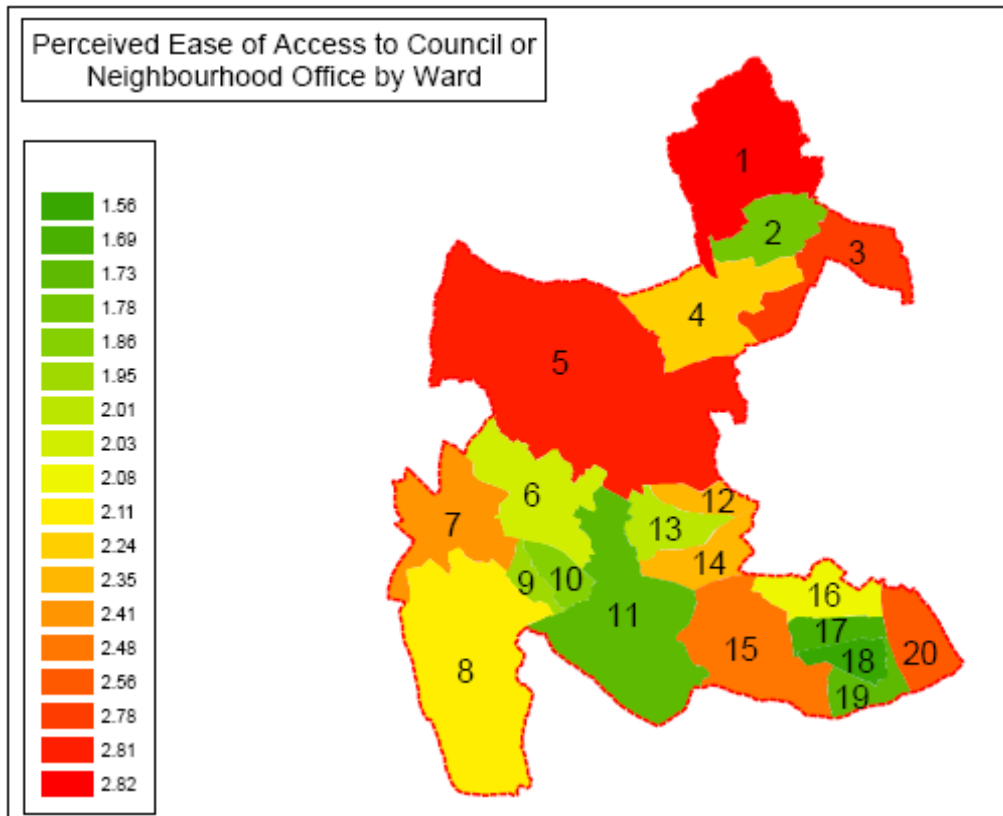
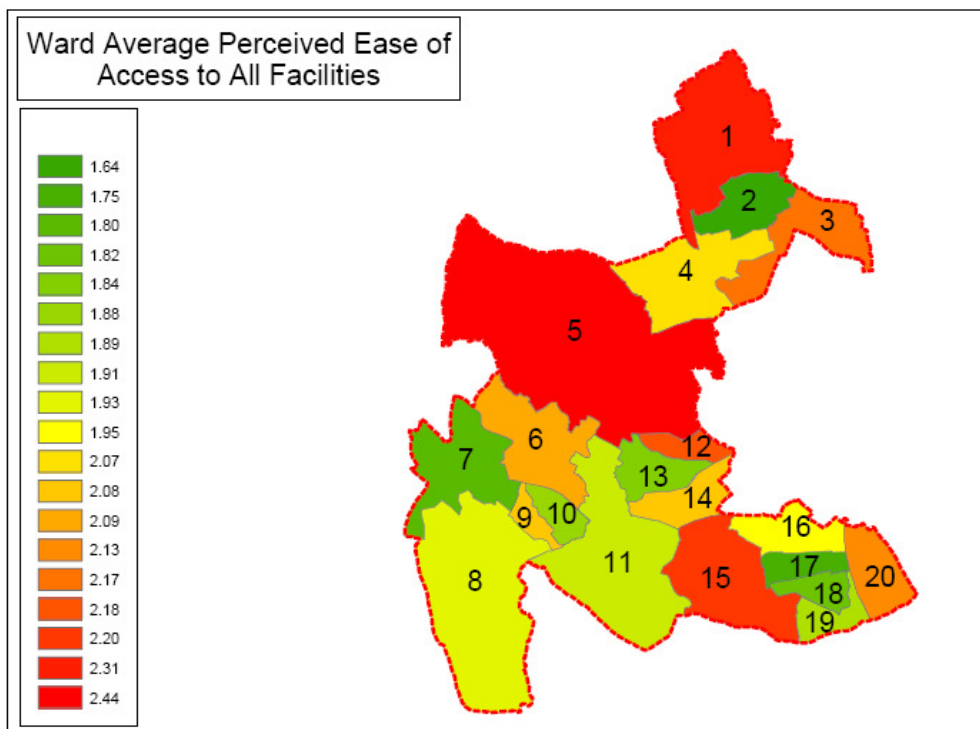


Figure 6.15:



Where the services assessed through the survey coincide with the key services considered through the mapping audit, the patterns of accessibility may be analysed further. Responses to the question of ease of access to services may range from 1 indicating access is very easy, to 5 indicating access is very difficult.

#### 6.1: LOCAL SHOP, SHOPPING CENTRE OR SUPERMARKET

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 map public perceptions of ease of access to a local shop, and to a shopping centre or supermarket, by ward. The responses indicating perceived ease of access to a local shop range from 1.17 in Ashridge to 1.98 in Chorleywood East, whilst access to a shopping centre or supermarket was generally perceived as being more difficult, with responses ranging from 1.57 in Rickmansworth to 2.35 in Sarratt. As may be expected, Rickmansworth scores most highly in terms of perceived access to a shopping centre or supermarket, reflecting its status as the principal Three Rivers settlement and town centre with the largest collection of shops and services.

The mapping audit highlights areas of Sarratt, Chorleywood East, Moor Park, Bedmond and Primrose Hill and Langleybury as areas which may potentially experience issues in access to convenience stores. This is reflected in the survey of public perceptions as these are the areas in which residents have the greatest perceived difficulty in access to local shops. In relation to other Three Rivers wards, Rickmansworth is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> for ease of access to a local shop, however the average response of 1.57 is equal to that given for access to a shopping centre or supermarket. Therefore, though residents find it no more difficult to access a local shop than a shopping centre or supermarket, in relation to other wards, access to local shops is comparatively more difficult.

