

Evidence Paper Employment Land

PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019-2036

REGULATION 16 CONSULTATION DRAFT

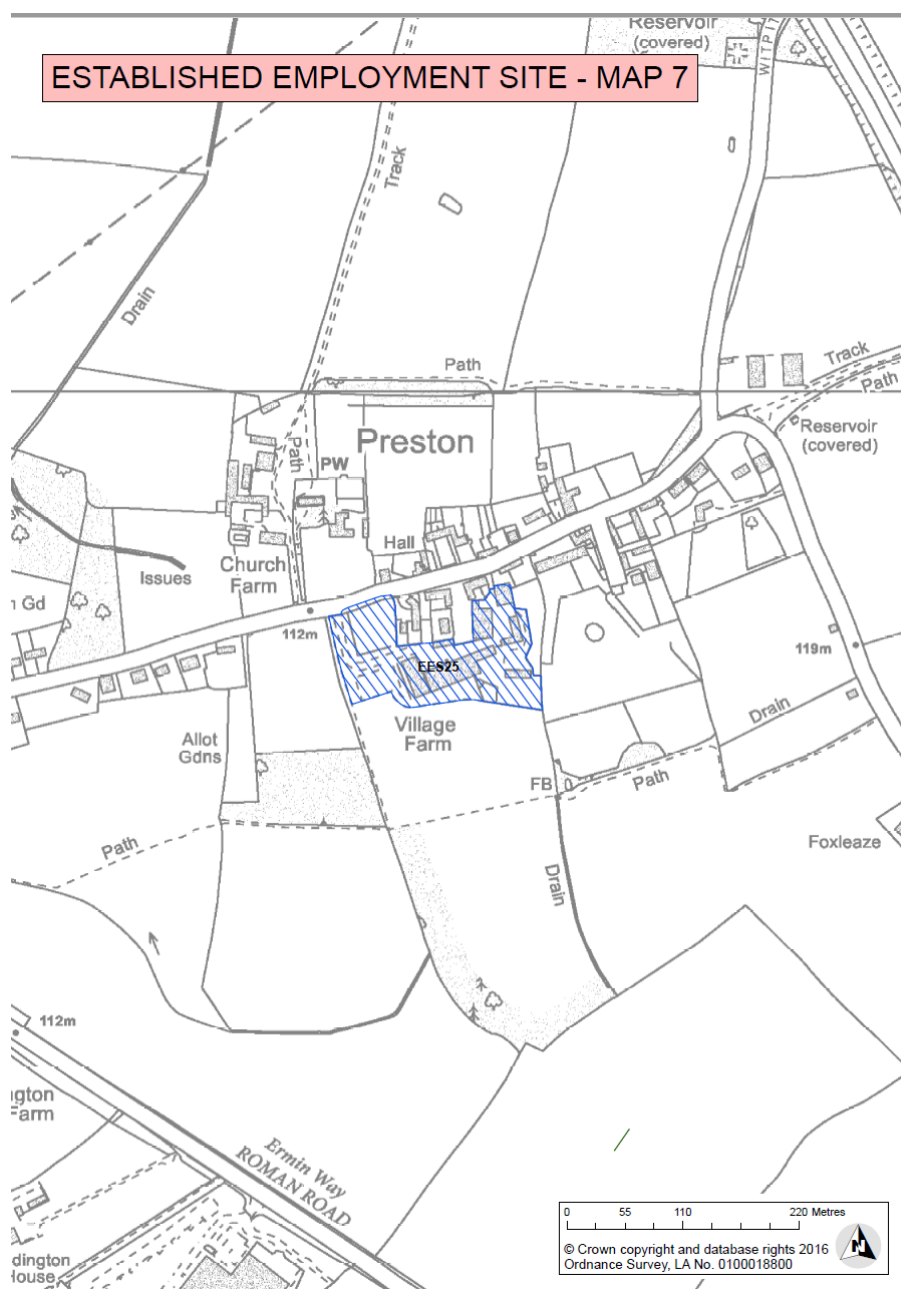
Prepared by Andrea Pellegram MRTPI

Introduction and purpose of this report

1. This report considers evidence surrounding the need to ensure that there is land and premises available for local businesses. It reviewed local evidence and the development plan context and proposes a policy to retain B1 land uses in the Parish.
2. The evidence derives from:
 - Responses by the community to the SWOT and Visioning exercises at the 26 September 2017 village NDP event.
 - An online business survey
 - The community survey.

