

Beadnell Settlement Boundary Background Paper

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND COAST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Introduction

As part of the development of a neighbourhood plan for the North Northumberland Coast, it has been decided to incorporate settlement boundaries for the three main settlements in the Plan area (Seahouses (with North Sunderland), Beadnell and Bamburgh).

This paper presents the detail and reasoning behind the decision to define a settlement boundary for Beadnell as shown on Map 1. This boundary will be incorporated into a Proposals map for the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan, and formal consultation on the boundary will take place through the pre-submission draft (Regulation 14) consultation on the Plan.

The boundary has been defined within the context of a requirement for the Plan to deliver sustainable development in the Plan area. As such, it is based on the need to ensure there is sufficient housing land available within the settlement boundaries of all three settlements in the Plan area, to accommodate small scale housing growth, over the plan period up to 2031.

The evidence base for the Northumberland County Council Core Strategy contains detail about housing delivery targets for sub-areas in the County. Seahouses 'sub-area' is contiguous with the Plan area, and so the remaining housing requirement up to 2031 for that area currently stands at 110 houses (out of an overall requirement of 230, 120 of which have been completed).

There is enough land within Seahouses alone to accommodate this figure, as well as land within the proposed settlement boundary of Bamburgh. The settlement boundary for Beadnell therefore seeks to positively promote the availability of land for some new small scale housing delivery, for permanent occupation, whilst protecting the most sensitive areas (in particular the coastal strip) from new development. This is in partnership with a policy approach to promote new housing development for permanently occupied housing, in an attempt re-dress the balance of holiday homes which contribute to the loss of a 'sustainable community' in Beadnell.

The rationale behind the settlement boundary (as in all three Parishes) has been to steer development away from the sensitive coastline with its many nature conservation designations. The map below (from Magic.gov) shows the proximity of coastal designations to the settlement of Beadnell. This has largely informed the approach to ensure that areas for future development are provided inland, and not seaward of Harbour Road.

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Figure 1: Extract from Magic website - showing nature conservation designations in Beadnell

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According to the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, most of Beadnell is of limited value to the landscape of the AONB. The village itself benefits from a strong landscape setting due to its immediate coastal location at the northern end of the sheltered and sandy Beadnell Bay, with rocky shoreline defining the northern fringe of the village and dune system backing the bay.

Beadnell village sits within a wider area of low lying and relatively level terrain, characterised by mostly arable farmland with very limited treescape. The dune systems south and north of the village are locally distinctive landscape features. This is more important to the south around the bay where it frequently obscures views out to sea due to their height.

There are relatively few historical features, with a small harbour and the listed limekilns on the bay's northern point being the main significant heritage features of the village apart from St Ebba's Church to the west. A Conservation Area is proposed for the historic centre of Beadnell, but no such designation exists at the present time.

The proposed settlement boundary has been heavily informed by the Northumberland Coast AONB Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (August 2013). The relevant section of this study is attached as Appendix A.

This study showed areas on the edge of Beadnell which are considered to be most sensitive to development in landscape terms. In simple terms, these areas have been excluded from the settlement boundary. Areas that have been identified as potentially suitable for small scale housing have been included in the settlement boundary to allow for small scale development over the Plan period (up to 2031).

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Careful consideration has also been given to historic environment designations (scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings) as well as natural environment designations (see extract from Magic map below).

Perhaps of greatest significance to Beadnell is the Shoreline Management Plan, which recommends a clear approach of restricting development seaward of Harbour Road. This document has informed the settlement boundary particularly along the east and southern sections of Beadnell.

Northern boundary: The settlement boundary has been drawn tight along the B1340 towards Seahouses. This presents a clear and logical boundary to the north of Beadnell, that should be maintained. The northern area is highlighted in the Landscape and Sensitivity Study as being particularly sensitive to further development. Although part of the 'sensitive' area is included in the settlement boundary (the Bull Ring), this is a Registered Village Green, and therefore will not be developed. It is included in the settlement boundary, because it is part of the settlement, and enjoyed by residents and visitors as such.

Western boundary: The settlement boundary continues to follow the line of existing development on the northern part of the boundary. This area is considered to be especially sensitive to new development in the Landscape and Sensitivity Study. It is currently a field in agricultural use, which provides an important 'setting' to Beadnell on the approach from the west as seen below.



Photo 1: Beadnell as seen from approach from the West along B1340 (towards Seahouses). Settlement boundary on this eastern edge closely follows existing built development excluding fields in foreground

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The boundary then follows existing development along Swinhoe Road, including a parcel of land on the western tip which could accommodate a small amount of new housing (below).

