

# **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination in Public**

## **STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

As agreed between North Hertfordshire District Council  
and Hertfordshire County Council Property

Concerning Site Allocations: -

BA2: Land West of Clothall Road

BA3: Land South of Clothall Common

BA4: Land East of Clothall Common

**February 2018**

## **Introduction**

1. This is an agreed Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) in relation to the identification of sites BA2 - Land West of Clothall Road; BA3 - Land South of Clothall Common; and BA4 - Land East of Clothall Common as a proposed within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan at Chapter 13: Baldock, Policies BA2, BA3 and BA4. The purpose of this SoCG is to provide the Inspector with a summary of the areas of agreement for the matters to be examined during the Local Plan hearing sessions scheduled for February 2018.
2. This SoCG has been prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council (the Council) and is submitted jointly with Hertfordshire County Council Property (HCC). The County Council owns sites BA2, BA3 and BA4 (the Sites). This SoCG is the result of collaboration between the landowner and the Council. Both are committed to the implementation of the proposed sites.
3. This statement provides additional information on site-specific issues and constraints. The contents of this SoCG are without prejudice to the submission and determination of any future planning application(s) on these sites.
4. The Council's own assessments and evidence have been supplemented by ongoing discussion between the parties and the provision of additional information by WYG, acting as agents on behalf of HCC as landowner, as set out in this statement.
5. WYG on behalf of HCC have recently submitted a planning application for all three sites BA2, BA3 and BA4 (part). Planning application Ref: 17/04417/OP, validated on 8 January 2018, referred to as Baldock Southeast.
6. BA4 (part) refers to the western part of the site that falls within the Green Belt. The eastern part of BA4 was land reserved for a school in the current Local Plan, i.e. the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations 1996, referenced as site BEd/P2. This part of site BA4 is to be developed for residential development and subject to separate planning application.
7. Documentation submitted with the above Planning Applications provides more detailed information on the matters set out in this statement.

## **Sites BA2, BA3 and BA4**

8. All parties agree that the land identified within the proposed site allocations at sites BA2, BA3 and BA4 on the policies map are 'suitable, available and achievable' for development, meeting the criterion of effectiveness set out in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The sites are able to deliver housing development in accordance with the aims of the Local Plan.
9. These Sites, along with all other proposed site allocations, have been the subject of a full planning assessment and Sustainability Appraisal process. This is set out in the Local Plan evidence base, and is summarised in the 'Housing and Green Belt Background Paper' (HOU1) as updated by examination document ED3, 'Partial Update on Housing Monitoring and 5 Year Supply' .

10. All parties consider that the site allocations for housing are an appropriate land use. The capacity of the site allocations is for approximately 200 homes for site BA2, 200 homes for site BA3 and 95 homes for BA4 together with provision for educational facilities as required. All parties are committed to working together to bring forward an appropriate scheme.
11. The extent of the site allocations is detailed at Appendix A.

### **Layout and Infrastructure**

12. An illustrative masterplan has been submitted with the planning application Ref: 17/04417/OP linking all three sites. A copy is attached at Appendix B of this statement. The proposal is for residential development comprising up to 495 new homes. All parties support the provision of high quality and well thought out design within the site allocations to produce attractive places to live.
13. All parties are supportive of the provision of affordable housing as part of the development of these sites in accordance with Policy HS2: Affordable Housing.
14. The County Council's places importance on its role to assist in the delivery of new homes. As the single land of the site they are in control of the direction and pace of development as set out in paragraph 25 of this statement. .
15. A proposed new southern link road will be provided between Royston Road (B656) and Wallington Road connecting sites BA3 and BA4. A number of new pedestrian and cycle links will also be provided to further improve connectivity between the new development and to existing communities within the town of Baldock.
16. The provision of community facilities, open space, pedestrian and cycle access, where required, will be constructed as an integral part of the residential development. Financial contribution towards education provision and where appropriate, further financial contributions will be made to offset the impact of development on the local area, and these will be secured through a S106 Agreement.
17. Utility company plans show that the site is adjacent to strategic infrastructure and that all services (water, gas, electricity and telecommunications) are available. Utility capacity assessments and direct contact with all service providers show that any upgrades that are required to service the site can be achieved through reinforcement works commensurate with a scheme of this scale. It is not anticipated that utility provision will place a constraint upon delivery of these Sites.
18. The details of the proposed layout of the development for sites BA2, BA3 and BA4 will continue to be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and the Local Planning Authority as part of the current and any future planning application.

