

# WENDRON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, STAGE TWO

Pre-Submission Consultation Draft, April 2026

### 1. Introduction

This Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment considers whether the Pre-Submission Draft Wendron Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely to have a positive, neutral or negative impact on people who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and whether any mitigation is required. It follows the Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment prepared in 2023, which identified the principal equality risks as, first, the potential under-representation of some groups in the plan-making process and, second, the possibility that future development influenced by the Plan might not be as accessible or inclusive as it could be unless equality issues were properly addressed.

The draft NDP has been checked through an Equalities Impact Assessment framework to help ensure that its vision, objectives and policies promote fairness, inclusivity and equality of opportunity, remove or mitigate barriers, and support development that meets the diverse needs of all residents.

**The overall conclusion is that the Pre-Submission Draft Wendron Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely overall to have a positive equality impact.**

### 2. Methodology

This assessment follows the Stage 2 template included in the Stage 1 EQIA. That template requires an assessment of whether the NDP is likely to have a **positive, neutral, or negative** effect on each protected characteristic, with any negative effect graded **low, medium or high**, and with mitigation identified where needed.

The assessment has been undertaken by reviewing:

- the baseline equality evidence in the Stage 1 EQIA, including age, disability, health, unpaid care, socio-economic issues and rural isolation,
- the vision, objectives and policy framework of the Pre-Submission Draft NDP, especially the parts of the Plan most relevant to housing, accessibility, transport, community facilities, climate resilience, business and digital connectivity,
- and the consultation material in the draft NDP, which shows the issues raised by residents and businesses and the methods used to engage the community.

The assessment is strategic in nature. It does not attempt to predict the detailed equality effects of every future planning application. Rather, it assesses whether the vision, objectives and policy approach of the NDP are likely overall to support or hinder equality and inclusion, and whether additional wording or monitoring is advisable.

### 3. Summary Data

The Stage 1 EQIA shows that Wendron contains a number of groups whose needs are particularly relevant to neighbourhood planning. The 2021 Census recorded a resident population of about **3,095 to 3,096 people** and around **1,200 households**. The population has aged significantly over time, with the proportion of residents aged over 50 rising from **40.2% in 2001 to 47.8% by 2020/2021**. This has clear implications for housing choice, accessibility, support services and community facilities.

The same baseline shows that **17.6%** of residents were disabled under the Equality Act, and that **25.4%** of the population reported a long-term physical or mental health condition. In addition, **10.4%** of residents aged 5 and over provided unpaid care, with **3%** providing 50 hours or more a week. These figures indicate a substantial need for accessible homes, inclusive routes, local services and reduced reliance on long journeys for everyday needs.

Wendron also experiences significant **rural isolation** and **barriers to housing and services**. The Stage 1 EQIA notes that the parish is among the **10% most deprived nationally** under the “Barriers to Housing and Services” domain, and among the **40% most deprived overall**, meaning that rurality, distance from services and affordability pressures may intensify the effects of disadvantage for protected groups.

On ethnicity and language, the parish is predominantly white and UK-born, with **96.8%** of residents recorded as white and **98.6%** of households having English as their main language. The Stage 1 EQIA also notes limited parish-level data for gender identity and sexual orientation, but highlights the need to remain inclusive and respectful, including in community engagement and terminology.

#### **4. Community Engagement Strategy**

The Stage 1 EQIA identified a risk that some groups, particularly young people, older people, people in poor health, disabled people, and people living in more isolated settlements, might be less engaged in the NDP process and that their voices might therefore be under-represented. It proposed mitigation through an engagement strategy, use of different formats, and outreach to representative groups.

The draft NDP records that a **Communications and Engagement Strategy** was adopted and that the Plan has been informed by a number of consultation exercises over several years, including a scoping questionnaire in 2022, a wider community survey in 2024, a business survey in 2025, an estate agents survey, and public information displays including at the West Cornwall Family Motor Show. It also explains that the current pre-submission consultation includes online access, paper copies on request, postal response routes and in-person drop-in events at several venues.

This suggests that reasonable steps have been taken to broaden participation beyond a single method of engagement. The availability of paper copies and physical events is especially relevant to older residents, digitally excluded households and others who may find online-only engagement difficult. The Stage 1 risk of exclusion has therefore been reduced, although it cannot be assumed to have been removed entirely.

#### **5. Vision and Aims of the NDP**

The vision of the Plan is for Wendron to remain “a vibrant and flourishing community” in which housing and service needs are met through thoughtful and sustainable development at a pace and scale that respects the rural nature of the parish, while the physical and social qualities of villages and countryside are enhanced. The Plan also seeks to respond positively to climate change and to support resilience for future generations.

This vision is broadly positive from an equality perspective. It does not favour one group over another and it recognises the importance of both physical and social aspects of place. Importantly, the associated objectives include explicit reference to affordable homes for local people, accessible homes for older residents, improved digital services, local employment, active travel routes, community facilities and infrastructure that keeps pace with a growing and changing population. These objectives are likely to be particularly beneficial to older people, disabled people, carers, lower-income households and those affected by rural isolation.

