

# Roche Parish Neighbourhood Plan

DRAFT Report



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# ROCHE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

**The Roche Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to ensure that future growth and development in the parish is shaped by local people to sustain and improve the quality of the community and its built and natural environment, in order to support sustainable development in the community. It seeks to protect the unique character of this Parish, and ensure that further development will contribute towards creating and maintaining a strong, sustainable community with high quality place-making.**

Neighbourhood Planning builds on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Cornwall Local Plan to give an extra level of detail at the local level. In accordance with NPPF (§184 and §185) the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared so as to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan (here the saved policies of the Restormel local plan). Regard has also been had to the policies of the emerging Cornwall Local Plan.

Such Neighbourhood Planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals. This is because unlike the parish, village or town plans that communities may have prepared in the past (as Roche Parish did), a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the Local Plan prepared by the local planning authority. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, and any other material considerations.

Therefore Neighbourhood Planning provides the opportunity for Roche Parish to not only set out a positive vision for how we want our community to develop over the next ten, fifteen, twenty years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people, but to put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning

permission for the development we want to see.

To help deliver this vision Roche Parish council took the proactive approach of initiating this Neighbourhood Plan and seeking to secure the consent of local people in a referendum. In turn, the community will also benefit from 25 percent of the revenues from the Community Infrastructure Levy (once Cornwall council have that in place) arising from any development that takes place in the Parish. This will contribute to Parish funds, enabling improved local services.

There was throughout the process of consulting upon and drawing up the Roche Neighbourhood Plan, recognition that under the legislation it can't promote less development than is proposed in the Local Plan, but should build upon its foundations. The Neighbourhood Plan that has now been created is pro-growth and consistent with the saved policies from the adopted Restormel Local Plan, and planned to be consistent with the emerging Cornwall Local Plan. The plan is pro-growth provided that such growth seeks to ameliorate any negative impacts of growth on the community and the Neighbourhood Plan sets out how to achieve this.

### WHY ROCHE NEEDS THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Rapid housing expansion in the village has taken place due to relatively cheap land with easy access to main roads and existing services. Roche's location in the county and lower than average house prices have made it an attractive place for young families and first time buyers to settle. Taken together this has doubled the parish population over the past 25 years.

Traffic growth is an even greater issue than the population growth. Roche is located on the B3274 which links St Austell in the south to the A30 and to Newquay and Padstow in the north. This channels substantial traffic through Trezaise, Roche and Victoria, acting as the main HGV route between the western communities of St Austell and the china clay

to the A30. It is also heavily used by aggregate HGVs from St Dennis and Whitemoor. The most recent traffic survey in the centre of Roche averaged one HGV every minute travelling through the village over a 24 hour period.

Planners have not always secured high quality place making and there has been too little in place to achieve high quality place making and design. Moreover, rapid growth has led to increased pressure on local services – for example, local school places are in short supply. Important green spaces have been under threat of unwelcome development. Traffic has increased substantially, yet safe pedestrian routes have not been achieved. The Neighbourhood Plan for Roche allows all these issues to be addressed (quality, location and quantity of development, safe pedestrian links, reduced traffic impacts, the preservation and enhancement of rural communities, historic buildings and features, and protecting key open spaces). It puts the community in charge of its own destiny.

***The vision for the future of Roche Parish is: 'Supporting a thriving Parish to meet local needs, and enhance its Character and Distinctiveness for a Sustainable Future'.***

#### ABOUT ROCHE PARISH

Roche Parish is a civil parish in mid-Cornwall, on the northern edge of the China Clay communities. There were 1592 dwellings in the parish according to the most recent (2011) census and the population was 3381.

The largest settlement by far is Roche village itself. South of Roche but connected to it is Trezaise, a primarily linear community extending from Roche along the main road south. Half a mile north of Roche village is the settlement of Victoria where Roche rail station is situated along with some housing and services (pub, café) but chiefly business prem-

ises – including some large retail units along the old A30, the Victoria Business Park, and most recently the Cornwall Services development on the new A30 junction. The new A30 dual carriageway intersects the northern edge of the Parish, with a junction and services just east of Victoria.

Roche Village itself is located 6 miles from St Austell on the south coast and 12 miles from Newquay on the north coast. The village gets its name from a granite outcrop east of the village, with Roche being the Norman-French word for rock. On top of Roche Rock is a ruined chapel (dedicated to St Michael).

The parish church of St Gomondas/Gonandus (Fig 1.2), is situated on a vantage point overlooking the main body of the village; with the scheduled Chapel on Roche Rock, it is one of the principal focal points in a much wider area. It is a grade II\* listed building, with a medieval tower, but with most of the surviving fabric and character dating from the restoration of 1890 by the great Victorian church architect J.D Sedding, Associated with the Old Rectory to the north, linked to the church through a formal and informal landscape in the style of a mini Country House and Park, the group stands symbolic of the rich history of the village, and of its rich heritage of both designated and undesignated historic buildings and sites.



**Figure 1.2 - Roche Parish Church**

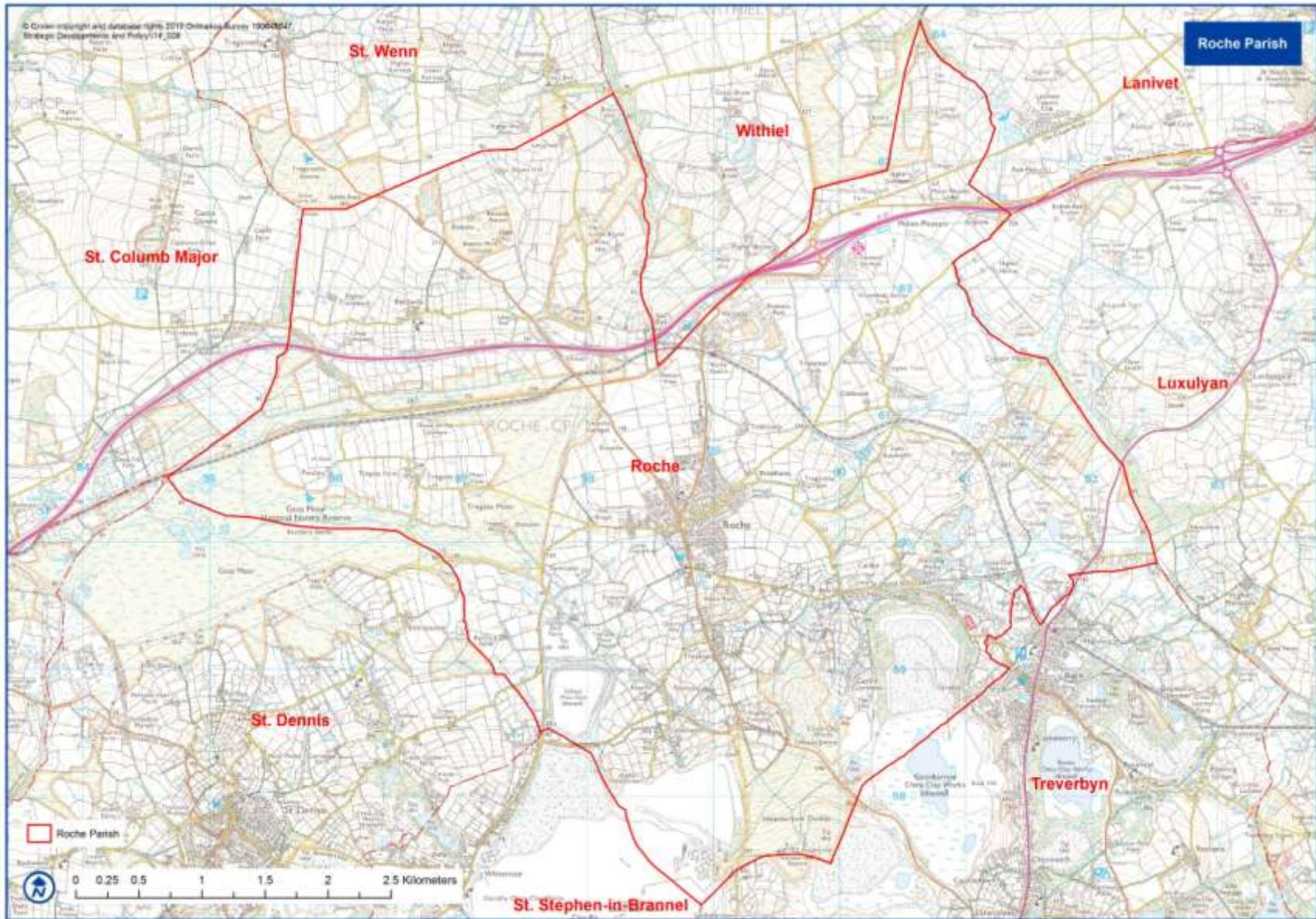


Figure 1.1 - Map of Roche Parish

Because over the past 25 years the village has more than doubled in its population, it has expanded its housing beyond the traditional limits of the village. This growth was referenced in the St Austell, St Blazey and China Clay Area Regeneration Plan Guidelines for Transformational Development Projects [Planning Future Cornwall Regeneration Plan] ref

***“During the 20 years between 1991-2011 there has been a 28% growth in housing across Cornwall but many of parishes within the plan areas have far exceeded that average. The Parish of Roche has had a 75% increase in housing stock...It is important that new development delivers transformational change and isn’t solely focused on those areas that have historically taken the majority of growth.”*** Page 10, para 4

Since then, however, growth in Roche has actually accelerated. The number of completions and commitments since 2010 alone in the Parish is 393, with more than half of these in Roche Village and Trezaise. As a result, the village has had to cope with substantial negative impacts: including the loss of some significant views of Roche Rock from the heart of the village through unsympathetic development (Fig 1.3), a shortage of school places such that siblings of local pupils have been unable to gain places and are having to be taxied to other schools, and substantial traffic growth.

Current transport links to the village consist of easy access to the A30 trunk road to the north, a branch line railway station at Victoria which connects with Newquay to the North and Par (on the main line) to the south. There is an hourly bus route (the number 27, operated by FirstGroup) directly connecting with Bodmin, Truro and to St. Austell. Regular but in-direct bus routes to Newquay and other destinations are also available.

The road through Trezaise, Roche and Victoria (the B3274) forms one of the primary links between St. Austell and the A30 (and to Newquay), a fact that has generated substantial traffic through the settlement, with ap-

proximately one HGV through Roche every minute on average. Trezaise and Higher Trezaise forms a linear settlement along the main road south of Roche and comprises a sporadic extension of the main village.



**Figure 1.3 - Modern housing developments have been allowed to encroach on Roche rock**

They are particularly impacted by the heavy fast traffic (Fig 1.4), and Higher Trezaise in particular is badly provisioned for pedestrians and dangerous for cyclists and other vulnerable road users due to lack of footpaths along the narrow, twisting but heavily trafficked fast carriageway.



**Figure 1.4 - Heavy traffic through Trezaise**

In contrast to Roche village, Victoria has long been primarily an industrial/business/retail area. There are however a range of community assets with the pub/hotel, cafés, petrol station, and some housing. Alongside are out of town retail units along the old A30, mostly quite dilapidated and in some cases empty. The modern business estate in contrast is thriving. Just down the road, the new Cornwall Services site has recently opened, adding further facilities (food outlets, coffee shop,

newsagent, indoor play and a planned hotel). Victoria sits north of the railway line and the Victoria Road rail bridge – south of which there is a distinct green gap separating Victoria from Roche.

Victoria Road, which links Victoria to Roche Village, takes heavy traffic but is narrow and has no pavement for most of its length. This is highly dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists moving between the two settlements to access work, shops, and the railway station.

