

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL - BUILT-UP AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced to form part of the evidence base which will underpin the Crawley Local Plan.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Built-up Area Boundary and its importance as a spatial planning tool is explained and the methodology used and the findings of the assessment are presented. The report concludes by highlighting the implications of the assessment for the Local Plan and any further work that is required as part of the evidence base.

2. The purpose of the Built-up Area Boundary

- 2.1 Crawley Borough Council is a single settlement with strong development pressures. As such, there is a clear need for a distinction between the urban area where certain forms of development are likely to be appropriate and the countryside, where protection and enhancement are of most importance. Defining the Built-up Area Boundary is a logical way of applying Government advice and strategic policy at the local level. The Built-up Area Boundary and related policies provide the basis for development management decisions to:
 - provide clear and unambiguous guidance as to where development is likely to be permitted, and;
 - make the best use of previously developed land and protect the countryside from inappropriate development.
- 2.2 Those areas included within the Built-up Area Boundary must conform to relevant local and national policy to ensure the most appropriate use of land. Outside the boundary only uses appropriate to a countryside location are acceptable.

3. The Assessment Methodology

- 3.1 This review assesses:
 - Sites that are adjacent to but outside the current built-up area boundary that have been developed or have planning permission to be developed.
 - Other areas adjacent to but outside the current built-up area boundary that may relate more to the urban environment than to the surrounding countryside.
 - The review will also highlight sites that may be suitable for housing. Further work can then be done to assess their suitability separate from this review.
- 3.2 The final boundary review will have regard to the results of the Landscape Characterisation Assessment¹ when available and make any amendments as necessary. Boundary amendments will also be made in light of proposed strategic development opportunity sites that are identified through the Local Plan and are located outside or extend beyond the Built-up Area Boundary.

¹ This assessment considers the landscape character at the present time. A key element of the project includes an appraisal of the relationship between the urban edge of the town with the rural landscape beyond.

- 3.3 The assessment consisted of an onsite survey of areas identified during the Submission Stage of the 2007 Core Strategy, continued dialogue with stakeholders and through a desktop survey using the current proposals map and aerial photographs. This ensured that areas were identified where inconsistencies on the demarcation between the urban area and the countryside may exist.
- 3.4 The following sites have been surveyed which cover a significant area of the built-up area boundary.
1. North of County Oak
 2. Rowley Wood Area
 3. Burleys Wood
 4. Land at Worth
 5. Tilgate Recreation Ground
 6. East and West of Brighton Road
 7. South of Broadfield South
 8. Target Hill and Breezehurst Drive Playing Fields
 9. West of Bewbush
 10. Whitehall Drive
 11. West of Ifield
 12. West of County Oak
- 3.5 These areas have been assessed using the guiding principles set out in the next section.

4. Guiding Principles

4.1 The guiding principles have been formed to ensure a fair, consistent and comprehensive approach in identifying and resolving any inconsistencies with the current boundary.

4.2 The guiding principles have been created by focussing on the separate characteristics and land use functions of the built-up area and the countryside. In conjunction with the site visits, the guiding principles will help determine whether a site should be in the urban area or countryside.

1. The BUAB should include existing commitments and new development adjacent to the boundary. This includes sites allocated for development in the Core Strategy.
2. The Built-up Area Boundary should generally follow defined physical features such as roads, hedges, field boundaries and existing property lines.
3. The Built-up Area can include greenfield sites which are predominantly encompassed and part of the built form and also well defined by strong boundary features.
4. The boundary should follow the whole curtilage of properties except where such properties include large open areas that extend up to existing countryside and are not encompassed by built form. This is to prevent inappropriate development in what is considered part of the open countryside.
5. Edge of settlement activities that relate well to the built-up area such as community facilities and employment activities should be included. Activities that relate more to the countryside such as agriculture, forestry and activities that require significant open area should be left outside the BUAB.
6. Development that is close to but physically separate from the built-up area should not be included within the built-up area boundary (including ribbon and fragmented development). This is to maintain a strongly defined boundary and to avoid areas of countryside from being unnecessarily included within the BUAB.
7. The review should have regard to the Landscape Character of the area.

