

Rural-Urban Classification 2011

Northumberland Knowledge Research Summary



Introduction

This research summary focuses on the Rural and Urban Classification 2011 and provides information on forthcoming data and reports profiling the Rural and Urban Areas of Northumberland.

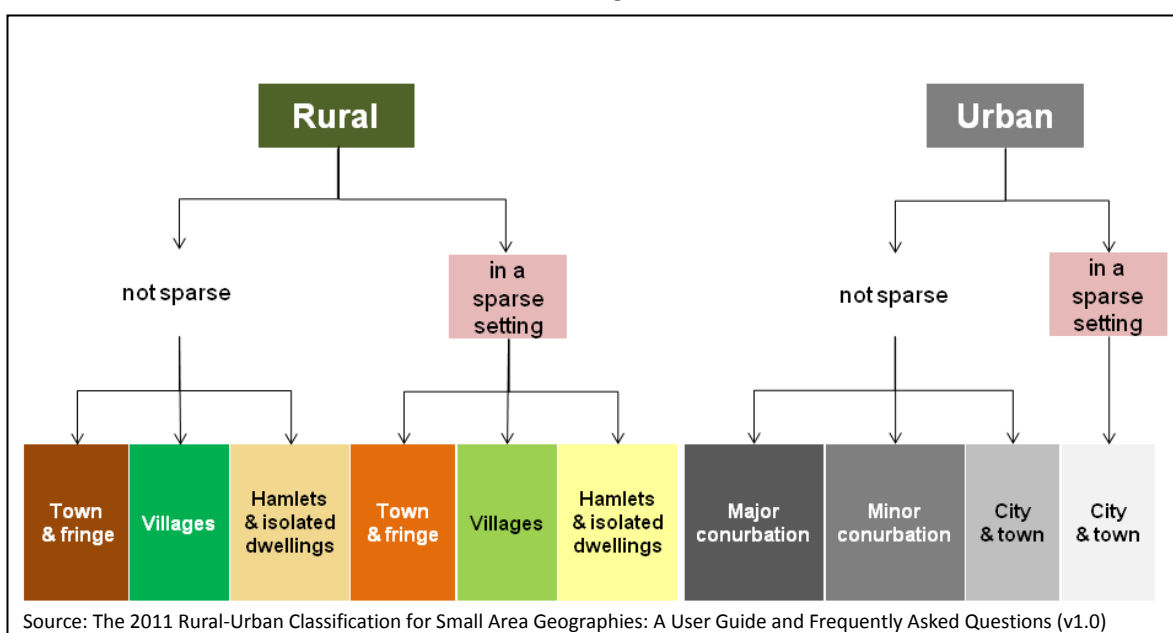
2011 Rural-Urban Classification for small area geographies

The 2011 rural-urban classification for small area geographies provides a rural/urban picture at output area (OA), super output area (SOA) and ward level. The classification is a revised version of that produced after the 2001 Census. It is important to distinguish between rural and urban areas as the composition of both the population and businesses can be markedly different. The opportunities, challenges and barriers to the services people receive and their quality of life can also vary considerably between towns and cities and rural settlements.

Output Area Level Classification (OAs)

The smallest level for which the classification is available is Output Area (OA). OAs are the lowest geographical level at which census data is released and each one contains approximately 125 households (309 residents). OAs are treated as 'urban' in the classification if they are within a built-up area with a population of 10,000 or more. '[Built up areas](#)' are a new geography, created as part of the 2011 Census and are defined as land which is 'irreversibly urban in character', meaning that they are characteristic of a town or city.

The first step in the classification is to define each geographical area as either urban or rural. These domains are then sub-divided into six broad morphological types. The classification also categorises OAs based on context – i.e. whether the wider surrounding area of a given OA is sparsely populated or less sparsely populated. Details of the resulting classes can be found in the [User Guide](#) and the diagram below.



Produced by the Policy and Research Team, Northumberland County Council

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Super Output Areas (SOAs) and wards

The rural-urban classification is also available at lower and middle layer super output area (LSOA and MSOA) and ward level. For these geographies the classification is built from the OA level classification. Assignments of LSOAs, MSOAs and wards to urban or rural categories are made by reference to the category to which the majority of their constituent OAs is assigned. At the SOA/ward level there are only five settlement categories. As the rural-urban classification is only produced for 2011 census wards the same [methodology](#) has been followed by the policy and research team to produce a classification based on the current Northumberland ward boundaries.

