LISKEARD SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY APPROACH – BACKGROUND NOTE

Introduction

This report sets out the rationale guiding the review and drawing up of a development boundary within the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Definitions

The terms 'development boundary', 'development limit', 'red line' and 'edge of town' and 'settlement boundary' tend to be used loosely and cause confusion. Therefore, the phrase '*development boundary'* has been adopted to describe the line which defines the separation of town and countryside and beyond which more restrictive countryside planning policies apply.

Background

National Planning Policy Framework

The parts of the NPPF that have a general relevance to setting boundaries around different land uses within plans are as follows:

Para 157. Plans should:

- 'indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land use designations on a proposals map.'
- 'allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate'
- 'identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the use of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation.'
- 'identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance….'

Para 17 on core planning principles:

- 'take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas…' which is generally taken as requiring the differentiation of areas for different uses such as settlements and the Open Countryside.
- 'actively manage patterns of growth to make fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable...' which can be interpreted as encouraging the focusing of development into settlements as they are the most sustainable places.

'Building a strong competitive economy', Para 21:

- ‘Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to meet anticipated needs over the plan period’ which emphasises the need to consider the inclusion of employment land allocations within settlements, which potentially may influence the setting of settlement boundaries.

‘Supporting a prosperous rural economy’ Para 28:

- ‘support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres’, which can be interpreted as potentially including some of the area’s defined settlements and could therefore affect their settlement boundaries.

National Planning Practice Guidance

Local Plans Chapter, Para 002:

- Planning authorities should set out ‘broad locations and specific allocations of land for different purposes; through designations showing areas where particular opportunities and considerations apply…. A policies map must illustrate geographically the application of policies in a development plan.’

Para 010:

- ‘Where sites are proposed for allocation, sufficient detail should be to provide clarity to developers, local communities and other interests about the nature and scale of developing (addressing the ‘what, where, when and how‘ questions.’ This emphasises the need for allocations to be explicitly shown and that may involve the definition of new settlement boundaries.

In summary, national policy and guidance seeks to direct most development to settlements where it can achieve the best levels of sustainability, requires the differentiation of areas for different uses such as settlements and the open countryside, and requires that development allocations should be shown on a policies map. Logically therefore settlement boundaries should be drawn to accommodate new development where it is proposed.

Cornwall Local Plan

Relevant parts of the CLP include:

‘The role and function of places’ Chapter:

Policy 3 says that the Cornwall Site Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Plans will manage the delivery of housing, community, cultural, leisure, retail, utility and employment provision. Liskeard is one of the locations listed.

Para 1.52 ‘Our towns and villages are central to our strategy. It is their role and function, not simply their size, that should determine the appropriate level of development to be planned for’.

Para 1.53 says that ‘In order to maintain and enhance these places the Plan takes an approach to growth that encourages jobs and homes, where they best deliver our strategic priorities and allows for more organic development where it supports or enables the provision of appropriate services and facilities locally’. This includes the single use of the phrase ‘organic development’ in the document, and it is no further elucidated. We can assume that the phrase encompasses an ‘adaptive planning’ approach, where Town Planning facilitates and shapes natural growth so that it is sustainable, rather than meaning the adoption of an unplanned approach, and that therefore the use of development boundaries remains legitimate within the CLP strategy.

Para 1.60 of the Local Plan says that the housing apportionments in Table 1 set out the level of growth expected in the Community Network Area or town (ie Liskeard), noting that some of this housing will already have been built since 2010 and other sites will also have obtained planning permission but not yet have been built (commitments).

Para 1.61 and 1.62 say that in assessing how the remainder of the housing apportionment is to be met, the deliverability of those sites with planning permission during the Plan period and an allowance for windfall development that is likely to come forward during the Plan period: the residual is the level of growth that will need to be provided by allocations in either the Site Allocations Development Plan Document or Neighbourhood Plans.

Para 1.64 …’ Development should be of a scale and nature appropriate to the character, role and needs of the local community’.

Para 1.65 …’ ‘infilling’ is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuously built up frontage that does not physically extend the settlement into the open countryside’.

Para 1.66 Large gaps in frontages, (i.e. bigger than one or two dwellings between buildings or groups of buildings) ‘can often provide the setting for the settlement, or add to the character of the area. Proposals should consider the significance or importance that larger gaps can make to settlements and ensure that this would not be significantly diminished’.

Para 1.67 Large gaps between the urban edge of a settlement and other isolated dwellings beyond the edge of the settlement ‘are not appropriate locations for infill development’….

Although Para 1.68 is about smaller villages and hamlets, it has some useful definitions that may help in setting a development boundary….

- Rounding off: This applies to development on land that is substantially enclosed but outside of the urban form of a settlement and where its edge is clearly defined by a physical feature that also acts as a barrier to further growth (such as a road). It should not visually extend building into the open countryside.

