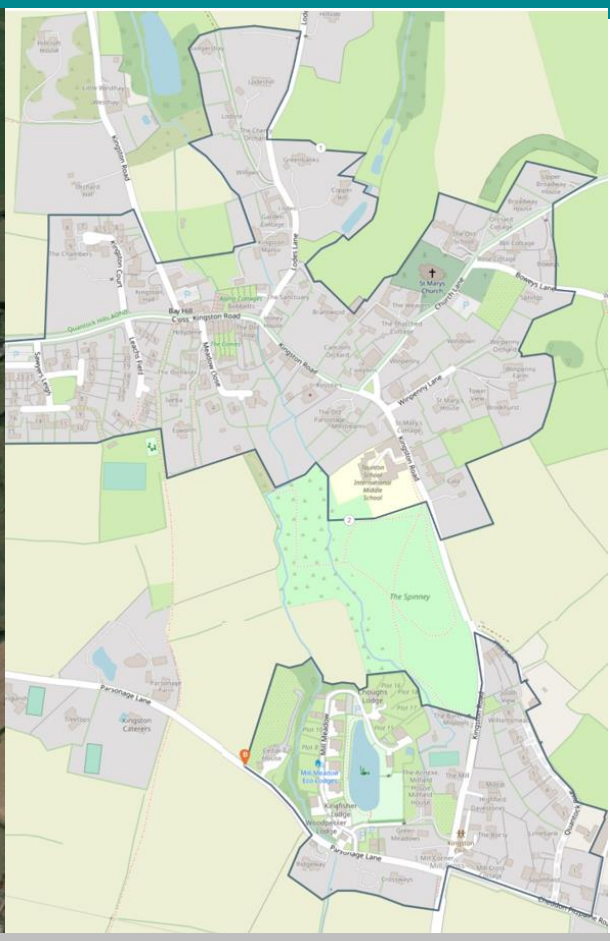
Kingston St Mary Settlement Boundary





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August 2023

Kingston St Mary's Settlement Boundary

What is a Settlement Boundary?

A settlement boundary[1] is a line drawn on a map around a town or village which distinguishes between the settlement's built form and the open countryside. It may also be called the settlement limit or village envelope.

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 controlled with stricter planning policies. However, it should be noted that any land which has been included within the settlement boundary line does not have a guarantee of approval of planning permission, as there will be other planning policies which will need to be considered, e.g. the protection of the character of a settlement.

Settlement boundaries are not a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework but they are an accepted planning tool that has historically been helpful for decision making, to provide guidance for developers and for local people to understand where development might happen in their settlement.

The former Taunton Deane Borough Council had settlement boundaries for 35 of its towns and villages set out in its Core Strategy Policy. Maps of the settlement boundaries are shown on the Policies and Inset Maps of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan[2]. Settlements without boundaries are classed as being in the open countryside where development is strictly controlled in order to conserve the environmental assets and the open character of the area. It should also be noted that settlements can have more than one settlement boundary[3], e.g. Bishops Lydeard (2), Combe Florey (2), Lydeard St Lawrence (2), Sampford Arundel (2), Stoke St Gregory (2) and West Bagborough (3).

Settlement boundaries assist in protecting the integrity of the countryside, providing a compact form to settlements, preventing sprawl and sporadic development and reducing visual impact on the countryside. Away from defined centres they also assist in reducing the consequences of unsustainable development.

Criteria for Delineating a Settlement Boundary.

In order to help decide where to draw the line on a map to delineate Kingston St Mary's settlement boundary it is useful to have some criteria to help determine the extent of the village envelop. It is suggested that the criteria[4] relevant to Kingston St Mary should:

- be closely aligned to the existing settlement boundary, which for some of its length mirrors Kingston St Mary's conservation area;
- follow clearly defined physical features, e.g. walls, fences, hedgerows, roads and streams;
- include all properties physically linked to the main (built) part of the Village, except those, such as operating farms, that principal functionally relates to the surrounding countryside;
- include existing planning consents relating to the Village;
- include all residential curtilages;
- not include properties separated from the main body of the Village by areas of open land not forming a residential curtilage;
- take cognizance of the Village's conservation area, listed buildings and the Quantock Hill's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

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1 Appendix 5 - Somerset West & Taunton Local Plan 2040 – Topic Paper 2: Settlement Boundaries.

2 Taunton Deane Policies Maps

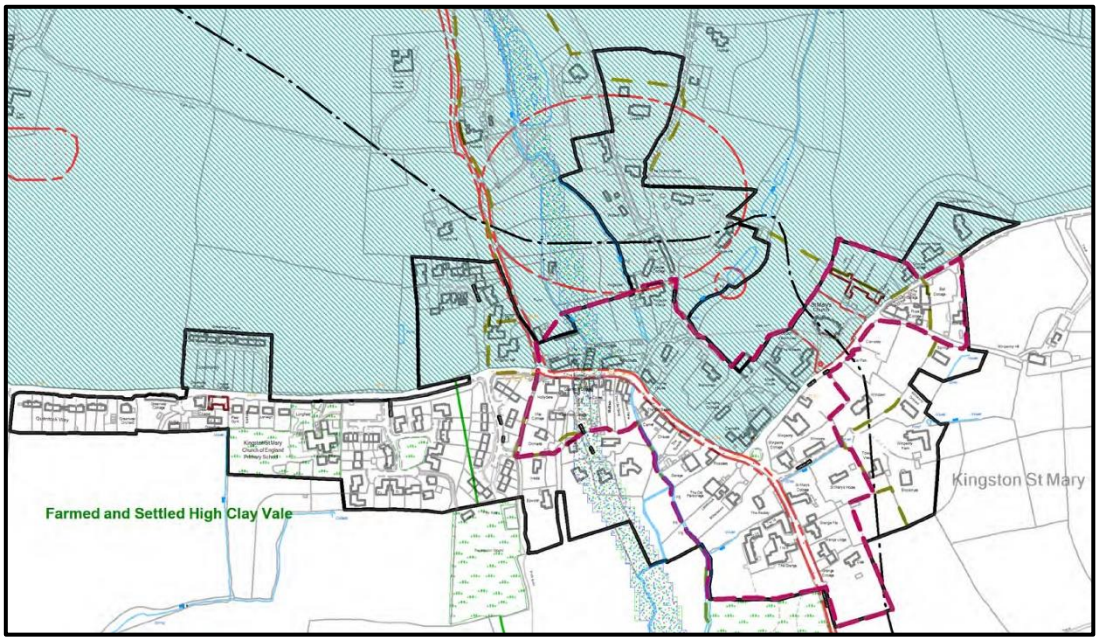
3 Appendix 4 – Stoke St Gregory Settlement Boundaries.

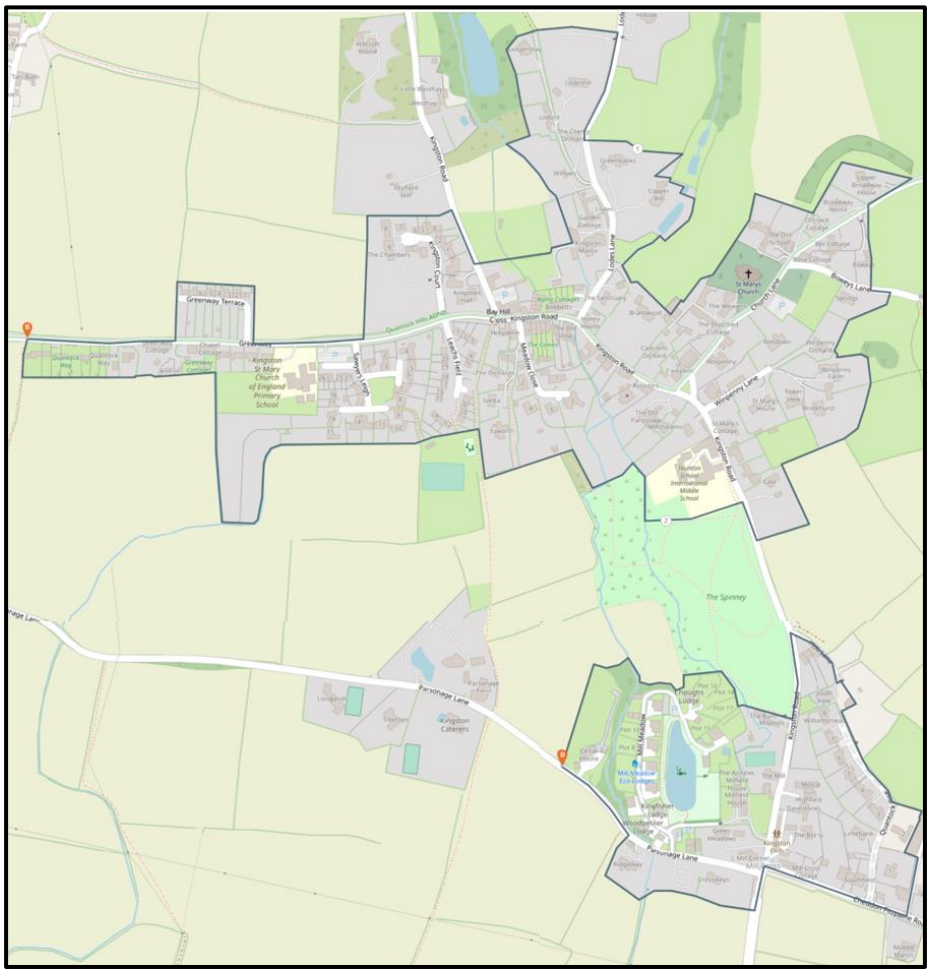
4 RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Kingston St Mary's Settlement Boundary.

