

ROSS-ON-WYE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY Part 1, 2018

METHODOLOGY

The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group decided that it would be appropriate to determine a revised settlement boundary for Ross-on-Wye because of (a) a wish to limit development in a number of locations and also (b) a wish to include some areas currently outside the built up area.

The methodology for determining the new settlement boundary follows Herefordshire Council's guidance to Neighbourhood Plan groups¹. The key criteria relevant to Ross are:

1. **Lines of communication** - The boundaries trace the edge of the built up area, therefore excluding roads, paths, railways and other lines of communications.
2. **Physical features** - Follow physical features, such as: buildings, field boundaries or curtilages. However, in order to conserve the character and to limit expansion, settlement boundaries can exclude large gardens, orchards and other areas.
3. **Planning History** - Consider existing commenced planning permissions, recent refusals, planning appeal decisions and previous Local Plan inspector's comments concerning areas on the edge of the town.
4. **Town Enhancements** - Settlement boundaries should include buildings and associated land that make up the town form. In some edge of town areas, boundaries may need to include small areas of land and/or buildings which offer the opportunity for improvements to the entrance of the town or ensure infrastructure improvements or a general enhancement to the town.
5. **Recent development** - Settlement boundaries should include new developments which may have occurred recently. It is also advisable to include sites that have received planning permission within the settlement boundary*.
6. Land within the Neighbourhood Development Plan allocated for housing, employment or other uses should be included within the boundary.
7. Settlement boundaries should be drawn to facilitate an appropriate level of proportional growth within the plan period. If land within the boundary is not formally allocated, there will be a requirement to demonstrate that there is enough available capacity within the boundary to enable development to take place.

This report also refers to more extensive guidance on methodology from Wiltshire Council that also draws on the methodology used by three other authorities². The Wiltshire approach differs slightly from the above on one aspect. Wiltshire (and the others they reference) recommend excluding (a) existing permissions unless already commenced and (b) allocations in the plan. In relation to sites with permission but where construction has not started, the Wiltshire guidance states that:

"Until they are built, there is still a degree of uncertainty over the exact layout of the urban form. Indeed, they may not be built out at all. However, for those planning permissions where development has commenced, there is a much greater certainty over the final built form of the development."

1

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/3711/guidance_note_20_guide_to_settlement_boundaries

2

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s132056/Appendix%20%20Topic%20Paper%201%20-%20Settlement%20Boundary%20Review%20Methodology.pdf>

The map that follows currently excludes sites with permission but where construction has not yet started and sites put forward in this Neighbourhood Plan. However, in both cases, the relevant areas of land are shown on the map, differently annotated. Once construction has started on sites with permission and the detailed final boundary can be determined, these will be included in a revised boundary. Any sites put forward in this Neighbourhood Plan, which are accepted by the Examiner (and given a successful referendum), will be included within the settlement boundary only when construction has commenced.

The settlement boundary work draws heavily on the landscape assessment work undertaken by Herefordshire Council and the Wye Valley AONB team. This material is in the Landscape section of the Character Portfolio.

LOCAL EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION

In addition to an on-site examination by the Chair of the Steering Group and one of the plan's consultants, reference was made in particular to (a) several aspects of landscape character as highlighted in the associated Landscape Evidence Report, (b) assessments of peripheral sites submitted during the SHLAA process and (c) as yet provisional proposals from Herefordshire Council about land east of the A40, notably but not solely land in their ownership. In addition, one relevant site has secured planning permission just off the Hildersley roundabout, SHLAA Reference HLAA/199/02. Finally, as elaborated below, the plan is putting forward three sites outside the current boundary, evidence for which is in the Development Sites Options Appraisal.

THE PROPOSED BOUNDARY

North, West and South West

In general, the boundary to the north, west and south west is mainly determined by the Wye Valley AONB and other landscape criteria, all of which suggests that these are areas of medium or high sensitivity. Details of this stretch of boundary can be taken into further detail in the comments (by Wiltshire Council and the AONB) about sites submitted in the SHLAA process. There are a few places along this boundary where large gardens have been excluded (as covered in the guidance quoted above).

As shown on the map, there are the following to note:

- One site currently outside the built up area, at the top of Fernbank Road, has permission but construction has not yet started.
- Two sites are put forward in the plan for allocation for housing (or part housing) development: Cleeve Field and Stoney Stile. Although these sites are in the AONB and beyond the edge of the existing settlement, the assessments undertaken for the SHLAA supported development on these sites.

Note also that the consultants advising the Steering Group for the Walford Neighbourhood Plan have suggested that a possible site on the south west edge of Ross-on-Wye should not be advanced because of the same landscape sensitivity issues as raised by Herefordshire Council in their SHLAA.

East

As well as the fact that this whole area is outside the AONB, there are two key points to note.

