

## Section 4: Spatial Strategy

### Location of Development

#### Purpose

- 4.1. This policy sets out the CAPNDP's approach to the location of development within the parish. It emphasises the importance of new development being directed to the most sustainable locations, near to local services and amenities, which will help to protect the valued green spaces and corridors in the area and avoid sprawl and coalescence between both the individual settlements within the parish and those nearby urban areas, notably Thatcham and Newbury.

#### Justification

- 4.2. In a predominantly rural parish such as Cold Ash, it is particularly important that development is directed to appropriate locations, where it minimises the impact on the natural environment and avoids sprawl and coalescence with surrounding settlements. The purpose of a settlement boundary is to provide that direction.
- 4.3. Within the Parish, two villages have a settlement boundary: Cold Ash is classified in the WBC Core Strategy as a 'service village', having a limited range of services and some limited development potential. It acts as a hub to Ashmore Green, which itself has a settlement boundary and is defined as a 'smaller village with settlement boundary', suitable only for limited infill development subject to the character and form of the settlement.
- 4.4. At the southern end of the parish, parts of the settlement boundaries for Thatcham and Newbury extend into the Cold Ash Parish boundary, and consequently the neighbourhood area. Beyond this, the parish is 'open countryside', with parts to the north-east falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 4.5. The LPR does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan, and it is considered that housing supply – to address both local and strategic housing needs - is being addressed adequately at the strategic level. The CAPNDP is a non-allocating neighbourhood plan and this position has been agreed with WBC. That is not to say that suitable sites may not become available in the future. An early review of the CAPNDP, therefore, will be undertaken to consider the policies of the LPR, once adopted, and the implications of these. This will provide greater clarity about the amount of growth that Cold Ash may be expected to accommodate over the new plan period.
- 4.6. The CAPNDP sets out a series of parameters to support WBC's proposed growth strategy and to reflect the comments received during the engagement on the Plan. These are:
- i. supporting the provision of new dwellings in the period 2020 to 2039 in accordance with WBC's Core Strategy, Site Allocations Plan and Local Plan Review;
  - ii. directing development to take place within the existing settlement boundaries, as the most sustainable locations;

- iii. protecting the individual and distinctive character of the villages within the parish and retaining the predominantly rural character and landscape of the parish. The rural gap between the villages and the Newbury and Thatcham settlement areas, which incorporate the urban elements of the parish, should be protected from development as this will restrict coalescence and reduce impacts on the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting.
- iv. strongly supporting the use of previously developed or 'brownfield' sites;
- v. ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity.

4.7. The extent of the settlement boundaries, which mirror those in the LPR, is illustrated in Figure 4.1 and on the Policies Map. Also shown is the rural 'buffer zone', which has been identified by the community as the areas where development would most likely lead to coalescence, impacting the character of the villages. Hence development should be avoided in this buffer zone, but any development that significantly compromises or reduces the green space buffers between any of the settlements will not be supported by policy CAP1.