### **Assessment and treatment of potential planning constraints**

19. All parties agree that the assessment of key potential planning constraints, as shown in the 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' (HO9) for sites BA2, BA3 and BA4 is accurate.

20. It is agreed that the following issues as listed below and as set out in detail by WYG in Appendix C attached to this statement, warrant consideration alongside the proposed development at sites BA2, BA3 and BA4, and address the site-specific requirements as set out in Policies BA2, BA3 and BA4 in the Local Plan (LP1). Where necessary, measures to ensure these issues are appropriately addressed may be secured through conditions and / or legal agreements attached to any future planning permission.
- Landscape
  - Ecology and green infrastructure
  - Green Belt
  - Heritage
  - Highways and sustainable Transport
  - Water and Flood risk
  - Community facilities
21. Any such conditions and/or legal agreements will be subject to any relevant tests or regulations at the time of their imposition and/or agreement.
22. It is agreed that the issues as listed in paragraph 19 above and detailed in Appendix C is not necessarily exhaustive and that the Council (or other parties) may require further issues to be investigated and / or addressed as part of, and / or prior to the determination of the current or any future planning application.

#### **Proposed further alteration of Green Belt Boundary**

23. In response to the suggestion made by HCC in their Regulation 19 representation to the Proposed Submission Local Plan, it is proposed and agreed to modify the Policies Map (LP2a) to draw back the Green Belt boundary to the western edge of the Baldock bypass and Bridleway Weston 001 to the south which goes over the bypass leading from the rear of the mobile home park.
24. It is agreed this would create a more defensible permanent boundary along the length of the Baldock bypass from the bridge at Bridleway Weston 001 in the south to the junction with the B656, Royston Road in the north east, in accordance with paragraph 85 of the NPPF. The proposed modification to the site boundary of BA2 is shown on the map attached as Appendix B to the Council's Matter 10 hearing Statement and is attached at Appendix D to this statement for reference.

#### **Timetable**

25. It is noted that a planning application has been submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council for all three sites. As with any of the sites proposed to be removed from the Green Belt through the Local Plan, the delivery trajectory will depend on the date of the adoption of the Plan.
26. Based on current information, the parties agree that the housing trajectory set out in Examination Document ED3 represents an appropriate trajectory for the development of these sites. It is anticipated that the first completions will be achieved in the 2019/20

monitoring year with 100 dwellings anticipated across the three sites. Annual completions in the range of 150-275 dwellings per annum are projected until development of these sites has been completed.

- 27. It is anticipated that the southern link road would be provided ahead of the development of BA3 and BA4. Other contributions would be phased in line with development.

**Conclusion**

- 28. The proposed Local Plan allocations at Sites BA2, BA3 and BA4 constitute an appropriate and deliverable extension to Baldock which supports the vision and objectives of the Plan. It would extend Baldock to the southeast towards the bypass and make a significant contribution towards the housing and associated infrastructure needs of North Hertfordshire consistent with proposed settlement hierarchy.

**Declaration**

The content of this document is agreed for the purposes of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination.