Kingston St Mary's current settlement boundary[5] does not include the Mill Cross area of the Village. The maps below show the current settlement boundary and an initial attempt at updating the boundary[6] to:

- include the Mill Cross area;
- include new additions to the Village (i.e. Meadow Barn by The Swan Inn); and
- reflect the settlement boundary criteria relevant to Kingston St Mary.





[5] Appendix 1.

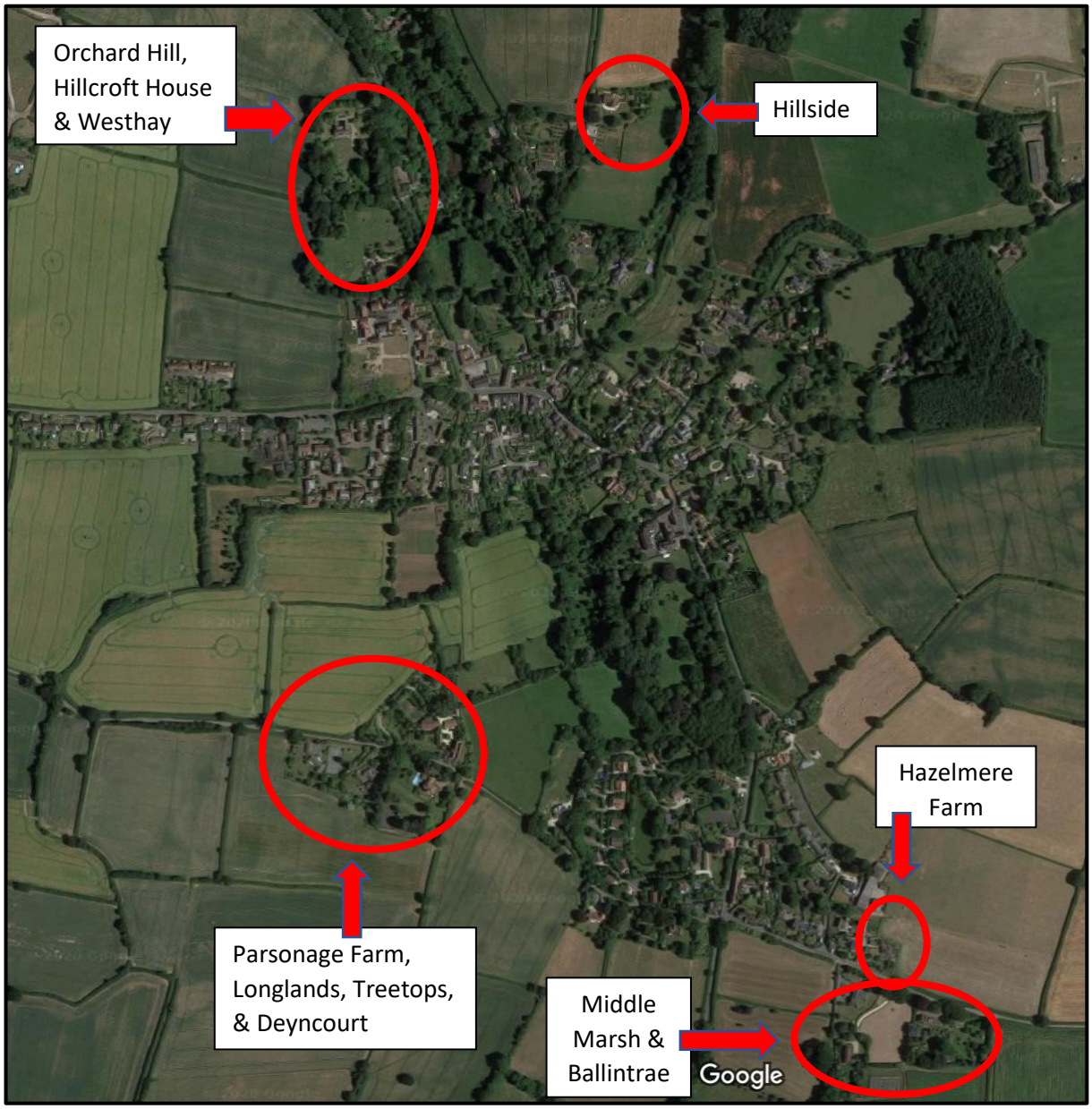
[6] Appendix 2.

Settlement Boundary Exclusions.

The satellite image below shows the built form of Kingston St Mary. The areas ringed in red, have been excluded from Kingston St Mary's proposed settlement boundary for the following reasons:

- Orchard Hill, Hillcroft House, Westhay and Hillside are located in the AONB, are in open countryside and are not within the current settlement limit. In addition, a planning application relating to Orchard Hill was refused in 2019 for a number of reasons including, that the proposed development would not conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB;
- Parsonage Farm together with Longlands, Treetops and Deyncourt are situated in open countryside and Parsonage Farm is a working farm;
- Middle Marsh and Ballintrae are separated from the main body of the Village by areas of open land and Hazelmere Farm is a working farm.

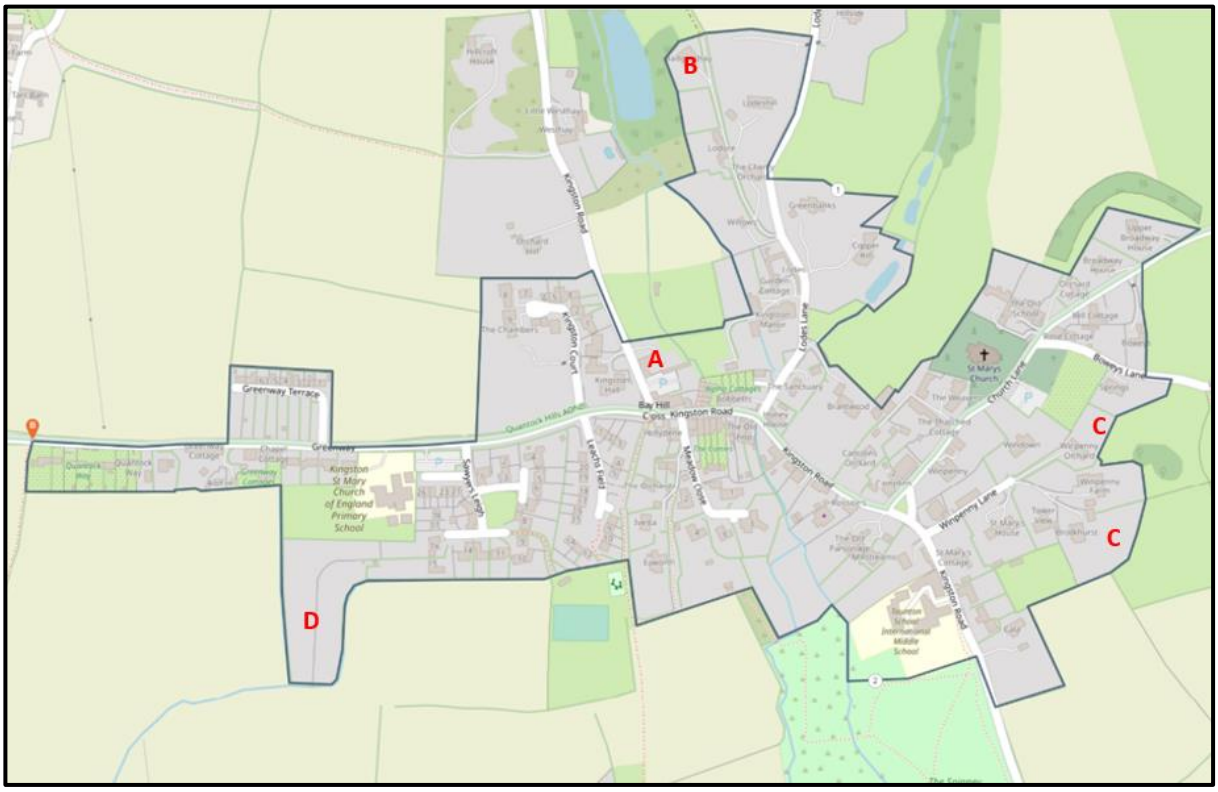
Consequently, for the reasons given above, although these properties are located on the periphery of the Village they have not been included in Kingston St Mary's proposed settlement boundary.



