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**COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Friday, 5 March 2021

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CABINET MEMBER FOR THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS DECISION-MAKING MEETING

A meeting of the Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils Decision-Making Meeting will be held remotely, via Cisco Webex on **Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 10.00 am.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils
Decision-Making Meeting
(Councillors Clive Webster)

Due to the current social distancing requirements and guidance relating to Coronavirus Regulations 2020 – Part 3 – Modification of meetings and public access requirements this meeting will be conducted remotely using Cisco Webex.

Members of the public will be able to follow the proceedings through a broadcast on [Cotswold District Council Facebook account](#) (You do not need a Facebook account for this).

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

I. **Neighbourhood Planning: Regulation 18 Decision on the Examiner's Report on the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan (Pages 3 - 76)**

To consider whether the Preston Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, meets the Basic Conditions required by the Localism Act, and therefore proceeds to referendum.

Reporting Officer: Joseph Walker (01285 623146)

DATE OF DECISION: NO EARLIER THAN THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2021

DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS: NOON ON WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH 2021

Note: Any Member who wishes to comment on an item is requested to send those comments (preferably by e-mail) to the Reporting Officer, copied to Democratic Services, by the deadline identified.

Any comments received will be reported to the Decision-Maker prior to the decision(s) being taken.

(END)



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET MEMBER FOR THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS DECISION-MAKING MEETING - 11 MARCH 2021
Report Number	ITEM 1
Subject	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: REGULATION 18 DECISION ON THE EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Wards affected	Siddington and Cerney Rural directly
Accountable member	Councillor Clive Webster - Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils. Email: clive.webster@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Tel: 01285 623146 Email: joseph.walker@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider whether the Preston Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, meets the Basic Conditions required by the Localism Act, and therefore proceeds to referendum
Annexes	Annex A - Examiner's Report on Preston Neighbourhood Plan Annex B - Preston Neighbourhood Plan referendum version Annex C - Table of Modifications
Recommendation/s	<i>That the Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils considers the recommendations of the examiner, and the proposed modifications, and agrees that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.</i>
Corporate priorities	The Council has a duty to support neighbourhood planning. 'Ensure that all services delivered by the Council are delivered to the highest standard.'
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The draft plan was consulted upon by the parish council, and subsequently by the District Council, in line with the statutory requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning process.

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Preston Parish Council (PPC) applied to this Council in May 2017 to designate a neighbourhood area. The area applied for, and subsequently approved, was the entirety of Preston Parish. Since that point, a steering group consisting of local residents and consultancy support has consulted locally, reviewed and developed a local evidence base, and drafted a plan, the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP). This plan was duly consulted upon in early 2020 (Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation) – a consultation to which this Council responded – and representations were considered in preparing a submission draft. Following the submission of this draft to the Council last year, consultation was launched in September 2020, closing on 2 November.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. Following the prescribed process for neighbourhood plans, Cotswold District Council procured an independent examination of the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) from an experienced examiner, Andrew Mead ('the examiner'). This examination process is typically carried out using written representations, so is effectively a desk-based exercise, usually supplemented with a visit to the neighbourhood area. The examiner issued his final report on 28 January 2021.
- 2.2. The examiner concluded that the NDP, as amended following his recommendations, meets the Basic Conditions laid out in law for neighbourhood plans, and should proceed to referendum, and that the referendum covers the area of the plan, that is, Preston Parish.
- 2.3. It is the role of this Council to make the changes recommended by the examiner, in consultation with the qualifying body. It should be noted that the examiner's recommendations are exactly that, and are not binding. These recommendations (contained in the examiner's report at Annex A2 and subsequent modifications are highlighted in table form at Appendix C, and have been made to the submission draft plan at Appendix 'B'.
- 2.4. Subject to the decision on this report, the PNDP will proceed to referendum in May 2021, alongside the other ballots scheduled for this date, including two other neighbourhood plans. This timeframe is within the usual window for a neighbourhood plan to proceed to referendum. However, it should be noted that due to Covid-19 pandemic emergency provisions, the plan can be given significant weight in decision-making after this decision, so far as the plan is material to an application (NPPG Paragraph: 107 Reference ID: 41-107-20200513, Revision date: 13 05 2020).

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. This decision will enable the Council to draw down grant from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. While this is set at a standard rate of £20,000, in this instance it will cover the costs of the examination and the referendum, as well as other cash costs incurred on this plan.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Making a decision on this report is a statutory duty. While the Council is expected to take on board the examiner's findings, these are non-binding, and the decision is the Council's. This decision will give the plan significant weight in planning decisions, as noted above, but will still need to be subject to a referendum and a final, formal decision to make the plan.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. This is part of a statutory process and a decision that must be made. To mitigate the risk that there is challenge to the Council's decision, the Council has participated fully in this process to ensure that the presented plan and the preparatory process is technically and legally robust.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. Not required for this decision.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None for this decision.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. None for this decision.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. None.

(END)

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Intelligent Plans
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Report on the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 - 2036

An Examination undertaken for Cotswold District Council with the support of the Preston Parish Council on the submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Date of Report: 28 January 2021

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP/the Plan) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the Preston Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Parish of Preston as shown on Figure 1 page 5 of the submitted Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period during which it is to take effect: 2020-2036; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2036

- 1.1 Preston Parish, which has a population of about 330,¹ is located immediately east of Cirencester. The Parish is traversed by main roads which focus on, or now bypass, Cirencester. The A429 (*Fosse Way*) forms part of the Parish boundary to the north, from which the B4425 (*Akeman Street*) leads to Burford; the A417 (London Road) leads south eastwards to Fairford and Lechlade; the A417/419 dual carriageway links Cirencester with Gloucester/M5 to the north and Swindon/M4 to the south; a section of the A419 (*Ermin Street*) leads from the A417/A419 dual carriageway north westwards into Cirencester.² The small village of Preston lies less than a kilometre from the eastern edge of the built-up area of Cirencester.
- 1.2 The benefits of a neighbourhood plan were first explained to the Parish Council in 2014 but preparation began in earnest in 2017, following a report to the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2017. A Steering Group was subsequently formed, consultation meetings held and evidence gathered. The PNDP was submitted to Cotswold District Council (CDC) in August 2020, representing about three years' work for those involved.

¹ The 2011 Census records 327 usual residents.

² The italicised are Roman Roads.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the PNDP by CDC, with the agreement of the Preston Parish Council (PPC).
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector and have experience of examining neighbourhood plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 As the independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.6 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.

- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

- 1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
 - Be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)³; and
 - Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Plan does not breach the requirement of Chapter 8 Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 Regulations').⁴

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The current Development Plan for Preston Parish, excluding policies relating to minerals and waste development, is the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011–2031 (CDLP) which was adopted in August 2018.
- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF

³ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

⁴ This revised Basic Condition came into effect by virtue of the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

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was published on 19 February 2019 and all references in this report are to the February 2019 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, as well as those submitted which include:

- the draft Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020–2036, dated August 2020;
- the map at Figure 1 on page 5 of the Plan, which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
- the undated Consultation Statement;
- the undated Basic Conditions Statement;
- all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report, dated September 2018;
- the 'Evidence Papers prepared by the Steering Group', listed on page 4 of the submission version of the draft PNDP; and
- the request for additional clarification sought in my letter of 19 November 2020 and the response dated 7 December 2020 from PPC.⁵

Site Visit

2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the PNDP Area on 19 November 2020 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant locations referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. No requests for a hearing session were received.

Modifications

2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in Appendix 1 to this report.

⁵ View at: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/preston-neighbourhood-plan/>

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3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by PPC, which is a qualifying body. The PNDP extends over all the Preston Parish. This constitutes the area of the Plan designated by CDC on 17 May 2017.

Plan Period

- 3.2 The Plan specifies the Plan period as 2020 to 2036. However, I note the end date was moved from 2028 at the first steps of preparation of the Plan to 2031, the date chosen through the later stages including the Regulation 14 Consultation. The end date of 2036 was only selected after the Regulation 14 consultation had concluded. Although the Regulation 16 Consultation referred to a Plan period of 2020 to 2036, there is no explanation provided for the change in the Basic Conditions Statement or Consultation Statement⁶ and I consider that the extension may have prejudiced some interests due to the lack of consistency. Those who might have wished to make representations on this point may have conceivably, and quite reasonably, overlooked the alteration. Therefore, I shall recommend that the Plan period uses 2031 as the end date, which helpfully is the end date of the CDLP. **(PM1)**

Neighbourhood Development Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.3 The concise Consultation Statement (CS), including 9 Appendices, indicates the stages in the process of the preparation of the Plan beginning at the Annual Village Meeting on 11 May 2017, when it was agreed by the village to produce a neighbourhood plan. On 17 May, the PPC submitted an application to CDC to designate the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area which was approved on the same day. The terms of reference of the PNDP Steering Group were adopted on 30 May.
- 3.4 A meeting with local landowners was held on 20 July 2017. In September 2017, 49 people from the village attended an event to help to develop a vision for the PNDP. A community survey was held online for 4 weeks in January 2018, with a business survey also held in the same month. Members of the community contributed other evidence. A first draft of the Plan was then considered at the Annual Village Meeting in May 2018. Advice was also sought from consultants in order to strengthen the evidence on landscape prior to finalising a pre-Regulation 14 draft of the Plan.⁷

⁶ Whilst page 19 of the Consultation Statement contains a footnote that the Steering Group subsequently decided to extend the PDNP period to 2036, no justification is provided.

⁷ Landscape Character Assessment: Preston Neighbourhood Plan: Portus & Whitton Landscape Architects.

- 3.5 The Pre-Submission Plan was published for consultation under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations on 24 February 2020 for a period of six weeks. The Plan could be viewed on the Parish Council website. Public Consultation Notices were emailed, posted or hand delivered to business addresses and all households. Hard copies could be read at four locations in the Parish and articles were placed in the village newsletter. The responses to the consultation together with how they were taken into account is shown at Appendix 9 of the CS.
- 3.6 The Plan was finally submitted to CDC on 28 August 2020. Consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 was carried out from 21 September 2020 until 2 November 2020. 11 responses were received. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the PNDP, that has had regard to advice in the PPG on plan preparation and is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.7 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.8 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.

Human Rights

- 3.9 The Basic Conditions Statement advises that the Plan has regard to and is compatible with the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights. The main issues for planning in the context of human rights are protection of property, right to respect for private and family life and prohibition of discrimination. The Plan complies with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998. All local landowners and businesses were specifically consulted in the preparation of the PNDP and its policies. I have considered this matter independently and I have found no reason to disagree with that position, especially as considerable emphasis has been placed throughout the consultation process to ensure that no sections of the community have been isolated or excluded and that the policies and proposals will not have a discriminatory impact on any particular group of individuals.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 The PNDP was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by CDC. The details were submitted with the Plan in accordance with the

legal requirement under Regulation 15(e)(i) of the 2012 Regulations.⁸ The screening report explains the following. As a result of the assessment, it was considered unlikely that there would be any significant environmental effects arising from the PNDP that were not covered in the Sustainability Appraisal or Appropriate Assessment of the Local Plan. Significant environmental effects have already been considered and dealt with through sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan for the District, to which the PNDP must be in general conformity to meet its 'basic conditions'. In addition, there are no allocations proposed in the PNDP. The impact of any potential development (in general conformity with the Local Plan) is expected to be localised and minimal and therefore not significant. Overall, it was not considered necessary to require a standalone SEA (or Appropriate Assessment) for the PNDP.

- 4.2 Therefore, it was considered the PNDP did not require a full SEA to be undertaken. Historic England⁹, the Environment Agency¹⁰ and Natural England,¹¹ when consulted, agreed with those conclusions. Natural England noted the screening process applied to the PNDP and agreed with the conclusion that there would be no likely significant effect upon European designated sites.
- 4.3 Having read the SEA Screening Assessment Report and the other information provided, and considered the matter independently, I also agree with those conclusions. Therefore, I am satisfied that the PNDP is compatible with EU obligations.

Main Issues

- 4.4 Having considered whether the Plan complies with various procedural and legal requirements, it is now necessary to deal with whether it complies with the remaining Basic Conditions, particularly the regard it pays to national policy and guidance, the contribution it makes to the achievement of sustainable development and whether it is in general conformity with strategic development plan policies.¹² I test the Plan against the Basic Conditions by considering specific issues of compliance of all the Plan's policies.
- 4.5 As part of that assessment, I consider whether the policies are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG. A

⁸ Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report: September 2018.

