

West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2036

Review of settlement boundaries

Guidance notes for town/parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups

As part of our Local Plan Review (LPR), we are undertaking a review of the settlement boundaries across the District.

What are settlement boundaries?

Settlement boundaries are a long established planning tool. They identify the main built up area of a settlement within which development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable.

What settlements have boundaries in West Berkshire?

At present, the following settlements across the District have boundaries:

Aldermaston	Burghfield Common	Hampstead Norreys	Streatley
Aldermaston Wharf	Chieveley	Hermitage	Tadley/Pamber Heath
Ashmore Green	Cold Ash	Hungerford	Thatcham
Beenham	Compton	Kintbury	Theale
Boxford	Curridge	Lambourn	Tidmarsh
Bradfield	Donnington	Leckhampstead	Eastern Urban Area (Tilehurst, Calcot, Purley)
Bradfield Southend	East Garston	Lower Basildon	Upper Basildon
Brightwalton	East Ilsley	Mortimer	Upper Bucklebury
Brightwalton Green	Eastbury	Newbury	West Ilsley
Brimpton	Eddington	Pangbourne	Woolhampton
Burghfield	Enborne Row	Peasemore	Wickham
Burghfield Bridge	Great Shefford	Stockcross	Yattendon

Why are we reviewing settlement boundaries now?

We committed to reviewing the boundaries for all settlements as part of the Local Plan Review to 2036 when we undertook a partial review for some settlements as part of our work on the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSADPD).

What approach are we taking?

We are taking a landscape led approach to the drawing of settlement boundaries. We have a wealth of information already contained in landscape character assessments and community led documents such as town and village design statements, parish plans and neighbourhood development plans which we will use as a guide. We will also need to undertake a detailed 'on the ground' community led assessment of each individual settlement.

What stage are we at now?

We have reviewed our existing settlement boundary criteria¹ and are now ready to start work on the actual review of the boundaries themselves. As previously promised, we intend to do this in co-operation with town/parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups across the District. You are likely to be much more aware of particular local issues and concerns than we are and so getting your input at this stage will be invaluable. We therefore want to give you the opportunity to undertake an initial review of boundaries which will then give us a clear community steer to use as a way forward.

Where do you start?

We are attaching all of the information you will need to get going:

- maps of the settlements in your area showing whether they have an existing boundary or not
- a copy of the finalised settlement boundary review criteria.

Using the criteria we would like you to have a go at reviewing the boundaries. Exactly how you do this is up to you, but you might find the satellite images on Google maps helpful. Ultimately though there is no substitute for walking around the settlement and recording what you see.

¹ We sought comments on our proposed criteria for the settlement boundary review as part of the [second round of Regulation 18 consultation](#) we undertook between 9 November to 21 December 2018. From the comments we received it was clear that there was overwhelming support for the principle of the Council's landscape led approach to the drawing of settlement boundaries but further clarity was sought in some of the detail. Details are set out in our [Consultation Statement \(June 2019\)](#).

At the moment, don't worry too much about the existing landscape character assessments and other documents that form part of the criteria. We will ensure that they are fully considered as part of the process. We simply want to get your local 'on the ground' perspective at this stage.

General principles to use

The settlement boundary review criteria sets out the general principles to follow when defining a boundary and give guidance as to what would usually be included and what would usually be excluded. We recognise the situation is not always so clear cut though and we have highlighted a few of those instances within the criteria.

What about settlements that don't have boundaries?

You will see that as part of the review process we are including settlements that currently do not have settlement boundaries. These include

Aldworth	Chapel Row	Midgham	Upper Lambourn
Ashampstead	Englefield	Shefford Woodlands	Worlds End
Beech Hill	Fawley	Stanford Dingley	
Beedon	Frilsham	Stratfield Mortimer	
Chaddleworth	Inkpen	Ufton Nervet	

We are including these smaller settlements in order to confirm whether our existing approach to them is still appropriate. The need to protect the small scale and informal nature of these smaller rural settlements will generally mean that introducing a logical boundary would not be easy. At the same time, however, there may be the odd opportunity which allows us to formalise something which may be happening anyway and, by defining a boundary, would allow us to prevent further unrestricted growth into the countryside. We are seeking your views on what you consider to be the best way forward.

What issues should you consider?

To help you decide whether or not it would be appropriate to introduce a new settlement boundary, some of the issues you may like to consider are:

- Some communities without settlement boundaries have actually seen more development than some of those with a boundary
- The informal and dispersed nature of development would be altered
- It is likely to be difficult to draw a logical boundary without including large areas of garden land, small parcels of land and traditional rural buildings

- It would likely mean more development within the area defined by the settlement boundary
- It would provide protection for the area outside the boundary

What about settlements that cover more than one parish?

We recognise that settlements and their boundaries don't always neatly follow administrative boundaries. There will be instances where an existing settlement boundary sits tightly against a parish boundary, or even where a settlement sits over the boundaries of more than one parish. In these situations we would encourage you to work together with your neighbours to ensure that the information you return to us is something with which you are all comfortable.

What do you do when you have finished?

Once you are happy you have revised the boundaries (or have decided that you don't want to introduce any new ones) then please send all of the information back to us at the address below. We will be able to use what you tell us as a clear community steer and will review it alongside the information contained in our existing landscape character assessments and other documents that form part of the criteria.

Timescale

We are giving you just over 6 weeks to complete the exercise and so our deadline for the return of all maps is **27 March 2020**. Any queries in the meantime just contact us using the details below and we will do our best to help.

Many thanks

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