

## ‘Harefield Is A Rural Settlement’: Discuss

Harefield is a settlement placed a few miles between the towns of Uxbridge (4 miles), Ruislip (5 miles), Northwood (3 miles), Harrow and Watford (both 8 miles), Slough (10 miles) and Central London (13 miles). Technically, as Harefield isn't that far away from those towns, it isn't a rural settlement (Index of Rurality). However I shall discuss that later. The characteristics of Harefield as a settlement are a mixture of rural and urban factors; it has wide open spaces and is surrounded by fields, but it is also built up in some places and has a high street. Harefield has mainly small country lanes as its means of transport, which suggests rural, but then it is on a main road, and has lots of transport facilities; at least three buses run through it, and a true rural settlement would usually have only one or two bus routes through, and once or twice a week at that, not the regular service that it actually has.

I am discussing whether Harefield is or isn't a rural settlement. This subject is difficult to land on a yes or a no, as Harefield has a wide mixture of both urban and rural characteristics. To help me decide on one or the other I shall apply the Index of Rurality to Harefield. The Index of Rurality was created by a man called P. Cloke (1977). It is constructed of the factors Cloke thought would tell whether a settlement was an urban or a rural one. The Index of Rurality consists of:

1. Female population: 15-45
2. Occupation structure
3. Population change
4. Commuting out pattern
5. Distance from an urban centre (50,000+)
6. Population over 65 (%)
7. Household amenities
8. Population density
9. Inward migration over the last five years

To apply this to Harefield I shall look at Harefield and then compare it to the Index.

1. The amount of women 15-45 is a more or less balanced statistic, as there is an almost equal amount of old and young women around Harefield
2. The occupation structure of Harefield is mostly in teaching, small shops and farming. The shops focus on mainly selling food, clothes and equipment for fishing and farming (with a few fashionable items)
3. The population of Harefield has stayed even, with neither birth nor death rates exceeding the other

4. I would say that more people commute out of Harefield than into it, as many of the jobs in Harefield are small and have small pay. Only the teaching jobs are really the larger jobs
5. As I said in my introduction, technically Harefield is an urban settlement as it isn't far enough away from an urban centre such as Central London with 50,000 people living there
6. There is a large amount of elderly people (65+) in Harefield, so that would make it rural as more elderly people live in rural settlements than in urban ones
7. Nearly all the houses in Harefield have modern household amenities such as hot running water, electricity and central heating. Only a few older ones have wood fires
8. The population density isn't very great in Harefield, which would suggest that Harefield is a rural settlement
9. The inward migration over the last five years hasn't been high, but nevertheless it has increased slightly. More people have moved in than people who have moved out, this would also suggest a rural settlement

On a scale of 1 (most rural) to 10 (most urban), Harefield on the Index of Rurality is a four, showing that it is a more rural area.

Next to apply to Harefield to decide whether it is a rural or urban settlement is the rural-urban continuum. This is a way of seeing how urban or rural a settlement has become, such as the increase of machinery use and housing estates and dormitory suburbs in a rural area. Some rural areas are made up of mostly tourists and second-home owners from the cities. Therefore many villages have lost agricultural functions, and have become more urbanely functional. There is therefore a rural-urban continuum.

For Harefield the rural-urban continuum shows that Harefield is becoming slightly more urban, but nothing major. More houses are being built but Harefield is still mainly small shops, small clusters of houses and farming based. On a scale of 1 (more rural) to 10 (more urban), Harefield on the rural-urban continuum is a five, showing it is an equal amount of both rural and urban.

In reflection of Harefield, and therefore in conclusion, I have decided to call Harefield more rural settlement than an urban one. This is because it is not so built up; it has a low population, many open spaces and large rivers, few large or main roads, mostly small clusters of houses and the commuting out pattern is larger than the commuting in. However, I shall admit that Harefield is getting rather close to becoming a more urban environment than a rural one. I think this because it is being built up; it is situated on a main road and has many modes of transport, routes and means, it is close to

urban centres and has large important buildings such as a town hall and secondary school. The population of Harefield isn't large enough to be classed as an urban settlement and the shops are for local needs, nothing large or international.

Looking back on the Index of Rurality I can say that Harefield appears to be mostly rural and hardly urban, and although the rural-urban continuum shows Harefield is more urban, the rurality of the place is obvious to see, and with the inward migration, Harefield can be classed as a rural settlement.