Settlements in the Forest of Dean

Keynote 2023

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This is an update of a document prepared to inform the 2018 Allocations Plan and used in a previous guise during its preparation. This version supports the new 2021-41 Local Plan and was prepared in advance of the 2024 consultation version of the Draft Local Plan.

1.2 The Forest of Dean District contains a network of settlements diverse in size and function, and which interact with each other economically and socially as well but also have key relationships with others outside the district. The scale and type of relationships between settlements must be carefully considered in order to strategically plan for future population growth, ensuring growth and development occurs in areas where infrastructure and services are able to support growing communities efficiently while promoting sustainable development.

1.3 This assessment of the district's Settlement Hierarchy supports the Forest of Dean's Local Plan by providing evidence upon which to determine role and functionality of the interrelationships between Forest of Dean's network of settlements. This evidence will assist decision making by identifying centres that have the range of sustainable services and infrastructure necessary to support further development, and ensure development avoids environmental and cultural constraints.

1.4 Land use planning frameworks are developed on the basic premise that development should be sustainable. Sustainability is measured in terms of economic, environmental, and social indicators. The Forest of Dean District Council planning framework provides an overall context for a local view of sustainable development, reflective of the district's location, functions and composition. With respect to the settlement hierarchy, sustainability specifically needs to take account of the degree to which each settlement is self-contained in terms of employment, services, and transport accessibility. The planning framework promotes environmental sustainability by maintaining compact and well-designed urban centres, and protects the countryside by preventing development encroaching into valuable open space and productive, agricultural land.

1.5 An almost universal planning tool which is supported by this settlement hierarchy is the use of settlement boundaries used to define for planning policy purposes the extent of settlements and thereby establish some of the key aspects of the local plan approach to the consideration of change. Local Plan policies are written with this in mind and having regard to the principles of sustainable development. The boundaries are established and reviewed when a plan is revised or prepared.

1.6 Therefore, the purpose of this document is to:

1. Establish an evidence base through the assessment of relevant data on the role and function of settlements in the Forest of Dean District;
2. Build on the Settlements Hierarchy Assessments undertaken in 2007/8, 2011 and 2018;
3. Analyse the relationships between settlements, and identify groups or hubs of settlements that are interlinked in terms of social networks and share employment and services;
4. Identify the settlements that act as rural service centres for their surrounding area, and could potentially offer a suitable location for accommodating the future growth requirements for the Forest of Dean District.
5. Support the principle of the settlement boundaries that are proposed

1.7   For the purposes of this study, the following parameters have been adopted

- Settlements of less than 20 houses & estimated populations of not more than about 50 people are excluded from the review. These are considered to be small hamlets, which for the purposes of planning are part of the open countryside (Source: Rural Settlements of Forest of Dean; 1990 and subsequent guidance).
- Functional relationships between centres are referred to as "hubs". -
- The towns are accepted to be Newent, Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney. Tutshill and Sedbury are regarded as a functional part of Chepstow.

2 Past Iterations

2.1   This Settlement Hierarchy reviews and updates previous Settlement Hierarchy documents published in 2011 and 2007, and the Rural Settlements Study prepared by the Forest of Dean Council in 1990. The 2018 iteration of the Settlement Hierarchy included new evidence, trends and change over the intervening period, and tested old assumptions about the way settlement patterns will progress into the future. Further updating in 2023 takes account of the greater emphasis on sustainability and the increased importance of influencing travel patterns and achieving carbon targets through reduced need to travel.

3 Policy Framework

3.1 One of the primary aims of the Local Plan is to promote sustainable communities by consolidating existing urban form, maintaining or increasing the viability of settlements by bringing housing, jobs, and services, closer together.

3.2 This hierarchy must reflect current and emerging policy context, and inform the emerging LP taking into account the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other national guidance.
- Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP)
- Protected area designations including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscapes), Conservation areas, SACs, SSSIs & Flood zones and Heritage assets such as Conservation Areas.

3.3 This study has been prepared within the framework of the NPPF (2021) and is compliant with the subsequent 2023 version. It will form an important part of the evidence base for the new LP.

3.4 Settlements in protected areas are constrained by various designations. The impact of any new peripheral residential development in protected areas such as the National Landscapes needs to be carefully considered, and only small-scale change based upon identified local need is likely to be appropriate.

3.5 The Settlement Hierarchy will inform and support the stated objectives of the Forest of Dean District LP in:

1. Maintaining and developing thriving and sustainable communities;
2. Providing quality environments throughout the district to protect the environment for the benefit of the community, and in order to attract and support new businesses;
3. Developing more self-contained and diverse local economies including tourism. This strategy includes addressing out-commuting and aims to enable more sustainable transport patterns, as well as providing a greater range and number of jobs, and improving locally accessible services and facilities;
4. Providing homes, including affordable homes, to meet the housing needs of the community;
5. Facilitating regeneration to support a stronger more sustainable economy in a better quality environment;
6. Creating safer communities with better facilities.

