

PRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Proposed Changes to Housing Development Boundary

Land between Church Farm Lane and Church Lane Priston

Priston Parish Council recommends that the HDB be modified to exclude land fronting Church Farm Lane between the Village Hall and the Apple store. As marked up on the Map, the new boundary would follow the wall of the Village Hall car park and then take the line of Church Farm Lane until close by the Apple store. The new boundary would then strike north to join up with the existing boundary close to the Old Milking Parlour but with an inset as detailed (for reasons outlined below) to allow the possibility of development within the small area of land between the lane serving the Old Calf House etc and the Manor boundary.

The effect of these changes would be to create two HDBs with one common point. The western part would contain the Church Farm Barn conversions as well as Mead Cottage and Rectory Cottage while the eastern part would be the main part of the village. It is acceptable to have two HDBs within a village, ref Principle 4 of the B&NES guidelines.

There are two main reasons for proposing this change. First, there has already been a Planning Application to develop this land for housing (subsequently withdrawn) on the basis that it represents infill and is therefore consistent with policy on villages washed over by the Green Belt. This view was strongly contested by the Parish Council who argued that the site does not meet B&NES definition of infill as “the filling of small gaps within existing development e.g. the building of one or two houses on a small vacant plot in an otherwise extensively built up frontage”. The gap is not narrow, at least in the context of a small village like Priston and there is no extensively built-up frontage - merely a lane at one end and a small listed Apple store at the other separated by approximately 70 metres. Correspondence between the Applicant and the Case Officer clearly indicates that had the application not been withdrawn it would have been rejected on the grounds that it did not constitute infill. Despite the lapse of the Local Plan 2007, this analysis still applies as the Adopted Core Strategy specifically states that policy towards villages washed over by the Green Belt will continue to be determined by the previous Supplementary Planning Document, Building in the Green Belt.

Secondly, and of greater importance in the eyes of the Parish Council, the land in question constitutes the setting for a number of historic buildings (the Grade I Church and Grade II Church Farm House, Apple Store and Village Hall). The setting of this group of buildings, already compromised to some extent by modern housing development, would be further and significantly damaged by development within the area in question. The importance of preserving the setting of heritage assets is expressed in Policy CP6 (2) of the Adopted Core Strategy. Once again, correspondence between the Case Officer and the Applicant shows a high level of concern at the impact of the development. The Parish Council argues that any development would be seriously detrimental from a heritage point of view and that the land concerned is also an important part of the Green Infrastructure of the village and deserves protection under Policy CP7.

The Parish Council therefore contends that, as the opportunity to revise HDBs has become available, it would be sensible to exclude this land as development there would be inconsistent with Policy. On the other hand, the small inset referred to earlier does leave open the possibility of small scale development in the immediate area. The Council feels that this would hardly impinge on the setting of the historic buildings though the lesser issue of whether the site constitutes infill remains of concern.

The Council also notes that there are other gaps within the built up frontage along the main village streets which are within the Housing Development Boundary. These lie within the gardens of existing properties and the Council seeks guidance on how The Planning Authority might view an application to develop such land, as a result of which it may be appropriate to seek further changes in the HDB.

