Keynote - Settlement Hierarchy

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1   The Local Development Framework (LDF) must carefully consider the way in which the settlements in the District relate one to another. The policies in the Core Strategy use these relationships and the general hierarchy of settlements.

1.2   The role of this paper is therefore to;

- Explain the role of national policy in the hierarchy
- Provide background evidence for a settlement hierarchy

1.3   An understanding of the settlement hierarchy is important as the Local Development Framework (LDF) must set out a clear order of preference for the location of development. This needs to be robust, not just for the short term in the context of limited or no housing supply, but in the longer term when development requirements change.

1.4   Whilst the hierarchy will indicate the most sustainable locations for development, it does not follow that levels of development will be equal amongst settlements at each level within the hierarchy. Levels of development will be dependant on strategic policy direction, suitable sites being available and other development constraints such as flooding.

2 Regional Context

2.1   The Forest of Dean lies in the northern most part of the the southwest region, being separated from the southwest peninsular by the River Severn. Much of the District does look to Gloucester and to a lesser extent Cheltenham for main services, but the influence of other centres such as Bristol, Newport and Hereford is also clear.

2.2   Throughout the region there are a range of settlements that exist in a loose hierarchy. Those in which affect the Forest of Dean begin with centres such as Bristol, Gloucester/Cheltenham and continue through other larger towns and market towns. These include a number of towns such as Hereford, Ledbury, Ross on Wye, Monmouth, Chepstow, Newport and Cardiff. The smaller of these (eg Chepstow, Ross and Monmouth) are not significantly larger than the towns within the Forest of Dean but do have more developed centres.

2.3   The key linkages by road are the M50, A40, A48, A4136, A4151, A466, along with the Gloucester to Cardiff rail line services at the south of the District.

3 Local Context

3.1   The Forest of Dean District is situated between the River Severn and the River Wye and is largely rural in character. The District has four main towns: Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney and Newent.

3.2   Cinderford is located in the heart of the Forest of Dean and is closely related to the settlement of Ruspidge, with a combined population of around 10,000. Heavy industry has had a significant influence on the development of the area and this legacy is particularly strong in Cinderford and Ruspidge. Most of the existing town dates back to the late eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the town still has a strong manufacturing base. The area has a number of problems to solve but equally has opportunities to exploit and the town and surrounding area is at an important stage in its development.

3.3   Coleford is an attractive historic market town at the western edge of the Forest of Dean, approximately 16km north of Chepstow. Whilst the town itself is relatively small (having a population of approximately 6,000), it is closely related to a group of settlements, including Milkwall, Mile End and Coalway, which though separate are mainly in the same Parish and effectively double the population. The town is large enough to support a wide range of services and shopping facilities. Heavy industry has had a significant influence on the development of the area and the area has been generally fortunate to escape the legacy of dereliction, which affects many other post-industrial locations. Coleford has an attractive and historic centre and lies in a bowl surrounded by open countryside, which has meant that there have been few opportunities for expansion without losing this valuable setting. Coleford lies close to the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the town benefits from visiting tourist activity. Industrial activity has declined leaving Coleford and its surrounding area to develop, expand and adapt its role as a market town providing shopping and other services to its hinterland.

3.4   Lydney is the most southerly of the four Forest of Dean towns. It is accessible by train, situated on a route between South Wales and the Midlands, and the A48 connects the town to Chepstow and Gloucester. The town has an attractive settling between the Forest and the Severn Valley. Historically, the town was a port for the Forest of Dean area, especially for exporting raw materials such as stone, coal, and iron and timber until the demise of those industries. It also acted as an agricultural market town including a river-based economy and developed manufacturing skills to serve the surrounding countryside. The manufacturing tradition was stimulated by the mining and port industries and the railway led to the manufacturing base broadening further. However, Lydney has followed the national trend of the decline in the mining and manufacturing sectors, and in structural changes to agriculture and retail. The town currently has a population of around 9,000.

3.5   Newent is a small traditional market town in the north of the Forest of Dean District and is located approximately 15km from Gloucester. Newent is smaller than the other three Forest towns with a population of around 4,500. Newent has an ancient history and is thought to have Roman origins. The medieval street pattern and the central market place are two of the town's most attractive features. The countryside surrounding the town provides high

quality agricultural land with medium-sized farms specialising in dairying, fruit growing, and horticulture, together with forestry. The landscape is characterised by gently rolling land with small villages and scattered settlements within it. Newent has a high quality built environment, which was designated as a conservation area in 1979. Today, the town remains an important service centre for the surrounding settlements providing a wide range of leisure, entertainment, welfare, education and retail facilities, as well as acting as a focus for tourism within the northern part of the Forest of Dean.

3.6   Outside of the four main towns, individual settlements vary considerably from one part of the District to another. Most of the smaller settlements have strong interconnections with other small settlements, with one of the four main towns and/or one of the larger settlements outside of the District (e.g. Gloucester or Chepstow).