Besides the village of Roche and Trezaise, and the business orientated developments around Victoria (which provides the majority of local employment), the Parish is largely rural in nature, with some small hamlets, and scattered small groups of buildings and individual properties, many agricultural. To the north-west is the Goss Moor and Tregoss SAC. To the east the Parish borders the settlement of Bugle. The rural hamlets are attractive and little impacted by recent development, and include some fine well preserved stone built properties of all sizes.

Although its industrial past was an important element in shaping the village and parish, in contrast with other clay parishes, the settlements and landscape have not been hugely impacted by china clay mining and tipping – much of the medieval field structure remains, with tipping confined to the southerly boundaries.

## CHARACTER OF ROCHE VILLAGE

Housing growth in the Parish has been, and is expected to continue to be, predominantly focused on Roche Village, although there have been small developments in Trezaise, and extensive business developments in Victoria (where there is opportunity for regeneration through mixed development, and extension of the business park). Given the focus of housing growth in Roche village, and a history of unsympathetic large scale development, it has been important to examine and understand the character of the settlement in

order to inform plan making and development management going forward.

Roche Village was always a churchtown – an ecclesiastical, administrative, marketing and service centre rather than overtly an industrial or commercial settlement. There was certainly an industrial element in the population (the terraced housing in Tremodrett Road and Chapel Road was reputedly built for clay workers), and much of the economic prosperity and employment here was linked to the dominant china industry. However the history of numerous smithies, wheelwrights, saw pits, workshops and shops also clearly served a thriving agricultural population, and this is reflected in its character today.

The population of the village has always been a mix of agricultural (including the part-time smallholders, also active as industrial labourers and carriers), commercial and what was termed in 19th century trade directories as ‘private’ or ‘gentry’, which included Anglican and non-conformist clergy, school teachers, retired businessmen and professionals. This historic range of people, of uses of buildings, of scales of wealth, all still informs the very varied character of the village today – very different in character from many of the ‘industrial’ villages of the Hensbarrow area.

Historically there were three main distinct areas to the village. First was the churchtown at the top of what is now Fore Street, set amid its medieval landscape, with church, rectory, large farms and Inn; second was the lower town, with shops, houses, cottages, smallholdings and chapels; thirdly, and joining the two is the late 19th century rebuilt commercial core around the central road junction (and spreading up Fore Street). These divisions are to some extent still maintained and visible today, preserved in part by the Local Plan development boundary and other designations, and by the ability of the generously scaled plots and open, low density grid of the early 19th century to absorb later development. Only in recent years has housing spread beyond this grid and the historic limits of the settlement, and encroached upon virgin

green-field land, the remnant open fields of the medieval landscape (Fig 1.5).



**Fig 1.5 - Roche is set within the remnants of a medieval field system**

The historic village was spread over a relatively wide area, but densities were low, for the most part. The most striking characteristic of Roche is that there are very few tightly packed terraces and buildings away from the central crossroads. The village is mostly made up of individual, detached buildings standing in good sized, often very generous plots. The total number of buildings and population was not, therefore, large. However, the scale of recent development in and around Roche has been substantial compared to its size; hundreds have in the last few decades turned into a population of some 3000 and growing - the size of a small Cornish town.

As a result, and on the positive side the range of shops and facilities in Roche has remained quite large, including a Co-op store, butchers, newsagent/general store, grocers, post office, beauticians, two pubs, takeaway food shops, sports and recreation grounds, village and church halls, Infant/Junior school, various

clubs and associations and a large modern GP's practice.

Despite this concentration, the negative impact of the main road running through the village has had the effect of creating a sense of a lack of focus in the townscape and downgrading the appearance of many of these shops and facilities. The traffic, and the engineering and management measures that have been put into place to control it have had a negative effect on the character and appearance of the village core. The historic 'square', has become little more than a token roundabout prioritising traffic over pedestrians (Fig 1.6).



**Figure 1.6 - Roche's historic square has been reduced to a roundabout**

The amount of HGV traffic causes considerable loss of quality of life, and regular congestion in the square and at the Harmony Road junction in particular, as well as severe safety issues for residents – especially through Higher Trezaise and Trezaise where footpaths are sporadic; and along Victoria Road (which is narrow and has no footpath linking the village of Roche and its services to the railway station and the employment centre). Traffic has seriously eroded the character of the settlement.

The main road is, unfortunately, what most people see and know of Roche, but there is much else of often high quality, both of individual buildings, and whole areas and street-scapes. There are distinct sub-areas with discernibly different characteristics, much of it scarcely touched by the noise and pollution of the through-roads (Fig 1.7). These areas do sometimes merge (Fore Street in particular

acts as a link between the churchtown and the lower town); sometimes there is a quite abrupt transition, a matter of yards, from one to the other (in appearance, in the types of buildings, in the levels of noise and pollution – as between Fore Street and Tremodrett Road or Victoria Road and Chapel Road).



*Fig 1.7 - Roche has distinctive suburbs often characterised by high quality individual buildings*

The Roche Design Guide (appendixed to the Neighbourhood Plan) describes these character areas of the village in detail, drawing on the work of the Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative report on Roche village(2005), commissioned jointly by English Heritage, Cornwall County Council and the former Restormel Borough Council.

**A key aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to encourage and support the protection and enhancement of these qualities and identity.**

## SECTION 2: POLICIES

The Neighbourhood Plan for Roche Parish has been extensively consulted upon amongst the local community and clear policy recommendations have emerged through this process. Detailed evidence gathering has taken place and this has been reviewed by the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Plan's vision has been developed through extensive community consultation and evidence gathering. This has included three full door to door surveys, two consultation events, and targeted surveys of businesses, young people (primary, secondary and tertiary), and the Molinis traveller site.

The clear wish of the people living in the Parish is to secure and enhance the quality of life alongside encouraging new opportunities for growth in ways that do not undermine the character and distinctiveness of the landscape and historic settlements. This will be achieved by:

- Allocating sites to meet the evidenced local housing need identified in the draft Cornwall Local Plan and local survey;
- Supporting road schemes to take through traffic out of Roche and Trezaise, enabled by additional housing growth and economic development contingent on this being achieved;
- Supporting sensitive economic growth, notably mixed use re-development at Victoria, subject to unacceptable traffic impact on Roche being avoided;
- Protecting Open Spaces and Wildlife species and habitats – in particular designating key sites as community open space; maintaining a green gap between Roche and Victoria; opposing inappropriate development outside the development boundary; protecting Roche Rock from encroachment; protect wildlife species and habitats by directing development to less sensitive sites and retaining important features of those sites; and

designing wildlife enhancements into all new developments at the earliest stage.

- Avoiding loss of local services, and supporting improved pedestrian linkage between Roche Village and Victoria, and between Roche Village and Higher Trezaise;
- Taking a design led approach to ensure that future development enhances character and distinctiveness.

The Plan has taken full account of existing policy guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the saved policies of the Restormel Local Plan and emerging policies of the Cornwall Local Plan. All of the policies in this Plan have been designed to support and complement these wider national and county policies, and should be read in that context.

### A: HOUSING NEEDS AND ALLOCATIONS

Policy background and objectively assessed housing need.

Roche Parish has been subject to very rapid housing growth since 1991 (the great majority in Roche Village). According to the ‘St Austell, St Blazey and China Clay Area Regeneration Plan Guidelines for Transformational Development Projects [Planning Future Cornwall Regeneration Plan]’ (page 10, para 4)

***“During the 20 years between 1991-2011 there has been a 28% growth in housing across Cornwall but many of parishes within the plan areas have far exceeded that average. The Parish of Roche has had a 75% increase in housing stock...It is important that new development delivers transformational change and isn’t solely focused on those areas that have historically taken the majority of growth.”***

The community consultations for this plan support this concern to take a more measured approach to further growth and deliver transformational change, ensuring in particular that further development should address local housing needs (in terms of quality, mar-

ket type, and location), and only be supported if policies address the need for sufficient school places; mitigate traffic impacts; provide suitable play and recreation facilities; protect important green spaces, views and historic areas; and have the support of a well thought through design code and protection of historic character areas.

At the start of the Neighbourhood Plan process (September 2014) advice from Cornwall Council suggested that (taking the Roche Parish 'share' of the then China Clay area draft Cornwall Plan housing numbers) the housing needed in the Parish in the plan period 2010-2030 was in the range 150 to 300 (the higher number recognising that Roche is one of the larger China Clay area villages and the range of facilities within it).

At that time we were informed by Cornwall Council that 240 homes had already (September 2014) been built or permitted in Roche Parish in the Cornwall draft local plan period 2010-2030.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group decided to take the higher 300 figure as the starting point for consultations for a number of reasons:

- The higher number would ensure we fully met the evidenced need
- The higher number would cover an increase if required in the Cornwall Draft Plan by the inspector, so the neighbourhood plan would remain up to date
- As the lower end of the range had already been exceeded, we wished to allow further organic growth to meet local need

That left a residual requirement (on our 300 home figure) of circa 60 more homes when we started neighbourhood plan consultation. This formed the basis of the allocations discussed in the various consultation stages.

However in November 2015 we received updated figures from Cornwall Council on both delivery and the updated housing numbers in the draft Cornwall local Plan (which take account of the inspector's recommendation for

an overall increase for the Cornwall Draft Plan).

On Tuesday, 17th November the Cornwall Council Planning Policy Advisory Committee had received a report which set out proposed revisions to the Cornwall Draft local Plan ("Appendix 1: **Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies** - Proposed changes for consultation 2016"). In this the revised China Clay Area housing numbers for the draft Cornwall Local Plan are set out. In addition the paper suggested allocations to the major china clay area settlements, plus a residual for the remaining clay parish areas. Although the Committee decided not to make the specific allocations (on the basis that the Cornwall Plan is not elsewhere specifying numbers for rural communities, only Cornwall's major towns), the paper does nonetheless show the pro-rata share for Roche of the latest draft Cornwall local Plan housing figures – 210 new homes in the 2010-2030 emerging Cornwall Local Plan.

The paper also shows that, on the latest figures, in the new Cornwall Plan period 2010-2030 the number of completions and commitments in Roche is already 393 (November 2015 figure). Of this figure, as of November 2015 58 are approved but not yet complete. As the paper presented in November 2015 makes clear, this means Roche has notionally exceeded its pro-rata share already by 183 homes – in contrast to other clay communities and indeed Cornwall as a whole.

This is in contrast to the draft Cornwall Local Plan policy position: The Local Plan policy is clear that "***New development should provide a sustainable approach to accommodating growth; providing a well balanced mix of economic, social and environmental benefits. This should maintain the dispersed development pattern of Cornwall and provide homes and jobs in a proportional manner based on the role and function of each place.***" (***Draft Policy 2 - Spatial Strategy***),

However the figure of 393, of which 144 were completed in the last year to November 2015, is misleading: The majority (116) of the 144 latest consents are lawful use certificates for

residential caravans that have been in situ for at least 10 years (to gain the lawful use) at Minorca Lane, issued as part of the planning regularisation of that community; so although they are new consents from a planning perspective, they are not really new houses. These still form part of the planning figures but the Neighbourhood Plan has taken this information into account when making decisions about housing need in the plan for Roche.

Therefore the number of new homes completed or permitted so far in the new Cornwall Local plan period is taken for the Neighbourhood Plan purposes as 277. This is still 67 in excess of the calculated pro-rata share for Roche above.

On this basis, but recognising the need not to 'freeze' housing in the Parish so that further needs are met, the decision was taken by the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to commit to allocations for up to 50 more homes in the plan period (revised down from 60 in the earlier consultations in recognition of further completions and permissions since the September 2014 figure).

This means that taking completions and permissions to November 2015, and the allocations proposed in this plan (sites A, B and C below – policy A1), the Neighbourhood Plan proposes allocations that will allow the parish to deliver 327 homes (discounting for the lawful use certificates) in the draft Cornwall Local Plan period to 2030 plus 'windfall', compared to its 210 pro rata share. In addition, Policy B1 and B2 make a further ***conditional*** allocation for 150 homes, and we expect continued low levels of 'windfall' permissions.

