

PENZANCE PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EVIDENCE STATEMENT - POLICY GI5 GREEN BUFFERS

Background

1. The Neighbourhood Plan area (Penzance Parish) is not a single community; in addition to Penzance town the parish includes a number of separate communities, the villages of Mousehole, Paul, Newlyn and Tredavoe, Heamoor and Gulval as well as the Eastern Green community on the eastern edge of the town.

One of the main outcomes of public consultation during preparation of the Cornwall Local Plan was the importance of retaining the separate identity of settlements in the Parish; this is reflected in Strategic Aim 9 of the Cornwall Site Allocations Development Plan Document (CSADPD), “To ensure the settlements of Penzance, Newlyn, Heamoor, Gulval ... maintain their individual and distinctive characters.”

Public consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan has reinforced this importance, which applies equally to Mousehole and Paul given that they are in close proximity to each other, and Newlyn, but are separate and distinct communities. .

2. Early discussions within the Neighbourhood Plan Community Link Group identified the relevance of Policy TV-2 in the Penwith Local Plan, protection of Open Areas Related to Settlements, as it applied to their villages. The policy was "saved" at the time but was due to disappear when the Site Allocations DPD was adopted, hence the wish to carry forward a similar approach in the NDP.

The basis for the designation of an Open Area Related to a Settlement was that “there is a strong relationship between the area and the form, character and environmental quality of the settlement”.

The factors taken into account, and considered sound by the Local Plan Inspector, included “an open break between settlements which serves to retain their individual identity and character”.

3. The Inspectors’ report for the Site Allocations DPD introduced the concept of a green buffer to ensure separation between the Trannack housing allocation on the edge of Penzance (Policy PZ-H4) and Gulval, as well as to protect a prominent hillside of comparatively high landscape value. The report also recognised the significance of the “distinctive hillside topography” that surrounds Penzance town and the villages within the Parish. “The semi-rural hillside landscape contributes to their setting and reinforces the separate identities of Heamoor and Gulval, in particular, towards the north” (Cornwall Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Examination Report 10 April 2019.)

4. Advice from Cornwall Council quite early in the process as well as later was that identification of settlement boundaries, or village envelopes, would be difficult for such a complex plan area, taking account of the need to include all the opportunities for infill and rounding off as allowed for in Local Plan and Site Allocations DPD policies. The purpose of a settlement boundary was also questioned, given that applying the criteria for infill and rounding off (see Policy 1 in the CSADPD and the Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note on Infill/Rounding Off) should result in a similar boundary being applied, albeit judged on a case by case basis. It was considered that, in protecting a gap between two settlements or the landscape setting of a particular village, a green buffer approach would be more effective by requiring the openness of the area in question to be maintained.

Policy approach

Following from this background, and the Green Infrastructure strategies in the Site Allocations DPD and the Neighbourhood Plan, the previously designated Open Areas Related to Settlements in the parish were reviewed, and those that related particularly to setting and separate identity of

each settlement were identified as potential green buffers. Other areas were identified by Individual communities as having the same importance to them.

The areas are complementary to Policy 1 in the Site Allocations DPD which provides for windfall development including “Infill development that does not physically extend into the open countryside or diminish a large gap that is important to the setting of the settlement;” and “Small scale rounding off that is appropriate to the size and role of the settlement and does not physically extend development into the open countryside;”

The proposed buffers do not include previously developed land within or adjoining settlements, which could be considered for development, and were identified in the context of sufficient land being identified to meet the housing requirement for the area to 2030 .

The policy approach is more focused on areas that are of particular importance to the identity or setting of a village, or the town, than the CSADPD policy or a settlement boundary, and seeks to protect their value and open character. It would apply equally to development that could take place outside the settlement, such as housing on a rural exception site for example, where that would have a harmful impact on setting or separate identity.

Areas Proposed as Green Buffers (shown on maps in Appendix 12 of the Consultation Draft Plan).

1. Posses Lane/Jelbert Way, Eastern Green

The Eastern Green community is dominated by traffic and commercial development, and connections with the natural environment are important. The proposed buffer is an open undeveloped area of small trees and low growing vegetation including bulrushes characteristic of the former marshland and hedgerows in surrounding fields.

Jelbert Way (east) and Posses Lane define the edge of retail and commercial development; the green buffer is important in screening and separating the residential community, including the proposed new housing site west of Posses Lane, from this development and from the heliport further to the east.