Settlement Boundary Additions.

The map below shows the proposed additions to the existing Village settlement boundary, which has been updated to include:

- Meadow Barn, which although within the AONB, this residential property is physically linked to the main part of the Village by The Swan Inn and is adjacent to Kingston Court, both of which are within the AONB and the existing settlement boundary;
- Badgershay, this residential property is within the AONB and Kingston St Mary's conservation area[7]. It is physically linked to the main part of the Village by being located in a small cul-de-sac off Lodes Lane and is adjacent to Lodeshill, which is within the existing settlement boundary. The other properties in this small cul-de-sac are also within the existing settlement boundary and the AONB;
- the full residential curtilages of Winpenny Orchard, Winpenny Farm and Brockhust, as the existing settlement boundary includes only a part of the gardens of these three Winpenny Lane properties;
- the full residential curtilages of 15 and 16 Sawyers Leigh, as the existing settlement boundary includes only a part of the gardens of these properties.

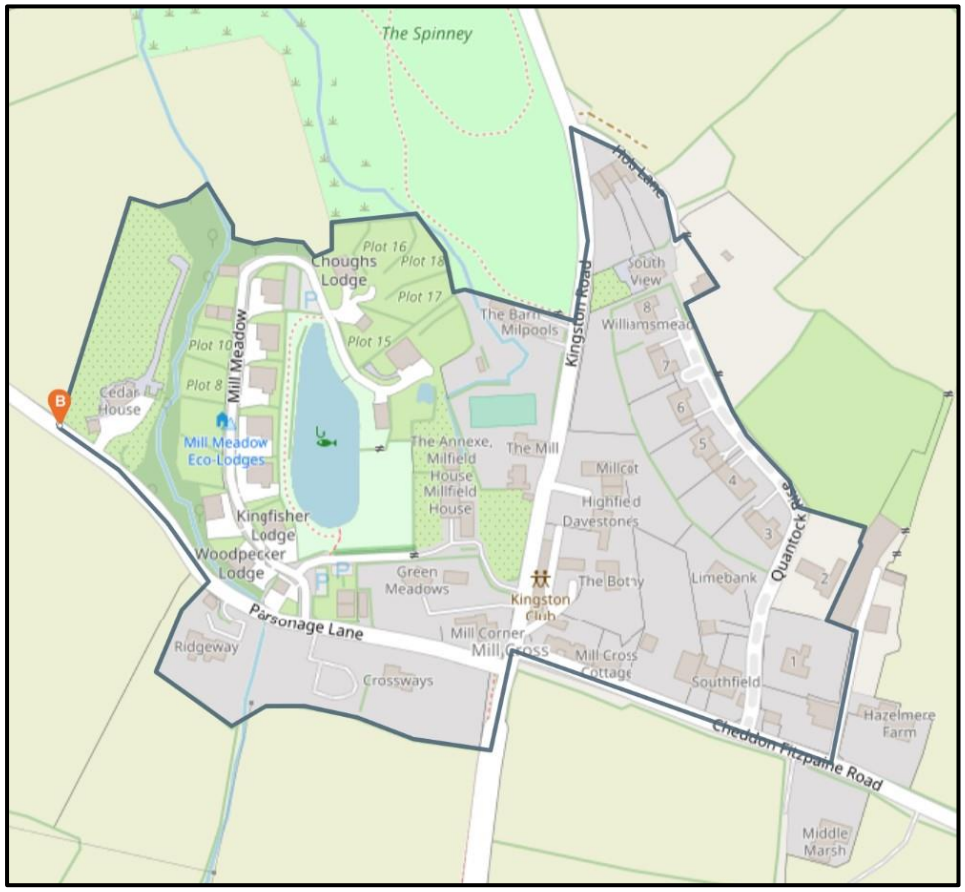


Key: **A** – Meadow Barn
B – Badgershay
C – Winpenny Lane
D – Sawyers Leigh

[7] Appendix 3.

Mill Cross Settlement Boundary.

The maps below show the proposed extension to Kingston St Mary's settlement boundary to include the Mill Cross area. The southern boundary of the current settlement limit finishes at Cala on the Kingston Road and it is suggested that this boundary should be updated to include the Mill Cross area, which comprises a large number of residential properties linked to the main part of the Village by the Kingston Road and The Spinney.





Local Plan.

The current Taunton and Dean Local Plan states that;

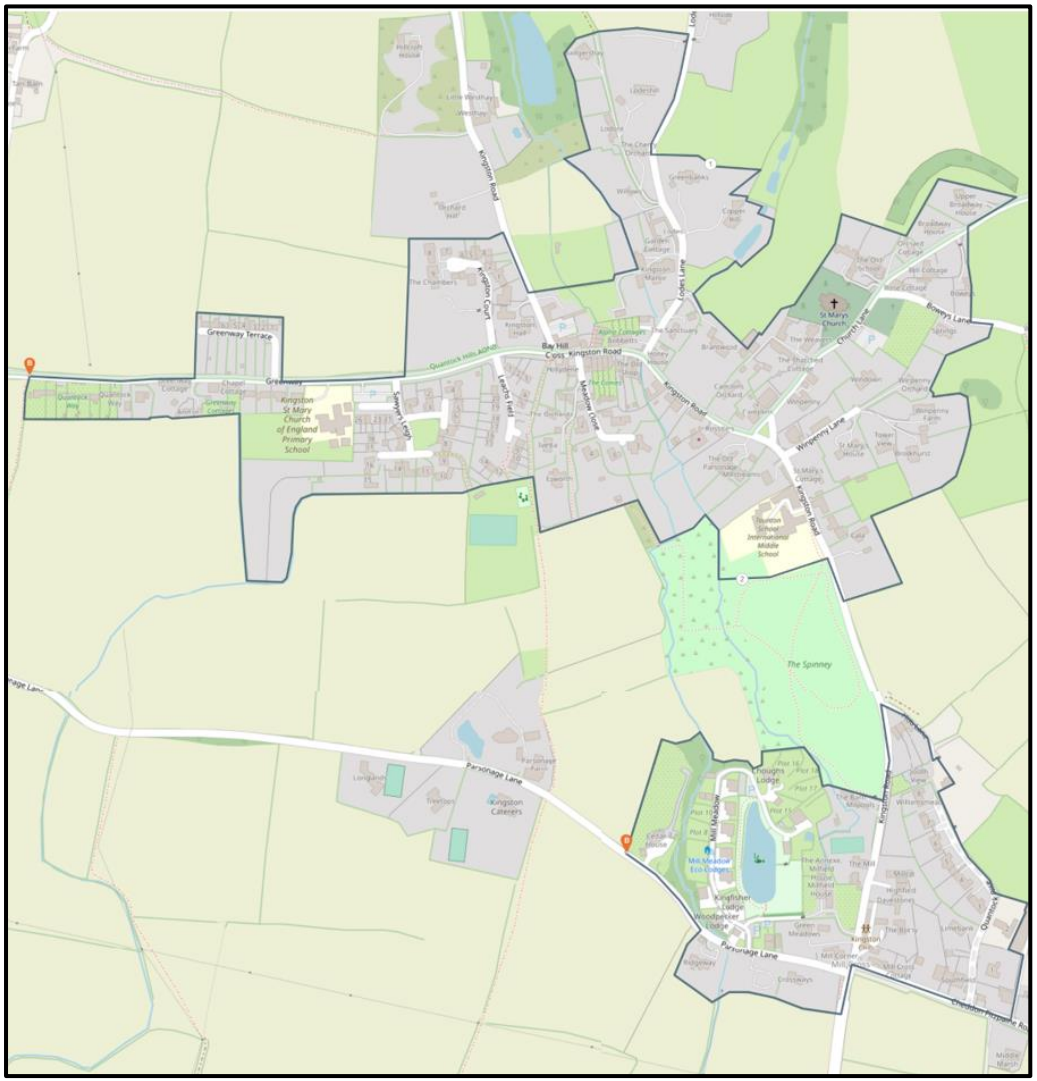
- new housing developments in Kingston St Mary will be restricted to small-scale developments in character with the settlement, including appropriate infilling and conversions, within the defined settlement limits; and
- the character and compactness of the Village provides only limited scope for such developments.