## POLICY A1

### Roche village

The plan establishes a new settlement boundary for the village of Roche, based on the boundary established by the former Restormel Borough Council but incorporating the allocation of sites A, B and C, sufficient for around 50 further houses covering the Cornwall Plan period 2010-2030 (Fig. 2.1)

(i) Any development outside the Roche development boundary within the Neighbourhood Plan area will normally be refused (see also policy A4). Exceptions may be made for:

- new agricultural workers buildings where a clear case of need has been established and subject to suitable controls;
- the redevelopment of existing previously developed land;
- the conversion of agricultural buildings subject to evidence that such buildings are structurally sound and capable of conversion;
- a replacement dwelling that is not materially larger than the original dwelling;
- development comprising 100% affordable housing which meets an evidenced local need;
- development which strictly accords with policy B2.

(ii) Development of Sites A,B and C will only be supported provided that :

(a) Site A: The proposal comprises 100% self-build plots.

A proposal for less than 100% self-build will only be supported if:

- it is demonstrated that 100% is unviable; and
- any proposal provides for a minimum of 40% affordable housing and/or Starter Homes.

(b) Site B & Site C: Any proposal should include at least 20% self-build plots

(iii) Small scale infill development and development on previously developed land within the settlement boundary will be supported where such development conforms with other policies in this plan;

In all cases, designs of high quality and sustainability that enhance their setting will be required. In the case of Sites B and C: Each site should be developed in two equal phases, the second phase commencing only

### **after the completion of the market housing built in phase 1.**

#### Policy Justification

The new sites allocated in this plan were preferred in the community consultation over alternative locations. The sites themselves are available and developable, with the land owners indicating that they would wish to bring them forward in whatever form and timing is proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan. These sites are supported by the Sustainability Appraisal and the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan by AECOM. Alternative sites were considered around the village, including all those put forward to Cornwall Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Appraisal. The land owners were contacted, the Neighbourhood Plan process and our thinking explained, and opportunity given to make representations. The sites were also consulted with the local community. The selected sites were considered the most sustainable, as well as receiving community support.

- 78% believe Sites B and C are natural village locations for growth of Roche village.
- Of the sites proposed in the SHLAA, Site A was both the most popular site and the least unpopular site.

It should be noted that the parish has a history of small infill development (single properties, renovations, conversions) and we expect that to add a small number of further homes in the plan period, typically a handful each year, and this is reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan policy.

As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan ensures sufficient plots are available to more than meet the Parish's share of the housing numbers for the clay communities in the Cornwall Draft Plan set out above.

The policy states the larger sites (B and C) should be developed in two phases over the plan period, to ensure a supply of new homes through the plan period.

The policy supports a substantial proportion of self-build plots. We received strong sup-

port for self-build plots as these provide an affordable route onto the housing ladder – in the January 2015 community survey 77% (231) felt that land should be provided for self-build plots.

This is a greater priority locally than social rented housing, since our evidence was that although there is a waiting list existing stock turnover broadly meets local demand, and recently built affordable homes have struggled to find local tenants. Ocean Housing (the largest local Housing Association) explicitly told us they do not wish to pursue affordable developments in Roche due to low demand (notwithstanding the numbers on the housing needs register). Similarly, Cornwall Council told us they did not wish to promote their SHLAA land for affordable housing.

In all cases, people told us that development should only be supported if it is of high quality and sustainable design that enhances Roche, so development should be in accordance with the design guide.

Development outside the settlement boundary is against policy (subject to policies B2 and C2 below which provide for additional development contingent on achieving new road links mitigating through traffic on the B3274). This policy implements the clear outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan consultations that development should be focused on the main settlements of Roche and Victoria, and recommendation 10 of the Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative report (2005) which recommended limiting or restricting development beyond the development boundary of Roche Village. Roche Parish contains largely unspoilt rural and heritage landscapes and hamlets, and various individual and small groups of rural buildings of often high quality and/or historic interest. Protection and improvement of these assets was an important priority for residents responding to the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

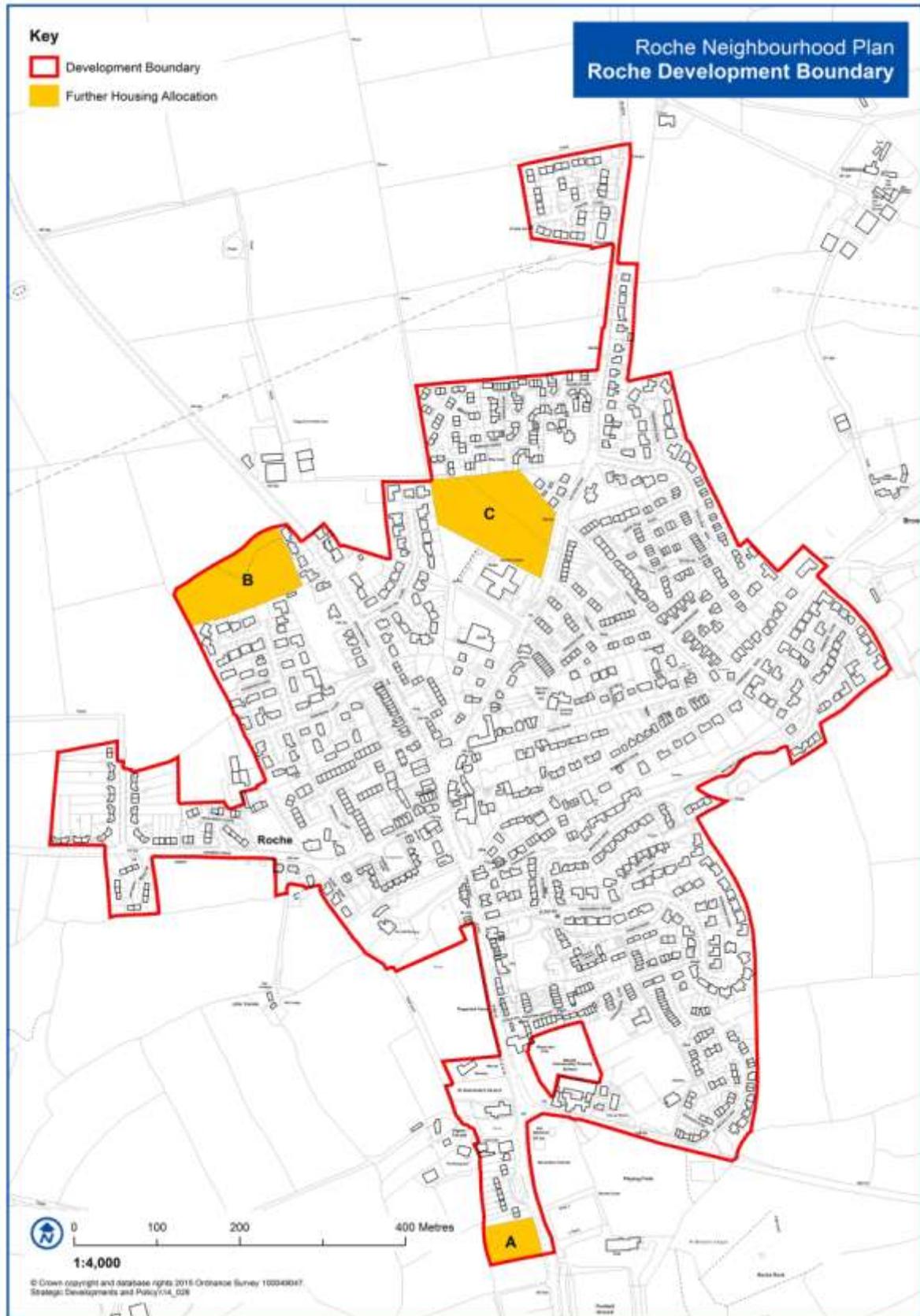


Figure 2.1 - New Roche settlement boundary and suggested housing allocations

## POLICY A2

### Trezaise/Higher Trezaise

**Development (including infill development) along Trezaise/Higher Trezaise, is not supported (Fig 2.2)**

#### Policy Justification

In the absence of either the full A30-St. Austell link road or the short section achieving an HGV diversion, the experience of current traffic problems makes it clear that no further development should be allowed feeding onto the Trezaise/Higher Trezaise Road. This was the strong view of local residents in the Neighbourhood Plan community consultations.

- 75% said there should be no more development along Trezaise Road due to traffic issues.

In light of these traffic safety concerns on the main road through Trezaise/Higher Trezaise, and the lack of safe pedestrian pavements fully linking to Roche Village and the facilities and school there, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group concluded that no further development should be permitted along this route.

If a new St. Austell-A30 link road is established west of Roche bypassing Trezaise/Higher Trezaise, this policy should be reviewed, to see if there are opportunities to strengthen the sustainability of this community by improving safe links to Roche Village and possible improved community infrastructure for Trezaise residents.

## POLICY A3

### School places

**Residential development proposals, including on allocated sites, must demonstrate**

**that suitable school places are available at Roche Village school to accommodate any increased need generated by that residential development, and if necessary make a suitable contribution to meeting any unmet need for school places.**

#### Policy Justification

A substantial level of concern was expressed throughout the Neighbourhood Plan consultations about the shortage of places at Roche School. Rapid development in the village, much of it near the school, has led to siblings of pupils already at the school but who live on the northern side of the village in less proximity to the school, being unable to secure places and therefore having to be taxed to other schools in the area. Currently the school limits classes to 30 (to support its successful turnaround from special measures over the last few years), with one class per academic year.

The school could consider larger class sizes, but development on the scale proposed in the local plan could still lead to capacity being exceeded. There is space to potentially add class rooms, and this could address the issue of meeting rising needs caused by further development. It is also possible that recent rapid housing growth has caused a 'bump' in pupil numbers that may subside. It was clear however that the community is concerned that further development should not prejudice places for local children and therefore the impact of further development on the need for school places at Roche School would need to be assessed, and a suitable contribution secured to meeting any unmet need for school places.

In the consultation exercise respondents noted that if more homes are needed to secure a bypass (policies B1 and B2), 87% consider that there must also be a plan for more places at the school.