2. Churchtown, Gulval

The area to the west, south and east of Gulval Churchtown is predominantly open agricultural land which provides the setting for the listed Church, a prominent local landmark, and surrounding Conservation Area.

The area to the south provides a break between the settlement and Eastern Green and commercial development south of Jelbert Way (east).

The Churchtown settlement within its setting can be seen from the A 30 approach to Penzance as well as from the local road and footpath network.

The proposed buffer defines the distinct edge and identity of Churchtown and is important in protecting its separation from urban development to the south.

3. North of School Lane, Gulval

The proposed buffer north of School Lane is part of an open agricultural landscape which rises to Gulval Carn, part of the hillside topography, recognised in the CSADPD Inspectors' report, that “contributes to their setting and reinforces the separate identities of Heamoor and Gulval, in particular”.

It also provides the foreground to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which lies just to the north.

The buffer defines the northern edge of development and School Lane provides a distinct edge to the village between Churchtown and Gulval Cross; its western boundary defines the open approach to the village from Kenegie.

It is important in protecting the setting and rural identity of Gulval, including Gulval Carn, which can be appreciated from adjacent roads and the Churchway paths that cross it.

4. Kenegie Hill, Gulval

This area, to the west of Kenegie Hill, is a continuation of the rising agricultural landscape north of Gulval and south of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It defines the distinct edge and open approach to the village on the B3311 (St Ives) road as well as the boundary between development and the Rosemorrán river corridor north of Helnoweth Gardens. As such it is important in protecting the setting and rural identity of the village.

5. Gulval/Penzance/Trannack

This area, which is also identified as a green buffer in the Site Allocations DPD, is a prominent ridge of agricultural land between Gulval village and Penzance. It rises steeply from the western edge of the village and from the Chy an Dour river valley on the eastern edge of Penzance, and extends to the edge of the Trannack housing allocation.

Its southern edge is a prominent local landmark, visible from a wide area including the Cornwall Coast Path and the approach to Penzance; it is also visible from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the north and north west of Gulval and provides the foreground to views of Mount's Bay and St. Michael's Mount..

Protection of this area was a key issue in consulting on, and preparing, the Gulval Village Plan and in responses to public consultations on the Site Allocations DPD. The CSADPD Inspectors' report recognised its importance in maintaining the separation between Penzance, including the Trannack housing site, and Gulval. As well as protecting the separate identity of Gulval the area is important to the setting of the village within the Trevaylor/Rosemorrán/Ponsandane river valley. It has additional benefit in retaining open land that can absorb surface water, reducing the risk of flooding in the village below.

6. Lescudjack/Eastern edge of Penzance town

The eastern edge of Penzance is a steep, mainly wooded, slope which rises from the Chy an Dour river valley to the housing areas around Lescudjack Hill, a scheduled ancient monument. It is a prominent feature in the approach to, and setting of, the town, particularly from the east, and is visible from the coast path and other approaches to the town. .

7. North of Heamoor and

9. North of Boscathnoe Lane

Following from responses to public consultations and the CSADPD Inspectors' report, Cornwall Council recognised that the countryside north of Trannack Lane, Polmennor Road, Josephs Lane and Boscathnoe Lane should be protected from development and, consequently, removed three proposed housing allocations on the northern edge of Heamoor. The Council accepts that this area is "of the highest landscape value"; that Trannack Lane, Polmennor Road, Josephs Lane and Boscathnoe Lane "represent a natural northern edge to the settlement" and a "strong historic line between Heamoor and the open countryside"; and that intrusions north of that line have the potential to "create a settlement pattern and precedent in the area north of and between Heamoor and Gulval, that could potentially lead to conflict with the CSADPD Strategic Aims 8 and 9."

These green buffers define the distinct edge of development, including the proposed housing site at Trannack, and boundary between the village and open countryside.

The buffer north of Boscathnoe Lane would also provide effective protection from the potential creep of development down from Madron, where recent new build permissions and applications suggest that there is mounting pressure to develop the countryside between the two villages.

In addition to protecting the distinct edge of the village, and respecting the high landscape value of this stretch of countryside, the buffer will contribute to

- visual amenity, many of these fields rise steeply above the village, so development there would be highly intrusive visually;

- recreational amenity, the fields are criss-crossed by widely-used paths, including three key north-south green pathways and link paths;
- protection of the part of Poltair Woods that lies within the Penzance civil parish ;
- avoiding extra flood risk, given the steepness of the slopes combined with the extensive natural springs and other drainage issues;
- retaining the existing high level of biodiversity in a richly populated wildlife habitat.

