LESBURY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Documentation on Settlement Boundaries

INTRODUCTION

This photo-documentation and description of the settlement boundaries for the villages of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton in Lesbury Parish has been compiled using the Settlement Boundary Methodology – Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan document, prepared by Jenny Ludman MRTPI (Appendix 1). The settlement boundaries in the draft Neighbourhood Plan are based on the previously adopted settlement boundaries published in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (2007). Adjustments have been made to include new developments, such as The Coppice and Hillside in Hipsburn, and to include land currently under development, such as Foxton Glade in Lesbury. The proposed settlement boundaries are shown on the Policies Map.

LESBURY VILLAGE

The boundaries of Lesbury Village are formed by the River Aln to the South, arable land outside the settlement boundary and the Northumberland Coast AONB to the East, pasture and arable land to the North and Alnwick Road (A1068) to the West. Details of some parts of the boundary are given below -

Photograph 1: Steppey Lane Bridge

Steppey Lane bridge provides pedestrian access across the River Aln, which forms a natural boundary to the south of Lesbury village. Photographs 2 and 3 show the view from the bridge to the west and to the east.

Photograph 2: View from Steppey Lane bridge, westwards along the bank of the River Aln

Photograph 3: View from Steppey Lane bridge, eastwards, downriver

Photograph 4:West-facing view towards Lesbury Village from fields adjoining River Aln

Photograph 5: West-facing view from SE boundary of Lesbury Village

Photographs 4 and 5 show West-facing views towards Lesbury Village from the fields adjoining the River Aln at the South-East edge of the settlement. Garden walls mark the edge of the settlement boundary. This area lies within the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Photograph 6: Eastern edge of Lesbury village – Townfoot Steadings

Photograph 6 shows the Eastern edge of Lesbury Village at Townfoot Steadings, to the North of Bridge End. This area lies within the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Photograph 7: East-facing view from Longhoughton Road

Photograph 7 shows the northern edge of the settlement from Longhoughton Road (B1339), facing East. To the left is agricultural land which is outside the settlement boundary, and on the right the start of the northern part of the development "Foxton Glade". All land to the East of the B1339 lies within the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Photograph 8: West-facing view close to Longhoughton Road

Photograph 8 shows the northern edge of the settlement from Longhoughton Road (B1339), facing West. The boundary is marked by hedgerows and garden fences. The pasture, used for grazing horses, lies outside the settlement boundary.

Photograph 9: East-facing view towards Longhoughton Road

Photograph 10: South-facing view from settlement perimeter

Photographs 9 and 10 show the East- and South-facing views from the northern corner of the settlement to the West of Longhoughton Road. The boundary is marked by hedgerows and garden fences. Land outside the settlement boundary is used as pasture for grazing horses.

Photograph 11: East-facing view at end of School Lane, behind St. Mary's Church

Photograph 12: West-facing view at end of School Lane, looking towards Lealands

Photographs 11 and 12 show the boundary to the East and West at the the end of School Lane, behind St. Mary's Church. The boundaries are marked by stone walls and wooden fences, with pasture outside the settlement boundary.

Photograph 13: North-facing view of Alnwick Road (A1068)

Photograph 13 shows the Western boundary of Lesbury Village, along the A1068 towards Alnwick. The photograph was taken from the bus stop just before the Lesbury roundabout. The arable fields on the left hand side of the road are outside the settlement boundary.

HIPSBURN

To the East of Hipsburn is the Northumberland Coast AONB and to the West is the East Coast main line railway. The settlement edges to the North and South are boundaries with agricultural arable land.

Photograph 14: South-facing view along pathway behind houses on Steppey Lane

Photograph 15: North-facing view along pathway behind houses on Steppey Lane

Photographs 14 and 15, on the previous page, show the pathway behind Steppey Lane which forms the boundary at the Eastern edge of Hipsburn. There are arable fields outside the settlement boundary. The area lies within the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Photograph 16: Alnmouth Football Club playing field, with houses on Steppey Lane in the distance

Alnmouth Football Club playing field lies outside the settlement boundary to the East of Hipsburn in the Northumberland Coast AONB. Houses on Steppey Lane are visible in the distance, to the left.

