

## ACCESS TO SERVICES 2007

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### Introduction

Physical distance from services and facilities can be a problem, particularly for those living in rural areas. Data for the number of households living within various distance bandings of key services is made available by the Commission for Rural Communities. The Countryside Agency use this data in their State of the Countryside reports where national and regional figures are presented for set distances. These distance bandings have been used to compare the situation locally with elsewhere. Due to changes in the methodology, data is only comparable from 2007 onwards.

Access to services is measured by 'how the crow flies' rather than distances by road.

### Access to services for Herefordshire as a whole compared with the West Midlands region and England

Table 1. Percentage of all households within set distances of key services in 2008

Service	Herefordshire	West Midlands	England
Banks & building societies ≤4km	62%	92%	93%
Post Offices ≤2km	83%	96%	97%
NHS Dentists ≤4km	65%	94%	94%
GP Surgeries (principal sites) ≤4km	73%	96%	96%
GP Surgeries (all sites) ≤4km	83%	97%	98%
Job Centres ≤8km	66%	91%	89%
Primary schools ≤2km	82%	97%	98%
Secondary schools ≤4km	69%	93%	93%
Supermarkets ≤4km	65%	94%	95%
Petrol stations ≤4km	80%	97%	97%
Public Houses ≤2km	88%	98%	98%

Source: Commission for Rural Communities. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

## Changes from 2007

The only changes since 2007 were seen in the proportion of households within set distance for:

- **GP surgeries (all sites)** - increased from 76% in 2007 to 83% in 2008. The West Midlands region has also seen a slight increase from 96% to 97% in 2008.
- **Primary schools** - down 1 percentage-point from 83% to 82% whereas this has increased by 1 percentage-point from 96% to 97% in the West Midlands and from 97% to 98% across England as a whole.
- **Public houses** - increased from 86% to 88% in 2008. There have been no changes in the West Midlands region and England.

## Differences between Herefordshire and the West Midlands region and England (2008)

Across **all** key services, Herefordshire had lower proportions of households within set distances compared to both the West Midlands region as a whole and England, with much lower proportions for particular services:

**Banks and building societies** - 62% of Herefordshire households were within 4km of a bank or building society, compared to 92% of households in the West Midlands region and 93% in England. This is a 31 percentage-point gap between Herefordshire and the West Midlands region.

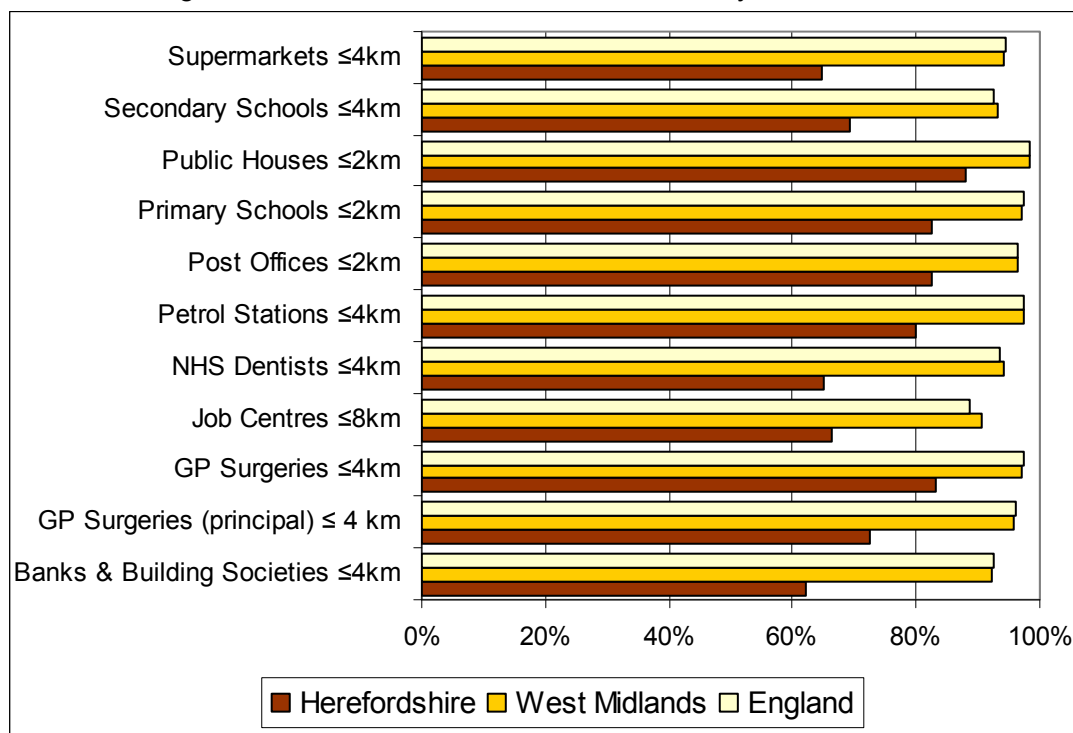
**NHS Dentists** – 65% of Herefordshire households are within 4km of an NHS dentist, compared to 94% of households in both the West Midlands region and England (a gap of 29 percentage-points). However there are likely to be wider issues than just distance from a NHS dentist as there are limitations on how many **people** can register for this service and how far people actually travel to visit a NHS dentist.