Perceptions of access to shopping centres or supermarkets show that Leavesden, Carpenders Park and Croxley Green North wards experience greater difficulty than may be expected through the mapping audit in accessing shopping centre or supermarket facilities.

#### 6.2: POST OFFICE

Figure 6.3 shows the public perceptions of access to a post office, mapped by ward. Responses range from 1.24 in Hayling to 2.50 in Leavesden. The mapping audit identifies areas of Sarratt, Langleybury, Chorleywood East and Bedmond as locations with potential for issues in access to post offices based on the distances involved. Bedmond and Primrose Hill, Langleybury and Chorleywood East are also the wards with greatest perceived difficulty in accessing post office services. In Sarratt however, although much of the ward is not within 1600m of a post office, it is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the district based on perceptions of ease of access. This may be a result of the central location of the post office in the main population centre, and relatively high car ownership levels in the ward (91.36% households have at least one car or van, compared to a Three Rivers average of 83.8%<sup>13</sup>).

Leavesden is not identified as an area lacking in post office provision through the mapping audit; however, it is the ward with the greatest level of perceived difficulty in access. This difference may be a result of the location of nearby post offices in relation to transport links, for example the post office in Bricket Wood may be difficult for residents of Leavesden to reach owing to limited transport connections between the areas, reducing accessibility.

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<sup>13</sup> Census, 2001

### 6.3: GP SURGERY

Figure 6.4 shows public perceptions of ease of access to GP surgeries, mapped by ward. Responses vary from 1.25 in Abbots Langley to 2.17 in Oxhey Hall, Moor Park and Eastbury, and Leavesden. The mapping audit highlights areas of Sarratt, Chorleywood East, Maple Cross and Mill End, Moor Park, Langleybury and Bedmond and Primrose Hill as having potential for issues in relation to the accessibility of GP services based on the distances involved. Public perceptions of difficulty in accessing a GP service reflect this in Sarratt, Chorleywood East, Moor Park and Eastbury, and Bedmond and Primrose Hill wards, where access is seen as more difficult than in other wards. Though difficulty may have been expected in Maple Cross and Mill End, and Langleybury, perceptions of difficulty rank these wards as 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in the district for ease of access to a GP. This may be a result of direct transport links between residents and facilities, or other factors such as the ease of obtaining an appointment affecting how services are viewed in terms of accessibility.

Oxhey Hall and Leavesden are not identified as lacking GP surgery provision through the mapping audit; however perceptions show these wards as having the greatest difficulty in accessing a GP. This may be because although there are GP surgeries nearby, transport links to reach them may be inadequate. It is also possible that difficulty in obtaining an appointment for people in these areas has led to increased levels of perceived difficulty in accessing services.

Limited opening hours may also have an influence on accessibility. The post office and GP surgery in Sarratt are within 300m of one another; however the perceived ease of access of a GP is 2.06, compared to 1.47 for a post office. The surgery in Sarratt is a branch surgery and as such is only open for appointments between 8.30 and 10.30 on weekday mornings. This may be influencing perceptions of how easy it is to access the service, where people have to rearrange commitments such as work in order to access services.

### 6.4: SHOP SELLING FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Figure 6.6 shows the public perceptions of ease of access to a shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables, mapped by ward. The responses vary from 1.47 in Hayling to 2.66 in Bedmond and Primrose Hill. For every ward, responses indicate the public perception is of greater difficulty in accessing a shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables, in comparison to accessing a local shop. For example, in Maple Cross and Mill End, the response for ease of access a local shop was 1.40, but rose to 2.19 for a shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables, while in Penn, the response for ease of access was 1.50 for a local shop but rose to 2.52 for a shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables. This indicates that although people may consider local shops to be accessible, this does not guarantee that the products stocked will meet the needs of the local community.

### 6.5: LIBRARY

Figure 6.10 shows the public perceptions of access to library facilities, mapped by ward. Responses vary from 1.25 in Croxley Green to 2.47 in Sarratt. There are five libraries in Three Rivers, located in settlements of Abbots Langley, Croxley Green, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth and South Oxhey. The corresponding wards are in the top six in terms of perceived ease of access to library services which is the expected pattern (Hayling ward

is also in the top six, as a result of the proximity to Northwick ward and South Oxhey library).

The mapping audit identifies areas of Chorleywood East, Leavesden and Moor Park as having potential for difficulty in access to libraries based on the distance involved. This is reflected in the perceived level of difficulty in accessing library services. Areas of Sarratt, Penn, and Bedmond and Primrose Hill are also perceived to have difficulty in accessing library services. These areas are covered by mobile library stops, rather than permanent libraries suggesting that areas covered by a mobile library service are not considered to have access to library services equal to that of areas covered by a full time library. Part of the reason for this may be the limited time mobile libraries are able to spend at each stop, for example services at Chandlers Cross, Bucks Hill and Commonwood are limited to a fortnightly visit of 20 minutes. This provides a barrier since access to mobile services depends on ability to reach a stop within the allocated time period. This may be a particular problem where it is necessary to rely on public transport. Access will also depend on the timing of other commitments, such as work, which may prevent people from using the service. The perceptions of the accessibility of mobile library services will also be affected by their promotion. If people are not aware of the service, either what it provides or the times and locations of nearby stops, the perceived ease of accessibility will be reduced.

#### 6.6: PASSENGER TRANSPORT FACILITY

Figure 6.9 shows the perceived ease of access to a public transport facility mapped by ward. The average responses range from 1.39 in Croxley Green to 2.80 in Sarratt. There are many bus stops through the district, while rail stations in Three Rivers are located in Chorleywood West, Rickmansworth, Abbots Langley, and Northwick wards which show higher levels of perceived ease of access to a passenger transport facility. There is also a rail station in Moor Park, but this ward has an average response of 2.00, indicating that access is perceived to be more difficult. This difference may be because Moor Park is not a main settlement, and there are no bus services within the settlement, reducing opportunities for access to public transport.

Sarratt, Chorleywood East and Bedmond and Primrose Hill are the areas identified through the mapping audit as areas with potential difficulty in accessing both rail and bus services based on the distances involved and the services available. These are in the five wards with the greatest perceived difficulty in accessing a public transport facility. Maple Cross and Mill End, Langleybury and Leavesden are identified as areas with potential difficulty in accessing rail services and with the exception of Maple Cross and Mill End these wards also scored poorly in perceptions of access to services. Moor Park and Eastbury and parts of Rickmansworth West, Oxhey Hall and Croxley Green North are identified as areas with potential issues in accessing bus services and while Moor Park and Eastbury scores poorly in the survey of perceptions of access to services, Rickmansworth West and Oxhey Hall are not perceived to have difficulties.