Photograph 17: East-facing view, with Steppey Lane junction on left-hand side

Photograph 18: South-facing view of A1068 from roundabout on Lesbury Road

Photograph 19: South-facing view of A1068 at entrance to Hipsburn Steadings, on right

Photographs 17 to 19 show Hipsburn settlement boundaries along Alnmouth Road to the East (Photograph 17) and along the A1068 from Hipsburn roundabout on Lesbury Road, southwards, passed Hipsburn Steadings, towards Warkworth (Photographs 18 and 19). On the opposite sides of these roads, outside the settlement boundary, are arable fields and the Hipsburn which flows into the estuary of the River Aln, all of which are in the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Photograph 20: North-East-facing view behind Hipsburn Steadings

Photograph 20 shows the South-West edge of the settlement from the Hipsburn towards Hipsburn Steadings.The boundary is marked by a stone wall and wooden fencing. The land outside the settlement boundary is used to graze cattle and sheep.

Photograph 21: North-East-facing view towards Hillside

Photograph 21 shows the view from the Hipsburn towards Station Cottages on South View. The Pond Field play area and the allotments in the foreground of the photograph are outside the settlement boundary.

Photograph 22: North-East-facing view towards Hillside

Photograph 23: North-facing view from Hillside

Photographs 22 and 23 show the Western edge of the settlement boundary, facing North-East towards Hillside in Photograph 22, and facing North from Hillside in Photograph 23. The boundaries are marked by hedgerows and garden fencing. Outside the settlement boundary are arable fields.

Photograph 24: North West-facing view behind houses on Lesbury Road

Photograph 25: North-facing view behind houses on Steppey Lane

Photographs 24 and 25 show the settlement boundaries behind the houses on Lesbury Road and Steppey Lane. The boundaries are marked by hedgerows and garden fences and the land outside the settlement boundary is used for arable farming.

BILTON

The main line railway station, Alnmouth for Alnwick, marks the Eastern boundary of the settlement of Bilton. To the North and South is agricultural land - arable land and grazing for cattle and sheep. To the West, there is some further development on the North side of the road leading to Shilbottle. These properties are outside the settlement boundary.

Photograph 26: The road from Shilbottle, with station entrance on left-hand side

Photograph 26 shows the road from Shilbottle and the entrance to the railway station which forms the Eastern edge of the settlement. Over the railway bridge is South View, in Hipsburn.

Photograph 27: Allotments on the South of the road from Shilbottle

The allotments on the South side of the road from Shilbottle to Hipsburn are within the settlement boundary. South of the allotments is arable land.

Photograph 28: East-facing view on the road from Shilbottle

Photograph 29: The road from Shilbottle, with Bilton Cottages on left-hand side

Photographs 28 and 29 show the road from Shilbottle which forms the settlement boundary in this part of the village. On the right-hand side of the road, there are some properties in Photograph 28 and fields with livestock in Photograph 29.

Photograph 30: East-facing view on the road from Greenrigg

Photograph 30 shows the road from Greenrigg which forms the settlement boundary to the North of Bilton. The land outside the settlement boundary is agricultural land.

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APPENDIX 1

Settlement Boundary Methodology – Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Aug 2018)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This background paper sets out the methodology used for the definition of settlement boundaries in the emerging Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The delineation of settlement boundaries is considered to be the best mechanism to achieve some of the main elements of the vision and objectives of the neighbourhood plan, particularly those related to landscape protection and encouraging the provision of housing in the best locations in the villages of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton.

1.3 The neighbourhood plan is planning positively for housing in the Neighbourhood Area. The objectively assessed need for housing for the Neighbourhood Area stands at 38 dwellings between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2036[1]. A significant number of these dwellings have already been provided or consented. The Neighbourhood Plan does not therefore need to allocate land for housing, although it may wish to do so in order to meet other objectives in the Plan.

