

Keynote - Self Containment and the Settlement Strategy for
the Forest of Dean.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Forest of Dean is the most western district in Gloucestershire. With a population of 82,800 ⁽¹⁾ it has the second lowest population of the six districts in the county. The total has increased by over 7.5% on the 1991 population and is the fourth largest population increase in the county. The Forest has a 95% rural population, under the definitions used by DEFRA (R80 ⁽²⁾), which makes it the most rural district in Gloucester apart from Cotswolds.
- 1.2** The basic aim of the LDF is to provide for a more sustainable future. This means addressing those aspects of activity which run counter to this by providing greater and wider opportunities for employment and other services within the district. It means making improvements to town centres to attract more users and to reduce the trade lost to the surroundings. At the root of the strategy is the need to address the daily out flow of commuters for employment, often of a different kind to that found within the district itself.

1 ONS, Mid-year Population Estimates 2009

2 DEFRA Urban/Rural Classifications. R80 = at least percent of the population in rural settlements and larger market towns

2 Self Containment

2.1 Using census data from 2001, it is possible to examine the patterns of travel that are apparent in the district. The Core Strategy reflects these in that it seeks to take reinforce the relationship that is seen between the settlements within the forest, while reducing the movement out. The table below shows the "self containment" of the various wards and the accompanying map illustrates the pattern. When considered alongside the plot of origins and destinations, the relationship between the towns becomes more clear as does the notion of reinforcing that relationship to provide for a greater degree of self containment.

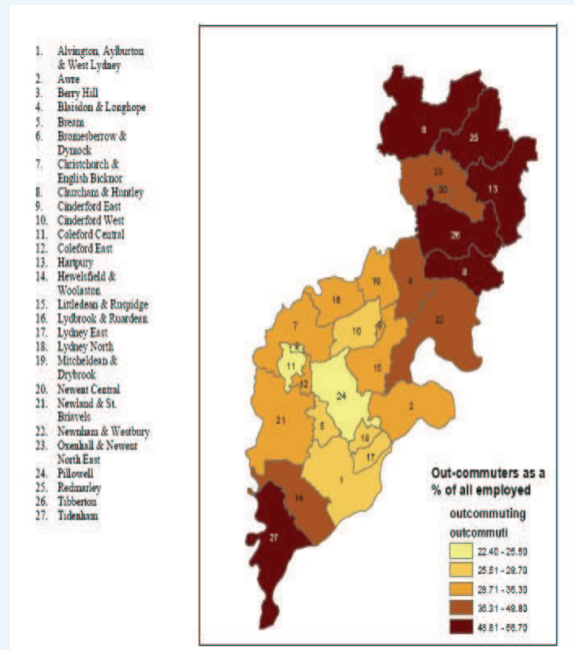
| Ward | Out commuters as % of all workers |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Berry Hill | 22.4% |
| Coleford Central | 24.1% |
| Pillowell | 25.5% |
| Lydney East | 26.7% |
| Lydney North | 27.9% |
| Bream | 28.0% |
| Cinderford West | 28.2% |
| Alvington, Aylburton & W. Lydney | 28.7% |
| Cinderford East | 31.5% |
| Awre | 33.8% |
| Littledean & Ruspidge | 33.8% |
| Newland & St. Briavels | 34.2% |
| Lydbrook & Ruardean | 34.5% |
| Christchurch & English Bicknor | 35.4% |
| Coleford East | 36.2% |

2 Self Containment

| Ward | Out commuters as % of all workers |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mitcheldean & Drybrook | 36.3% |
| Hewelsfield & Woolaston | 45.7% |
| Blaisdon & Longhope | 46.4% |
| Oxenhall & Newent North East | 46.4% |
| Newent Central | 48.3% |
| Newnham & Westbury | 48.8% |
| Tidenham | 51.9% |
| Churcham & Huntley | 52.3% |
| Bromesberrow and Dymock | 53.7% |
| Tibberton | 54.8% |
| Hartpury | 56.7% |
| Redmarley | 56.7% |

