

# Settlement Boundaries: Methodology

## Background

Settlement Boundaries provide clear, defensible boundaries around settlements within which development will normally be confined. They have been used as a planning policy tool in East Northamptonshire for a considerable time and are a well understood planning tool for managing development. 93% of respondents to a questionnaire circulated to households in Ringstead in 2018 agreed that a Settlement Boundary is a good way of controlling development in Ringstead.

Settlement Boundaries are currently defined by the East Northamptonshire Local Plan, adopted in 1996. The Local Plan has largely been replaced and the Settlement Boundaries it defines are out of date. The Ringstead Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to review the Settlement Boundaries to ensure they remain up to date. The Settlement Boundaries distinguish between areas of development and development potential and areas of restraint, such as countryside.

## Methodology

The review will ensure that, generally, open areas of countryside- agricultural land, paddocks, meadows, woodland, rivers and lakes, and other greenfield land (except for residential curtilages)- will continue to lie outside Settlement Boundaries.

The following methodology applies:

- Where possible, boundaries should follow a defined feature that is visible on-site and on an OS plan e.g. field boundary, building, road, stream, wall or fence.
- Boundaries should generally follow the curtilage of properties. In the case of residential gardens, occasionally the curtilage of the property is not well defined or so large that it appears to form part of the countryside surrounding the settlement. In these cases, the boundary should be defined to protect the landscape setting of the settlement.
- Isolated or sporadic development which is clearly detached from the principal built-up area should be excluded from within the boundary.
- Boundaries need not be continuous. It may be appropriate given the form of a settlement to define two or more separate areas.
- Settlement Boundaries should be extended to include peripheral sites where there is an extant planning permission for residential or employment development. Similarly, sites that are to be allocated for development should be included within settlement boundaries.
- Peripheral playing fields, environmental space, garden centres and nurseries, paddocks, allotments and community gardens should not be included within the boundary.
- Sewage Treatment Works, electricity sub-stations, pumping stations and other utility buildings on the edge of a settlement should be excluded from within the boundary.
- Agricultural buildings may be included in development boundaries if they are well related in terms of scale and positioning to the rest of the settlement. Account will also be taken of the availability of defensible boundaries and the age of the building (i.e. how established the building is in the settlement).