3.7   The individual settlements display their own development layout characteristics and form. Generally in the north they are compact and have clear physical boundaries with areas of ribbon development adjoining some. In the south many of the villages away from the statutory Forest have developed from small hamlets and are relatively concentrated built up areas within agricultural landscapes. Around the Forest itself is an almost continuous form of built development encircling the core woodland and the minerals outcrop (coal, iron ore) that approximately coincides with the perimeter of the Statutory Forest. This so called "forest ring" contains a large number of villages which are dominated by a distinctive settlement pattern that displays a loosely aggregated built form punctuated by open areas in the form of forest waste and paddocks. This pattern is very different from the more traditional forms of villages found in other parts of the District, and the country as a whole.

4 Why is a Settlement Hierarchy needed?

4.1 What are Settlements?

4.1   Settlements are not just a collection of dwellings. They provide services, facilities and infrastructure for their inhabitants and the wider area. The bigger the settlement the more services it tends to have, although this is not always the case. Over time a settlement hierarchy has been established in the District with the towns providing many of the services and facilities for the whole District. As car ownership has increased, local village services have tended to decline, and even some of the largest villages in the District in terms of population lack many basic facilities like a post office or general store. One further influence is the economy, the cycles of which have an impact on service provision and on the health and nature of businesses. This impact is clearly apparent in many areas including the Forest of Dean which is and will continue to be vulnerable to reductions in private investment and public expenditure.

4.2 What is the role of the planning system?

4.2   One of the key aims of the planning system is to create sustainable communities by bringing housing, jobs and services closer together in an attempt to reduce the need for travel. This is an important ambition of the LDF for the Forest of Dean and the establishment of a settlement hierarchy is a key starting point for much of this. The settlement hierarchy helps by giving a basic understanding of the way in which the settlements interrelate and enables growth to be planned in those settlements that have a range of services and employment opportunities, while those that do not can be restricted.

4.3   Whilst to an extent assumptions about settlement hierarchy have been incorporated in the existing policy framework, there have been a number of changes in national policy that must be taken into account when considering a settlement hierarchy. It is therefore important that it is reviewed and updated so that it is fit for purpose and based on sound and up to date evidence.

4.4   The LDF will consider options for growth in the future and the establishment of a settlement hierarchy will inform choices of where new development should be focused in order to support the objective to create sustainable communities.

4.3 The Current Situation

4.5   The current settlement hierarchy is established through various tiers of policy documents comprising the following:

- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West – RPG10 (September 2001),
- The Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review (1999) and
- The Forest of Dean Local Plan (November 2008) - Saved Policies 2008

4 | Why is a Settlement Hierarchy needed?

4.6   The Forest of Dean Local Plan is the most detailed of these documents, setting the current settlement hierarchy (see Appendix A) and builds upon the more strategic approach in the Structure Plan and Regional Planning Guidance. Although these documents will be redundant or may be superceded, the basic principles of hierarchy (derived from evidence) will endure.

4.7   The outgoing Local Plan contains a broadly hierarchical set of policies for settlements. The emphasis then was to concentrate development in the four main towns of the District – Lydney, Cinderford, Coleford, and Newent – and to develop their role and function as accessible employment, service and transport centres serving the surrounding rural hinterland. This reflected the requirement of national and regional policy to concentrate development in certain locations. Below the towns the local plan made a number of allocations and provided for a certain scale of development in what were the larger villages. These were held as appropriate for a degree of change which could include allocations for further change and new housing where not allocated in the form of small groups of dwellings. A further tier below these villages still have defined settlement boundaries but are considered appropriate only for a smaller scale of development (eg single or pairs of dwellings). The district contains many very small rural settlements that in the outgoing Local Plan did not qualify for settlement boundaries and are therefore treated as part of the open countryside.

4.8   The broad hierarchy which is reflected in the Local Plan is still present. It has been further explored by examining the services and facilities that are present in the settlements.

4.9   Despite some housing growth in villages across the District, many settlements have generally continued to lose their services, especially shops. This follows a general trend of increased competition from large supermarkets resulting from increased mobility of the population. However, for those without a car there is more reliance on bus services for economic and social links. The larger and more accessible towns have retained their services better and act as hubs for the smaller, more isolated settlements.

5 National Policy

5.1   National Planning Policy mainly in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPS) sets out some of the groundrules for settlement strategies.   They are based on principles such as reducing the need to travel and providing concentrations of services where they can be best accessed.

> PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and its supplement, PPS3 (Housing), PPS4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth), PPS6 (Planning for Town Centres), PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) and PPG13 (Transport).

5.2   The key principles and elements of these documents are as follows:

- Most new development should be directed to existing towns and cities, to help maximise accessibility to employment and services by walking, cycling and public transport
- In rural areas local service centres should be identified (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages), and locate most new development in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing , services and other facilities can be provided close together.
- In open countryside small groups or ribbons of housing development with no services are not usually appropriate for further housing.
- With regard to housing, the focus for significant growth should be market towns or local service centres, well served by public transport and other facilities, with development in villages and other small rural communities only where needed to contribute to their sustainability. Therefore only limited growth should be expected though the expansion of villages.