**Supermarkets** – 65% of Herefordshire households are within 4km of a supermarket, compared to 94% of households across the West Midlands region and 95% in England; 29 percentage-points lower. Note: this does not take into account access to local shops that sell goods similar (but possibly more expensive) to those found in supermarkets.

**Job Centres** – 66% of Herefordshire households are within 8km of a Job Centre, compared to 91% of households across the West Midlands region and 89% in England; 23 percentage-points lower. Note: this may not take into account some of the Job Centre Plus stations that are available in some of the Market Towns.

**GP Surgeries (principal sites)** – 73% of Herefordshire households are within 4km of a GP surgery that is a principal site, compared to 96% of households across both the West Midlands region and England; 23 percentage-points lower. Although access to any GP surgery is better, 14 percentage-points lower.

Chart 1. Percentage of households within set distances of key services in 2008.



Source: Commission for Rural Communities. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

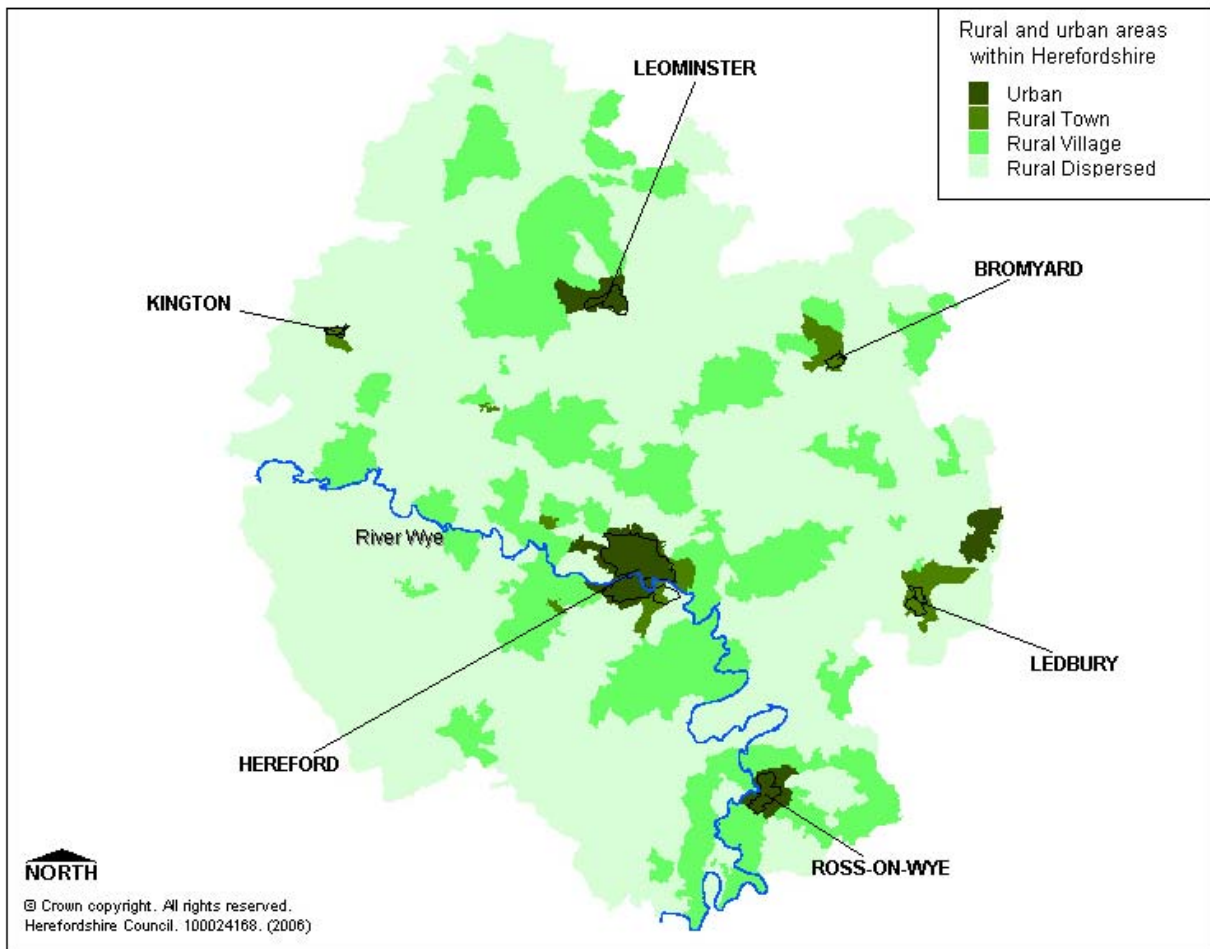
Geographical access to public houses is good compared to other services, with 88% of households in Herefordshire within 2km. This is still 10 percentage-points lower than the West Midlands and England (both 98%), but is the smallest gap between Herefordshire and regionally and nationally.

Other services with better geographical access, are Post Offices, any GP surgeries and primary schools. All of these services have a lower proportion of households within the set distances than the West Midlands and England but Herefordshire is only lower by 14 or 15 percentage-points compared to the largest gaps, which were around 31 percentage-points for banks and building societies.

### Access to services for rural-urban settlement areas within Herefordshire

The following sections look at the differences between rural and urban areas within Herefordshire. There are four main types of area defined by Defra's 2004 rural-urban settlement classifications (urban, rural towns, rural villages and rural dispersed areas – hamlets) as shown in Map 1, which can be used to group access to services data. This may highlight any particular issues for Herefordshire as it is possible to compare like with like, i.e. comparing rural areas of Herefordshire with rural areas of the West Midlands.

Map 1. Rural-urban areas within Herefordshire



Source: Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright

Note: The area just north east of Ledbury which encompasses the area of Colwall has been classified as urban; this is probably due to its close proximity to the town of Malvern in Worcestershire.

The following section looks at differences within Herefordshire, comparing urban and rural areas.