Signed on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council

<<Company>> ...Michael Evans.....  
Position: Head of Estates



Date: 5th February 2018

And

Signed on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council

.....David Levett.....  
Position: Executive Member for Planning and Enterprise

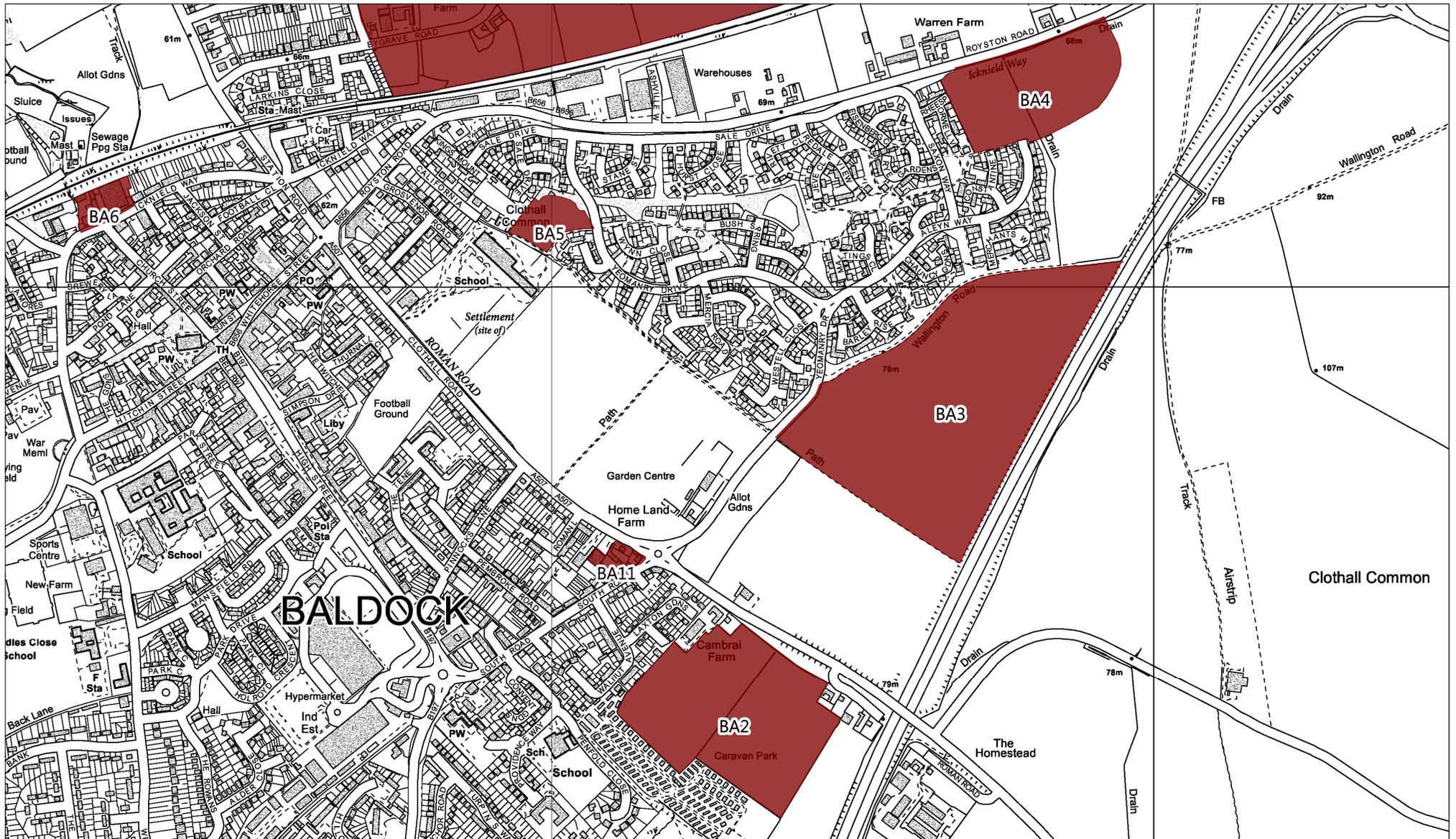
Date: 5th February 2018

## **Appendix A**

### **Extent of site allocations BA2, BA3 and BA4**



Appendix A - Extent of housing allocations BA2, BA3 & BA4



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## **Appendix B:**

### **Illustrative Masterplan for Site Allocations BA2, BA3 and BA4 – Baldock southeast**

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Legend  
Redline Boundary



Project title:  
**Baldock Southeast**

Drawing title:  
**Illustrative Masterplan**

Dwg N°: A090070-171\_303 Rev:

Drawn:LQ Checked:AC Date: 14/12/2017

Scale @ A2: 1:5,000



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## **Appendix C**

**Proposed response to potential planning constraints in relation to Site Allocations BA2, BA3 and BA4 – Drafted by WYG acting as agents for Hertfordshire County Council (the landowner).**



## **Assessment and treatment of potential planning constraints in relation to Site Allocations BA2, BA3 and BA4: Baldock Southeast**

### **Baldock Southeast** (planning application reference 17/04417/OP)

#### **Landscape**

1. The allocations are located outside the AONB.
2. The application proposals have been informed by a site-specific Landscape Assessment and Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
3. Landscaping is proposed in the areas indicated on the parameter plans submitted with the planning application.