3.6   These objectives are underpinned by the emerging LP vision:

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL PLAN VISION

- The district is actively engaged in pursuing a low carbon future and new development is designed to enable this while being able to adapt to climate change.
- In 2041 younger people are more likely to want stay in the district with good access to education, employment and housing.
- The needs of an ageing population have also been incorporated into the design of new development.
- It is a place where healthy lifestyles are an everyday part of living and working in the district.
- The implementation of sustainable development enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.
- The diverse landscapes and heritage of the area is so distinctive that it is nationally and internationally recognised.
- A thriving tourism market is underpinned by a high quality natural and built environment.
- The lack of affordable housing has been addressed through imaginative and sustainable ways providing an appropriate range of tenures which support local communities, services and facilities.
- The area has resilient and diverse employment opportunities with strong links to good local schools embracing, in particular, industries of the future.
- The district is better connected through improved transport, digital and mobile data connections which reduce the need to travel and provide a distinctive local offer.
- The Forest of Dean is known as a special place to start and grow business.

3.7   The emerging LP includes a firm commitment to maintaining and consolidating the role and function of the four main market towns- Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney and Newent. This Settlement Hierarchy will support this vision and existing settlement pattern with an evidence base that re-examines the role of the four main centres in relation to each other, as well providing a next layer of analysis in terms of the network of villages and functional relationships between rural service centres.

3.8   This further relates directly to the following key questions (currently reproduced in the AP, Table 4 p 21 but also relevant to the emerging LP):

Accessibility

Key question: How easily can the development be accessed by modes other than private car? Are development proposals located to make the best use of existing facilities and services, and do they support local town service centres?

Economy

Key question: How do development proposals support the economy of our towns and the rural economy?

Community

Key question: How do development proposals support integrated, fair and diverse communities?
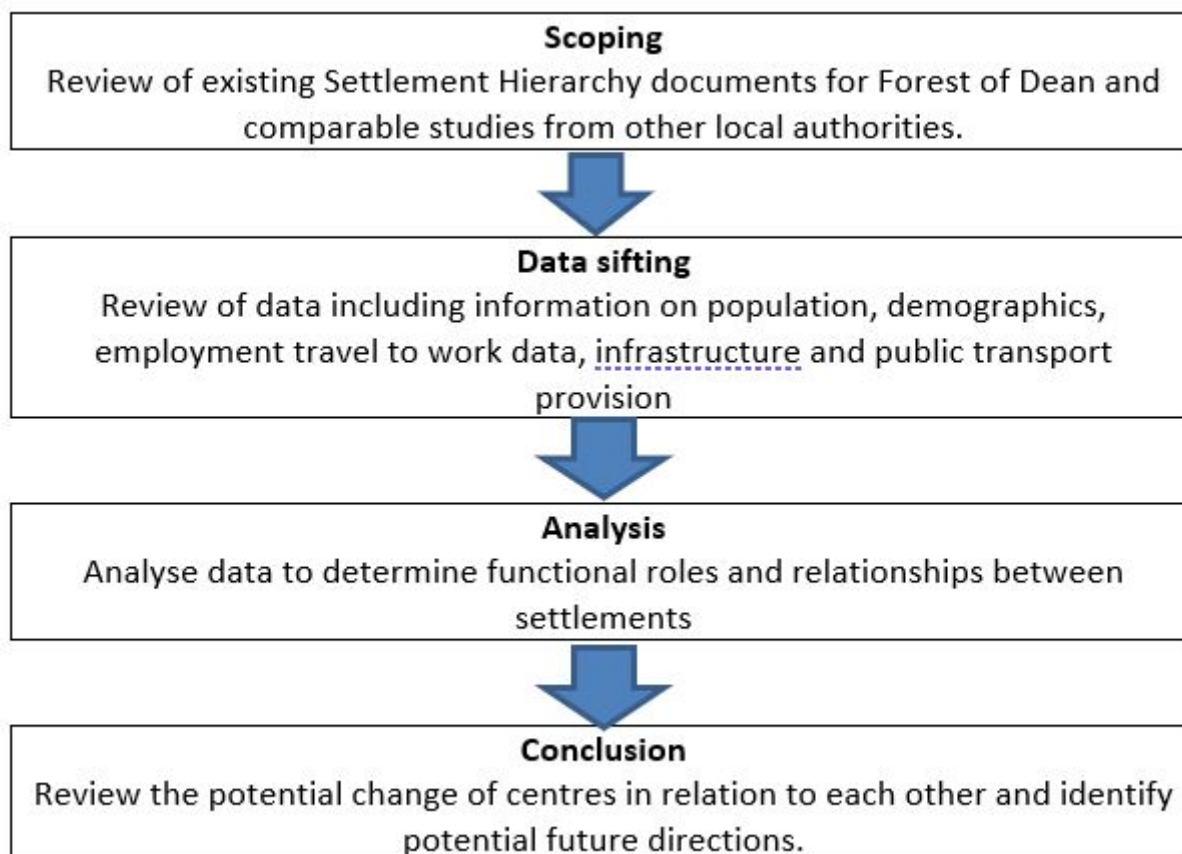
Key question: How do proposals support the rural context of the district?