The overall consideration of whether to include/exclude land from the Built-up Area is whether the area in question relates in its use, character and connectivity to the urban environment of Crawley or the surrounding countryside.

Site Assessments

1 - North of County Oak

Description

This area comprises fragmented development consisting of Gatwick Kennels and cottages which are situated off a track leading from London Road. The area is characterised by fields and hedgerows up to the developed area of County Oak Retail Park which is where the BUAB currently lies.

Recommendation and Justification

No Change:

Conflicts with GP 3, 4 and 6:

- The development in this area is fragmented and physically separate from the current built up area (GP6), is not encompassed by built form or defined by a strong boundary (GP3).
- Any change to the boundary here would lead to areas of a rural/countryside nature being unnecessarily included in the built up area (GP4 and 6).



2 – Rowley Wood Area

Description

Rowley Wood is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance containing Ancient Woodland which sits outside the BUAB. Aerial photos show a heavily wooded area bounded on two sides by Manor Royal industrial estate and farmland to the north and west. The woodland area is predominantly located in the Gatwick Safeguarding Zone.

The area West of Rowley Wood comprises of farmland. It is currently included within the Built-up Area as it has been allocated as an Employment Opportunity Area in the Core Strategy. The eastern section has been developed as a Tesco Distribution Centre up to the edge of Rowley Wood.

Recommendation and Justification

Amend boundary to reflect new development within the employment opportunity areas.

- Whilst Rowley Wood is now slightly more enclosed by development, the heavily wooded natural environment relates more to the farmland directly to the north. In addition the path that leads from Manor Royal up through woodland into farmland is shielded visually and from noise by the dense woodland adding to the perception of being beyond the built up area.
- The land use type, its transition to farmland and lack of a strong boundary conflict with GP3 and 5.
- The amended line follows the boundary set out in the planning application for the Tesco Distribution Centre and access road.



— Built-Up Area Boundary (Core Strategy C1)
— Built-Up Area Boundary (Proposed)

3 – Burleys Wood

Description

This 3.5 hectare area currently outside the BUAB comprises ancient woodland, amenity greenspace and late 20th century informal fieldscape with housing to the west and the M23 and open countryside to the east.

There is a path that leads from this area under the M23 to Crabbet Park (business park) and to the open countryside within Mid Sussex.

Recommendation and Justification

No Change

- Whilst the M23 provides a strong barrier, this area is on the edge of the urban area rather than encompassed by it. The area does not contain an activity/use that is more related to the urban area than countryside. The connection between this area and open countryside via a footpath under the M23 adds to its relationship to the open countryside beyond.
- The land use type, connection to open countryside and not being encompassed and part of the built form conflicts with GP3 and 5.



4 – Land at Worth

Description

This 13 hectare area is currently outside the BUAB and within the M23 Motorway.

The area is bounded by residential properties/roads. The Worth Way (a long distance footpath/bridleway to East Grinstead) is within the area and continues beyond the M23 via a footbridge. A small number of residential properties with large gardens lie within the area. The southern area is predominantly semi natural open space of biodiversity value which is locally designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

All area outside the BUAB but within the M23 is designated as the Worth Conservation area, the purpose of which is to preserve and enhance the character of the setting of St. Nicholas' Church. The historic landscape character surrounding the church is that of a historic core of a hamlet – early medieval 410-1065.

Recommendation and Justification

No Change

- The density and type of development as well as the character of the area is markedly different from the adjacent urban area within the BUAB. The historic character of the area as a whole is that of a rural hamlet which has been largely retained through the conservation area and countryside designations – GP5
- The size and enclosed nature of the area prevents it from feeling encompassed and part of the existing built up area – GP3
- The only strong boundary is the M23 but this would include a significant area of semi natural open space which has a rural character – GP3+5



5 – Tilgate Recreation Ground

Description

This area is outside the BUAB and comprise of a playing field bounded by residential built form on three sides and allotments to the south. The allotments are adjacent to golf course buildings, driving range and Tilgate Drive (road). Further south from the existing BUAB is Tilgate Country Park, a significant area of natural and semi natural open space within Crawley and the M23.