#### **Ecology & Green infrastructure**

4. The allocations are free from environmental designations.
5. Policy NE5 'New and improved public open space and biodiversity' requires new development to provide open space in line with the Council's Open Space Standards. These are the Fields in Trust guidance for various types of open spaces. The Illustrative Masterplan submitted with the application shows how the various open spaces could be created through the parameters of the land uses. The plan shows the inclusion of formal play areas within the development areas, as well as less formal parkland spaces, and sports pitches. The precise nature of these will be determined in consultation with the community and other stakeholders through reserved matters submissions, however the open levels of open space exceed the Fields in Trust standards. This is set out in the development schedule accompanying the application plans.

#### **Green Belt**

6. Where Green Belt boundaries are amended, the NPPF requires that a new strong permanent and defensible boundary must be created (Paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF). The A505 provides an appropriate boundary for the new eastern edge of the Green Belt around Baldock, being strong, defensible and permanent.
7. It is proposed that the proposed major modification by NHDC to amend the Green Belt boundary at BA2, in line with the representations made by HCC Property (the



landowner) at Regulation 19 stage, will result in a stronger, permanent and more defensible Green Belt boundary.

8. The north-east of the application area adjoins a cattery which provides an existing boundary to development. The planning applications submitted for development at BA2, BA3 and BA4 seek to create an appropriate transition from the built-up area to the Green Belt boundary. This includes perimeter landscaping, structural planting and consideration of topography.

## Heritage

9. Baldock is known to be an area with high potential for archaeology. Initial studies have been undertaken to inform the principles of development. Policy HE4 'Archaeology' requires development proposals which affect heritage assets with archaeological significance to assess the impacts and justify the appropriateness of the solution. Initial archaeological and built heritage assessments have been undertaken to identify heritage assets and their significance. Further survey and assessment will be undertaken as the detail of the proposals develops.

## Highways and sustainable Transport

10. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan are submitted with the planning application, in accordance with pre-application discussions about the content of the submission with NHDC and HCC. These set out how a scheme could be implemented which achieves appropriate mitigation in terms of highway impacts, and successfully promotes sustainable travel.
11. Commitments to funding infrastructure in association with this application, including local highway improvements and sustainable transport measures will be made through a S106 agreement. The Transport strategy has regard to safety, efficiency and convenience in sustainable transport planning through design, in order to promote sustainable travel. This includes offsite and onsite improvements to walking and cycling facilities, as set out at Section 5 of the Travel Plan 'Sustainable Transport Modes'.
12. The Transport Assessment sets out that the key themes of the transport strategy for the application are integration with the town centre and the provision of infrastructure and links to services and facilities for both the existing and new occupants. The transport strategy is based on reducing the need to travel, which is achieved through the sustainable and accessible location of the site within the existing network, enhancing walking and cycling facilities, bus services and railway offer, and the creation of a new 'South Link Road'.



13. As part of the scheme, it is proposed to enhance walking and cycling connections with the town centre. This includes creating a new three-metre-wide shared footway and cycle way to the northern side of Clothall Road, and upgrading the puffin crossing on Clothall Road to a toucan crossing, to allow cyclists to cross.
14. New green space, recreation provision and walking/cycling routes will be provided within the scheme, and are carefully planned to encourage walking and cycling into the town centre.

### **Water and flood risk**

15. The entirety of the sites are located within Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk of flooding. No rivers or streams run through the sites and the only Ordinary Watercourses adjoin the edges of the site, next to existing development. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be provided across the site and consideration of the details of energy efficiency will be presented at reserved matters stage.

