

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031)

Examination hearing sessions

Statement of North Hertfordshire District Council

Matter 11 – The housing allocations and the settlement boundaries: the Category A villages – Preston PR1

11.56 Is the proposed housing allocation deliverable? In particular, is it:

a) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?

1. Yes, site PR1 is owned by North Hertfordshire District Council are the landowners of the site. (ED3, p17 [appendix 1])

b) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?

2. Yes, no site specific objections to the allocations have been received from the highways authority. The site has the opportunity to connect into the existing pedestrian footpath network. Access will be off Templars Lane. There is a small, adjoining housing development already accessed off Templars Lane which has the provision for vehicular access through into this site. Pedestrian access would be via the same route and provide access to the village. PRow Preston 004 runs along the southern boundary of the site.

c) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

3. Yes. The site has been considered through the SHLAA and is considered a suitable location for development having regard to potential constraints (HOU9, site ref PR1. See Appendix 3, p.26 and Appendix 4, p.44). The site is bounded by residential development on three sides and Butchers Lane on the fourth providing clear boundaries to development.
4. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (TI1) and Local Plan Viability Assessment Update (TI2) show that this development is deliverable in infrastructure planning terms. The likely significant environmental affects of allocating the site have been considered through the Sustainability Appraisal (LP4, Appendix 6, pp.120-122 (621-623).
5. No fundamental constraints to development have been identified. Site-specific criteria for this site are identified in the plan (LP1, Section Four – Communities, Preston p196). These will be supplemented by the generic development management policy requirements that apply to all sites in relation to issues

including (but not limited to) affordable housing, housing mix, transport, design and heritage.

11.57 Is the proposed housing allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?

6. Yes, the proposed housing allocation in Preston is justified and appropriate.
7. In broad terms, each allocation in the plan is justified by (see the Council's Statements on Matters 5, 7 and 9):
 - The need to seek to meet the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF in a district that is currently highly constrained by Green Belt and other considerations;
 - The 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and plan-making requirements set out in Paragraph 14 of the NPPF. Potential adverse impacts and specific policies in the Framework which indicate development should be restricted have been properly considered. Mitigation measures have been identified to address key issues. A balanced planning judgement has been made on the benefits and impacts of each individual site.
 - The significant majority of the deliverable and developable sites identified in the SHLAA (HOU9) being required for allocation if the District is to be able to meet the OAN;
 - No preferable, deliverable alternative sites existing which would allow OAN to be met over the plan period in a substantively different way;
 - There being no reasonable prospect of other authorities in shared housing market areas being in a position to assist under the Duty to Co-operate should North Hertfordshire have resolved not to meet its OAN in full.

PR1

8. Preston is a Category A village within the district settlement hierarchy where draft Policy SP2 (as amended) allows general development within the defined settlement boundaries.
9. The site lies in the northwest part of Preston, bounded by Butchers Lane on side and adjoining existing residential development on the other three sides. It provides an opportunity to contribute to the District's overall housing number. It comprises an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land and is adjacent to Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area. Wain Wood SSSI lies to the northeast of Preston.

11.58 Is the proposed allocation the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?

10. The proposed allocation of site PR1 represents the only reasonable option for the expansion of Preston. Three other sites were considered but not allocated as they would have extended the village beyond a robust boundary. Preston is largely contained by Butchers Lane and Back Lane to the west and by Chequers Lane to the north. These roads provide strong boundaries to the Green Belt as well as a robust settlement boundary and opportunities for future development within the built core.

