

ROSS-ON-WYE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

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.

In line with the guidance, the map that follows later includes peripheral sites with planning permission (whether or not construction has started) and sites allocated in this Neighbourhood Plan (annotated as such).

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.

The changes from the previous settlement boundary are relatively minor to the south west of the town because of the proposed allocation of two peripheral sites. There are more significant potential changes to the east, elaborated in the relevant section below.

¹ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/3711/guidance_note_20_guide_to_settlement_boundaries

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.

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 Herefordshire Council and the Wye Valley 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 so is included.
- 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.

East

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

1. The current settlement boundary comes well towards the town centre from the A40, excluding 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 could be extended in the future to include all or part of this land if development proceeded. Inclusion of this whole area would then result in a very clear boundary to the east.
2. Looking to the east, beyond this very clear boundary, there is as yet only one full planning permission for development. That is for the Model Farm employment development site. Outline permission has been secured for the Pigeon House development, but both this and Model Farm are shown on the map as outside the boundary. This is because Herefordshire Council has considerable land holdings in this area (including Model Farm) and there is potential for further major development – in total – of what is addressed in the plan as 'Land East of the A40'.

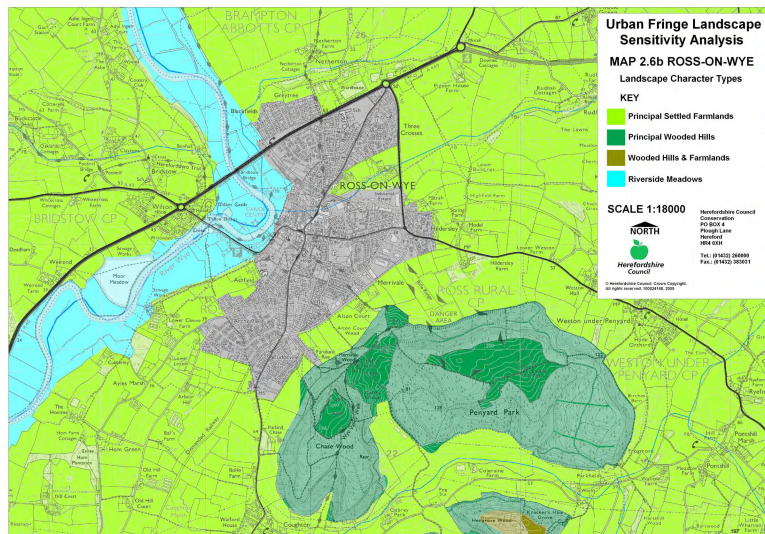
South East

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 Hildersley to the east and Fernbank Road to the west, 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 report². 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, for which outline permission has been granted, inside the boundary as amended here. 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 cautionary 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".

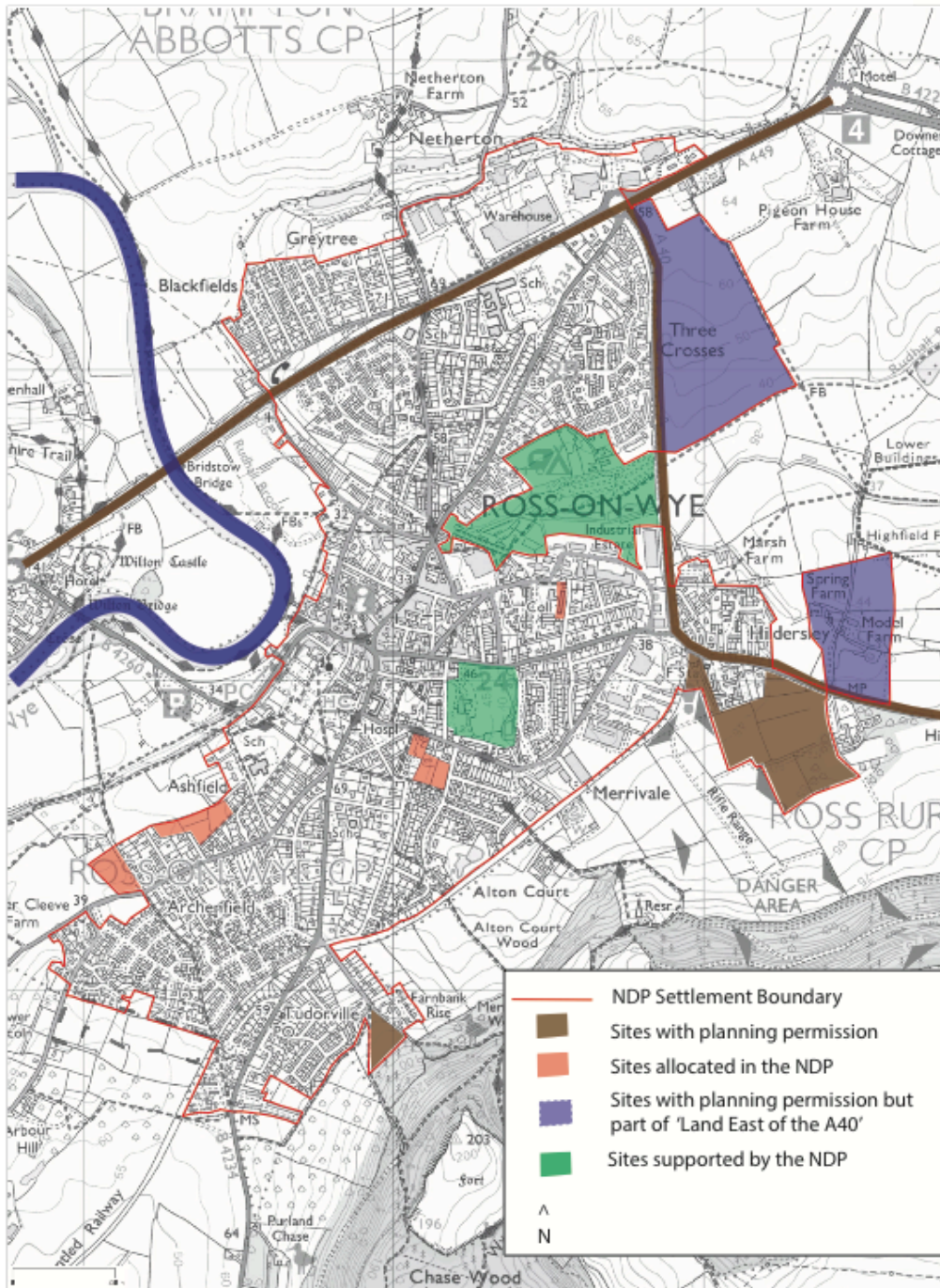
The Steering Group were disturbed by the different conclusions about these two areas. As a result, in the view of the Steering Group, reflecting many comments received during public consultation and given the apparent certainty of the Hildersley development, all of this stretch of land is considered 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 report².



² https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/187/urban_fringe_sensitivity_analysis_2010

In relation to point 7 in the Herefordshire guidance about enabling an “*appropriate level of proportional growth within the plan period*”, permissions granted to date and those proposed in the plan would deliver above the Local Plan targets. This would be even more the case should some or all of the Broadmeadows/Tanyard come forward for development.

The proposed Settlement Boundary Map (as also included in the main plan) follows overleaf.



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