### **Facilities**

16. Financial contributions will be made via a S106 agreement for public facilities such as education.
17. New recreation facilities will be provided in the form of linear parks, open spaces, parkland, play spaces and facilities, and sports pitches.
18. Additional allotments will be provided alongside the existing allotments.

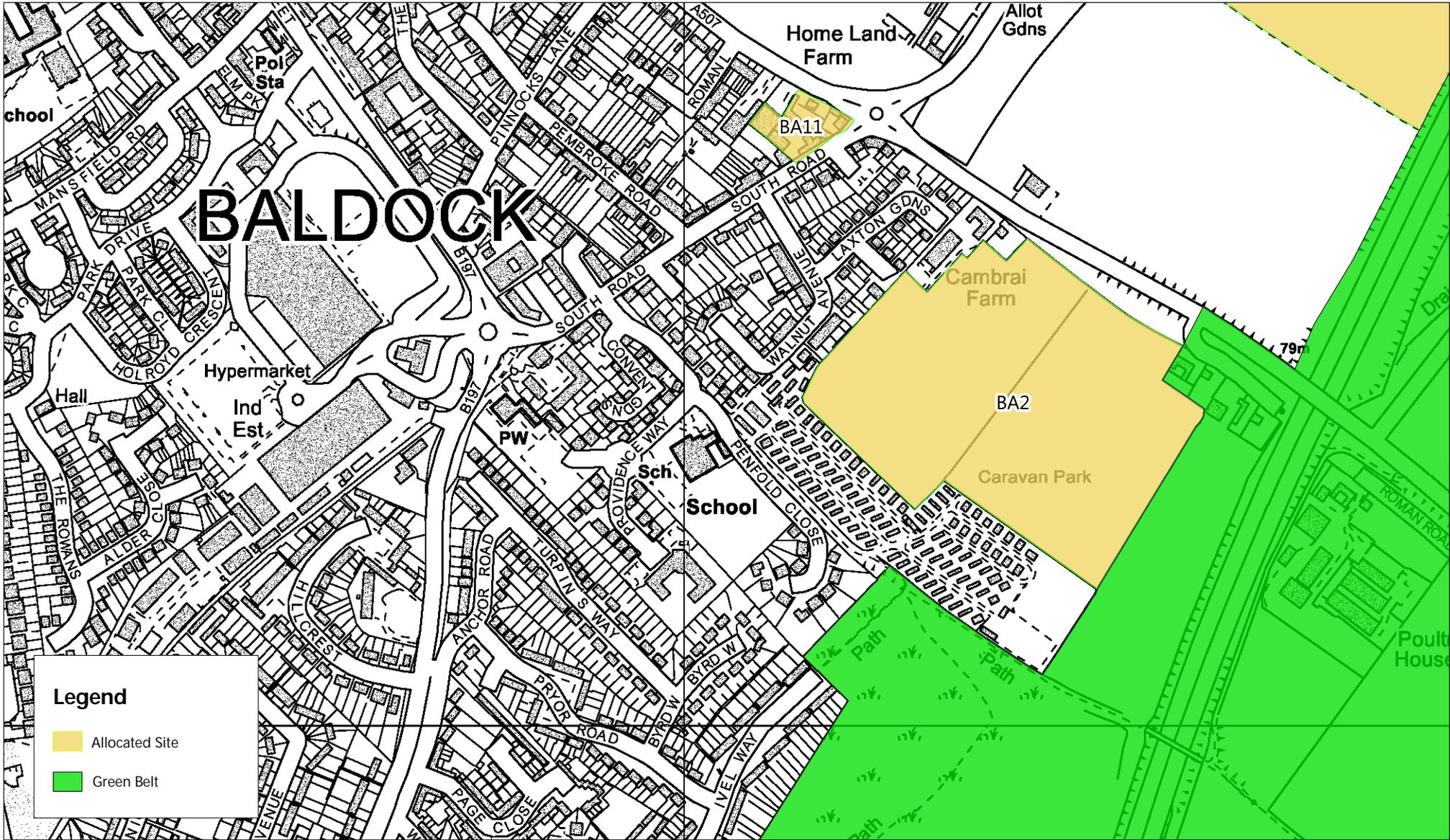