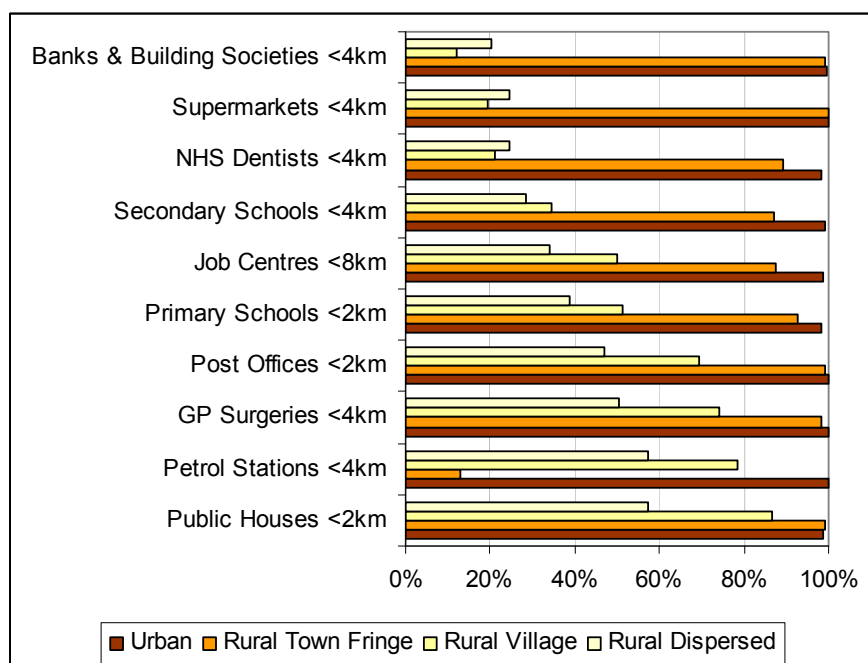
Table 2. Percentage of Herefordshire households within set distances of key services grouped by rural-urban settlement definition (2008)

Service	Urban	Rural Town & fringe	Rural Village	Hamlet & rural dispersed
Banks & building societies ≤4km	99%	87%	12%	20%
Post Offices ≤2km	99%	99%	74%	47%
NHS Dentists ≤4km	98%	89%	21%	25%
GP Surgeries (all sites) ≤4km	100%	100%	69%	50%
Job Centres ≤8km	100%	13%	51%	34%
Primary schools ≤2km	100%	99%	79%	39%
Secondary schools ≤4km	98%	93%	34%	29%
Supermarkets ≤4km	99%	87%	19%	25%
Petrol stations ≤4km	100%	98%	50%	57%
Public Houses ≤2km	100%	99%	86%	57%

Source: Commission for Rural Communities; Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

There are some anomalies between figures for rural villages and hamlet & rural dispersed areas. For some services (banks, NHS Dentists, petrol stations and supermarkets) there are higher proportions of households within the set distances in rural dispersed locations than in rural villages. This can happen because there are many rural dispersed locations on the fringe of towns and urban areas (see map 3) where these services are likely to be. Whereas the rural villages are often more remote and not close to the areas where these services are located.

Chart 2. Percentage of Herefordshire households within set distances for key services according to Defra's rural/urban classification



Nearly all households in urban areas in Herefordshire are within the set distance for each of the key services, as is the case for the West Midlands region and England as a whole.

Source: Commission for Rural Communities, 2007; Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

Noticeable points suggesting poor geographical access are:

- only 12% of households within village locations are within 4km of a bank or building society.
- only 13% of households in town & fringe locations are within 8km of a job centre.

Tables 3 to 5 look at whether patterns for urban and rural areas in the West Midlands or England are similar or whether there are particular issues in Herefordshire's rural areas.

### Access according to rural/urban classification

As the urban areas have very high levels for these access to services measures, only the three rural classifications (town & fringe, village and hamlet & rural dispersed) will be compared.

### Access to services in rural towns and households on the fringe of towns

Table 3. Percentage of **rural town and fringe** households within set distances of key services grouped by rural-urban settlement definition (2008)

	<i>Herefordshire's relative position</i>	Herefordshire	West Midlands	England
Banks & Building Societies ≤4km	<i>Better</i>	87%	74%	79%
GP Surgeries ≤4km	<i>Better</i>	100%	97%	98%
NHS Dentists ≤4km	<i>Better</i>	89%	84%	83%
Secondary Schools ≤4km	<i>Better</i>	93%	74%	77%
Petrol Stations ≤4km	<i>Similar</i>	98%	97%	94%
Post Offices ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	99%	99%	99%
Primary Schools ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	99%	100%	99%
Public Houses ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	99%	99%	98%
Supermarkets ≤4km	<i>Similar</i>	87%	86%	88%
Job Centres ≤8km	<i>Worse</i>	13%	54%	56%

Source: Commission for Rural Communities; Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

For the majority of key services rural towns in Herefordshire either have better access or similar to that of the rural towns within the West Midlands region and England.