1.4 An identified objective in the Neighbourhood Plan is to maintain the sense of separation between the settlements of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton. This will be an important consideration in delineating the settlement boundaries for all three settlements.

2.0 What is a settlement boundary?

2.1 In simple terms, a 'settlement boundary' is a dividing line, or boundary between areas of built/urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development (the open countryside). Although a settlement boundary does not preclude all development beyond the boundary[2], it does give clarity as to where new development (particularly housing) is likely to be acceptable in planning terms.

2.2 Inclusion of land within a settlement boundary does not mean that all land within the boundary is automatically suitable for new development. There may be areas of land within the settlement boundary that are not suitable for development due to other constraints, for example, where there is land protected as Local Green Space (to be allocated through the neighbourhood planning process) or areas of special character (for example areas that would have an impact on the setting of listed buildings or conservation areas). Policies in the neighbourhood plan will clearly define what proposals are likely to be acceptable within the settlement boundary.

[1] Annex 2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan identifies a housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Area

[2] A number of exceptions exist, including 'exceptions' housing sites as defined in the NPPF, some business and employment related activities and development in the countryside in accordance with relevant paragraphs in the NPPF.

2.3 The benefits of establishing settlement boundaries are as follows:

- Ensure development is directed to the most suitable locations in the villages, both in terms of accessibility to and support of existing services and transport, and in terms of landscape and protected landscapes, such as the Northumberland AONB, Heritage Coast and the Lesbury Conservation Area.
- Protect the special character of the villages and the landscapes around them to maintain local character and distinctiveness.
- Provide greater certainty to communities, landowners and developers over where certain types of development could be acceptable in principle, and where.
- Support the plan led approach to development, giving a local context to the strategic intention of providing sufficient housing to meet the identified needs of the parish.

3.0 Current Planning Context

3.1 The Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan will propose a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundaries identified for each village. The current strategic plan for the neighbourhood plan area is the Alnwick Local Development Framework Core Strategy (October 2007) and the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (April 1997).

3.2 A number of policies in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan were 'saved' under the Secretary of State's Direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Settlement boundaries were drawn up for Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton, and exist on the proposals maps for the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan, (and is shown in background reports for the Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan) but the policies relating to settlement boundaries were not saved and as such, these villages do not at present have defensible settlement boundaries.

3.3 Northumberland County Council is in the process of preparing a County-wide Local Plan (currently consulting on issues and options). This Northumberland Local Plan is at the very early stages of production. The emerging Northumberland Local Plan identifies settlement boundaries for settlements that are not producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It therefore does not propose settlement boundaries for Lesbury, Hipsburn or Bilton, meaning that it will be important for these boundaries to be defined through the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.4 In line with national planning policy, the current strategic policy for Northumberland as set out in the current development plan is to direct development to the most sustainable locations. Hipsburn is the most sustainable location, due to be being close to the railway that serves the area. Hipsburn also has a first school, and there are also regular bus services. Lesbury has a number of services and facilities, including a shop, pub, church and village hall.

3.5 It is considered that the definition of a settlement boundary for Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton will be a spatial planning tool that will be used to direct development to the most sustainable and appropriate locations in the villages, whilst protecting the special character of the surrounding landscapes which are highly valued. In particular the Conservation Area in Lesbury, the AONB and Heritage Coast designations which are in the eastern part of the Neighbourhood Area, and the SSSI areas to the east. More information on these designations, including maps, can be found on the Magic website: www.magic.gov.uk

3.6 The principle of development within the settlement boundaries of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton will be supported provided that it complies with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and is of a scale and nature appropriate to the character and function of the settlement and is in accordance with the spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Area. Development will not be permitted outside settlement boundaries with the exception of certain types of development to be set out in the Neighbourhood Plan (for example, 'exception' sites for affordable housing and Community Led Housing schemes.