⁹ Response from Historic England, dated 6 September 2018.

¹⁰ Response from the Environment Agency, dated 2 August 2018.

¹¹ Response from Natural England, dated 5 September 2018.

¹² CDC's Regulation 16 response advises in relation to page 15, paragraph 45 of the Plan that the CDLP does not distinguish between strategic and other policies. Whilst paragraph 21 of the 2019 NPPF advises that Local Plans should make explicit which policies are strategic, this post-dates the preparation of the CDLP. Guidance on whether policies are to be considered as strategic is provided in PPG Reference ID: 41-076-20190509.

neighbourhood plan policy should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.¹³

- 4.6 Accordingly, having regard to the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan, the consultation responses, other evidence¹⁴ and the site visit, I consider that the main issues in this examination are whether the PNDP policies (i) have regard to national policy and guidance, (ii) are in general conformity with the adopted strategic planning policies and (iii) would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? I shall assess these issues by considering the policies within the themes in the sequence in which they appear in the Plan.

Vision

- 4.7 The process of preparing the Plan included having a village event to discuss issues and which resulted in the establishment of a vision for Preston. The vision is fully described on page 14 of the Plan, but the gist of it is that:
- the village will retain its Cotswold character within its rural setting, preserving the surrounding countryside and wildlife;
 - there will be good provision of public and sustainable transport;
 - there will be a strong sense of community;
 - small rural businesses will be retained and opportunities for small commercial enterprises will continue;
 - any residential development will have minimal impact on the area's character and environment;
 - there will be a reduction in traffic noise and traffic speed and volume will be controlled through the village; and
 - light pollution will not be increased with the tranquil character of the village and surrounding countryside being preserved.

Preston Countryside and Landscape (Policy 1)

- 4.8 The Plan considers the countryside and landscape around Preston in a comprehensive justification section culminating in Policy 1, which contains five main clauses, A-E.
- 4.9 Clause A includes a requirement that planning applications in the Plan area should address the issues and recommendations in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (November 2019) for the PNDP. I note the LCA is now referenced Revision E, dated 17 July 2020, and it is that version on which I have based my conclusions.

¹³ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

¹⁴ The other evidence includes the response from PPC dated 7 December 2020 to the questions in my letter of 19 November 2020.

- 4.10 Recommendation 1 of the LCA is to create a Preston Special Local Landscape Area which should be of equal status and enforceability to that of a Special Landscape Area (SLA) designated at a "District level". This recommendation has been carried forward in the PNDP by Clause B which designates a Preston Special Local Landscape Area (PSLLA) covering Areas 2–5, shown on Figure 6 of the Plan and described in Table 1. Policy EN6 of the CDLP is then repeated as Clause C of Policy 1 in the PNDP.
- 4.11 In its Regulation 16 consultation response, CDC commented that the policy is seeking to act strategically, rather than locally, and is outside the scope of the Plan. I agree. The CDLP states that SLAs were introduced in Gloucestershire in 1982 and there are six SLAs designated in the District, the purpose of which is to protect locally significant and valued landscapes that have particular intrinsic qualities or character. The designations were based on a formal assessment of each area and were reviewed in 2001 and 2017.
- 4.12 I realise that the proposed PSLLA adjoins the southern end of the AONB, but it seems to me that the consideration and choice of where SLAs should be located within the District is based on a District wide comparison. Therefore, I consider that the PSLLA designation is a strategic matter to be considered at a District scale and which cannot be usurped by Policy 1 of the PNDP. Accordingly, I shall recommend modifications to the Plan to delete the references to the Preston Special Local Landscape Area and the deletion of Clauses A, B and C of Policy 1.
- 4.13 Furthermore, accepting a policy addressing the issues and recommendations in the LCA would mean importing its conclusions, not all of which I support. For example, in the Conclusions and Policy Recommendation section beneath the sub-heading "The significance and intrinsic quality of the landscape", it is stated that Preston Parish is of high landscape quality as evidenced by its northern section being within the AONB and its location adjacent to the Cirencester SLA. However, I do not accept that chain of reasoning. It is the properties of all the landscape within the Parish which determines its quality, not the landscape of adjacent areas. Indeed, in my opinion, the quality of the landscape within the Parish varies significantly.
- 4.14 Whereas the landscape quality within the AONB may be high, there is a gradual transition down the gentle south eastern slope and towards the south, moving away from the South and Mid Cotswold Lowlands (described by the Cotswold AONB LCA), through the Ampneys landscape character (described in the Gloucestershire LCA) to the Clay Vale of the Upper Thames Valley. This transition is unsurprising. *"Mapped boundaries may suggest that there is a sharp change from one landscape to another, generally however, on site it can be seen that a boundary line represents a zone of transition from one landscape to another - character rarely changes abruptly."*¹⁵ Similarly, I do not agree with the contention in the

¹⁵ An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: Natural England: October 2014.
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PNDP LCA that the landscape within sub areas 2 – 5 is of equal value, given the presence of features which have negative impacts such as the Cirencester urban fringe, the A417 and A419 dual carriageways and the electricity pylons.

- 4.15 Clause D seeks to retain the open landscape character of the “green wedge” key view of Cirencester as shown on Figure 8 of the Plan and reflects recommendation 2 of the LCA. The Cirencester Parish Church is prominent in the view, as I observed on my visit to the area. However, the retention of the open character of the green wedge would effectively constitute a blanket ban on built development within its boundaries, as indicated in paragraph 67 of the justification in the Plan.
- 4.16 The proposal begs comparison with Local Green Space (LGS), the national policy¹⁶ for which is that LGS designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. *“Consequently, blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a “back door” way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name.”*¹⁷ I accept that the green wedge is not proposed as an LGS, but the effect would be very similar. Therefore, I shall recommend the deletion of Clause D of Policy 1.
- 4.17 Clause E of the policy aims to promote particular features where new development is proposed and broadly follows all except one of the remaining recommendations in the LCA. I shall recommend retaining Clause E of Policy 1 subject to three changes. The first change is to delete the reference to the Preston Special Local Landscape Area and substitute an introductory phrase, which would have the effect of excluding the AONB from the policy and including the remainder of the Plan area.
- 4.18 The second change is to replace the phrase “extensive new woodland planting” in E ii with “unsympathetic new woodland planting” so that woodland planting as a result of any need to address climate change would be reasonable. The third change is the deletion of E viii and its requirement to ensure that any proposed development does not encroach on key views across the Parish, as described in the LCA. Appendix A: Key Views of the LCA contains 49 photographs which cover most of the Parish. The application of this requirement in the policy would preclude most forms of new built development from virtually anywhere within the Plan area.
- 4.19 Therefore, I shall recommend modifications **(PM2)** to Policy 1 which will enable it to have regard to national guidance,¹⁸ generally conform with Policy EN4 of the CDLP and meet the Basic Conditions. The modification should also include the deletion of paragraph 61 of the Plan.

¹⁶ NPPF: Paragraph 100.

¹⁷ PPG Reference ID: 37-015-20140306.

¹⁸ NPPF: paragraph 170.

- 4.20 Finally, I have reservations about sections of Table 1: Visual Sensitivity Sub-Area commentary. Whereas the Table notes landscape characteristics and features of Areas 1–5, the text goes beyond the informative and useful factual descriptions and offers judgements on what sort of development might be acceptable. I believe that the judgements could pre-empt development management decisions where factors other than landscape should also be taken into consideration and therefore would not have regard to national guidance in the PPG for effective decision making. Accordingly, I shall recommend that the Table is removed from the main body of the Plan and attached as Appendix A, with a qualification that the Sub-Area commentary offers an assessment of development potential and constraints from the landscape point of view. **(PM3)**

Design (Policy 2)

- 4.21 Policy 2 considers design and includes five clauses A–E, the first of which requires new development to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the CDLP and the Cotswold Design Code. In order to avoid ambiguity arising about the status of the Cotswold Design Code, I shall recommend rephrasing the sentence so that it is clear the Design Code is part of the Development Plan.
- 4.22 Clause B states that proposals should have specific regard to the key local features and development guidelines in the Design in Preston document. I note that Design in Preston is dated 2017 and the Cotswold Design Code was adopted as part of the CDLP in 2018. The Regulation 16 consultation response from CDC identifies several conflicts with the Design Code or ambiguities. Therefore, to avoid the conflicts, create more precision and enable more effective development management, I shall recommend the modification of Clause B so that proposals should have regard to the “following guidelines of the Preston Design Guide”, which are then stated as in Clauses C, D and E.
- 4.23 Clause C would become (i) and would be remain as drafted. I consider that the description of publicly accessible green spaces within the policy is sufficiently clear to be understood. Clause D would become (ii) and seeks the use of locally characteristic building materials. This part of the policy avoids being unacceptably prescriptive by the use of the qualification of, “where appropriate”. In order to avoid the same criticism of Clause E, I shall recommend the addition of appropriateness.
- 4.24 With these modifications **(PM4)**, Policy 2 would have regard to national guidance,¹⁹ generally conform with Policy EN2 of the CDLP and meet the Basic Conditions.

¹⁹ NPPF: paragraph 125.

Local Green Spaces (LGS) (Policy 3)

- 4.25 The Plan defines two LGS: Preston Playing Fields and Preston Allotments. As explained in the NPPF, Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.²⁰
- 4.26 I agree with the assessment in the Plan that each of the proposed LGS is in reasonably close proximity to the village; each LGS is local in character, demonstrable special to the local community and is not an extensive area of land. Therefore, Policy 3 would have regard to national guidance, generally conform with the aims of Policy EN3 of the CDLP and meet the Basic Conditions.

Employment Land (Policy 4)

- 4.27 Policy 4 aims to support new and existing small businesses in the Parish, particularly at the Village Farm employment site as proposed in Clause A of the policy. However, whereas a change to residential use at the Village Farm site would be supported in the Plan, it would be on the condition that all the Class B units change use simultaneously. It is accepted in the Plan (paragraph 80) and noted in the Regulation 16 consultation response from CDC, that the change of use from Class B to a residential use may be “permitted development”. Therefore, Policy 4: Clause A. a. cannot be delivered and I shall recommend that it is deleted.
- 4.28 Policy 1 Clause B refers to “small” businesses, which I shall recommend to be modified to “small-scale” as referred to in CDLP Policy EC3. Accordingly, I shall recommend the rewording of the policy so as to retain the viability test and not differentiate between the Village Farm employment site and other sites, and which appears to be justified by the evidence in the Plan. **(PM5)** Subject to those modifications, Policy 4 will have regard to national guidance, generally conform with Policies EC2 and EC3 of the CDLP and meet the Basic Conditions.

Footpaths and Cycleways (Policy 5)

- 4.29 Policy 5 aims to support the improvement of the network of cycleways, footways and footpaths. Clause B of the policy seeks developer contributions to fund improvements to the network. However, as CDC quite rightly indicate the list of projects include some which are well distributed across the Plan area and may be more reasonably resourced through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Therefore, I shall

²⁰ NPPF: paragraph 100.

recommend that this is recognised in the policy and that the list of projects is included as a separate table as in the section on Community Infrastructure. **(PM6)** Subject to those modifications, the policy would have regard to national guidance,²¹ generally conform with Policy INF3 of the CDLP and meet the Basic Conditions.

Community Infrastructure (Policy 6)

4.30 Policy 6 includes support for proposals which would improve community infrastructure and also seeks to avoid the loss of infrastructure listed in Table 2, without good reason. Additional text in Table 2 describes necessary improvements to the separate items. Table 2 might appear as an onerous list of requirements for a developer to consider, but it is more like a “wish list” of where community improvements might be sought by legal agreement. In my opinion, these are constructive suggestions, some of which might form a basis for discussions should any relevant proposal be made. Accordingly, Policy 6 has regard to national guidance²², generally conforms with Policies INF1 and INF2 of the CDLP and meets the Basic Conditions.

Transport and Village Amenity (Policy 7)

4.31 The Policy is entitled “Transport and Village Amenity”, but the policy is concerned with the effects of motorised traffic due to speed, noise, vibration, conflicts with other road users and feelings of safety. All these factors are referred to as considerations in national guidance and to which the policy has regard.²³ The policy also generally conforms with Policies INF3 and INF4 of the CDLP. Therefore, the policy meets the Basic Conditions, but subject to one reservation.