## 6. The Plan Objectives and Their Impact

The NDP objectives are, in general, equality-positive.

**Climate Change.** The objective supports low-carbon, resilient development, sustainable drainage and nature-based solutions. This is likely to have positive effects for all groups, but especially older people and those with health conditions, because climate resilience, overheating prevention, flood management and better local environmental quality can reduce health risks and infrastructure disruption.

**Housing.** The housing objective seeks affordable homes for local people, accessible homes for older residents, and opportunities for younger generations to remain in the parish. This is strongly positive in equality terms, particularly for age, disability and socio-economic disadvantage.

**Business and Employment.** Support for small-scale enterprise, home working and improved digital connectivity is likely to benefit people whose employment options are constrained by care responsibilities, mobility issues or distance from urban centres.

**Heritage, Distinctiveness and Design, and Natural Environment.** These objectives are broadly neutral to positive. They do not target protected groups directly, but they support a high-quality environment and distinctive sense of place, which benefits the wider community. Care is needed, however, to ensure that design and heritage objectives are not applied in ways that inadvertently obstruct accessibility or adaptation.

**Community Facilities and Infrastructure.** This objective is strongly positive. It seeks improved access to community facilities, social spaces, active travel routes and essential infrastructure, and is directly relevant to older people, disabled people, carers, families and households without easy access to a car.

## 7. Summary of Policies and Their Impact

For clarity, the policies are grouped by theme rather than assessed one by one in isolation.

### 7.1 Climate and resilience policies, Policies 1 to 7A

These policies support sustainable design, low-carbon heat, water efficiency, sustainable drainage, natural flood management and retrofitting of traditional buildings. Overall, they are likely to have a **positive** effect across most groups by improving environmental quality, reducing fuel costs over time, improving resilience, and encouraging healthier homes.

Potential negative effects are limited but should be noted. The move toward low-carbon heating and retrofit may impose costs or practical difficulties for some households, especially older residents, lower-income households and occupiers of traditional buildings. The draft Plan recognises those rural challenges directly in its supporting text. Because the policies are supportive rather than coercive, and because they emphasise sensitive and appropriate retrofit, this is assessed as **negative low** rather than medium or high. Mitigation lies in continuing to support locally tailored and affordable solutions, and in ensuring advice and signposting are accessible.

### 7.2 Housing policies, Policies 8 to 12

The housing policies are the most equality-significant part of the Plan. The Plan seeks to support smaller homes, affordable housing, accessible and adaptable homes, wheelchair accessible homes,

provision for older people, and affordable routes to home ownership. It also recognises the importance of local need, hidden households and the effects of high housing costs.

These policies are likely to have a **strong positive** effect in relation to **age, disability, pregnancy and maternity**, and **socio-economic disadvantage**. Policy 9 is particularly important because it expressly supports accessible and adaptable homes and wheelchair accessible homes, and because it links housing mix to evidenced local need.

There is also a positive effect for younger adults and families who may otherwise be forced to leave the parish because of affordability pressures. The main equality risk here is that, because the Plan does not allocate sites directly and relies heavily on criteria-based policies and exception-site mechanisms, actual delivery may fall short of need. That is a delivery risk rather than a discriminatory policy effect, so it is assessed as **negative low**. Mitigation lies in monitoring completions and tenure outcomes, especially affordable and accessible housing.

### **7.3 Business and employment policies, Policies 13 to 15**

These policies support local employment land, small business development, live/work units, home-based working and rural diversification. Overall, they are likely to have a **positive** effect for people who benefit from local employment, flexible working or reduced commuting, including some disabled people, carers, older workers and lower-income households.

Policy 14 on working from home is potentially equality-supportive because it recognises that home working can improve independence and wellbeing for people with limited mobility.

There is little evidence of negative differential impact, although some forms of live/work or self-employment opportunity may be less accessible to those without capital or digital access. This is again assessed as **negative low**, and largely mitigated by the Plan's parallel support for digital infrastructure.

### **7.4 Natural environment, heritage and design policies, Policies 16 to 22**

These policies safeguard the World Heritage Site setting, biodiversity, trees, tranquillity, dark skies, local character and non-listed historic assets. Overall they are **neutral to positive** in equality terms. They support environmental quality, local identity and wellbeing for all residents.

The main risk is indirect. Strict design, heritage or landscape controls can sometimes make it harder to adapt buildings or sites for accessibility, energy efficiency or specialist accommodation. However, the Plan elsewhere explicitly supports sensitive retrofit and accessible housing, which reduces the risk. The likely effect is therefore **neutral**, with **negative low** risk if such policies were ever applied inflexibly. Mitigation is to ensure that, in implementation, heritage and design policies are read alongside accessibility and equalities considerations.

