

Agenda Item No: 8
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 19th December 2019



Report Title: Adoption of Challock village envelope boundary map

Report Author & Job Title: Simon Cole, Spatial Planning Manager

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Planning and Development

Summary:

The adopted Local Plan 2030 includes policies that refer to the 'built-up confines' of settlements and what constitutes the confines is defined textually.

However, members have requested for village envelopes to be drawn on a map base as a means of easily defining where the built confines are. This will help guide decision makers for future planning applications. Accordingly, a number of maps showing the village envelopes have been endorsed by Cabinet recently.

This report proposes a village envelope for Challock (see map 1 below). As part of the process, officers have been engaged with Challock parish council and they support the map being presented. If endorsed by Cabinet, this map will be used for the purposes of decision-making on relevant planning applications in and around Challock.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: Challock and surrounding wards

Recommendations: The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- I. **Adopt the Challock village envelope boundary (map 1) as informal guidance for development management purposes and in doing so supersede the 2014 Challock village envelope (map 2); and,**
- II. **Delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Development and Spatial Planning Manager, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development to amend, where relevant, a village envelope boundary to account for the construction of new development.**

Policy Overview:	Local Plan policies HOU3a and HOU5 are important elements in the consideration of applications for new residential development in the borough. Their interpretation relies on a written definition of the 'built-up confines' of a settlement set out in the Plan. The proposed Challock village envelope boundary contained within this report reflects this interpretation, taking account of local geography and will be used as informal guidance to assist in the interpretation of what constitutes the 'built-up confines' in relevant planning applications.
Financial Implications:	There are no financial implications.
Legal Implications	None
Other material implications	If Cabinet approve the 2019 village envelope map presented in this report, then the existing 2014 village envelope map, derived from the pilot community project, will be superseded.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not required.
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	None
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Adoption of Challock village envelope boundary map

Introduction and Background

1. Over successive Local Plans, the 'built-up confines' or village 'envelope' of a settlement has been defined in written terms as the "*limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built-up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (e.g. garden areas)*".
2. Members have now asked for these built confines to be drawn on a map base for a number of rural settlements in the borough. Accordingly, over the last few months, a number of village envelopes have been endorsed by Cabinet.
3. As with the other village envelopes, when the map is endorsed by Cabinet, it can then be used as informal guidance for the determination of relevant planning applications. It is hoped that a map based approach will provide greater clarity for applicants, local residents as well as officers and members.

The Challock Village Envelope Map

4. For a time Challock was the only village in the Borough that had a bespoke village envelope in place. This stemmed from their 2014 community pilot exercise, a process which was supported by the Borough Council.
5. As such, the Parish Council were initially reluctant to accept a new village envelope boundary. This position was reported to the Local Plan and Planning Task Group in February 2019.
6. However, following discussions with officers from the Council, the Parish Council now support the need to move away from the 2014 envelope, and also support the 2019 envelope being presented. Once endorsed, the 2019 envelope will supersede the 2014 envelope.
7. In large part this view is held because of Policy HOU5 of the Council's Local Plan 2030 (adopted Feb 2019). This changed the overarching planning context in that new residential windfall development, in principle, could come forward at larger rural settlements (including Challock) where it is 'adjoining' or 'close to' the existing built-up confines. This raises potential implications that were not apparent when the 2014 envelope exercise was undertaken.
8. This raises the possibility that the new 'adjoining' or 'close to' policy test could apply to the 2014 envelope area, as that sets out (it could be argued) the 'extent of the built confines' for Challock (accepting that other criteria in Policy HOU5 would also apply). This would cover a very broad area – areas which have never been supported by the Parish Council (in principle) for new housing development. The 2014 envelope only sought additional housing development within a clearly defined area.
9. It is therefore preferable to reduce the village envelope area from 2014, as a means of reducing this uncertainty. Doing so also allows the Council to draw an envelope

that reflects the written definition of the Local Plan 2030, bringing Challock into line with the approaches being adopted elsewhere.

10. Members should note that a number of minor changes that the Parish Council requested to the envelope have been made during the process and these are now incorporated into the 2019 envelope attached. Some of these changes followed a public event held by Parish Council in the summer of 2019.
11. Of note is the desire to include 'the Lees' in the 2019 envelope area (as highlighted in blue on map 1) as the area greatly contributes to the character of the village. On balance, officers are content to include this area as it is public open land and as such is unlikely to be acceptable for new housing development.
12. As with other envelope maps, the Local Plan 2030 site allocation at Challock (S54-Land at Clockhouse) is also annotated, for information purposes. This will form part of the built confines, once built out.
13. The November 2019 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group debated the 2019 envelope. They recommended to Cabinet that it is endorsed. It was also recognised that, once endorsed, the 2019 map would supersede 2014 village envelope for Challock.

Implications and Risk Assessment

14. If the Cabinet agree the recommendation, the existing 2014 Challock village envelope will be superseded. This envelope is currently a material consideration, but does not have development plan weight. However, recent planning appeals have appeared to give greater planning weight to the written definition of the Local Plan 2030 which raises questions over the current status of the 2014 envelope in any event.
15. The 2019 envelope is seen as a way of providing greater clarity to the position and ensure that the envelope is consistent with the Local Plan 2030. In doing so, it also brings Challock into line with the other rural settlements in the borough which have been subject to a new envelope being drawn.