4.32 I have read the evidence paper Transport and Village Amenity and the details of the surveys which were conducted. I consider that the phrase “to manage impacts to maintain or improve upon the 2018 baseline” is too imprecise to enable the policy to be used in effective development management. In addition, given that the traffic survey data measured by Gloucestershire Police did not support any reduction in traffic speeds either through the village or along the A419 or A417, I am not convinced that the use of the 2018 evidence is sufficiently robust to form an effective baseline for policy considerations. Therefore, I shall recommend the deletion of the 2018 baseline and a change from “manage” to “mitigate” impacts. **(PM7)**

Other Matters

4.33 A representation was received seeking the allocation of land on the edge of Preston village for low-density residential development specifically for

²¹ NPPF: paragraph 102.

²² NPPF: paragraph 92.

²³ NPPF: paragraph 101.

the needs of persons over 55 years of age. The proposal has some merit. However, the Plan as drafted and as recommended to be modified would meet the Basic Conditions. Therefore, I have no reason to modify the Plan by allocating the land as is sought. Furthermore, it seems to me that such an allocation would not generally conform with Policy DS4 of the CDLP. Neither would it generally conform with Policy DS3 of the CDLP which considers small-scale residential development in Non-Principal settlements. Even if the site were to be considered to be located in Preston as opposed to adjoining it, the CDLP states that the housing should be proportionate to, and complementary with, the size and character of the settlement and its surroundings.²⁴ I consider that the 8.5ha site would not meet those criteria, even with its spacious layout.

Overview

- 4.34 Accordingly, on the evidence before me, with the recommended modifications, I consider that the policies within the PNDP are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the CDLP, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the PNDP, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The PNDP as modified has no policy or proposal which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

²⁴ CDLP: paragraph 6.3.5.

Concluding Comments

- 5.4 The Parish Council and voluntary contributors are to be commended for their efforts in producing a concise Plan which was well presented with comprehensive accompanying documentation. I enjoyed reading the Plan and visiting the area. With the recommended modifications, the PNDP will make a positive contribution to the Development Plan for the area and should enable the rural character and appearance of Preston and its surroundings to be maintained.

Andrew Mead

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification no. (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Cover and elsewhere in the Plan	Amend plan period to: "2020 – 2031" .
PM2	Policy 1	<p>Delete Clauses A – D and paragraph 61 of the justification.</p> <p>Amend Clause E by substituting the first phrase with: "Other than within the AONB, new development should where appropriate promote the following..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Retain as drafted. ii. Replace "... extensive ..." with "... unsympathetic ...". iii. Retain as drafted. iv. Retain as drafted. v. Retain as drafted. vi. Retain as drafted. vii. Retain as drafted. viii. Delete. ix. Retain as drafted. <p>Delete paragraph 67 and Figure 8.</p>
PM3	Table 1	<p>Transfer Table 1 to become Appendix A.</p> <p>Amend paragraph 54 to become: "The LCA identified several Landscape Areas in the Parish, shown in Figure 6 and Appendix A. The commentary on the Sub-Areas includes an assessment of how the landscape may affect the potential for and the constraints on development."</p>
PM4	Policy 2	<p>Clause A: Amend final phrase to "... in accordance with the relevant policies of the Cotswold District Local Plan, including the Cotswold Design Code."</p> <p>Clause B Amend to: "Proposals should have specific regard to the following conclusions derived from the Design in Preston Design Statement (2017):"</p> <p>Clause C: Amend to (i).</p>

		<p>Clause D: Amend to (ii).</p> <p>Clause E: Amend to (iii). Include phrase "... Cotswold Stone walls, where appropriate, particularly where these ...".</p>
PM5	Policy 4	<p>Delete policy text and replace with:</p> <p>"The establishment of new, or the retention of existing small-scale businesses in the Parish will be supported where they comply with other policies of the development plan.</p> <p>Planning applications which would result in the loss of a small-scale employment site will be supported provided that detailed evidence is submitted to demonstrate that the site can no longer practically or viably be used for employment purposes. The evidence should demonstrate that the employment site has been actively and recently marketed for a period of at least 12 months."</p>
PM6	Policy 5	<p>Clause B Delete: "This includes:"</p> <p>Remove items i – vi to a new table separated from the policy and headed "List of possible projects to be the subject of developer contributions and/or CIL", commenting in the justification that the list is not exhaustive and other projects may be added.</p> <p>Add a new Clause C: "Projects to improve the network or provide new connections may also be funded through the Parish's share of any CIL which may be due."</p>
PM7	Policy 7	<p>Amend to: "... will be encouraged to mitigate impacts with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. traffic speeds; b. noise and vibration; c. conflict with other road users and feelings of safety."

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PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2020-2031

REFERENDUM DRAFT

Introduction by Chairman of the Steering Group

Neighbourhood Development Plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them. The Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the village and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period 2018 – 2031. When finally 'made' our Neighbourhood Development Plan will be a statutory document that will be incorporated into the District planning framework and be used by Cotswold District Council to determine planning applications.

Our Plan has been produced by local residents, under the aegis of the Parish Council, using the views of the residents of Preston, with the invaluable assistance of an experienced Planning Consultant. The Steering Group has consulted with and listened to the community and local organisations on a wide range of issues that will influence the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of Preston's rural community. Building on the Design Statement published in 2017, every effort has been made to ensure that the views and policies contained in this document reflect those of the majority of Preston residents.

An electronic copy of this Plan and the Evidence Papers supporting it can be found online at www.prestonpc.org.uk

As Chair of the Steering Group I would like personally to thank particularly the members of the Group and pay tribute to their work since May 2017 and our Parish Clerk and Planning Consultant for their continued support. Many thanks are also due to all those in the Parish who helped to write this Plan by filling in questionnaires, attending meetings and offering views, without which it would not have been possible to produce this Neighbourhood Plan; your continued support is still vital to achieve its final adoption.

Tony Warren



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Referendum Draft

1. This referendum draft Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2031 will be put to the local electorate of Preston Parish on 6 May 2021.

The role of the neighbourhood plan in the planning system

2. Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and enacted in the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 as amended. NDPs are prepared by parish councils for a designated area – in this case, Preston Parish Council prepared this NDP for Preston Parish. Once the NDP is “made”, i.e. has been adopted, it becomes part of the planning decision-making framework for Preston. When this NDP successfully passes its referendum with the Preston parishioners and receives a majority vote in favour of adopting it: consideration of every planning application that is submitted in the parish must pay regard to the policies in this NDP.

3. There are several stages in the preparation of an NDP. This NDP has already been subjected to extensive consultation in its production and in response to comments received to its public consultation under Reg. 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. Subsequently it has been reviewed by an independent examiner, who has determined, that subject to modifications

that have been made to this document, it should proceed to referendum.

4. Neighbourhood plans must meet certain “basic conditions” and other legal requirements before they can come into force. These are tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum.¹ Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan that covers their area². Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies of the Cotswold Local Plan or undermine those strategic policies.³ The preparation of planning policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence.⁴



¹ National Planning Policy Framework, 37.

² National Planning Policy Framework, footnote 16.

³ National Planning Policy Framework, 29.

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, 31.

5. The planning authority prepares the Local Plan. This sets out strategic policies that are applicable across the entire Cotswold District. The Preston NDP works within those policies and adds local detail. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area.

6. Once the NDP has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the local plan for Preston Parish.

NDP structure

7. The NDP is the main document but each policy is based on evidence such as the results of the community survey, consideration of the Local Plan policies and other information collected by the steering group who have overseen the NDP's preparation. In the interest of brevity, the NDP only summarises the evidence.

8. The Submission Draft was accompanied by this background evidence. In addition, it was also supported by a Consultation Statement which sets out in detail how the community and other stakeholders were consulted about the emerging NDP and describes how the issues raised were addressed.

9. It was also accompanied by a statement that sets out how the NDP meets the Basic Conditions (requirements of para. 8 of the Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

10. A Strategic Environmental Assessment has not been prepared because this was deemed to be unnecessary by the Local Planning Authority in its SEA Screening Opinion (2018).

Applicants and others who are stakeholder in the planning process are advised to consider the detailed analysis in the evidence papers.

Evidence in support of NDP policies

Evidence Papers prepared by the Steering Group

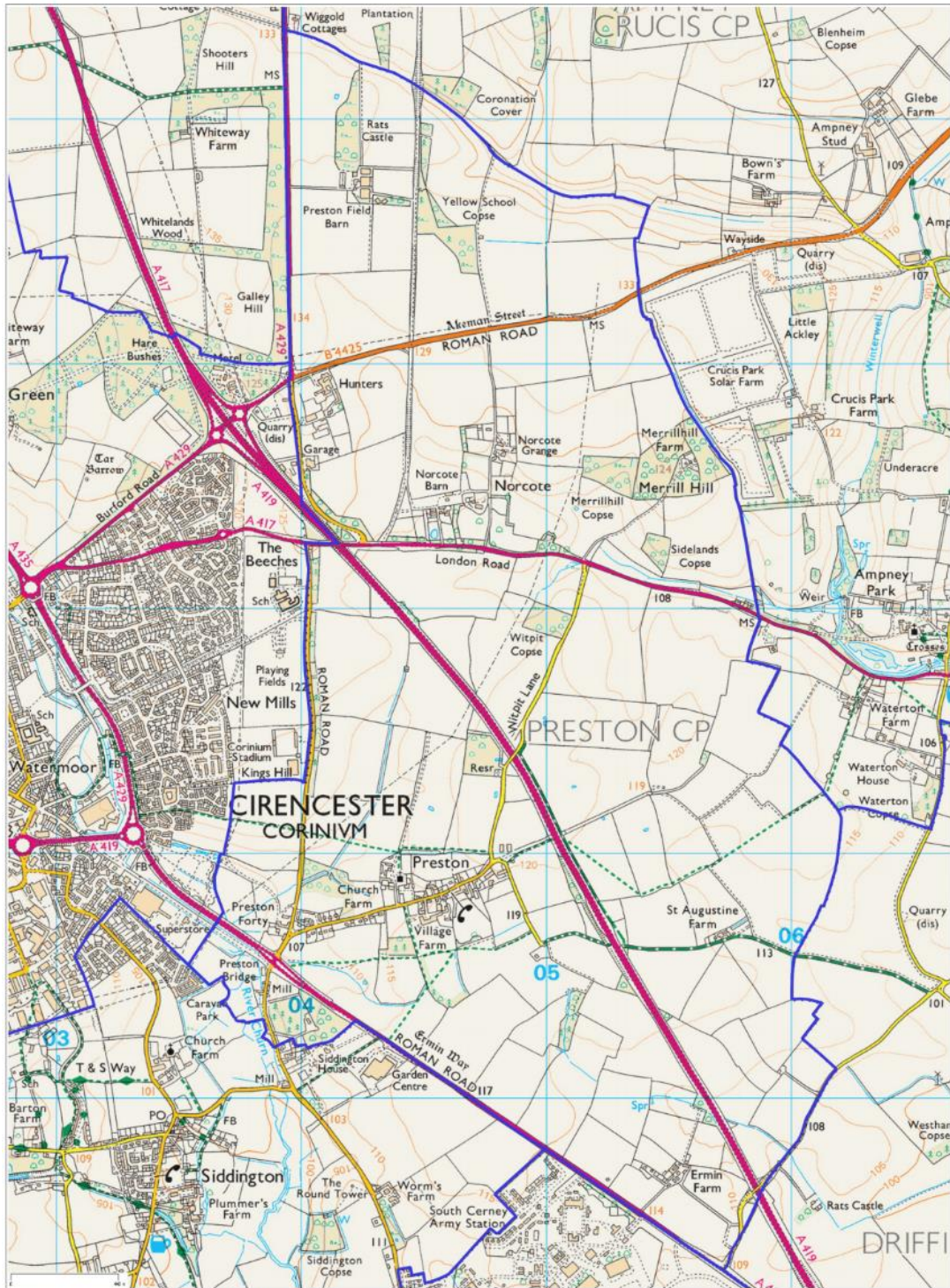
- Community Infrastructure
- Design in Preston
- Employment Land
- Sustainable Transport
- Transport and Village Amenity

Landscape Character Assessment for Preston Neighbourhood Plan (July 2020, Portus & Whitton Landscape Architects)

Neighbourhood planning area

11. The area covered by this NDP is the parish of Preston shown in **Figure 1**. Cotswold District Council approved Preston parish as the NDP area under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016 on 17 May 2017.