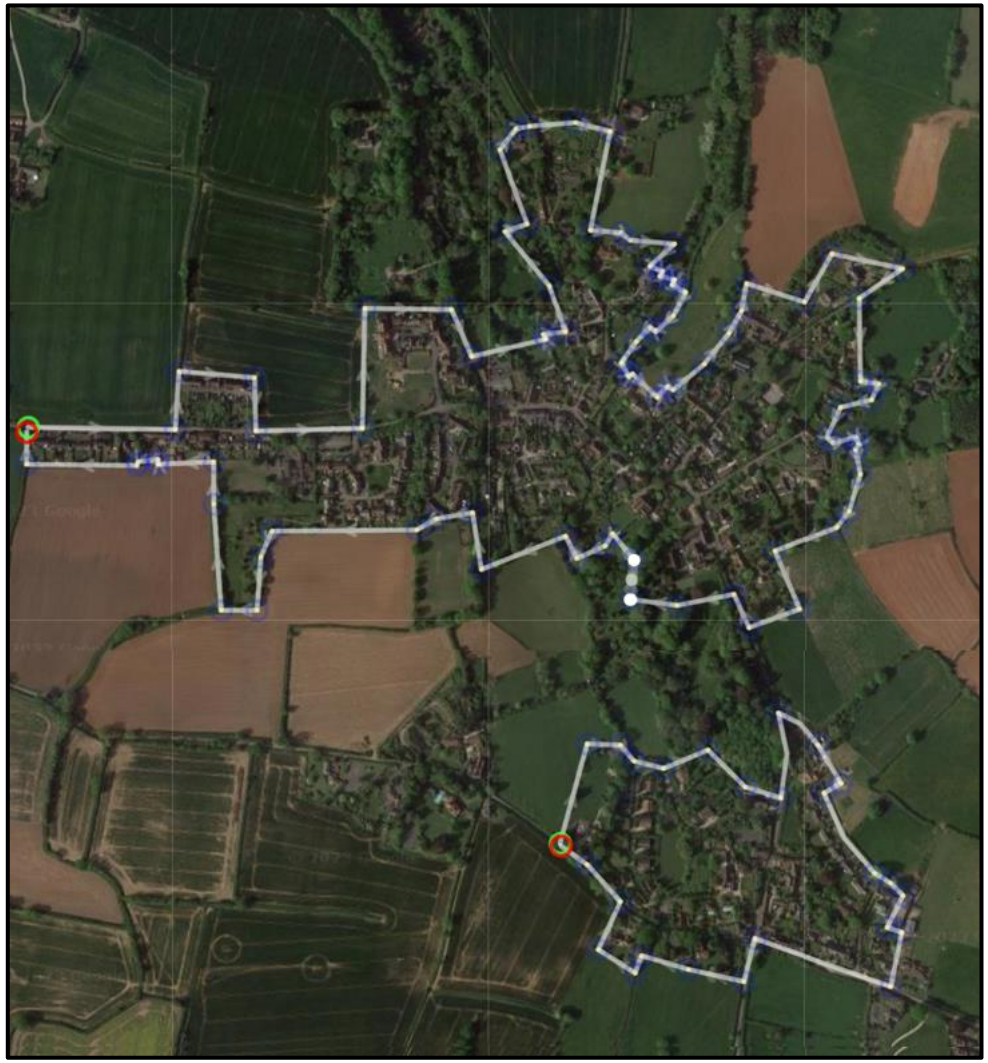
The proposed change to Kingston St Mary's settlement boundary complies with the above requirements and conforms to the current Local Plan.

Settlement Boundary Conclusion.

The Mill Cross area is not included in Kingston St Mary's current settlement boundary and is outside the Quantock's AONB and the Kingston St Mary conservation area. Consequently, this part of the Village would benefit from being included in the Village envelope as a settlement boundary around Mill Cross, would help protect both the character of the area and the nearby countryside from unsustainable development.

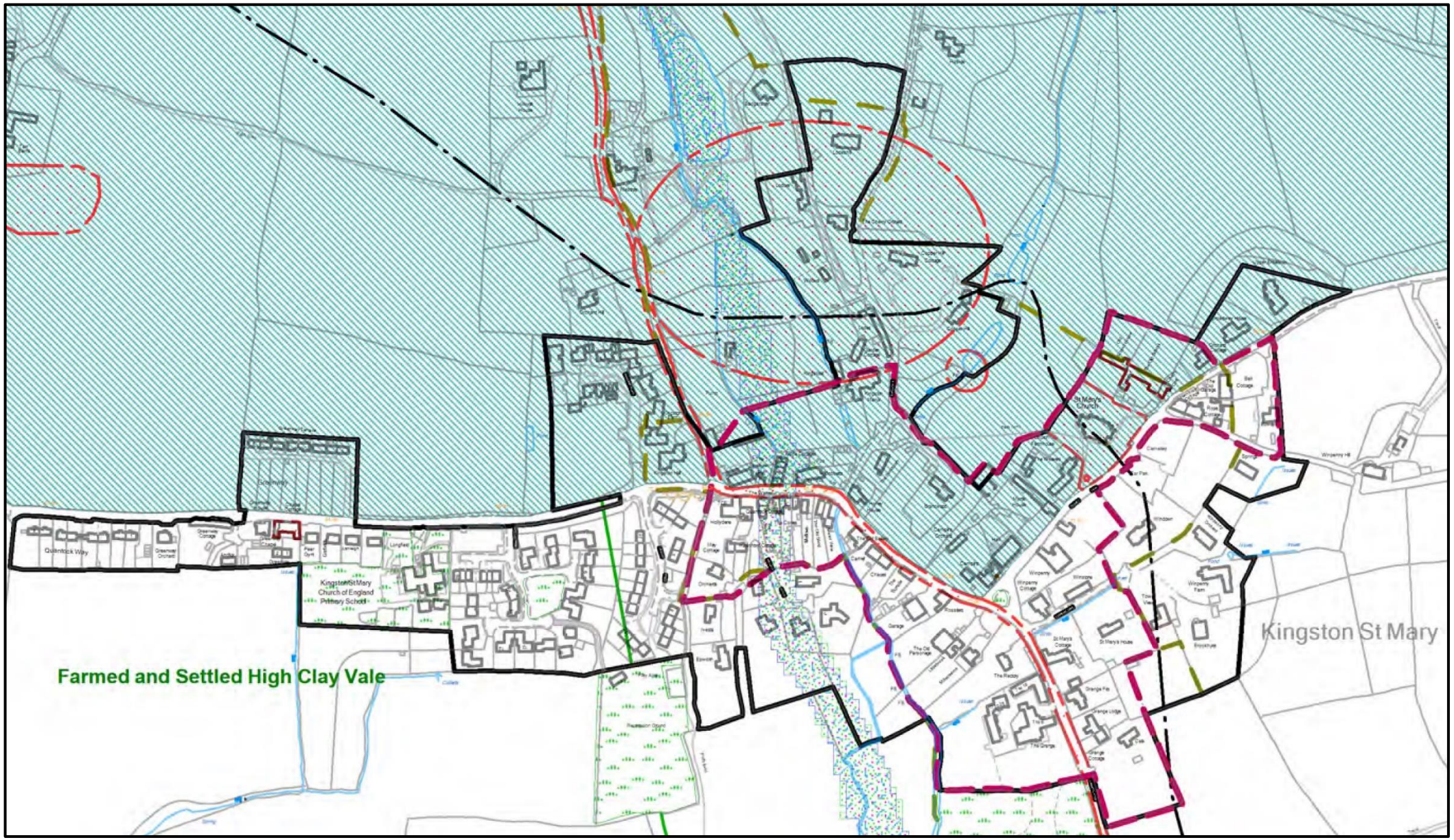
The proposed Kingston St Mary settlement boundary, shown below, is closely aligned to the current settlement boundary, conforms to the current Local Plan, includes the Mill Cross area and incorporates a limited number of changes to reflect the built form of the entire Village.





