



SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS (SPAs)

CONSULTATION PAPER – JULY 2008

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
BEDFORD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS (SPAs)

PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION

The review of Settlement Policy Areas is being undertaken as part of the Allocations and Designations Plan.

The purpose of this paper is to consult on how Settlement Policy Areas (SPAs) should be reviewed. All SPAs that are currently defined in the Local Plan of 2002 will be covered, including the SPA for Shortstown currently shown in the 'Land at Shortstown' development brief (2003). A SPA boundary will be defined for Wixams for the first time.

This is also the opportunity for you to suggest whether any settlements currently without a SPA should have one or whether there are settlements currently with a SPA that should have the SPA removed.

HOW TO RESPOND

Throughout this paper you will find boxes asking for your views. In each case please mark the appropriate box to say whether you agree or disagree with what is being proposed. Where options are given, please mark the appropriate box to say which option you prefer. There is space for you to make additional comments or make suggestions of your own. Please attach separate sheets if you need more space. **You must return this completed paper to the following address by Friday 10th October 2008.**

Post: David Bailey
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FREEPOST ANG5840
Bedford
MK40 1ZD

Email: bdf@bedford.gov.uk

Fax: 01234 221851

Online: www.bedford.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/AllocationsandDesignationsDPD1

The online response sheet enables you to save a copy of your comments before it is emailed.

Please note, all comments received will be made public.

WHY REVIEW THE SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS?

In the Council's view the main reasons for reviewing SPAs are:

- To ensure that their definition is in line with recently adopted Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan policies,
- To ensure that boundaries are drawn in a consistent manner and are defensible under scrutiny,
- To make small changes where developments have already occurred,
- Where appropriate, to accommodate any allocations that might be made for new development.

Please note - this consultation is not asking you to suggest sites for allocation (eg. sites for housing, a new village hall, employment premises etc). If you wish to suggest a development site for allocation, please respond to the 'Invitation to submit potential sites for inclusion in the Local Development Framework' (also known as the 'Call for Sites') consultation using the Site Appraisal Form and Methodology the Council has provided. All the information about the Call for Sites is available at

<http://www.bedford.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/AllocationsandDesignationsPlanSites> or please call 01234 221854.

The Call for Sites consultation ends on the 18th August.

THE POLICIES OF THE CORE STRATEGY AND RURAL ISSUES PLAN (ADOPTED APRIL 2008)

The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan provides the overall strategy for the development of the Borough until 2021. The Plan contains policy relevant to how Settlement Policy Areas should be defined. The relevant policies are shown below. These policies are now adopted and set the framework for the Allocations and Designations Plan and your views are not sought on their content.

Policy CP12 - Settlement Policy Areas

Settlement Policy Areas should be defined for villages with a built-up character. The Settlement Policy Area boundary encloses the main built-up part of the village but excludes undeveloped areas or more loosely knit development.

This policy explains that villages with a 'built-up character' should have a Settlement Policy Area (SPA). The SPA should enclose the 'main built-up part of the village' and exclude undeveloped areas or more loosely knit development. When reviewing the SPA, this guidance will need to be followed. The policy applies in the Rural Policy Area (outside the Growth Area) and the Growth Area (Bedford, Kempston and the Northern Marston Vale).

Different policies apply inside and outside the SPA.

The following policy (CP13) will apply outside the SPA. It is a restrictive policy and applies in the Rural Policy Area and the Growth Area (Bedford, Kempston and the Northern Marston Vale). Examples of uses that are consistent with national policy in PPS7 are: justified agricultural or other occupational dwellings; leisure and tourism uses that need to be in the countryside; and, some horse-related activities.

Policy CP13 - The Countryside and Development Within It

All land outside Settlement Policy Areas is defined as countryside. Development in the countryside will only be permitted if it would be consistent with national policy, particularly that in PPS7: Planning and the Countryside.

Within the SPA the policy that will apply depends on whether the village is in the Growth Area or the Rural Policy Area.

In the Growth Area, policy CP3 applies.

Policy CP3 - The Location of Development in the Growth Area

The locations for growth will be

- i) within the urban area boundary**
- ii) within the defined limits of Growth Area key service centres**

Outside of the areas defined in i) and ii), policies CP12, CP13 and CP17 will apply.

The Growth Area key service centres are Wootton and Stewartby.

In the Rural Policy Area, policy CPI4 applies.

Policy CPI4 - Location of Development in the Rural Policy Area

In circumstances where there is a proven need for development to be located in the Rural Policy Area, most new development will be focused in or around the edge of key service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together.