Outcommuting by Ward

2.2 Figure 4 Map Showing Out commuting by Ward

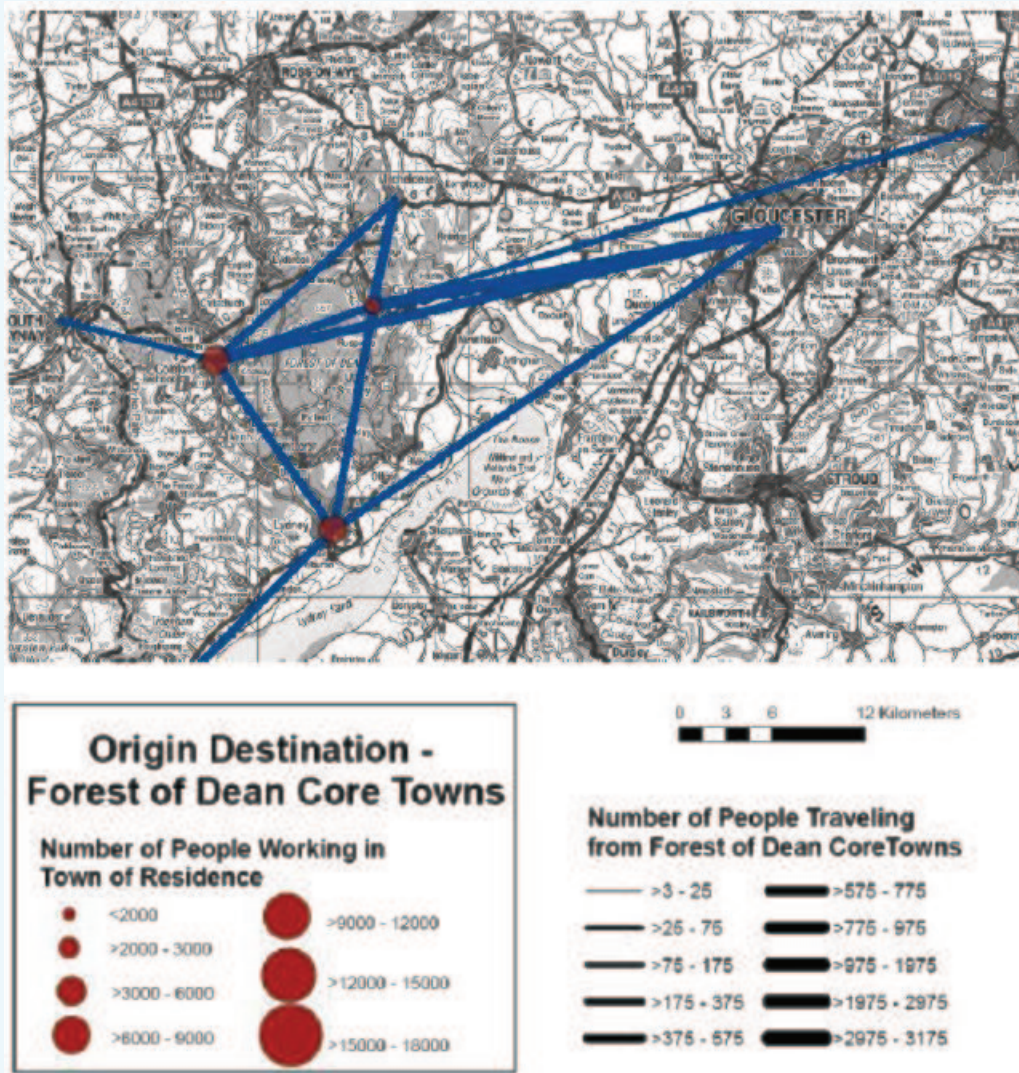


- 2.3** The above map shows that higher percentages of people in the northern and southern wards commute out of the Forest for work than in the central area. This is partly a reflection of the opportunities in the central area and also the relatively easy access from the north of the district and the south to major commuter destinations such as Gloucester and Bristol.
- 2.4** When destinations outside the district are considered, the pattern is one where the main destinations from the north and central area are Gloucester and its vicinity, with travel to the south from the southern part of the district.