5.3   In addition to guidance within the National Planning Policy Statements, The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008) has aided in informing and influencing the development of this background paper.

6 Methodology

6.1 Baseline

6.1   This paper provides the evidence and justification for the settlement hierarchy policy in the Core Strategy. The Council has assessed the settlement hierarchy through the use of National Strategic Guidance, historic policy, data collected for the GVA Grimley Forest of Dean District Retail Study (prepared in 2008), and a local facilities survey in villages undertaken by Forest of Dean District Council. Other local knowledge has also been employed.

6.2   The paper has been prepared in accordance with the existing policy framework, and builds upon the existing Local Plan and the research that was undertaken in the preparation of the RSS.

6.3   The facilities survey was originally undertaken in July and August 2007 by the Council, although it has been partially updated since. Officers visited each settlement to record facilities. Other sources of data used to compile the lists included bus timetables, material from the West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust, the Post Office website, and internet business directories.

6.4   A separate summary of the facilities survey is available which shows the level of shopping, service, social, cultural, community, and health facilities in each settlement in the District with a defined settlement boundary. Information also recorded identifies whether the settlement is accessible and served by public transport, and whether there are significant employment opportunities available. A single chart summarising this data is reproduced below.

6.5   All locations with a defined settlement boundary have been assessed using the selection criteria mentioned above. They have then been ranked according to the following requirements, which reflect the emphasis on providing a basic level of service for the local rural community and reducing the need to travel, especially by private car:

1.   At least one general store;
2.   At least one shop (other than general store) or other A1 use;
3.   Access to employment opportunities;
4.   A primary school;
5.   A secondary school;
6.   Two or more of the following services: a Post Office, surgery or health centre, bank, A5 food and drink use (e.g. take-away), café / restaurant;
7.   Two or more of the following types of social facilities: public house(s), community centre or hall, church, library; and,
8.   Reasonably accessible by public transport.

6.2 Settlement Services Table

6.6   The following table indicates the various services available to each settlement within the District. A breakdown of settlement classifications can be found in Appendix 3. The services recorded are not necessarily confined to the present defined settlement boundaries but are regarded as readily accessible.

	General Store	Other A1 uses	Employment Uses	Primary School	Secondary School	Other Services	Social Cultural Facilities	Public Transport	Number of Criteria Met
Alvington	*						*	*	3
Aylburton			*	*			*	*	4
Beachley			*				*	*	3
Blakeney	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	7
Bream	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	7
Brierley		*					*	*	3
Brockweir							*		1
Bromsberrow Heath	*		*						2
Cinderford	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8
Clearwell				*		*	*		3
Coleford	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8
Drybrook / Harrow Hill	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	7
Dymock		*		*		*	*	*	5
Edge End								*	1
Ellwood				*			*		2
English Bicknor				*				*	2
Hartpury	*	*		*			*		4
Huntley	*		*	*			*	*	5
Kempley Green									0
Littledean	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	7
Longhope	*		*	*		*	*	*	6
Lydbrook	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	7
Lydney	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8

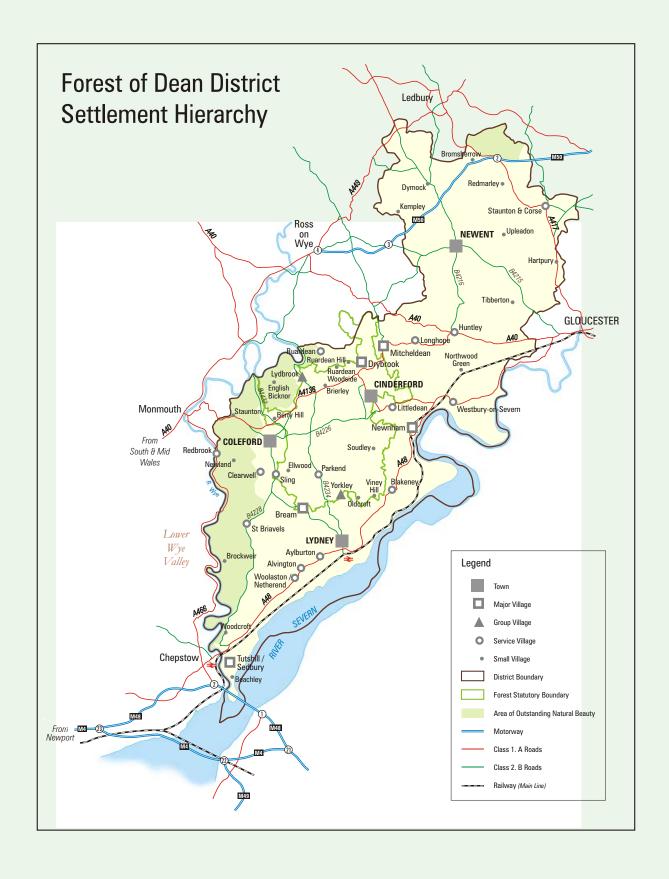|	General Store	Other A1 uses	Employment Uses	Primary School	Secondary School	Other Services	Social Cultural Facilities	Public Transport	Number of Criteria Met
Mitcheldean	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8
Newent	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8
Newland							*		1
Newnham - on - Severn	*	*		*		*	*	*	6
Northwood Green							*		1
	General Store	Other A1 uses	Employment Uses	Primary School	Secondary School	Other Services	Social Cultural Facilities	Public Transport	Number of Criteria Met
Oldcroft									0
Parkend		*	*	*			*		4
Redbrook	*			*			*		3
Redmarley D'Abitot				*			*		2
Ruardean	*			*		*	*	*	5
Ruardean Hill							*		1
Ruardean Woodside	*			*			*		3
Sling			*				*	*	3
St Briavels				*			*		2
Staunton (near Coleford)		*					*		2
Staunton / Corse	*	*	*	*		*	*		6
Tibberton				*					1
Tutshill / Sedbury	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8
Upleadon							*		0
Upper Soudley				*			*	*	3
Viney Hill							*		1
Westbury		*		*			*	*	4