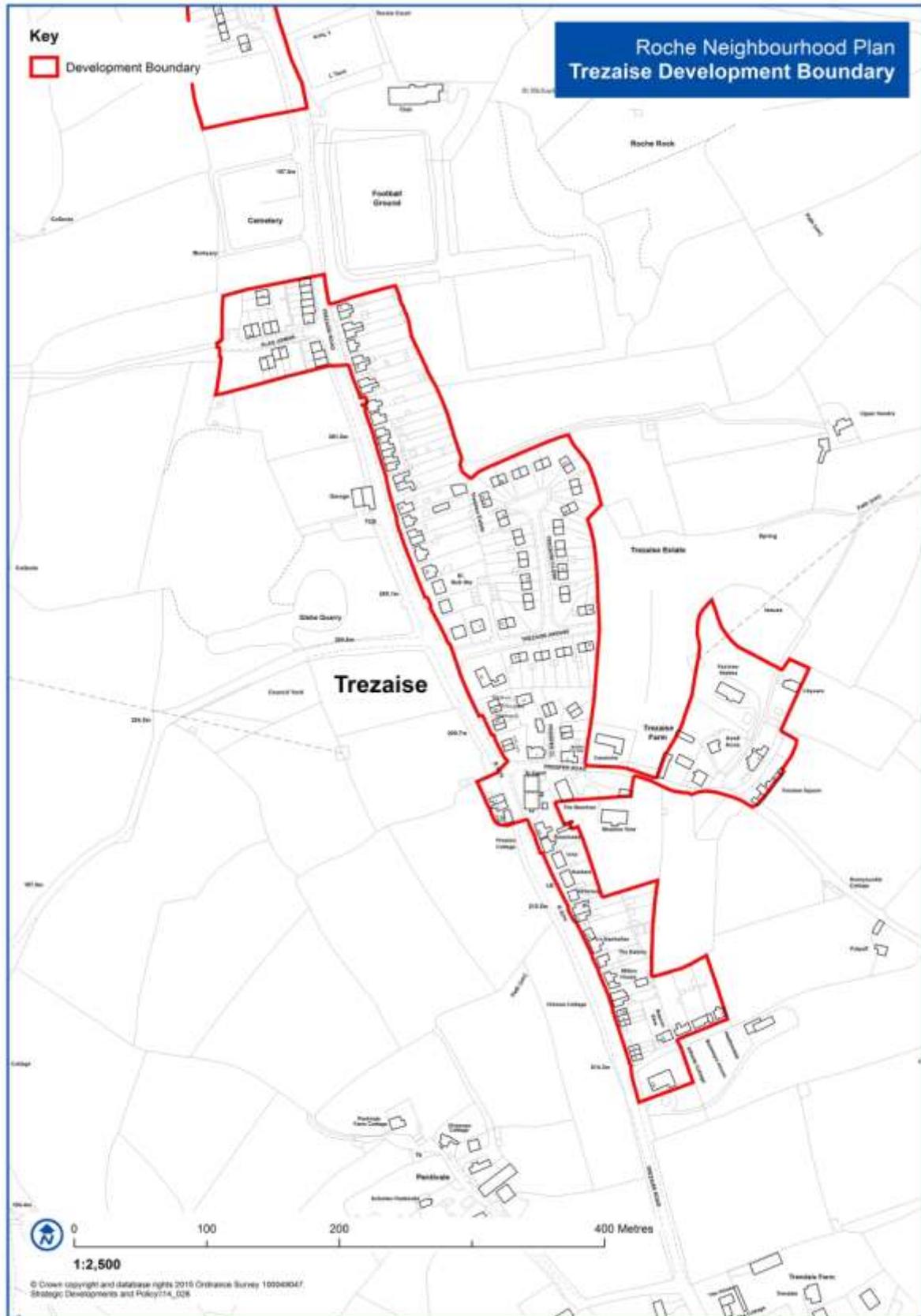


Fig 2.2 - Trezaise and Higher Trezaise: no development will be allowed within the settlement boundary

## B: TRAFFIC ISSUES

Community consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan clearly showed that solving the issues caused by heavy traffic through Roche Village and Trezaise is the greatest concern for residents of Roche Parish.

Achieving a good quality link road between the A30 and St. Austell is also a priority for Cornwall Council, and during the Neighbourhood Plan process the Council initiated a Route Options Appraisal looking into the viability of eight routes. It will now seek to develop this into an Outline Business Case for submission to the Department of Transport in 2017. A preferred route status will follow public consultation likely to be held on two route options in Spring 2016. It is likely that one of these routes will be just west of Roche, the other east of Bugle.

Absent such a new route west of Roche (or as a first stage in achieving it), the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group also explored the possibility of achieving an HGV diversion if a short section of new road is built between Harmony Road and Edgcombe Road. It was agreed with Cornwall Council that funding this short section of road could in principle be achieved (and the full new route economic case enhanced) by allowing new homes to be built (additional to the allocations in Policy 1) in the area between that new link road and Roche Village. We explored this in detail with Cornwall Council, who conducted their own study with this option as part of their research into possible link roads. They concluded that this HGV diversion was achievable, and could achieve a reduction in HGV traffic through Trezaise and Roche Village provided it was accompanied by sufficient traffic calming measures on the old route through Roche Village to make the through route sufficiently unattractive.

Community consultation by the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group clearly evidenced very strong community support for these road options, and therefore for supporting them through allocating additional housing provided it is contingent on the road being achieved, there are sufficient school places, it is a high quality low-density design, there is adequate provision for children's play within the development area (D), and a green

gap with boundary treatment and/or trees to provide road noise reduction for residents.

Absent either the full A30-St. Austell link road (policy B1) or a short section achieving an HGV diversion (policy B2), the evidence of traffic problems and the clear views of the community made it clear that no further housing allocation (beyond the specific allocations in Policy A1) should be supported in Victoria, Roche Village or Trezaise/Higher Trezaise Road, so as to avoid worsening the existing traffic issues.

It is therefore intended that residential development should contribute to this necessary road infrastructure and that the extent of affordable delivery being subordinate to delivery of the new road link.

### POLICY B1

#### Link Road west of Roche

**This plan supports the principle of an A30-St. Austell link road west of Roche as a priority, to relieve traffic issues impacting Higher Trezaise, Trezaise, the village of Roche, and Victoria Road.**

**The promotion of this scheme will be a material consideration in the determination of any application along the likely route.**

**Support for this route is subject to the following conditions:**

- a) **The new road scheme seeks to include an HGV diversion banning HGV movements through Roche village from the Combellack turning off Trezaise Road to the south of Roche Village, and from the Victoria Rail bridge north of Roche, and into the village from Harmony Road east of the new road, and into Edgcombe Road south of the new road. HGVs to be directed instead onto the new link road (Fig .3).**
- b) **That measures designed appropriately to the historic context would be taken as part of the new road scheme to improve the central areas of Roche village and to prioritise pedestrians, make increased short term parking available for shoppers, and improve the quality of the environment and in so doing deter rat-running through Higher**

Trezaise, Trezaise, the village of Roche, and Victoria Road.

c) **Where reasonably practicable, that a footpath is established along Victoria Road as part of the new road scheme to provide safe pedestrian access between Roche Village and the railway station/ employment at Victoria**

**In the absence of a full A30-St Austell link road, this plan supports the principle of the delivery of a new road linking Harmony Road to Edgcumbe Road north of the settlement boundary (see Fig 2.3) to address the traffic issues in Roche.**

**Proposals for residential development in excess of 5 units within this plan area will be required to make a proportionate contribution to cost of the delivery of the Harmony Road to Edgcumbe Road road link (or in the alternative the A30-St Austell Link Road if it can be demonstrated that A30-St Austell link is committed and a contribution to its cost has been secured).**

#### Policy Justification

Our evidence is that the dominance of traffic through Trezaise/Higher Trezaise, Roche Village and Victoria Road is the number one issue for residents. This policy supports measures to tackle these issues.

In addition, Cornwall Council has long standing policy to achieve an improved A30-St. Austell link road, which the Neighbourhood Plan can support. During the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, Cornwall Council carried out a study to determine possible routes for this link. The study suggested a route west of Roche village provides the most viable and cost-effective solution to achieve this link, and would also allow through traffic

to be diverted around Roche village and Trezaise.

Cornwall Council are now carrying out detailed investigation of this route and alternatives, preparatory to a possible funding bid. The Neighbourhood Plan support this route in principle, based on the substantial support for it shown in our public consultation and the clear benefits to the Parish

- 82% supported the proposal to get HGVs out of Trezaise and Roche
- 93% (278) believe that pavement improvements should be a requirement for developers.
- 87% (259) thought an A30-St Austell link road should be supported to reduce traffic through Roche.
- 79% (234) felt that improvements to Roche centre should be made to make it more pedestrian friendly rather than prioritising traffic.

However, if either this link road/HGV diversion or the full A30-St.Austell link road route is implemented by Cornwall Council, it is important that either is accompanied by measures to deter rat-running through Roche and Bugle by traffic calming, pedestrian prioritisation, improving the village centre and creating a safe, HGV free pedestrian link between Roche village and Victoria. These measures were all strongly supported in the Neighbourhood Plan community consultations.

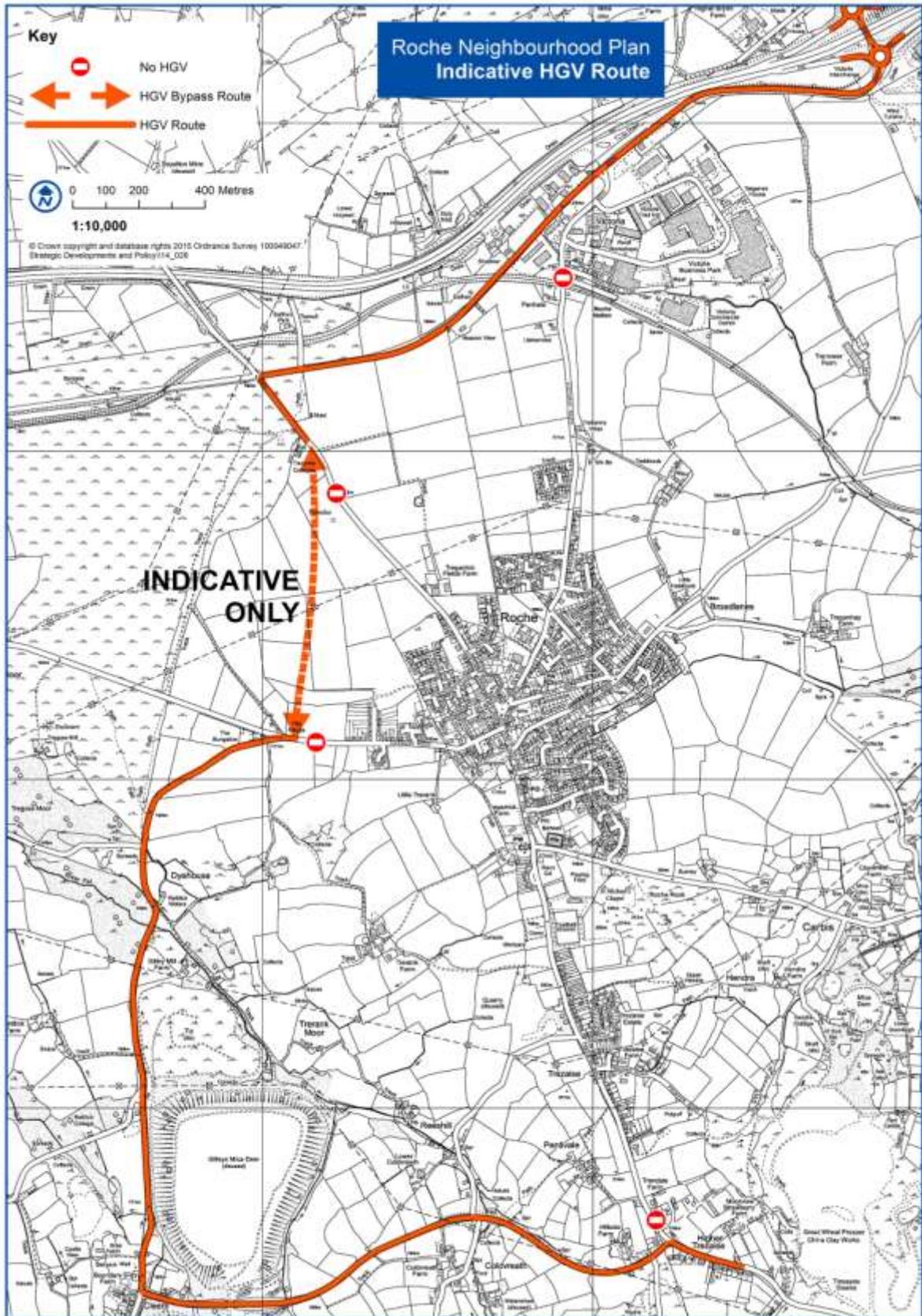


Figure 2.3 - the possible route of a diversion for heavy goods vehicles

## POLICY B2

### Potential development of Site D

Development of Site D (Fig 2.4), (which shall include an equipped local play area, provision of open, natural space and sufficient Cornish hedges and tree cover along the road to screen noise) will only be supported for a low density development of up to 150 houses, provided that any planning permission results in either:

(i) a proportionate contribution to the delivery of the A30-St Austell link road (including appropriate means to prevent through traffic passing through Roche village) if it can be demonstrated that A30-St Austell link is committed and a contribution to its cost has been secured, and there is a reasonable prospect of its delivery; or alternatively

(ii) an enforceable contract for the construction of the new link road has been agreed by Cornwall Council for the delivery of the Harmony Road to Edgumbe Road link subject to the following conditions:

a) Upon opening of the new road HGV movements will be prevented through Roche village from the Combellack turning off Trezaise Road to the south of Roche Village, and from the Victoria Rail bridge north of Roche, and into the village from Harmony Road east of the new road, and into Edgumbe Road south of the new road. HGVs will be directed instead on the route shown (see map attached).

b) No more than 50 new homes in this contingent allocation can be occupied until:

- the new road has been completed and the HGV diversion established
- Street works and traffic calming to support the HGV ban by HGVs from Trezaise Road, Roche Village centre and Victoria Road are completed

- a pavement is established along Victoria Road linking Roach Village to Victoria

- there is evidence that sufficient school places can be accommodated at Roche Village School to meet local needs including any additional demand from new homes

c) A children's play area and open, natural public space including trees and/or Cornish hedges to mitigate road noise is included in the new development

d) The conditions for the allocation of this site for 150 homes will also be considered met if the new A30-St.Auslell link route referred to in Policy 2 is built, subject to the conditions in Policy B1 and condition B2 d) above

The costs of meeting the above conditions will be taken into account in determining S106 contributions from the 150 home contingent allocation, the extent of affordable delivery being subordinate to delivery of the new road link.

