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| 1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**   To inform Members of the Background Paper SSP LDD: Settlement Boundaries (Update) September 2015 which updates the existing settlement boundaries within the borough. Approval of the Background Paper is sought, together with endorsement to progress public consultation, following inclusion of housing and employment site allocations. |

**2. INTRODUCTION**

* 1. On 4th October 2011, Members were provided with a series of background papers which were prepared to support the progression of the Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document (SSP LDD).
  2. One of these was a background paper on Settlement Boundaries, that was informed by consultation responses on the SSP LDD Issues Consultation, which took place between March and April 2009. The consultation gave rise to a general preference towards the continued use of settlement boundaries accommodating amendments to the existing Local Plan settlement boundaries. This was reported and agreed by Members at the Planning Policy Committee on 1st September 2009, and subsequently taken forward.
  3. The current iteration of the Settlement Boundaries SSP LDD Background Paper (February 2012) builds on this work and provides an evidence base for setting out an approach to development in the countryside, and identifying settlement boundaries. A copy of the 2012 Background Paper is attached as **Appendix 2**. A revised methodology for defining settlement boundary principles was also adopted, which takes into account earlier SPP LDD Issues Paper Consultation responses. Section 3 below sets out in more detail the local and national planning policy context for adopting a settlement boundary approach to settlements.

In summary, these principles provide a systematic framework for defining the extent of each individual settlement. The 2012 Background Paper contains full details of the four defining principles, but a summary is provided as follows:

1) Securing tightly drawn boundaries which follow defining features such as walls, highways and hedgerows.

2) Inclusion of extant planning permissions, community facilities, new allocations (excluding affordable housing allocations); and clearly defined curtilages.

3) Exclusion of physically isolated development, playing fields and open spaces in edge of settlement locations, and large open gardens or those which would threaten a settlement’s character if developed.

4) Setttlement boundaries can be drawn in one or more parts.

* 1. As a result of the delay in the submission and adoption of the emerging Joint Core Strategy (Part 1 Local Plan), progress on the Part 2 Local Plan (SSP LDD Site Specific Plan Local Development Document) has been paused, affecting the currency of the earlier background study work which will be relied upon as an evidence base when submitting the non-strategic Part 2 Local Plan for Examination.
  2. The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) will allocate strategic sites for housing and employment development, the threshold being 500+dwellings and 5ha+ for employment sites. In addition to this, site allocations for smaller sites of new housing and employment remain to be allocated through the SSP LDD. All these new allocations will affect the extent of the final settlement boundaries. As a result, a review of the last SSP LDDBackground Paper: Settlement Boundaries (February 2012) is now required, in order to progress the SSP LDD to submission stage and provide an up-to-date evidence base.
  3. Changes to settlement boundaries contained within the 2015 update have been made using the settlement boundary defining principles, contained within the 2012 Background Paper. In summary, Brampton Ash, Dingley, Orton and Pipewell are defined as scattered villages within open countryside and without a settlement boundary. Changes to the other settlement boundaries have been made to address, for example, extant planning permissions for development; and other identified inconsistencies. These were identified through a desk top study, and subsequent site visits (where necessary). A copy of the draft SSP LDDBackground Paper: Settlement Boundaries Update (September 2015) is attached as **Appendix 1**.