	General Store	Other A1 uses	Employment Uses	Primary School	Secondary School	Other Services	Social Cultural Facilities	Public Transport	Number of Criteria Met
Whitecroft / Pillowell	*		*	*		*	*		5
Woodcroft									0
Woolaston	*			*			*	*	4
Worrall Hill								*	1
Yorkley	*	*		*		*	*		5

7 Results

7.1 Settlement Hierarchy Map

7.1   The following map indicates the classification of settlements within the District.

Forest of Dean District
Settlement Hierarchy

7.2 Market Towns

7.2   Clearly the four main towns of Lydney, Coleford, Cinderford, Newent meet all the criteria relating to services and facilities. Going beyond that, the level of service provision does vary between the towns though the three Southern towns have quite similar numbers of shop units. One, Lydney has a railway station, while all share services. All have secondary schools, two (Lydney and Cinderford) have small hospitals. The future development of the towns is governed by their facilities by their potential to accommodate change and by requirement to develop the area in the most sustainable manner, encouraging greater "self containment".

7.3   All of the settlements surveyed are subject to constant change as the economics of service provision also change. These affect both services provided by government (eg schools) and those privately funded (shops, pubs etc). As a consequence changes in the information set out in the above table will be frequent. The overall hierarchy will change less and the distinction between large and small will remain, though always against a diminishing range of provision.

7.4   Like other services the level of bus provision is under review because of the need to reconsider the degree to which they can be subsidised. A general reduction in the level of bus services in the district is likely at least during the early part of the period of the Core Strategy

7.5   The next largest settlement after the four towns is Tutshill and Sedbury which together have a population of 4500. They meet the eight criteria, as would be expected but in a very different way to the towns. Possibly because of their close relationship with Chepstow, services in Tutshill and Sedbury are dispersed more in the manner that would be expected in part of a larger town and the settlements do not have a particular location which acts as a focus and which could reasonably constitute a 'town centre'. Their proximity to Chepstow means that most of the services that they require are found there and are in easy reach. For the Purposes of the Core Strategy however, they are regarded as the largest of five "major villages" and are treated accordingly. Because their population is over 3000, the affordable housing thresholds applicable to larger settlements apply.

7.6   Mitcheldean too meets all 8 criteria, and it also has a very large quantity and range of employment. Its population is just under 2500. As far as the settlement hierarchy is concerned it has good access to services and some capacity for further change. Its centre lies just off one of the main routes through the district (A4136).

7.7   The other three of the largest settlements (Bream, Drybrook and Newnham) also have a good range of services and facilities. Bream is the largest (population approximately 2600) and has the greatest range of services. It is situated on a secondary road and is reasonably accessible. Historically Newnham was more important than the forest towns but now functions as a large village with some services and transport connections. Its population is less than the other major villages but its function and services present put it above others in the hierarchy. An example of this comparison would be with the village of Ruardean which has

a similar population but fewer services and facilities. The explanation for this is partly historic and partly the better access along the A48 enjoyed by Newnham. Drybrook and its close neighbour Harrow Hill is the fifth of the largest villages, having a population of over 2000 and the last of those defined as major villages.

7.8   Below the towns and the five largest villages, the hierarchy becomes less distinct. There are some villages that are relatively small that have a reasonable range of services and there are others of a similar size which do not. Especially in the forest ring the nature of the villages means that one merges with another and the services in one may serve several within easy distance (example Whitecroft and Pillowell). Other influences are also revealed. Settlements on a major road will inevitably have better services and often are on public transport routes (for example Blakeney. Accessibility therefore plays an important part in selecting settlements for a particular role. Those that are on a main road and have a petrol station often also have a store (Huntley, Brierley and Alvington for example).