1. There are as yet no full planning permissions for housing development directly east of the A40 so the boundary would include those once any development is finally commenced.

There are now planning permissions for employment development at Model Farm and for housing at Pigeon House (shown on the map) but construction has yet to commence. However, Herefordshire Council has considerable land holdings in this area (including Model Farm). The future for these areas is as yet unknown, so no other specific areas can be included on the map.

2. The current settlement boundary comes well towards the town centre from the A40 to include what has been described elsewhere as a large 'wedge' of currently non-built up land. That is all titled 'Broadmeadows/Tanyard' in the Neighbourhood Plan and is all put forward for development on a criteria-led basis. It is therefore shown as such on the map and the boundary would be extended to include all of the land if development proceeded.

South East

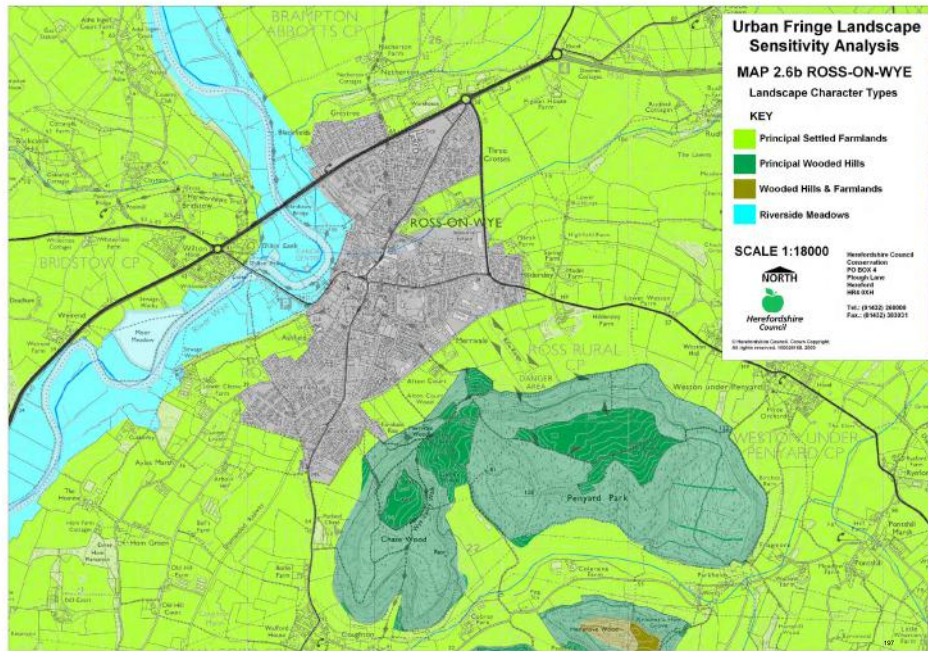
This is the only stretch of potential settlement boundary where there may be conflicting views between the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Herefordshire Council, not in terms of the existing boundary as shown on the map but in terms of future development.

This whole strip of land between the A40 and Fernbank Road and between the Town and Country Trail and Penyard Wood and Chase Wood is as yet undeveloped. It is categorised as two areas in the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis report³. One – Merrivale – is classified as being of Medium sensitivity, the other – Town and Country Trail to Penyard Park/Chase Wood - is classified as being of High sensitivity.

The map shows the Local Plan Strategic Site of Hildersley, outside the current boundary. The area of land immediately south west of that up to PGL Travel's premises on Penyard Lane (Merrivale as above) was submitted in the SHLAA process as "*O/Ross/007: Land to the south of Alton Road Industrial Estate*". Despite several comments about landscape value, it was assessed to be suitable. The next stretch of land beyond PGL Travel and up to Fernbank Road (Town and Country Trail to Penyard Park as above), assessed in the SHLAA as "*O/Ross/008: Land at Alton Court Farm*", was regarded as unsuitable because of very similar landscape issues to those highlighted for the site mentioned above. In fact it was considered to have "*significant value as a landscape resource*". The importance of this whole area is also reinforced by how it is shown on Natural England's Character Area map, as relevant to Ross and surrounds.

The Steering Group were disturbed by the different conclusions about these two areas. As a result, in the view of the Steering Group, reflecting many comments received during public consultation and given the apparent certainty of the Hildersley development, all of this stretch of land is considered to have significant landscape value. It is therefore seen to be essential to retain the settlement boundary as, in effect, the line of the Town and Country Trail and the existing built area boundary. This is picked up on the map below from the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis report.

3



In relation to point 7 in the Herefordshire guidance about enabling an “*appropriate level of proportional growth within the plan period*”, it should be clear that the addition of the very large Broadmeadows/Tanyard area alone would deliver above the Local Plan targets.

The proposed Settlement Boundary Map follows overleaf.