Recommendation and Justification

Include playing field and allotments up to Tilgate Drive.

- The area is predominantly encompassed by built up form - GP3.
- The boundary would follow a road which is a defined physical feature - GP2.
- Community facility use relates well to the built up area - GP5.
- The site is bounded by houses which, combined with the flat openness of the site gives it an urban character - GP3/7

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary



6 – East and West of Brighton Road

Description

The east side, adjacent to Brighton Road includes a small business park. Beyond this comprises ancient woodland and Tilgate Country Park.

The area West of Brighton Road comprises of Broadfield House which is currently used as a school and Broadfield Park which is Formal Parkland (AD 1800- AD 1913) and recently designated as a Local Nature Reserve. The area is bounded on three sides by residential development and Brighton Road on one side.

K2 Leisure Centre and a large part of the Thomas Bennett Community College are located to the North.

These three areas are currently outside the BUAB.

Recommendation and Justification

Include Thomas Bennett College and K2 Leisure Centre

These large developments strongly relate to the urban area in use and character, are adjacent to the boundary and do not include any areas of countryside. GP1, GP5, GP6.

Include West of Brighton Road

The urban area is generally visible from the open areas of Broadfield Park with Brighton Road acting as a strong boundary (GP3)

Broadfield Park is enclosed within the built up area by Brighton Road. This boundary separates it from the larger, more enclosed Tilgate Country Park which has stronger connections to the open countryside beyond the M23 (GP3+4).

Include East of Brighton Road

Employment use relates to the built up area - GP5. With the inclusion of Broadfield Park, Tilgate Business Park can be included without including countryside within the BUAB (GP6).

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary



7 - South of Broadfield South

Description

The area comprises of two playing fields and a community centre currently outside the BUAB. This area located between residential development and the A264.

Recommendation and Justification

Include

- The community centre and playing field use relates well to the built up area – GP5
- The site is encompassed by built form physically and psychologically, being a relatively small open area - GP3.
- The A264 is a strong and defined boundary – GP2+3

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary



8 – Target Hill and Breezehurst Drive

Description

1 - A small area of housing on the edge of Broadfield currently outside the BUAB.

2 – A small area of woodland currently included within the BUAB located at the end of St Sampson road next to Target Hill

3 - Area comprises of flat grassland used as sports pitches, bounded by residential properties, Horsham Road and an allocated housing site. This area is currently outside the BUAB.

Recommendation and Justification

1 – Include

- The area of housing is part of the Broadfield neighbourhood – GP5
- The boundary can follow existing property lines which is a clear boundary – GP2

2 - Exclude the woodland from the built up area

- The woodland area does not have a defined or strong boundary – GP2 and 3.
- The area of woodland is part of a large area of woodland extending into the open countryside – GP5.
- There is no development within the area – GP6

3 – Include

- The playing field is a community facility which relates well to the built up area – GP5
- The site is bounded by built form which, combined with the flat openness of the site gives it an urban feel - GP3
- Horsham Road to the south forms a strong boundary – GP 2+3

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary



9 – West of Bewbush

Description

1 - The open grass area between the borough boundary and the current built up area boundary comprises of playing fields, changing facilities and a small play area.

2 – The wooded area to the North is characterised by wooded areas and pathways, some of which is located in Bewbush Water Garden.

Recommendation and Justification

1 – Include - following the borough boundary.

The area will become encompassed by built form once the new neighbourhood West of Bewbush is constructed - GP1.

2 – Include - following the borough boundary.

The area will become encompassed by built form once the new neighbourhood West of Bewbush is constructed - GP1.

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary



10 – Whitehall Drive

Description

This area of housing is currently outside the BUAB and also beyond the borough boundary which is where the current BUAB lies.

It comprises 1980's suburban housing at its southernmost point (1) changing to larger low density housing to the north. These properties pre date the more modern housing to the south ranging from 30 to 50 years older (2). A flatted development is located at the easternmost point (3).