Figure 1: NDP area – the Parish of Preston



Background to Preston Parish

12. The Village of Preston lies approximately 2 miles to the south east of Cirencester in Cotswold District. There is good access to Cirencester by car and cycle. The A419 is easily accessible, and both Swindon and Cheltenham can be reached within 20 minutes. The 2018 community survey showed that Preston residents rely upon Cirencester and Cheltenham for leisure, though a high proportion of responders relied almost entirely on Preston and Cirencester to meet their work, study and leisure needs.

13. The entire parish lies outside the Cirencester Development Boundary⁵ and therefore, only small scale residential development will be permissible in the parish⁶. New-build open market housing is not permitted unless in accordance with other policies that expressly deal with residential development which is not the case in Preston Parish⁷. The northern part of the parish is designated as AONB and there is a small employment area in the village.

14. The parish is composed mainly of countryside with scattered dwellings and small businesses. The A417 travels through the parish, effectively severing the north and south of the parish, except for the bridge at Witpit Lane.

15. The Parish of Preston extends north along the Fosse Way (A429 Stow Road) to Ragged Hedge Covert, East along London Road (A417) to near the entrance of Ampney Park, south to the A419 road

junction opposite the South Cerney Airfield and west towards Cirencester.

16. Part of the new Kingshill Meadow development on the outskirts of Cirencester was formerly in the parish but, as part of boundary reorganization, the boundary was moved in 2015 to enable the whole of that development to be part of Cirencester. Preston Parish Council supported the boundary change because they felt that to accept a new and large development would change the nature of the parish.

17. Archaeological finds from Preston show evidence of occupation back to Neolithic times, through Roman, Saxon and medieval times to the present day.

18. The agricultural hamlet of Preston has stood in the Cotswold countryside for more than a thousand years. Documented in the Domesday Book as being held by Regenbald, (debatably) the chancellor of Edward the Confessor, it formed a part of the endowment to the Abbey of Cirencester by Henry I in the mid part of the 12th century along with the majority of Regenbald's estates. So it remained over the course of the next four hundred years, until the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 1540s. The Church of Preston, like other possessions of the Abbey, stayed in royal hands until it, along with other estates in the area, was purchased from Queen Elizabeth by her physician, Dr. Richard Master, in 1564.

19. That purchase began a relationship between the Master (subsequently Chester Master) family and Preston that continues to this day.

⁵ Cotswold District Council Local Plan 2011-2031, Policy DS2.

⁶ Local Plan policy DS3.

⁷ Local Plan policy DS4.

20. The community remained stable between the time of the enclosure of the parish in 1772, and the Second World War, with the addition of an imposing new rectory in 1820. Two or three more substantial farmhouses near the centre were interspersed with smaller cottages, forming a ribbon-like settlement along the central part of the village road.

21. Between 1950 and 1980 the village expanded with new dwellings being built on intermittent sites along the roadside from the crossroads at the western end to the junction at the eastern end to the Ampneys one way and Harnhill and Driffield to the other. That development was continued into the 1980s and 1990s with the conversion of farm buildings into both residential and small commercial properties. However, the fundamentally rural nature of the built area of Preston has been maintained, despite a change in the demography of the village from the historical, purely agricultural, to the more varied background of today.

22. In the centre of Preston village is a conservation area. This is the oldest part where the church, letter box, telephone box and village hall can be found. There are 23 listed buildings in the parish. These range from the 13th and 14th century Anglican church with some monuments in the churchyard, to individual houses and farmhouses built in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

23. Preston relies upon a number of community facilities:

- **All Saints Parish Church:** this is part of the Churnside Benefice along with churches at Siddington, South Cerney and Cerney Wick.
- **The Village Hall:** this is the social hub of the village. It was renovated by the residents in 2008. It is a well-equipped

and a welcoming space and is used by various clubs and organizations, as well as social events organized in the village.

- **Village Playing Field:** this located to the rear of what were Forty Farm Cottages (now part of Kingsway) and is provided and maintained by Preston Parish Council. It is a safe and enclosed area for children with play equipment and football posts.
- **Allotments:** These are available for rent from the Chestermaster estate and are situated centrally to the south side of the village, behind The Barn.

24. The parish area consists mainly of undulating arable fields, typical of the Cotswold landscape, that are surrounded by hedges and dry stone walls. The area is crossed by numerous drainage ditches and is prone to limited localized field flooding. To the north of Preston village, the fields are dotted with several old dew ponds and an underground reservoir is located to the south of the A417, along Witpit Lane.

25. There are no areas of designated SSSI within the parish, but the area north of Akeman Street is within the Cotswolds AONB.

26. The parish is crisscrossed by the routes of old Roman Roads (the Fosse Way, Ermin Way and Akeman Street) and also includes the route of a dismantled railway, now the main access road to the Organic Farm shop at Abbey Home Farm.

27. Most of the farmland is arable, though the Abbey Estate does have some livestock. The parish is also dotted with a number of copses, which help to break up the skyline. The copses and drainage ditches also provide excellent wildlife corridors. Buzzards and green woodpeckers are resident and red kites, heron, otters and roe and fallow deer are often seen.

28. Despite its proximity to Cirencester, the fact that most of the land is arable farmland and subject to rotational cropping helps to maintain the distinctly rural feel of the parish.



All Saints Church



Preston Village Hall



Preston Playing Fields

Demographic characteristics

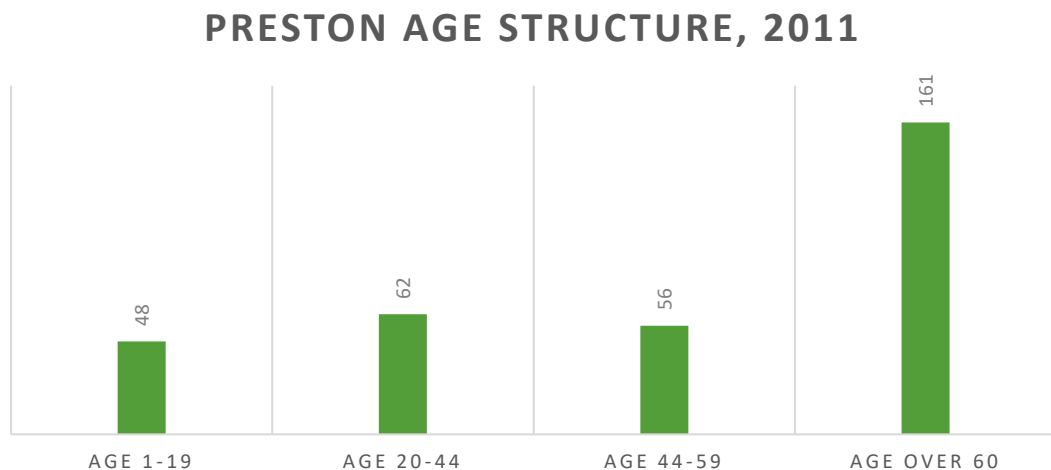
29. The key characteristics in the NDP are taken from the 2011 census⁸.

30. Most residents live within the village though there are some scattered individual dwellings, mainly farms or former farms. Hunters Care Home accounts for around a quarter of residents. There were 327 usual residents in the parish on Census day 2011: 76.1% lived in households and 23.9% lived in communal establishments (Hunters). Excluding Hunters, around 250 people were resident in Preston in 2011 which is the start of the Local Plan period. There are currently 250 people on the electoral roll.

31. In total there were 118 households. There were 327 usual residents (45% male, 55% female). The ethnicity is overwhelmingly white (99.7%) and born in the UK (99.6%).

32. Preston is a community with a relatively older population: the mean age is 54.8. This is skewed by Hunters but it was not possible to determine the age profile for the remainder of the residents. In 2011, there were only 48 young people under the age of 19, and over three times as many people aged over 60. The 2011 age structure is illustrated in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** which shows that Preston has a relatively older population than Gloucestershire or England though again, this is skewed by Hunters Care Home.

Figure 2: Age Structure, 2011

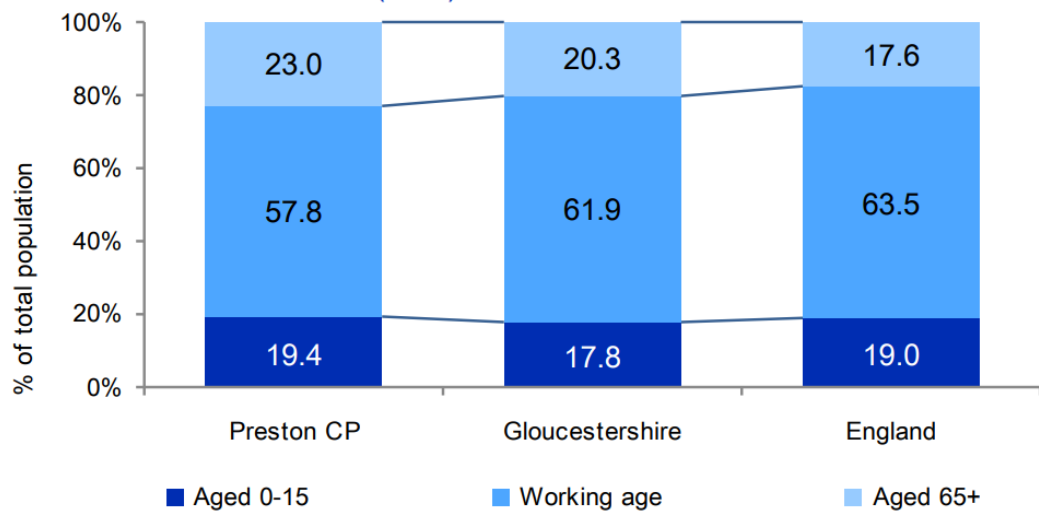


Source: 2011 census

Figure 3: Comparative age profile, 2014

⁸<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170214123>

Figure: Population by age
 Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2014



Source: Gloucestershire Parish Profiles Report, created 8 November 2016

33. Of the residents over the age of 16, 49% were married, 23% were widowed, and 22% had never married.

34. The population is healthy, where two thirds of census respondents classified themselves as very healthy or in good health and not limited in their daily activities. These figures would probably be higher if Hunters Care Home is excluded.

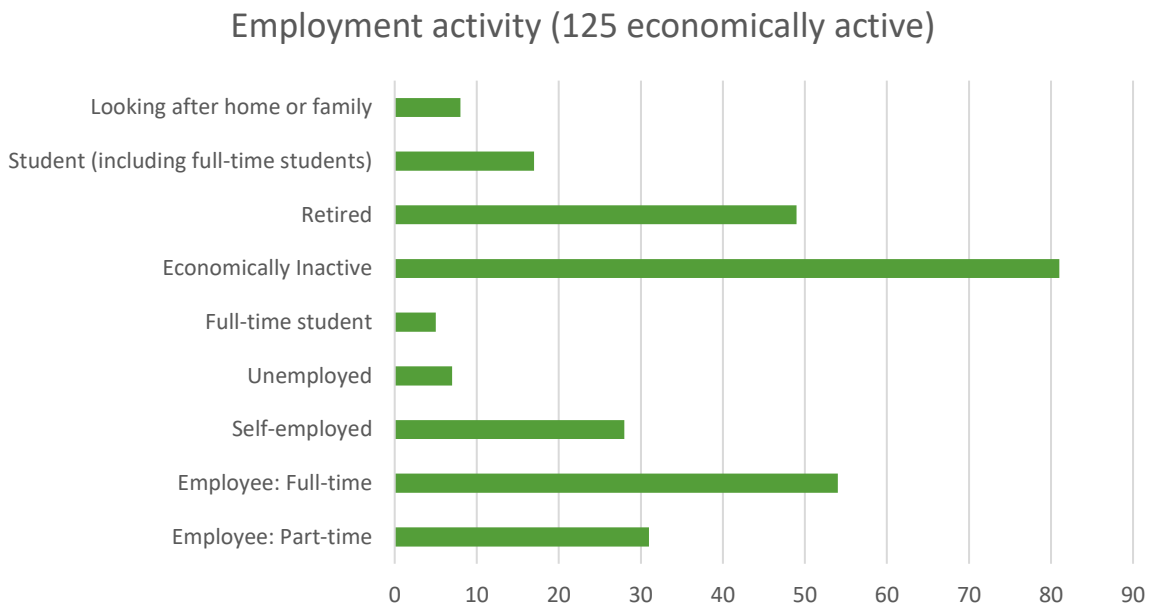
35. Most people lived in detached properties (44%) or semi-detached properties (38%), and the remainder lived in terraced properties (18%). The average household size is 2.3 persons and the average house has 3.4 bedrooms. Most

homes are owned (66%) and the remainder are rented (14% of all properties are social rented). One third of all homes have only one occupant and the remainder are occupied by families. The Community Survey, undertaken in 2018, showed that 55% of respondents lived in detached homes and another 30% in semi-detached homes. On average, responders had been at the same address for 21 years and few responders wished to move or downsize.