#### 6.7: CHEMIST OR PHARMACY

Figure 6.5 shows public perceptions of ease of access to a chemist or pharmacy mapped by ward. Responses vary from 1.24 in Hayling to 2.29 in Sarratt. The mapping audit highlights areas of Sarratt, Bedmond and Primrose Hill, Maple Cross and Mill End and Chorleywood East as having potential for issues in accessing pharmacy services based on the distances involved. This is reflected in public perceptions of difficulty in Sarratt, Bedmond and Primrose Hill, Chorleywood East and Maple Cross and Mill End.



Croxley Green South, Oxhey Hall, and Leavesden are not identified as lacking in pharmacy provision through mapping audit; however perceptions rank these wards as 19<sup>th</sup> and joint 15<sup>th</sup> for ease of access. This may be because local transport links are inadequate making access to services difficult, though geographically they are relatively close.

## 6.8: CAR OWNERSHIP LEVELS

Public perceptions of ease of access to services were assessed on the basis of people using their 'usual form of transport'. Car ownership levels in Hertfordshire are some of the highest in the country, and Three Rivers has the third highest level in Hertfordshire. 83.8 % of households in Three Rivers have ownership of at least one car or van. There are however significant variations in levels between wards, Moor Park and Eastbury car ownership levels are 97.29%, while in Northwick ward they are just 63.7%.

Table 6.1: Car or Van Ownership (Census, 2001)

Percentage of Households in Category					
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
<b>England</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>East of England</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Three Rivers</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Bedmond and Primrose Hill	9.7	43.8	34.8	8.0	3.7
Abbots Langley	18.3	37.8	34.0	7.6	2.5
Leavesden	9.2	38.1	43.1	7.1	2.4
Langleybury	20.6	38.0	33.0	6.8	1.6
Sarratt	8.6	36.3	41.4	12.6	7.0
Croxley Green North	16.4	38.5	36.6	6.4	2.2
Croxley Green South	11.6	40.9	37.2	8.4	1.4
Croxley Green	16.9	40.1	32.4	7.2	3.4
Chorleywood East	6.6	27.5	44.3	16.1	6.0
Chorleywood West	11.1	39.1	37.4	9.5	3.0
Maple Cross & Mill End	18.8	39.3	32.8	7.1	2.0
Penn	14.1	44.7	33.7	5.9	1.7
Rickmansworth West	10.0	34.5	42.0	10.4	3.2
Rickmansworth	19.1	43.8	28.2	6.1	2.8
Moor Park & Eastbury	2.7	30.5	46.7	14.2	5.9
Oxhey Hall	11.3	35.4	41.7	8.9	2.8
Hayling	31.0	40.6	24.2	3.4	0.8
Ashridge	26.1	44.7	23.7	4.7	0.8
Northwick	36.3	41.6	18.9	2.6	0.5
Carpenders Park	14.8	44.6	33.3	5.3	2.0

Although there may be high car ownership levels, people may still have difficulty in accessing services. This is indicated by the results of the survey of public perceptions

which put Sarratt and Moor Park and Eastbury in the top three wards for experiencing difficulty in accessing services; however they are also in the top three wards for car ownership levels.

## 7: NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FACILITIES/ PROMOTION OF EXISTING FACILITIES IN THREE RIVERS

The main settlements of Abbots Langley, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth, Croxley Green and South Oxhey are the areas of Three Rivers subject to the greatest change, and the areas also expected to accommodate the majority of allocated housing growth in the district. In accordance with national guidance, these are therefore the areas for which additional service provision should be planned for where appropriate in order to make the best use of resources and to promote sustainable relationships between service provision and residential land use.

Table 7.1: Summary Table of Identified Issues in Accessing Services

WARD	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	GP SURGERY	POST OFFICE	LOCAL SHOP	LIBRARY	PASSENGER TRANSPORT	PHARMACY
Abbots Langley								
Ashridge								
Bedmond & Primrose Hill	MA		MA PPS IMD	MA PPS	MA PPS	PPS	MA PPS	MA PPS
Carpenders Park			IMD					
Chorleywood East	MA		MA IMD	MA PPS IMD	MA PPS IMD	MA	MA	MA PPS
Chorleywood West								
Croxley Green								
Croxley Green North							PPS	
Croxley Green South								PPS
Hayling								
Langleybury			MA	MA PPS	PPS IMD		MA	
Leavesden			PPS	PPS		MA PPS	MA PPS	PPS
Maple Cross and Mill End		MA	MA IMD	MA	MA IMD		MA	MA
Moor Park and Eastbury	MA		MA PPS		MA PPS IMD	MA PPS		
Northwick								
Oxhey Hall	MA		PPS IMD		PPS			PPS
Penn				PPS		PPS		
Rickmansworth								
Rickmansworth West								
Sarratt	MA	MA	MA PPS IMD	MA	MA IMD	PPS	MA PPS	MA PPS

	Areas Identified for Change
MA	Access Issue Identified through Mapping Audit
PPS	Access Issue Identified through Survey of Public Perceptions (relative to other wards)
IMD	Access Issue Identified through Index of Deprivation (2004)

Sarratt is the location most consistently identified as having difficulty in access to services, through the mapping audit, the survey of perceived difficulty of access and the Index of Deprivation indicator. However, the ward has a low population (1887 people<sup>14</sup>) coupled with the large area (20.6km<sup>2</sup>) giving a population density of just 92 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, compared to a Three Rivers average population density of 933 persons/km<sup>2</sup> makes it unlikely that provision of any additional services would be viable. Provision of better public transport links in the area may facilitate access to services for residents, however it is likely that any extension of bus services for example, either through provision of additional routes or 'on demand' services would also require subsidising as it is unlikely the population would otherwise be able to support them.

After Sarratt, the areas with most difficulty in accessing services, identified through mapping audit, the survey of perceived difficulty of access and the Index of Deprivation indicator are Moor Park and Eastbury, Langleybury, Chorleywood East and Maple Cross and Mill End. Areas which are recognised as having issues in accessing services, but which are not identified as locations of change and development may benefit most from improvements to transport connections, either in the frequency, route or reliability of public transport services, or through enhancement of existing infrastructure such as roads, footpaths and cycle routes in order to make them more user friendly and attractive options for accessing services.

