

Town listed in top 20 of wealth chart

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A GOVERNMENT report has listed Stroud as one of the most affluent areas of the country – way ahead of Gloucester and even traditionally well-heeled Cheltenham.

The figures, from the Department of Environment's Index of Local Conditions, show only 17 areas of the country – out of 366 listed – suffer less deprivation than Stroud.

The town ranks among South East stockbroker belt areas like Mid Sussex and the Prime Minister's constituency of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.

Cheltenham ranks as the

156th most deprived area in Britain with Gloucester coming in at 138th.

The Forest of Dean is given 243rd spot in the table.

The figures are based on 13 sets of statistics, including unemployment, pay, housing and death rates.

The four most deprived areas are in run-down inner London and the most affluent is mid Sussex.

The Department of the Environment said the league table was drawn up to help the government decide where public money should be directed to improve conditions.