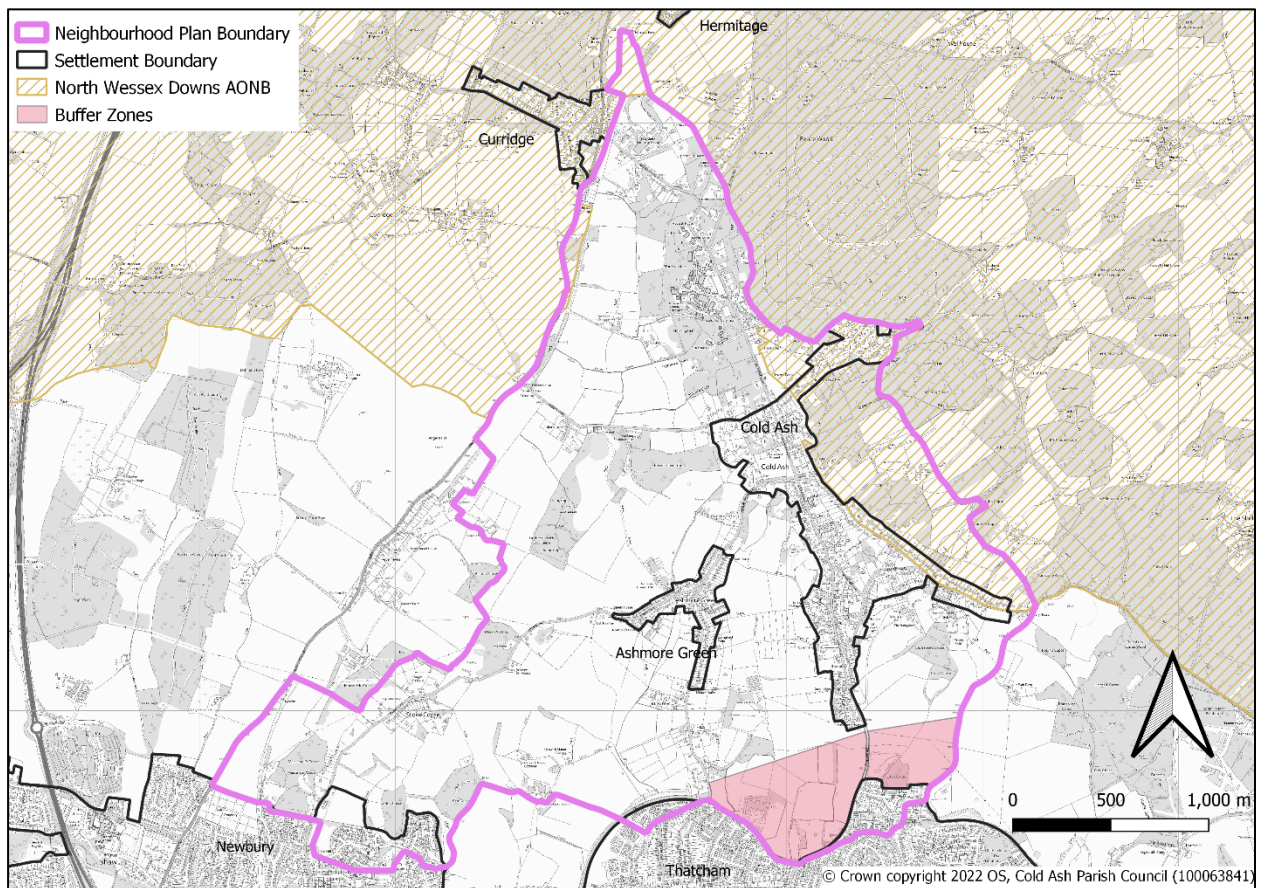


Figure 4.1: Settlement boundaries and buffer zone, where development should be avoided to prevent further coalescence

## **POLICY CAP1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 1. Development shall be focused within the settlement boundaries (as defined in Figure 4.1) in accordance with Area Delivery Plan Policy 1 of the Core Strategy or the equivalent policy of the successor Local Plan Review.**
- 2. Development proposals outside the settlement boundaries will not be supported unless they are in accordance with the policies of the Core Strategy and the Housing Sites Allocations Development Plan Document (or their successor), in respect of:**
  - a. appropriate uses in the countryside; or**
  - b. the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area, including the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB; or**
  - c. the development brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm buildings or historic buildings of heritage value back into optimum beneficial use in a manner that does not cause harm in terms of additional traffic or compromise the amenity of residents in terms of size, light pollution, noise, dirt, loss of wildlife habitat; or**
  - d. it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available; or**
  - e. it is on sites allocated for those uses in the West Berkshire Site Allocations Development Plan or its successor.**

**Such development must not individually or cumulatively result in physical and/or visual coalescence and loss of separate identity of the individual settlements in the parish (Cold Ash or Ashmore Green) from neighbouring settlements, and from each other. The buffer zone shown in Figure 4.1 demonstrates the area most sensitive to this.**

- 3. In determining development proposals substantial weight will be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within the settlement boundaries for either homes and/or other identified needs, or to support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 1, 2; Adopted Core Strategy: ADP Policy 1 and 5, CS1; Housing Site Allocations DPD: C1; Local Plan Review: SP1, SP2, SP3, DM1; NPPF: 16, 17, 28, 117, 120