Where issues of access to services have been identified in wards in which the greatest change and development are expected however, these form the most appropriate areas in which to consider the provision of services further.

Chorleywood East is the ward with the most identified issues in accessing services in an area classified as a location for change and development. Access to post office and local shop services is highlighted as an issue by the mapping audit, survey of public perceptions and the index of deprivation, so provision of these may be a priority for development in the area. Planning alone can not ensure provision of a local shop or post office as other influences such as market factors will also be important.

## **8: ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN LDF**

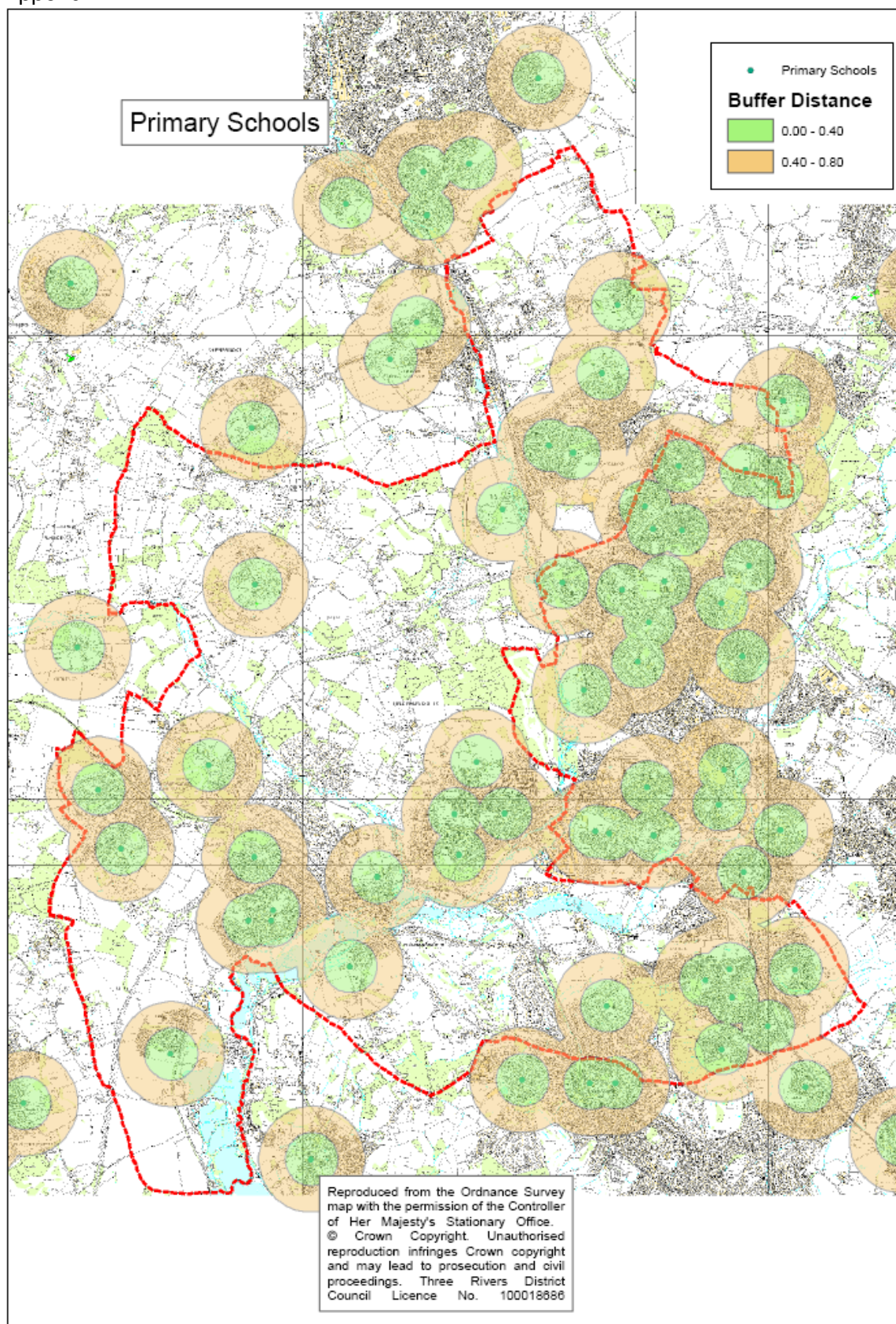
The LDF may address issues in the provision of facilities in the district through the allocation of land or through policy provision (either core or detailed). The issues identified will require cooperation on a number of scales, from national, regional, county and district perspectives. Providing authorities and the Local Strategic Partnership should be involved in discussions of strategies for the provision of facilities through the LDF

Potential measures which may help tackle accessibility which may be encouraged through the LDF process include the focussing of facilities in town or local centres, and supporting development and improvement of the transport network, for example through seeking developer contributions to ensure adequate passenger transport links to important local services.