The boundary follows tight along Swinhoe Road, and then follows the public footpath which forms the new settlement boundary along the south eastern edge. The photo below shows the western boundary of the settlement, incorporating the fenced area to the right.



Photo 2: Settlement edge to follow converted farm buildings on left of photo, incorporate small paddock on right, and then continue along property boundaries along Swinhoe Road until meeting public right of way



Photo 3: Public right of way (see Photo 4 below) at end of Kennedy Green entrance

The public right of way (off Meadow Lane) defines the western boundary of the settlement. It incorporates a large area of land, capable of accommodating a significant amount of new housing development. This area is identified in the Landscape Sensitivity Capacity Study as

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having a low impact on the AONB landscape, and is therefore felt to be the most suitable area for new development in Beadnell.

The photograph below shows this area of land as seen from the public footpath from Meadow Lane (near the play area). Existing housing at Benthall can clearly be seen, with the fields in the foreground to be included in the settlement boundary to accommodate future development. The land itself is of relatively low landscape value, and development in this area could offer some opportunity for enhancement of the relationship of the settlement to its landscape setting.

Although there is not a hard boundary in the form of wall/hedge, there is a public right of way, which could comprise the western boundary for Beadnell.



Photo 4: Looking from public right of way south west, towards existing housing development in Beadnell

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Photo 5: Looking across Bentall Green towards caravan park at Beadnell Links

Southern Boundary: The southern boundary would then follow existing features; a wall along the southern boundary separates the caravan park, and the boundary continues along the access road to Beadnell Car Park, which is excluded from the settlement boundary. The boundary then follows existing development tight along boundaries, until it reaches Harbour Road. A number of properties are excluded from this southern boundary due to the sensitive habitats and coastal location. A number of properties back onto Ebb's Sneuk, and these are excluded from the settlement boundary (see below).

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Photo 6: Properties seaward of settlement boundary backing onto Ebb's Sneuk. This area is excluded from the settlement boundary



Photo 7: Properties seaward of Harbour Road on left (excluded from settlement boundary)

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Photo 8: Beadnell Car Park to right, and all built development seaward of Harbour Road is excluded from the settlement boundary

Eastern Boundary: Harbour Road then forms the eastern boundary to the settlement up until it reaches the main road (B1340). All land seaward of Harbour Road is excluded from the settlement boundary. This is important in landscape terms, as this area contains much of the publicly accessible open space in Beadnell, that allows the appreciation of the coastline. Further development seaward of Harbour Road would have significant landscape impacts as well as shoreline management implications.

The Shoreline Management Plan proposes that land seaward of Harbour Road is left undeveloped (extract below):

Beadnell and Beadnell Bay.

The headland settlement and the harbour has been demonstrated through the strategy for the area to be an essential part of this overall community. The harbour and the associated Lime Kiln are of important heritage and cultural value. Management of both north and south areas of the village, and by association the whole of Beadnell Bay, has to be considered as a whole; in part because the defence of the northern frontage provides defence against overtopping to the area behind, which in turn is an area protected from erosion by the harbour, and in part because the use and sustainability of the harbour use relies on the access road along the northern frontage. There is no scope for retreat of the harbour road without loss of properties. The strategies have indicated a strong economic benefit for maintaining protection to the village. This is in line with key objectives. There will, however, be continuing loss of designated rocky shore habitat due to submergence and it is essential that the vegetated rock headlands along the frontage (Red Brae and the undeveloped section of Beadnell Point) remain undeveloped and allowed to erode. This will provide partial mitigation for loss of designated rocky shore habitat.

Maintaining the harbour structures, helps maintain the defence to the northern section of the bay. While there will still be some erosion this is unlikely to require additional protection during the period of the SMP2. This harbour structure is not causing coastal squeeze as it is built around the rocky outcrop. At present there is a natural buffer

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zone between the shore and developed areas behind. To maintain this policy of minimising intervention it is important that this undeveloped width is maintained.

Further south along the bay, the shoreline will retreat. Any attempt to intervene is likely to create difficulty in maintaining the natural shape of the bay.

This provides clear justification for the settlement boundary to be drawn tight along Harbour Road for the entire length of that road, even though this means excluding a number of properties from the settlement boundary - most notably the properties at Beadnell Harbour, White Rock, the shop and dwellings adjacent to the shop.