Planning Policy Context

3. This evidence paper provides an overview of the planning policy context in support of the Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP or the NDP).
4. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. This evidence paper sets out the context for each policy area in response to this requirement.
5. The Development Plan and relevant reference documents for this policy of the NDP are:
 - a. National Planning Policy Framework (March 2019) (NPPF)
 - b. Cotswold Design Code
 - c. Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted August 2018)
 - d. "Design in Preston: the Preston Village Design Statement" (April 26, 2017) (design statement)
6. In addition to the farms, there are several small businesses in Preston parish, some of them rural, and some small commercial operations in the village. There are also some larger businesses such as Hunters Care Home and the Equestrian Centre. All provide local jobs and are valued by people in the village who wish to see that they can continue. There is a wish to protect the small business areas from change of use.
7. The NPPF para. 83 states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth of all types of business in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
8. Local Plan policy EC1 permits employment proposals where they maintain and enhance the vitality of the rural economy. Policy EC2 ensures that existing established employment sites will be retained for B Class employment uses unless there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes.
9. Village Farm Buildings in Preston village was identified as an established employment site in the local plan.



10. Whilst the NDP can seek to protect existing employment sites, the policy must be sufficiently flexible to allow change of use should the land not be required. The NPPF would countenance the loss of employment land to other land uses, but the revised wording indicates that this land should be retained in B class uses where suitable opportunities exist.
11. 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.
12. 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 B1 uses in a flexible manner.
13. It would harm the overall viability of the Village Farm employment area if individual units were to be lost to change of use. Permitted development would allow the change from B class uses to residential uses

under classes M, O, and P of the General Permitted Development Order (2015). However, to allow individual units to change use would compromise the integrity of the employment area as a whole. Therefore, the loss of individual units will be resisted. 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 allowed. This approach is in conformity to Local Plan policy EC2.

Nature of local employment

14. There are two main categories of businesses in the parish: independent businesses in single premises outside the main settlement, and small businesses in the Village Farm Units within the village.

15. Individual businesses

- Bibury - Landscape Contractors
- F J Huck Ltd
- Abbey Home Farm
- Hunters Equestrian
- Hunters, Barchester Healthcare
- Ivor Webb & Son Ltd
- DMH Cirencester Ltd
- Moore Allen & Innocent
- Quoin Developments Ltd
- Original Architectural Antiques Co Ltd

16. Village Farm Units

- Quality Office Supplies
- Hang Loose
- J J Hall
- H J Herbert Electrical Engineers
- Mark's Motors
- Dennis's Motorcycle Resprays
- Snap-on-Tools
- Salazar Designs
- Del's Motorcycles and Tyres
- Cotswold Plumbing & Heating
- iongiant
- The Drum Den
- Ford Flooring
- Edward Van Thiel Ltd

Vision exercise 26 September 2017

17. At the Visioning event, participants indicated that they wanted Preston to be a place where there were opportunities for small commercial enterprises to thrive, where villagers were able to work from home and where small businesses could start up.

Business Survey

18. An electronic survey was issued to all businesses and where email addresses were not known, leaflets were delivered to individual premises. The survey was succinct, limited to questions about the nature of the business, whether the business was satisfied with their premises, and where employees lived.

19. 6 surveys were returned out of 24 businesses: 5 of these were from the Village Farm Units (a 36% response).
20. The following conclusions can be drawn from the responses to the Village Farm Units:
 1. Village Farm Units is an established industrial area offering necessary local services;
 2. Most businesses have been there for at least 10 years and intend to remain;
21. Of the 22 employees, 17 (77%) live in the surrounding villages or Cirencester and only 4 (23% who all work for one business) commute a longer distance.
22. The remaining respondent was not satisfied with their location because of traffic and hopes to redevelop the site to facilitate a move to another location. This is beyond the scope of this NDP and this issue will not be discussed further.

