

Topic Paper

Definition of Settlement

Boundaries

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Topic Paper provides background to the definition of Settlement Boundaries, their justification and how they have been delineated on the Policies Map. Settlement Boundaries were known as “Physical Limits” in the existing Local Plan (Local Development Framework)¹.
- 1.2 This Local Plan makes provision for more than enough development to meet needs over the plan period and therefore satisfies the presumption in favour of sustainable development for plan making. In order for the vision and strategy to be successful, it is necessary that the Local Plan controls and limits development in certain locations. The Local Plan also needs to give clear signals to developers, the community and infrastructure providers about where development will take place and where it will not take place. Furthermore, to meet objectives on preserving natural resources and the countryside, the Local Plan must ensure undeveloped land in the countryside is not unnecessarily lost to development in excess of the needs accommodated by the Local Plan. Settlement boundaries are a useful and positive tool in meeting these objectives.
- 1.3 Settlement boundaries define the built up area of settlements, and subject to the other policies of this Local Plan, indicate where development for housing, employment and town centre development would be suitable. They therefore allow for flexibility in the Local Plan by potentially allowing more development than is planned for by the allocation of specific sites, at the same time as avoiding the loss of further undeveloped land in the countryside and further urban sprawl. Limiting development beyond settlement boundaries lowers land values in these locations by removing the ‘hope value’ for high value developments such as market housing. This allows the Council to develop ‘exception site policies’ which allow for certain types of development such as 100% affordable housing schemes or schemes for the relocation of homes at risk from coastal erosion which wouldn’t otherwise be viable if they were competing for land with market housing.
- 1.4 Policy WLP1.3 defines settlement boundaries and restricts the development of new residential, employment and retail uses outside of settlement boundaries.

2 Options for the New Waveney Local Plan Consultation (April 2016)

- 2.1 One question was asked in relation to the definition of Settlement Boundaries in the April 2016 consultation.

Question 17: Should physical limits be tightly defined around existing built development or more loosely to allow for more small scale development around settlement edges?

1.1 _____

¹ See Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (adopted 2011)

- 2.2 In response to question 17 Town and Parish Councils mostly supported tightly defined boundaries with some room for exceptions. Ilketshall St Margaret Parish Council believed the boundaries should be retained as they are. Developers generally supported more loosely defined boundaries. The Somerleyton and Sotterley Estates supported tighter boundaries. Most members of the public supported tight boundaries however some did suggest some exceptions such as affordable housing developments.

3 First Draft Local Plan Consultation (2017)

- 3.1 The First Draft Local Plan (July 2017) included Policy WLP1.3 on Settlement Boundaries given the support for the retention of Settlement Boundaries in the April 2016 Options for the New Waveney Local Plan Consultation. The strategy within the First Draft Local Plan also sought to increase levels of development in rural areas. Therefore, the plan identified Settlement Boundaries around all towns and larger villages and smaller villages as defined in Policy WLP7.1 of the Local Plan. The effect of this is that a larger number of settlements now benefit from Settlement Boundaries than do in the existing Local Plan (Local Development Framework).

- 3.2 The settlements which benefited from Settlement Boundaries as indicated in the First Draft Local Plan were:

- Towns
 - Lowestoft
 - Beccles and Worlingham
 - Halesworth and Holton
 - Bungay
 - Southwold and Reydon
- Larger Villages
 - Barnby and North Cove
 - Blundeston
 - Corton
 - Kessingland
 - Somerleyton
 - Wangford
 - Wrentham
- Smaller Villages
 - Brampton
 - Homersfield
 - Ilketshall St Lawrence/Spexhall
 - Lound

- Mutford
- Ringsfield
- Rumburgh
- Willingham (Shadingfield and Willingham St. Mary)
- Westhall
- Wissett

3.3 The Settlement Boundaries as outlined in Policy WLP1.3 defined the built up area of settlements and were tightly drawn around settlements reflecting the comments at the previous stage of consultation.

Responses to the First Draft Local Plan Consultation (2017)

- 3.4 The comments received during the First Draft Local Plan consultation were generally in favour of the Settlement Boundaries Policy (WLP1.3). South Norfolk District Council, Somerleyton Estate and Sotterley Estate all supported the provision of Neighbourhood Plans to make adjustments to Settlement Boundaries. Holton Parish Council supported the comments of Cllrs G and A Cackett to extend the Holton boundary to cover their entire property. Members of the public stated that the boundary for Westhall had been drawn too tightly and questioned what had happened to 'physical limits'. Gladman Developments Ltd. objected to the policy stating that it arbitrarily restricted potentially suitable development on the edge of settlements.
- 3.5 Following the First Draft Local Plan consultation and reviewing the comments received relating to WLP1.3 Settlement Boundaries no changes were considered to be necessary to the policy. However, the Settlement Boundaries were reviewed individually against the criteria below to ensure a consistent approach to their definition and reflect the comments received during the Regulation 18 consultations.

4 Definition of Settlement Boundaries

- 4.1 The following criteria were used to define what could be included within Settlement Boundaries. These were partially based on the criteria which defined the Physical Limits as set out in the Local Development Framework, with some alterations and additions to align the criteria with the policies of the NPPF.
- 4.2 The underlying principal has been to define a tightly drawn boundary based on the built up area of the settlements.
- 4.3 For some settlements numerous clusters of contiguous built-up areas are also covered by Settlement Boundaries. Sites with planning permissions on the edge of settlements which are under construction have also been included within settlement boundaries.

- 4.4 Clearly defined physical features form the boundaries where possible. These include discernible ground features such as walls, hedgerows, streams, lines of communication such as roads, and field boundaries
- 4.5 Buildings which are located on the perimeter of a settlement but separated from the main built up area by an area of open land i.e. buildings not surrounded by other buildings have not been included within the Settlement Boundaries. These buildings have also not been included if they are too far from the settlement to be considered part of it and if they do not relate to the built form of the settlement.
- 4.6 All buildings on the edge of a settlement that have a clear rural character or use, such as farm buildings, have been excluded from the boundaries
- 4.7 Formal areas of open space on the edge of settlements have been excluded from the boundaries. If these areas are surrounded by the main built up area of the settlement, they have been included within the boundaries.
- 4.8 Areas that have good quality landscapes or have historic value that should be preserved and protected from intrusive development have been excluded from the boundaries where possible. If they are surrounded by the main built up area of the settlement, they have been included within the boundary.
- 4.9 The Settlement Boundaries for a settlement will not always include the entire curtilage of the property or garden where development within the plot would have the potential to encroach into the open countryside or result in ribboning development along a highway.