Photo 9: Looking south down Harbour Road. Properties seaward are excluded from the settlement boundary



Photo 10: Southern end of Harbour Road. All seaward land (to left) excluded from the settlement boundary

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Photo 11: Entrance to Beadnell Village. All included in settlement boundary, but Registered Village Green



Photo 12: Harbour Road as seen close to entrance of Beadnell. Road runs the full length of the settlement, to the Car Park and Harbour at the southern point

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Appendix A: Extract from Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study: Beadnell

Beadnell

Landscape Context

Beadnell is located within landscape character area 4b *Farne Islands Coast*, within the wider *Rocky Coastline* LCT 4.

Key Landscape Characteristics

The key landscape characteristics for the *Farne Islands Coast* landscape character area as recorded in the NLCA Part A, Annex A, are as follows:

Criteria	Key Characteristics	Summary
Landform	Varied, but lacking strong complexity	Rocky headlands and sandy bays
Land cover	Some variety	Rocky headlands, sand and arable and pasture farmland
Scale	Medium	Bays and field pattern create medium scale landscape
Enclosure	Some enclosures	Headlands create some enclosure
Skylines	Varied	Inland landform rises gently, along coast headlands punctuate skyline
Views and landmarks	Some important landscape features, or significance in views	Views to Dunstanburgh Castle and headlands
Intervisibility	Intervisibility with some neighbouring landscapes	Some areas are visible with neighbouring landscapes
Receptors	Local transport routes, limited numbers of residents	Coast provides draw for visitors on local roads
Movement	Quiet, limited movement	Local roads but visitor movement
Remoteness	Relatively tranquil	Coastal landscape provides high degree of tranquillity
Settlement	Occasional villages/hamlets or frequent farmsteads	Small settlements
Industry	No industrial influence	No industrial features
Vertical features	None	No vertical features
Linear features	Few linear features	Local roads only linear features
Historic features	Some prominent historic features	Dunstanburgh Castle lies in south of LCA
Recreation	Locally significant recreational use or attraction	Coast a draw to visitors
Condition	Generally well managed	Generally well managed coast and farmland with visitor facilities
Distinctiveness	Some distinctive features	Combination of headlands and bays provide some distinctive features
Rarity	A more common landscape with some unique features	Lack of rare features although headlands and Dunstanburgh Castle provide unique features

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Key Landscape Characteristics

The key landscape characteristics for the Farne Islands Coast landscape character area as recorded in the NLCA Part A, Annex A, are as follows:

Key Landscape Qualities

The key qualities of LCT 4: Rocky Coastline as listed in the NLCA Part B are as follows:

- Dynamic seascape environment
- Exposed coastal location, with dramatic views along the coast and out to sea
- Prominent natural and cultural coastal features including castles and the Farne Islands.
- Traditional cores of former fishing villages, often with distinctive pantiled roofs.
- Extensively accessible landscape with much tourist-oriented development.

Constraints to Development

(i) Would new housing development affect the key qualities of the landscape as described in the NLCA?

Most of Beadnell is of limited value to the landscape of the AONB. The village itself benefits from a strong landscape setting due to its immediate coastal location at the northern end of the sheltered and sandy Beadnell Bay, with rocky shoreline defining the northern fringe of the village and dune system backing the bay. The village sits within a wider area of low lying and relatively level terrain, characterised by mostly arable farmland with very limited treescape. The dune systems south and north of the village are locally distinctive landscape features. This is more important to the south around the bay where it frequently obscures views out to sea due to their height.

A small harbour and the historically important limekilns on the bay's northern point remain the only significant heritage features of the village apart from St Ebba's Church to the west.

The village is elongated in form from the Harbour northwards, as far as the B1340 which defines its northern limits, and as such overlies the headland and fronts an extended strip of coastline. The village has extended inland also with late 20th century and more recent housing located along most of its length. A great majority of the built extent of the village consists of post 1900 buildings, primarily low-density housing, much of which appears to be used as retirement or holiday accommodation, reflecting Beadnell's close relationship with the bay in particular. The built environment of Beadnell lacks any significant vernacular character and there is no clearly defined historic village centre or services.

Sweeping views from the harbour and limekilns to the south over Beadnell Bay towards Dunstanburgh Castle are dramatic and free from visually incongruous features, primarily because of the screening effect of the dunes which mask significant caravan park development immediately south of the village. Vistas over the landscape and seascape are strongly horizontal in emphasis with the castle presenting a striking exception to this.

Away from the shoreline itself, Beadnell does not present an especially sensitive context for accommodating additional housing needs. Sites to the western fringe of the settlement, where the most recent phase of housing growth is evident, may absorb further proportionate growth without significant threat of harmful impact on settlement character or the wider landscape of the AONB.

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Some views into the western fringe of Beadnell are possible from the west and southwest along the main B1340 and new housing in this area would be visible within those views, but seen against the existing village rather than as an extension into prominent or important countryside.

More significant risk to the special qualities of the AONB would be in relation to any extension to Beadnell north of the B1340, although application of planning policy would be likely to preclude such development as this presents a clearly defined and effective constraint on northerly extension. Strong tree cover along this village boundary further reinforces it as a rational and effective limit to the village.

Opportunities to accommodate modest housing development therefore exist in or around Beadnell which would have limited impact upon the wider landscape character and qualities of the AONB.

(ii) Would new housing affect other features of importance in landscape terms?

Delivery of new housing on the periphery of the village or in open space within it would be unlikely to any significant detrimental impact upon heritage or landscape features. Heritage features, such as the limekilns are tightly constrained and consequently development would be unlikely to have significant effect on those assets. The built environment of the village is not characteristic of the identified valued qualities of the AONB, so limited new housing would be unlikely to be detrimental in AONB terms, subject to meeting siting and design policy expectations.

(iii) Would new housing development affect zones of visual sensitivity around Iconic landscape features or key views from important viewpoints?

The whole of the village and its southerly and western landscape setting falls within the zone of visual sensitivity of Dunstanburgh castle. Any development would therefore have a potential for some visual impact within the zone and all development proposals should be scrutinized in relation to such potential. However, and having regard to; distance of separation; likely scale of development; its low elevation; and the probability growth would be viewed against the backdrop of existing housing, the likelihood of harm to that zone are considered negligible.

Beadnell also lies within the view cones of two identified important viewpoints:

- Farne Islands
- Preston Tower

Modest housing development is highly unlikely to be of a scale or prominence across the village to preset harmful visual impacts from these viewpoints which are at significant distance from the village and/or are screened by intervening existing development, landform or woodlands.

(iv) Would new housing development affect other key views or views from sensitive routes?

Other key viewpoints identified by this study are limited to the important viewpoint from Beadnell harbour southwards, towards Dunstanburgh Castle and over the bay and headlands beyond. New housing development would necessarily be located inland to the existing settlement and not encroach upon this vista.

A limited stretch of the B1340 to the west of Beadnell has been identified as a route presenting important views. The significance of vistas into and across the village from this route are however

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limited, as the importance of such views is in relation to the dunes and on to Dunstanburgh Castle. Development on the western fringe of Beadnell, seen from the road would be seen against the existing, unremarkable village environs.

Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement / Mitigation

(i) Are there opportunities for landscape enhancement or other mitigation measures associated with new housing development that could help strengthen landscape character?

New housing in or around Beadnell would almost certainly be limited to its western fringe. Views into this area from the west are unremarkable in respect to the contribution the settlement makes to the AONB and its special qualities. Any extension of the built extent of the settlement could benefit from substantive structural planting to afford medium and long-term mitigation of the prominence of the development in wider coastal vistas. High standards of design and the use of appropriate external materials in new development would be pre-requisites in new development within the AONB, and these should be delivered such that the outer fringes of the village enhance its landscape fit.

Whilst harm has been caused to the special qualities of the AONB in respect to past development around Beadnell, it is important to embrace opportunities to further the landscape objectives for the conservation of the LCT through new development. Sensitive management and delivery of future development proposals on the western fringe of Beadnell remains necessary in order to minimize further landscape character erosion.

Delivery of Recommendations within the NLCA Part B

(i) Would new housing compromise or help deliver the key guiding principle and the principle aims and land management guidelines for this landscape?

The guiding principle for the Rocky Coastline LCT is to protect the landscape. The vision statement in the NLCA Part B to achieve this is described as follows:

Vision Statement:

The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to arrest the erosion of character and loss of condition of landscape elements where this has occurred, and in so doing raise the general quality of the landscape. The coastal landscape and adjacent seascape is a key element of Northumberland's tourist economy, and requires a degree of protection.

Subject to appropriate application of planning policy, landscape and other considerations as examined above, the scale and nature of potentially appropriate housing development at Beadnell would be most unlikely to inherently compromise protection of the Rocky Coastline's special qualities, such as the undeveloped coastline, historic village setting and features, key views into and out of the village.

Some opportunity does exist for modest delivery of housing on the western edge of the settlement without compromising aspirations for the LCT. In doing so modest opportunity for enhancement of the relationship of the settlement to its landscape setting is presented, but wider enhancement of landscape character would be limited.

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