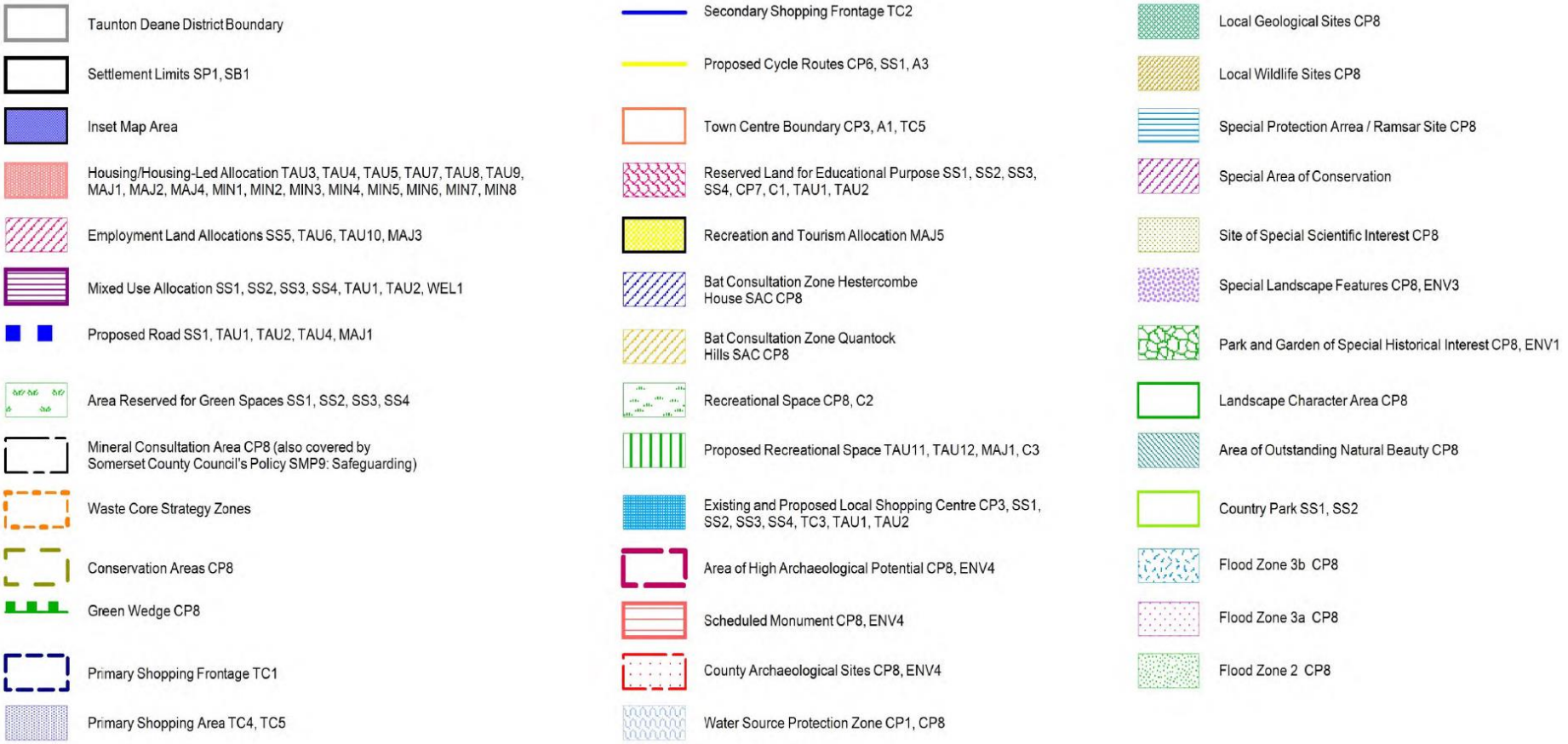
Kingston St Mary's Current Settlement Boundary