Recommendation and Justification

1 - Include suburban housing to the south

This is a continuation of the urban area GP5 which was built at same time in the 1980's.

2 - Include low density housing area.

These houses are bigger properties with large gardens which are different in character to the adjacent housing estate. They are however, an extension of the urban area the inclusion of which would not include areas of countryside (GP6) and the curtilage of properties forms a clear boundary (GP2+4).

3 - Include flatted development

See above.

Nb. As this area is within Horsham District it would need to be considered and adopted by Horsham District Council.

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary



11 – West of Ifield

Description

The following areas are currently outside the BUAB:

1/2 - Part of the site comprises a playing field with associated car park (inside the BUAB). The area North of the playing field is predominantly semi natural open space which is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

3/4 – to the south and adjacent to the BUAB is Ifield village, comprising of residential development, a church and a car park. To the north along Rectory Lanes lies low density housing on the west side and playing fields/sports pitches on the east side. The northernmost sports pitch is currently unused and has become overgrown and semi natural.

Recommendation and Justification



1/2 – No Change

The playing field relates partially to the built up area but is encompassed by semi natural green space rather than built form and lacks a defined boundary (GP3+6). The area of semi-natural open space (SNCI) is not encompassed by built form (GP3). The area does not contain development or activities that relate well to the built up area (GP6).

3/4 – Minor amendments to more accurately define the built area

The housing outside the existing boundary along Rectory Lane and Ifield Conservation Area is rural in character (GP4+7)

The playing fields to the east of Rectory Lane are not enclosed/encompassed by built form, they extend out from the built up area into the countryside (GP3+4)

 Built-Up Area Boundary (Core Strategy C1)
 Built-Up Area Boundary (Proposed)



12 – West of County Oak

Description

1 - This area is predominantly farmland and fragmented development that extends into an expanse of fields/farmland.

2 - Fir Tree Close is a residential area adjacent to Langley Walk but outside the Built up Area Boundary.

3 - Part of the area adjacent to the boundary comprises playing fields, sports facilities and a car park.

Recommendation and Justification

1 - Exclude

The area adjacent to Langley Walk is not encompassed by built form and lacks a defined boundary - GP3.

The area contains fragmented development which extends into a significant area of open space - GP4 and 6.

The land use is predominantly related to countryside uses i.e. farmland requiring an open area - GP5.

2 – Exclude linear housing outside the urban area

Development is adjacent to the boundary GP1 but stretches out into the open countryside.

3 - Include car park, sports facilities and southern playing field.

This area is predominantly encompassed by built form and has a defined boundary - GP2. The community use and presence of development relates well to the built up area - GP5.

Current Boundary



Proposed Boundary






6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The site assessment shows that some areas are recommended for inclusion within the Built-up area.
- 6.2 Whilst some of the areas are considered part the Built-up Area, there is no presumption that these areas would be suitable for development. Areas such as school playing fields, Historic Gardens and Conservation Areas within the Built-up Area must be identified and protected from inappropriate development through appropriate policies in the Local Plan. This is in addition to protection through NPPF which requires careful consideration of applications involving development on playing fields and in areas of open space. There is no presumption for the development of these types of greenfield land. This remains the case whether or not such facilities are included in a defined built-up area boundary.
- 6.3 Land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds and allotments and back gardens are excluded from the definition of PDL. This is significant as the priority for development is on previously developed land, in particular, vacant and derelict sites and buildings as long as they are not of high biodiversity value.
- 6.4 The recommendations above are based on an assessment of the boundary as it stands. Further amendments to the boundary may be necessary as the Local Plan progresses to take into account new evidence and proposals. Whilst undertaking the survey a small number of sites were highlighted for further assessment as part of the Urban Capacity Study. Whilst these sites may currently relate more to the countryside than the urban area, further assessment could allow a limited amount of development without impacting on the character of the area. A list of these sites will be assessed prior to the Site Allocations Consultation in Spring 2013.

Built-up Area Boundary Consultation Map October 2012

1:30,000

-  Built-Up Area Boundary (Existing)
-  Built-Up Area Boundary (Proposed)
-  CBC Neighbourhoods