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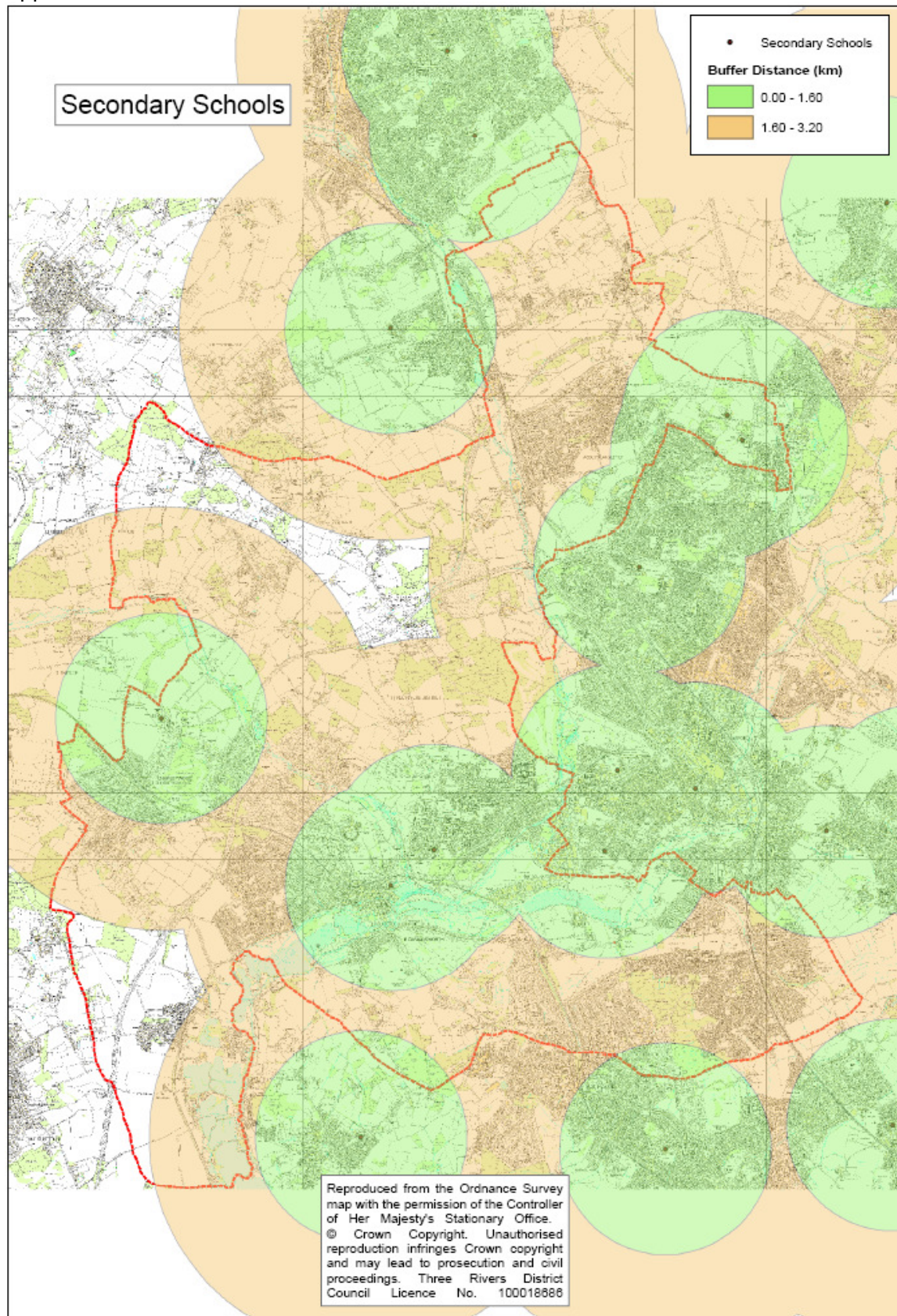
<sup>14</sup> Census, 2001