7.9   Two groups of settlements have been identified and are treated as groups rather than as separate villages. The first of these forms a major part of the so called forest ring. This is Whitecroft, Pillowell and Yorkley, which are a group with a population of about 2300. They contain two schools, several shops and some employment together with a number of halls, churches and public houses. Because of their close proximity and complementary nature, they are treated together in the Core Strategy. The other example is Joys green, Lydbrook and Worrall Hill which are closely associated though this association is affected by steep terrain. Together they have a population of over 1200, and a range of services, albeit almost all in Lydbrook.

7.10   Below the grouped villages in the hierarchy there are three main categories that are used in the Core Strategy.   These are divide by size and by the presence of services. The first of these are the so called service villages that do possess a number of basic services and are larger than the "small" villages which still may have some local service role but generally not a range of facilities. The second category is those small villages and the third is the generally much smaller settlements which because of their size or other characteristics (such as a dispersed nature) do not have a defined boundary in the 2005 Local Plan. The three categories all contain settlements with distinctive characteristics, largely defined by their location. There are some which are part of the Forest fringe, some nucleated settlements in agricultural land, and some which show particular historic origins (eg Staunton and Corse).

7.11   Turning back to the main towns of Lydney, Coleford, Cinderford and Newent, the GVA Grimley Forest of Dean District Retail Study 2008 undertook an assessment of the main facilities within each town centre and a summary of the results is set out below:

7.2.1 Lydney

7.12   Lydney is the main town serving the southern part of the south Forest with a wide catchment area including several large settlements, such as Bream. The composition of the centre is as follows in Table 2:

7.13 *Table 2: Lydney Town Centre – Retail and Land Use Composition*

Sector	No of Units
A1 Convenience	8
A1 Comparison	49
Service	42
Vacant	5
Miscellaneous	2
Total	**106**

Source: Forest of Dean Council Survey 2007

7.14 Lydney has a large Tesco store on the southern edge of the town centre and a Co-op store on Newerne Street. There is also a Tuffins store in the town centre accessed from Hams Road, adjacent to the bus station. In addition to these three national operators, there are also a number of independent convenience retailers in the town including a baker and newsagents.

7.15 In the comparison goods sector, the only national major retailers were Lloyds Pharmacy, Oxfam Charity Shop, and Travis Perkins. The remainder of comparison retailers consist of independent retail units, including a range of clothing, electrical, personal goods and books/arts/crafts shops. In the service sector, there were a number of high street banks, building societies and estate agents, plus hair salons and a selection of food and drink establishments.

7.16 Outside the town centre, there are limited further retail facilities in Lydney. The main facility is at Taurus Crafts which is located to the south west of the town and includes craft, art, food and gardening supplies. There is also a DIY, gardening and electrical store on Forest Road just outside the town centre.

7.17 Bus services visiting Lydney link the town to Chepstow and Gloucester with an hourly service running Monday to Saturday and a more limited service on Sundays. The bus station is located at the eastern end of the town centre on Ham Road and provides an accessible location for town centre visitors.

Overall Lydney is assessed to be a reasonably healthy centre with a reasonably good range of shops and services, albeit limited to largely local independent businesses in the comparison sector. It has, by a small margin, the highest number of retail and service units in any of the four main Forest centres.

7.2.2 Cinderford

7.18   The retail composition of Cinderford town centre is shown in Table 3 below:

7.19   *Table 3: Cinderford Town Centre – Retail and Land Use Composition*

Sector	No of Units
A1 Convenience	11
A1 Comparison	32
Service	35
Vacant	15
Miscellaneous	4
Total	**97**

Source: Forest of Dean Council Survey 2007

7.20   There is only a limited number of national multiple shops in the town centre including the Co-op, Lidl and Sue Ryder Charity Shop. The retail offer is focused around independent retailers and the Westgate Department Store which is the largest comparison retail unit in the town centre selling clothing, homeware, garden and electrical goods.

7.21   Outside the town centre, there is a limited amount of additional retail provision, including a large builders merchants (Hales) to the north of the town and a number of quasi-retail premises within the Forest Vale industrial estate.

7.22   There is a small bus station adjacent to the vehicular entrance of the Co-op store and this accommodates services linking the town centre with regular services to Joys Green, Micheldean, Ruardean, Gloucester and Coleford. Most services run on an hourly basis.

7.23   Overall, Cinderford possesses the second largest town centre in the District in terms of retail and commercial units and has the potential to possess a large shopping catchment population. Analysis of the retail composition of the town centre indicates a good level of convenience and service uses, but low levels of comparison goods retail uses.