11.59 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

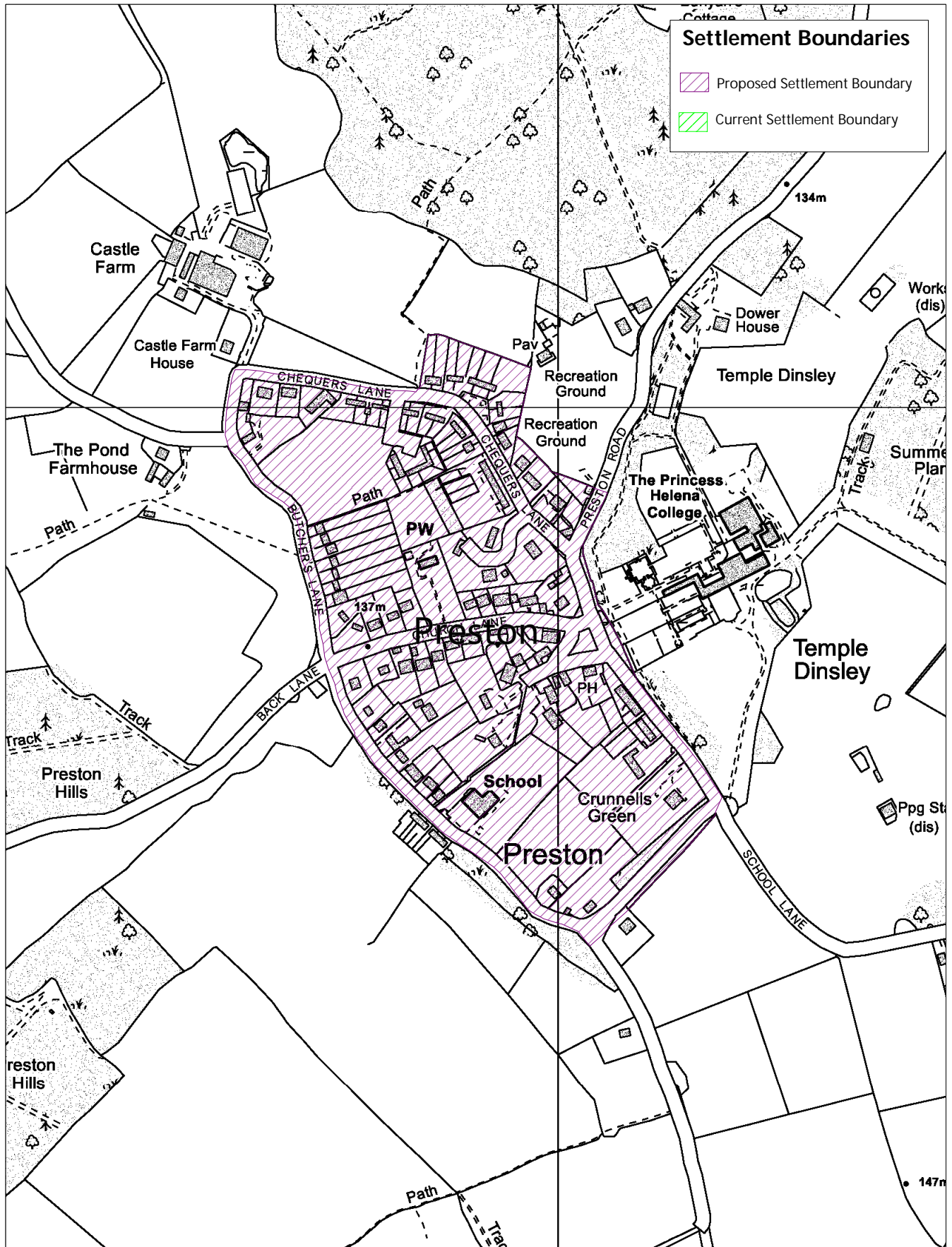
- a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?
- b) appropriate and justified?

11. Preston is located within the area of additional Green Belt having previously been located within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The Council's proposed amendment to the supporting text of Policy SP2 (LP3, amendment to paragraph 4.13, p.2) makes clear that settlements are those areas excluded from the prevailing policy designation of the surrounding rural area; the boundaries of Preston are 'inner' boundaries to the Green Belt rather than 'outer' boundaries to the settlement itself. The boundaries are Butchers Lane/ Back Lane to the west; Crunnells Green to the south; School Lane/Hitchin Road to the east; and rear boundaries of plots on the north side of Chequers Lane and part of Chequers Lane to the north.
12. The settlement boundary has been drawn to encompass the existing developed extent and provides the opportunity for future development within the built core and is justified by consistency with policy SP2 Settlement Hierarchy.
13. A map showing the existing and proposed settlement boundaries for Preston is attached to this Statement as Appendix 1 to aid interpretation.

Appendix 1: Current and proposed settlement extent of Preston

Plan overleaf.

Preston



Scale: 1:6000
Date: 08:01:18