	Urban			Rural	
	Major conurbations	Minor conurbations	City and town	Town and fringe	Village and dispersed
Less Sparse	Urban major conurbation	Urban minor conurbation	Urban city and town	Rural town and fringe	Rural village and dispersed
Sparse			Urban city and town in a sparse setting	Rural town and fringe in a sparse setting	Rural village and dispersed in a sparse setting

Northumberland Key points

The two maps below give a visual representation of the Rural-Urban Classification at output area and current ward in Northumberland. Some of the key points are as follows:

- Of the 1,084 OA's in Northumberland 580 (53.5%) are classed as urban and 504 (46.5%) as rural. This is an increase in the number of urban output areas from 2001 when 530 of the 1,074 OA's (49.3%) were classed as urban.
- 54% of the population of Northumberland live in an output area classed as urban.
- The largest percentage of people live in an output area classed as city and town (41.4%).
- 16.9% of people live in an output area classed as town and fringe (16.9%).
- No one in Northumberland lives in an area class as a minor conurbation.

Future Reports and Data

Data from the 2011 census has been released for key and quick statistics for the rural-urban classification areas. Analysis of the rural-urban classification, the associated census data and exploration of change over time at a Northumberland and ward level is currently being undertaken by the policy and research team.

Further information on the Rural-Urban Classification

The Rural-Urban Classification for OA, LSOA, MSOA and wards, together with user guidance and a methodology report, can be downloaded from [ONS's Open Geography portal](#). A short leaflet explaining the rural-urban classification at a national level can be accessed [here](#). The rural-urban classification for local authority areas will be available sometime in 2014.

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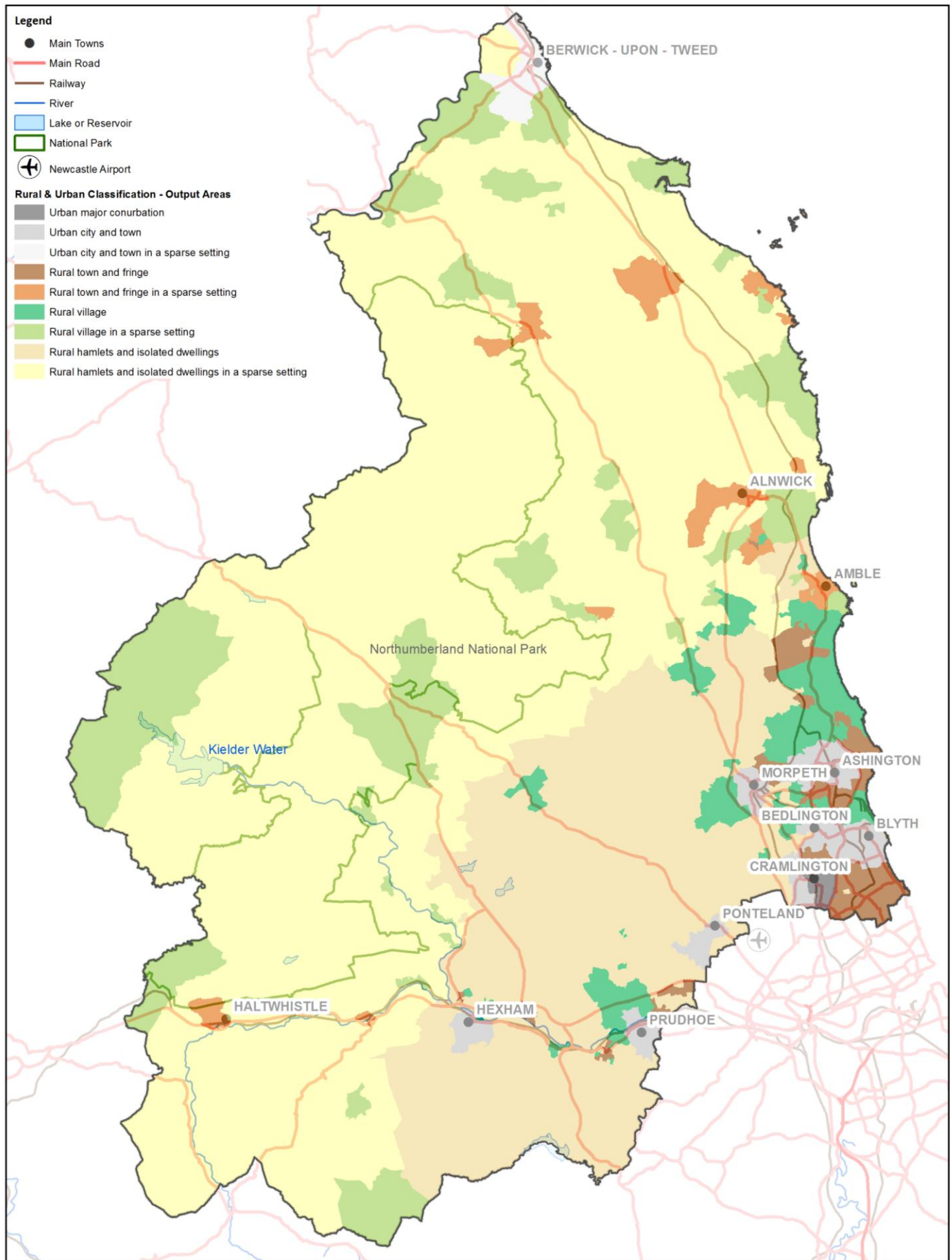
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Rural & Urban Classification for Small Areas - Output Areas