In rural settlements defined by a Settlement Policy Area boundary which are not designated as key service centres, such development will be restricted to that which is required to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of those communities.

The key service centres in the Rural Policy Area are Bromham, Clapham, Great Barford, Harrold, Sharnbrook and Wilstead. If a village does not have a SPA, then the restrictive countryside policy CPI3 applies.

Policy CPI7 enables affordable housing development to take place to meet identified housing needs following a search sequence. This policy applies to both the Growth Area and the Rural Policy Area.

Policy CPI7 - Affordable Housing to Meet Local Needs in the Rural Area

Exceptionally, permission will be granted for sites providing 100% affordable housing to meet identified local needs. Within the defined area of need and subject to environmental constraints, sites should be identified in accordance with the following search sequence:

- **Within a settlement with a SPA.**
- **Immediately adjoining a settlement with a SPA**
- **Within or immediately adjoining a settlement without a SPA.**

Permission will only be granted where:

- i) Local housing need is evidenced by an up to date survey and the number, size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to and appropriate to the strict extent of the identified local need; and,**
- ii) The site meets the locational criteria set out above; and,**
- iii) The development should contribute positively to the character of the village, maintain landscape character and not lead to coalescence with other settlements; and,**
- iv) The proposed site is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the structure, form, character and size of the village; and,**
- v) The housing proposed must be capable of management by the parish council, Registered Social Landlord, village trust or other similar organisation; and,**
- vi) The housing is provided in perpetuity for qualifying local people.**

The provision of affordable housing to meet local needs may also be encouraged by the allocation of an exception site for 100% affordable housing.

HOW THE RESPONSES TO THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

The Issues and Options Paper consultation ended on the 16th June 2008. The Issues and Options consultation asked a series of questions on Settlement Policy Areas. The responses to those questions are discussed below.

Issues & Options Question: **Which villages should have Settlement Policy Area boundaries?**

The response was:

- Choose using a set of guidelines – 6
- Consider each on a case by case basis – 29
- Another way – 4

It is clear from the above response that the preferred way to identify which villages should have SPAs is to decide on a case by case basis.

The current villages which have a Settlement Policy Area are:

Biddenham	Elstow	Renhold , Green End	Thurleigh
Bletsoe	Felmersham	Renhold, Salph End	Turvey
Bromham	Great Barford	Riseley	Upper Dean
Cardington	Harrold	Roxton	Wilden
Carlton	Little Staughton	Sharnbrook	Willington
Clapham	Milton Ernest	Souldrop	Wilstead
Colmworth	Oakley	Stagsden	Wootton
Cople	Odell	Stevington	Wymington
Eastcotts, Cotton End	Pavenham	Stewartby	Yelden
Eastcotts, Shortstown*	Podington	Swineshead	

* The SPA for Shortstown is contained within the Development Brief of 2003

CONSULTATION QUESTION 1

Should any of the villages listed above not have a Settlement Policy Area?

Please provide your reasons.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 2

The Council intend to define a SPA for Wixams. Are there any other villages that should have a Settlement Policy Area which currently do not have one?

Please state which village and provide your reasons.

Issues & Options Question: **How should SPA boundaries be defined?**

The response was:

- Define them using a set of guidelines – 15
- No set approach, consider on a case by case basis – 20
- Another way – 3

The results of the consultation show that there was an evenly balanced response to the two alternative approaches to defining SPA boundaries. It is important to the delivery of the Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan and to the credibility of the planning process generally that there should be a consistent definition of SPAs having regard to their role in guiding development within the borough.

PROPOSED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The purpose of the SPA is to define the main built-up part of the village. The SPA should include built structures within the village insofar as they form a recognisable built mass distinct from undeveloped areas or more loosely knit or dispersed development.

We are proposing groups of principles, A to F which relate to particular buildings, land uses and settlement characteristics. We would like to know whether you agree with these principles or, in the case of garden land, which option you prefer.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES A1, A2 & A3: Open spaces, playing fields and allotments

Greenfield land (open spaces, playing fields and allotments) is generally excluded from the Settlement Policy Area (SPA) except where it is effectively enclosed by the built form of the settlement. The following principles will apply.

A1 Playing fields and open spaces should generally not be within the SPA. However, if effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village, they should be included but specifically protected from development.

A2 Allotments should generally not be within the SPA. However, if an allotment is effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village, it should be included but specifically protected from development.

A3 Development which is of a dispersed built form and more loosely knit development should not be included in a SPA or have a SPA of its own.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 3

Do you agree with Principles A1 - A3?

A1	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you don't agree, please use this space to explain your reasons.

EXAMPLE OF PRINCIPLE A1



Existing SPA Boundary

Revised SPA Boundary

Important Open Space

The existing SPA boundary excludes the open space and the dwellings that line the road. Under Principle A1, the SPA boundary would be revised to include the dwellings and the open space but the open space would continue to be protected from development.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES B1, B2 & B3: Public buildings

Public buildings (village halls, sports pavilions, schools, churches) are generally excluded except where effectively enclosed by the built form of the settlement. The following principles will apply.

B1 Where a village hall or sports pavilion is effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village then it should be included in the SPA. Any associated playing fields/open space should be specifically protected.

Where a village hall or sports pavilion is located on the edge of a village, adjoining the existing main built-up part of the village, then these buildings should be included in the SPA. Associated playing fields/open space that lay beyond the hall or pavilion should be excluded.

Where a village hall or sports pavilion lies beyond the main built-up part of the village, it should not be included in the SPA. Any associated playing fields/open space should also be excluded.

B2 School buildings and associated playgrounds/playing fields that are effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village should be included in the SPA and the play areas specifically protected.

Where schools are located on the edge of the village and the buildings adjoin the existing main built-up part of the village then those buildings should be included in the SPA. Associated playgrounds/playing fields that lay beyond the school buildings should be excluded (see example).

Where schools are located on the edge of the village and the associated playgrounds/playing fields separate the school's buildings from the main built-up part of the village then both the buildings and grounds should be excluded from the SPA.

B3 Churches and places of worship that are effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village should be located in the SPA. Where these buildings are on the edge of or are detached from the main built-up part of the village, they should be excluded from the SPA.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 4

Do you agree with Principles B1 - B3?

B1	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
B2	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
B3	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you don't agree, please use this space to explain your reasons.

EXAMPLE OF PRINCIPLE B2



Existing SPA Boundary

The existing SPA boundary is currently drawn to include the school buildings but exclude the associated grounds/playing fields. It is therefore consistent with Principle B2



GUIDING PRINCIPLE C1: Farmyards

C1 Farmyards should generally be excluded from the SPA except where effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 5

Do you agree with Principle C1 in relation to farm buildings?

C1

Agree

Disagree

If you don't agree, please use this space to explain your reasons.

EXAMPLE OF PRINCIPLE C1



Existing SPA Boundary

The existing SPA boundary excludes the farm. The farm is not effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the village and the SPA is therefore consistent with Principle C1.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE D (Options 1-4): Garden land

Deciding where to draw the SPA in relation to garden land is probably the most difficult and controversial part of the review process. For this reason we would like you to consider the four options D1 to D4 below and tell us which (if any) you support. Remember, outside the SPA the restrictive policy for open countryside applies (policy CP13).

- D1** Include all gardens on the edge of the main built-up part of the village in the SPA (following recognisable physical features). No exceptions.
- D2** Include all gardens on the edge of the main built-up part of the village in the SPA but with exceptions ie. where they extend beyond the main built-up part of the village and/or their inclusion (and potential development) would harm the structure, form and character of the settlement
- D3** Exclude all gardens on the edge of the main built-up part of the village from the SPA but with exceptions ie. where they form part of the main built-up part of the village and/or their inclusion (and potential development) would not harm the structure, form and character of the settlement.
- D4** Exclude all gardens on the edge of the main built-up part of the village from the SPA. No exceptions.

NB. If SPA boundaries are drawn tightly around the back of dwellings, this would not prevent acceptable extensions being added to existing buildings (and other minor developments such as sheds, garages that are classed as 'permitted development') even though technically they might fall outside the SPA.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 6

Which of the options D1 to D4 do you support?

D1

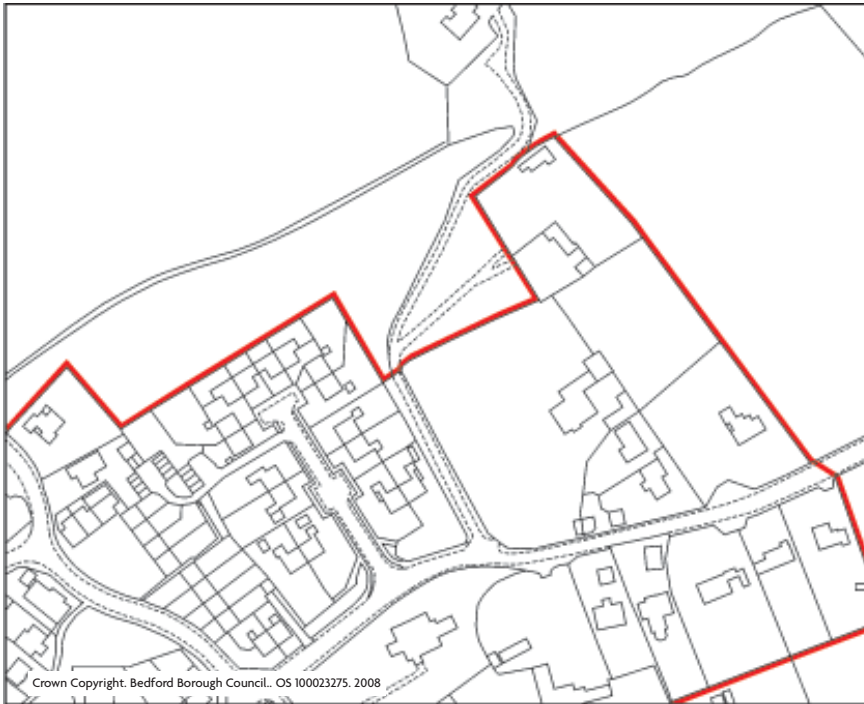
D2

D3

D4

If you prefer an option that we haven't suggested, then please use this space to explain how you think SPAs should be defined around gardens.

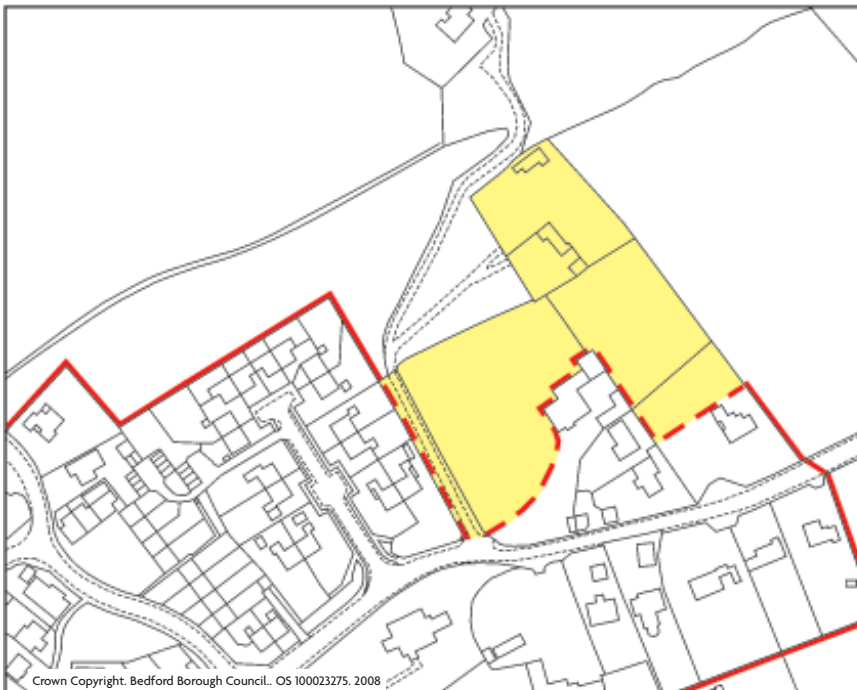
The following four maps show the four options under **GUIDING PRINCIPLE D**
(An aerial photo of this village can be found on p17.)



SPA Boundary

Option D1

The map shows that the Settlement Policy Area includes all the gardens on the edge of the built-up part of the village (following recognisable physical features) with no exceptions. This option includes more garden land within the SPA than any of the other four options.



SPA Boundary

Area of gardens excluded from SPA under Option D2

Option D2

The map shows that all gardens have been included in the Settlement Policy Area, with the exception of the two large gardens (highlighted in yellow). These gardens are excluded because their inclusion (and potential development) could harm the structure, form and character of the settlement. In this option, the restrictive countryside policy would apply to the yellow area.



SPA Boundary

Area of gardens excluded from SPA under Option D3

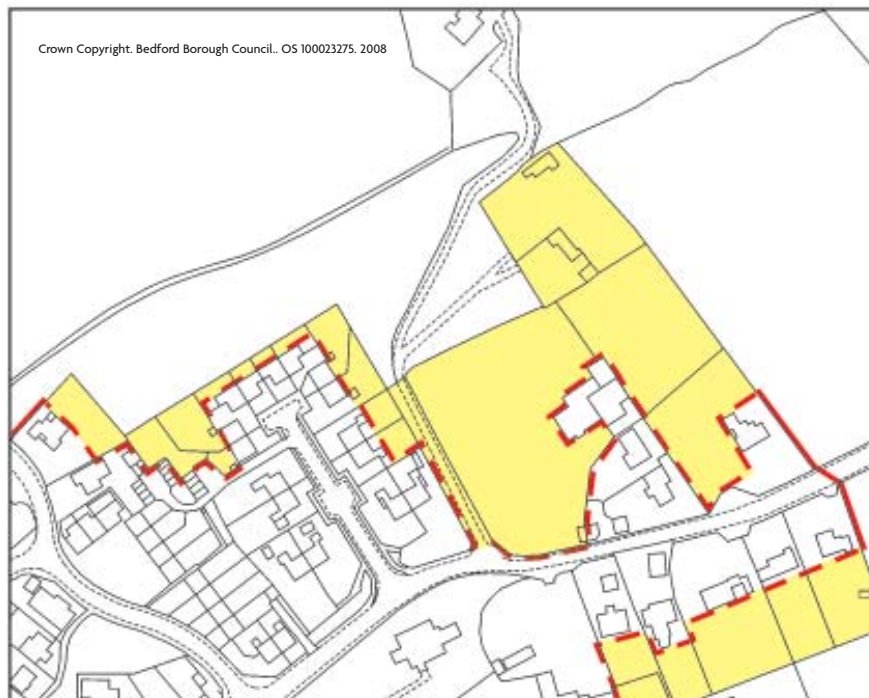


Area of gardens included on a case by case basis under Option D3



Option D3

The map shows that the majority of gardens have been excluded. These are shown in yellow and again the restrictive countryside policy (CP13) would apply here. Where a garden or gardens have been included (shown in brown), these would need to be justified on a case by case basis. Their inclusion (and potential development) should not harm the structure, form and character of the village.



SPA Boundary

Area of gardens excluded from SPA under Option D4



Option D4

The map shows that all gardens on the edge of the built-up part of the settlement have been excluded. Gardens excluded from the SPA are highlighted in yellow. The restrictive countryside policy (CP13) would apply to all back gardens on the edge of the main built-up part of the village under option D4.

Please note - these maps illustrate the principles involved. They should not be interpreted as the council's view that the brown areas are suitable development sites or that the yellow areas are not.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE E1: Affordable housing exception sites

E1 SPAs will not be expanded to include any affordable housing exception sites on the edge of villages (this applies to sites that have been built, those that have planning permission and any affordable housing exception sites that may be allocated). These sites would not normally be granted planning permission for market housing therefore it is more appropriate for the restrictive countryside policy to apply to them.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 7

Do you agree with Principle E1 in relation to affordable housing exception sites?

E1

Agree

Disagree

If you don't agree, please use this space to explain your reasons.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FI: Allocations and sites with planning permission

FI Any new village allocations for market housing, employment development, community uses or Gypsy and Traveller sites that are on the edge of the main built-up part of the village, along with sites that have already been granted planning permission for these uses, should be included in the SPA.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 7

Do you agree with Principle FI in relation to allocations and sites with planning permission?

FI

Agree

Disagree

If you don't agree, please use this space to explain your reasons.

THE NEXT STAGE IN THE REVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS

The consultation period for this paper ends on the 10th October 2008.

The responses will be considered and the methodology for reviewing SPAs will be finalised. The existing Settlement Policy Areas will then be reviewed and a SPA Boundary defined for Wixams.

Where new Settlement Policy Areas have been suggested for villages that do not currently have them, these villages will be considered. This will be done in relation to the policies of the adopted Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (specifically Policy CP12) and the finalised methodology.

The revised and new Settlement Policy Areas will then be published for consultation. This consultation is expected to take place in Summer/Autumn 2009.

SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS (SPAs)

CONSULTATION PAPER – JULY 2008

Please send your responses to:

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Email: bdf@bedford.gov.uk

Fax: 01234 221851

**THE DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS IS 10th OCTOBER 2008
ALL COMMENTS RECEIVED WILL BE MADE PUBLIC¹**

To enable us to contact you so that we can acknowledge receipt of your comments please write your details below. Anonymous responses will not be accepted.

<i>Name:</i>
<i>Address:</i>
<i>Telephone:</i>
<i>Email:</i>

If you would like us to keep you informed of progress on preparing the Allocations & Designations Plan please tick here

¹ It is an offence to make any representation which is contrary to the Race Relations Act. The Planning Service is mindful of its statutory duties to promote equality and to challenge all forms of discrimination. Therefore, where representations are received in response to public consultation which, if published, would conflict or be perceived by others to conflict with these duties, the relevant parts will not be published or taken into account. Such representations will not be placed on the public record but will be returned to the sender.