- Previously developed land: In principle, the use of previously developed land within or immediately adjoining the settlement will be permitted provided it is of a scale appropriate to the size and role of the settlement.
- Rural Exception sites: These are affordable housing led developments adjoining, or physically well related to, the built form of existing settlements, (they allow for a proportion of market housing where it is required to support delivery of the affordable element). The definition of these sites is set out in Policy 9 of the Local Plan.

Para 2.32 is also relevant. In the context of rural settlements, but not specifically excluding places such as Liskeard, it says that Neighbourhood Plans may, if they feel it appropriate, can look to identify specific settlement boundaries consistent with this approach.

Para 2.33 says that open countryside is defined as the area outside of the physical boundaries of existing settlements (where they have a clear form and shape). The Plan seeks to ensure that development occurs in the most sustainable locations in order to protect the open countryside from inappropriate development

Policy 9: Rural Exceptions Sites: Development proposals on sites outside of but adjacent to the existing built up area of *smaller towns*, villages and hamlets, whose primary purpose is to provide affordable housing to meet local needs will be supported where they are clearly affordable housing led and would be well related to the physical form of the settlement and appropriate in scale, character and appearance.

In summary, the Cornwall Local Plan says that the Neighbourhood Plan must plan to meet the residual growth requirements of the apportionments set out in it, and that the use of Development Boundaries is permissible. It gives some definition to the terminology which must be reflected in the setting of settlement boundaries. If a development boundary is to be used as a planning tool , it must allow for the necessary residual development to meet growth needs, as required by the Cornwall Local Plan.

Benefits/Dis-Benefits of Development Boundaries

Benefits

- Gives positive direction, seen as a clear act of planning by community
- Provides clarity to all – is easily understood
- Defines area that to which divergent policies may apply
- Can explicitly include new growth
- Facilitates sequential approach to identification of most sustainable development sites
- Facilitates policies to encourage development of previously developed land in preference to green fields
- Can also help protects most sensitive landscape areas and prevent coalescence of settlements

Disbenefits

- Reduced flexibility to respond to change

- Can create a divisive ‘rallying point’ for different interests
- Restricts ‘organic’ change

In summary, on balance, the use of development boundaries is a useful planning tool that gives clarity and supports other planning policies.

Community Engagement

There were strong views about further greenfield development, with people wanting to see previously developed land brought forward in preference. The use of a development boundary may provide some reassurance to those concerned and help rebuild the credibility of Planning locally.

Criteria for definition of the Development Boundary.

Taking into account the forgoing analysis, the following criteria are recommended to determine the boundaries of the settlements.

1. General Rules
The over-ruling consideration must be to reflect and respect the character and built form of the settlement.

2007 Caradon Local Plan settlement boundary, which followed logical boundaries as at 2007, and was well established and respected, should be the starting point.

Follow clearly defined features such as field boundaries, roads, streams, walls, well-established fences, curtilage of properties (dwellings and other uses) physically linked to the built part of the settlement except for large gardens, separate curtilages to dwellings (eg allotments),

2. Bringing the 2007 Boundary Up to Date
Review the Boundary to include development since 2007 and deal with any inconsistencies. In most cases the issues are obvious but the following will assist:

Include:
- development permitted outside the boundaries since 2007 which now forms a coherent and integral part of the town (residential, employment and other built uses);
- any existing commitments for built development on the edge of the 2007 boundary: these could reasonably include both permissions and application sites where there has been a decision to grant PP subject to completion of a S106 and other agreements, but otherwise undecided applications should not be included at this stage;
- traditional rural buildings which have been converted to residential use, together with their residential curtilages providing they do not project susbstantially into the countryside;
- redundant traditional agricultural buildings with potential for conversion;

- redundant modern agricultural buildings but only if the buildings have had a lawful use and have been redundant for at least 10 years;
- land which is outside of the settlement but where at least two-thirds of the existing edge now substantially encloses it with development, and where its edge is clearly defined by a physical feature that can act as a barrier to further growth (such as a road, Cornish hedge, or substantial hedgerow) and would not visually extend development into the open countryside;

Exclude:

- isolated or sporadic development, free standing, individual or groups of dwellings, farm buildings or other structures detached from the main built area;
- larger scale amenity land, such as parkland, kick-about areas, and club playing fields;
- single depth development (ribbon development) along roads leading out of the town unless physically well related to it;
- working farms with modern agricultural buildings situated alongside the existing boundary.

3. Accommodating New Growth

Having 'brought up to date' the 2007 boundary, the next step is to identify new growth area that may need to accommodate the residual housing need.

Reference should be made to the Town Framework Urban Extension Assessment 2012 referred to in the evidence base, and to Appendix 5 of the 'A Place to Live Report 2016', and the best scoring sites identified in that work included within the development boundary.

4. Menheniot

Note that the built-up area of Liskeard, taking into account the Tencreek Farm planning permission which was granted since 2007, now extends well beyond the Town's administrative area and outside the NDPs Designated Area.

Conclusions

The creation of a Development Boundary is a legitimate, justified and easily understood way of bringing clarity to the planning strategy for Liskeard for all its users, and will facilitate the implementation of several of the proposed planning policies.