Other Options Considered

16. Challock parish council have the option to produce a Neighbourhood Plan which could provide an alternative means of establishing a village envelope. This option remains, even if Cabinet endorse the 2019 envelope now being proposed.
17. Once adopted, a neighbourhood plan would become part of the Development Plan and material in the assessment of relevant planning applications. However, any alternative village envelope would still need to be broadly consistent with the Council's Local Plan 2030.
18. During recent discussions, Challock parish council have confirmed that they do not intend to produce a Neighbourhood Plan in the foreseeable future.

Conclusion

19. The 2019 Challock envelope represents an approach which is consistent with that being applied at other rural settlements in the Borough. The drawn envelope visually represents the written definition of the 'built confines', as per the Council's Local Plan 2030.
20. The Parish Council have been involved in the process, alongside officers from the Council. The Parish Council support the 2019 envelope being presented and as part of the process have suggested a number of small amendments to the map. Where possible, these have been included in the 2019 envelope.
21. Based on the above, and the content of this report, the Cabinet is recommended to:
 - Adopt the Challock village envelope boundary shown in appendix 1 to this report as informal guidance for development management purposes and in doing so supersede the 2014 Challock village envelope; and,
 - Delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Development and Spatial Planning Manager, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development to amend, where relevant, a village envelope boundary to account for the construction of new development.

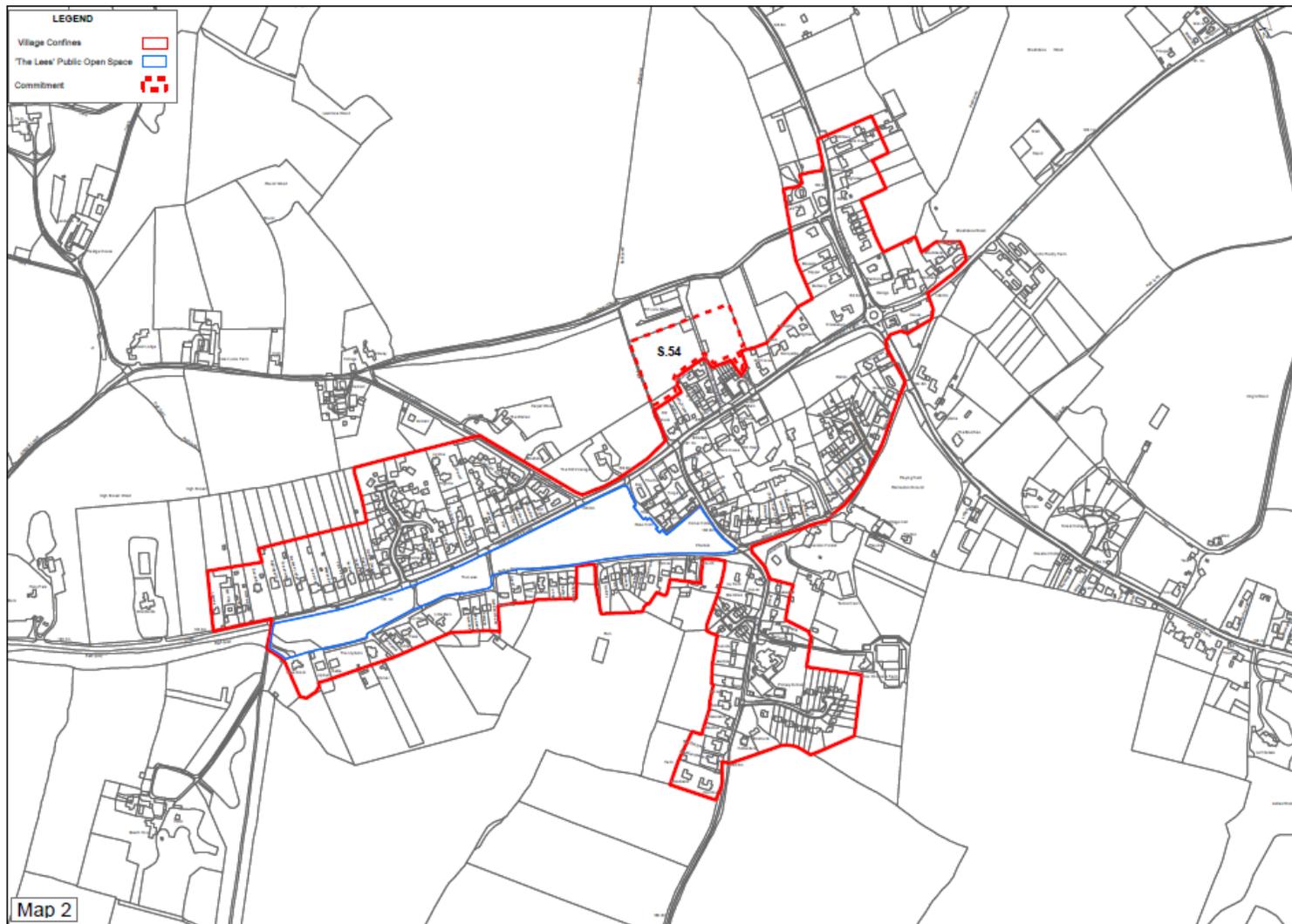
Portfolio Holder's Views (Cllr. Shorter)

22. I am supportive of the proposals and recommendations outlined in this report and would like to express my thanks to officers for progressing this important project and the constructive dialogue undertaken with the Parish Council to achieve such a positive outcome.

Contact and Email

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Map 1 – Challock Village Envelope 2019



Map 2 – Challock Village Envelope 2014 (from their pilot project)