3.9   Taking account of the general hierarchy may also reveal opportunities to reinforce it and make use of the general existing pattern of development to improve some of the relationships involved. Some of the LP policies and potential allocations may do this, for example to enable improved services by the identification of opportunities for development that will support existing centres as well as meeting their own needs. Some degree of concentration can be helpful as opposed to supporting dispersal of development which will rely on inefficient patterns of travel and not provide sufficient support for upgrades to existing or new infrastructure.

4 Methodology

4.1   This section provides a description and explanation of the methodology adopted for the study. This is explained in the following schematic:

Scoping

Review of existing Settlement Hierarchy documents for Forest of Dean and comparable studies from other local authorities.

⬇

Data sifting

Review of data including information on population, demographics, employment travel to work data, infrastructure and public transport provision

⬇

Analysis

Analyse data to determine functional roles and relationships between settlements

⬇

Conclusion

Review the potential change of centres in relation to each other and identify potential future directions.

4.2   The simplest kind of settlement "hierarchy" is a ranking from largest to smallest in terms of population size. Population can be a significant indicator as to the diversity and complexity of a particular settlement's role(s) and function(s). However, it is only one aspect of a centre's role and function. To more fully understand each centre, an assessment is made of all of the following elements:

1.   Population and housing;
2.   Employment role;
3.   Ease of travel to work, and access to services and facilities;
4.   Availability of retail and community services and facilities;
5.   A previous study for the now defunct South West Assembly provided an initial analysis of Travel To Work (TTW) data, looked particularly at "self-containment"- defined as the ratio of residents living and working in a settlement to the total number of employed residents living in the settlement. Although now dated the principles are just as relevant, possibly more so at a time when there needs to be additional focus on reducing the need to travel

4.3   There are three key things to consider when determining a settlement's role and status within the hierarchy:

1. Service provision – where are the important clusters of retail and community services?
2. Employment – which settlements fulfil a strong employment role?
3. Accessibility – where are the most sustainable travel opportunities and self-containment?

4.4   Analysis of these aspects alongside population size contributes to understanding the degree of self-containment at which each centre is currently operating. It also indicates which centres have the social, economic, and transport infrastructure to support further growth without compromising the sustainability of the district.

4.5   To this end, each centre is scored against weighted criteria for services, transport accessibility and employment areas.

4.6   Towns and villages in the Forest of Dean have been:

*   Ranked by population size;
*   Given a weighted score based on the number of business and community facilities they contain.
*   Given a weighted score based on the quality of public transport provision;
*   Assessed on the basis of TTW data, where available;
*   Assessed in terms of the location of the largest employment generators within the Forest of Dean District;
*   Assessed on the basis of environmental constraints around the existing settlement boundaries of each centre;
*   Assessed in terms of qualitative significance criteria, relating to significant cultural and institutional status of each centre.

5 About Forest of Dean District

5.1   The Forest of Dean District is the most western district of Gloucestershire, bordering Wales. It is geographically defined by the Wye River to the west and the Severn River to the east, with a large protected forest reserve in the centre known as the Royal Forest of Dean.

5.2   South-west England has a more dispersed population (and thus settlement pattern) than other English regions, with around 35% of people living in settlements of less than 10,000 people.

5.3   With a total district population of 87,000 the Forest of Dean has the second lowest population in Gloucestershire. The Forest's population is 95% rural, making it the second most rural district in Gloucestershire after the Cotswolds (Source: DEFRA urban/ rural classifications).

5.4   These two figures combined make the Forest of Dean a sparsely populated, rural district, relative to English national standards.

5.5   In considering future population growth, it is necessary to focus on expanding larger centres for employment and accommodation needs, minimising travel needs and infrastructure cost, while acknowledging that a significant proportion of the existing population live in rural areas with very different development needs. These areas are typified by a large number of villages clustered around "market towns" that are the centre of valuable cultural, community and economic activities, and provide necessary services to rural areas (Tym, RPG10).

5.6   The settlement pattern of Forest of Dean is dominated by four market towns which provide the main services and employment centres for the district. These are Newent in the northern part of the district, and Coleford, Cinderford and Lydney in the centre.

5.7   The Forest of Dean lies in the northern-most part of the south-west region, being separated from the south-west peninsula by the Severn River. Much of the district relies on Gloucester for main services and employment opportunities, and to a lesser extent Cheltenham. The Forest of Dean is also influenced by centres outside of Gloucestershire, such as Bristol, Newport, Cardiff and Hereford, as well as smaller centres such as Ledbury, Ross on Wye, Monmouth, Chepstow and Newport, in a network of complex travel patterns and inter-relationships.

5.8   Bristol has been clearly identified as the regional centre of south west England, with a population estimate of 479,000 (City Council 2023 est), Bristol does not dominate the south west like core cities in other regions, but forms an important part of the regional settlement pattern. It is the location of its two major strategic ports; the Bristol International Airport is the region's principal airport, and the Bristol port is the largest freight handling port in the south-west. Bristol exerts a strong influence over the southern and central parts of the Forest of Dean district, particularly Tutshill & Sedbury, extending up to Lydney. The Northern parts of the district are more influenced by Gloucester and to a lesser extent Cheltenham. There is also some out-commuting into Welsh centres of Newport and Cardiff.