- 2.5** The significance of these patterns is twofold. Firstly the patterns reflected in the 2001 census could be reinforced by planned development concentrating on the south and north of the Forest of Dean. Secondly because of the relative inaccessibility of the central area there is a clear pattern whereby the various Forest settlements interrelate. This together with their overall mass is something that can be reinforced by increasing employment and service provision so that the need to leave the settlements concerned is reduced.

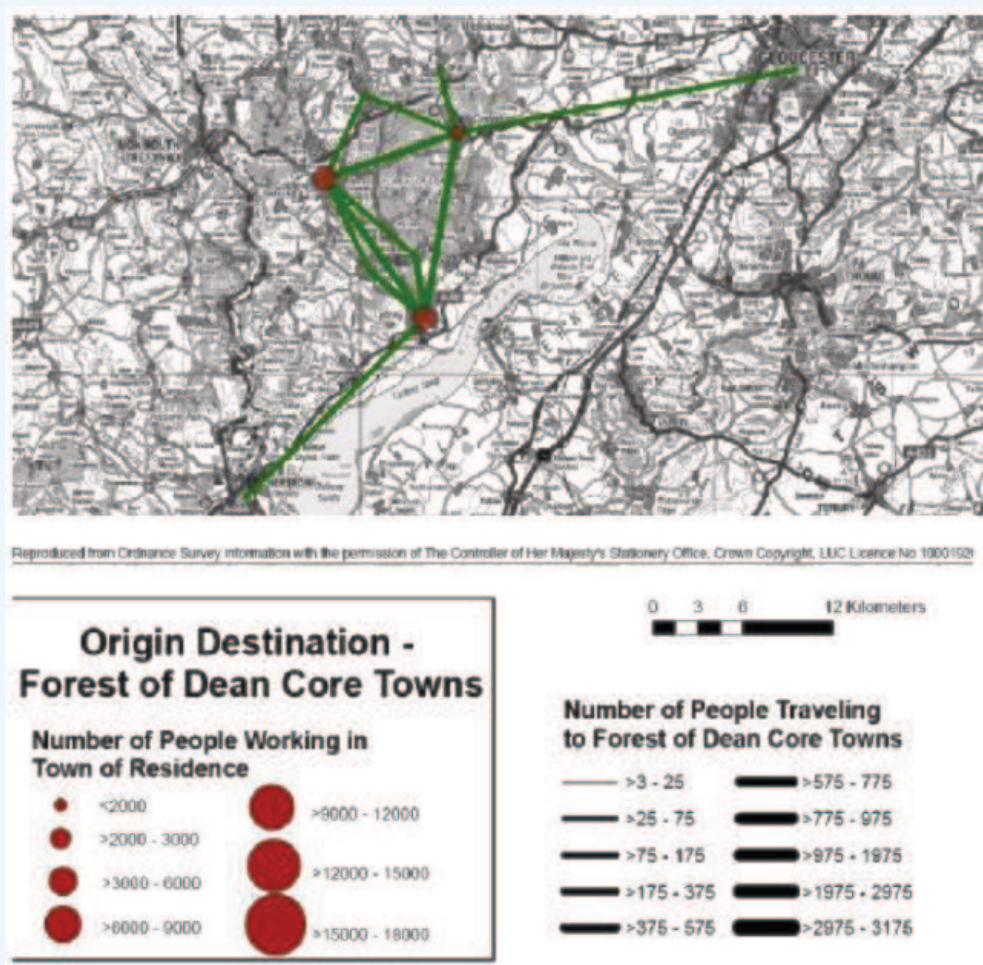
2 Self Containment

3 Interrelationships

3.1 A study of the patterns of travel for each of the towns shows the considerable level of out commuting. It also reveals the pattern of travel between the towns for both travel to work and travel from work. This illustrates the inter relationships between the towns and is commented on as follows:



3 Interrelationships



3.2 Source R Tym research for SW RSS, 2006

Analysis for the regional assembly of the settlements in the southwest looked at both individual settlements and at groups. It found that there were four groups which required further work, and these were:

1. the 'Cornish Towns' the specific list of towns to be considered, and their relationships, are currently the subject of a special study by LUC, but at least includes Camborne/Redruth, Falmouth/Penryn, St. Austell and Truro
2. the Forest of Dean towns – Coleford, Cinderford, Lydney
3. the West Wilts and North East Somerset towns – Trowbridge, Chippenham, Melksham, Devizes, Corsham, Westbury, Norton Radstock, Frome, Street, Wells.

4. Teignbridge, South Hams and Torbay towns – Newton Abbott, Totnes, Dawlish, Kingsteignton, Kingsbridge and other smaller settlements adjacent to Torquay (and related to Exeter), which are also the subject of a special study by LUC for Joint Study Areas

In greater detail, in respect of the Forest of Dean, the study continues:

Forest of Dean Towns

9.18 The three Forest of Dean towns [Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney]: These exhibit significantly different TTW dynamics. They are not very self contained and have a reasonably strong relationship with Gloucester. However, there is a well-established, if complex, relatively local commuting pattern in place. Future growth in the three towns could be expected to reinforce such a sustainable pattern, not as freestanding individual towns but as a tight local network. [See the data and analysis at 7.37 to 7.41.]

And provides some additional comment:

9.32 Finally, there were 5 other settlements that were the subject of additional

(i) The 3 Forest of Dean towns of Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney; We can confirm that though they act in a tight local network where the scale and intensity of these relationships is low compared to say the Cornish Towns. They are not significant for RSS purposes, but this local network ought to be considered through the LDF planning process...."

R Tym Functional analysis of Settlements, for SW Regional Assembly, 2005

3.3 The consideration of the Forest of Dean towns referred to above is principally the role of the Core Strategy.

3 Interrelationships

4 Distances travelled and job density

- 4.1** One further indicator more of sustainability than self containment is the steady increase in the distances travelled to work. In 1991 this averaged 14km but had increased to 16km by 2001. One significant factor in this was the decline of very local journeys (less than 2km). This decline was however less than in other districts possibly because of the overall high level of commuting in the district.
- 4.2** The table below is a summary of so called job density, that is the number of jobs in each district per worker. As would be expected, the larger centres are net importers of workers but the key item of significance for the Forest of Dean is its position within the County as having the lowest number of jobs per worker. While this general situation is common across the country, it is no reason not to adopt a strategy which can redress the balance.