Community survey

23. The community survey asked respondents to describe where they worked.
24. Question 6 asked what respondents' main places of work, study and leisure were.
25. Respondents' main place of work and study (total responses was 50)

	Place of work	Place of study
Preston	12	4
Cirencester	12	5
Gloucestershire District	1	1
Stroud District	3	0
London	3	0
Elsewhere	3	1
Other	2	0

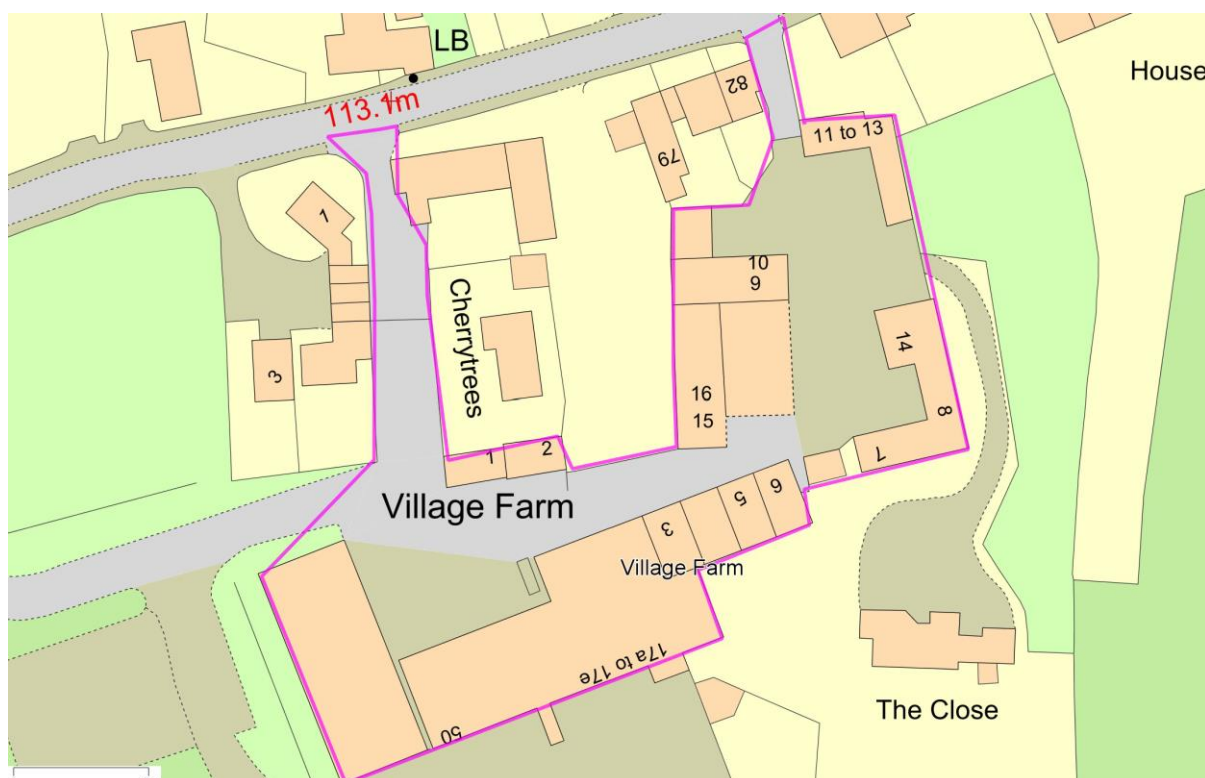
26. Question 6 shows that most respondents work and study in Cirencester or Preston.
27. Question 7 asks about travel to work and leisure to confirm the responses in Question 6. This analysis shows that in most respondents' households (32 out of 49), two people tend to leave the village to work.
28. Number of household members who travel out of the village for work and study (total responses was 49)

	Average number per household	Total Number	Number of responses
Work	2	53	32
Study	1	19	16

Conclusion

29. The vision exercise indicated that villagers wish to retain small employment areas, and the business survey indicated that where they existed (in the Village Farm Units), the local businesses wished 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.
30. The development plan supports the vision to protect local businesses in B1 and the Village Farm Units are identified as an Established Employment Site (EES25/Map 7) in the Local Plan under Policy EC2. 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.
31. However, there is scope to add detail to Policy EC2 to protect the Village Farm Units commercial area for the future. To do this, a policy would be required to amplify the local plan and NPPF approach to seeking to retain B1 uses in a flexible manner.

Figure 1: Village Farm Units, Preston



32. It is therefore proposed that a policy be included in the NDP that seeks to achieve the following:
33. In the first instance, change of use of individual units in the Village Farm Units will be resisted.
34. The change of use of the entire Village Farm Units will only be allowed where all units have ceased trading, or compelling evidence can be provided that the estate is no longer required to provide local jobs and services. Evidence will be required to demonstrate that the overall estate is no longer commercially viable and that the site cannot be reconfigured to provide attractive and modern employment opportunities.