Appendix 1

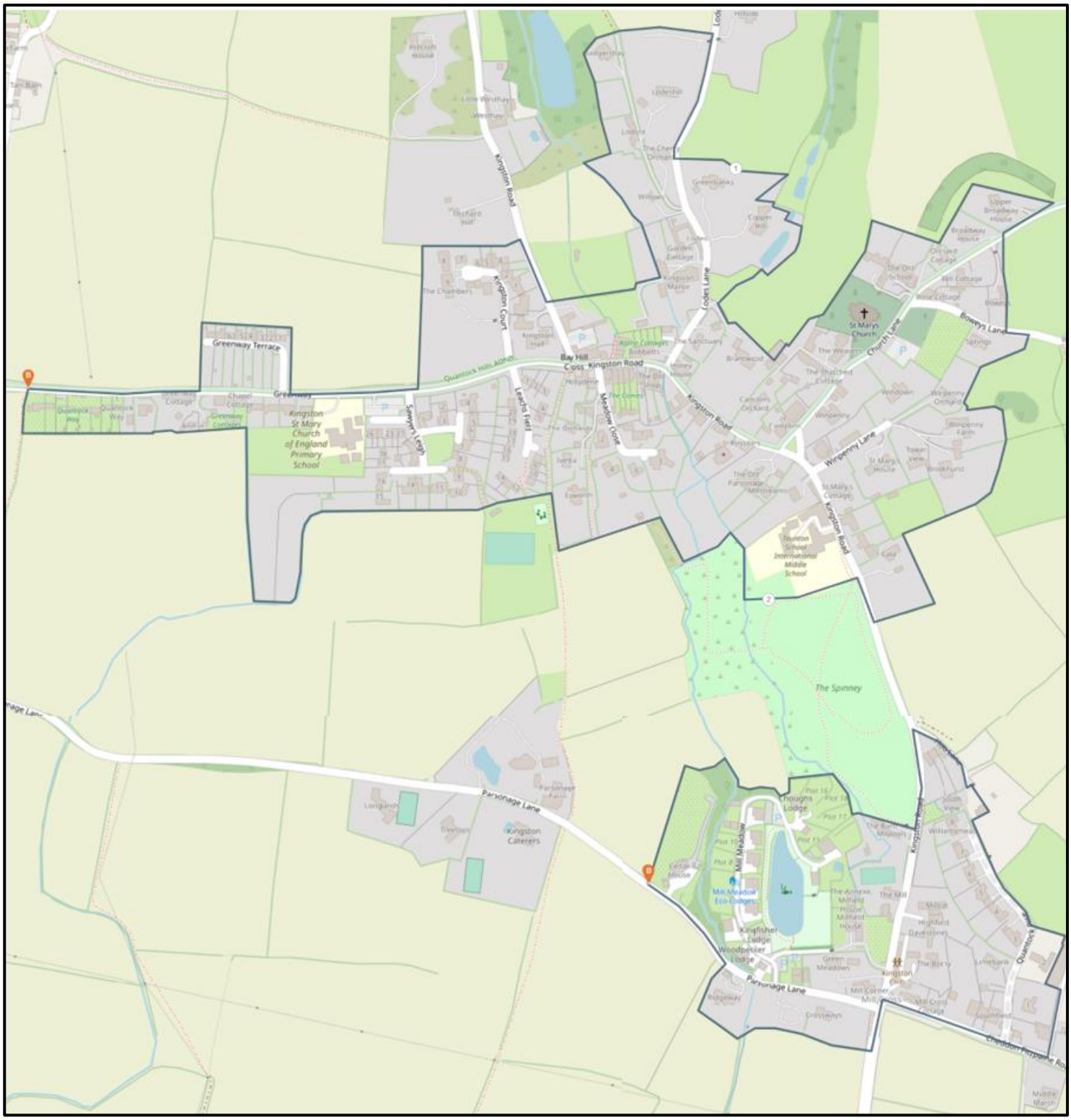


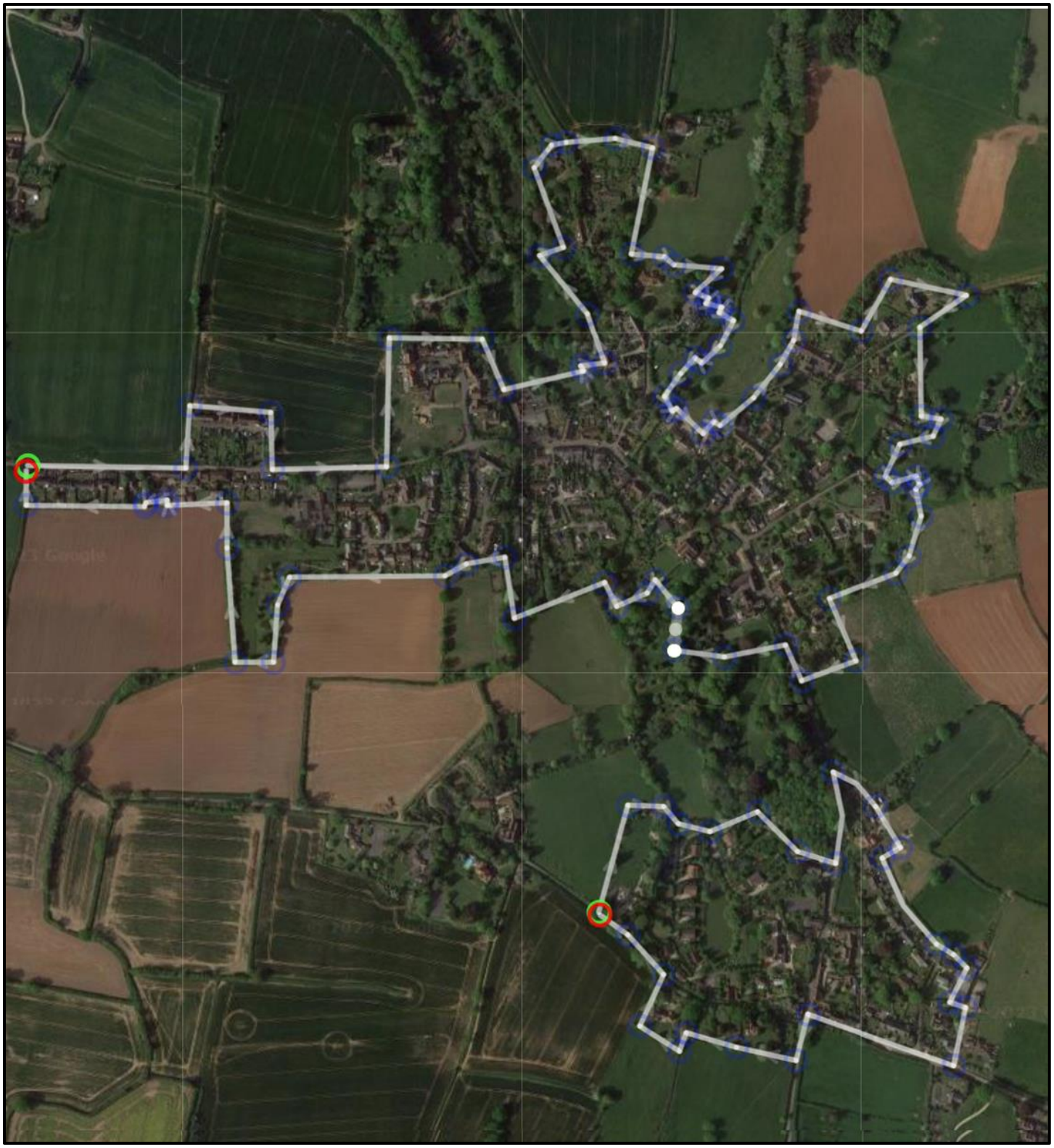
Taunton Deane Adopted Core Strategy and Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan Policies