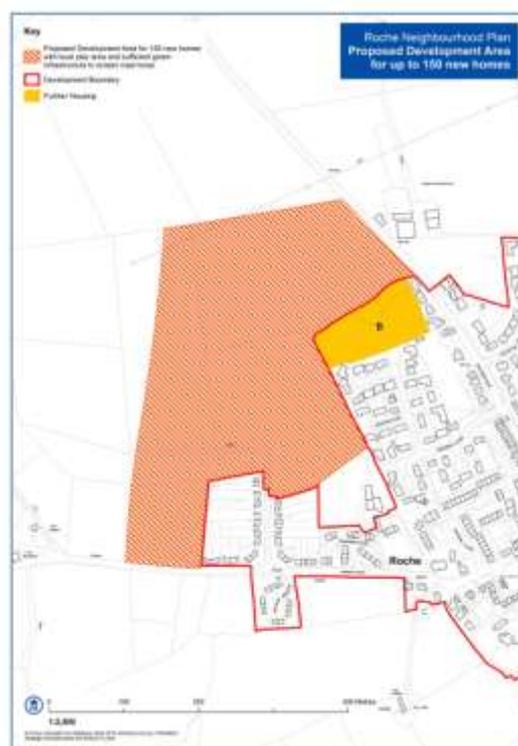


Figure 2.4 - Site D: Potential development area, local play area and sufficient green infrastructure to screen road noise

### Policy Justification

Our evidence is that the dominance of traffic though Trezaise/Higher Trezaise, Roche Village and Victoria Road is of greatest concern for residents. This policy supports measures to tackle these issues.

Currently Roche forms part of the main Newquay-St. Austell traffic route, receives Whitemoor/St.Dennis/western China Clay-A30 HGV traffic diverted away from St. Dennis, and receives A30-St. Austell traffic. The most recent traffic survey shows an average of one HGV through the village every minute. This seriously detracts from the quality of the environment within the centre of the village and has a consequent impact upon the quality of life of residents. Achieving a solution to the traffic issues, especially HGVs, is the first priority of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy B2 enables such a solution.

The Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group explored a number of options for taking the HGV traffic around Roche. Cornwall Council confirmed a new link road between Harmony Road and Edgumbe Road would allow this, subject to sufficient suitable traffic calming in the centre of the village, together with advanced signage etc to deter HGVs from the village.

Our proposal is therefore to allocate a proportion of the area formed between the village and the proposed Harmony Road to Edgumbe Road link road for housing, conditional on:

- a) the road having been built,
- b) the diversion made,
- c) sufficient traffic calming being in place to deter HGV rat-running.
- d) sufficient places being made available at Roche school to meet increased demand arising from the development through a contribution to meet any new demand.

The Neighbourhood Plan is clear that the justification for this additional contingent housing allocation is solely on the basis that it secures the means of delivery of this link road, as otherwise the development is not sustainable and so would not be acceptable. An area of land between the development and the new road will need to be landscaped to miti-

gate traffic noise and provide significant new community open space for recreation and play.

The new road would divert HGVs slightly closer to Tregoss Moor which is a SAC, however our advice is that the main environmental impact of concern to the SAC is emissions. Because stop-start delays for HGVs currently travelling through Roche village should be significantly reduced, the new route would therefore lower emissions, and thereby make a net reduction in current impacts on the SAC.

The housing allocation (up to 150 homes) will support through contributions the funding required for the road section, the securing of planning permission for the road and ensuring that it is deliverable. The Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recognise these contribution requirements could reduce the affordable housing contribution on viability grounds, though specific evidence on an 'open book' basis would be required to demonstrate this.

The development of the 150 homes should be carefully designed to avoid the impression of a single large housing estate, achieving a high quality, low density development with generous garden space and natural, open public space and well integrated development in line with the Roche Neighbourhood Plan design guide.

This reflects current housing needs and complements recent new developments which have generally been high density with an over provision of affordable housing.

## POLICY B3

### Heavy goods diversion

**Proposals for a new St. Austell Link Road or HGV diversion must: be accompanied by a fully integrated review of existing policies of traffic and traffic management measures and produce design guidance specific to the B 3274 in its passage through the village, based on a detailed audit of surrounding landscapes, wildlife habitats, buildings, materials and streetscape and a high quality approach to enhancement and improvement of streetscape; any scheme to be thoroughly grounded on the creation of a street and a**

**sense of place rather than the mere exigencies of traffic management. This should concentrate restoration/enhancement schemes on some of Roche's important focal points, particularly the area around the Victoria Road/Harmony Road/Edgecumbe Road/Fore Street junction, the Fore Street, the Churchtown, and at gateway points (Churchtown Roundabout/Harmony Road/Chapel Road/Tremodrett Road junction.**

#### Policy Justification

This policy is designed to enhance the special character of Roche, and promote transformational change that will assist a pedestrian friendly environment in Roche Village and Trezaise; and assist in discouraging traffic/HGVs 'rat-running through the village', ensuring any investment in an alternative route achieves the objective of relieving the traffic issues through Trezaise/Higher Trezaise, Roche Village and Victoria Road. It thus supports policies B1 and B2.

### **C) EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

Victoria is the main employment centre in Roche Parish, and the plan proposes to support further employment growth here. Victoria sits north of the railway line and the Victoria Road rail bridge – south of which there is a distinct green gap separating it from Roche.

In contrast to Roche village, Victoria has long been primarily a business and industrial area. The business estate is thriving, and benefits from direct access to the A30 as well as the Railway Station. Alongside are old out of town retail units along the old A30, mostly quite dilapidated and in some cases empty – these provide regeneration potential. There are however a range of community assets with the pub/hotel, cafés, petrol station, and some housing. Just down the road, the new Cornwall Services site has recently opened, adding further facilities (food outlets, coffee shop, newsagent, indoor play and a planned hotel).

Whilst Victoria benefits from direct access to both the A30 and to rail, in contrast the road link to Roche is narrow, has a light controlled single carriageway road bridge over the rail-

way, and has no pavement, despite currently being the HGV route to/from St. Austell and being well used by pedestrians. The traffic and pedestrian safety issues will be resolved if the new link road or the HGV diversion described in policies B1 and B2 are achieved. Without this resolution, substantive employment growth is not sustainable at Victoria if it increases traffic on Victoria Road.

Longer term there is potential for the business estate to grow in the area between the existing business estate and the new Cornwall Services (shaded orange in the attached map), provided any development does not unduly increase traffic issues on the B3274, and/or on achieving either policy B1 or B2. There is also potential for further mixed use development and regeneration within the existing built area (red lined in the attached map as the Victoria Development area).

Many employees at Victoria either live in Roche or use its services. However, the lack of a pavement between Victoria and Roche makes this route extremely dangerous. Any growth at Victoria must be contingent on resolving this pedestrian safety issue. Therefore expansion at Victoria must be subject to a requirement that a pavement is built along Victoria road to link it safely to Roche for pedestrians.

The rail bridge forms a natural barrier to the south, forming the northern edge of the highly valued 'green gap' between Victoria and Roche. There is strong support in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations for preserving this green gap.

## **POLICY C1**

### **Employment and development**

**Employment related development will be supported:**

- (i) within the settlement boundary of Roche, where it results in small scale commercial development which is in keeping with its immediate context;**
- (ii) in the area between the existing Business Park and Cornwall Services (see**

map), subject to the following conditions:

- a). A safe pedestrian route being established along Victoria Road to Roche;
- b). All new proposals for development must be accompanied by a Travel Plan which shows the volume of HGV traffic that is likely to be created by the new development. The Travel Plan must show the likely routes of any additional HGV traffic travelling from or to the site. Any development which would result in increased HGV traffic through Roche / Trezaise will not be supported.

Policy Justification:

The Neighbourhood Plan community consultation shows support for expansion of employment at Victoria. It is well connected to the A30 and has a rail way station. However, there is also strong support for maintaining the green gap between Roche and Victoria, with no development of Victoria south of the railway bridge and line. Pedestrian safety on Victoria road is resolved by condition a). The concern that development at Victoria should not increase HGV traffic through Roche Village and so worsen existing traffic issues is resolved by condition b).

## POLICY C2

### Mixed use development

To support employment at Victoria, within the development redline mixed use development is supported (Fig 2.5). However any residential element is subject to the following conditions:

- (a). Change of use from an existing business use to residential will only be supported if it is clearly demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the existing business use being taken up in the foreseeable future, or alternatively that some residential is required to support a primarily business use.
- (b). A safe pedestrian route has been established along Victoria Road to Roche;

Policy Justification.

There is already a small amount of residential in addition to the business development at Victoria, and there is a rail station and other facilities including the pub and petrol station as well as the new Cornwall services. Community surveys indicated support for mixed use development to support regeneration at Victoria, business growth and local employment, providing the 'green gap' between Roche and Victoria is not encroached; there is no risk of generation of increased traffic through Roche village; sufficient school places are available; and there is a safe pedestrian link.

Change of use from business use to residential use would not normally be supported however since this is an important business centre and opportunity for economic growth not only for the parish, but for mid-Cornwall, and in any event Victoria is not well connected to local schools.