Herefordshire has a noticeably **higher** proportion of households within rural towns within the set distances, compared to those in the West Midlands region and England for:

- Banks and building societies
- GP surgeries
- NHS Dentists
- Secondary schools

Access to Job Centres, however, is the exception; Herefordshire has a much **lower** percentage of households (only 13%) in rural towns within 8km of a job centre than the West Midlands and England (54% and 56% respectively).

## Access to services in rural villages

Table 4. Percentage of **rural village** households within set distances of key services grouped by rural-urban settlement definition (2008)

	<i>Herefordshire's relative position</i>	Herefordshire	West Midlands	England
Public Houses ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	86%	89%	89%
Primary Schools ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	79%	78%	80%
Post Offices ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	74%	71%	73%
Job Centres ≤8km	<i>Similar</i>	51%	57%	50%
GP Surgeries ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	69%	73%	77%
Petrol Stations ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	50%	76%	80%
Secondary Schools ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	34%	47%	46%
NHS Dentists ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	21%	48%	51%
Supermarkets ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	19%	50%	54%
Banks & Building Societies ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	12%	38%	44%

Source: Commission for Rural Communities; Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

There are **no rural villages** in Herefordshire, which have a higher proportion of households within the set distance (i.e. better access) when compared to rural villages in the West Midlands region and England.

For four of the key services, access in Herefordshire's rural villages is **similar** to that regionally and nationally:

- Job centres (although worse access than the West Midlands region)
- Post offices
- Primary schools
- Public houses

The services with **considerably worse** geographical access are:

- Banks and building societies
- NHS Dentists
- Supermarkets

## Access to services in rural dispersed areas (hamlets)

Table 5. Percentage of **rural dispersed** households within set distances of key services grouped by rural-urban settlement definition (2008)

	<i>Herefordshire's relative position</i>	West		
		Herefordshire	Midlands	England
Public Houses ≤2km	<i>Worse</i>	57%	74%	80%
Petrol Stations ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	57%	71%	80%
GP Surgeries ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	50%	68%	77%
Post Offices ≤2km	<i>Worse</i>	47%	54%	63%
Primary Schools ≤2km	<i>Worse</i>	39%	57%	69%
Job Centres ≤8km	<i>Worse</i>	34%	47%	51%
Secondary Schools ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	29%	46%	53%
NHS Dentists ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	25%	47%	58%
Supermarkets ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	25%	46%	60%
Banks & Building Societies ≤4km	<i>Worse</i>	20%	41%	54%

Source: Commission for Rural Communities; Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

Across all key services, the percentage of households within the set distances in rural dispersed areas in Herefordshire is **lower** than the equivalent percentages of rural dispersed households in the West Midlands region and England as a whole. This suggests that geographical access to key services in rural dispersed areas of Herefordshire is **worse** than regionally and nationally.

Despite all rural dispersed areas in Herefordshire having worse access to key services, the actual difference between Herefordshire and regionally/nationally is not as marked as seen for some services for rural villages in Herefordshire.

For example, access to banks and building societies: 20% of rural dispersed households in Herefordshire are within 4km, compared to 41% regionally and 54% nationally. Whilst only 12% of Herefordshire's rural village households are within that distance, compared to 38% regionally and 44% nationally. This is likely to be a result of proximity to urban areas as mentioned above.