## Appendix 1



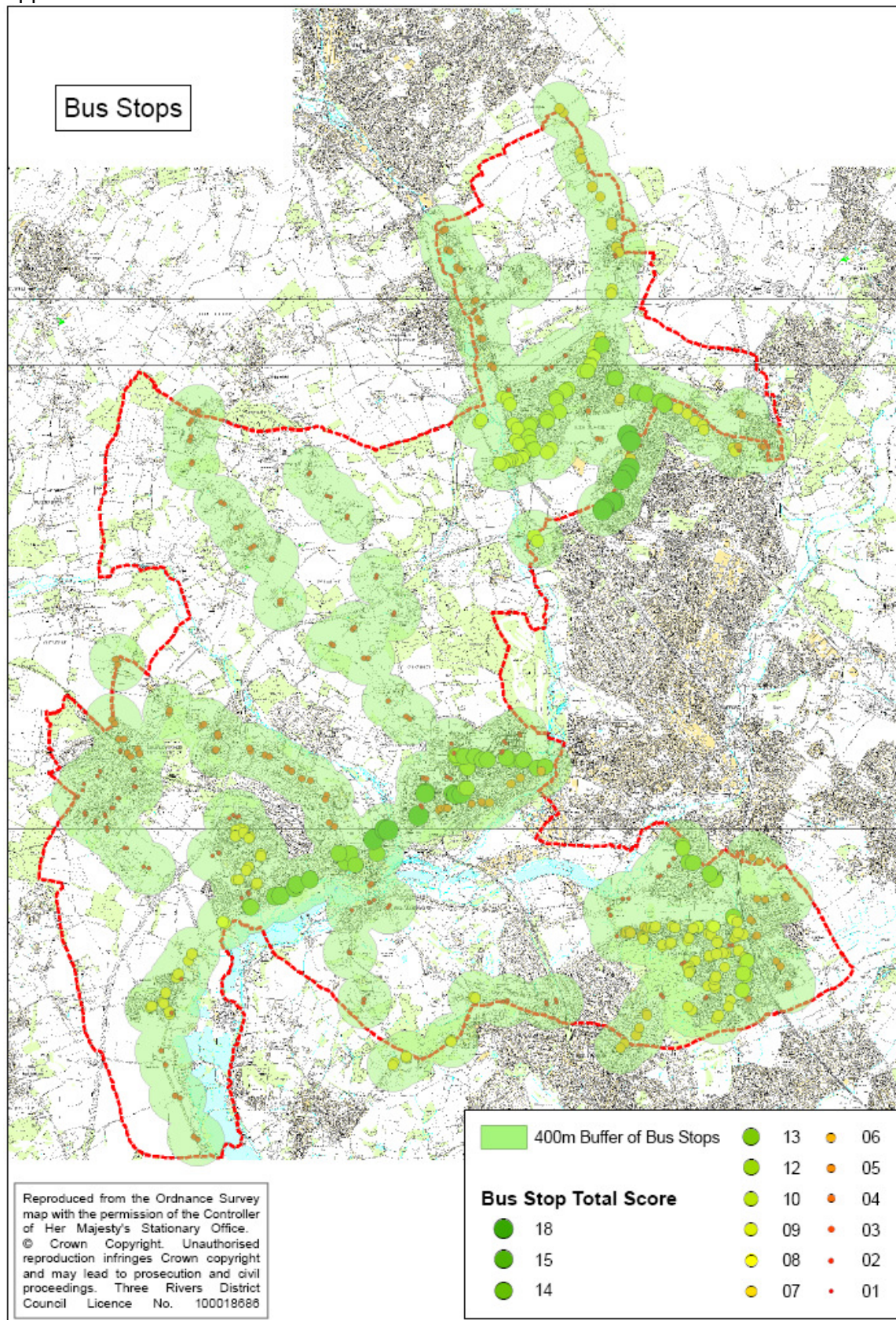


## Appendix 2



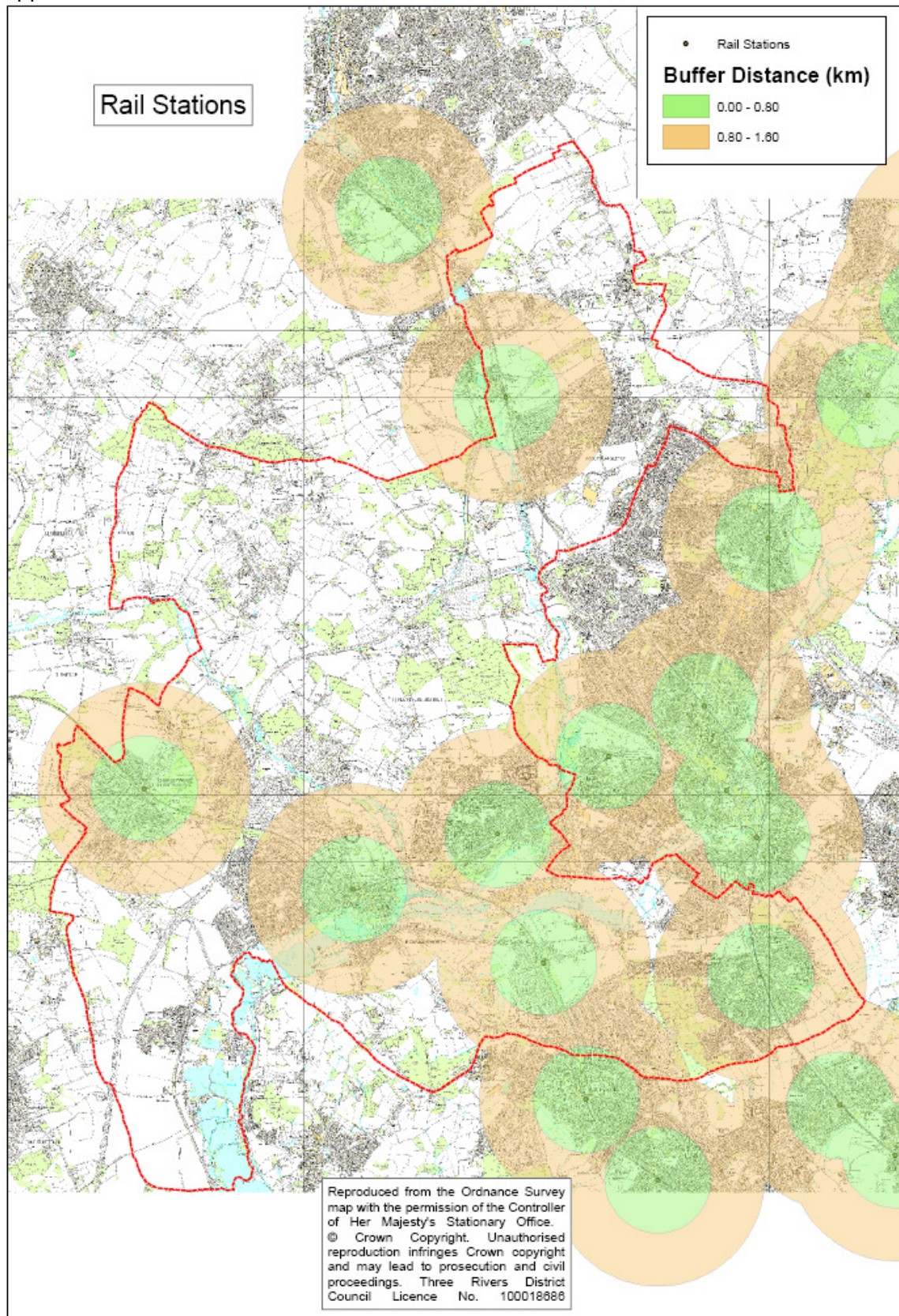


