

Allocation Statement from Preston Parish Council

The proposed housing target poses one of the biggest threats to the parish of Preston in its 1,000-year history. To its residents, it is nothing short of calamitous.

We are a distinctly rural community on the outskirts of Cirencester. Preston village is made up of around 90 homes with a Conservation Area covering the historic core. There's a thriving business park on Village Farm and the small village hall is a hub for the friendly and close-knit community.

We are faced with 170 new dwellings within the existing settlement plus the prospect of an additional 960 dwellings on fields to the south of Preston by 2043 and a further 1,550 thereafter. This would engulf the village and obliterate its unique identity.

These figures are on top of a development of 280 new dwellings on fields on the western edge of the village, which was granted outline consent in 2025.

People move to Preston - and stay here - because it feels safe, connected and human. We greet each other on the lanes, we support our local groups and we look out for our neighbours.

The proposals dictated by the housing targets would create a settlement so large and disconnected from the existing village that it risks becoming a separate town in all but name. Instead of strengthening our community, it would divide it.

Residents are already expressing fear, frustration and a sense of powerlessness. Many feel unheard. Many feel that the character of their community is being sacrificed.

The emotional toll is real: anxiety about the future, sadness at the potential loss of our village identity and anger that the Preston Village Neighbourhood Plan - created by the community, for the community - is being disregarded. That plan was meant to protect us and to ensure that any growth would be modest, sustainable and respectful of the place we love. The target proposal does the opposite.

The practical consequences are just as alarming. Adding thousands of extra cars to our narrow rural roads will bring congestion, noise, pollution and a serious risk to safety. Parents worry about their children walking or cycling. Older residents fear losing the peace and security they rely on.

With no clear, guaranteed investment in schools, healthcare, public transport, or utilities, the existing minimal infrastructure simply cannot cope.

This is not about resisting change. Preston has always welcomed new neighbours. But growth must be fair, proportionate and rooted in the needs and wishes of the people who live here.

A housing target on this scale is none of those things. It is overwhelming,

inappropriate and fundamentally out of step with the community's vision for its own future.

The people of Preston care about our village, our landscape, our safety, our wellbeing and our identity. We care about the generations who came before us and the generations who will come after. Preston deserves thoughtful planning, not reckless expansion.