7.2.3 Coleford

7.24   The retail composition of Coleford town centre is shown in Table 4.

7.25   *Table 4: Coleford Town Centre – Retail and Land Use Composition*

Sector	No of Units

A1 Convenience	8
A1 Comparison	42
Service	38
Vacant	4
Miscellaneous	3
Total	**95**

Source: Forest of Dean Council Survey 2007

7.26   In terms of retailer representation, Coleford has a large Co-op, a small Tuffins store, and a Tesco Express store. In addition to these three national multiples, there are a number of independent convenience retailers in the town centre including butchers, newsagents and health food shops.

7.27   In the comparison goods sector, again there is a limited number of national multiple retailers. In addition to the foodstores mentioned, there is only a Lloyds pharmacy, Sue Ryder Charity Shop and a Cancer Research UK Charity Shop. The remainder of comparison retailers in the town consist of independent retail units, including a range of clothing, electrical, personal goods and books/arts/crafts shops. In the service sector, there are a number of high street banks and building societies, including HSBC and Lloyds, as well as estate agents, hair and beauty salons and food and drink establishments.

7.28   Outside the town centre, Coleford has a garden centre and a small foodstore called EskiMart.

7.29   The town centre is served by a number of local bus services, linking the town to Cinderford, Gloucester, Christchurch, Lydbrook, Ross on Wye and Micheldean. Most of these services run on an hourly basis. In addition, one return service runs between Coleford and Hereford on alternate Wednesdays.

7.30   Overall, Coleford is considered to be a healthy centre, which caters well for local residents. Household telephone surveys indicate high levels of expenditure leakage from the town, which suggests that the centre is not particularly attractive to local residents for a wide range of shopping, although the comparison goods retention rate is comparative to other Forest towns.

7.2.4 Newent

7.31   The retail composition of Newent town centre is shown in Table 5.

7.32   *Table 5: Newent Town Centre – Retail and Land Use Composition*

Sector	No of Units
A1 Convenience	10
A1 Comparison	23
Service	31
Vacant	5
Miscellaneous	0
Total	**69**

Source: Forest of Dean Council Survey 2007

7.33   There are fewer units in Newent than the other three centres, and the proportion of service units is higher reflecting its role as a rural service centre.

7.34   Newent has Costcutter, Co-op and Budgens foodstores, the latter of which is the largest of the three. In addition, there are a number of independent convenience retailers including confectioners, newsagents, butchers, delicatessen, healthfoods, greengrocers and a small general stores. Overall, for a town of its size, the range of convenience stores is considered to be good.

7.35   In the comparison goods sector, there were no national multiple retailers but a number of independent specialist and niche retailers. The centre had three banks including Barclays and Lloyds.

7.36   Outside of the town, there are a couple of garden centres to the north of the main urban area.

7.37   The town is visited by bus services, including an hourly service to Ross on Wye and Hereford. One return service to Gloucester also runs each Tuesday and Friday.

7.38   In summary, Newent is the smallest town centre in the Forest of Dean in terms of the number of retail and commercial units available and serves a rural hinterland in the northern part of the District. General shopping provision is limited but reasonably healthy.

7.3 Other Settlements

7.39   In order to enable rural communities to thrive, some development, particularly economic development may be appropriate in small amounts in villages and small towns. PPS4 indicates that local planning authorities should support economic development which enhances rural service centres and locate most new development in settlements where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services, and other facilities can be provided close together

7.40   Table 1 below shows that there are several settlements in addition to the market towns previously mentioned which have a range of facilities, services, and employment opportunities. The following settlements meet a least 4 criteria:

Serviced Settlements (excluding the four towns)		
Aylburton	Blakeney	Bream
Drybrook / Harrow Hill	Dymock	Hartpury
Huntley	Littledean	Longhope
Lydbrook	Mitcheldean	Newnham on Severn
Parkend	Redbrook	Ruardean
Staunton / Corse	Tutshill / Sedbury	Westbury
Whitecroft / Pillowell	Woolaston	Yorkley

7.41   The settlements shown in the table above have a broader range of facilities than other settlements assessed, and therefore are better placed to support a limited amount of additional development. However, they have significantly fewer facilities and a much narrower range of services than the four main towns. The five largest still stand out and with the exception of Newnham (score 6) have a score of 7 or over. When the range rather than just the presence of services is considered, the differences between the five major settlements and the remainder becomes more pronounced. Others with a high score include Lydbrook-Joys Green Worrall Hill and Whitecroft-Pillowell- Yorkley. These are the two grouped settlements. Some which are not major villages nor grouped settlements have a relatively high score and therefore a range of services. These include Blakeney, Littledean, Longhope Staunton and Corse and Ruardean. These are all regarded as "service villages" along with smaller generally less well provided villages in the list above. Also regarded as service villages are several other villages which have been added to this category. These are Alvington, Clearwell, Sling, and St Briavels. All four have a level of services and are readily distinguishable from the next tier of small settlements.

7.42   Below the service villages category, the remaining settlements are generally smaller and have a limited range of services. Included within these are a number that have some facilities and several that have almost none. Also included is Dymock which is considered to have more in common with the smaller villages than with those in the category above.