## **Appendix D**

**Site BA2 Proposed Modification to Green Belt boundary.**



Green Belt & Settlement Boundary as in Submission Local Plan

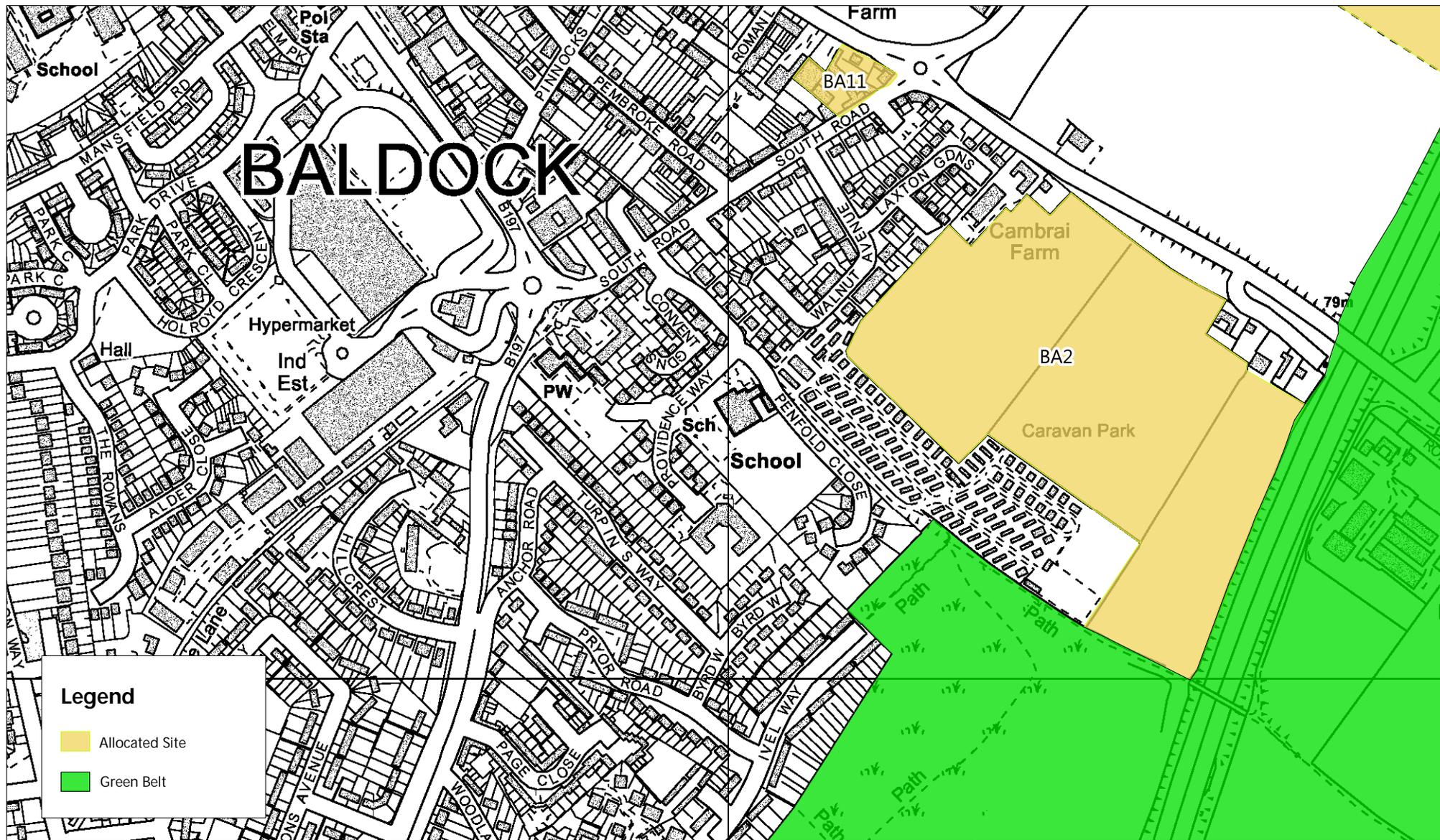


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Proposed Modification to Green Belt & Settlement Boundary



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