6 Forest of Dean Settlements

6.1   The settlement hierarchy has been divided into four tiers, in terms of the size and function of each centre:

6.2   *Figure 1: Tiers of settlement size*

TIER 1: Market Towns Coleford, Cinderford, Lydney, Newent
TIER 2: Large Villages Mitcheldean, Drybrook, Tutshill/Sedbury, Blakeney, Bream, Lydbrook, Newnham, Whitecroft and Pillowell with Yorkley.
TIER 3: Villages Alvington, Aylburton, Beachley, Brierley, Bromsberrow Heath, Churchman, Clearwell, Dymock, Edge End, Ellwood, English Bicknor, Hartpury, Huntley, Kempley Green, Littledean, Longhope, Northwood Green, Parkend, Redbrook, Redmarley D'Abitot, Ruardean, Sling, St Briavels, Staunton (near Coleford), Staunton/Corse , Soudley, Tibberton, Upper Soudley, Westbury on Severn, Woodcroft, Woolaston, Worrall Hill.
TIER 4: Small settlements/hamlets (examples only) Aylburton Common, Awre, Birdwood, Blackwells End Green, Blaisdon, Blakeney Hill, Botloe's Green, Bollow, Boughspring, Broadoak, Brockweir, Brains Green, Broadmoor, Broadoak, Chaxhill, , Clearwell, Cliffords Mesne, Edge End, Ellwood, English Bicknor, Four Oaks, Ganders Green, Glasshouse, Gorsley, Hanover Green, Hewelsfield Common, Hewelsfield, Highleadon, Hillersland, Kempley, Kempley Green, Kents Green, Kilcot, May hill village, Newland, Northwood Green, Oakle Street, Oldcroft, Pludds, Plump Hill, The Scarr, Upleadon, Viney Hill.

6.3   This study primarily focuses on the top three tiers most of which have some degree of service provision. These are capable of providing a degree of self-containment by being able to fulfil some of the day to day needs of residents.

6.4   Centres capable of accommodating further development should ideally have the following:

1.   Employment, or employment site or sites close by:
2.   Good or very good public transport accessibility:
3.   Easy access to several daily services such as primary school, village hall, pub, and shop.

6.5   There may be exceptions to this rule- however, if one is absent, it should be compensated for by another element to be regarded as a rural service village.

6.6   Tier 4 identifies a number of much smaller settlements. These settlements often do not have the same range of public transport or local facilities as main settlements, but some do host certain facilities and/ or services to the local area. Homes sporadically located in the open countryside effectively form a fifth tier to the settlement pattern, which have traditionally been tied to agricultural land use. While there may be some minor and isolated opportunities for infilling within these two tiers of settlement, they have not been identified by settlement boundaries, due to their clear lack of capacity for self-containment and hence overall sustainability.

6.7   Some of the services in the FoDD are located away from settlements including several primary schools, village halls and churches. In addition some recreation grounds and shops are also sometimes located in the open countryside, the latter in a few cases associated with filling stations.

7 Functional Relationships

7.1   For the purposes of this study, 'hubs' are defined as the focus for a network of interdependent settlements which fulfil each other's needs. Many smaller centres evolved as independent villages, but due to their proximity to a larger centre, and erosion of services such as shops and schools they have become consumed and become functionally dependant. Settlements often share certain key services with another settlement or main town. Market towns and rural settlements do not exist in isolation, but rather, are dependent on each other for labour, housing, employment and services.

7.2   Figure 2: Forest of Dean settlement relationships- core areas and some dependant settlements (in addition to more rural hamlets settlements and individual dwellings).

Core	*Satellite (smaller 'satellites' are examples in some cases)*
Coleford	Berry Hill, Edge End, Broadwell, Joyford, Christchurch, Coalway, Five Acres, Milkwall, Scowles, Mile End, Palmers Flat,Sling, Ellwood, Clearwell.
Cinderford	Drybrook/ Harrow Hill, Ruardean Hill, Ruardean Woodside, Steam Mills, Littledean, Ruspidge, Soudley,
Blakeney	Awre, Blakeney Hill, Nibley, Brain's Green, Furnace Valley
Bream	Breams Eaves, Tufts and Breams Meend, Hang Hill, Brockhollands
Drybrook	Harrow Hill, Ruardean Hill
Dymock	Shakesfield
Kempley	Kempley Green
Lydbrook	Lower Lydbrook, Upper Lydbrook, Hangerberry, Joys Green, Stowfield, Worrall Hill
Lydney	Alvington, Aylburton, Oldcroft, Viney Hill, Yorkley, Whitecroft, Pillowell
Mitcheldean	Abenhall, Plump Hill
Newent	Oxenhall, The Scarr
Redmarley	Playley Green
Ruardean	Ruardean Hill, Ruardean Woodside, The Pludds
Sedbury/Tutshill (adjoins Chepstow)	Woodcroft, Broadrock, Beachley
Sling	Clements End, Ellwood
St Briavels	Coldharbour
Westbury on Severn	Chaxhill
Woolaston	Woolaston Common, Woolaston Woodside, Netherend,
Yorkley, Whitecroft, Pillowell	Yorkley Wood