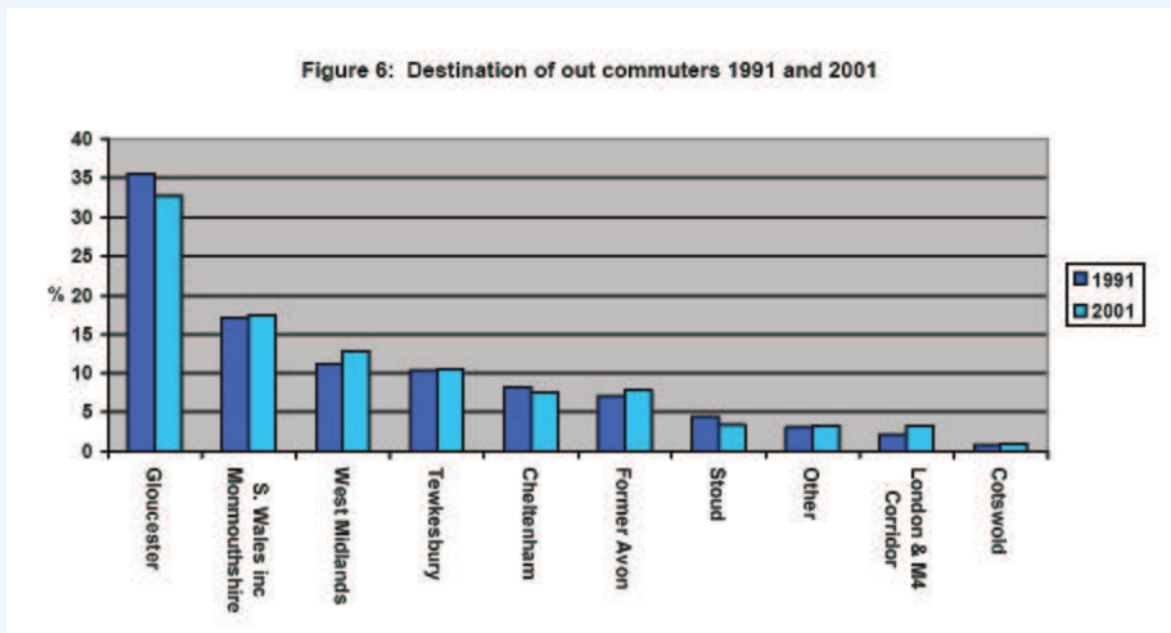
| Forest of Dean District Council | 0.60 |
|--|-------------|
| Cotswold District Council | 0.94 |
| Herefordshire Council | 0.87 |
| Cheltenham Borough Council | 1.03 |
| Gloucester City Council | 1.03 |
| Stroud District Council | 0.76 |
| Tewkesbury Borough Council | 0.90 |

Job density, Gloucestershire (as reproduced in 2008 Marketing and Workspace Study using 2001 Census data)

4 Distances travelled and job density

5 Destinations

5.1 Further study of where the 40% of all workers leaving the district on a daily basis go shows a pattern whereby a larger percentage travel further, again explaining the above figures and pointing to the increasingly unsustainable pattern.



5.2 The chart shows that out commuting from the Forest to Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud dropped between 1991 and 2001 with the decrease of commuting to Gloucester being most noticeable. However, out commuting to South Wales, the West Midland, Tewkesbury, Former Avon, London and the M4 Corridor, Cotswolds and other locations increased in this period with out commuting to the West Midlands and London and the M4 Corridor showing the largest increases. Longer trips have increased. Again this could indicate either a lack of suitable or available jobs, or that people are willing to commute long distances rather than move away from the Forest.

6 Occupation of Out Commuters

6.1 Consideration of the occupations of out commuters is a partial indicator of the lack of jobs within the district. Some people will choose to commute whatever the range of local jobs but a better, broader range of local opportunities can only be beneficial, in both the short and long term. It is in the longer term that more attractive local employment options can be influential in reducing unnecessary travel.

| type | Percentage of total |
|--|---------------------|
| Professional Occupations | 13% |
| Associate professional & Technical Occupations | 16% |
| Administrative & secretarial occupations | 14% |
| Managers & Senior Officials | 18% |
| Skilled Trades | 9% |
| Personal Service | 5% |
| Sales & Customer Service | 7% |
| Process Plant & Machinery Operatives | 9% |
| Elementary Occupations | 10% |

Out-Commuters by Occupation ⁽³⁾

3 Source Out-commuting from the Forest of Dean GCC 2007

6 Occupation of Out Commuters

7 Conclusion

- 7.1** Greater self containment is an appropriate aim for the district, led by the improvement of the range and number of employment opportunities on offer. The central forest with its distinctive settlement pattern and three closely related towns is able to benefit from a strategy that reinforces this, and can deliver a more sustainable spatial structure.
- 7.2** While no single settlement is of sufficient size to attract sufficient change, a combination of the three towns in the forest can become the basis for a new pattern of complimentary and sustainable growth.

With its current traditional employment structure, the Forest of Dean is not best placed to offer the range of opportunities that are most desirable. However with a strategy aimed at making the most of the environment and ensuring that better quality sites and facilities are available, changes can be achieved. Achieving these changes is central to the Core Strategy.