### **7.5 Community facilities and infrastructure policies, Policies 23 to 29**

These policies are strongly relevant to equality. They support the protection and enhancement of community facilities, open space and recreation, Assets of Community Value, regional sports facilities, transport and communications, rights of way, digital infrastructure and mobile signal infrastructure.

The overall effect is **positive**, especially for **age, disability, pregnancy and maternity**, and **socio-economic disadvantage**. Policies 26 and 27 are particularly significant because they explicitly refer

to inclusive movement, protected characteristics, Least Restrictive Access, and routes usable by people of all ages and abilities, including those with limited mobility.

Policy 28 on digital infrastructure is also equality-positive, because poor connectivity can disproportionately disadvantage older residents, isolated households, people working from home, those with caring responsibilities, and those dependent on online services.

The only potential adverse effect is that some infrastructure improvements, such as communications structures or transport-related works, may have localised amenity effects for nearby residents. That is not an equalities issue in itself and is adequately controlled through criteria and design requirements. No material negative equalities effect is identified.

## 7A. Assessment Table

<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>Assessed impact</b>	<b>Comments and mitigation</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Positive</b>	Strong positive effect from policies for smaller homes, accessible homes, community facilities, safer routes, digital services and protection of local facilities. Older people are a substantial part of the population and the Plan responds directly to that. Monitor delivery of smaller and accessible dwellings.
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Positive</b>	Positive effect from accessible/adaptable and wheelchair housing, Least Restrictive Access, inclusive route design, attention to protected characteristics in transport policy, and support for local facilities and digital access. Ensure design and implementation continue to prioritise accessibility.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	No specific policy targets this group, but no discriminatory effect is evident. Stage 1 guidance on respectful language and inclusive engagement remains relevant.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	No clear differential impact identified.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<b>Positive / Neutral</b>	Positive where policies support accessible local services, safer walking routes, community facilities, and suitable housing. No negative impact identified.
<b>Race</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	No specific negative impact identified. Continue to ensure consultation materials and events remain accessible and inclusive. Stage 1 terminology guidance remains relevant.
<b>Religion and belief</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	No discriminatory effect identified. Protection of community facilities may indirectly benefit places and patterns of community gathering.
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Neutral / Positive</b>	No adverse impact identified. Some policies on safety, housing and local access may have indirect positive effects, particularly for carers and those managing household travel needs.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	No discriminatory effect identified. Inclusive engagement and terminology remain important.
<b>Socio-economic</b>	<b>Positive</b>	Not a protected characteristic under the Act, but highly relevant locally. The Plan responds positively to affordability, local housing need, rural isolation, community facilities and digital connectivity. Delivery should be monitored.
<b>Rural isolation</b>	<b>Positive</b>	Also not a protected characteristic, but a major local factor. The Plan responds through local housing, facilities, transport, rights of way and digital infrastructure.

## Mitigations Introduced / Recommended

**Inclusive engagement.** Continue to provide multiple ways to engage at later implementation stages, including online, paper and in-person methods, and remain open to requests for accessible formats. This follows the Stage 1 approach and remains appropriate at Stage 2.

**Accessible implementation.** When applying the NDP, ensure that design, heritage and landscape policies are not interpreted in ways that unintentionally undermine accessibility, adaptation or inclusive movement. This is especially important where proposals involve older people, disabled people or routes to services.

**Monitoring housing outcomes.** Monitor whether affordable homes, smaller homes, M4(2) and M4(3) dwellings, and homes suitable for older residents are actually delivered. This is the principal area where a positive policy intention may fail if implementation is weak.

**Monitoring infrastructure and access.** Monitor whether development actually improves pedestrian access, rights of way integration and digital connectivity, especially in the more isolated settlements.

## 8. Conclusions and Overview

The Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the Pre-Submission Draft Wendron Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely overall to have a **positive equality impact**. It responds appropriately to the main risks identified at Stage 1, especially the need to avoid exclusion in the plan-making process and the need to ensure that the resulting pattern of development is inclusive and accessible.

The strongest positive effects are likely to arise in relation to **age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic disadvantage and rural isolation**, because the Plan supports affordable and accessible housing, community facilities, local services, safe and inclusive movement, and improved digital connectivity. These are all particularly relevant in a parish with an ageing population, a substantial proportion of disabled and long-term ill residents, and significant barriers to services and housing.

No significant adverse or discriminatory effects have been identified in relation to the protected characteristics. A small number of **negative low** risks remain, mainly concerning whether delivery will match the Plan's positive intentions, especially for affordable and accessible housing, and whether heritage or design considerations might sometimes be applied too rigidly in individual cases. Those risks can be managed through monitoring and careful implementation.

The overall conclusion is therefore that the Wendron NDP can proceed on the basis that **no major change is required in principle**, but that continued attention should be given to implementation, monitoring and inclusive engagement. In Stage 1 terms, this aligns mainly with **Outcome 1**, while recognising a limited ongoing need for refinement and mitigation consistent with **Outcome 2** where detailed wording or implementation practice can better promote equality.

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