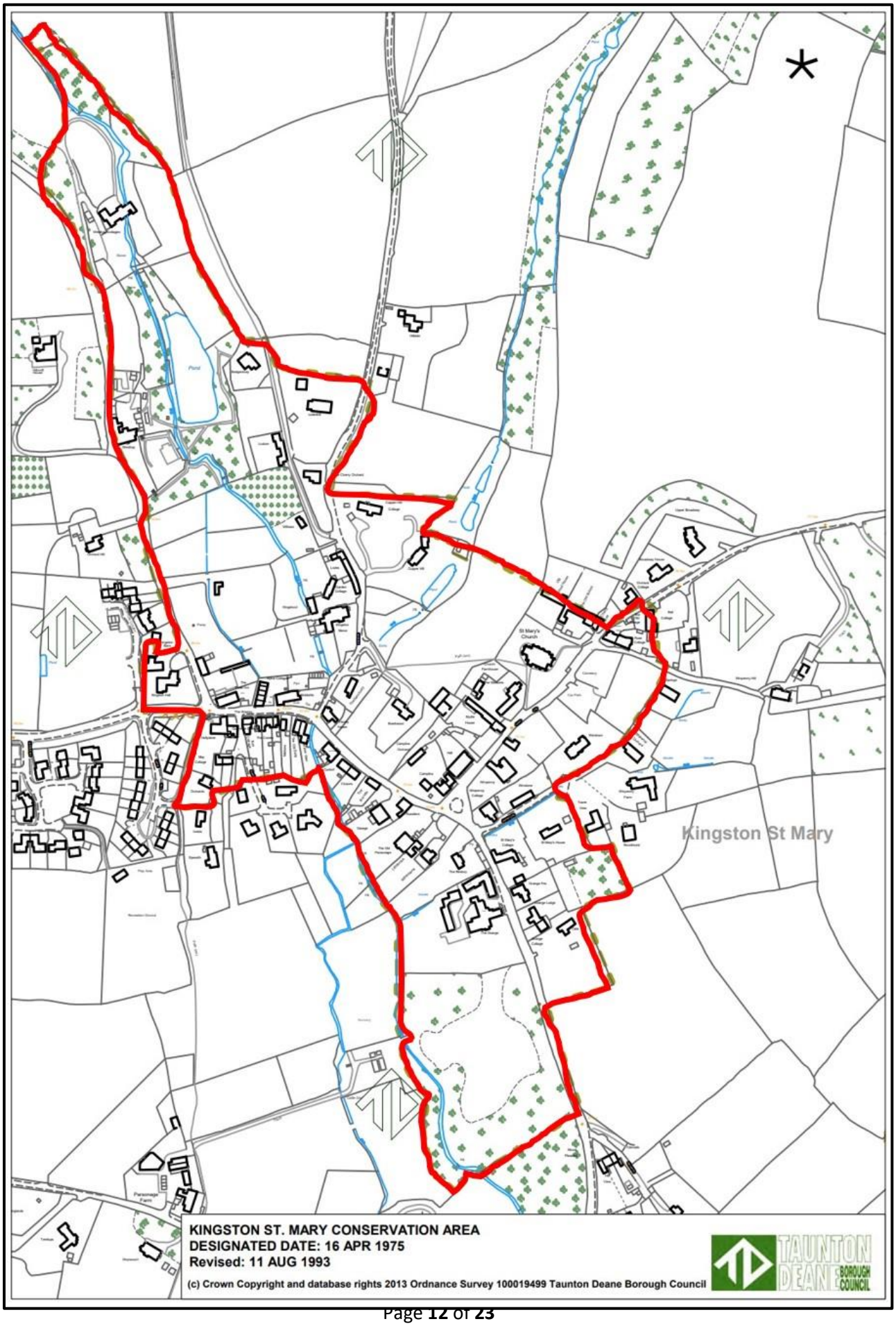
Inset Map Keys

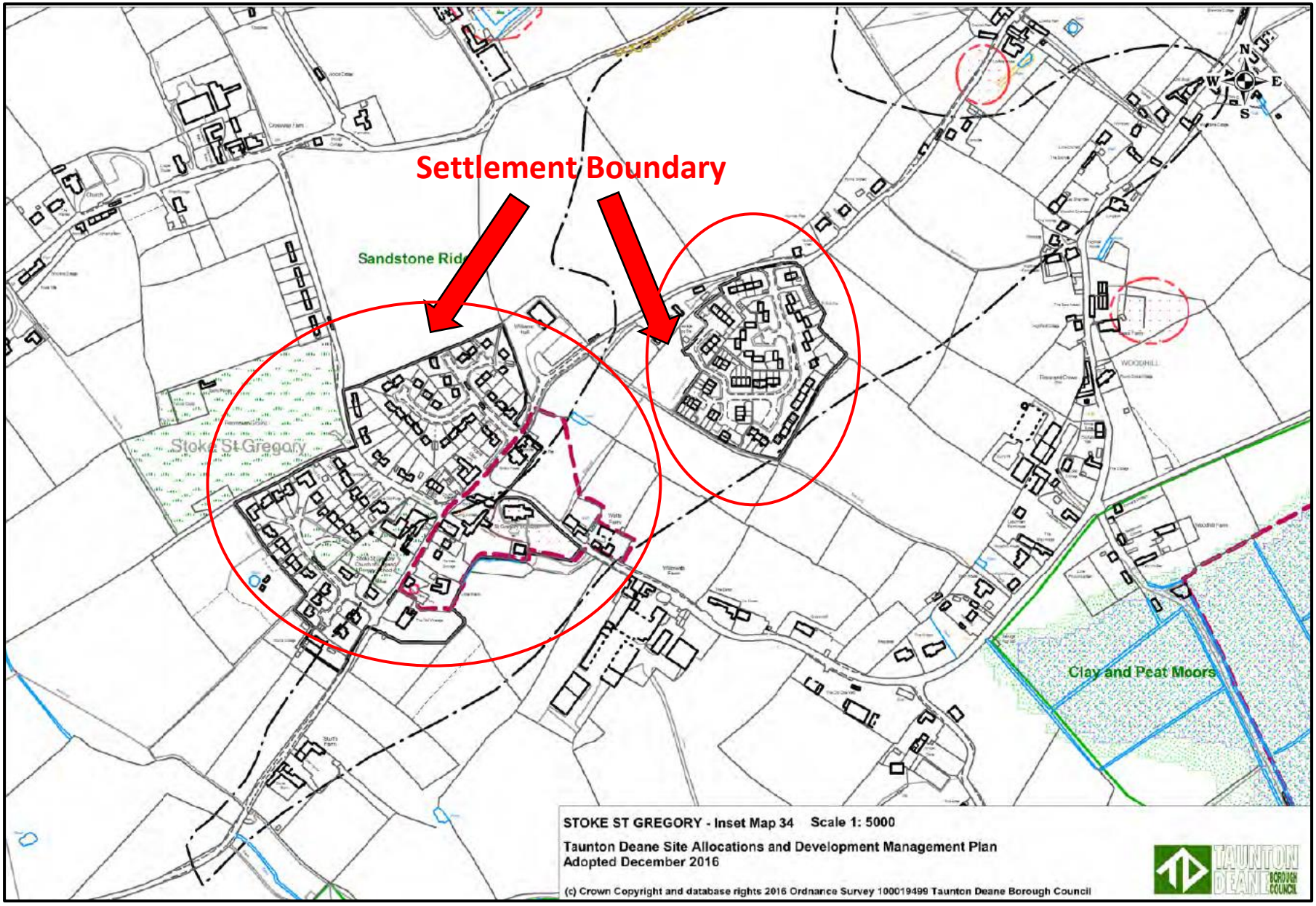


Kingston St Mary's Proposed Settlement Boundary Appendix 2






Kingston St Mary
KINGSTON ST. MARY CONSERVATION AREA
DESIGNATED DATE: 16 APR 1975
Revised: 11 AUG 1993
(c) Crown Copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100019499 Taunton Deane Borough Council
TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL


Settlement Boundary
Sandstone Rid
Stoke St Gregory
Clay and Peat Moors
STOKE ST GREGORY - Inset Map 34 Scale 1: 5000
Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan
Adopted December 2016
(c) Crown Copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019499 Taunton Deane Borough Council

LOCAL PLAN 2040

Topic Paper 2: Settlement Boundaries

January 2020

Introduction

A Local Plan sets out how many new homes we need and where new homes and jobs will go over the next 20 years. It says how buildings should be designed. It sets out how our places will be improved and protected.

We are consulting on the *Local Plan 2040 Issues and Options document*[1] from 13 January to 16 March 2020. It sets out the key issues for the Local Plan and present 'Options' for how we could respond to these issues. Options are where we have not decided on the best approach and would like to hear your views. We may also be awaiting further technical evidence.

What is a Settlement Boundary?

A settlement boundary is a line drawn on a map around a town or village which distinguishes between the settlement's built form and the open countryside. It may also be called the settlement limit.

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 controlled with stricter planning policies. However, it should be noted that any land which has been included within the settlement boundary line does not have a guarantee of approval of planning permission, as there will be other planning policies which will need to be considered, for example, the protection of the character of a settlement.

The Issues and Options document

The Issues and Options document presents the issues of Settlement boundaries at Section 5.8.1 and Option 8a replicated below:

[1] Local Plan 2040 Issues and Options document (Jan 2020) Somerset West and Taunton Council

"5.8.1 Issue: Managing development in rural settlements

The natural and built environment of our rural areas adds greatly to the quality of life resulting in high house prices and, coupled with low wages, means that many local people are priced out of the housing market., A lack of affordable housing and less traditional office and industrial employment space, particularly near the coast makes it difficult for young people to stay in the area.

Rural settlements have a variable and basic range of facilities such as a shop, pub, village hall, school and doctors' surgery but there are villages with no such facilities. Many smaller rural communities have extremely limited or no public transport provision and many lack safe footways.

We want to identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. However, there is a balance to be struck between a modest amount of new development, including both affordable and market housing, and harm to the character of a settlement.

A settlement boundary is a line drawn on a plan around a village, which distinguishes between what is considered to be its built form and the countryside. Different approaches are currently used in the former council areas. The former West Somerset area does not have settlement limits but instead it has a definition of the built-up area and a policy that within 50 metres of it would be considered for development. The former Taunton Deane area has defined settlement limits for 35 of its towns and villages; other settlements without boundaries are classed as being in the open countryside.

These areas have very different development needs and pressures. There is significant development pressure around Taunton, Wellington, and Wiveliscombe and to some extent with some of the higher order settlements near Taunton (such as Creech St Michael, Henlade, Ruishton and Thornfalcon). The former West Somerset area does not have the same level of development pressure but a need remains for housing in this area, particularly affordable housing."

2

Option 8a: Managing development in rural settlements

i) *Have settlement boundaries across the District; or*

ii) *Do not have settlement boundaries but instead have a criteria based policy to determine development proposals against; or*

iii) *Have a policy which is a hybrid of a) and b) where there are settlement boundaries only in areas of greater development pressure ie parts of the District that are more accessible - closer to the M5, Taunton and Wellington areas*

Question 8a: *Should we keep or remove settlement boundaries? Or should we have settlement boundaries in areas where there is higher pressure from development i.e. closer to Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe but remove them in more remote areas to provide more options for development?*

Our current Local Plan policies

In April 2018 Somerset West and Taunton Council was created from Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC). We now have two sets of existing Local Plan documents covering the former administrative areas.

The former Taunton Deane Borough Council area has settlement boundaries for 35 of its towns and villages set out in *Core Strategy*[2] Policy SP1. Maps of the settlement boundaries are shown on the *Policies and Inset Maps* of the *Site Allocations and Development Management Plan*[3]. Other settlements without boundaries are classed as being in the open countryside where development is strictly controlled in order to conserve the environmental assets and open character of the area (*Core Strategy* Policy CP8). Settlement boundaries are used in the TDBC as the area is attractive to developers (good accessibility to jobs, services, motorway and rail) which creates a pressure on our settlements.

The *West Somerset Local Plan 2032*[4] does not have settlement boundaries but instead has a definition of the built-up area and a criteria based policy where development will be considered "*within or in close proximity (within 50 metres) to the contiguous built up area*" (*Local Plan* Policy SC1). Outside of this zone development is classed as being in the open countryside. The justification for not having settlement boundaries was because of the challenge of delivering new housing and employment sites in WSC. Given the poor road network and accessibility to main areas of employment, the area was not proving attractive to

[2] Core Strategy 2011-2028, Taunton Deane Borough Council
[3] Policies and Inset Maps, Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, Taunton Deane Borough Council
[4] Local Plan 2032, West Somerset Council

house builders despite the area having a need for housing and affordable housing.

Do we need to do anything different from our current approach?

We need to create a new Local Plan covering Somerset West and Taunton, excluding the area of Exmoor National Park which has its own Local Plan. We need to review and reconcile the two different approaches. There are justifiable reasons why the policy approaches are different but they were developed independently of each other.

The things we need to think about are:

i. How the existing policies have been performing;
ii. National policy and guidance;
iii. The advantages for settlement boundaries;
iv. The disadvantages for settlement boundaries;
v. The impact of settlement boundaries on sustainability objectives (Sustainability Appraisal) and impact on European protected habitats (Habitat Regulation Assessment);
vi. Our spatial strategy and housing need

i. How the policies have been performing

In terms of how successful the policies have been in restricting development outside settlement boundaries, monitoring data suggests this has been successful. 20 applications across the former TDBC and WSC areas (excluding Exmoor) were refused on the basis of the development being outside of settlement limits and in open countryside.

Importantly, these refusals haven't restricted the delivery of housing overall. Both the former TDBC and WSC areas have been successfully delivering new housing. The Housing Delivery Test for both former authorities shows that the housing requirements are being comfortably exceeded (TDBC 191% and WSC 130%).