7.3   The above include relatively large groups of settlements as well as smaller dependencies. Some of the groups such as those around Coleford provide a material increase in the area's population and hence considerable support for the central settlement's services. Between some of the others there is a

much more basic relationship. Some appear twice being within the influence of a larger centre but also having some services which might benefit smaller settlements around them. The whole district includes a number of tight overlapping networks though this is much less apparent in the north where there is a more simple hierarchy around Newent. Travel patterns highlight a great deal of interdependence between the key centres, especially Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney which effectively operate as a functional network. This is well described in the following extract from the Functional Analysis of Settlements prepared for the South West Regional Assembly by Roger Tym and Partners in 2005 and it still applies despite its age:

Inter-relationships

Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney

These three towns differ significantly from other settlements in the greater South-west region due to their relative isolation from major infrastructure. They are all small towns and this is an important feature to stress, particularly in relation to the scale of travel to work journeys, compared to say, the Cornish towns who also display a similar local functional network. Cinderford and Coleford are both under 50% self-contained. The figure is not available for Lydney is a slight net importer.

Examining the town-as-origin travel to work patterns the strongest relationships of all towns are with Gloucester. Cheltenham has a lesser role. After this primary relationship the next most significant are those of the towns with each other. These are summarised below:

	Cinderford	Coleford	Lydney
Cinderford	-	224	192
Coleford	305	-	223
Lydney	173	265	-

Every day the three towns exchange 1382 employees, over 10% of their entire combined working population. The patterning for the towns-as-destinations is not greatly changed, though the links to Cheltenham and Gloucester become weaker depending on the centre.

Both the origin and destination mapping clearly show the complex, yet localised, nature of commuting to and from the towns. Other smaller settlements and towns in Wales are all intimately involved. This forms a relatively tight network.

Thus, for these three towns there is a significantly different travel to work dynamic. They are not very self-contained, and have a fairly strong relationship with Gloucester. But beyond this there is a well-established, if complex, relatively local commuting pattern in place. This leads to the conclusion that growth in the three towns could be expected to reinforce such a pattern, and thus would be relatively sustainable, not from the perspective of freestanding individual towns, but from that of the tight local network.

Source: South West Regional Assembly FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF SETTLEMENTS. Roger Tym & partners, March 2005.

7.4 The above extract refers to Gloucester and Cheltenham but there are also quite close relationships with other larger centres outside the FoDD. One is Chepstow where Tutshill and Sedbury are in effect part of the town and others include nearby Ross, Monmouth and Ledbury, and

then further away but much larger centres such as Hereford, Cheltenham, Bristol, Newport and Cardiff. DataShine commuting patterns reveal much of these patterns:

7.5   https://commute.datashine.org.uk/
#mode=cardriving&direction=both&msoa=undefined&zoom=11.0&lon=-2.4801&lat=51.7938

8 Services and Facilities

8.1   The table below is a simple analysis of the various settlements with regard to their general accessibility, size, and the offer of services which also takes into account their location. It provides a guide to a basic hierarchy which can be used as one input to the assessment of development capabilities. These then need to be considered against other factors such as the various physical constraints (relief, vulnerability to flooding, protected sites and landscapes etc).

Settlement	size	access	services	sum	location	total
Cinderford	1	1	1	3	1	4
Coleford	1	1	1	3	1	4
Lydney	1	1	1	3	1	4
Newent	1	1	1	3	1	4
Tutshill Sedbury Beachley	2	1	2	5	1	6
Bream	3	1	2	6	2	8
Mitcheldean	3	1	2	6	2	8
Newnham	3	1	2	6	2	8
Littledean	4	1	2	7	2	9
Drybrook	3	3	2	8	2	10
Yorkley Pillowell Whitecroft	3	3	2	8	2	10
Aylburton	5	1	3	9	2	11
Blakeney	4	2	2	8	3	11
Longhope	4	2	3	9	3	12
Lydbrook and Joys Green W Hill	3	3	3	9	3	12
Parkend	4	2	3	9	3	12
Staunton Corse	4	2	3	9	3	12
Woolaston	4	2	3	9	3	12
Beachley	4	2	5	11	2	13
Hartpury	4	2	4	10	3	13
Huntley	4	2	4	10	3	13
Sling	4	2	5	11	2	13
Alvington	5	2	4	11	3	14
Dymock	4	3	4	11	3	14
Redbrook	5	2	4	11	3	14
Ruardean	4	3	4	11	3	14
St Briavels	4	3	4	11	3	14
Ruardean Hill	5	3	5	13	2	15
Westbury	6	2	5	13	2	15
Woodcroft	6	2	5	13	2	15
Brierley	6	2	5	13	3	16
Brockweir	6	2	5	13	3	16
Clearwell	5	4	4	13	3	16
Edge End	6	2	6	14	2	16
Ellwood	5	4	5	14	2	16
Oldcroft and Viney Hill	6	3	5	14	2	16
Ruardean Woodside	5	4	5	14	2	16
Staunton Coleford	6	2	5	13	3	16
Bromsberrow	5	4	5	14	3	17
Redmarley	5	4	5	14	3	17
Tibberton	5	4	5	14	3	17
Upper Soudley	6	3	5	14	3	17
E Bicknor	6	4	5	15	3	18
Northwood Green	6	4	5	15	3	18
Newland	7	4	5	16	3	19
Upleadon	7	4	5	16	3	19
Kempley Green	7	4	6	17	3	20

8.2   It is possible to refine the above in a variety of ways but overall it provides a working view of the district. It follows that settlements at the top of the list are likely to be more sustainable locations for development. Size is a good general guide but there are some other factors including access to transport routes (including for public transport) and proximity to other larger centres that can be taken into account.