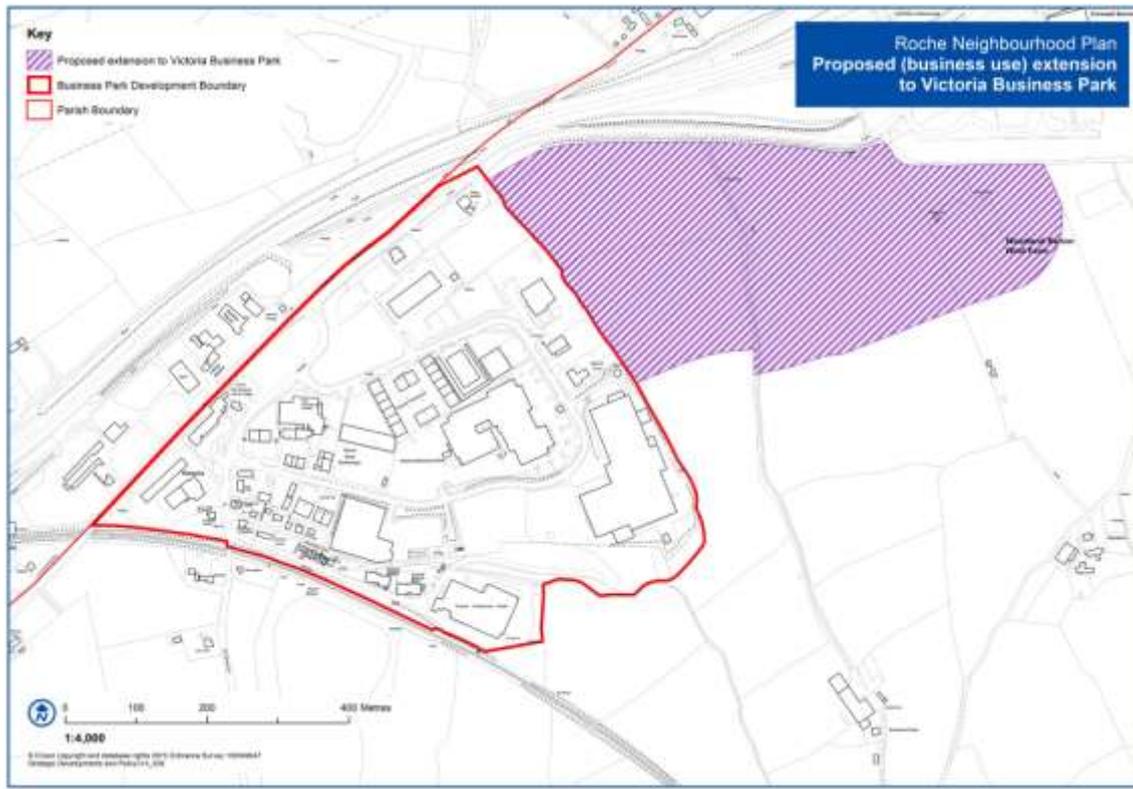


Fig 2.5 development between the existing business park and Cornwall Services at Victoria will be supported



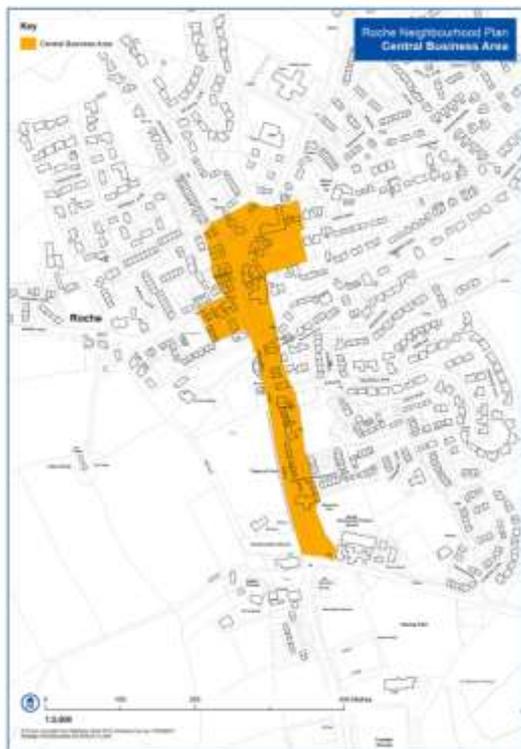
Fig 2.6 - No development will be permitted in the green gap between Victoria and Roche village

**POLICY C3**

**Protection of existing business premises**

The loss of business premises in Class A of the Use Classes Order in the commercial area of Roche Village indicated in Fig 2.7) to other uses will not be supported unless:

- it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the existing business use being taken up in the foreseeable future. The viability of maintaining these uses must be tested, if challenged, by at least six months marketing.



**Fig 2.7** There is clear community support for retaining shops and services in the central business district within Roche village

Policy Justification:

Roche village benefits from a range of commercial services, especially shops and pubs and food outlets. The Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group received clear community representations that the range of pubs and shops in the village is of high value to the community, and should if possible be preserved, and that the character of the central square and Fore street is also that of com-

mercial services such as food and retail provision.

- 94% (279) believe we should have policies to support keeping shops and pubs open

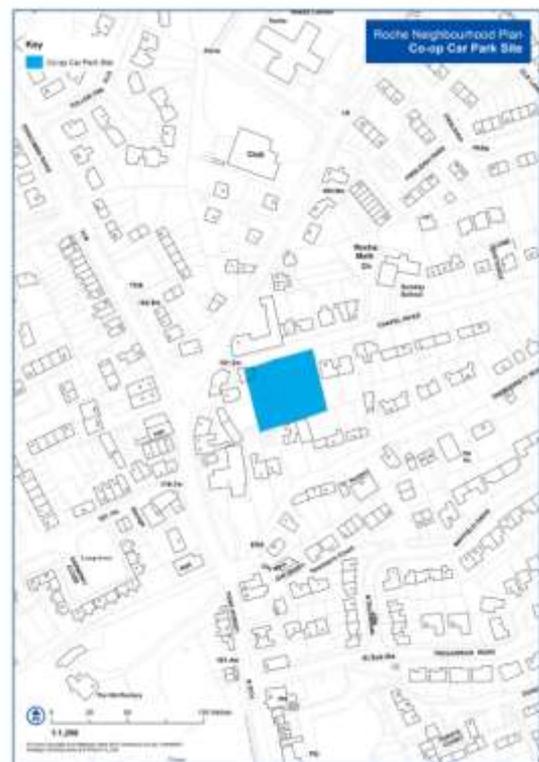
**POLICY C4**

**Co-op car park**

Development on the car park adjacent to the Co-op (as indicated in Fig 2.8) will not be supported unless suitable alternative parking provision can be provided nearby.

Policy Justification

The Co-op car park provides much needed car parking for the village centre. Loss of this facility would impact on local businesses and inconvenience residents, and on street parking is limited. Development on this site will not therefore be supported unless alternative parking can be provided nearby.



**Fig. 2.8** The Co-op car park will be retained and efforts made to increase spaces available

## D) COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS

The Neighbourhood Plan consultations showed a high importance attached to protecting significant community green spaces.

Four community green space designations have been strongly supported during the Neighbourhood Plan consultations – two to preserve green spaces of historic importance that also have a history of community use and are important to the setting of the historic village centre (the old fair ground and the glebe meadow), and the third for its community recreational use and its visual relationship with Roche Rock. All are important to their setting.

In addition, there was general support for protecting and enhancing green spaces and the natural environment. Open space provision has been delivered historically without always considering potential for wider environmental benefits. A playing field or a play park provided with new development can also provide ecological value, value to local character or connectivity to other open spaces if a joined up approach is taken. The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to encourage and enable a joined up approach.

### POLICY D1

#### Community Green Space designations

**Built development on land which has been identified as Community Green Space will be resisted unless it small scale and is incidental to the use of the land as green space.**

#### **Policy D1(a): Community Green Space designation The Old Fairground (Fig 2.9)**

##### Policy Justification:

The Old Fair Ground on the North West corner of the school grounds was donated for use as a nature area by the school. It is now

used as such. Both for its original historic significance and to protect its new community educational use against possible development, its designation as a community green space is recommended. 92% of survey responses supported this designation, as did the School.

#### **Policy D1(b): Community Green Space designation - The Glebe Meadow (Fig 2.9)**

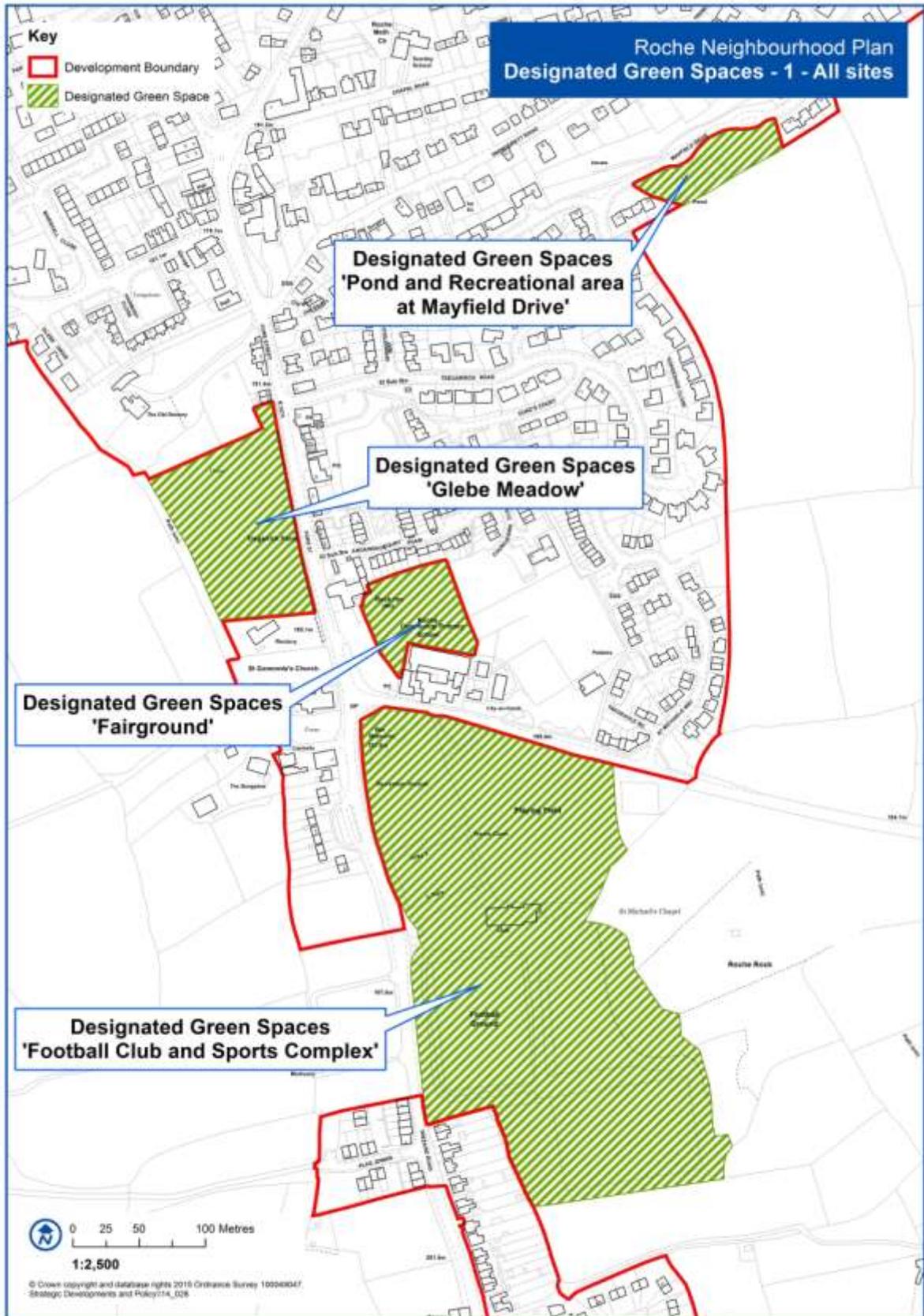
##### Policy Justification:

The Glebe Meadow is part of an 1820's designed landscape between the Church and the Old Rectory, bordered by a planted 'Avenue' and a Ha-Ha, and recommended for protection by the Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative (an initiative by English Heritage, Cornwall Council and the former Restormel Borough Council) as locally and regionally important. Historically it has been used for community events and clubs including church fetes, community fairs and dances, and community sports such as the tug-of-war team. Unlike agricultural land around Roche it is undisturbed or semi-disturbed grass land and therefore of ecological value, and contains a listed Celtic cross. Its designation as a community green space was supported by a village petition of 260 residents, and 90% support in the Neighbourhood Plan surveys, as well as the CISI recommendations

#### **Policy D1(c): Community Green Space designation - The play and recreation area (Fig 2.9)**

##### Policy Justification:

Roche has a substantial recreation asset, with the play area, tennis courts, cricket pitch and football fields and training area. Located west of Roche rock, this area is not only of huge recreational value, but any development here would also be of significant detrimental visual impact on the setting of Roche Rock. Its designation was proposed to the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group by local councillors and members of the Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.