36. On average, 36% of adults in each household are in full or part-time employment. **Figure 4** provides a breakdown of economic activity.



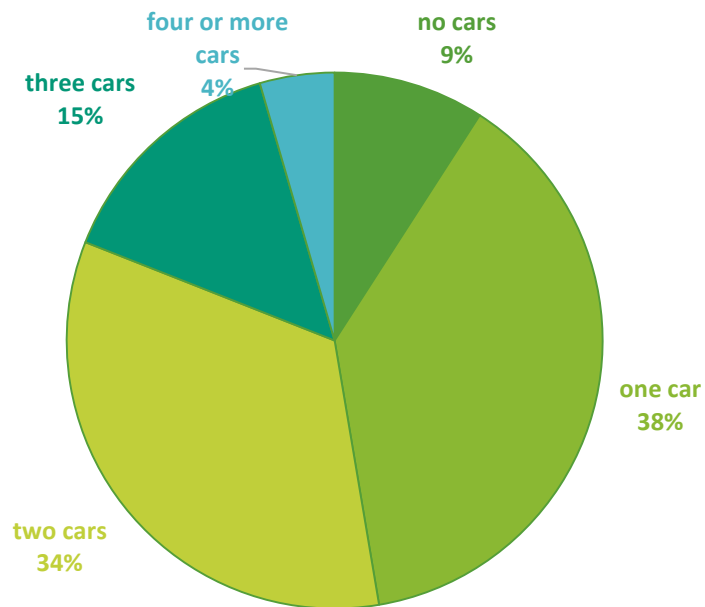
Figure 4: Economic Activity



Source: 2011 census

37. Most households have access to at least one car, shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5: Number of cars per household, 2011



Source: 2011 census

Engagement

38. The NDP is based on extensive consultation with the Preston community and wider stakeholders. The NDP steering group is made up of representatives from the local community and the Parish Council. It was supported by a professional town planner, Dr Andrea Pellegram MRTPI.

39. The steering group had its first meeting in May 2017 and met monthly while the NDP was actively being prepared. A meeting for local landowners was held in July 2017. A successful community event in the village hall on 26 September 2017 was well attended (49 people plus the steering group) – this was the opportunity for the village to suggest the vision and policy themes for the steering group to refine. The steering group also prepared materials that the Parish Clerk posted on the village website and many of the NDP activities, particularly the surveys, were advertised in the Parish newsletter. A community survey

was undertaken in early 2018 and 50 villagers responded. A separate survey of local businesses was undertaken in Spring 2018. Individual villagers collected and prepared other evidence that is described in the Evidence Papers.

40. The draft NDP was considered by planning officers in a meeting in June 2018, and in further correspondence and amendments were made accordingly.

41. Portus & Whitton Landscape Architects were appointed to provide specialist advice on landscape issues on advice from the planning authority.

42. The Reg. 14 draft was discussed at the 5 July 2018 village consultation event and was generally supported.

43. Following Reg. 14 consultation, extensive modifications were made to the NDP as set out in the Consultation Statement.



VISION FOR PRESTON TO 2031

Preston Village will retain its Cotswold character within its rural setting, preserving the surrounding countryside and wildlife, whilst maintaining safe, convenient and good quality footpaths and cycleways into Cirencester.

There will be good provision of public and sustainable transport to meet the needs of all residents of the parish.

Preston will continue its strong sense of community with a thriving village hall and a range of recreational facilities for all ages.

The established small rural and agricultural businesses will be retained and the opportunity for small commercial enterprises to become established and thrive will continue.

Any residential development in the parish will have had minimal impact on the area's distinctive character and environment and will accommodate everybody.

There will be a reduction in traffic noise and the traffic speed and volume will be controlled through the village.

Light pollution will not be increased, and the tranquil character of the village and surrounding countryside will have been preserved.

Landscape

44. Since its first settlement, Preston village has maintained a separate identity from other villages in the area, particularly Cirencester. Villagers have demonstrated their passion for retaining Preston’s separate identity throughout the NDP consultation. The importance to them of retaining this - geographically in terms of built development, and socially in terms of preserving a village where people know and like one another - was stressed time and time again during public consultation. What residents fear the most is the coalescence of Preston with Cirencester and a merging of the two areas.

45. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in their relevant Local Plan. In Preston, the strategic policies are set out in Local Plan policies DS1 (which sets out the Cirencester Development boundary) and DS2 and DS3 which preclude development outside the development boundary and allow only small scale development in Preston.

46. There are also strategic landscape policies in the form of the AONB designation (Policy EN5) at the northern part of the parish and the Special Landscape Area (Policy EN6) which does not cover any land in Preston Parish but which is immediately adjacent to the north west.

47. However, though Preston Parish is not wholly protected by these strategic policies, its landscape is still worthy of protection. Local Plan para. 7.2.3 refers to ‘green wedges’ and views of Cirencester’s parish church tower as important when approaching the town from various directions – there is a prominent view from Preston when approaching Cirencester of

the Parish Church. Para. 7.2.7 sets out adjacent parishes that are effectively part of Cirencester but Preston is excluded, indicating that it is NOT part of the Cirencester developed area.

48. Policy EN1 seeks to safeguard the sensitive built, natural and historic environment from the less positive aspects of development and simultaneously seeks enhancements where possible (para 10.1.4). The policy requires development to promote the protection, conservation and enhancements of the historic and natural environment.

49. Policy EN2 requires proposals to respect the character and distinctive appearance of the locality and Policy EN4 protects the wider natural and historic landscape. Policy EN 4 protects the Cotswolds AONB and Policy EN7 protects trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

50. NPPF para. 28 allows NDPs to establish design principles and set out policies that conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment. Locality toolkit ‘How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans’ sets out the basic principles how this should be done. This method has been followed in the preparation of the NDP evidence in support of this policy.

51. This NDP policy and its supporting evidence add another layer of protection to the existing strategic designations and provide fine grained local evidence in support of Local Plan policies EN1, EN2, EN4, EN5 and EN7.

52. This policy is supported by Evidence Papers ***Design in Preston*** and ***Landscape***.

53. Preston Parish Council commissioned Portus & Whitton Landscape Architects to undertake a comprehensive **Landscape**

Character Assessment for Preston Neighbourhood Plan (LCA) which includes an appendix on Key Views(July 2020).

These documents should be considered when planning applications are prepared in Preston Parish.

carriageway changes to the A417 in name northwards of the junction leading to Cirencester where it takes the name of A419 (also known as Swindon Road) but is a single carriageway.

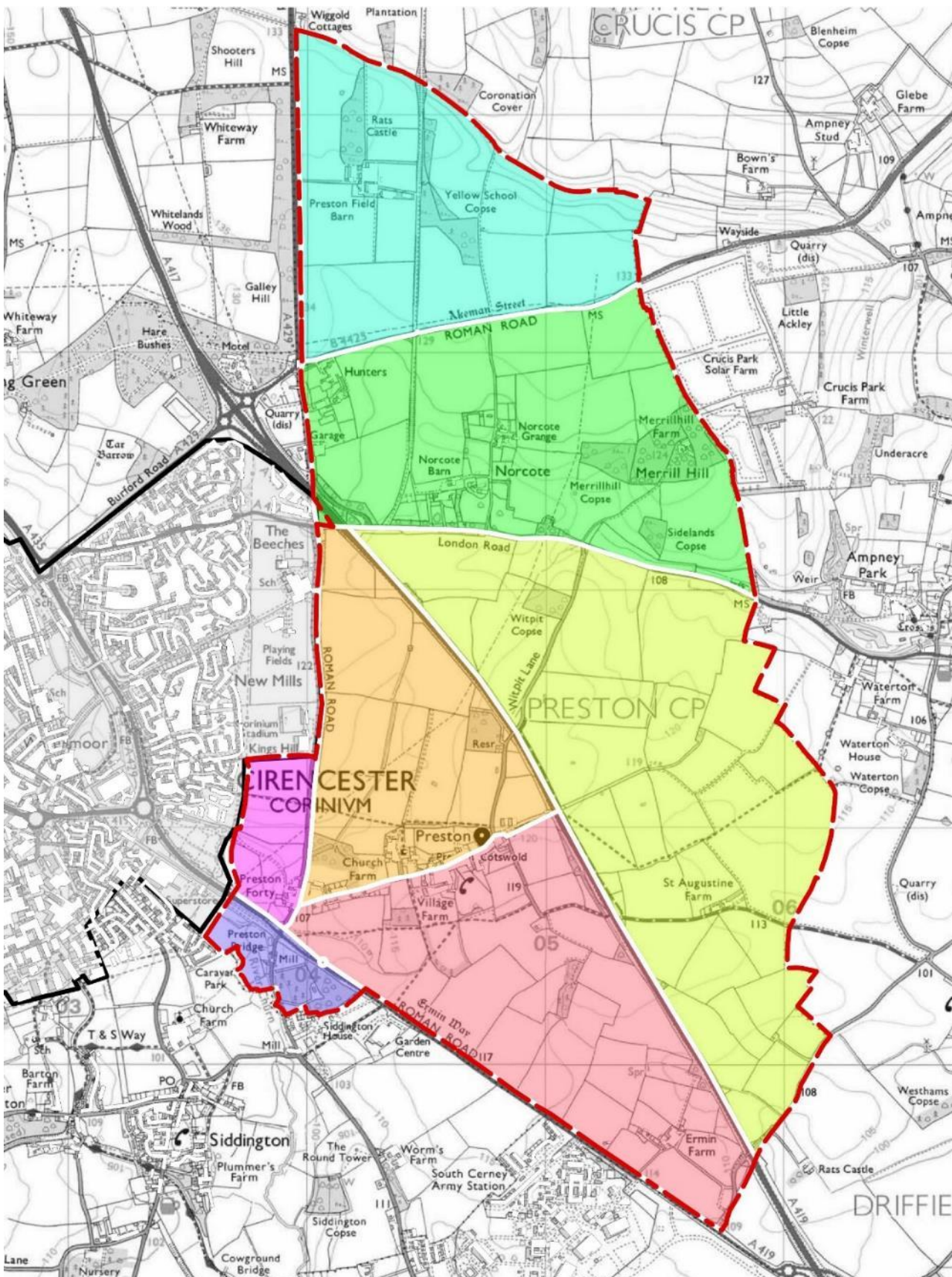
54. The LCA identified several Landscape Areas in the Parish, shown in Figure 6 and Appendix A. The commentary on the Sub-Areas in Appendix A includes an assessment of how the landscape may affect the potential for and the constraints on development.

55. The LCA concludes that in the whole of the Parish, there is a remarkable uniformity of defining landscape features, namely the presence of rectilinear woodland copses, linear shelterbelts, the use of hedgerows as field boundaries, dry stone walling, gentle variations in topography and several areas of very flat, low-lying ground. Land uses include arable land and pasture for the largest part, but also include forestry, horticulture, parkland, and renewable solar farming.

56. The presence of numerous transport routes which criss-cross the parish have in time contributed to shaping the development of its landscape. Whilst the presence of Public Rights of Way within the parish are limited, many of the roads have been important transport links since Roman times. These are recognised as primary visual receptors and this analysis is based primarily on views from the roads rather than the minimal PRow network, which is within a limited area. The two main public footpaths are further compromised in that their route now has to travel across a busy dual carriageway.