9 Employment

9.1   One factor contributing to the sustainability of a settlement is employment density (i.e.number of jobs compared to total population). Not all people will choose to live and work within the same settlement, but settlements with a higher employment density will offer the best opportunity to be able to do so, while minimising pressure on transport. Although active travel will be encouraged the aim to reduce the need to travel overall is equally important. Settlements with low employment density will inevitably limit residents' options, requiring them to commute further to work. Some may be within easy "active" travel range and this is reflected in the table. An overall view of the availability and proximity to employment opportunities can be overlain on the emerging hierarchy as below. Clearly the range of available employment may only be limited in some cases but the existence of any opportunities will help retain some daytime activity as well as providing some employment without a need to travel. The increase in working from home has also impacted on this although it is difficult to assess as the 2021 census figures were obtained during the pandemic.

9.2   The main impact of including a column for employment in the list below is to distance Mitcheldean from other large villages in the list due to the extensive range of opportunities there. Otherwise the hierarchy remains broadly the same except for Staunton/ Corse Longhope and Parkend which have a relatively large amount of employment accessible on foot. Whilst the existence of accessible employment is a useful consideration it is only likely to be where it is both accessible and contains a suitably wide range of opportunities that any real improvement on sustainability will be seen.

Settlement	size	Employment	Total with employment factor
Cinderford	1	1	5
Coleford	1	1	5
Lydney	1	1	5
Newent	1	2	6
Tutshill Sedbury Beachley	2	3	9
Mitcheldean	3	1	9
Bream	3	3	11
Newnham	3	4	12
Yorkley Pillowell Whitecroft	3	3	13
Littledean	4	4	13
Drybrook	3	4	14
Aylburton	5	3	14
Blakeney	4	4	15
Longhope	4	3	15
Parkend	4	3	15
Staunton Corse	4	3	15
Lydbrook and Joys Green W Hill	3	4	16
Woolaston	4	4	16
Hartpury	4	3	16
Sling	4	3	16
Beachley	4	4	17
Huntley	4	4	17
Dymock	4	4	18
Ruardean	4	5	19
St Briavels	4	5	19
Alvington	5	5	19
Redbrook	5	5	19
Ruardean Hill	5	5	20
Westbury	6	5	20
Woodcroft	6	5	20
Clearwell	5	5	21
Ellwood	5	5	21
Ruardean Woodside	5	5	21
Bromsberrow	5	4	21
Brierley	6	5	21
Brockweir	6	5	21
Edge End	6	5	21
Oldcroft and Viney Hill	6	5	21
Staunton Coleford	6	5	21
Redmarley	5	5	22
Tibberton	5	5	22
Upper Soudley	6	5	22
E Bicknor	6	5	23
Northwood Green	6	5	23
Newland	7	5	24
Upleadon	7	5	24
Kempley Green	7	5	25

10 Travel Patterns and Accessibility

10.1   Self-containment remains prioritised in current thinking about what makes a community sustainable. Communities which can provide a range of services, including economic, employment and social needs, are favoured in order to minimise private travel, and maximise efficiency of service provision. Current data on commuting patterns thus provides a measure of the self-containment of a community, informing potential sustainable growth directions, and helping to avoid the development of commuter towns.

10.2   The FoDD has low levels of self-containment, something that applies when compared with other regional centres of south west England. Smaller settlements tend to be less self-contained in terms of providing a balance of jobs to resident workforce. The FoDD settlements are therefore tend towards functioning as dormitory towns for out-commuters, who account for over half of the district's economically active residents.

10.3   A useful source of commuting patterns is datashine: (https://commute.datashine.org.uk/#mode=cardriving&direction=both&msoa=undefined&zoom=11.0&lon=-2.4801&lat=51.7938) which uses census information and settlement locations to plot commuting patterns. It does not show all settlements however but it demonstrates the overall patterns of travel to and from the larger ones. This supports the status of the larger settlements in the district where they are also destinations for employment purposes.

10.4   There are various measures of accessibility, and a broad measure of assessment is set out in the table above. The most accessible locations are those on a travel route served by public transport and one which uses the major roads. Lydney is also served by the railway so has an additional advantage. Major routes that are also part of the public transport network will also be those on which the public transport routes are most easily improved and locations on them will have an advantage. This can in some cases offset or partially offset the disadvantages of scale.

