

Settlement Boundary Review – matters to take into consideration

This note provides a list of matters to be considered when determining if and how an existing settlement boundary should be updated. It is important that this process is systematic and consistent and, above all, Plan-led through a collaborative approach between the Rye and Rother DC.

Planning policies within the Local Plan set out the development strategy for all settlements in the District. Only those larger settlements, with a housing target to meet and other identified growth, may need to proactively review their settlement boundary – this will depend on the capacity of the existing built-up area to accommodate the levels of development identified.

Other smaller settlements may also wish to consider amending existing settlement boundaries to allow for new development. In addition those settlements without a boundary may wish to define one to take a more proactive approach to bringing forward land for new development, within the development strategy in Local Plan. In simple terms, a settlement boundary is the dividing line or boundary between areas of built/urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development – the countryside.

A settlement is where there is usually a variety of residential, commercial/employment uses and where services are normally provided and expected, the proportions of each varying depending on the type of settlement. The existing boundaries are established in the 2006 District Local Plan (see Inset Map).

Typically included within the settlement boundary are existing employment areas, community facilities and services and the bulk of a settlement's housing stock. Land outside a settlement boundary is defined as countryside and is usually oriented towards agriculture, tourism or outdoor recreational uses.

A settlement boundary can serve a number of related but separate purposes. For instance:

- it can be used to create an edge to existing development thereby encouraging consolidation.
- It can help separate adjacent communities and therefore retain their individual identities.
- it can define the logical boundary between areas with different features and purposes.

For example, the boundary between areas considered sensitive as a result of environmental or landscape designations and those suitable for development. In planning terms there is a presumption in favour of built development within the settlement boundary whereas, beyond the boundary in the countryside, development is more tightly controlled.

A settlement boundary may not encompass the total area of the settlement as understood by the local community, as it may exclude open spaces, gardens and other areas, where development of these may be harmful. Therefore, it will be necessary to take into account when examining and proposing a revised boundary: the need to release land for development – to positively plan for the levels of growth set out in Local Plan, through the allocation of specific sites or to allow for growth over the Plan period, which runs to 2028.

The allocation of sites will also need to follow the 10 step process set out in the Site Assessment Checklist (see below), normally only larger sites (10 or more dwellings or larger than 0.3 hectares) would be considered as allocations – smaller sites could be released through a review of settlement boundaries rather than an allocation.

It will also be necessary to develop a strategy for the levels of development needed - will they be achieved from one larger site or several smaller ones?

- The need to include recent edge of settlement developments, include land that has been developed or has planning permission for development or is allocated in an adopted Local Plan for development (an exception to this is those sites that have been developed for rural housing under the rural exceptions policy – generally these sites should

be retained outside a defined settlement boundary, to ensure that they are retained for local housing needs purposes)

- Identifying opportunities to 'round off' development to allow for modest expansion i.e. those sites surrounded by development which have defined natural boundaries or topographical features, thereby creating a defensible edge; consider using defined physical features such as roads and footpaths, walls, fences, hedgerows and streams. However, boundaries should not be revised simply for 'neatness' and do not necessarily have to follow features on the ground – remember that their purpose is to define where development should or should not take place and, once defined, they are likely to remain for the Plan period.
- Whether to include the curtilage of dwellings - normally settlement boundaries would follow property boundaries unless their inclusion would result in development of a sensitive site or be incongruous with the pattern of surrounding development. The exclusion of a curtilage would need to be explained, to avoid an arbitrary boundary which could be difficult to defend in the future. Generally settlement boundaries should exclude paddocks, orchards, etc unless the intention is that they should be developed.
- Should certain types of buildings/uses such as schools and playing fields which are on the edge of settlements be excluded, to provide protection from development (or do other policies achieve this)? Open areas such as formal or informal recreational space which contribute to the character or setting of a settlement should be excluded to safeguard their use and maintain their contribution to the wider landscape setting.