**Fig 2.9 Community Green Space designations: The Glebe Meadow, The Old Fairground and the sports and recreation areas to the west of Roche Rock**

**Policy D1(d): Community Green Space designation - The duck pond and surrounding green space (Fig 2.9)**

Policy Justification:

The duck pond is in part a flood attenuation pond, but also provides an important local recreational and nature resource. Its retention, including the surrounding green space (which has in the past been subject to development proposals which have been refused) - is important for its amenity value to the community, as well as the ponds drainage management role. The Roche Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group received community representations for its protection.

## POLICY D2

**A coordinated approach to green spaces**

**Proposed enhancements to open space provision in Roche should be delivered through a coordinated green infrastructure approach, including in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being undertaken by Cornwall Council, Natural England and other organisations locally.**

Justification

The delivery of new and improved green infrastructure provision is most effective when it is planned through a partnership approach. This helps ensure that the full range of benefits from a high quality green infrastructure network can be realised, including (but not limited to) improvements to recreational offer, enhancements to landscape and townscape character, the protection and enrichment of the historic environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhancements to ecological networks.

In Roche, it is therefore anticipated that a coordinated approach will be significantly more effective in designing and managing green infrastructure as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits than a piecemeal approach.

## E) RENEWABLES

## POLICY E1

**Wind and solar farms**

**In considering applications for wind farms and solar farms:**

- a. Importance will be placed on considering siting against national guidance that stresses visual impact, and particularly cumulative impact**
- b. In the absence of clear community support, wind turbine applications will not be supported**
- c. Wind or solar farm applications that materially impact the setting of Roche Rock will not be supported.**

Policy Justification

Roche Parish has recently seen a number of wind turbines approved to the north-west of Roche village. The wider mid-Cornwall area has seen large numbers of individual turbines approved as well as a small number of wind farms. The result is that from many vantage points multiple wind turbines can be seen scattered across the landscape.

Similar concerns were raised about solar farms, since along main roads in Cornwall multiple solar farms have also been approved in often highly visible locations.

The community consultations that took place (prior to the Secretary of State's statement that wind turbines should not be permitted in the absence of demonstrable community support), showed strong concern about insensitive siting of wind turbines in the Parish. The new national policy makes it clear that in the absence of clear community support, wind turbine applications should not be supported.

- 95% (281) want the Neighbourhood Plan to emphasise that windmills and solar farms must be sensitively sited.

National planning guidance is clear that visual impact, including cumulative impact is a material consideration, and given the wind turbines already erected in and near the Parish

this will also be a particularly important consideration in considering any further applications – a view clearly held by Roche residents responding to the Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

Given there is demonstrable community concern, and given the likely cumulative impact of further permissions, the plan does not support further wind turbine permissions. More specifically, the setting of Roche Rock is particularly sensitive and proposals that impact on its setting would not be acceptable in any event.

## F) HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The Neighbourhood Plan evidenced strong support for protecting the historic environment of the Parish

- 93% (281) want policies to protect traditional hedges, meadows and woodland
- 94% (282) agreed conservation policies should be adopted to protect traditional features.
- 89% (263) thought new developments should not encroach on Roche Rock.

In 2005 a comprehensive report into Roche Village was published through the Cornwall Industrial Settlement Initiative (CISI), jointly commissioned by English Heritage and the then Cornwall County and Restormel Borough Councils.

The meticulously researched report forms part of Cornwall Council's evidence base, but it is not clear it has fully informed subsequent planning decisions. This may be in part because action on the CISI recommendations was eclipsed by the subsequent merger of the councils. The report has been used to inform the Roche Parish Neighbourhood Plan however, and the Plan formalises a number of historic environment policies based on the recommendations and evidence base of that report.

In order to enhance the evidence base behind this Plan, to aid the process of assessment

required by these Policies, and in order to give certainty and reduce risk to future development proposals, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has also recommended the Parish Council seek the designation of a conservation area, if deemed appropriate, together with revision of national designations, and /or development of a list of locally significant buildings and sites.

## POLICY F1

### Assessment of historic assets

**As part of any development or management proposal, applications should provide a proportionate assessment of the significance of any historic assets affected by the proposals, designated or otherwise, including buildings, landscapes, archaeological features or areas of locally distinctive character, and including any contribution made by their setting.**

**Assessments should be detailed enough to show how the proposal will affect that significance (positively or negatively) with, if necessary, an explanation of the public benefits of the proposal. Proposals will be determined in line with statutory requirements, national policy guidance and relevant specific guidance, principles and best practice.**

### Policy Justification:

To ensure decision making is based on sound evidence, is appropriate to the importance of the site, to ensure the preservation and enhancement of locally distinctive character and historic assets, but not to be overburdensome on smaller applications in less sensitive areas.

The principle will be that the more important the asset, the more assessment would be required. Assessments should, where relevant, utilise the existing available evidence base, particularly the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record, the 2005 CISI report and other relevant studies and locally specific guidance such as the *Guidance for Methodist*

and Nonconformist chapels in Cornwall, as well as national guidance, such as Historic England publications (e.g. on types of heritage assets, but also on principles and best practice, as in the relevant *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes or Conservation Principles*).

In those, probably rare, cases where there is likely to be a substantial degree of harm to historic assets of demonstrable importance, more detailed assessment may be required to include:

- Desk Based Assessment
- Historic building assessments/archaeological trial trenching etc. where appropriate
- Historic Area Impact Assessment
- Assessment of impact on setting, context and inter-relationship of heritage assets/historic townscapes or landscapes
- Mitigation to include appropriate design responding to historic context; historic building recording; archaeological assessments/watching briefs/targeted excavation/recording etc. as appropriate.

## POLICY F2

### Area of special architectural and historic interest

**Within the historic areas of Roche village (the area in Fig 2.10) development proposals must demonstrate that the proposed development is consistent with the locally distinctive character of the village. Proposals that result in substantial harm to the character of the area identified in Fig 2.10 as a locally significant area of special architectural and historic interest will be resisted**

#### Policy Justification:

In the Neighbourhood Plan consultation there was strong support for protecting and en-

hancing the historic character of the older areas of the village. This support is underpinned by Recommendation I of the CISI report, which proposed the designation of a conservation area “replacing and extending the existing area of local architectural and historic character”; the analysis in the CISI report should be the basis for understanding the locally treasured character of the village. Policy F2 recognises the important areas of special architectural and historic importance in Roche to promote the preservation and enhancement of those areas. These areas are within the ‘area of special architectural and/or historic interest’ in the proposals map Fig 2.10

## POLICY F3

### Protecting local character

**Development will be refused in open areas that contribute to local character, including:**

- a. The areas designated as Community Open Space;
- b. Encroachment on the open areas around the Church and around Roche Rock,
- c. Development proposals that would significantly impact on the setting of and views into and from Roche Rock, to retain an open moorland setting visually linked to and seen from the village of Roche, but not encroached by it.

#### Policy Justification:

To retain both the rural identity of Roche, and to manage and protect the setting of the historic Roche Village, Church and Roche Rock. Protection of open areas had considerable support in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, and also reflects the CISI recommendation 3, to ‘Protect open areas that contribute to character’.

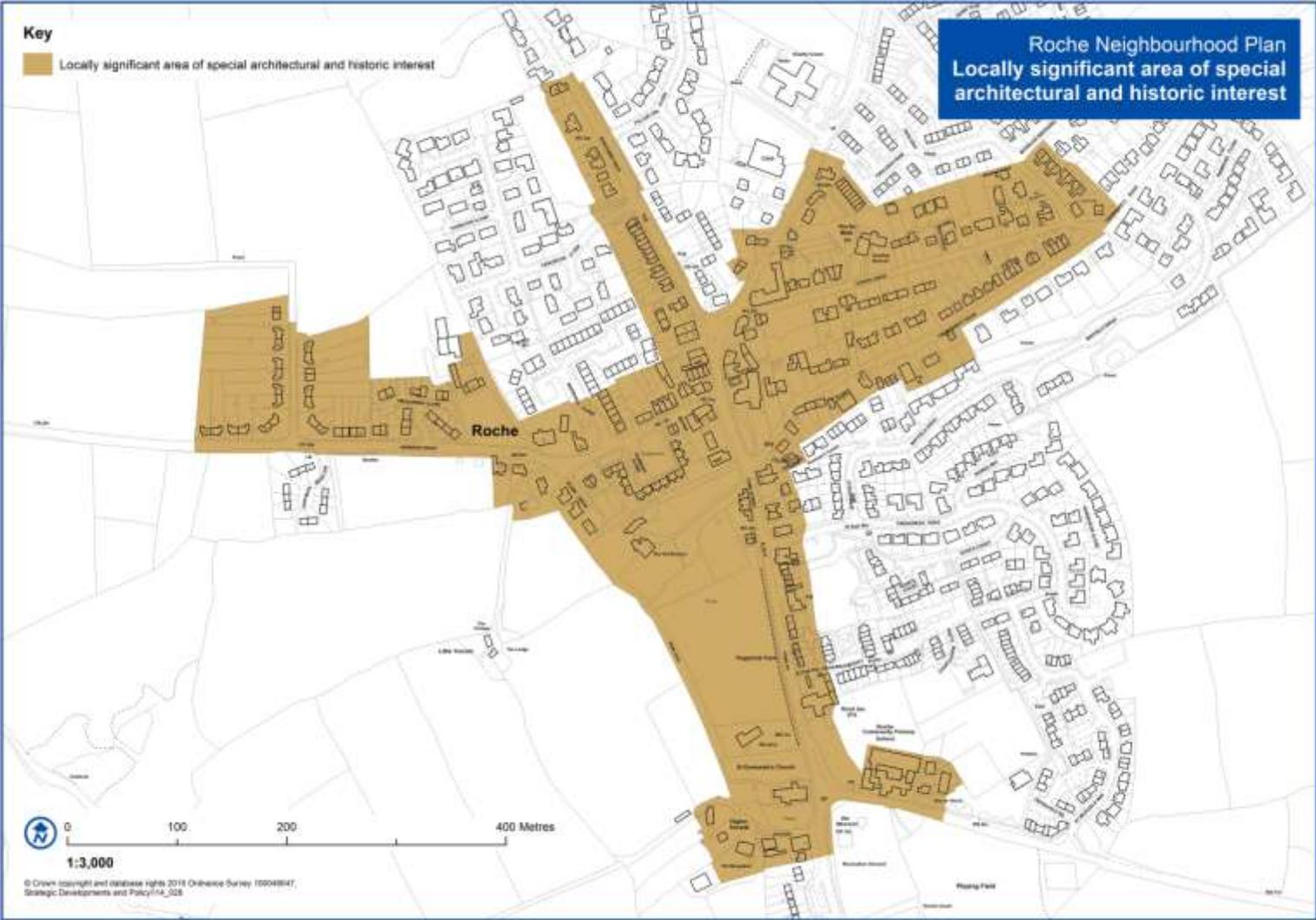


Fig 2.10 Locally significant area of architectural and historic significance

## POLICY F4

### Preservation of settlement boundaries

Where new development forms an edge of any settlement boundary, such as the allocations in this Neighbourhood Plan, the proposal must be fully integrated into the historic topography and settlement form with appropriate traditional boundary treatments, and consistent with the Roche Parish Design Guide (see appendix 1).