10.5   Some smaller centres are close enough to larger and better serviced locations to benefit from their services and to be accessible by a variety of means from them. This is especially true of some of the Forest ring where settlements in close proximity share some key facilities which they in turn support.

11 Significance

11.1   Analysis of the complex economic, social and cultural relationships between settlements suggests that a means of making qualitative assessments of the roles of towns and settlements is required. Relying solely on traditional quantitative assessment of population size, employment and transport accessibility only gives a partial of the degree of significance of the different centres, and may miss important qualitative elements.

11.2   "Significance" in this context has a more nuanced meaning than size alone. Of course, larger centres are significant in that larger populations inevitably provide more employment and services, and have larger economies. Settlement may be classified as significant on one or more of the following dimensions. The following key questions originally developed by Roger Tym provide a framework to assess the significance of different centres within the Forest of Dean District:

Question	FoD commentary
Has the most population of its settlement type in its locality?	Of the four market towns, three are almost equal in size Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney. Cinderford was once the largest and has received a lot of attention for town improvements and regeneration. However, due to the combined impacts of Cinderford's declining economy and Lydney's market advantage benefitting from the end of the Severn Bridge tolling, Lydney has seen a great deal of recent change and the level of activity is expected to continue as the various allocated sites are developed.
Main employment centre of its settlement type	Aside from the towns, the largest employment centre is Mitcheldean as a result of the former rank Xerox site now managed as a mixed employment site. Other large villages have a varying offer and some rural locations too.
Main retail centre of its settlement type (in terms of floor space and mix)	Lydney has a stronger retail sector than its counterpart Cinderford and Coleford is similar while the offer at Newent is somewhat smaller. Recent development have seen a new discount supermarket in both Lydney and Coleford, as well as the closure of the former town centre co-op in Lydney.
Provides or takes special or unique roles that others cannot or will not (eg. Seat of University and higher education's institutes)	Some aspects of the towns distinguish them from others but no one is dominant. No higher education in any, Hartpury (university and college) is in a rural area. Cinderford has a new community hospital, FE college and construction industry training centre.
Provides strategic or command and control functions that determine overall levels of service or activities across a wide area	Coleford has greater status as an administrative centre, with both the head office of the Forest of Dean District Council and the Forestry Commission based here. None of the towns has a notable office sector.
Higher profile directly as a result of its history or heritage status (eg. World heritage site)	No single centre dominates. Cinderford and Coleford are within or close to FoD and Coleford has a recreation and tourism focus more than Cinderford. Lydney has recently seen regeneration (ongoing) in connection with the Harbour.
Major infrastructure intersections or has access to a wider network	Newent- proximity to M50 corridor

	Tutshill, Sedbury and Beachley- proximity to Severn bridge and easy access to M48. Functionally part of Chepstow although the town centre falls within Monmouthshire, Wales. Lydney has a rail connection. A48 and A40 are main axes but can be congested.
Major built stadia or other facilities	Hartpury University/ college in rural area of northern part of the FoDD.
Visitor attractions of national reputation (based on visitor numbers)	Wye valley & Forest of Dean both attract substantial numbers of visitors. Coleford is best placed for this. Parkend has a strong tourism/ recreation offer.

11.3   Other local aspects may identify settlements that disrupt population based hierarchies. One example of this could be the relative tourism focus at Parkend with the Whitemead Park, the terminus of the Dean Forest railway, the Field studies centre, and connections to the leisure cycling network.

11.4   The relationship between 'significance' and size is not straightforward. Some centres of significance are based on cultural, heritage, and/ or environmental criteria, in which case population size, growth and resulting service needs would be more complicated and for example increased transport services may be required. Other significant centres may need to be identified for more general growth in order to maintain their significance in the region, and provide employment and services.

11.5   The above situation may apply in the FoDD where no one centre is dominant and where one or two are more orientated towards tourism and recreation. The third, Cinderford has a large proportion of the manufacturing space in the FoDDC while Coleford has the largest employer of that type and Lydney also has a large existing offer and the greatest area allocated for additional employment requiring purpose built "estate" premises. Cinderford carries the only Further Education base in the FoDD and also the new hospital, as well a construction industry training centre. Lydney has arguably the best access and currently the greatest flow of investment in, though Coleford is better established as a recreation / tourism centre. The FoDD is also investing heavily in a new recreation facility at Five Acres.

11.6   Conclusions from the above in respect of the settlement hierarchy are that the three towns will continue to co exist with no one being dominant. This supports the current and past LP strategy of seeking to promote all three in a complementary manner. The emerging LP strategy and the constraints on development suggest that Lydney may remain the largest, while Cinderford will require support for its evolution. Newent is outside the triangle (Cinderford-Lydney- Coleford) and can evolve as a service centre for its locality possibly capturing trade currently lost to nearby centres.

11.7   Tutshill Sedbury and Beachley are a special case in that their main dependency is on Chepstow and is likely to continue to be so. Beachley is split between the current army camp (to be vacated after 2029), the old settlement of that name and the area formerly occupied by hutments but now accommodating a largely settled area of relatively new detached homes. When the camp is vacated it is likely to be redeveloped into a mixed area that will need services, transport and other infrastructure and will need to be suitably self-contained.

