

Defining a Settlement/Built-Up Area Boundary

It is important that the boundary should take account of development and commitments that have occurred since the previous boundary was set. It should also include sites that are allocated in development plans (unless they are detached from the settlements and designated as exception sites).

The basic approach to defining the settlement area is illustrated by a set of draft principles below. Consistency is the key. The principles once agreed will need to be applied consistently when defining settlement boundaries and where judgements are made these will need to be noted.

Principle 1:

The boundary will be **drawn tightly** around the built-up areas and, where possible, will follow defined features such as walls, hedgerows, paths and roads and other lines of communications that are likely to have a degree of permanence.

Principle 2:

Boundaries will include:

- a. Buildings and associated land that make up the settlement area, including recent new development
- b. Existing commitments for built development i.e. unimplemented planning permissions (unless there is real doubt that they will be implementable within the plan period)
- c. Buildings on the edge of settlements which relate closely to the economic or social function of the settlement e.g. churches, community halls etc
- d. Important amenity areas which form part of the character of the settlement
- e. Curtilages which are contained and visually separated from the open countryside and are clearly part of a network of buildings that form part of the built-up area
- f. Site allocations in the LP or NP – but not those subject to an exception site policy
- g. The entire part of a dwelling and attached outbuildings, but not necessarily those that are physically separate

Principle 3:

Boundaries will exclude:

- a. Important gaps
- b. Playing fields or open space at the edge of settlements (unless such open spaces are surrounded by the built-up area of the settlement and they are to be designated as open space to protect them from development)
- c. New allocations for affordable housing
- d. Isolated development, or individual groups of dwellings, or areas of business/employment, which are physically or visually detached from the settlement (
- e. Farm buildings or agricultural buildings on the edge of the settlement which relate more to the countryside than the settlement
- f. Large gardens and other open areas which are visually open and relate to the open countryside rather than the settlement
- g. Large gardens or other areas whose inclusion or possible development would harm the structure, form and character of the settlement
- h. Camping and caravan sites unless in year-round permanent residential use
- i. Agriculture, forestry, equestrian development, minerals extraction, landfill, water features, public utilities (sewage treatment plants, substations)

Principle 4:

Boundaries do not need to be continuous. It may be appropriate given the nature and form of a settlement to define two or more separate elements.

Principle 5:

Property ownership boundaries should not form the basis for defining the built-up area. The key is, the visual openness of the land and whether it relates best to the built-up area or countryside.