New housing in small towns and villages has also exceeded targets. In TDBC, 164% of the housing planned for small towns and villages has either been built or has planning permission[5]. In WSC, 252% of the housing planned for primary and secondary villages has either been built or has planning permission[6].

ii. National policy and guidance

[5] See Topic Paper 1, Table 13
[6] See Topic Paper 1, Table 13

Settlement boundaries are not a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework[7] (NPPF) but they are an accepted planning tool that has historically been helpful for decision making, to provide guidance for developers and for local people to understand where development might happen in their settlement. Settlement boundaries can help to deliver the NPPF requirements through:

- Promoting sustainable development (focussing new housing closer to shops, schools and healthcare to minimise the need to travel and support and helps support existing services);
- Encouraging development towards previously developed land;
- Creating a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities;
- Providing a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs;
- Identifying opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services;
- Protecting the character of settlements;
- Protecting the countryside from development (encroachment/creep and the joining up of settlements);
- Avoiding isolated development;
- Enabling sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas;
- Responding to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.

iii. The advantages of settlement boundaries

As well as the advantages of delivering NPPF requirements as set out above, settlement boundaries have many practical advantages that aid decision making on planning applications and improve the delivery of housing:

- Defining the established cohesive built form (usually follows defensible boundaries - distinct features such as walls, watercourses, roads and hedgerows which have a degree of permanence) is often accompanied by allocating sites in the Local Plan rather than relying on windfalls to deliver housing;
- For local people, settlement boundaries are an understood and accepted planning tool for guiding development locations;
- A 'line' plotted on a plan gives some clarity and certainty, defining areas which will be considered more acceptable for development. It reduces

[7] National Planning Policy Framework MHCLG

potential issues relating to consistency of decision making and additional resources required to make and defend robust decisions;

- Supports the development of small-scale sites which would not otherwise be identified as allocations;
- With supporting LP policies they facilitate a sequential approach to identification of most sustainable development sites;
- Limiting development beyond settlement boundaries lowers land values in these locations by removing the 'hope value' for high value developments such as market housing. This allows the Council to develop 'exception site policies' which allow for certain types of development such as 100% affordable housing schemes which wouldn't otherwise be viable if they were competing for land with market housing.

iv. The disadvantages of settlement boundaries

- They can be inflexible; not responding to local circumstances or support housing and employment developments that reflect changing local needs;
- The character of the settlement and properties can be altered if development is allowed within gardens of houses within a settlement boundary, unless other policies are in place to protect this;
- Could restrict organic changes;
- Could lead to intensive development within a settlement as every available area of land competes for development resulting in a potential reduction in the landscape quality and character of that village, unless other policies are in place;
- Not all villages lend themselves to having a settlement boundary due to their dispersed nature. Having several little boundaries being drawn around properties to form a collection of mini boundaries goes against identifying a contiguous built form.
- Could lead to increased land and property values within the settlement boundary. The high prices of land and existing housing coupled with low wages could result in local people being priced out of the housing market. This could mean that local people with ties to particular communities have left for urban areas where the prospects of securing more affordable housing are greater.

v. Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment

Sustainability appraisal (SA)

SA is a systematic process to consider ways by which the Local Plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have.

The SA[8] assessed the three options within Option 8a against sustainability criteria. This assessment scored *Option (i) Have settlement boundaries* as the most sustainable with *Option (ii) Have criteria based policy for development, instead of settlement boundaries* as the least sustainable against the scoring criteria. The hybrid approach *Option (iii) Have settlement boundaries in areas of high housing demand, and criteria-based policy for areas of low demand*, scored in between.

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

We are required to consider the policy options for the Local Plan against their potential effects on Natura 2000 sites[9] and provides guidance on the options that would have the least effects on these sites.

The HRA for the Issues and Options document came to the conclusion that all three options (i)-(iii) would have equal effect on Natura 2000 sites with no option preferred. When setting boundaries, the HRA suggesting mitigation through avoiding effects on the lesser horseshoe bat colony at Hestercombe House SAC north side of Taunton and Monkton Heathfield. Also avoiding effects on barbastelle bats from the Exmoor and Quantocks Oak Woodlands SAC around west Minehead, Porlock and other villages in the Bat Consultation Zones of both SACs.

vi. Our spatial strategy and housing need

The Local Plan's spatial strategy is a plan for where new development will be located. It is being developed through the Local Plan process and it is a question that we are asking through the consultation on the Issues and Options document (Section 5.2). We are also producing up-to-date technical evidence on housing need which will inform our housing target.

These issues will direct housing to certain locations and plan for the amount of housing for those locations. Most new homes will be on the edge of Taunton as these new homes are already part of Taunton's Garden Town plans and Taunton is the most sustainable location. Housing will also be directed to other locations to a lesser extent. Precise numbers of homes for each place is still to be determined. We also already know about many likely sites for housing that

[8] Appendix A, Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and Alternatives Report (Nov 2019) Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants

[9] Natura 2000 sites include European Sites - Special Protection Areas (SPA) classified under the EC Birds Directive 1979 and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and all Ramsar sites as if they are fully designated European Sites for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them.

already have planning permission or are already allocated in the existing Local Plans (pending review against the new Local Plan's spatial strategy).

Whilst the Local Plan will direct where most housing will go, we are still expected to plan positively for housing in all areas so we need to consider the merits of having settlement boundaries across our whole area.

Discussion

There are different development needs and pressures across our area roughly reflecting the former Council area boundaries. There is significant development pressure in the former TDBC at Taunton, Wellington, and Wiveliscombe and to some extent with some of the larger villages near Taunton (such as Creech St Michael, Henlade, Ruishton and Thornfalcon). These places are in high demand as they are closer to jobs and services at Taunton and closer to the M5 and the railway. These places are therefore attractive to housing developers and are likely to continue to come under pressure for new housing.

The former WSC area (Minehead, Watchet, Williton, coastal strip and nearby rural areas) has a poorer road network and are more remote from main centres of employment (with the exception of places close to Hinkley Point C). As a result these areas do not have the same level of development pressure. These differences have resulted in different policy approaches regarding settlement boundaries.

In order to guide development to the most sustainable and suitable locations, it is necessary that the Local Plan controls and in some instances limits development in certain locations. The Local Plan also needs to set out clearly for developers, the community and infrastructure providers about where development will take place and where it will not take place. Furthermore, to meet objectives on protecting the natural environment and build heritage, the Local Plan must ensure undeveloped land in the countryside is not unnecessarily lost to development in excess of the identified needs.

In the former TDBC area development has been concentrated 80% within the Taunton Urban Area, 15% in Wellington, 3% in Wiveliscombe and Bishops Lydeard and 2% in Churchinford, Milverton, North Curry, Creech St Michael and Cotford St Luke. Historically settlement boundaries have assisted in protecting the integrity of the countryside, providing a compact form to settlements, preventing sprawl and sporadic development and reducing visual impact on the countryside. Away from defined centres they also assist in reducing the consequences of unsustainable development. Where development may appear to constitute permitted development the Council have sought to minimise

impacts through the prior approval notification system in order to limit undesirable development in non-sustainable locations.

In the former WSC area historically approximately 80% of new development within the Local Plan area has taken place at the area's main service centre of Minehead/Alcombe, and the secondary service centres of Watchet and Williton. This pattern of development, without settlement limits, has served to sustain a good level of local services in these three settlements. Maintaining this pattern of development should continue to support the health of the service functions of the three main settlements. Bringing in settlement limits and allocating sites in these areas will help to prevent urban sprawl and also enable affordable exceptions sites to come forward. This is likely to require some adjustment to their development limits.

Throughout the SWT area village based services have shown a tendency to decline over time, with the loss of many local shops, post offices, pubs and petrol filling stations. This is partly a result of greater mobility arising from higher levels of private car ownership and use, and the greater choice offered by services accessible in larger settlements. Development of an appropriate scale in villages can help with their continuing health and sustainability. However, a balance must be reached by means of which a modest amount of new development including both affordable and market housing can help to secure the future of these settlements. Such development should be limited according to the size and character of each settlement in order to maintain their vitality. This could be achieved by a mechanism which relates consideration of new development proposals to a proportion of existing dwelling numbers within the settlement over a given time period subject to caveats about protection of the character of the settlement and/or allocations.

The Local Plan also needs to demonstrate that 10% of the housing requirement will come from sites of less that 1ha unless there is strong reasons why this cannot be achieved.[10] Such sites could be delivered in smaller settlements. There are currently around 130 sites which could fall into this category where the developable area is under 1ha[11]. These sites tend to be those currently outside of settlement limits known as 'potentially developable' and would require amendments to current settlement boundaries.

Robust policies and evidence on matters such as the built heritage (i.e. conservation area appraisals, listed buildings and scheduled monuments, archaeology, etc.) and natural environment (i.e. landscape character, green

[10] Para 68 NPPF, February 2019
[11] Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments 2019

wedge, Ramsar sites, SSSI, SAC, recreational open space, etc.), accessibility (i.e. transport, services and facilities, etc.), design and infrastructure would form a sound basis for managing development and consistency of decision making if there were no settlement limits. The Local Plan in any case would have strong policies on such matters.