57. These roads split the landscape into legible individual parcels which are experienced by road users as they travel along these routes. The A419 dual

Figure 6: Preston Landscape Areas



58. The A417 dual carriageway is used mainly for regional traffic and is screened by maturing vegetation along most of its course across the parish. Most of the other routes are very minor rural roads where drivers are likely to be driving slowly and appreciating the views. These minor roads are also used by walkers. Some traffic links experience very high levels of traffic and sometimes congestion, and whilst traffic is a main detracting feature in the landscape of the parish, road users do experience and enjoy Preston’s rural landscape character. This is especially relevant for users of the A419 Ermin Street driving towards Cirencester where they can glimpse the the church tower of St John the Baptist Church in Cirencester.

59. The character of Cirencester is strongly informed by areas of open landscape which, through varying degrees of parkland and agricultural character, reach close to the town centre from several directions, principally from the west (Bathurst estate), the north-east (Abbey Home Farm estate) and the south-east (Preston parish & Kingshill Country Park)⁹. The largely unspoilt agricultural section of the parish serves this important ‘green wedge’ purpose, which is described by the Local Plan as follows:

‘The ‘green wedges’ and views of [Cirencester] Parish Church tower, are particular characteristics of Cirencester when approaching the town from various directions.’ (para 7.2.3)

60. In this context, Preston Parish lies at a critically important location. Its immediate proximity to Cirencester forms a major

constituent of one of the ‘green wedge’ approaches (particularly Area 4b). It also emphasises by contrast to the open views of the urban town itself, the importance of the parish as an open landscape setting to the largest of the Cotswold towns.

61. The approach to Cirencester from the south east on the A419/Cirencester Road/Ermin Way allows the viewer to orientate and visualise the location of Cirencester’s historic core, shown in **Figures 7**. The church tower is in the distance and is viewed over green fields. It increases in visual importance as one approaches Cirencester - it is a visual focal point that shows the centre of the town and helps the viewer identify where the historic core is.

62. Cirencester is approached by six principal roads. It is a well-established historic feature of the town that the church tower stands aloft above the roofscape and acts as a prominent landmark. The A419 Ermin Way is one of four that retains framed views of the tower in summer and broader views in the winter and in a similar manner to the Whiteway road to the north and the old Tetbury road to the west.

63. Ermin Way additionally forms a boundary to one side of a green wedge that visually connects Cirencester to the wider agricultural setting in a key view. It is a very well used road and therefore the sense of arrival is experienced by many.

⁹ Study of land surrounding Key Settlements

in Cotswold District: Update, October 2014.

Figures 7: Approach to Cirencester through Preston Parish from the south east showing the church tower (arrow) as a marker for Cirencester’s historic core





Policy 1: Preston Countryside and Landscape

Other than within the AONB, new development should where appropriate promote the following:

- i. Replanting non-native tree plantations with native broadleaved native species as part of the woodland succession planting;
- ii. Avoiding unsympathetic new woodland planting including new dense linear shelterbelts, particularly in character areas 4a, 4b and 5, which would enclose the character of the landscape at points where it is currently open;
- iii. Managing existing shelterbelts with selective thinning to retain native specimens and open up views below their canopies; maintaining dry-stone wall boundaries and restore any in disrepair;
- iv. Restoring historic hedgerow lines;
- v. Maintaining the existing network of open ditches and streams to ensure continuity of irrigation to fields and surface water management to grass and agricultural fields;
- vi. Protecting open views between buildings of Preston’s agricultural setting when viewed from the village main street (Witpit Lane);
- vii. Establishing a pedestrian link using the route of the old railway line to create a public footpath which connects the whole of the parish on a north/south axis;
- viii. Resolving footpath links across the dual carriageway to improve connectivity across the parish.

Design

64. Evidence paper *Design in Preston*, which was based on a consultation exercise that pre-dated the NDP, describes the features that contribute to Preston’s unique local character.

65. In the centre of Preston village is a conservation area. This is the oldest part of the village where the church, letter box, telephone box and village hall can be found. The conservation area stretches on the north side of the road from Church Farm to the Old Farmhouse and on the South side of the road from Preston House to Village Farm Cottage. This includes a number of listed buildings which are an important part of the village’s history. The conservation area and listed buildings are shown in **Figures 8**.

66. Local Plan policy EN2 requires good design that accords with the Cotswold Design Code. Policy EN10 sustains and enhances designated heritage assets, EN11 preserves and enhances the special character and appearance of conservations areas, and policy EN12 enhances the character of non-designated historic assets. This NDP policy and Design in Preston add local detail to assist in the delivery of these policies.

Figure 8: Preston Village Conservation Area Listed buildings and AONB

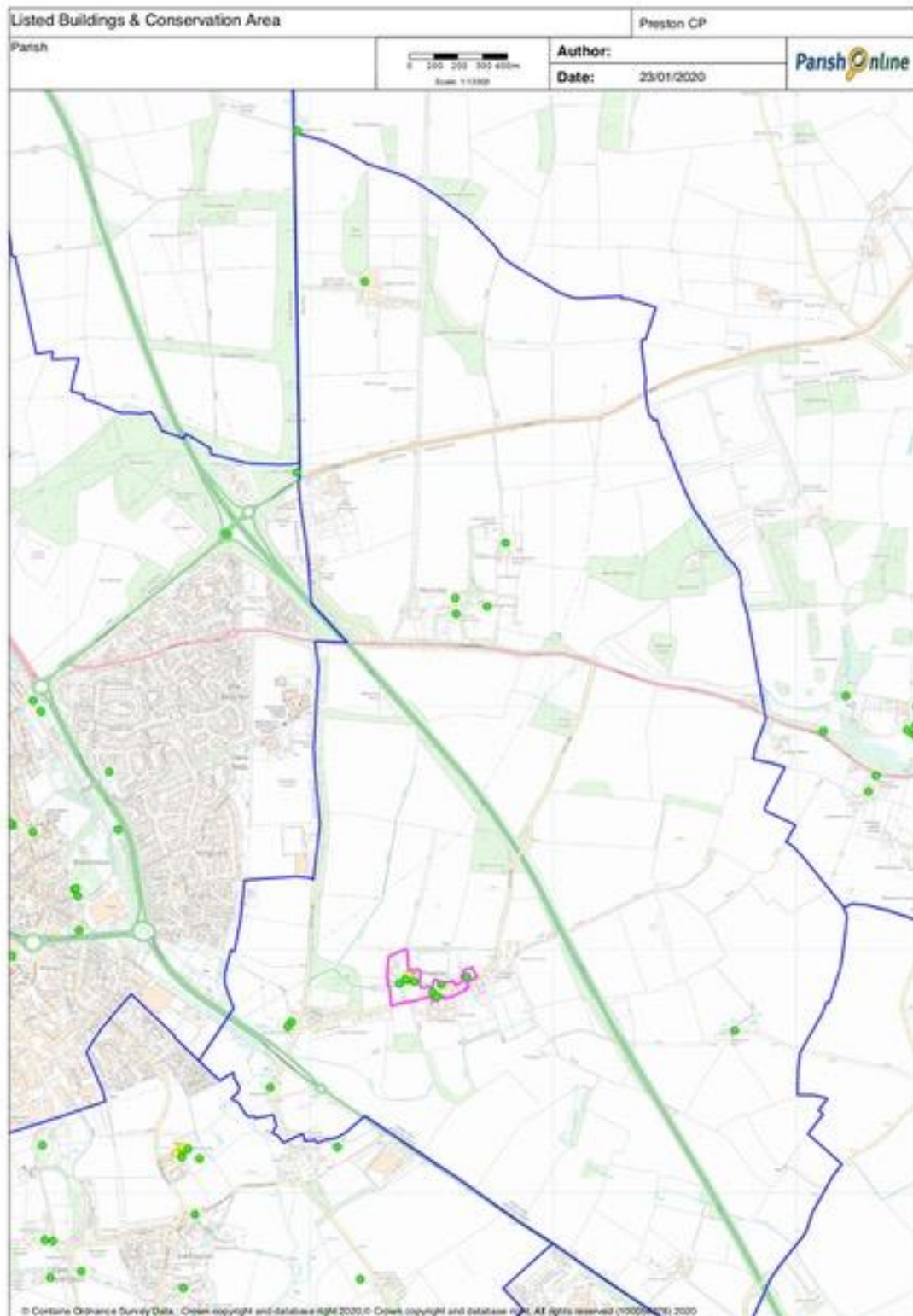
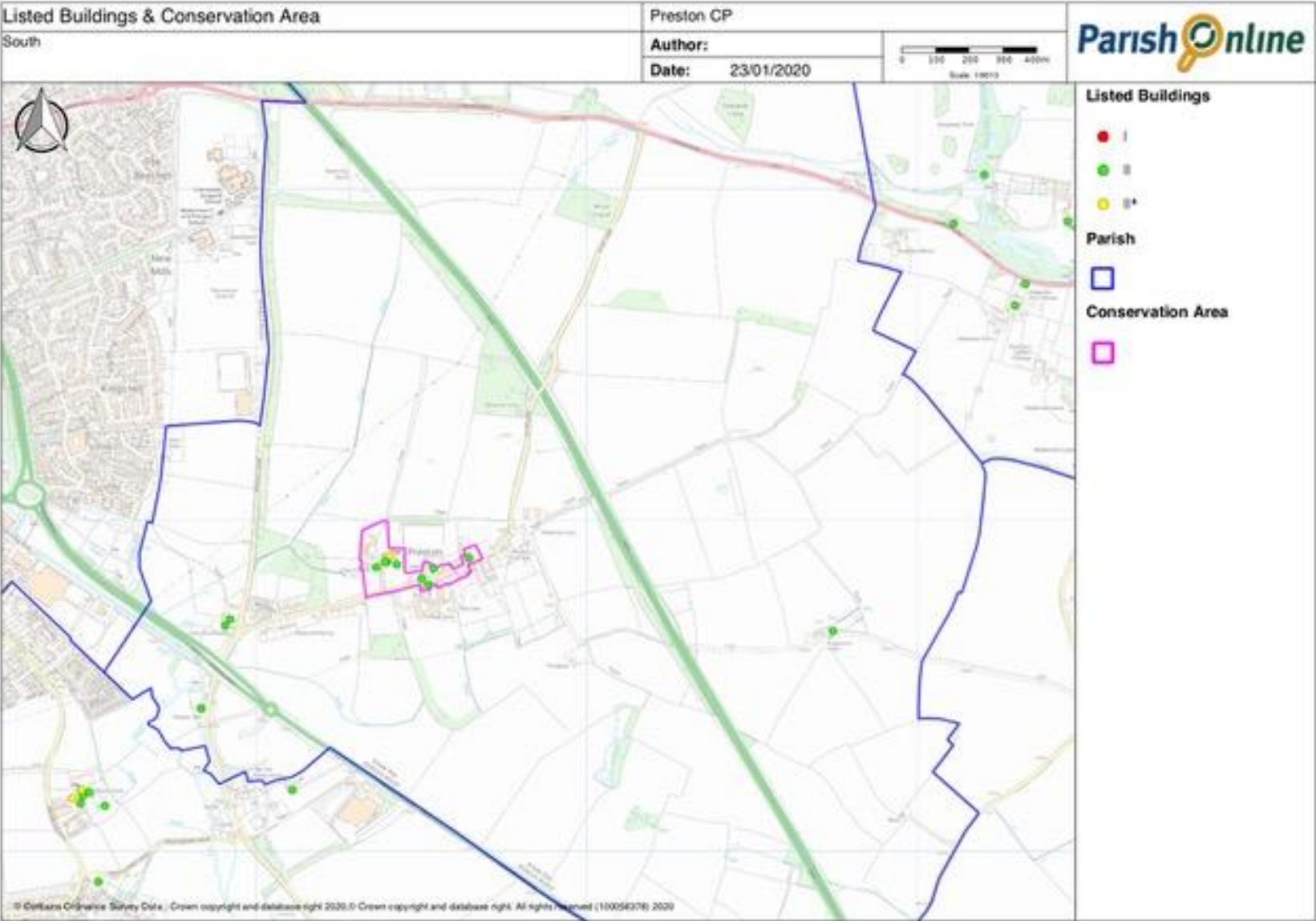


Figure 8b (south)



Policy 2: Design

- A. Proposals for new development, including extensions to existing buildings, and conversions of farm buildings, should be of the highest design standards in accordance with the relevant policies of the Cotswold District Local Plan, including the Cotswold Design Code.**

Proposals should have specific regard to the following conclusions derived from the Design in Preston Design Statement (2017):

i) Publicly accessible green spaces (such as the formal spaces around community infrastructure and incidental spaces such as grass verges) within the village built-up area should be retained if possible.

ii) Proposals should use locally characteristic building materials, for example Cotswold stone and reconstituted Cotswold stone for walling, roofing and timber for windows and doors, where appropriate.

iii) Properties should have high quality boundary features, such as hedges and Cotswold Stone walls where appropriate, particularly where these are visible from public vantage points.

