

# Barrow upon Soar Neighborhood Plan: Limits to Development

## Background

Limits to Development provide clear, defensible boundaries around settlements within which development will normally be confined. They have been used as a planning policy tool in Charnwood Borough for a considerable time and are a well understood planning tool for managing development.

Limits to Development are currently defined by the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004) proposals map. The Limits to Development distinguish between areas of development and development potential and areas of restraint, such as countryside.

Although the Charnwood Local Plan 2011 - 2028 Core Strategy does not identify new Limits to Development, it paves the way for our Neighbourhood Plan to define new boundaries as a means of providing for development and protecting the countryside (Core Strategy Policy CS1 and paragraphs 5.23 and 7.7).

## The Need to Review Limits to Development

Although Limits to Development are defined in the 2004 Local Plan, their preparation started well before then, so they have not been fully reviewed for many years. Originally they allowed for some new development, but over time those opportunities have become more constrained.

The National Planning Policy makes it clear that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. So, while Charnwood Borough Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing sites, Limits to Development should be considered as not being up-to-date. In view of this, an increasing amount of development, particularly housing, has been granted beyond Limits to Development. In Barrow upon Soar, this includes the Melton Road development planned by Jelson homes.

The case for reviewing Limits to Development as part of the preparation of the Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan is overwhelming. Up-to-date Limits to Development will provide:

- Certainty: with a boundary shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map, Limits to Development make it clear what will or will not be permitted and where. They provide a transparent and consistent approach to development control decisions;
- A managed approach to housing growth;
- Protection for the countryside from ribbon development and the coalescence of settlements. The later is particularly important for Barrow upon Soar, where the individual identity of the settlement is highly valued but fragile;
- Reduces the hope of obtaining planning consent for development outside Limits to Development with resulting impact on land values. Reduced 'hope value' facilitates the release of land for rural exception site affordable housing schemes and the provision of community facilities.

## Methodology

The Limits to Development defined by the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004) Proposals Map provide a good starting point for a review. The existing Limits to Development define the principal built-up area of Barrow upon Soar.

The review will ensure that, generally, open areas of countryside- agricultural land, paddocks, meadows, woodland, rivers and lakes, and other greenfield land (except for residential curtilages)- will continue to lie outside Limits to Development. If there is a need for Barrow upon Soar to accommodate housing or employment growth this will be done by the allocation of development sites within, or more likely, adjoining the Limits to Development Boundary.

The following methodology applies:

- Where possible, boundaries should follow a defined feature that is visible on-site and on an OS plan e.g. field boundary, building, road, stream, wall or fence.
- Boundaries should generally follow the curtilage of properties. In the case of residential gardens, occasionally the curtilage of the property is not well defined or so large that it appears to form part of the countryside surrounding the settlement. In these cases, the boundary should be defined to protect the landscape setting of the settlement.
- Isolated or sporadic development which is clearly detached from the principal built-up area should be excluded from within the boundary.
- Boundaries need not be continuous. It may be appropriate given the form of a settlement to define two or more separate areas.
- Limits to Development boundaries should be extended to include peripheral sites where there is an extant planning permission for residential or employment development. Similarly, sites that are to be allocated for development should be included within settlement boundaries.
- Peripheral playing fields, environmental space, garden centres and nurseries, allotments and community gardens should not be included within the boundary.
- Sewage Treatment Works, electricity sub-stations, pumping stations and other utility buildings on the edge of a settlement should be excluded from within the boundary.
- Agricultural buildings may be included in development boundaries if they are well related in terms of scale and positioning to the rest of the settlement. Account will also be taken of the availability of defensible boundaries and the age of the building (i.e. how established the building is in the settlement).