Basildon Borough
Local Development Framework

Topic Paper TP8
Settlement Hierarchy

February 2012

BasildonCouncil

BASILDON · BILLERICAY · WICKFORD

Topic Paper TP8: Settlement Hierarchy

Introduction

1   A Core Strategy should include

"*An overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop.*" **(1)**

"*The Vision should be informed by an analysis of the characteristics of the area and its constituent parts and the key issues and challenges facing them.*"**(2)**

2   The Basildon Borough is enveloped by Metropolitan Green Belt. Its settlements have never been formally defined through local planning policies and for a robust Core Strategy to be developed that reflects the different characteristics of the area, there is a need to carry out a logical and rational assessment to establish a Settlement Hierarchy.

3   The Basildon Borough Settlement Hierarchy has been devised based on an approach used for the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)**(3)**. It involves the classification of settlement types according to factors such as population, level of facilities and accessibility to services. It will be able to support the development of Basildon Borough Core Strategy Spatial Options through identifying the most sustainable locations for future development in the Borough, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development**(4)**.

4   Identifying the Borough's settlements will involve gathering detailed evidence and data. Conclusions drawn from the evidence will determine areas of the Borough that should be able to accommodate development without placing undesired pressures on social, economic, environmental and transport infrastructure.

5   This Topic Paper firstly looks at the national, regional and local planning policy, and then sets out the methodology used to determine the Borough's Settlement Hierarchy, which is set out in the final section.

---

1   DCLG, Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning, para 4.1 (1)
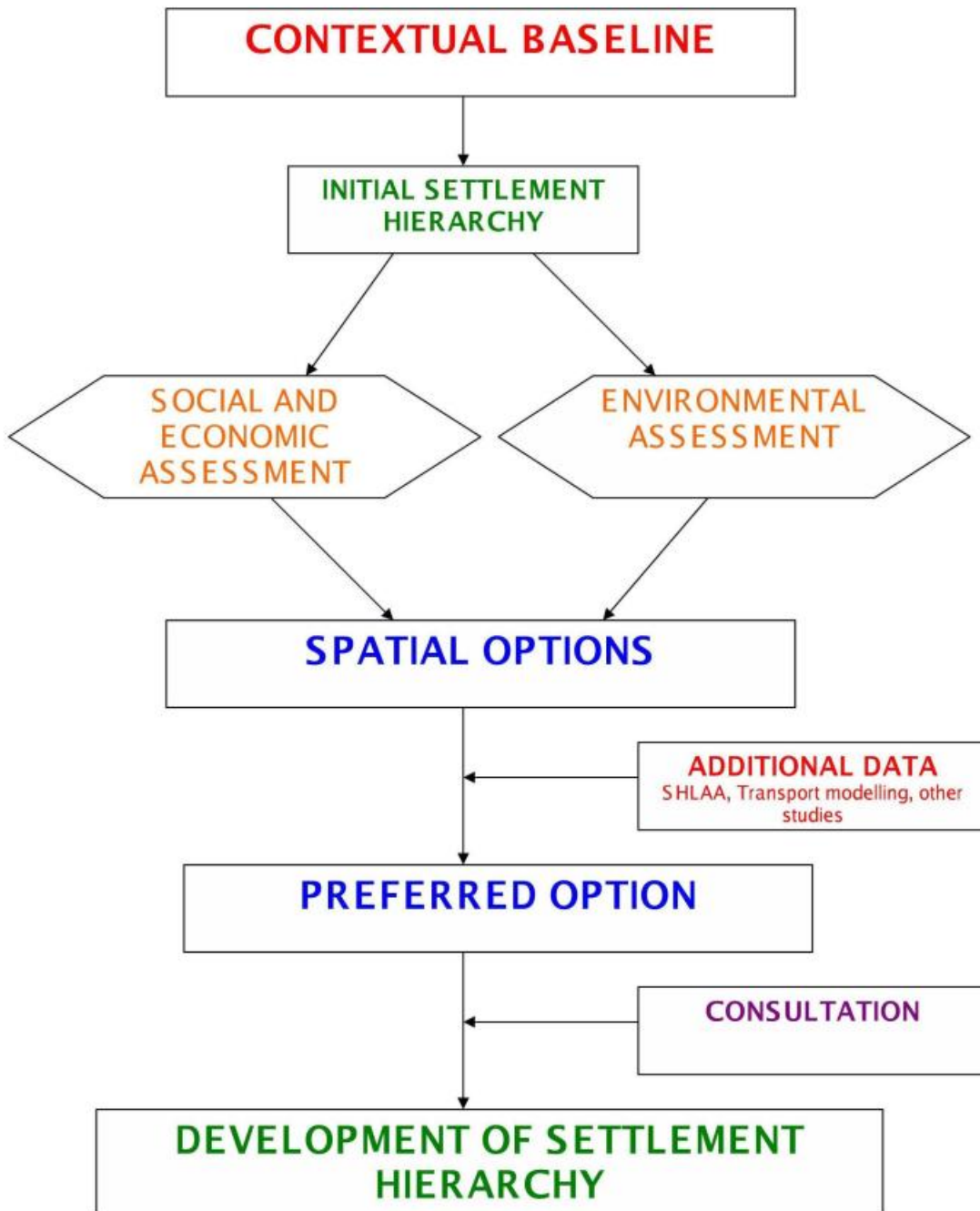2   DCLG, Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning, para 4.2
3   EERA, Regional Spatial Strategy: The East of England Plan, May 2008
4   Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning, para 4.2

The Process

6   In order to produce a Settlement Hierarchy, it is important to recognise the different steps that need to be undertaken in its development throughout the Core Strategy. Figure 1 shows the different steps.

Policy Context

National Policy Context

7 Planning Policy Statement 1(PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development (para.23,vii) states that Local Authorities should:

'*ensure the provision of sufficient good quality new homes in suitable locations...that reduce the need to travel*''.

8 In addition, PPS1, (para.27,v) states that Local Authorities should:

'...*provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation be ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot,bicycle or public transport rather than having to reply on access by car, while recognising that this may be difficult in rural areas*'.

9 Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2): Green Belt sets out the aim of national Green Belt policy which is to restrict urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements. PPG2 also identifies that Green Belt boundaries should promote sustainable development through encouraging development within the built-up areas, whilst protecting the Green Belt.

10 Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing (para 10) states that the planning system should deliver:

'*...housing development in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure'.*

11 PPS3 also states that housing should be provided:;

'...*in rural areas, not only in market towns and local service centres but also in villages in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability'.*

12 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth states that development should be:

'*...focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities'.*

13 Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas sets out that planning should promote sustainable patterns of development, focusing development in existing centres and not allowing development in the Green Belt. PPS7 (para 3) further states that:

'*...Away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together.'*

14 Planning Policy Statement 13: Transport recognises that the planning system can be used to influence the location of facilities and services so to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it easier for people to access services, jobs and shopping by modes other than the car.

Regional Policy Context

East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (due to be revoked)

15 The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) identifies that to development should be focused in significant urban areas. One of these significant urban areas is Basildon town centre, which has been termed a Key Centre for Development and Change in RSS Policy SS3.

16   Policy SS4: Towns other than Key Centres and Rural Areas states that Development Plan Documents should define the approach to development in towns, increasing their economic and social sustainability through measures to:

- *Support urban and rural renaissance;*

- *Secure appropriate amounts of new housing, including affordable housing, local employment and other facilities; and*

- *Improve the town's accessibility, especially by public transport.*

17   Furthermore, Policy SS4 identifies that development documents should:

'...Consider the potential of other key service centres to accommodate development which is sympathetic to local character and of an appropriate scale and nature in relation to local housing and employment needs'.

18   The supporting text to Policy SS4 terms a key service centres as

'...large villages with a good level of services, which might include:

- *A primary school within the settlement...;*

- *Primary health care facilities;*

- *...Convenience shopping;*

- *Local employment opportunities; and*

- *Frequent public transport...'*

19   Paragraph 3.18 of the RSS notes that many villages have limited local services and are dependant on the key service centres. Paragraph 3.19 states that:

'*Careful examination of how a settlement or groups of settlements function is required, as well as analysis of the service base to determine the best solutions for each area'.*

20   In addition, Billericay and Wickford are identified as 'Other Settlements', on the Spatial Plan accompanying the RSS. The 'Other Settlements' are shown on the Spatial Plan for their spatial context and are applicable to Policy SS4, as detailed above.

Local Plans, Programmes and Policies

Basildon District Local Plan 1998

21   The Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 that remain applicable in the Borough are from the last adopted local planning policy document, the Basildon District Local Plan 1998. The Local Plan examined settlements and development opportunities during the plan period (1991-2001).

22   Within the Local Plan; Basildon, Billericay and Wickford are referred to as 'towns' and identified as the main locations of services. Whilst Bowers Gifford, Ramsden Bellhouse, Noak Hill Road are mentioned in the Local Plan, no particular settlement classification is given to these areas. The Local Plan does recognise however that there are numerous small settlements and Plotland areas dispersed throughout the Green Belt.

Contextual Information

Origins of Borough Settlements

23   The Basildon Borough Historic Environment Characterisation \Study Report 2011[5] identifies that there was evidence of human occupation in Basildon Borough from the late Palaeolithic period (500,000 to 10,000BC) after the discovery of flint hand-axes. A few scatter of find-spots from the Mesolithic period (10,000 to 4,000BC) in recent years have led to the conclusion that there were possible Mesolithic settlements in the Borough in areas such as Nevendon.

24   According to the study, whilst there is some evidence of settlement activity from the Neolithic period (4,000 to 2,200BC), there is more Bronze Age settlement activity (2,200BC to 700BC) in the northern part of the Borough centred on Billericay and Norsey Wood; in the east of the Borough, around Wickford and North Benfleet; and in the south of the Borough, in Vange.

25   The study identifies there is considerable local evidence from the Iron Age period (700BC to 43AD) in the vicinity of Norsey Wood and south Billericay with a possible settlement at Little Burstead and an extensive settlement at Beauchamps Farm in Wickford. The study mentions during the Roman period (43 to 410AD), the principal settlement appears to have been at Billericay, with evidence of scattered farms/villa sites at Little Burstead, Wickford, Ramsden Bellhouse and Langdon Hills. Evidence of people living in the area during the Saxon (410-1066AD) period is however rather sparse.

26   It is the Medieval period (1066-1537) that laid the foundations for the modern development of the Borough, through the establishment of local manors, Parish Churches and Parish boundaries. The historic parishes are:

- Mountnessing;
- Billericay;
- Great Burstead;
- Little Burstead;
- Ramsden Crays;
- Ramsden Bellhouse;
- Downham;
- Wickford;
- Nevendon;
- North Benfleet;
- Pitsea;
- Vange;
- Basildon;
- Lee Chapel;
- Laindon;
- Langdon Hills; and
- Dunton.

27   During the post medieval period (1538-1900) further expansion of Billericay in the the form of ribbon development and infilling along medieval streets occurred. It was however during the modern period (1900 to the present day) where the most profound development occurred as a result of the agricultural depression at the beginning of the 20th Century that saw many semi-derelict farms brought by local entrepreneurs and split into plots for sale, often to people seeking to escape London. These areas became known as "Plotlands".

28   Plotland development was unplanned and occurred in an ad-hoc unregulated manner mostly in the period between the First and Second World War. Small shacks and bungalows were built without adequate services or proper roads.

29 In 1946, the Town and Country Planning Act designated a series of New Towns around major cities in England. Basildon New Town was designated in 1947, incorporating the existing settlements of Laindon, Landgon Hills, Pitsea and Vange. The towns of Wickford and Billericay expanded significantly in the post war period as stand alone settlements and residential development took place in Ramsden Bellhouse, Crays Hill, Noak Hill Road and Bowers Gifford.

Settlement Service and Facilities Appraisal

30 To understand the function and existence of the Borough's settlements, contextual information has been collated. In order to ensure that a consistent approach has been taken that reflects on the RSS's approach[6], population and the main facilities of each settlement need to be identified. The main facilities are:

- A primary school;
- A health facility - for this study, a GP/ health centre will be used as it can provide the widest service in comparison to an opticians or a dentist, for example;
- A convenience shop, including a post office;
- Local employment opportunities; and
- Access to public transport.

31 The results of this assessment per settlement is presented in Table 1.

Settlement, the population and key services

Place	Population (to the nearest 100[7])	Primary School	Post Office	Foodstore	Doctors	Local Employment opportunities	Frequent public transport	Total
Basildon	103,600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Billericay	34, 100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Wickford	29,600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Crays Hill	600	✓	✓	✓			✓	4
Ramsden Bellhouse	600	✓	✓	✓			✓	4
Bowers Gifford	900	✓				✓	✓	3
North Benfleet	400					✓	✓	2

6   para 3.18
7   Apart from the Plotlands where some are less than 100

Topic Paper TP8: Settlement Hierarchy

Place	Population (to the nearest 100[7])	Primary School	Post Office	Foodstore	Doctors	Local Employment opportunities	Frequent public transport	Total
Little Burstead	100						✔	1
Noak Hill Road	600						✔	1
Bells Hill	80						✔	1
Broomshill Chase	60						✔	1
Fobbing	100						✔	1
Break Egg Hill	40							0
Crays Hill	390							0
Fairmead	400							0
Green Lane	50							0
Newhouse Farm and Castleson Road	270							0
Northlands	70							0
Ramsden View Road	60							0
Wickford Lawn	40							0
Stormonts Way	15							0

32   From Table 1, it is clear to see that there are areas in the Basildon Borough that have a larger population, more facilities and access to more services. Using this information, along with the policy context, similar characteristics in settlements can be identified. These similar characteristics can then be used to categorise the settlements and form the initial Settlement Hierarchy.

---

7   Apart from the Plotlands where some are less than 100

33   It can be seen from the policy context that Basildon, Billericay and Wickford have long been recognised as towns, with Basildon being identified as a Key Centre for Change and Development most recently in the RSS [8].

34   Table 1 clarifies Basildon's status as a more, major urban area (when incorporating Laindon and Pitsea) given its higher population and the presence of facilities. It seems just that Basildon is therefore placed at the apex of the hierarchy.

35   Wickford and Billericay's status with a comparable population between them and the availability of services and facilities would suggest that it is logical to group Billericay and Wickford together in the hierarchy.

36   The Policy Context identifies that '...other settlements and Plotlands are dispersed throughout the Green Belt'. From the further contextual information shown in Table 1, Ramsden Bellhouse, Crays Hill and Bowers Gifford can be distinguished from other smaller settlements in the Borough as they have at least some facilities or services present.

37   All other remaining settlements have a slightly different historic background as identified in the Policy Context, but are all limited in accessibility to services, as can be seen in Table 1.

