

Kimbolton Neighbourhood Development Plan

Settlement Boundary Report

November 2016

Introduction

This paper sets out the approach used to define a settlement boundary for the village of Kimbolton for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. The paper summarises the background to the settlement boundary, the approach used and its application to Kimbolton. The proposed settlement boundary is shown in Appendix 1.

Background

A settlement boundary is a line drawn on a plan around a village which reflects its built form. In general there is a presumption in favour of development within the settlement boundary and any land and buildings outside of the boundary line are usually considered to be open countryside where development is regulated by strict planning policies.

Policy RA2 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy identifies villages to which growth should be directed. This Policy explains that sustainable housing growth will be supported in or adjacent to these settlements in order to enable development that has the ability to bolster existing service provision, improve facilities and infrastructure and meet the needs of the communities concerned. Outside these settlements, new development is strictly controlled and in the case of housing, limited to affordable housing or the residential conversion of existing rural buildings.

In the case of the Kimbolton Neighbourhood Plan area the Policy RA2 settlement is the village of Kimbolton only. The Core Strategy also indicates that where appropriate, Neighbourhood Plans should seek to define the extent of these settlements with a settlement boundary or equivalent tool (para 4.8.23). With this in mind, and on the basis of the guidance contained in the Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 20: Guide to Settlement Boundaries – it is considered that the benefits of a settlement boundary – principally the certainty that this provides to the making of planning decisions and the ability to prevent ‘ribbon development’, outweighs the disadvantages.

Approach

The approach to the definition of the settlement boundary was based on the Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note referred to above and supplemented by additional clarification where appropriate. In summary, these criteria are:

1. Lines of communication. The boundaries should trace the edge of the built up area excluding roads, paths and other forms of communication.
2. The boundary should 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. This may mean that occasionally the boundaries do not fully relate to the physical features surrounding the village.
3. Free standing, individual or groups of dwellings, farm buildings or other structures detached or peripheral to the main built up area of the settlement are excluded.

4. Planning history – existing commenced planning permissions, recent refusals and planning appeal decisions should be considered.
5. Village enhancements – settlement boundaries should include buildings and associated land that make up the village form. In some cases the boundary may need to include all areas of land and / or buildings which offer the opportunity for improvements to the entrance of the village or ensure infrastructure improvements or a general enhancement to the village.
6. Important amenity areas which form the character of the settlement and which can be protected from development by policy should be included.
7. If land is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan for housing then this should be included within the boundary.
8. Individual plots or small scale development sites (less than five units) that would provide rounding off opportunities in areas physically and visually related to the settlement should be included within the settlement boundary.

On the basis of these criteria, the settlement boundary should exclude those areas deemed to relate physically to the countryside and those areas of greenfield land that would unnecessarily increase land-take, increase village sprawl or result in 'ribbon' development. The settlement boundaries do not need to be contiguous; it may be appropriate given the nature and form of some settlements to define two or more separate areas.

Application to Kimbolton

The starting point for the assessment is the Characterisation Study completed in 2016 which seeks to define the character of the settlement (including their setting) and the wider countryside of the Parish.

The Character Study identifies two distinct parts of the settlement – Stockton (the area around Stockton Cross, Stockton Bury and Lower Stockton) and secondly Kimbolton (the eastern part of the settlement along New Road (the A4112) and Church Bank).

The Characterisation Study identifies the gap between these two areas to the south of Stockton Court and to the north of Brook Farm as being an important part of the character of the settlement as a whole. The settlement boundary is therefore in two parts consistent with the method set out above.

In terms of the detail, and using the criteria set out above, the identification of the settlement boundary was based on desk-top research supplemented by a series of site visits and a search of relevant planning history. The identification of the detailed settlement boundary was a relatively straightforward exercise with the exception of three areas. These three areas were the area around Kimbolton Primary School, Lower Stockton and Stockton Bury.

Kimbolton Primary School has a strong functional relationship to the settlement. However, the school complex, associated car park and playing fields are physically detached from the nucleated part of the settlement by the 'gap' formed by the fields and orchards to the east of Little Britain. It has the character of a free-standing complex of buildings which are not visually related to The village.

Lower Stockton forms the southern element of the historic core of the village strung out along the lane which runs uphill to Stockton Cross. The group of buildings which make up Lower Stockton are separated from the main part of the village to the north by a gap of some 70 metres. This gap is made up of open fields on the western side of the lane and the extensive grounds of Brook Farm to its east. The Cogwell Brook also flows through this gap and is crossed by the lane to the immediate north of the property known as Lower Stockton. However, the curved alignment, gradual slope and sunken nature of the lane with its high hedgerows visually ties Lower Stockton to the rest of the village and it is considered that on balance, Lower Stockton is too significant an element of the village to be excluded from the settlement boundary.

The boundary has been drawn to include the extensive grounds of Brook Farm. Brook Farm was originally accessed via a bridge over the Cogwell Brook and through the haulage yard onto the lane. When the property was last sold, the bridge was removed and the present access created in the form of a long and winding drive across an area of former orchard. This open area has been maintained and has the character of a landscaped garden domestic in character and an integral part of the Brook Farm property. Brook Farm is a Grade II listed building and the grounds form an important part of its setting. While the inclusion of the grounds within the settlement boundary could be seen to render them as being suitable in principle for some infill development, the priority would be the preservation of the setting of the listed buildings.

Stockton Bury is a historic former farmstead and renowned four acre garden on the western edge of Stockton. The gardens surround an attractive collection of historic buildings including tithe barn, mill and dovecote. The gardens extend to the west of the buildings parallel with the A4112 towards its junction with A49. The complex of buildings occupy the eastern part of the site and there is no significant gap with the main part of the village to the east. The gardens are intrinsically linked to the historic buildings and contain a number of structures and hard landscaping which distinguish them from the more open surrounding countryside. It is considered that the buildings and gardens should be included within the settlement boundary.