7.43   Although the hierarchy divides the settlements into six categories in practice the divisions are blurred. It is however a useful indication of the function of the towns and villages and the analysis does clearly show a distinct group of major villages and two groups which are larger and more sustainable locations for modest additional development. Equally the smaller settlements with few if any service provision can be readily identified. This hierarchy

informs the Core Strategy and will be referred to in the development of other planning policy documents. It should however be taken only as a general guide and broad illustration of the nature of the settlements that are present in the district.

7.44   In some areas of the Forest of Dean the close proximity of settlements means that services and facilities in one may serve a neighbouring settlement and vice versa. Some individual settlements may not have the size of population to support certain services but the close proximity of one or two other settlements may make a service viable. Examples of this can be found in the ring of settlements around the Statutory Forest, including Ruardean / Ruardean Woodside / Ruardean Hill, Ellwood / Sling, and Yorkley / Pillowell / Whitecroft.

7.45   Notwithstanding the inter-relationships between the above settlements, all of the villages rely on many of the services and facilities provided in the nearest of the four main towns in the District, or larger towns and cities outside the District. Residents of the settlements listed in Table 1 are within the general catchments of the following larger settlements:

Service Catchment Area	
Main Settlement	**Settlements**
Lydney:	Alvington, Aylburton, Blakeney, Bream, Oldcroft, Parkend, Viney Hill, Whitecroft / Pillowell, Woolaston, and Yorkley (combined population 7,600 approx)
Coleford:	Clearwell, Edge End, Ellwood, English Bicknor, Lydbrook, Newland, Parkend, Redbrook, St Briavals, Sling, and Staunton (combined population 4,500 approx)
Cinderford and Ruspidge:	Brierley, Drybrook / Harrow Hill, Littledean, Longhope, Lydbrook, Mitcheldean, Newnham-on-Severn, Northwood Green, Ruardean, Ruardean Hill, Ruardean Woodside, Staunton, Upper Soudley, Westbury, Worrall Hill (combined population 11,000 approx)
Newent:	Bromsberrow Heath, Dymock, Hartpury, Kempley Green, Redmarley, Staunton / Corse, Tibberton, Upleaden (combined population 2,400 approx)
Chepstow (outside District):	Beachley, Brockweir, Tutshill and Sedbury, Woodcroft
Gloucester(outside District):	Blaisdon, Hartpury, Staunton / Corse, Longhope, Tibberton, and Westbury

Ledbury (outside District):	Bromsberrow Heath, Dymock
Monmouth (outside District):	Redbrook

(Note: some settlements are within the service catchment areas of more than one town.)

7.46   The following table indicates the various settlements and the policy approach in the Core Strategy. It uses the broad categories referred to above in arriving at policies for the district. The towns are treated individually in the Core strategy and policies for each are derived from their identified needs and characteristics. A separate policy approach for each of the major villages is contained in the Core Strategy. The Strategy also distinguishes between those settlements with a defined boundary and those without. It does also refer to the general principle of evaluating development proposals against the form and function of the settlement(s) concerned.

Key Settlement Characteristics			
Settlement	**Classifi-cation**	**Policy Approach**	**Core Strategy Policy**
Lydney	Town	Most accessible of Southern Forest towns, major location for additional growth, and economic led regeneration, proposed AAP:	CSP12
Cinderford (with Ruspidge)	Town	Focus on economic and Rgeneration policies, one of forest towns proposed AAP and related business plan	CSP10
Coleford (with Berry Hill, Broadwell, Coalway and Milkwall)	Town	Local centre and southern forest town- well located for Wye Valley and Forest	CPS 14
Newent	Town	Local centre for northern part of district	CPS 15
Tutshill and Sedbury, Bream, Drybrook and Harrow Hill, Mitcheldean, Newnham,	Major Village	Large villages with employment and/or services important to a wider area. Some scope for additional development	CPS 16
Whitecroft-Pillowell-Yorkley, Joys Green-Lydbrook-Worrall Hill,	Group Village	Villages which can be considered part of a group with common facilities and services in close proximity. May offer potential for small housing sites	CPS 16

Key Settlement Characteristics			
Settlement	**Classifi-cation**	**Policy Approach**	**Core Strategy Policy**
		within existing settlement, and for affordable housing outside	
Alvington, Aylburton, Blakeney, Clearwell, Huntley, Littledean, Longhope, Parkend, Redbrook, Ruardean, St Briavels, Sling, Staunton and Corse, Westbury, Woolaston (Netherend)	Service Village	Except for possible affordable housing as an exception, and existing allocations, new housing and employment opportunities are likely to be small in scale (e.g. single plots, or pairs, small workshops or changes of use of existing buildings plus re use of agricultural buildings)	CPS 16
Beachley, Brierley, Brockweir, Bromsberrow Heath, Dymock, Edge End, Ellwood, English Bicknor, Kempley Green, Hartpury, Newland, Northwood Green, Oldcroft, Redmarley, Ruardean Hill, Ruardean Woodside,Staunton (Coleford) Tibberton, Upleadon, Upper Soudley, Viney Hill, Woodcroft,	Small Village	Some local services/facilities but generally very limited opportunity for additional development. Settlements with some services may be suitable for small affordable housing developments	CPS 16
Small settlements without defined settlement boundaries	Small Settlement	Will be regarded as part of the open countryside for most purposes, but may be appropriate locations for limited affordable housing and rural employment as defined in Core Policies.	