11.8   The remaining villages sit in a complex but understandable hierarchy with the employment area at Mitcheldean being a notable asset. Many are part of the "forest ring" and are interrelated. They are also frequently physically constrained by the statutory forest so cannot expand significantly even if that was desirable. Conservation of the form and of features within these is paramount. The largest (Bream) has a good range of facilities as well as being close to other centres. One (Newnham) is an

outstanding conservation area. The headline characteristics of the villages and towns are summarised below. They don't generally affect the hierarchy as it now is but do impact on the potential for change. This potential is however also driven by the need to balance conservation with development opportunities.

Cinderford	town- mostly inside FoD boundary	on transport route
Coleford	town and closely related satellite villages which lie mainly within FoD boundary	on transport routes

Lydney	town	on major transport routes - well located for transport incl. rail
Newent	town	adjoins major transport route
Bream	large village range of services - mostly inside FoD boundary	on transport route
Drybrook, Harrow Hill	large village range of services - mostly inside FoD boundary	Harrow Hill adjoins major transport route
Lydbrook, Joys Green, Worrall Hill	large village range of services comprises three closely related settlements part inside FoD boundary	Worrall Hill adjoins major transport route
Mitcheldean	large village range of services- major employment location	adjoins major transport route
Newnham	large village range of services	on major transport route
Tutshill, Sedbury, Beachley	large village range of services adjoining Chepstow Beachley Camp 2km away	on major transport route
Yorkley, Pillowell, Whitecroft	large village range of services but dispersed on and almost all within FoD boundary	on transport route
Alvington	village some services	on major transport route
Aylburton	village- close to Lydney and employment opportunities	on major transport route
Beachley (Loop Rd)	village	
Blakeney	village range of services inc school, shops, hall, recreation areas, church	on major transport route
Bromsberrow	village some services	
Clearwell	village some services inc school, church	
Dymock	village some services inc school	on major transport route
Ellwood	village few services inc school within FoD boundary	
Hartpury	village some services inc hall, school employment	on major transport route
Huntley	village some services inc school	on major transport route
Littledean	village close to Cinderford shops school and other services in village	on transport route
Longhope	village range of employment	on major transport route

Parkend	village within FoD and range of tourism/ recreation provision	on transport route
Redbrook	village some services inc school	on major transport route
Redmarley	village some services inc school	
Ruardean	village some services inc school, hall, church, recren ground, GP	
Ruardean Hill	village few services recreation ground, church inside FoD boundary	
Ruardean Woodside	village few services, hall, school inside FoD boundary	
Sling	village some services, employment area nearby inside FoD boundary	on major transport route
St Briavels	village some services hall, church, school, shop	on major transport route
Staunton Coleford	village few services	on major transport route
Staunton Corse	village nearby employment and services	on major transport route
Tibberton	village few services, school	
Upper Soudley	village few services inside FoD boundary	On transport route
Westbury	village few services, school, church,	on major transport route
Woodcroft	village close to Tutshill school,	on major transport route
Woolaston	village some services, shop, recreation ground	adjoins major transport route
English Bicknor	small village school recreation ground church, hall	
Edge End	small village inside FoD	on major transport route
Kempley Green	small village	
Newland	small village some services	
Northwood Green	small village few services	
Oldcroft and Viney Hill	small village- Oldcroft is close to Yorkley almost all inside FoD boundary	Close to transport route
Upleadon	small village few services	on transport route

11.9   FoD boundary is the statutory Forest boundary.

12 Conclusion

12.1   There is an increased need and a wider acceptance of the need to apply the principles of sustainability to plan making and provide a future strategy that will place new development where it is well serviced and can reduce the need to travel especially by private transport. Using a settlement hierarchy to support the plan strategy is an essential step although plans can also change hierarchies for example by the promotion of new centres or even settlements. Where allocations support existing facilities or rely on them there is unlikely to be a major additional infrastructure requirement of the scale required for example by a New Settlement. It remains the case that some additional provision will be vital and this should be made in a manner that will benefit the existing settlement as well as supporting any new additions.

12.2   The hierarchy exists within the context of various physical constraints which may reduce or enhance the ability of the settlements concerned to accommodate change. In the FoDD for example several of the larger settlements are heavily constrained by the forest boundary, or by landscape, areas that are liable to flooding and these, often absolute, factors mean that any new allocation could also be limited. Conversely where there are opportunities such as potentially large previously developed sites or areas which can accommodate new areas for nature recovery alongside new development, there may be additional benefits from making allocations.

12.3   The present LP strategy is one of supporting existing settlements and includes steering development to previously developed land. This alongside the application of the hierarchy in general terms is considered to deliver a sustainable strategy for this plan period using the current calculation of housing requirement. Given the nature of many of the settlements it will be necessary to review future strategies and probably consider a wider range of options if a high degree of sustainability is to be maintained.

12.4   It is likely that there will always a pattern of development where there is no one dominant town in the FoDD. They operate as a tight local network and are likely to continue to do so. Three serve nearby large villages and benefit from their population's requirement for services.