

From: North Somerset Officer
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 9:04:07 AM
To: bleadon@live.co.uk
Subject: FW: Purpose of Settlement Boundaries?

Dear Mr Butler,

Thank you for your email. Bleadon is, as you say, an 'infill' village and its defined settlement boundary is drawn tightly around the built-up part of the village. Infill villages are the smaller and less self-contained settlements in the district, which typically makes them less sustainable to accommodate major growth. Hence the main purpose of infill village settlement boundaries policies is to restrict development inside its boundaries. There are some limited exceptions to this, which might for example consider employment, leisure or tourism uses outside infill village boundaries subject to their impacts. Policy CS33 of the North Somerset Core Strategy applies to 'Infill villages' smaller settlements and the countryside'. While this policy does not preclude small-scale housing development inside the settlement boundary, it does not support housing adjacent to (outside) it. Other housing policies across the district that apply to towns and 'service' villages are more flexible and these do allow housing development adjacent to their boundaries - provided certain criteria is met.

If policy CS33 had full weight in decision making there would unquestionably be an in-principle objection to housing adjacent to infill villages boundaries. However, in June 2017 following examination hearings into the Council's emerging 'Sites Allocations Plan', it was concluded by an independent planning inspector that the Council does not currently have a rolling 5-year supply of deliverable housing land when measured against the residual housing balance of Core Strategy Policy CS13 and more deliverable housing land needs to be found. The consequence of this is that the Council's housing policies, including CS33, are currently deemed to be out-of-date according to paragraphs 14 and 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This means they currently have reduced weight in deciding planning applications.

The Council, in response to the planning inspectors recent findings, is working diligently to identify more deliverable housing land in the most sustainable locations. Once further sites are identified it will report back to the planning inspector. Whether sufficient housing land can be found at or adjacent to Towns and service villages to meet the deficit and give greater flexibility to housing delivery is likely to take a couple of months. If it cannot find enough sites in these locations, then there is a possibility that it may have to consider housing land at other locations.

The development industry is very aware of Council's 5-year housing land supply deficit and the significant weight that is being given by the Government to the need to build more houses. This is why numerous developers have applied for planning permissions for speculative housing adjacent to infill villages across the district. The absence of a 5-year housing land supply, does not mean that the Council is obliged to grant planning permission for such applications. However the reduced weight that can be given to housing policies and the need to build more houses means that some application which, ordinarily, would not be supported, can become more finely balanced.

I hope this gives you some insight into the current situation but please call me on xxxxxx if you require further clarification.

From: Bleadon BOB Community Website
Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2017 3:42 PM
To: North Somerset Officer
Subject: Purpose of Settlement Boundaries?

Please can you help clarify the planning situation on the purpose of Core Strategy Settlement Boundaries within infill villages like Bleadon?

You may recall in December 2016, during the Bleadon Hill Inquiry, we asked "*Please can BPC/NSC inform us what is the purpose of the Settlement Boundary and how it relates to development applications? How does this covenant apply? What is being done, or can be done, to protect Bleadon Parish's rural and village environments and way of life from repeated development applications, including encroachment into the extremes of the parish now, and for future generations (e.g. existing and future applications/licences on the Bleadon Levels for dwellings, businesses, solar energy, fracking, etc.)*" We never received an answer.

As you may be aware Bleadon Parish is currently subject to at least two large scale developments (Purn Way & Bridgwater Rd), both outside the settlement boundary, to which some residents object. An attendee at last night's BPC June Parish Meeting reported that a 'NSC representative' said along the lines that "the village fence and infill villages are not significant in the planning decision. What is significant is the number of objections we have to the plans."

Is this correct? How do these NSC public representative statements fit with the Jan 17 adopted NSC Core Strategy, especially CS33 "*4.92 Demand for housing in the countryside has historically been high, with the result that North Somerset villages and hamlets have become dormitory settlements. To avoid perpetuating unsustainable patterns of development and retain the character of our villages and openness of our countryside, development will be strictly controlled. Outside the Service Villages the number of villages with settlement boundaries is therefore limited to Infill Villages. Within these villages only sustainable development in the form of infilling within settlement boundaries will be permitted.*"?

Surely, I think, the whole point of making these policies and expending public resources on consultations, etc. is that the planning officers then use them to make consistent decisions and not have a 'who shouts loudest' system to decide.

I look forward hearing from you as soon as possible. If you are not the correct person please can you let us know who to contact as public consultation dates are expiring soon?

Kind regards,

Chris Butler

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