8 Conclusion

8.1   The analysis has enabled the identification of a clear settlement hierarchy within the Forest Of Dean District.

8.2   The four main towns of Lydney, Cinderford, Coleford and newent all have a range of facilities, and meet all the criteria related to shopping, services, social, cultural, community and health facilities. Consequently, these should be the primary focus for new development.

8.3   Underneath this tier, there are a number of settlements, which have a broader range of facilities than the other settlements assessed and, therefore are better placed to support a limited amount of additional development. However, they have significantly fewer facilities and a narrower range of services than the four main towns.

8.4   Below this, many of the smaller settlements lack community facilities, service, public transport and access to jobs at close hand, and will be generally unsuitable for new development that is not directly related to their own local needs.

9 Appendix A: Policy Background

The Gloucestershire Structure Plan Third Alteration

The Gloucestershire Structure Plan Settlement Hierarchy as identified in Policies SD.1, SD.3, SD.4, SD.5, and SD.7 is as follows:

Policy SD1 identifies the Principle Urban Areas (Policy SD.1) as being Gloucester and Cheltenham. Other Designated Centres for Growth are identified as Policy SD.3 as being:

- Tewkesbury / Ashchurch

- Stroud / Stonehouse

- Cirencester

Policy SD4 relates to other Market Towns (i.e. those outside the PUAs and Other Designated Centres for Growth). It advises that market towns should be identified in the relevant District Local Plans which should form the focal points for a smaller scale of development which is consistent with the character and function of the settlement, and supports local services and the social and economic well-being of local communities. They should therefore be:

- Accessible to the community they serve and well related to public transport and the highway network

- Defined to ensure that the social and economic needs of all rural areas can be met, taking into account their location relative to other settlements and environmental considerations, including those in adjoining administrative areas

- Residential development should be limited in such towns near the PUAs where it would encourage commuting rather than meet local needs

In relation to other rural settlements Policy SD.5 advises that residential, commercial and industrial development within other rural settlements (i.e. those not referred to above) should be limited in scale, well integrated with the existing form and framework of the settlements, and sustain and enhance the character and appearance and social and economic well-being of local communities.

Residential development should be limited to those settlements that:

- Have access to a range of employment opportunities to meet local needs

- Have access or potential access to community facilities and services, and

- Are well served by public transport services

Appendix A: Policy Background

Commercial and industrial development should primarily be limited to those settlements that are well served by public transport services. These settlements should be identified in the relevant District Local Plans.

The Forest of Dean is identified as an Area of Special Need where Policy SD.7 is to be applied. The policy advises that within this area priority will be given to economic growth and regeneration based on the principles of sustainable development. Such development should support an enhanced role for the market towns, adding to their self-containment thereby:

- Improving access to jobs, services and community facilities

- Allowing the provision of a range of housing, including affordable housing

- Developing a more sustainable transport system which improves access both

- within the Area of Special Need and to areas outside it, and

- Bringing forward environmental enhancement

Within this Area of Special Need, Lydney and Cinderford are identified as particular foci for growth. In addition, proposals for tourism development will be supported where they will benefit the local economy as well as meeting environmental and transport criteria.

The Forest of Dean District Local Plan, November 2005

The current settlement hierarchy is set out in the following policies relating to housing provision:

Towns (Policy (R) FH.1)

Lydney	Coleford
Cinderford/Ruspidge	Newent

Large Villages (Policy (R) FH.4)

Aylburton	Huntley	Parkend	Tutshill / Sedbury
Blakeney	Joys Green	Redbrook	Westbury
Bream	Littledean	Ruardean	Whitecroft / Pillowell
Clearwell	Longhope	St Briavals	Woolaston
Drybrook	Lydbrook	Sling	Yorkley / Yorkley Slade

Aylburton	Huntley	Parkend	Tutshill / Sedbury
Dymock	Mitcheldean	Staunton / Corse	

Smaller Villages (Policy (R) FH.5)

Alvington	Ellwood	Redmarley	Upper Soudley
Beachley	English Bicknor	Ruardean Hill	Viney Hill
Brierley	Kempley Green	Ruardean Woodside	Worral Hill
Brockweir	Newland	Staunton (nr Coleford)	Woodcroft
Bromsberrow Heath	Northwood Green	Tibberton	
Edge End	Oldcroft	Upleadon	

10 Appendix B: Comparative Matrix of Services & Facilities in the Forest of Dean Settlements