Local Green Spaces

67. Neighbourhood Plans may designate land in their parish that is of particular importance to the community as Local Green Spaces.¹⁰ Local Green Spaces should only be designated where they are capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period and once designated take on the status consistent with Green Belts.

68. Two Local Green Spaces are designated (shown in **Figures 9 and Figure 10**): the Playing Fields and the Allotment.

Both are leased to the Parish Council by the landowner who has indicated her wish for them to remain in community use for the foreseeable future.

69. To be suitable to for Local Green Space Designation, a sites must be reasonably close to the community they serve; of local significance; and local in character. Both sites meet all three criteria.

70. Local Plan policy EN3 does not allocate local green spaces in Preston. This NDP policy adds two new Local Green Spaces under provisions of NPPF paras. 99-101.

Policy 3: Local Green Spaces

A. Local Green Spaces are designated at the Preston Playing Fields and the Preston Allotments as shown in Figure 11.

¹⁰ National Planning Policy Framework paras. 99-101.

Figure 9a: Preston Playing Fields

<p>ADDRESS: Off Kingsway, Preston, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5XA</p>

<p>OWNERSHIP Land owner: Mrs P M Chester-Master, Leased to: Preston Parish Council</p>
<p>MANAGEMENT : Managed by Preston Parish Council</p>
<p>SIZE IN HA. 0.5749 hectares</p>
<p>DESCRIPTION OF VALUE TO PRESTON COMMUNITY</p> <p>The Playing Field is the only public space in the Village that is available to residents for sports and recreation. There are two areas – the football field and the children’s play area.</p> <p>The football field is used by children and young people of the Village as well as occasional use by local football teams for practice.</p> <p>The play area was refurbished by the Parish Council in 2016, costing in the region of £10,000, and provides play equipment for the young children of the Village and surrounding area. The facilities are well used and include: swings, adventure play house, slide, jungle gym climber and multi-play climber.</p> <p>The Playing Field is occasionally used for Village-wide events.</p>

Figure 9b: Preston Allotments

ADDRESS: (Next to The Barn) Preston, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5PR



OWNERSHIP

Land owner and manager: Mrs P M Chester-Master

SIZE IN HA. 0.3463 hectares

DESCRIPTION OF VALUE TO PRESTON COMMUNITY

There are 6 Allotments on the site which are privately rented to local residents. This is the only facility of its kind available in the Village which are residents and, therefore, there is a great deal of support to ensure that it is retained.

Figure 10: Local Green Spaces – Allotment and Playing Fields



Employment Land

71. The vision exercise indicated that villagers wish to retain small businesses in the parish, and the business survey indicated that they intended to remain. Furthermore, the business survey provides evidence that these small businesses provide employment for people who live in the parish or very nearby. The community survey substantiated this conclusion and it appears that a good portion of Preston’s working population is employed locally, though there is some out-commuting.

72. The development plan supports the vision to protect local businesses in B class use and the Village Farm Units are identified as an Established Employment Site in the Local Plan under Policy EC2(EES25/Map 7). The Village Farm units are shown in **Figure 11** below.

73. Around half of the businesses in Preston are on individual sites, some of which are ancillary to residential uses, and it is therefore not possible or desirable to seek to prevent these economic activities from ceasing or reverting to purely residential uses.

74. However, there is scope to add detail to policy EC2 to protect the Village Farm Units employment area for the future. To do this, the NDP amplifies the policies in the Local Plan and NPPF by seeking to retain Class B uses in a flexible manner.

75. It would harm the overall viability of the Village Farm employment area if individual units were to be lost to change of use.

76. Permitted development would allow the change from Class B uses to residential uses under classes M, O, and P of the General Permitted Development Order (2015).

However, if units were to change use, the integrity of the employment area as a whole would be compromised. Therefore, the loss of individual units will be resisted were possible. In addition, compelling evidence will be required to justify that the overall estate can no longer serve an economic or commercial function before change of use to non-commercial or non-agricultural activities can be considered. This approach is in conformity to Local Plan policy EC2.

77. In addition, if individual Class B units were to change use to residential uses, it would be difficult to mitigate the conflict between the two. Residential amenity will most certainly be affected by ongoing noise, dust, odour and traffic generated in the estate, and it would be difficult to ensure that new residents would enjoy high quality domestic amenity.

Figure 11: Village Farm Units, Preston



Policy 4: Employment Land

The establishment of new, or the retention of existing small-scale businesses in the Parish will be supported where they comply with other policies of the development plan. Planning applications which would result in the loss of a small-scale employment site will be supported provided that detailed evidence is submitted to demonstrate that the site can no longer practically or viably be used for employment purposes. The evidence should demonstrate that the employment site has been actively and recently marketed for a period of at least 12 months.

Footpaths and Cycleways

78. Preston is well provided with public footpaths and safe cycle routes in the southern portion of the parish, as shown in **Figure 12**. These are discussed extensively in Evidence Paper Sustainable Transport. The system of footpaths around Preston clearly originates from the farming heritage. The paths link local villages and churches and provide access to Cirencester. In places they have been altered by new road building, but the basic system persists.

79. There is only one designated cycle path. This runs alongside the A419 from Dobbies Garden Centre, crosses the South Cerney Road and follows the Old Cricklade road as far as Tesco Supermarket. From there, a mix of cycle paths and roads leads into Cirencester. This is a shared foot/cycle path with no separation between the two modes of transport. The Bridle paths PB/13 provide cycle access to Harnhill and Driffield that was cut off when the A417 dual carriageway was built.

80. The community consultation event and the community survey showed that villagers valued their local walking and cycling opportunities and regularly walked for pleasure or to access the local shopping areas. The survey indicated that improvements to these networks would lead to greater use which is supported by development plan policy INF3 that encourage sustainable transport.

81. A member of the local walking group undertook an extensive survey of the condition of the local footpaths and cycle routes and this is described in the evidence paper. The foot and cycle routes from Preston to neighbouring villages, town and schools and those around the village used for leisure, were evaluated for their amenity value, condition, signposting and adequacy.

82. The current sustainable transport network is appropriate for the current number of Preston residents and visitors. However, should new development come forward, for instance that introduced more school age children or led to a greater use of the existing network, it would be appropriate to introduce improvements to the network to accommodate the increase in demand. New development should provide necessary improvements that have been identified as set out in Local Plan policy INF3.



Figure 12: Public Rights of Way and Cycle Paths



Policy 5: Footpaths and Cycleways

- A. Support will be given to proposals that improve the network of cycle ways, footways and footpaths in the parish.**
- B. Developer contributions will be sought where necessary to fund improvements to the existing networks as well as the provision of new connections, in particular where these have been identified in the Sustainable Transport evidence paper.**
- C. Projects to improve the network or provide new connections may also be funded through the Parish’s share of any CIL which may be due.**

List of possible projects to be the subject of developer contributions and/or CIL

- i. A new foot and cycle path between Kingshill Schools and the village/other residential development;**
- ii. Improvement to the crossing point on the South Cerney Road;**
- iii. Slowing of traffic on the A419 and provision of a pedestrian crossing;**
- iv. A footbridge over the A417 connecting the Harnhill Road;**
- v. Continuation of the village footpath around the corner into Witpit lane to connect with PF6;**
- vi. Establishing a pedestrian link using the route of the old railway line to create a public footpath which connects the whole of the parish on a north-south axis.**

The above list is not exhaustive and other projects may be added.

Community Infrastructure

83. As a small rural community, Preston must work hard to retain and build strong and positive social interactions. Critical to this is the ability to meet locally and to come together as a village. Evidence Paper **Community Infrastructure** illustrates how and why key community infrastructure is valued and also, how it is deficient.

84. Maintaining this infrastructure, shown in **Table 2**, is an ongoing process and the Parish Council and local volunteers work hard to keep it up to date and pleasant to use. However, as the survey shows, much of this infrastructure, particularly the village hall,

is heavily used and cannot sustain growth in demand.

85. Local Plan policy INF2 supports the provision of new community infrastructure and protects where possible against the loss of existing infrastructure. This NDP policy sets out how this policy should be interpreted in Preston.

86. Should new development come forward either within or near the parish that would lead to increased demand for these facilities, it will be necessary to ensure that capacity can be maintained to an acceptable level. What this means is that development proposals should carefully consider how the rise in demand for community infrastructure can be sustainably managed for the future.



Preston Village Hall



Table 2: Community Infrastructure in Preston

Necessary community infrastructure improvements	
Village Hall	The village hall is the most important community asset but it is too small for some activities and there is no room for expansion. There is also a need to continually manage and maintain the fabric of the building and there are no funds for this. Should any further development occur in the Parish, this village hall would not be able to accommodate the growth in demand and additional/new facilities would be required.
Playing field and children’s play area	The Playing field and children’s play areas are important for a sector of the community and should be retained and protected. Expiry of the lease in 2026 is a major threat and the Parish Council is taking steps to extend it. Future development, where it significantly adds to usership of either the playing field or children’s play area will need to make a proportionate contribution towards ensuring that the facilities are sufficient to meet demand. Assistance with securing the long-term lease for the land would be beneficial.
Allotments	The allotments are important to only a small sector of the community, however, some people place high value upon them. The Parish Council is seeking to secure their long-term availability. Future development, where this significantly adds to the demand for allotment space, could assist by providing long-term allotment space.
Other Facilities	Additional litter bins are needed at the village hall, playing fields, children’s play area and Witpit Lane. Additional dog waste bins are needed at the children’s play area, allotments and churchyard. Additional grit/salt bins are needed on Kingshill Lane, Witpit Lane and at the village hall.

Policy 6: Community Infrastructure

- A. Support will be given to proposals that improve the provision of community infrastructure, whether as new provision or improvements to existing provision in the parish.**

- B. Loss of existing community infrastructure described in the Table 2, or any new infrastructure provided over the course of the NDP, will not be supported unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:**
 - a. the asset is no longer financially viable, or**
 - b. considered necessary or of value to the community, or**
 - c. a suitable replacement can be provided elsewhere in the parish.**

- C. Any replacement provision should meet or exceed the existing benefit to the community of the current facility especially with regard to safety and accessibility.**

- D. Major Development proposals as defined in the NPPF should consider:**
 - i. How the development might give rise to increased demand for community infrastructure;**
 - ii. Options how the increased demand could be met;**
 - iii. Evidence that the community or Parish Council were consulted on the options and their views considered;**
 - iv. Provision of appropriate additional community infrastructure or support, as evidenced and justified by the consultation.**

Transport and Village Amenity

88. The Evidence Paper on **Transport and Village Amenity** concluded that whilst the survey evidence indicates a strong feeling amongst villagers that traffic speeds are too high and that traffic volume is a problem, the data supplied by Gloucestershire Police indicates that though there is speeding, it is generally within tolerable limits (less than a mean of 5 miles per hour over the posted limit.) Therefore, no management action is currently required to control the amenity impacts of traffic volume which can lead to noise or speeding, and which can lead to feelings of being unsafe.

89. It may be beneficial to address villagers’ concerns by putting in place speed monitoring signs or other means to remind motorists to be careful of the amenity of the village and other residents. New developments that would potentially cause significant increases in traffic volumes in the Parish should manage traffic speed and flow so that the 2018 baseline situation is not exacerbated in line with Local Plan INF3 (c). The 2018 police survey is a suitable baseline for consideration of traffic impacts.

90. Local Plan policy INF4 sets out provisions for highways safety in new development. This NDP policy sets out considerations for Preston parish.