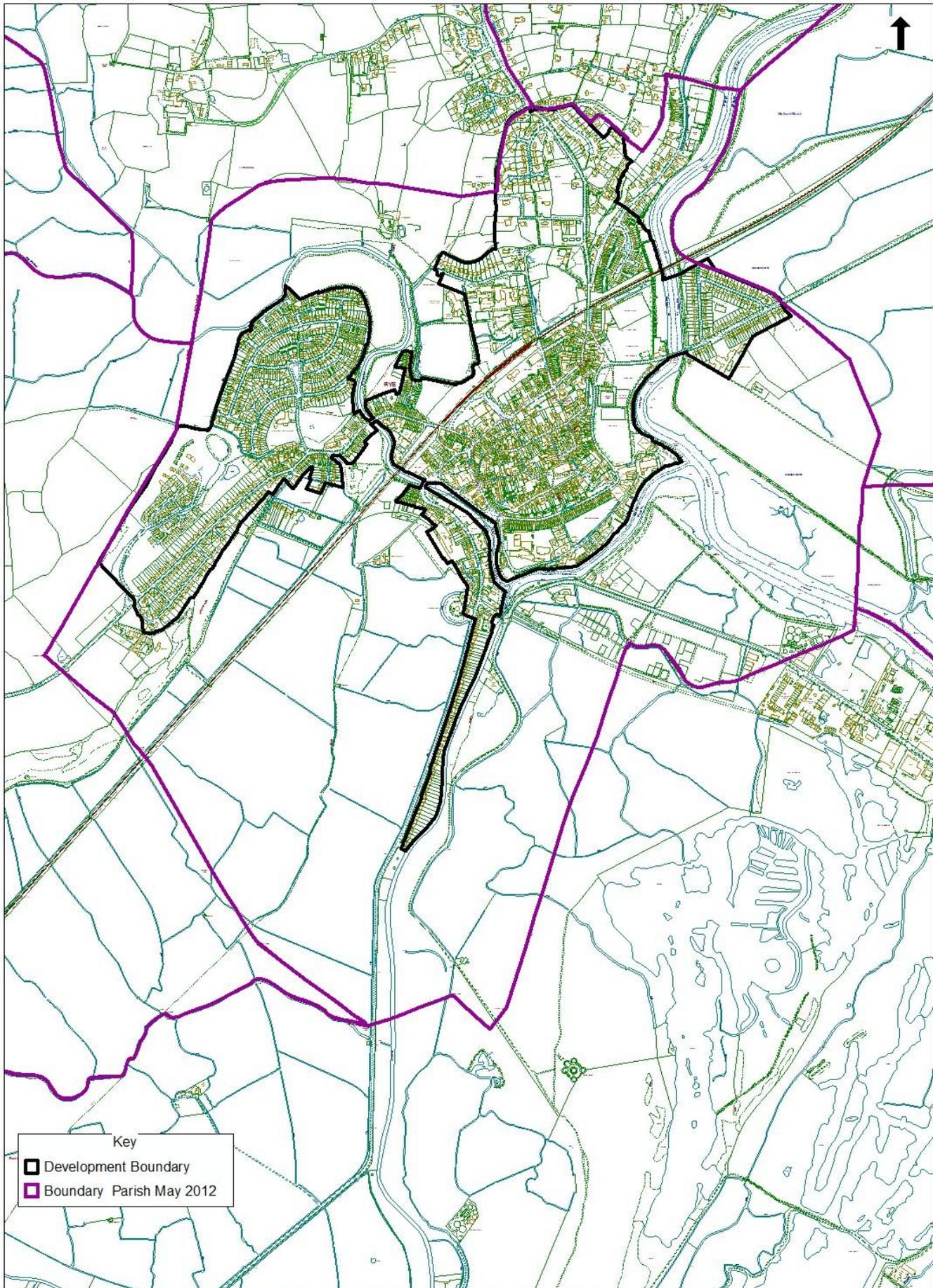
10 Step Process

1. The site has been named, located and described.
2. Existing land use has been described.
3. The site characteristics have been recorded: topography; natural landscape; boundaries; road frontage.

4. A Green Belt assessment has been made for all sites located in or adjacent to the Green Belt. Would development of the site constitute urban sprawl? Would it impact adversely on the character of Rye? Would there be a loss of open countryside? Would it enable merge with adjacent urban areas?
5. Does it comply with the Rother DC Core Strategy?
6. Is it Brown or Greenfield?
7. Would the site be appropriate for specific uses?
8. Are there questions about the boundaries?
9. Would development of the site be dependent on the development of adjacent sites?
10. What are the overall conclusions?

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