#### Policy Justification

To retain both the discrete identity of Roche and the setting of Roche Rock, and comply with existing Local Plan commitments, this implements recommendation 10 of the CISI report, and reflects the strong representations made to the Neighbourhood Plan consultations about development being sensitive to the landscape and visual impacts

## POLICY F5

### Retaining community identity

Within the area designated as Green Gap on the proposals map (Fig 2.6), development which will erode the separation between Roche and Victoria, and thereby undermine their distinct character and identities will be resisted.

#### Policy Justification

The protection of the green gap between Roche and Victoria (bounded by the Roche development boundary to the south, and the railway line to the north) was strongly supported throughout the consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan, to protect the distinct identities of the two settlements.

## POLICY F6

### Designated heritage assets

Proposals which result in substantial harm to the significance of any designated heritage assets will be resisted.

Where a proposal will give rise to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset then considerable importance will be attached to such harm, and planning permission will only be granted if the public interest clearly and demonstrably outweighs such harm.

#### Policy Justification

This policy seeks to give weight to the significance of historic assets, to strengthen the statutory and national policy requirements to avoid harm or loss to designated assets, including cumulative impacts and less than substantial harm, and to require clear and convincing justification to allow the harm to be balanced against any public benefits of a proposal.

## POLICY F7

### Non-designated heritage assets

Where development will impact upon buildings or features that are of heritage importance but not designated, then full account must be taken of any impact upon their heritage significance in determining a planning application. Non-designated assets of local importance include: Cornish hedges/banks (Fig 2.11), the remnant medieval field systems and associated farmsteads and hamlets; sites already identified in relevant studies (CISI) or in the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record.

#### Policy Justification:

The Roche Neighbourhood Plan consultations showed strong support for protecting these assets, and the CISI report also recommended policy should recognise the intrinsic value and importance of our historic settlements and landscapes, including the remnant medieval field systems and associated farmsteads and hamlets.



*Figure 2.11 Full account must be taken by potential development of the impact of non-designated heritage assets such as Cornish hedges*

## POLICY F8

### Protection of archaeological assets

**Where applications have the potential to impact on archaeological remains (including industrial archaeology), and before any development is approved, there must be sufficient assessments and field evaluations to define the significance and scale of potential impact. Applicants should outline any mitigation measures and the steps to be taken to record, retain, incorporate, protect, enhance and where appropriate manage the archaeological interest, as part of the proposals.**

**Non designated heritage assets of archaeological interest of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments shall be dealt with as subject to the same policy weight as the designated heritage assets.**

#### Policy Justification.

Roche Parish includes many areas of archaeological sensitivity, both medieval and earlier, as well as more modern industrial heritage. This policy is to ensure all proposals comply with and strengthen existing Local Plan commitments to assess the archaeological heritage of the Parish. This supports recommendation 6 of the CISI report.

Roche Parish contains many areas designated for their important species and habitats including those with international, national and local designations. These include part of the Breney Common Goss and Tregoss Moor Special area of Conservation (SAC); the Goss and Tregoss Moors Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) which cover similar areas; River Camel SAC and River Camel Valley and Tributaries SSSI (which cover similar areas); St Austell Clay Pits SAC and St Austell Clay Pits SSSI (which cover similar areas); Tregonetha & Belowda Downs - Belowda Beacon SSSI (geological designation); Roche Rock SSSI (geological designation); Hensbarrow and Criggan Moor County Wildlife Sites. Collectively these sites contain significant tracts of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats including Lowland Heathland, Wet Woodland and Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture. There are also significant areas of non-designated semi-natural habitat, particularly to the north and east of Carbis. The Parish also contains part of the Goonbarrow County Geology Site on its south east border. These are set out in Fig 2.12.

Site allocations have been chosen to avoid these sensitive areas so as not to undermine the nature conservation or geodiversity conservation value of these key internationally and nationally designated sites, and where possible, seek to support enhancements.

However, even non-designated sites include habitat features that can be harmed by built development, particularly Cornish hedges, trees and areas of scrub. Habitat features should be retained and designed into developments and opportunities to build-in enhancements for wildlife should be maximised. Some species groups are particularly vulnerable to disturbance but also can benefit from enhancements. Whilst there is existing national and local planning policy and national legislation that is relevant, this policy adds locally relevant detail to make sure wildlife habitats and species are both protected and enhanced.

## G) NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## POLICY G1

### Protection of wildlife

**Both housing and industrial developments will be expected to demonstrate how the proposed development will protect the wildlife of the Parish. In particular, planning applications should:**

- (a) protect Cornish hedges and the species they support from loss, damage and street lighting**
- (b) provide for nesting birds, roosting bats and hedgehogs.**
- (c) maximise opportunities for enhancing wildlife in new areas of public open space.**

**Where loss of habitat is unavoidable, any mitigation will be expected to enhance biodiversity.**

#### Policy Justification

It is important not only to protect existing national and international designations but also to recognise the important value of other sites and connected wildlife corridors. It is also important where possible to seek to protect and enhance the natural environment whenever development takes place. This policy also reflects the importance attached to wildlife and biodiversity in the public consultations.

- 93% wanted to protect traditional hedges, meadows and woodland.

## H) DESIGN

It is important that all development in Roche Parish enhances and respects the quality of the historic environment, and maintains and enhances the sustainability of the community.

It is essential proposals are drawn up with careful consideration of local context and to achieve the highest possible design quality, clearly setting out how they will achieve this to enable informed community consultation and decision taking. The Roche Design Guide (annexed to this Neighbourhood Plan) is de-

signed to supplement the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, and includes both key tasks developers need to address and background material specific to the historic areas of Roche.

The principles outlined in the Roche Design Guide section should be applied to all developments across the parish to ensure high quality, thoughtfully planned and designed developments which enhance the community.

- 92% (275) agreed the design of new homes should 'fit in'.

## POLICY H1

### Reinforcing character and heritage

**Developers must demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement how their proposed development reinforces Roche's character and heritage. In particular the statement must set out how the proposals follow the policies and guidance in the NPPF, the Cornwall Design Guide and the Roche Parish Design Guide together with any subsequent revision to those Design Guides. The Design and Access Statement must address the following: Context and character; Historic character; Connection with the countryside; Quality for pedestrians; cyclists and the physically disadvantaged; Development density and build quality; Car Parking; Landscaping and access to open and green space; Occupier controlled access to fibre, copper and other home office services; Environmental footprint.**

**These requirements apply to new commercial buildings as much as to new homes. The Parish Council reserves the right to require an individual design review on any development application.**

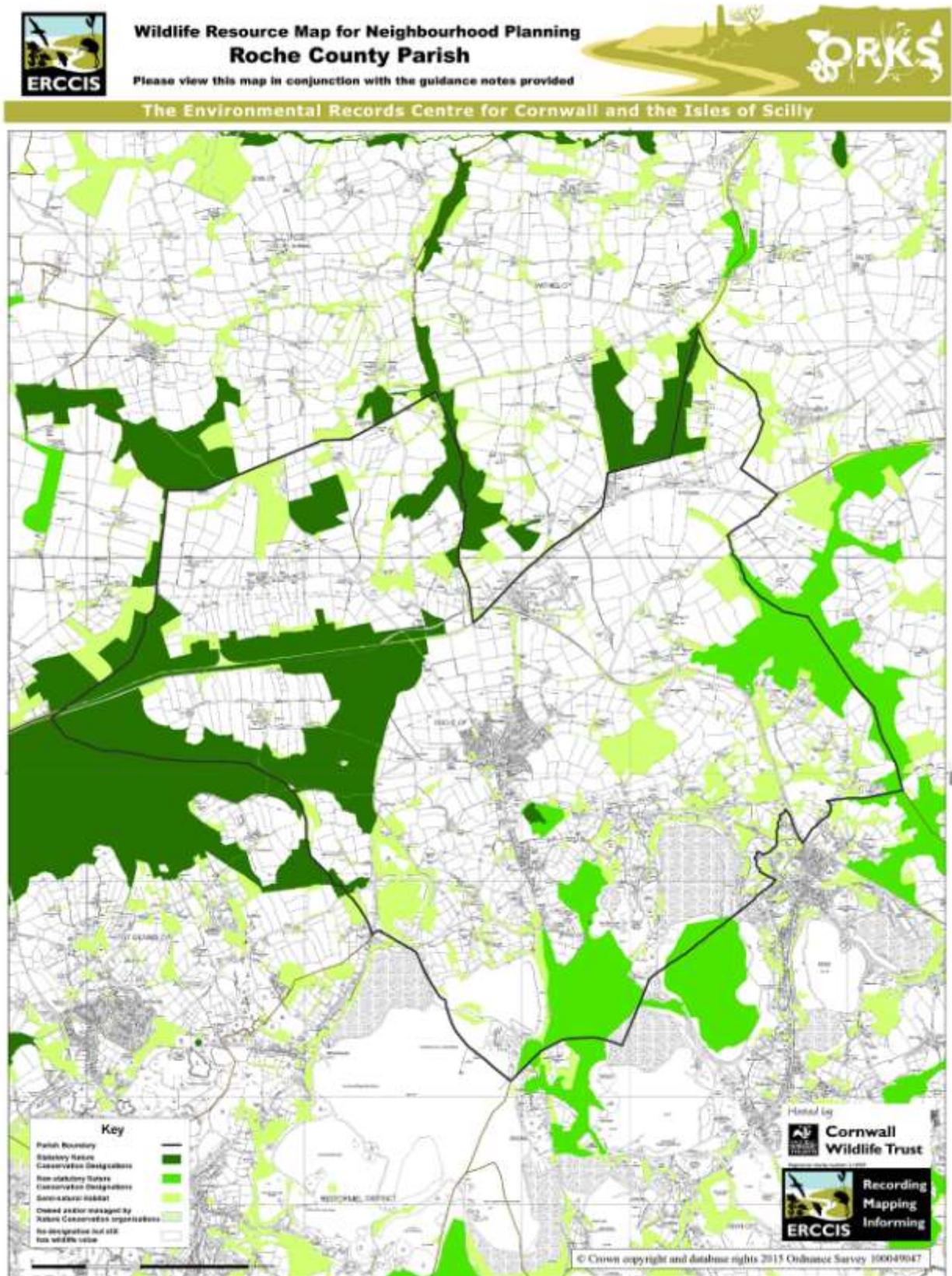


Fig 2.12 Roche Parish Wildlife Resource Map 2015 -kindly supplied by Cornwall Wildlife Trust

#### Policy Justification

High Quality design which takes full account of the best qualities of Roche Parish was strongly supported through the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, and Policy F1 helps give effect to this desire, especially when read in conjunction with the Roche Parish Design Guide (**attached as an annex to this Neighbourhood Plan**).

## **POLICY H2**

### **Ensuring the highest standards of development, protecting landscape character**

**Layouts for new development should be designed to the highest possible standard and protect historic and landscape character against inappropriate incremental alterations and demolition, in particular:**

- (a) Make sensitive use of local landscape features.**
  
- (b) Make generous provision for open green spaces which are linked to the wider natural environment and accessible to the public.**

#### Policy Justification

High Quality design which takes full account of landscape and provides opportunities to access green space was strongly supported through the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, and Policy F2 helps give effect to this desire, especially when read in conjunction with the design guide section of the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is important in making new development acceptable for the community and therefore enabling its delivery.

## **POLICY H3**

### **Maintaining a sense of place**

**To protect the character of Roche against inappropriate incremental alterations and demolition, especially in historic areas and around historic properties**

**a. The demolition of walls and hedges, especially for the creation of hard standings, should be avoided**

**b. Demolition of freestanding outbuildings and the loss of historic features will be resisted.**

#### Policy Justification

Protecting the traditional design features and 'sense of place' in the historic areas of settlement throughout the Parish was strongly supported through the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, and Policy F3 helps give effect to this desire, especially when read in conjunction with the Roche Design Guide.