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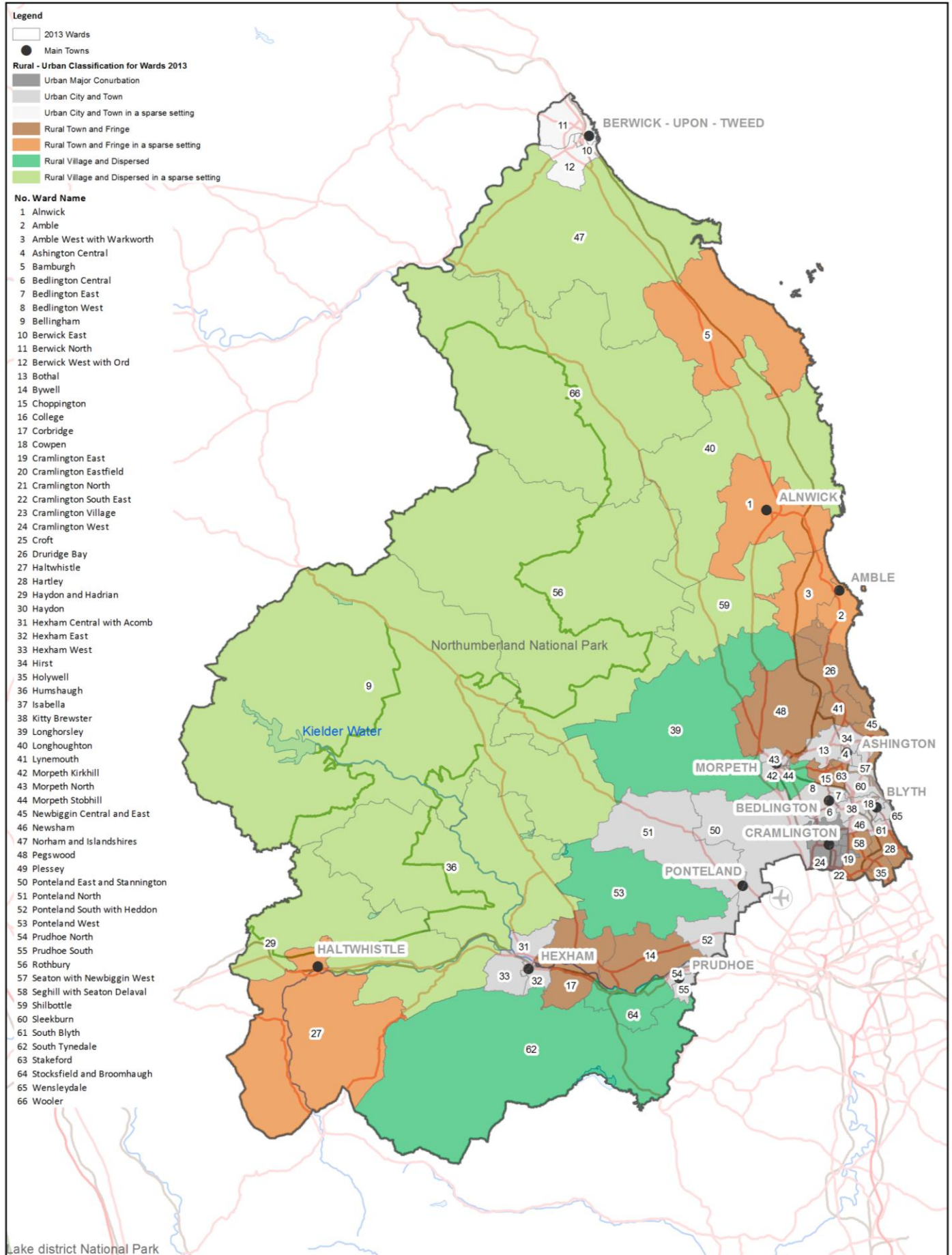
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Rural & Urban Classification for Small Areas - 2013 Wards



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