38   A summary of the grouping of settlements by characteristic can be seen in Table 2 which forms the basis of the Settlement Hierarchy.
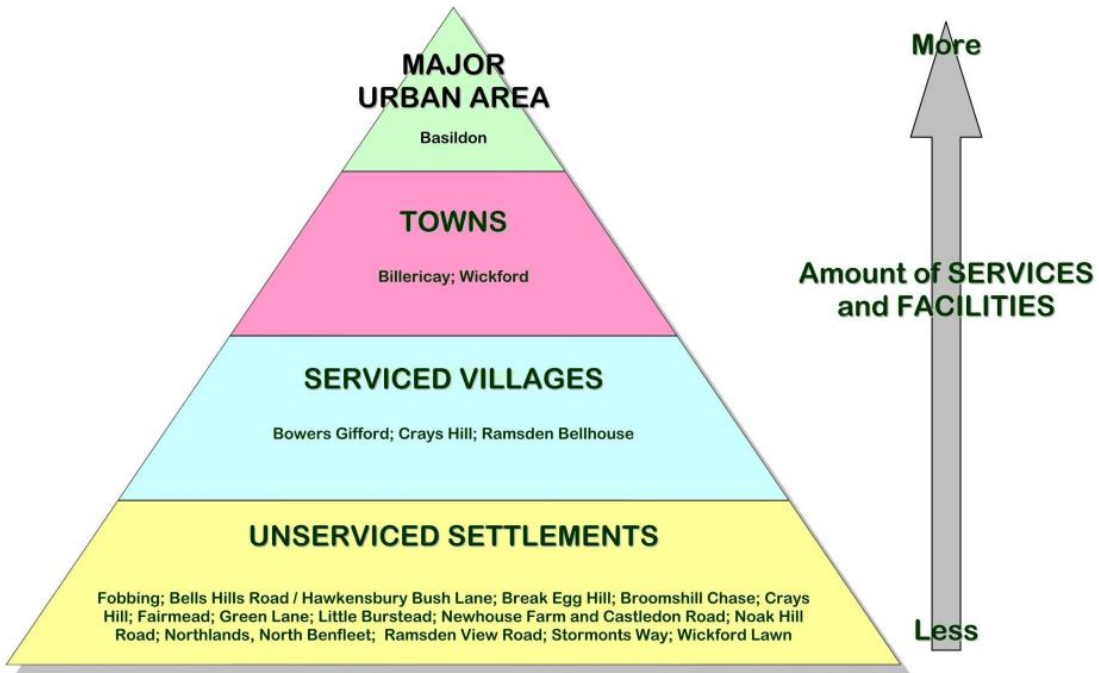
Characteristics of the settlements

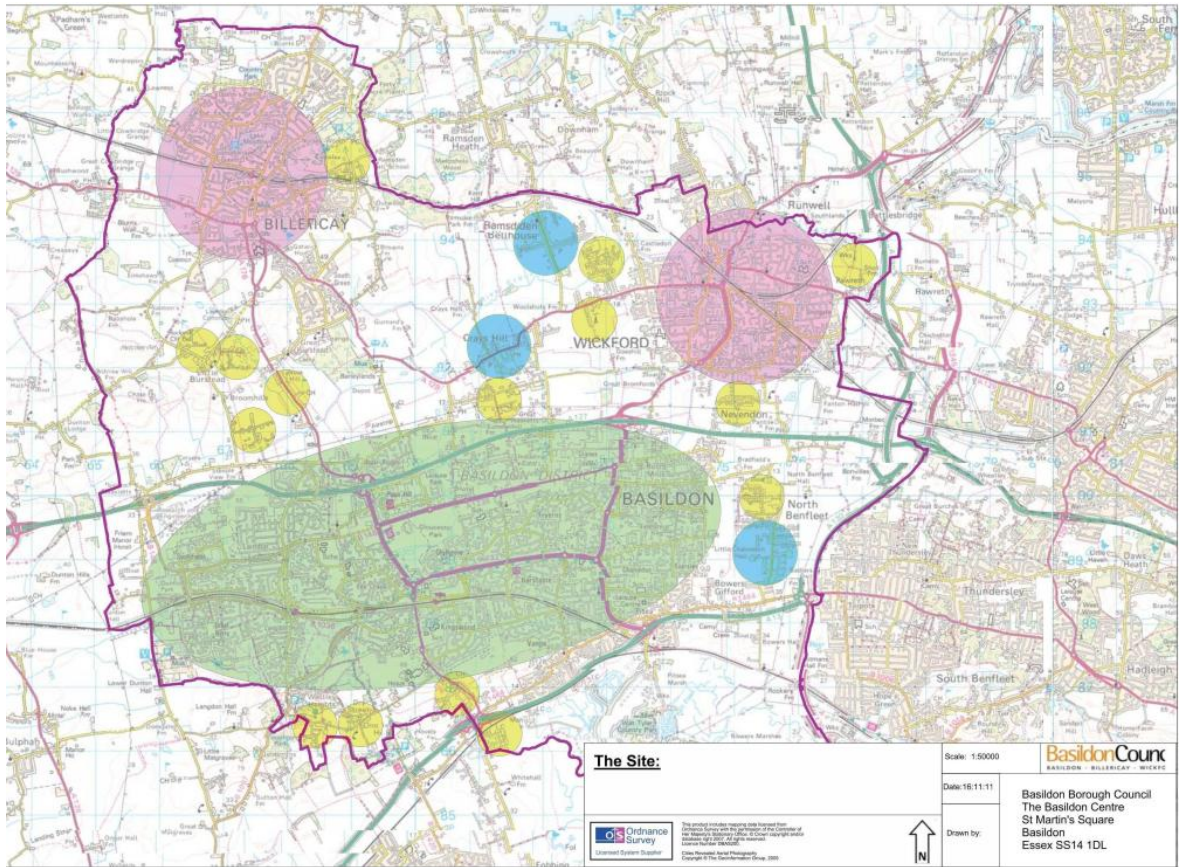| Characteristics	Place
• Main Town (recognised as a regional hub in the Regional Spatial Strategy) • Focal point for retailing and commercial activities • A127 employment corridor • Hospital and other health facilities • Wide range of leisure and community facilities • Widely accessible by public transport	Basildon
• Large town centres • Retail and commercial activities • Employment areas • Health facilities • Several primary and secondary schools • Some leisure and community facilities • Good public transport accessibility	Billericay Wickford
• Limited community facilities • Fair public transport accessibility	Bowers Gifford Crays Hill Ramsden Bellhouse
• Small collection of dwellings • Limited public transport accessibility	Fobbing Plotland Bells Hills Road / Hawkensbury Bush Lane Plotland Break Egg Hill Plotland, Billericay