# Appendix 3



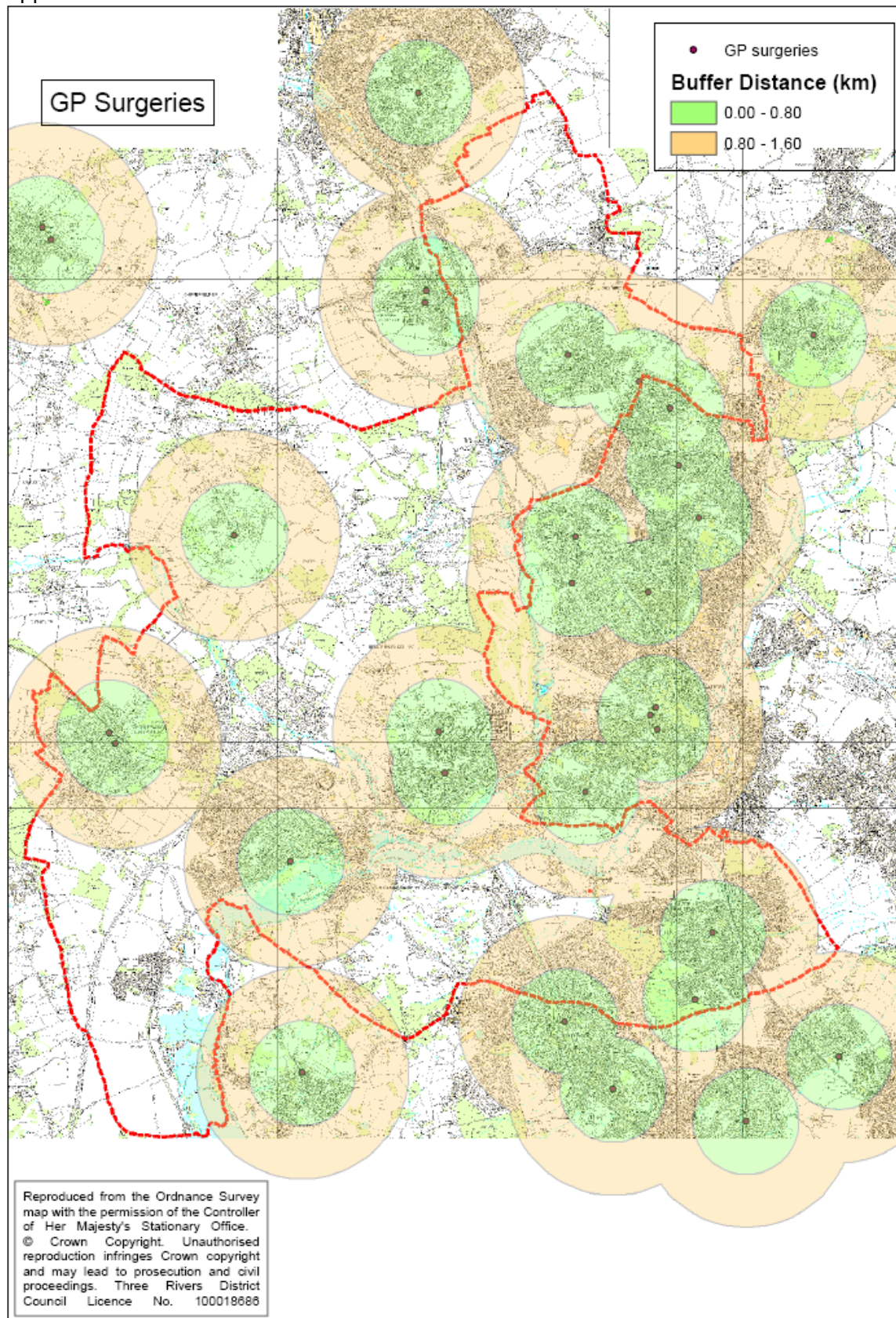


## Appendix 4



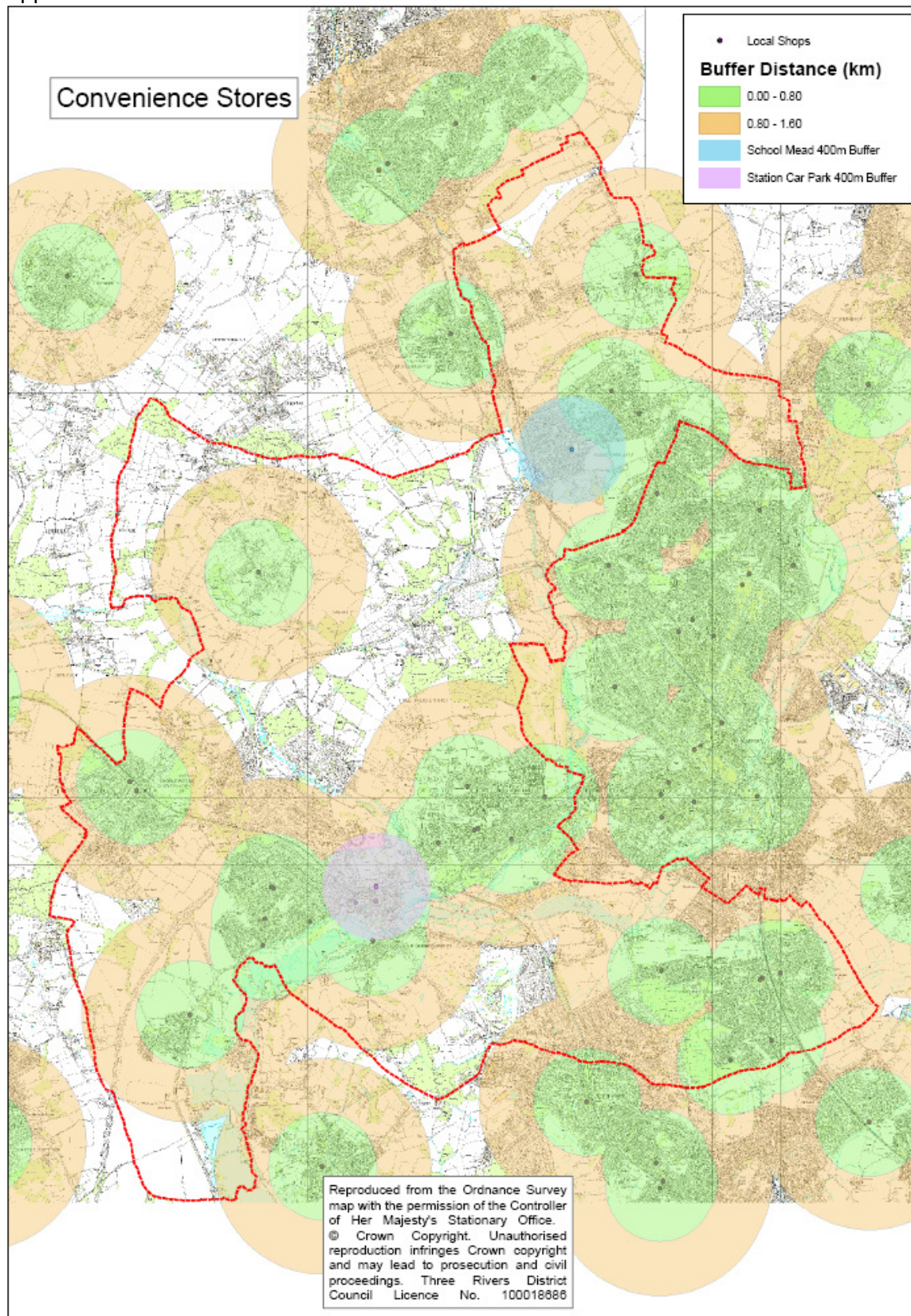


## Appendix 5