8. Heamoor West

The purpose of the green buffer to the west of the allocated housing site at Boscathnoe is to define the edge of the village, including the allocated housing site, and protect the Lariggan river corridor which provides a natural boundary between planned development and open countryside.

Maintaining the open character of this area, including the frontages of the lane between Trengwainton entrance and Polteggan, will also contribute to the protection of Trengwainton Gardens, a national heritage asset, and the rural countryside around Lesingey Round, a scheduled ancient monument

10. Roscadghill/Nancealverne/Castle Horneck

This area includes the remaining parkland around Nancealverne and agricultural land around the Castle Horneck valley. It provides an open break between the western edge of Penzance, including a planned extension to the developed area, and the southern edge of Heamoor. It is important to the separate identity of Heamoor village.

11. Mount Misery/Newlyn Coombe

The mainly undeveloped Newlyn Coombe valley provides a significant break between the edge of Penzance, at Alverton, and the edge of residential and industrial development in Newlyn, including the allocated employment site at Stable Hobba. The area includes the prominent landmark of Mount Misery (Bluebell Dell) and other green spaces and extends south eastwards to the edge of Newlyn at Tolcarne. The river valley is also identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as an important biodiversity corridor and includes many areas of woodland. Its value as a green buffer is to protect the separate identities of Newlyn and Penzance.

12. South of St. Golder Road/Lower Gurnick Road

The proposed buffer south of St. Golder Road is on rising agricultural land that provides a backdrop to the housing development on the south western side of Newlyn Coombe. It includes an area of mixed woodland, which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The hillside topography around Penzance was recognised in the CSADPD Inspectors' report as contributing to the setting of the town and surrounding settlements. The buffer defines the southern edge of development and the distinct boundary between Newlyn and open countryside. It is visible from viewpoints such as Mount Misery, the Promenade and the approach to Newlyn on New Road and the coast path, as well as from a wider area across the bay, and can be appreciated from footpaths within the area. Its value as an open undeveloped area is its contribution to the setting of Newlyn; it also contributes to the gap between Newlyn and Tredavoe..

13. Newlyn / Tredavoe

The south western edge of Newlyn has been significantly developed over recent decades with a consequent impact on the open break between Tredavoe and Newlyn. The proposed buffer defines the boundaries of development in Newlyn and Tredavoe and the agricultural land between them to retain their separate identities. .

14. Newlyn / Paul

Gwavas Lane is a narrow rural route between Newlyn and Paul. The proposed buffer defines the boundary of development in Newlyn and Penlee Quarry and an area surrounding the lane which is part of the open break between the two settlements. Retaining the open rural character of Gwavas Lane, and the area between it and the Quarry site, is important to the separate identities of Newlyn and Paul.

15. Paul / Penlee Quarry

The proposed buffer north west of Paul includes the comparatively narrow gap between the village and the edge of the Penlee Quarry site and defines the boundary of this part of the village. It is part of the open agricultural landscape which surrounds the village and is important to its setting.

The purpose of the buffer is, therefore, to protect the separate rural identity of Paul village, given the possibility of future development of the Quarry site, and to protect the setting of the Grade 1 listed Church and the Churchtown Conservation Area which can be appreciated from the Churchway paths that converge on the village.

16. Mousehole Lane

Protecting the predominantly open character of the countryside between Paul and Mousehole is important in retaining their separate identities. The importance of this buffer has been identified by both communities and reflects continuing pressure for development, especially on the northern edge of Mousehole.

17. Mousehole North

Mousehole expanded in the 1970s on to land that rises steeply north and east of the village. The proposed buffer defines the distinct boundary between 1970s development and open countryside and includes agricultural land that continues to rise towards a high point in the local landscape. The buffer is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and includes an area of small enclosures, quilllets, which are characteristic of the field pattern around Mousehole. Retention of the open character of this rising land is important to the setting of the village and its Conservation Area.

18. Mousehole South and West

The proposed buffer defines the edge of the settlement to the west and south of the village centre. It is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and includes a significant area of small enclosures, quilllets, within their planted hedges along the coastal slope as well as more open agricultural land above the village..

Retaining the undeveloped character of this area is important in protecting the setting of Mousehole and its Conservation Area together with the distinct boundary between the village and open countryside.