Policy 7: Transport and Village Amenity

A. Where appropriate, development proposals that are likely to lead to an increase in motorised traffic in the parish, particularly at the Toll Bar junction, on Kingshill Lane and on the village high street, will be encouraged to mitigate impacts to maintain or improve upon the 2018 baseline with regard to:

- a. Traffic speeds;**
- b. Noise and vibration;**
- c. Conflict with other road users and feelings of safety.**

Appendix A. Visual Sensitivity Sub-Area commentary

<p>Area 1</p>	<p>Sensitive receptors to this sub-area are primarily the users of Abbey Home Farm and walkers on the Farm permissive footpaths. Views from these and generally from land within the Farm are not strictly public views. Other, less sensitive receptors include users of the Fosse Way and of the B4425 Akeman Street, as there are no PRoWs. Views from the Fosse Way are for the largest part screened by deciduous trees planted consistently along the road verge to the parish side. Views to the north from along the B4425 are more open as the verge is planted with fairly low hedgerows and sparse trees; however, due to the flat topography, views are limited by field boundaries on a low horizon. Notwithstanding that this part of the parish is designated as AONB, the value of the landscape in this area is heightened by the communal and educational facilities, and due to the fact that Abbey Home Farm is accessible to the public. Detracting landscape features in this area include the presence of low pylons along the B4425. The operations and visible paraphernalia within the Farm are intrinsically linked to the functions it performs and contribute to the character of this area. Changes to the landscape which result from developing the educational, horticultural, and communal offer of Abbey Home Farm, should continue to respect the agricultural character of their surroundings, and remain subject to the guidelines and overarching constraints set by the AONB designation.</p>
<p>Area 2</p>	<p>Sensitive receptors to this sub-area are primarily the users of the B4425 Akeman Street and London Road, as there is no PRoW. This area has a more intimate, discrete character and views from the south and west are mostly screened by structural vegetation - trees and hedgerows, with some limited detracting features. These are primarily linked to the recent development of the road and commercial development along Cherrytree Lane. There are panoramic views south of the B4425 (Akeman Street) which are very sensitive to any change, due to the road verge being mostly short hedgerows. The remainder of the sub-area is not in full view from other adjacent roads or from publicly accessible points. Due to the level of enclosure and topography, the area to the north of the A417 London Road may have some potential capacity to absorb a limited amount of new residential development in association with the prevailing agricultural use.</p>
<p>Area 3</p>	<p>The more sensitive receptors in this sub-area include the users of the two PRoW, of Witpit Lane and, to a much lesser extent, of the A417/A419. The course of both public footpaths has been severed by the dual carriageway and though crossing points exist, these are</p>

	<p>extremely dangerous to attempt on foot. Users of Witpit Lane have elevated views over this area of the parish when they approach the bridge. In terms of landscape detractors, the A417/A419 is a major intrusion in the landscape and, notwithstanding that the dual carriageway is flanked by maturing vegetation, the tranquillity in this sub-area is greatly affected by noise and traffic. Lighting impact of cars driving along the dual carriageway also detracts from the rural character of this area at night. Most of the landscape of the parish is effectively hidden from views to users of the dual carriageway and vice versa, both by the steep banks and the vegetation planted along the verges. Some views are available towards Witpit Copse. Views southwards from London Road are limited by rising topography. Any proposed changes that may affect the landscape in this area should strive to bring about positive enhancements to the area, including the restoration of historic hedgerows by sub-division of larger fields. There is an aspiration to achieve improved connectivity across the parish by resolving the footpath links across the dual carriageway. Any potential residential development in this sub-area would be remote and disconnected from the rest of the village. Other constraints to potential built development include the lack of connecting routes, the presence of traffic noise and the impact that this would have on the open agricultural character of this area. Views from along Witpit Lane overlook most of the area, which due to the sparse presence of vegetated enclosures present itself as a very open landscape that would not be able to accommodate development without the introduction of very robust mitigation measures.</p>
<p>Area 4a</p>	<p>Sensitive receptors include primarily the residents of the village. Other receptors are the users of both Kingshill and Witpit Lane and the PRoW. Views from Kingshill Lane are mostly screened by the extensive verge planting, whereas from the main route through the village there are open views across fields in the gaps between one group of houses and the next. The main public footpath runs on an east-west axis north of the village and intersects a footpath running northwards from the parish church. These footpaths offer panoramic views both of the surrounding landscape to the north and back towards the village. Detracting features of these key views include the presence of the A417/A419, and numerous pylons in the view. A key characteristic of Preston village is the way in which the rural landscape permeates into the village and its main road, with the presence of gaps between the houses enabling views out into the adjacent countryside. Any proposed development should respect this character of the village and of the</p>

	<p>Conservation Area and not inhibit existing views through to the open countryside.</p> <p>Any further built development, even if of suitable scale and design, would be difficult to accommodate without significant negative effect on the landscape character within this sub-area, and due to inter-visibility and the presence of important public vantage points, whose visual amenity would be negatively affected. It would be desirable to implement a succession tree planting plan to replant the woodland copse between Church Farm and Kingshill Lane with native tree species to screen views of the urban edge of Kingshill Meadow and to extend the shelterbelt along Kingshill Lane southwards. The openness of the landscape and the amenity of views from the PRowS and from within the village that this provides should be maintained and the agricultural setting to the village should be preserved in its current integrity. This is to ensure that the sense of identity of Preston is not further compromised by sub-urban residential development of a scale and density which would be incongruous with the historic open and loose grain of the village. For any proposed development to be considered appropriate in this sub-area, it would have to ensure that the open landscape character of the landscape around the village of Preston is retained, the visual amenity of PRowS is retained, the agricultural setting of the village is respected, and the historic open and loose grain of the settlement pattern is preserved.</p>
<p>Area 4b</p>	<p>Sensitive receptors include the residents of the village, the users of both the Ermin Way and Witpit Lane, and of the PRow network. Views southwards from the village are available because of the intermittent character of the settlement, these contribute importantly to the perception of the village within its agricultural landscape. This has been eroded by the presence of development to the south of the Ermin Way, which is very prominent from the village, including the recently completed Preston Leigh development. Public footpaths link to both east-west.</p> <p>In terms of landscape detractors, these can be summarised as large-scale development along the Ermin Way, both recent residential and less recent commercial, the trafficked A417 and the military base just south of the parish boundary. Approaching the parish from the south, the rural character of the landscape is obfuscated by the presence of the airfield and barracks located south of the Ermin Way. As one drives towards Cirencester, the historic town and the church the church tower appear in view, and the village, separated by the Kingshill Estate with its dense and urban character. The developed edge of Cirencester was</p>

	<p>already part of the picture from views along Ermin Way, however the new development has brought it further into view and reduced the extent of open landscape and the physical distinction between the distinctive rural character of the village and the urban densities of the new estate, which is even more prominent as is located on high ground. The large scale of buildings to the south-west of the A419 Ermin Way (Garden centre, Tesco, recent housing) also comes in view as one approaches the town, creating a strong contrast with the tranquil character of the agricultural fields and village to the north-east of the A419.</p> <p>The character of this sub-area is very rural in contrast to the largely developed landscape south of the Cirencester Road, this provides a visible strong edge to the built development. Any proposed development within this sub-area would be very hard to incorporate within the agricultural landscape without negatively affecting the openness and the setting of the village and the visual amenity of users of the footpaths.</p> <p>The character of Cirencester is strongly informed by areas of open landscape which, though varying degrees of parkland and agricultural character, reach close to the town centre from various directions, principally from the west (Bathurst estate), the north-east (Abbey Home Farm estate) and the south-east (Preston parish). The largely unspoilt agricultural section of the parish serves this important ‘green wedge’ purpose, which is described by the Local Plan as follows: ‘The ‘green wedges’ and views of Cirencester Parish Church tower are particular characteristics of Cirencester when approaching the town from various directions.’ (para 7.2.3)</p> <p>On the approach to Cirencester, the open landscape of this sub-area is then visually linked to Kingshill Meadow Country Park and the small area of parkland south of the A419, which is perceived as a whole entity. Any proposed development in this subarea would need to respect the importance of this open rural landscape and maintain a meaningful green wedge that continues to provide this setting function for Cirencester.</p>
<p>Area 5</p>	<p>Sensitive receptors are the users of the Country park, the village residents, users of Kingshill Lane and of the public footpath which runs east to west along the north of this area, and users of the A419 Ermin Way. Views of the Kingshill Meadow estate are prominent on the approach to Cirencester, although the presence of the recently established parkland along the road will create screening to this development in the longer term. For any proposed development to be</p>

	<p>considered appropriate in this sub-area, it would need to retain the open agricultural character of the landscape, ensure the identity of the village of Preston to be retained as a separate settlement and with its own countryside setting, maintain the visual amenity of PROWs, and ensure that the green wedge approach to Cirencester is retained. It would be appropriate if the existing country park along the Ermin Way is extended to the east.</p>
<p>Area 6</p>	<p>Sensitive receptors are users of A419 Ermin Way / Swindon Road, the lane to Siddington village and users of the public footpath within area 4b and village residents. Historically, Preston was an agricultural village surrounded by countryside and scattered isolated farmsteads. There has now been a significant amount of development in this area in recent years resulting in its agricultural setting being eroded both from the south-west and the west. Any further larger scale development to the north west of Preston Bridge i.e. adjacent to Tesco's development would have the potential to link built development from Dobbies Garden Centre to Cirencester. However, by nature of the low lying land and its close proximity to the River Churn, development is anticipated to be unlikely.</p>

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification no. (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification	Officer's recommendation	Reason for decision
PM1	Cover and elsewhere in the Plan	Amend plan period to: " 2020 – 2031 ".	Agree	Consistent with CDC's representation and required to meet the Basic Conditions
PM2	Policy 1	<p>Delete Clauses A – D and paragraph 61 of the justification.</p> <p>Amend Clause E by substituting the first phrase with: "Other than within the AONB, new development should where appropriate promote the following..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Retain as drafted. ii. Replace "... extensive ..." with "... unsympathetic ...". iii. Retain as drafted. iv. Retain as drafted. v. Retain as drafted. vi. Retain as drafted. vii. Retain as drafted. viii. Delete. ix. Retain as drafted. 	Agree	Consistent with CDC's representation and required to meet the Basic Conditions

		Delete paragraph 67 and Figure 8.		
PM3	Table 1	Transfer Table 1 to become Appendix A . Amend paragraph 54 to become: "The LCA identified several Landscape Areas in the Parish, shown in Figure 6 and Appendix A. The commentary on the Sub-Areas includes an assessment of how the landscape may affect the potential for and the constraints on development."	Agree	Consistent with CDC's representation
PM4	Policy 2	Clause A: Amend final phrase to "... in accordance with the relevant policies of the Cotswold District Local Plan, including the Cotswold Design Code." Clause B Amend to: "Proposals should have specific regard to the following conclusions derived from the Design in Preston Design Statement (2017):" Clause C: Amend to (i) . Clause D: Amend to (ii) . Clause E: Amend to (iii) . Include phrase "... Cotswold Stone walls, where appropriate , particularly where these ...".	Agree	Consistent with CDC's representation and required to meet the Basic Conditions

PM5	Policy 4	<p>Delete policy text and replace with: “The establishment of new, or the retention of existing small-scale businesses in the Parish will be supported where they comply with other policies of the development plan.</p> <p>Planning applications which would result in the loss of a small-scale employment site will be supported provided that detailed evidence is submitted to demonstrate that the site can no longer practically or viably be used for employment purposes. The evidence should demonstrate that the employment site has been actively and recently marketed for a period of at least 12 months.”</p>	Agree	Consistent with CDC’s representation and required to meet the Basic Conditions
PM6	Policy 5	<p>Clause B Delete: “This includes:”</p> <p>Remove items i – vi to a new table separated from the policy and headed “List of possible projects to be the subject of developer contributions and/or CIL”, commenting in the justification that the list is not exhaustive and other projects may be added.</p> <p>Add a new Clause C: “Projects to improve the network or provide new connections may also be</p>	Agree	Consistent with CDC’s representation and required to meet the Basic Conditions

		funded through the Parish's share of any CIL which may be due."		
PM7	Policy 7	Amend to: "... will be encouraged to mitigate impacts with regard to: a. traffic speeds; b. noise and vibration; c. conflict with other road users and feelings of safety."	Agree	Consistent with CDC's representation and required to meet the Basic Conditions
Other changes proposed by CDC	Throughout	Minor update to introductory text, to reflect the changes above, and that the status of the draft has moved on from 'Submission draft' to Referendum draft'.		Amendments that are not consequential in policy terms but required to reflect the status of the draft.