

Housing - Criteria for defining Settlement Boundaries

These criteria were drawn from an old District Council document on this topic recommended by Cornwall Council,¹ with further material drawn from other recent Cornish NDPs.

During the process of defining new SBs for the parish, a new criterion was added to allow for the implications of policy 9, Rural Exception Sites, of the Cornwall Local Plan that was adopted in 2016. This is criterion 4, below.

We have also added a car park criterion (6, below), an issue not covered within the guidance initially suggested by CC (probably because the minor villages in rural areas covered in that guidance tended to include few peripheral car parking areas).

1. Boundaries will be drawn tightly around the built-up areas and, where possible, will follow defined features such as walls, hedgerows, paths and roads and other lines of communications that are likely to have a degree of permanence
2. Boundaries should generally follow the curtilage of properties except where there are large gardens or other open areas, which would be inappropriately drawn into the built-up area
3. Settlement boundaries should include peripheral built sites on the edge of a settlement which contribute to the economic and social life of the settlement, e.g. community hall, church, chapel, workshops etc.
4. Settlement boundaries should include commitments for built development on the edge of a settlement (e.g. outstanding but still valid planning consents for housing), except for *Exception sites* for housing that have not yet been built and similar situations where higher-than-standard proportions of AH have been successfully negotiated on existing permissions. (There have been cases in Cornwall where, after an *unbuilt* Exception site was included within a SB in an NDP, this led to a new application being submitted on that site for what might be called a standard infill or rounding-off proposal, thereby successfully avoiding the enhanced Affordable Housing requirements that had previously been demanded from the developer under Policy 9 of the Cornwall Local Plan.)
5. Existing playing fields and other open space on the periphery of a settlement should be excluded from a boundary
6. Car parks on the periphery of a settlement should be excluded, unless these form part of a land-use with planning permission that falls within a specific Use Class and so constitute 'brownfield' land.
7. Camping and caravan sites are to be excluded unless in year-round permanent residential use
8. Agriculture, forestry, and equestrian development, and areas used for minerals extraction, landfill, water features, public utilities (such as sewage treatment plants and electrical substations) should be excluded

¹ Minor Villages Development Boundaries: supplementary planning guidance. November 2001. North Cornwall District Council

9. Isolated or sporadic development which is clearly detached from the main built-up area of the settlement should be excluded
9. A particular issue concerns how to deal with agricultural buildings on the edge of a village, where the following factors should be taken into account:
 - Type of agricultural building e.g. farmhouse, traditional stone built barn, modern storage shed, etc.
 - Scale of the building
 - Relationship with the rest of the village
 - Redevelopment / conversion potential
 - Availability of clear defensible boundaries

Although each case is different, the general approach is to include farmhouses and traditional stone buildings where they have a close relationship with the existing built-up area. These buildings tend to be of a scale which are in keeping with the rest of the village and any future proposals for residential conversion would be of a scale that is likely to be appropriate to villages. In the case of large modern agricultural buildings, these would tend to be excluded where they are on the edge of or detached from the built-up area.

Making of judgments and maintaining a record

In applying these guiding principles, judgements have to be made on whether land or buildings are considered to form a natural part of the built-up area of a village. Moreover, consideration should be given to whether development of a site on the periphery of a village would contribute to or detract from the character of the settlement. In some cases the judgements made will be clear-cut whereas in others they will be more finely balanced and subjective.