3.7 Hamlets and farmsteads located outside settlement boundaries will be considered to be in the 'open countryside' in planning terms and will have no defined settlement boundaries

4.0 Methodology for defining settlement boundaries

4.1 There is no single established methodology for defining settlement boundaries, and different local planning authorities across the country have taken different approaches to drawing settlement boundaries. However, where a methodology has been used the criteria are generally similar from one local authority to another. These include questions such as whether to draw a boundary around clusters of buildings close to but separate from the main settlement; and whether particular uses should be included or excluded from the boundary, where they occur at the edge of a settlement. This report has drawn on existing methodologies and sought to establish a methodology considered to be most appropriate within the context of the sensitive landscapes in the Neighbourhood Area.

4.2 Any methodology must be clear, easy to understand, and replicable. The methodology is similar to that used in the production of the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan, which has recently passed examination.[3]

5.0 Existing evidence

5.1 There is a significant amount of evidence available to the neighbourhood plan Steering Group, and the desk-top element of defining settlement boundaries has drawn on a range of published studies and evidence base relating to landscape, heritage, and the natural environment.

[3] Post examination North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

5.2 The following evidence has been used as background information to inform settlement boundaries, as well as the criteria put forward later in this paper.

Northumberland County Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Data (Interactive Map)

5.3 A number of sites have been put forward for development in the Neighbourhood Area following the recent call for sites (ended mid-March 2018). This gives an indication of which sites are available for housing.

Planning applications/approvals in Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton (NCC planning register)

5.4 This is derived from the County Council's planning application register. Land that has planning approval should generally be included within the settlement boundaries.

Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) – Previous settlement boundaries

5.5 Although planning policies in the Alnwick Wide Local Plan related to settlement boundaries have not been saved, the previously adopted boundaries provide a relevant and useful context within which to re-define settlement boundaries for all three settlements in the Neighbourhood Area.

Northumberland Coast AONB Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (August 2013)

5.6 This document http://www.northumberlandcoastaonb.org/files/Downloads/6882-Sensitivity-Capacity-Study.compressed.pdf forms an important part of the evidence base for defining the settlement boundaries in the Neighbourhood Area. In particular the map on p.103 identifies 'sensitive edges' on which new development should be avoided because of the likely landscape impacts.

Other landscape studies – Northumberland Landscape Assessment (2010) Land Use Consultants

5.7 This document contains detail on important landscape character features in the Neighbourhood Area and is available at http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Landscape%20Green%20Spaces%20Studies/1.%20Landscape%20Character/Landscape-Character-Part-A.pdf

Historic Environment Record

5.8 The historic environment record (HER), and detailed information about listed (and non-listed) buildings provides an idea of the local historic context in the Neighbourhood Area. Information can be obtained from the County Council, and from Historic England's website. A map search for the area would reveal the extent of listed buildings, and detail about the listings. This could help inform settlement boundaries in terms of protecting the setting of listed buildings.

Lesbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal

5.9 Lesbury village has a detailed Conservation Area Appraisal that identifies key features, listed buildings, and important views into and out of the conservation area. This could comprise a useful evidence base. The following link contains the document: http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/Conservation/Lesbury-CAA.pdf

Local Features

5.10 Where possible, settlement boundaries should be drawn along defined features such as walls, hedgerows, watercourses, garden curtilages, existing development and roads/footpaths.

5.11 Site visits, aerial photographs and use of evidence base documents referred to above as well as criteria listed below will be essential to ensure a consistent approach.

5.12 Where no specific recommendations arise from the above evidence base studies, the following principles have been applied to the inclusion or exclusion of specific uses from within the settlement boundary where they occur adjacent to an existing or proposed new settlement boundary. The reasoning for these principles is provided in the paragraphs that follow.

5.13 The table below describes what types of development will be included or excluded from settlement boundaries. It is important that a consistent and clearly replicable approach is used to define the settlement boundary.

6.0 General Principles

6.1 The table below lists, as a general principle, which types of area are likely to be included, excluded, or dealt with on a site by site basis, in determining the detailed boundaries for Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton.