### So which areas of Herefordshire are less well provided for in terms of access to services?

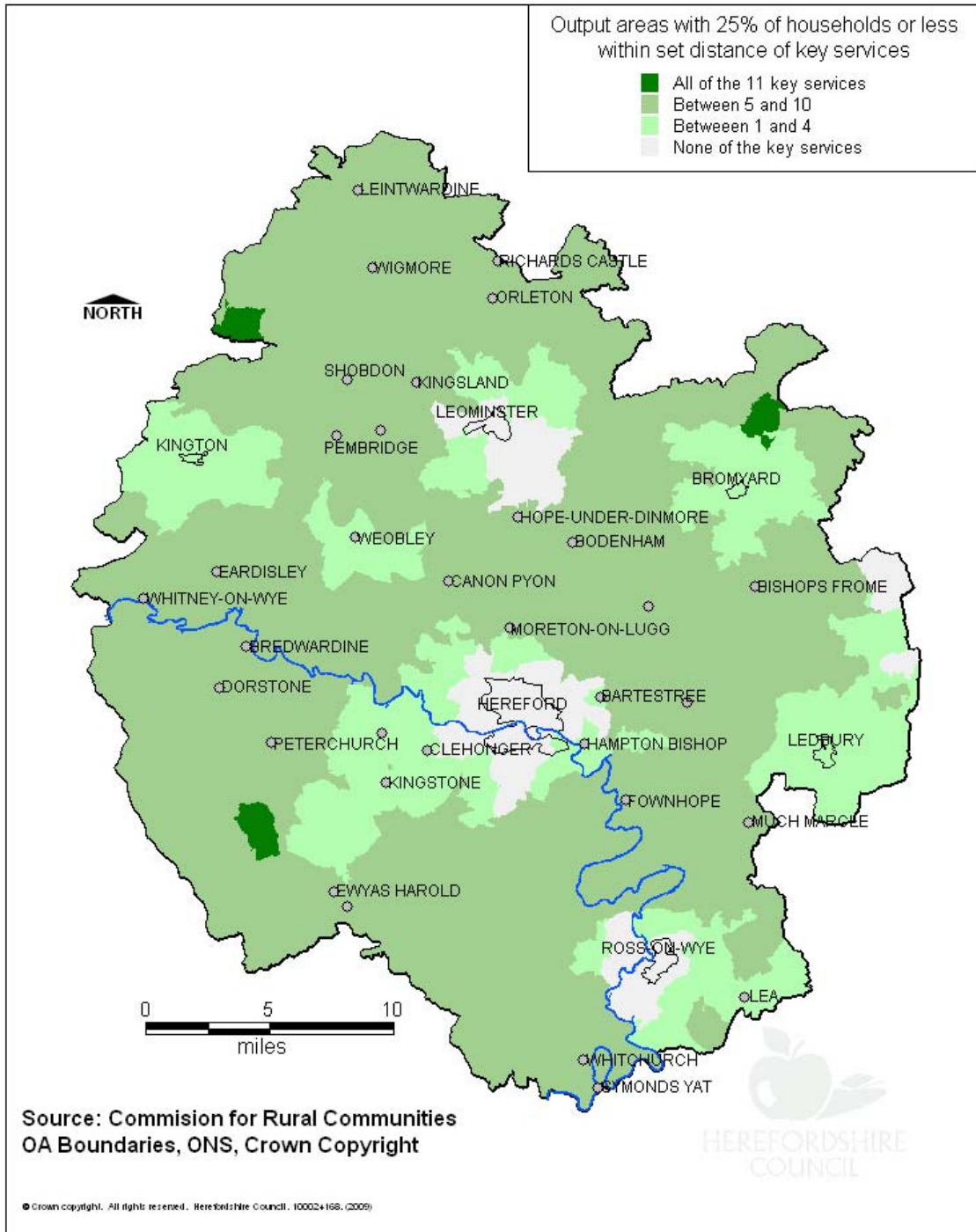
Map 2 on the following page shows the areas<sup>1</sup> that have poorer access (less than 25% of households within set distance) to a number of services. The darker areas on Map 2 show areas that have poor access for **more** key services.

There are only 3 areas in Herefordshire with less than 25% of households within the set distances for all of the key services:

- Edvin Loach & Saltmarshe / Tedstone Wafer parish (Bringsty ward near Bromyard)
- Newton parish (Golden Valley South ward)
- Stapleton parish (Mortimer ward, north west of Herefordshire)

<sup>1</sup> Output Areas - a set geographical areas devised at the time of the 2001 Census with the aim of providing a stable boundary to track changes.

Map 2. Output areas within Herefordshire that have 25% of households or less within the set distance for key services (2008)



For further information on the data in this article, please contact the Research Team on 01432 383634, or e-mail [researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk)