

Settlement Boundary Methodology and Background Report Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan

Revision History

Version	Revision date	Details
v.0.1	17 September 2020	Preparation of first draft
v.0.2	5 October 2020	Minor revisions to first draft (DB)
v.0.3	8 October 2020	Comments on revisions by NCC
v.0.4	12 th October 2020	Revision following above comments
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This background paper sets out a methodology for the definition of settlement boundaries in the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan. The delineation of settlement boundaries is a recognised and well-used planning policy tool for the management of development and is considered by Eglington Parish Council to be an appropriate mechanism to achieve some of the main elements of the vision and objectives of the neighbourhood plan. The vision is to maintain Eglington Parish as a rural but thriving and sustainable place to live, work and visit. The principal objectives will be to ensure that, though likely to be modest, housing development will be sustainable, accessible and in keeping with the character of the area; to protect, conserve and, where possible, to enhance both the setting and environment of the Parish and its landscapes, together with its local natural, built and historic environment; and to leave a positive legacy for future generations.

2 What is a Settlement Boundary?

- 2.1 In simple terms, a 'settlement boundary' is a dividing line, or boundary between built-up areas (the settlement) and the land beyond built-up areas. Although a settlement boundary does not preclude all development beyond the boundary¹, it does give clarity as to where new development should be directed and where it is likely to be acceptable in planning terms.
- 2.2 Inclusion of land within a settlement boundary does not mean that all land within the boundary is automatically suitable for new development. There may be areas of land within the settlement boundary that are not suitable for development due to other constraints. This could include for example, where land is protected as Local Green Space or other areas of special character such as the grounds of listed buildings or other areas that would have an impact on the setting of listed buildings.
- 2.3 Policies in the neighbourhood plan should define as clearly as possible what proposals are likely to be acceptable within the settlement boundary, and what proposals are likely to be acceptable in the countryside beyond the settlement boundary.

¹ A number of exceptions are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework including 'rural exceptions' housing sites, some business and employment related activities and some tourist development in the countryside.

- 2.4 It is important to recognise that settlement boundaries should only be created through planning policies where they ensure adequate provision is made for land to accommodate the amount of housing needed in an area for a given period. They should not be used solely as a tool to prevent development in certain areas. The task of establishing the minimum amount of new housing needed in an area is a matter for the Local Planning Authority. For Eglington Parish, this is Northumberland County Council. Neighbourhood planning powers allow parish councils to plan for more housing than the minimum requirement should they wish to do that, subject to demonstrating such additional growth is reasonably necessary, can be delivered within the plan period and that it would not conflict with the strategic planning policies for the area.

3 Current Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan. In Northumberland, this is the Northumberland Local Plan (adopted March 2022).
- 3.2 Eglington and South Charlton are classed as ‘small villages’ in the Northumberland Local Plan. Unless previously defined, settlement boundaries are generally not defined for smaller settlements in the Northumberland Local Plan. The County Council is not proposing to reintroduce the settlement boundaries previously defined in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan,² as the local community, through the neighbourhood planning process are proposing to define new settlement boundaries for Eglington and South Charlton.
- 3.3 The Parish Council is keen to ensure that development is managed appropriately in the future particularly in relation to the impact development may have on valued landscapes and on the character of the countryside around settlements in the Parish. For this reason, it is intended to reintroduce settlement boundaries through the Neighbourhood Plan as locally distinctive development management planning policies.

² Under Policy H2 of the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) settlement boundaries were defined for Eglington and South Charlton.

4 Methodology for Defining Settlement Boundaries

- 4.1 The decision to define settlement boundaries for Eglington and South Charlton has been taken by the Parish Council as the qualifying body for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. This has been done in consultation with the local community, in the production of the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan, to give clarity and context to policies proposed. This decision is strongly supported by residents in the Parish. The results of the initial consultation on the Neighbourhood plan indicated support for the principle of settlement boundaries in Eglington and South Charlton at over 80% of respondents.
- 4.2 Consideration was given to a suggestion to define a settlement boundary for North Charlton, however, this proposal was not widely supported and on reflection, the steering group felt that this would offer no greater protection against inappropriate development than that afforded by Policy STP1 in the Northumberland Local Plan.
- 4.3 Specifically, the Parish Council considers the following benefits arise from establishing settlement boundaries through planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan:
- They create certainty for the local community and for landowners and potential developers by defining clear lines on a policy map where it is easy to distinguish the 'settlement' from the 'countryside', thereby allowing consistent interpretation and use of relevant planning policies.
 - Locally, settlement boundaries are an understood and accepted planning tool for guiding and managing developments.
 - They offer a more plan-led development management approach to future housing growth by supporting growth within settlements and generally only by exception in the countryside beyond.
 - They serve to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside whilst allowing for development to meet established identified needs.
- 4.4 There is no single established methodology for defining settlement boundaries; however, the criteria used are generally similar from one local authority to another. The common factors that distinguish well defined and enduring settlement boundaries rely on two key characteristics being exhibited in the final policies:
- The boundaries drawn on policy maps follow well defined and easily distinguishable features on the ground along which the settlement boundary runs in order to prevent any dispute in the implementation of appropriate policies

covering development management within the settlement and development management within the countryside; and

- The land available within the settlement boundaries to accommodate housing development is at least sufficient to allow development to meet the housing needs for the area identified by the Local Planning Authority.

4.5 Provided those two key characteristics are respected the following matters will be relevant in determining the lines along which settlement boundaries should be drawn:

- Where recognisable planning policy settlement boundaries have been adopted and used in the past it may be appropriate to use these as a starting point. However, it would be appropriate to consider modification to accommodate any built development completed or approved since the original settlement boundary was created where that is contiguous with the previous defined settlement boundary.
- If land is required to accommodate additional housing development to meet the housing needs for the area identified by the Local Planning Authority, an appropriate and transparent site assessment and selection process would be proposed. Undertaking the assessment and selection process would be subject to a separate methodology. This would be likely to follow a similar approach to assessments undertaken by the Local Planning Authority in preparing their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as part of the evidence to support the Northumberland Local Plan. This approach ensures a fair and transparent process is followed, with clear justification given if specific sites are to be selected and allocated for housing or other development, or if land is being made available for development within settlement boundaries.
- In circumstances where no additional development is required to meet the identified housing needs, and particularly in rural areas if less dense development patterns exist within identified settlements, it would be appropriate to consider how buildings close to but separate from the identifiable main settlement, such as farm steadings, should be treated. More specifically, it will be important to consider the implications of including any undeveloped land between such divorced buildings within the settlement boundary.
- The implications of including open land on the edge of a settlement within the settlement boundary will need to be considered. Including such land within a settlement boundary creates different planning policy presumptions than those normally applied to land in the countryside beyond settlement boundaries.
- When defining settlement boundaries, it will be important to bear in mind and seek to respect and give spatial expression to the Vision and Objectives of the

Neighbourhood Plan. The definition of settlement boundaries must be consistent with the aims of the plan.

4.5 In considering where to draw the settlement boundaries for Eglingham and South Charlton, the Parish Council has taken into account:

- i. the Northumberland Local Plan housing requirement for the Parish;
- ii. previously defined settlement boundaries;
- iii. housing commitments; and
- iv. local features on the ground that provide recognisable boundaries.

These factors are discussed more fully in Section 5.

5 Evidence for Proposed Settlement Boundaries for Eglington and South Charlton

The Northumberland Local Plan housing requirements for the Parish

5.1 In Policy HOU 3 (Housing requirements for neighbourhood areas, Strategic Policy), the County Council has set a minimum housing requirement for the parish of zero units. In addition, permissions exist for 21 dwellings (Table 1). There is therefore, currently, no requirement to provide land for additional housing in the Parish before the end of the proposed plan period (April 2036). This means that there is scope to draw relatively tight settlement boundaries around Eglington and South Charlton, whilst allowing for windfall development on appropriate sites, consistent with strategic planning policy and the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Previously defined settlement boundaries

5.2 Under Policy H2 of the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) settlement boundaries were defined for Eglington and South Charlton. This provides a starting point for establishing settlement boundaries in the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan because it previously formed part of the adopted statutory development plan.

5.3 Those settlement boundaries for Eglington and South Charlton are shown in figures 1 and 2 respectively (dashed line). The settlement boundaries are drawn relatively tightly around existing development in both villages, whilst allowing space for two housing development sites at South Charlton.

Figure 1: Settlement Boundary for Eglington in Alnwick District Wide Local Plan, 1997

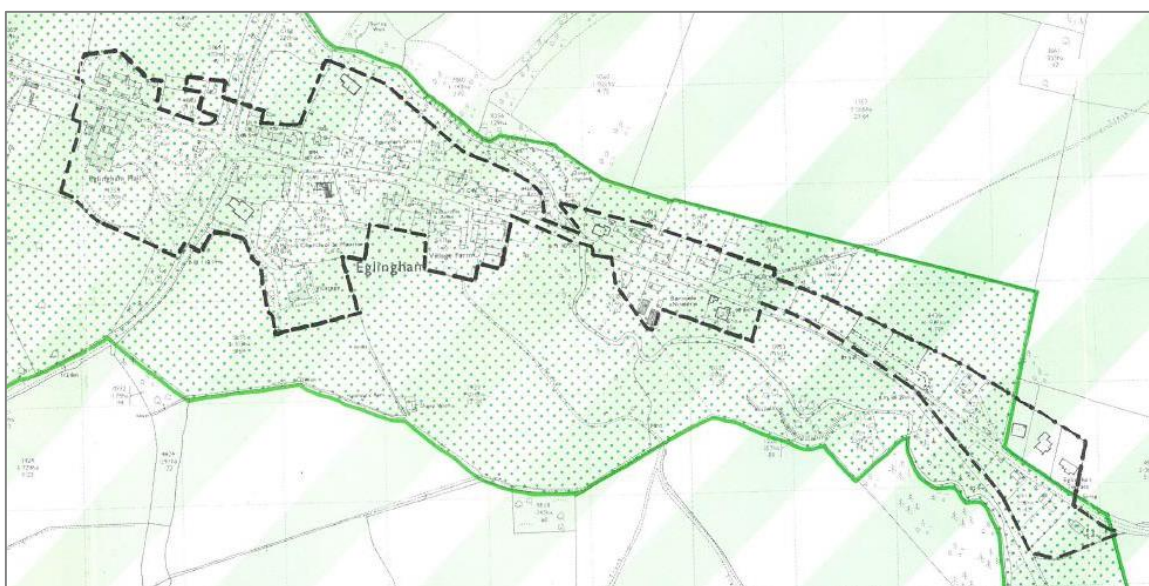
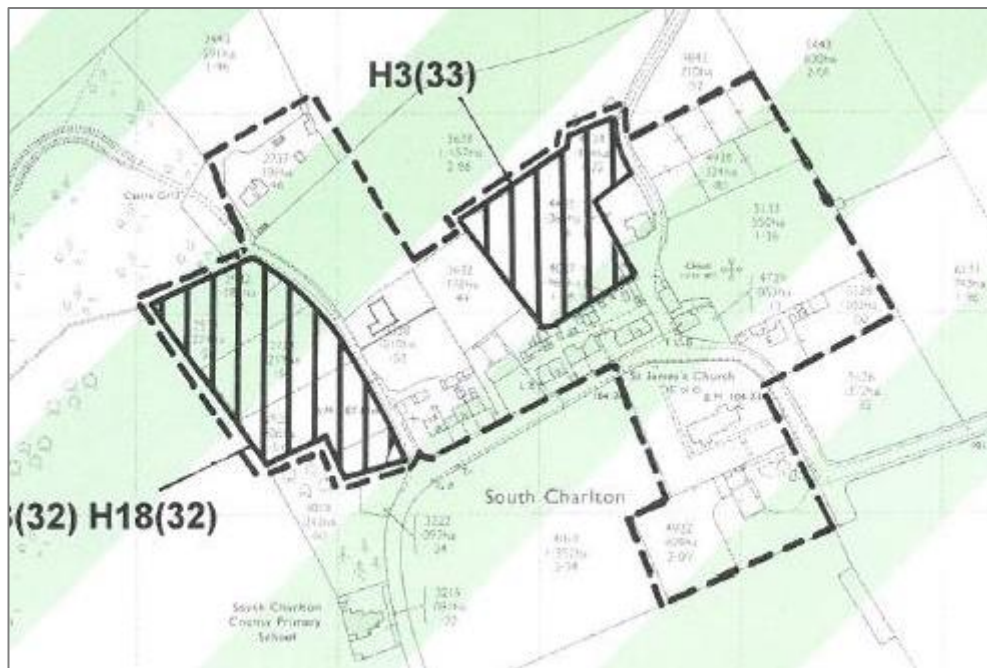


Figure 2: Settlement Boundary for South Charlton in Alnwick District Wide Local Plan, 1997



Housing commitments

5.4 In determining the extent of the settlement boundary, consideration will be given to sites with planning permission on the edge of the settlement. The Parish Council consider it reasonable to propose drawing the settlement boundary around these sites (Table 1). There are three pertinent planning permissions. The first is for two dwellings on land south east of the Terrace in Eglingham (see figure 4). This site is on the edge of Eglingham and outside the previously defined settlement boundary. The second application is for 3 self-build housing plots on land South of Yarrow Cottage, Ditchburn Road, South Charlton (figure 5). This site is within the previously defined settlement boundary. The third is for 7 dwellings on land east of St. James' Church, South Charlton (figure 6). This site is outside the previously defined settlement boundary.

Table 1: Extant Housing permissions in Eglington Parish (1 April 2022)⁴

Planning Reference	Address	Dwellings (net)	Proposal	Notes
15/03295/FUL	Farm Buildings, Eglington Hill	5	Change of use and conversion of existing barns to 5 dwellings.	Permission implemented.
20/01422/FUL	Land East Of St James Church, South Charlton	7	Change of use of agricultural land and construction of 7no. residential dwellings (including 2no. affordable homes).	
12/02194/FUL	Charlton Mires Telephone Exchange (Land South Of), South Charlton	1	Proposed three bedroom single storey cottage	Not in a Settlement. Under construction.
16/01883/FUL 12/03368/COU	Eglington C Of E Aided First School, Eglington	1	Change of use from former school to residential use.	Under construction.
20/02128/REM	Land South East Of The Terrace, Eglington	2	Proposal for two dwellings.	Building work started May 2022.
18/01718/OUT 21/04783/REM 20/03675/REM	Land South Of Yarrow Cottage, Ditchburn Road, South Charlton	3	Application for 3 self-build housing plots.	Building work started June 2022.
18/02990/FUL	Farm Cottage And Agricultural Buildings Charlton Hall, Eglington	1	Change of use and conversion of agricultural buildings to C1 hotel plus one new build dwelling for staff accommodation.	Under construction. Not in a settlement.
20/03334/AGTRES	Land North West Of North Lodge Eglington	1	Change of use of agricultural building to dwelling house.	Not in a settlement.
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⁴ Data provided by Northumberland County Council Planning Services

Figure 4: Location of housing permission 20/02128/REM, south east of The Terrace, Eglington



Figure 5: Location of housing permission 18/01718/OUT, Land South Of Yarrow Cottage Ditchburn Road South Charlton

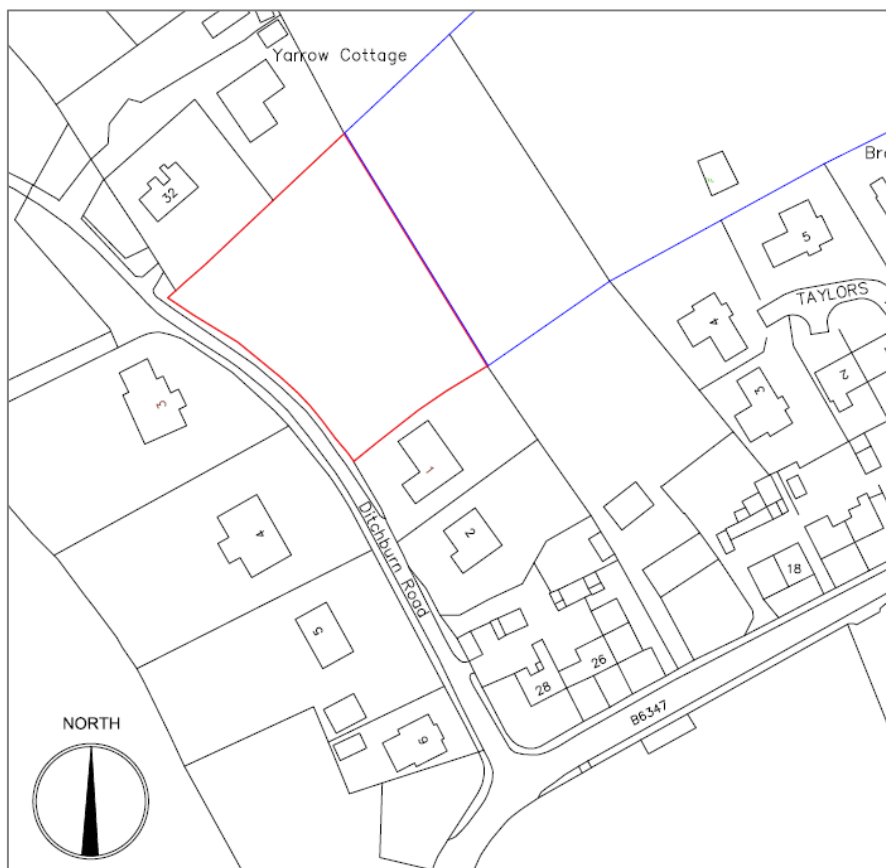
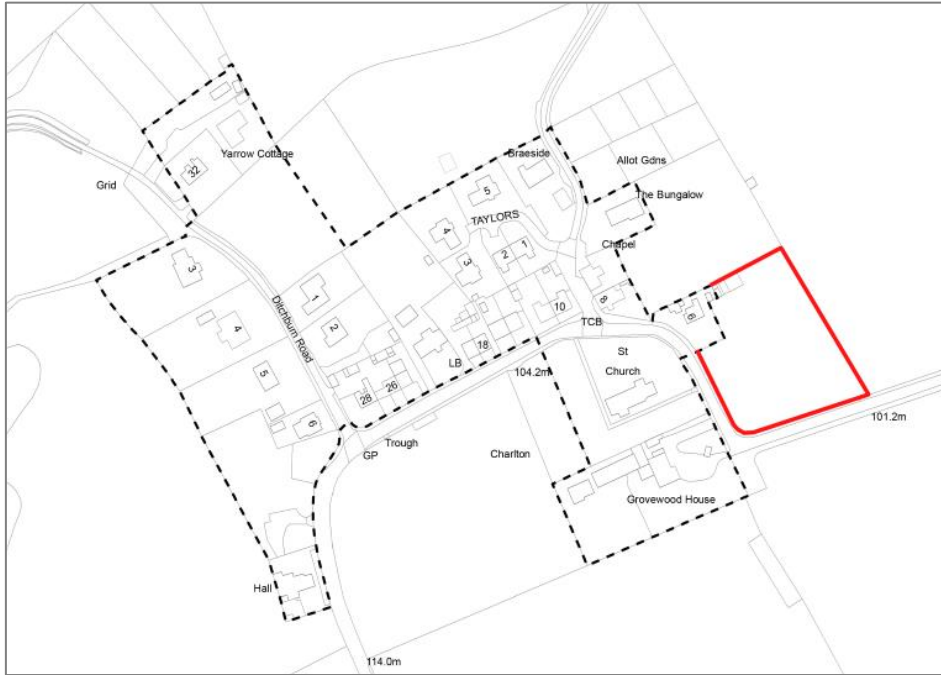


Figure 6: Location of housing permission 20/01422/FUL, Land East Of St James' Church, South Charlton



Local Features on the ground that provide recognisable boundaries

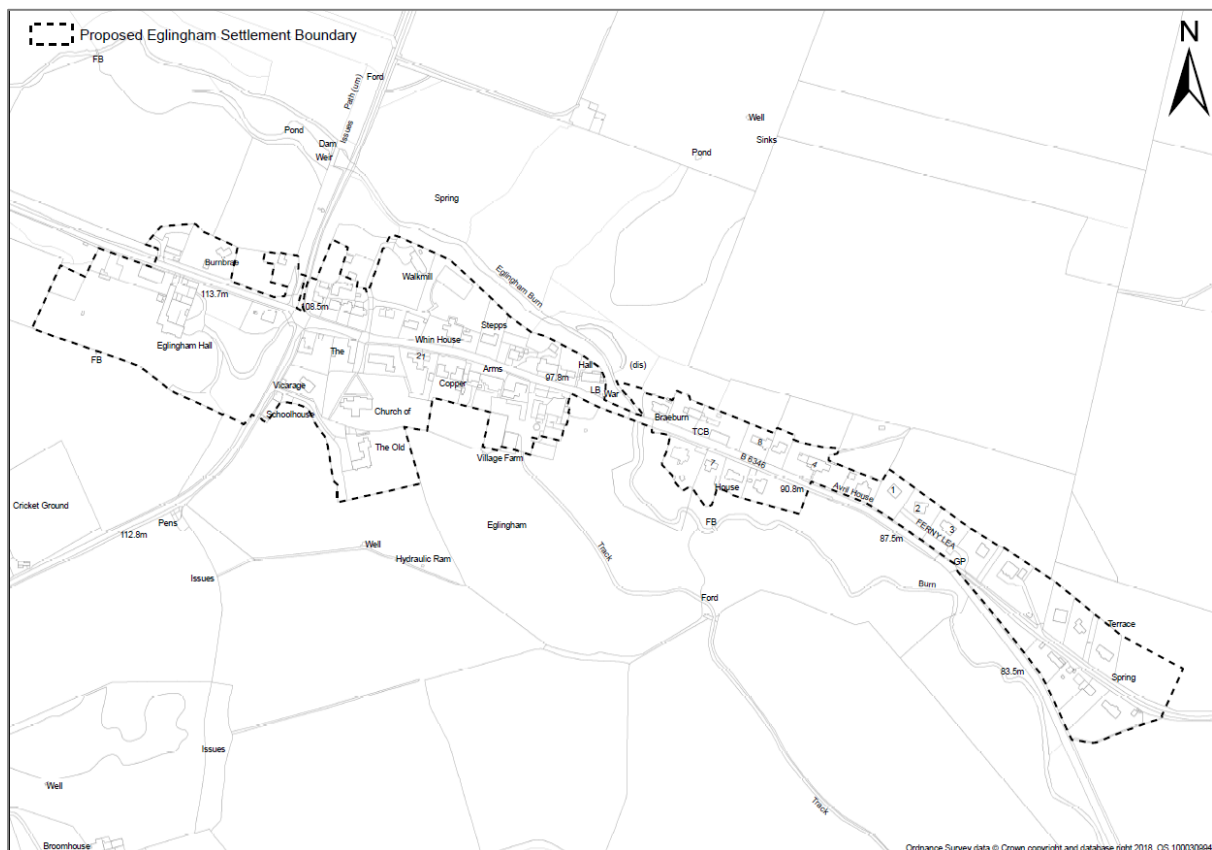
- 5.5 The proposed settlement boundaries have taken account of defined features such as walls, hedgerows, watercourses, garden curtilages and roads and footpaths.
- 5.6 The Parish Council has taken the decision to exclude development that is not well related to the village, from the proposed settlement boundaries for Eglingham and South Charlton. Typically, this includes isolated dwellings; agricultural buildings; farm steadings; and recreational or tourism facilities.

6 Proposed Settlement Boundaries for Eglingham and South Charlton

Eglingham

6.1 The proposed settlement boundary for Eglingham is shown in figure 7. It closely mirrors the previous settlement boundary in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) with a minor amendment made to reflect an implemented planning permission granted for development on land south east of the Terrace (20/02128/REM). As there is currently no requirement to provide land for additional housing in the Parish before 2036, there is scope to draw a relatively tight settlement boundary around Eglingham, whilst allowing for windfall development on appropriate sites. In addition, the Parish Council proposes to make minor 'corrections' to align the proposed boundary with defined features.

Figure 7: Proposed Settlement Boundary for Eglingham



South Charlton

6.2 The proposed settlement boundary for South Charlton is shown in figure 8. It reflects the previous settlement boundary in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) but, as there is currently no requirement to provide land for additional housing in the Parish before 2036, the Parish Council proposes to draw a relatively tight settlement boundary around the village, whilst allowing for windfall development on appropriate sites. The proposed boundary includes the two housing sites that have planning permission (Land south of Yarrow Cottage, 18/01718/OUT and Land East Of St James' Church, 20/01422/FUL). In addition, the Parish Council proposes to extend the boundary to incorporate existing development in the form of the Village Hall site to the south west of the settlement.

Figure 8: Proposed Settlement Boundary for South Charlton