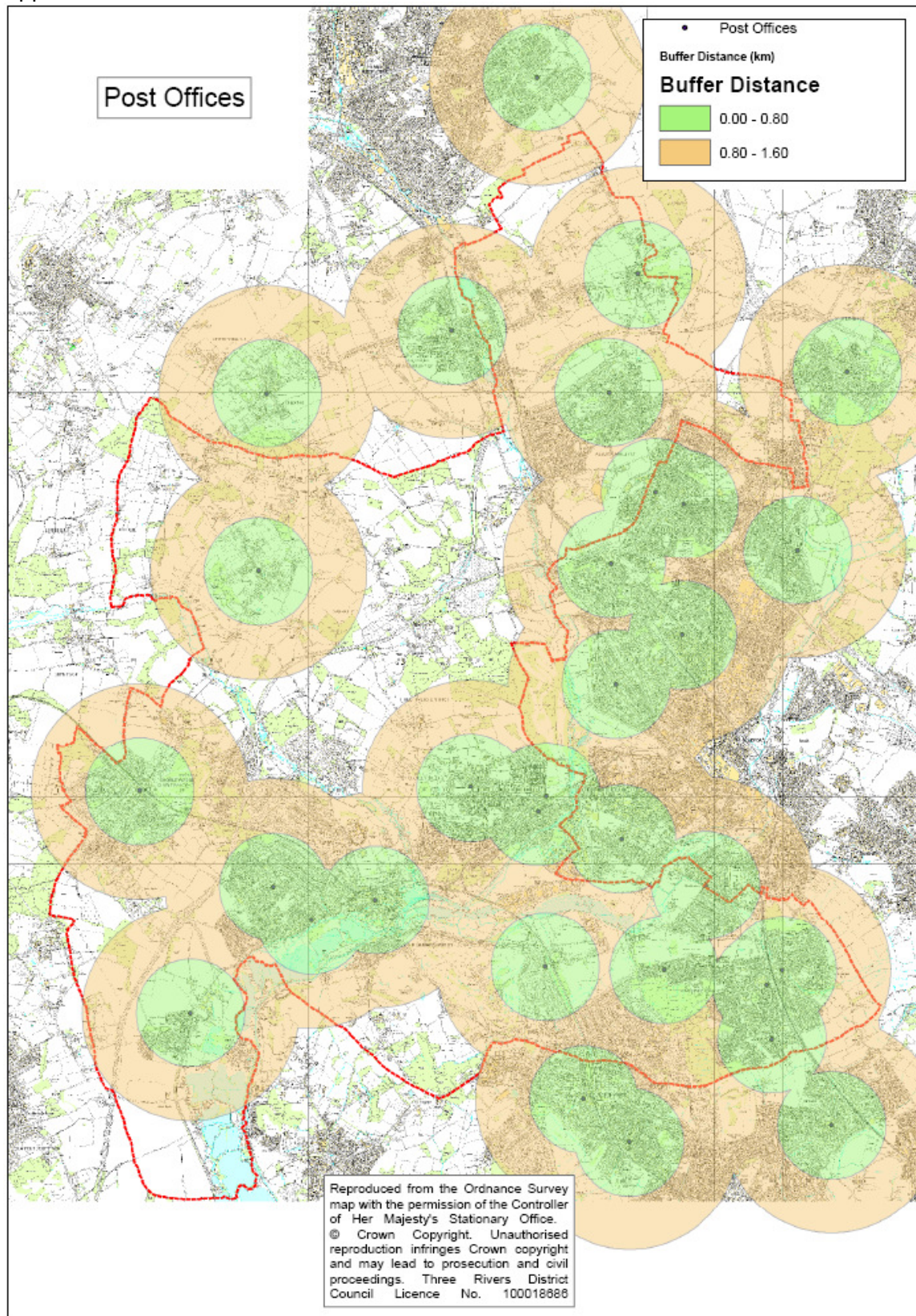


## Appendix 6



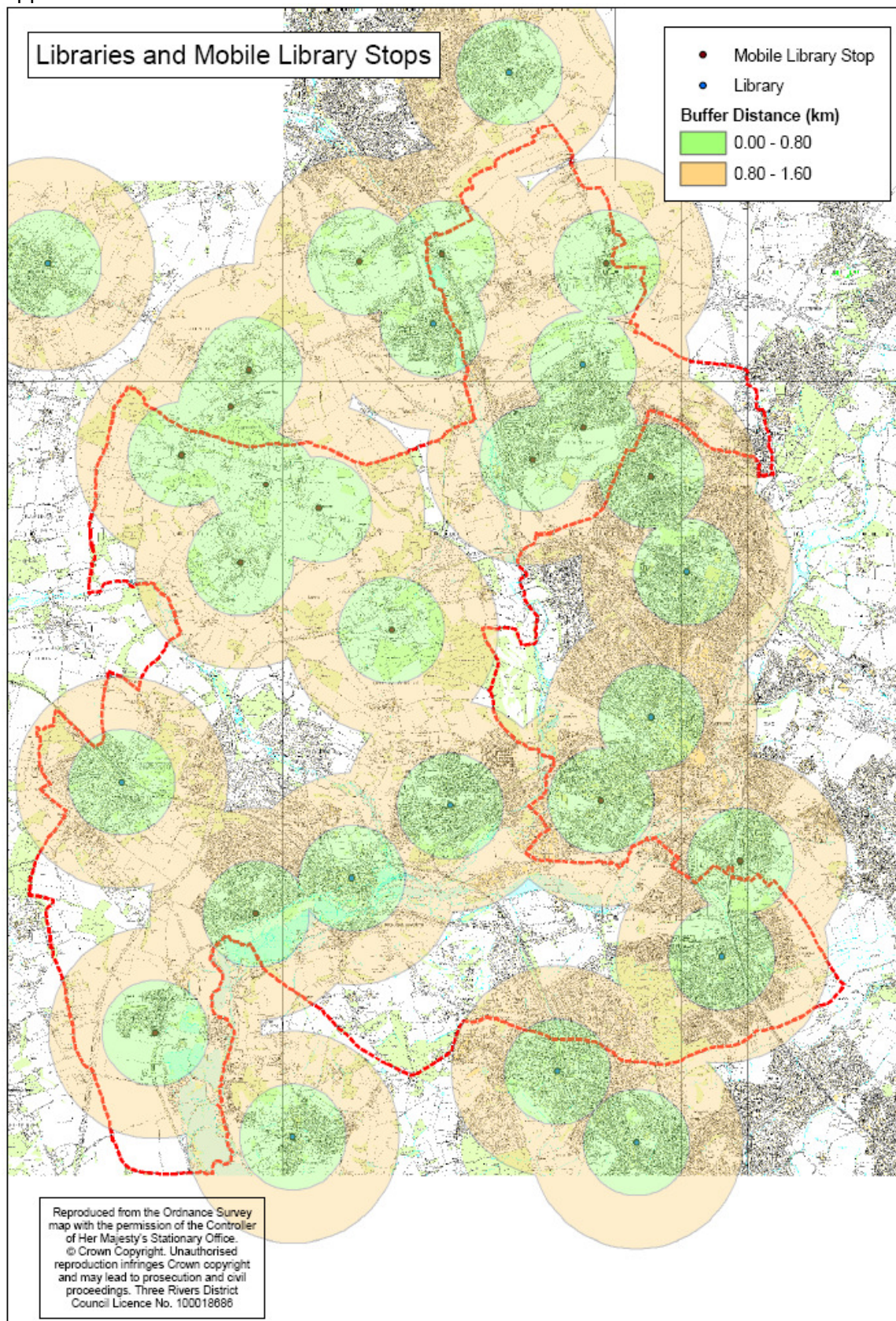


## Appendix 7





## Appendix 8





## Appendix 9

