

# **East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Settlement Boundary Background Paper**

**Updated February 2021**

## Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background	4
Settlement boundaries	4
The development plan	5
3. Settlement boundary methodology	6
Desktop review	6
Identification of a draft boundary and on-site review	7
Engagement on the draft boundary	7
Review	7
Submission/ adoption	7
4. Desktop review – key findings	8
South Tyneside Local Plan (current and emerging)	8
South Tyneside Landscape Character Study	9
Areas of high landscape value	9
South Tyneside Green Belt Review	10
East Boldon Conservation Area Character Appraisal	11
South Tyneside SHLAA	11
5. Identification of a settlement boundary	13

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to explain the process which has led to the proposed designation of a settlement boundary around the village of East Boldon within the draft East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 As part of the consultation on the pre-submission draft neighbourhood plan, we invited comments on the proposed settlement boundary. These comments informed the final draft settlement boundary that is included within the submission draft plan.

## 2. Background

### Settlement boundaries

- 2.1 A settlement boundary is a line that is drawn on a plan around a village, which reflects its built form, this is also known historically as a 'village envelope'. A settlement boundary is used as a policy tool reflecting the area where a set of plan policies are to be applied. The settlement boundary does not necessarily have to cover the full extent of a village or be limited to its built form. In general, there is a presumption in favour of development within the settlement boundary. Any land and buildings outside of the boundary line are usually considered to be open countryside, where development would be regulated with stricter planning policies. However, it should be noted that any land which has been included within the boundary line does not have a guarantee of approval of planning permission, as there will be other planning policies which will need to be adhered to also, for example, the protection of the character of a settlement.
- 2.2 Settlement boundaries have a number of advantages, they seek to:
- Ensure development is directed to more sustainable locations, both in terms of accessibility to and support of existing services and transport and in terms of landscape;
  - Protect the countryside from encroachment of land uses more characteristic of built up areas, which can help conserve and enhance cultural heritage and natural beauty;
  - Provide an easy to understand tool that gives certainty for landowners, developers and the community over where development is likely to be acceptable and where it is not;
  - Direct development to specific parts of the area. This can help increase the viability of local services, as well as encourage new ones to establish;
  - Ensure a plan-led and more managed approach to future development, providing a firm basis for protecting the countryside from unnecessary encroachment;
  - Support the presumption in favour of sustainable development of sites that are too small to be identified as formal allocations;
  - Make it easier for local residents to obtain planning permission for domestic outbuildings within a settlement boundary than outside;
  - Provide a guide for appropriate locations for rural exception sites to provide affordable housing for local needs (in locations adjoining and outside of the settlement policy boundary); and
  - Ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach.
- 2.3 However, there can also be some disadvantages of settlement boundaries:
- By restricting development, settlement boundaries can artificially increase land values within the settlement compared with land outside, as the likelihood of successfully gaining planning permission differs;
  - Artificially increase land values on land adjoining the settlement boundary due to future 'hope value', with landowners seeking the possibility of the boundary being realigned at some point in the future to accommodate future growth of the

settlement. This could mean fewer rural exception sites coming forward, as the landowner may wish to take a longer-term view;

- The general presumption that development within settlement boundaries is acceptable can result in pressure for the development of unsuitable land, such as valued open spaces within settlement boundaries or other places where development may not be appropriate. Although, this can be overcome by ensuring that any open space valued by the community is protected through formal designation;
- The use of settlement boundaries can lead to the perception that they result in denser development in already well-developed settlements e.g. within the gardens of houses; and
- Settlement boundaries can be crude and inflexible. For small rural communities with a character of dispersed development, it can be difficult to draw a logical boundary around the village.

### **The development plan**

- 2.4 The East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan includes a general presumption in favour of sustainable development and seeks to focus the majority of new development within the settlement boundary of East Boldon.
- 2.5 The current development plan for East Boldon comprises the: South Tyneside Core Strategy (2007), Development Policies (2011) and Site Specific Allocations (2012). Settlement boundaries are not included within the adopted development plan policies. However, the expansion of East Boldon is limited by the Green Belt. Core Strategy policy EA1 requires new development to protect and enhance the openness of the Green Belt.
- 2.6 The emerging South Tyneside Local Plan also does not propose settlement boundaries, although reference is made within policy S2, criterion 'a)vii' that settlement boundaries should contribute positively to the setting of the urban area and the countryside and reinforce Green Belt boundaries. The emerging local plan proposes amendments to the Green Belt boundary within the East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 2.7 Draft policy S1 defines the purposes of the Green Belt (reflecting national planning policy), specific reference is however made to the need to preserve the special and separate characters of the villages of West Boldon, East Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn. However, significant unresolved objections remain to the proposals to amend the Green Belt boundary within the neighbourhood plan area.

### 3. Settlement Boundary Methodology

- 3.1 As explained in section 1, the concept of a settlement boundary is to identify a policy line which separates built-up areas (within which development is, in principle, acceptable), from the countryside (within which, with limited exceptions, development is not acceptable).
- 3.2 There is a presumption in favour of development if land is within a settlement boundary and therefore land should only be included within the boundary if that is where development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other policies. There is a judgement to be made as to whether other development or areas adjacent to but outside the current settlement policy area relates more to the built environment than to the surrounding countryside.
- 3.3 There is no definitive methodology to establish settlement boundaries and different approaches have been taken by local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning groups across the country.
- 3.4 This settlement boundary methodology for the East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan, has been informed by a review of a number of different approaches and has been prepared in the context of the plan area. It follows a five-stage process which is set out below.
- 3.5 It should be noted that through the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, East Boldon Forum are not looking to revise the Green Belt boundary, however the work prepared by South Tyneside Council in relation to the Green Belt is a relevant consideration.

#### Stage 1 – Desktop review:

This first stage involves a review of existing evidence documents, including:

- South Tyneside Site Specific Allocations (2012);
- Emerging South Tyneside Local Plan and Policies Map (August 2019);
- South Tyneside Landscape Character Study – parts 1, 2 and 3 (2012);
- South Tyneside Local Plan – justification for areas of high landscape value boundary changes (July 2019);
- South Tyneside Green Belt Review – Stage 1 (August 2019);
- South Tyneside Green Belt Review – Stage 2, site assessments (July 2019);
- East Boldon Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2006);
- East Boldon Conservation Area Management Plan (2009)
- South Tyneside Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (April 2019)
- Review of current planning applications/ permissions;
- Evidence base supporting the East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan, such as the East Boldon Design Code<sup>1</sup> and the East Boldon Community Character Statement<sup>2</sup> ; and
- Aerial mapping (Google Earth).

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.eastboldonforum.org.uk](http://www.eastboldonforum.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [www.eastboldonforum.org.uk](http://www.eastboldonforum.org.uk)

## **Stage 2 – Identification of a draft boundary and on-site review:**

Following the desktop review, an initial draft boundary is identified which can then be viewed on site. In order to establish a robust settlement boundary for the village there are a number of guiding principles:

- Where practical, the boundary should follow clearly defined physical features, such as walls, fences, hedgerows, roads and water courses;
- Areas to be included are:
  - Built development that visually forms part of the settlement;
  - Those with extant planning permissions for built development which is physically and functionally related to the village;
  - Agricultural buildings if they are well related in terms of scale and positioning to the rest of the village; and
  - Community facilities where they are within the built-up area;
- Areas to be excluded are:
  - Curtilages of properties which have the capacity to extend the built form of the settlement - including large residential gardens;
  - Recreational or amenity space at the edge of the settlement which primarily relate to the countryside;
  - Allotments, unless within the built-up area;
  - Isolated buildings, not well related to the settlement;
  - Designated wildlife sites, unless within the built-up area;
  - Woodlands, orchards and other community green spaces, including cemeteries and churchyards, unless within the built-up area;
  - Car parks on the edge of the settlement; and
  - Community facilities clearly outside the settlement e.g. pubs/ hotels.

## **Stage 3 – Engagement:**

- Contact landowners prior to wider public engagement;
- Public feedback on the draft boundary as part of the consultation on the pre-submission draft plan.

## **Stage 4 – Review:**

- Review of comments received and amendment where necessary.

## **Stage 5 – Submission/ adoption:**

- Inclusion of proposed settlement boundaries within submission draft plan, if endorsed through examination and referendum, will be adopted as part of the neighbourhood plan.

## 4. Desktop review – key findings

- 4.1 A number of evidence documents were identified as part of the desktop review, these are set out below.

### South Tyneside Site Specific Allocations (2012)

- 4.2 Core Strategy policy EA1 requires new development to protect and enhance the openness of the Green Belt and the detailed Green Belt boundary within the plan area is illustrated in the site specific allocations document (figure 1). This also includes allocation of the area of high landscape value and area of landscape significance of the village from Hylton Lane to Sunderland Road. This designation has been in place since 1985 when it was identified as part of the West Boldon, East Boldon and Cleadon Local Plan.

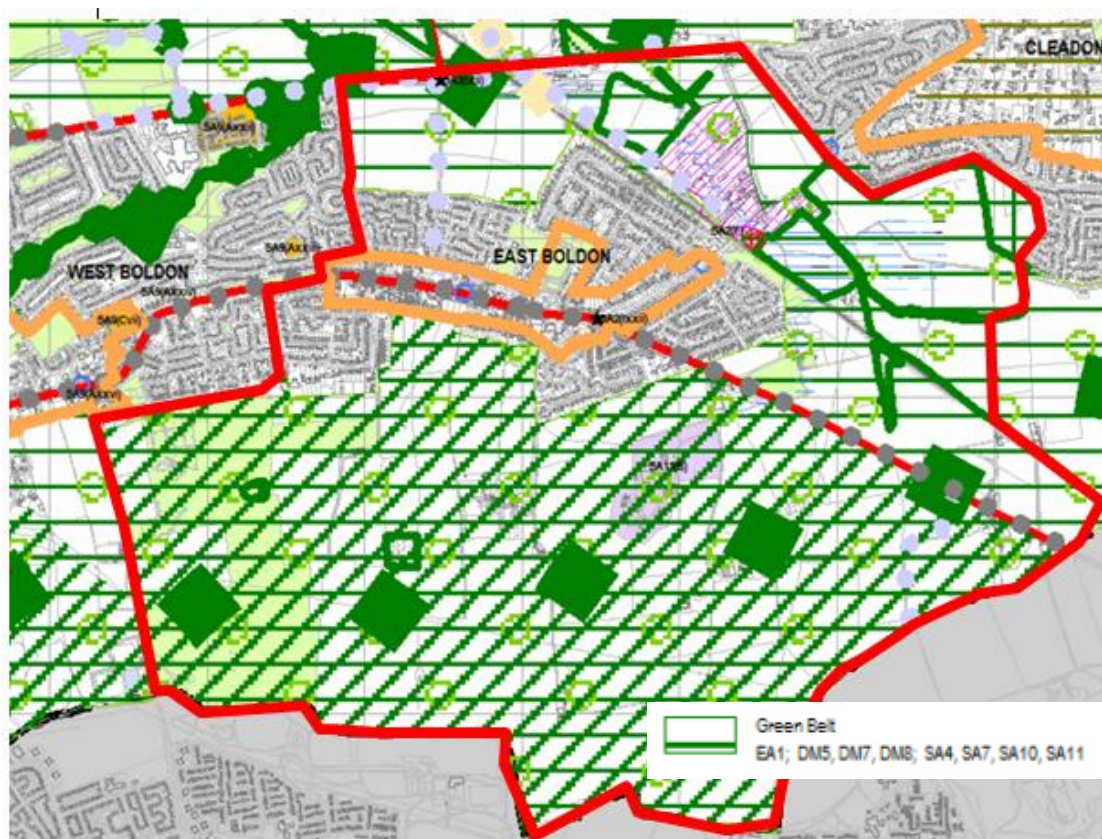


Figure 1: Extract from South Tyneside Site Specific Allocations Proposals Map – Green Belt boundary

### Emerging South Tyneside Local Plan Policies Map (2019)

- 4.3 The draft South Tyneside Local Plan proposes changes to the Green Belt that lies within the plan area. It is proposed that Green Belt is deleted and replaced with three housing sites (H3.59, H3.61 and H3.65). Other relevant designations include green infrastructure corridors to the north of the plan area (policies NE1 and NE3) and an area of high landscape value to the west of the plan area (policy NE5). This is illustrated in figure 2.



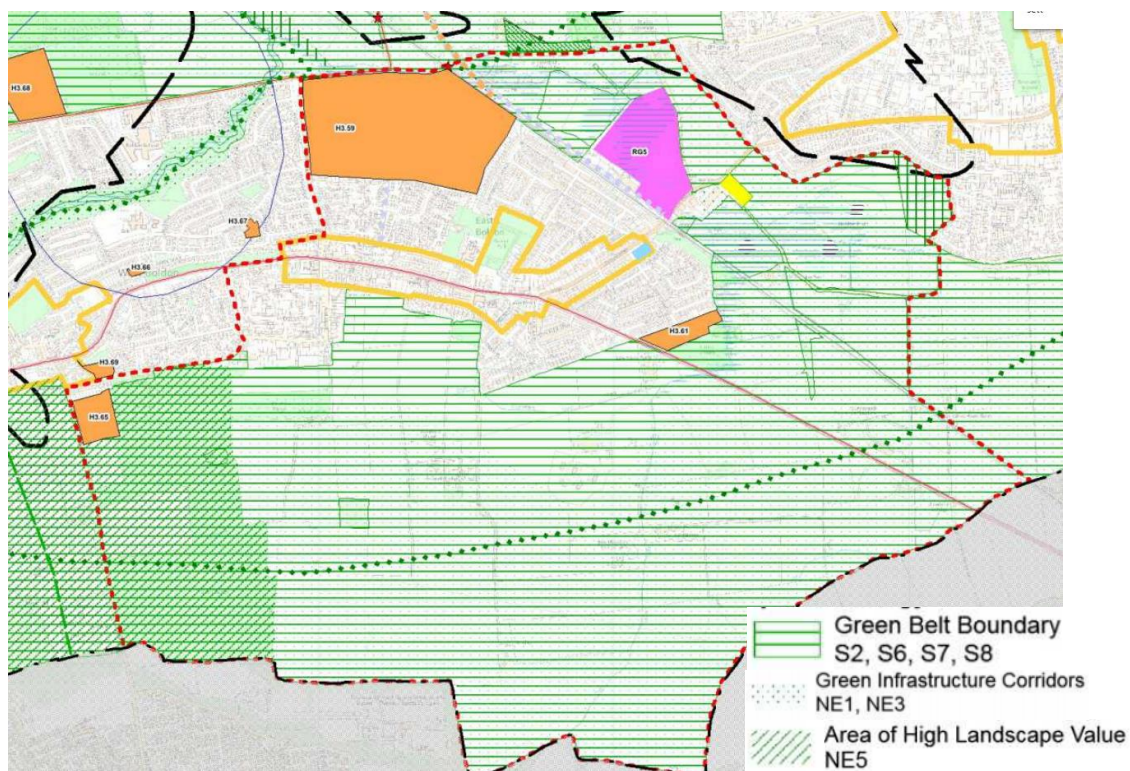


Figure 2: Extract from emerging South Tyneside Local Plan Policies Map (2019)

### South Tyneside Landscape Character Study – parts 1, 2 and 3 (2012)

- 4.4 The landscape character study presents a detailed review of the landscape of the borough and identified the way in which the distinctive characteristics can be maintained and enhanced. In addition, it considers the implications regarding the function of the Green Belt and landscape designations.
- 4.5 The plan area sits within three landscape character areas: The Boldons (24); Boldon Downhill (32) and Boldon Flats and Whitburn Moor (33). The study identifies the importance of the historic core of East Boldon and the separation between settlements.
- 4.6 Part III of the study recommended the removal of the area of landscape significance east of Boldon Downhill. The study concluded that there was no justification of retaining this designation and concluded that although an area of pleasant, relatively well wooded farmland, this area does not display the range of aspects and qualities which would potentially merit the maintenance of the designation. The forum does not agree with this conclusion which has been included in the emerging local plan.

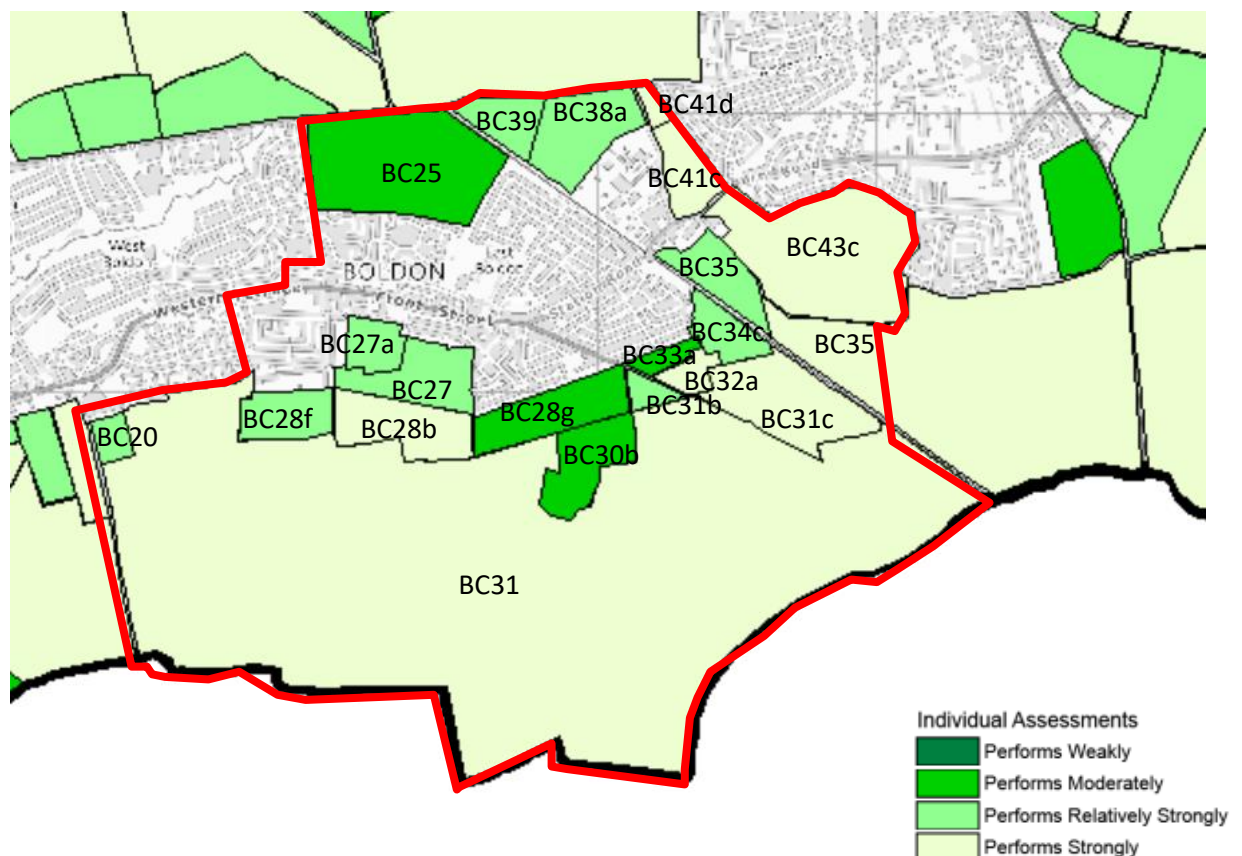
### Justification for areas of high landscape value (2019)

- 4.7 Part of the Boldon Downhill Area of High Landscape Value lies within the plan area. The evidence document explains that the 2012 landscape character study proposed a new boundary for the area of high landscape value. The new boundaries are proposed as:
- The western boundary to follow Downhill Lane and the track at the foot of the scarp;
  - The southern boundary to follow the borough boundary;
  - The eastern boundary to follow the eastern edge of the golf course; and

- The northern boundary to follow the urban/ Green Belt boundary.

### South Tyneside Green Belt Review – stages 1 and 2 (2019)

- 4.8 Stage 1 of the Green Belt review concludes that exceptional circumstances exist at the borough level to justify the release of land from the Green Belt and then considers sites for release. This conclusion has not yet been tested through independent examination and there remain significant unresolved objections to the approach taken by the council. Therefore, at this stage, the conclusions of the review cannot be given weight in the planning process. However, it is included within this paper for completeness.
- 4.9 Stage 2 of the Green Belt review assessed parcels of land against the purposes of the Green Belt and other designations and constraints. The nationally defined Green Belt purposes are to:
- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
  - Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict land.
- 4.10 Figure 3 provides an extract of the findings of the Green Belt land parcel assessments.



*Figure 3: Extract from South Tyneside Green Belt Review - Stage 2 (2019)*

- 4.11 No sites within the plan area have been assessed by the council as performing weakly against the purposes of the Green Belt, however four sites have been identified as

performing moderately (BC28g, BC30b, BC33a and BC25). Nine sites have been identified as performing relatively strongly (BC20, BC27, BC27a, BC28f, BC31b, BC32a, BC34c, BC35, BC38a, and BC39) and eight sites performing strongly (BC28b, BC31, BC31c, BC32a, BC35, BC41c, BC41d and BC43c).

#### East Boldon Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2006) and Management Plan (2009)

- 4.12 The conservation character appraisal explains that the conservation area was designated in 1975 and extended in 1993. The management plan highlights the importance of key views into and out of the conservation area and the need to retain and protect agricultural land, gardens, parks recreational areas and other areas of open space.

#### South Tyneside Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2019)

- 4.13 There are nine sites contained within the South Tyneside SHLAA that are relevant to the consideration of the identification of settlement boundaries for East Boldon:

- SBC003 (BC25a): Land at North Farm (west);
- SBC006 (BC27): Land to south of South Lane and west of Belle View Lane;
- SBC007 (BC27a): Land to south of South Lane;
- SBC010 (BC37): Land at Cleadon Lane Industrial Estate;
- SBC080 (BC28c): Land at Green Lane;
- SBC081 (BC28d): Land at Green Lane east of Mundles Lane;
- SBC087 (BC33a): Land south of St John's Terrace and Natley Avenue;
- SBC111 (BC20): Land West of Boldon Cemetery;
- SBC115 (BC28a): Land south of the Boldons;
- SBC117 (BC31a): Land at Boldon Golf Course.

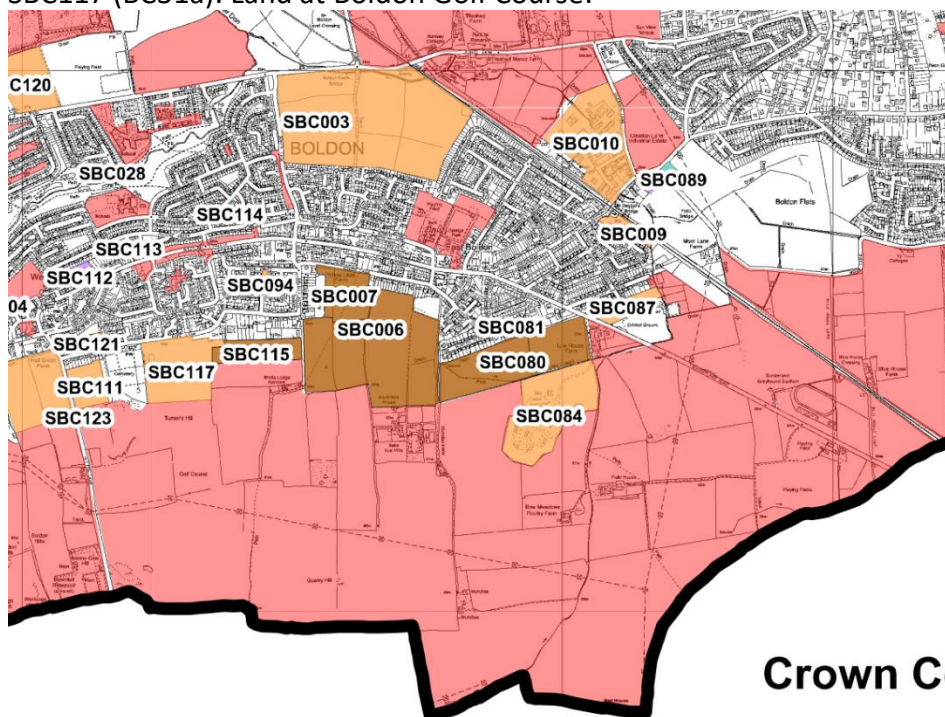


Figure 4: Extract from South Tyneside SHLAA



- 4.14 The forum agrees with South Tyneside Council's (STC) published assessment of sites SBC006, SBC007 and SBC115 that the sites are not suitable for housing and therefore should not form part of the East Boldon settlement boundary. With regard to site SBC010, the Forum considers that the site should lie within the settlement boundary. However, as the site has an important role within the local economy the forum considers the whole site should not be lost to residential development. Therefore, housing would only be supported where this does not undermine the vitality and viability of the existing businesses and has been informed by the preparation of a masterplan.
- 4.15 Only site SBC08 has planning permission, there are no other relevant applications pending consideration.
- 4.16 The Forum does not consider sites SBC003, SBC080, SBC081, SBC087, SBC111 or SBC117 suitable for development:
- Site SBC003 acts as an important green gap between Boldon and South Shields. Development of the site would result in the loss of separation along Boker Lane, effectively merging East and West Boldon. The site is rich in wildlife and forms an important part of a wildlife corridor and is also at risk from flooding;
  - Sites SBC080 and SBC081 are in agricultural use, they are adjacent to the south east of the village and form and provide an important green approach along the A184. The forum agrees with STCs assessment of these sites as contained within their strategic land review (2018);
  - Site SBC087 forms part of the important green approach to East Boldon. Development of the site would impact on the character of the village and has the potential to create significant road safety issues. The neighbouring use of the cricket club would be incompatibly with residential development. The site is also at risk from flooding;
  - Site SBC111 lies within an area of high landscape value and green infrastructure corridor. It is detached from the village of East Boldon and its development could impact on the setting of West Boldon Conservation Area. There is also the potential to create road safety issues;
  - Site SBC117 forms the northern part of Boldon Golf Club. The council concluded in their strategic land review (2018) that the site was not suitable for development. The forum agrees with the council's assessment and is considering the site for designation as local green space.

## **5. Identification of a settlement boundary**

5.1 Informed by the evidence detailed in the previous section, the impact of future development on the landscape and setting of the village of East Boldon has been critical in the definition of the settlement boundary as well as ensuring the boundary supports the sustainable growth of the plan area. The proposed boundary:

- Will manage development to around to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on the important landscape setting of the village;
- Will manage development to seek to ensure that it conserves and enhances the East Boldon and West Boldon Conservation Areas;
- Establishes a logical shape to the edges of the village, again seeking to conserve and enhance the character of the area;
- Avoids irregular incursions into the open countryside; and
- Has been drawn along features which are easily identified on the ground to establish robust boundaries.

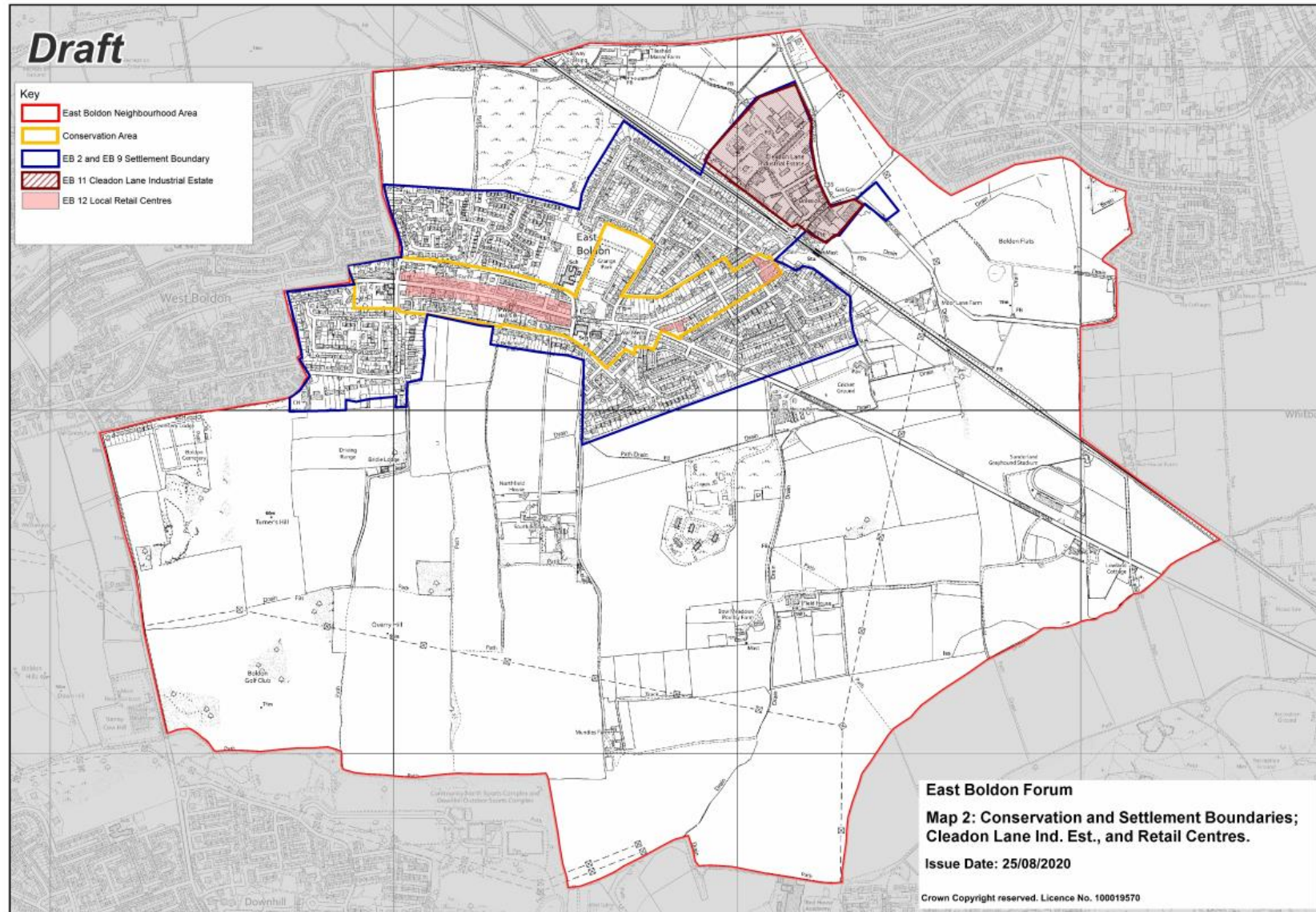


Figure 5: Proposed East Boldon Settlement Boundary