Site by site basis	Include	Exclude
Agricultural fields or paddocks that are surrounded by development on all sides	Built development forming the main settlement	Isolated housing not well related visually to the settlement. Housing in large plots on the edge of settlements, but not well related to the built form, will be excluded.
Former farm buildings, converted to other uses adjacent to the settlement (account will be taken of defensible boundaries and the age of building - i.e. how established it is within the settlement)	Playing fields where within, or on the edge of a settlement	Community orchard/allotments/community recreational areas if not well related to the existing settlement

Caravan sites, except where clearly within a settlement	Community facilities e.g. schools, public houses where they are within the existing built environment	Designated wildlife sites (unless within the built-up area)
Edge of settlement sites included in the SHLAA or put forward by local landowners	Local Green Spaces (designated through the neighbourhood plan) within settlements	Woodlands, orchards and other community green spaces, including cemeteries and churchyards (unless within the built-up area)
	Land with planning permission for new development within or well-related to the settlement	Agricultural units (farmyards and farm buildings) including agricultural workers' dwellings, horticultural nurseries, equestrian facilities where not well related to the settlement
	Proposed site allocations for housing	Community facilities clearly outside the settlement (i.e. pubs/hotels/golf clubs)
		Roads, tracks and public rights of way running along the boundary

7.0 Explanation (where relevant) of exclusion/inclusion criteria:

Agricultural fields and paddocks

7.1 Where agricultural fields and paddocks, including those no longer in agricultural use, are entirely surrounded by a built-up area, they will be assessed on a case by case basis. If they contribute positively to the landscape and/or have biodiversity, historic and recreational value then it is likely that they will be designated as Local Green Space through the neighbourhood plan where they can be demonstrated as having particular importance to the local community they serve.

7.2 Where these sites have been submitted through the SHLAA process, they will be assessed on a case by case basis, depending on need for housing land, and location of the site in terms of sustainability and local context as well as suitability for housing.

Agricultural buildings

7.3 Agricultural farmsteads are characteristically part of the countryside and provide the historical connection between settlements and their agricultural origins. These buildings can provide visual links to the rural context beyond. Therefore, where farmsteads are situated on the edge of the built form of settlements, they will be excluded if they are not well related to the settlement. Where farmsteads are clearly integral to the built-up part of the settlement, they will be included within the settlement boundary.

Other countryside development

7.4 Other developments that would be allowed in the countryside or have been allowed under countryside policies in the past are considered to relate more to the countryside than to the settlement and will therefore be excluded where they lie adjacent to the boundary. This category includes equestrian developments; housing for agricultural or forestry workers and tourism/employment sites as well as other development that is appropriate in the countryside.

Community and tourism facilities

7.5 Extensive community facilities such as sports grounds (including pavilions), golf clubs and associated car parks, where they have been built outside existing settlement boundaries will be excluded. More intensively built up community uses such as schools (and their playing fields) or public houses have been included in the boundary if they are already within the built-up area or if they have been built adjacent to the built-up area and relate well to the settlement.

Existing allocated sites

7.6 Sites designated for housing or other development in existing Local Plans should be included in the settlement boundary. Sites where planning permission has been given for housing should also be included in the settlement boundary. Proposed housing sites to be brought forward through the Neighbourhood Plan should also be included.

Tracks and roads

7.7 Where settlement boundaries run along roads, tracks or public rights of way, they have been drawn along the edge closest to the settlement.

Hamlets and farmsteads

7.8 There are a number of farmsteads in the Neighbourhood Area. None of these are well related to the built-up areas of Lesbury, Hipsburn or Bilton and therefore the are excluded, and are not of sufficient size to have their own settlement boundary.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 It is considered that this methodology presents as objective a method as feasible, for establishing a settlement boundary around the villages of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton to inform policy to be contained in the Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

9.0 Next steps

- The settlement boundaries are drawn using this methodology and consulted on (Autumn 2018).
- Following public consultation, proposed settlement boundaries are agreed/amended by Lesbury Parish Council.