

Sustainable parcel delivery using municipal assets



Using cycle couriers or porters for parcel delivery may be an attractive option for parcel carriers seeking to operate more sustainably and where using a van is difficult due to traffic, parking or access issues.



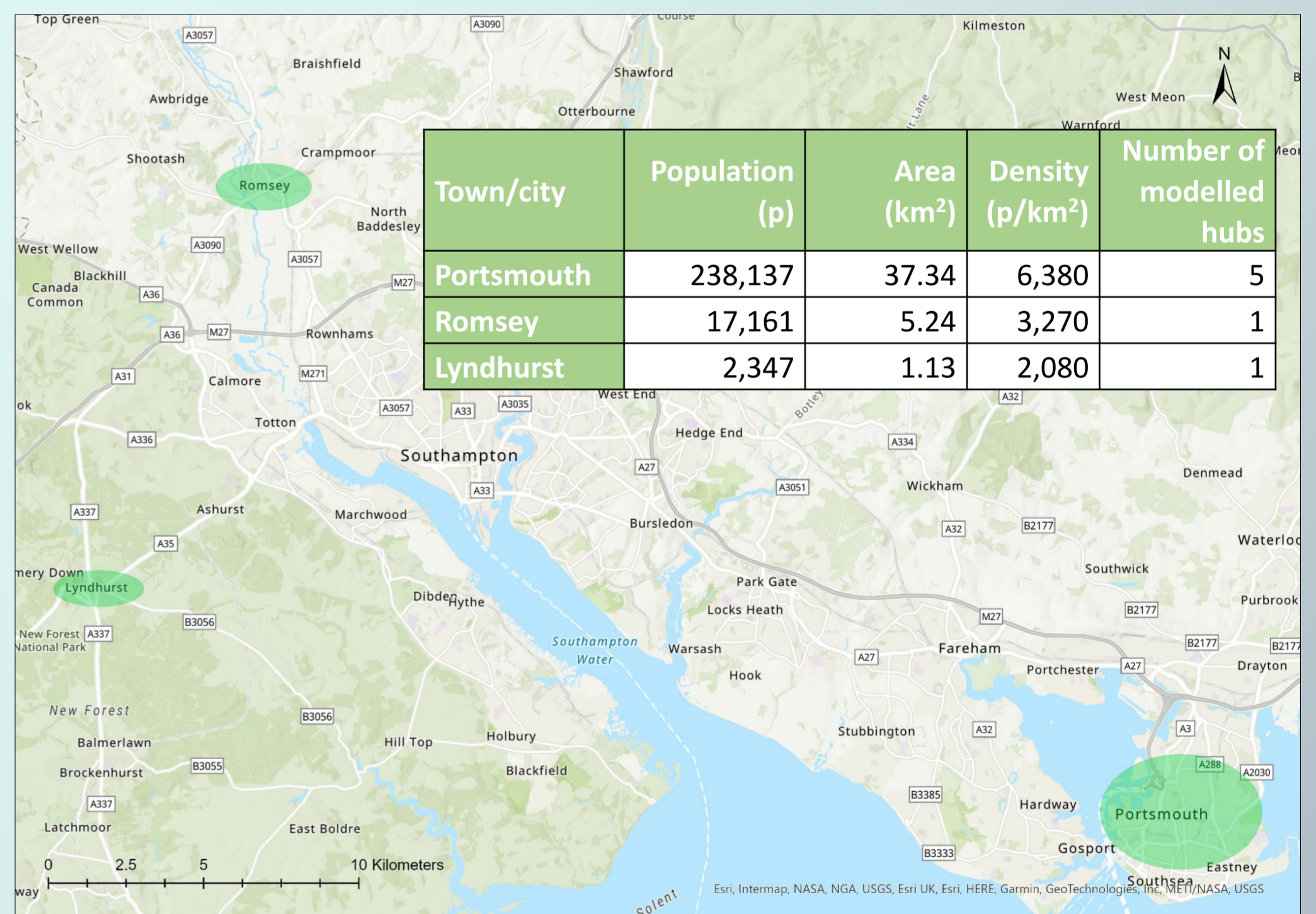
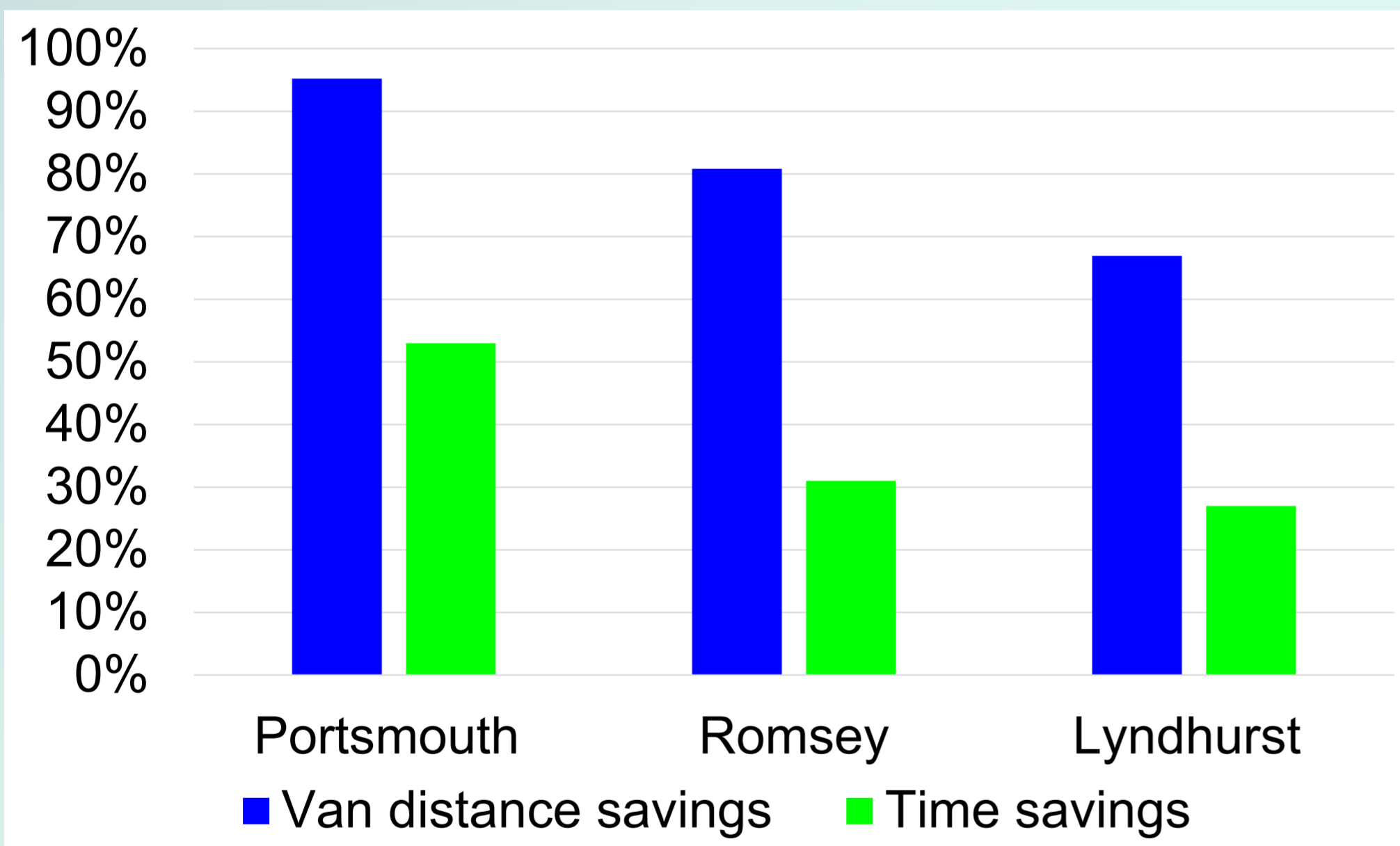
Municipal assets as local parcel hubs

A local authority can support more sustainable parcel delivery by providing space in one or more council-run car parks, libraries or community centres for parcel carriers to use as local parcel hubs, with last-mile deliveries on foot or bicycle. Using fewer vans and reducing stem mileage contributes to lowering vehicle emissions and reducing road congestion. Hubs may also be used as parcel collection points.



Not just for the big city

Porters and cycle couriers tend to be used in densely populated cities, but our research has shown that they can also be used effectively in small towns and suburban areas. Van distance and time savings from using local parcel hubs and porters were compared for the contrasting locations of Portsmouth, Romsey and Lyndhurst in Hampshire (map right and results below).



Distribution of work between couriers

Companies advertising for cycle couriers often promote the work as being flexible and convenient for those seeking part-time work only. Our research highlighted the wide range in the distribution of work between individuals working for different cycle courier companies. The example work distribution profile (right) seems typical, where there is a small proportion of couriers undertaking most of the work (e.g. 50% of the work done by 20% of the couriers) and a larger proportion of seemingly more casual workers performing much fewer tasks.