**3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

* 1. The decision to apply settlement boundaries as a control mechanism for development within the countryside is reinforced at both a local and national level as described below.
  2. Local Planning Policy
  3. The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (NNCSS) was adopted in June 2008 and includes Policy 1: Strengthening the Network of Settlements, which utilises a settlement hierarchy approach for the focus of development, referring to the use of village boundaries where development takes place in rural areas. Supporting text provided in paragraph 3.13 (NNCSS) states *‘…outside of these developments* [sustainable urban extensions] *and settlement boundaries determined through Master Plans and Development Plan Documents, the countryside will be subject to protection as set out in Policy 9 and on the basis of national policies in Planning Policy Statement 7.’*
  4. Policy 9: Distribution and Location of Development (NNCSS) refers back to Policy 1 (NNCSS) distinguishing between settlements where development should strengthen their role, and open countryside where development should be strictly controlled.
  5. The emerging North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-31 maintains a similar policy stance with respect of settlement boundaries. In particular, Policy 11: Network of Urban and Rural Areas takes forward the aims of Policy 1 (NNCSS). Criterion 2(b) of Policy 11 which relates to development in rural areas, states *‘small scale infill development will be permitted on suitable sites within villages where this would not materially harm the character of the settlement….’*
  6. Supporting text in paragraph 5.17 of the NNJCS states *‘Criterion 2b of Policy 11 refers to small scale infill development being permitted on suitable sites within villages. This refers to the development of vacant and under-developed land within the main built up areas of the village…..’*
  7. Supporting text in Paragraph 5.18 of the NNJCS states *‘In order to clarify the application of the criteria 2b and 2c of policy 11, Part 2 Local Plans and/or Neighbourhood Plans may define village boundaries or more detailed village boundary criteria, taking account of the character of the village. Village boundaries can provide a tool to plan positively for growth and to prevent ad-hoc encroachment into open countryside, particularly for villages located close to larger settlements where coalescence is a concern.’*
  8. Policy 13 – Rural Exceptions (NNJCS) also states *‘New development may be permitted adjoining established settlements, beyond their existing built up area or defined boundary…In open countryside, away from established settlements, permission will not normally be granted for new built residential development….’*
  9. The prevailing theme is a clear distinction between defined settlement and open countryside, with respect of the location of new development. The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-31 has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination, so can be given a degree of weight.
  10. National Planning Policy
  11. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides national perspective on the preparation of Local Plans. Whilst the NPPF does not explicitly require the use of the settlement boundaries approach for controlling the location of development, Paragraph 151 (NPPF) which deals with Plan Making, states *‘Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development’.*
  12. Paragraph 17 sets out ‘Core Planning Principles’ which places an emphasis on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, and a need to *‘take account of different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside…’* Policy 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (NPPF) also includes direction on where to locate new housing. Specifically, paragraph 53 (NPPF) states *‘Local Planning Authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area’*. Paragraph 55 (NPPF) also sets out a policy direction to avoid the location of new homes in the countryside, except where they meet a local rural employment need, re-use a building, or are exceptional or innovative in quality or nature.
  13. In general, the over-riding national planning policy direction accords with the settlement boundary approach to control the location of new development. This was largely confirmed through the Adopted Core Spatial Strategy – assessment of compatibility with National Planning Policy Framework which was presented to North Northamptonshire Joint Committee on 14th March 2013.

**4. CONSULTATION**

The SSP LDDBackground Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2015) will be updated to include identified housing and employment allocations in accordance with the existing settlement boundary defining principles 2(d) and 3(b), and then published for public consultation for six weeks (dates to be confirmed). Following receipt of comments the settlement boundaries will be reviewed, and where appropriate updated to address comments made. The document will then be reported back to Planning Policy Committee for Members to determine. Further public consultation will then take place on the Pre-Submission Plan in line with the timetable set out in Item 1 of this agenda.

**5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The SSP LDDBackground Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2015) will form part of the Kettering Borough SSP LDD. When adopted this will form part of the Development Plan for North Northamptonshire.

**6. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The consultation proposals contained in this report will be met within the existing Development Services Planning Policy budget.

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| **7. RECOMMENDATION**  It is recommended that Members agree the contents of the updated SSP LDD Background Paper (September 2015) and endorse the documentation for public consultation following an update of housing and employment allocations. |

Appendix 1: Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document (SSPLDD)Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (Update) September 2015.

Appendix 2: Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document (SSPLDD)Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (February 2012)

Relevant Committee/Minutes:

Date: 14th March 2013

Title of Document: Adopted Core Spatial Strategy – Item 5 - assessment of

Compatibility with National Planning Policy Framework

Date: 4th September 2012

Title of Document: Site Specific Proposals LDD – Item 7 – Options Consultation.

Date: February 2012

Title of Document: Site Specific Proposals LDD – Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries

Date: 22nd February 2012

Title of Document: Site Specific Proposals LDD – Item 6 - Options Paper Consultation

Date: 4th October 2011

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee – Item 7 - Site Specific Proposals LDD – Background Papers and Consultation on Options

Date: 1st September 2009

Title of Document: Planning Policy Committee – Item 7 Site Specific Proposals LDD – Issues Paper

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