Characteristics	Place
	Broomhills Chase Plotland, Little Burstead
	Crays Hill Plotland
	Fairmead Plotland, Wickford
	Green Lane Plotland, Little Burstead
	Little Burstead
	Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland, Wickford
	Noak Hill Road
	Northlands Plotland, Langdon Hills
	North Benfleet Plotland
	Ramsden View Road Plotland, Wickford
	Stormonts Way Plotland, Langdon Hills
	Wickford Lawn Plotland, Shotgate

Settlement Hierarchy

39 The Basildon Borough Settlement Hierarchy derived from this Topic Paper is represented in Figure 2 and Map 1.

40 Figure 2 shows the initial settlement hierarchy and also forms the colour legend for Map 1.

For free translation phone

Për një përkthim falas telefononi

للترجمة المجانية الرجاء الاتصال هاتفياً

বিনাখরচে অনুবাদের জন্য টেলিফোন করুন

Za besplatne prevode pozovite

欲索取免費譯本，請致電

Pour une traduction gratuite, téléphonez

Για δωρεάν μετάφραση, τηλεφωνήστε

મફત ભાષાંતર માટે ફોન કરો

नि:शुल्क अनुवाद के लिए कृपया फ़ोन कीजिए

بو ته رجومه کردنی به خورایی ته له فون بکه بو

Del nemokamo vertimo skambinkinte

സൗജന്യമായ തർജ്ജിമയ്ക്കായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുക

Po bezpłatne tłumaczenie prosimy dzwonić

Para uma tradução grátis, telefone

ਮੁੱਫ਼ਤ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਲਈ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ

Перевод – бесплатно. Звоните

Para obtener una traducción gratuita llame al

Turjubaan lacag la'aan ah ka soo wac telefoonka

இலவச மொழிபெயர்ப்புக்கு தொலைபேசி செய்யவும

Ücretsiz çeviri için telefon edin

Để cón bản dịch miễn phí hãy điện thoại

مفت ترجمے کے لئے فون کریں

Also for Audio, Large Print and Braille, phone

0800 952 0119