

WNC's draft Local Plan: proposed change to the "Northampton Planning Boundary" – Parishioner's Questions & Answers

As a starting point please read WNC's "Technical Engagement with Parish Councils" a copy of which can be found here: <https://boughtonparishcouncil.co.uk/wnc-local-plan/wncs-draft-local-plan-february-2024-update>

Below is a summary of questions the Parish Council have received on the matter. If anyone has any queries please contact the Parish Clerk.

1. Will WNC's consultation be direct with residents or just take representation from the Parish Council?

- a. *WNC have launched a public consultation on the draft local Plan. It runs from Monday 8 April to Sunday 2 June . Further details can be found here: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/planning/west-northamptonshires-local-plan-req18/>*
- b. *WNC have said "in terms of public consultation on the boundary changes, the Regulation 18 version of the new Local Plan (now out for public consultation) will include the draft criteria for defining the Northampton boundary, but there will not be a suggested boundary shown on the draft policies map at this stage.*
- c. *It is envisaged that the draft boundary line will be included in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan/policies map (due for consultation in early 2025)."*
- d. *A suggested boundary was sent to Boughton Parish Council, see page 3 of the pdf here: <https://boughtonparishcouncil.co.uk/wnc-local-plan/wncs-draft-local-plan-february-2024-update>*
- e. *The consultation is essentially in three stages:*
 - i. *In the form of "pre consultation" with the parish council on the boundary line*
 - ii. *Public consultation on the draft plan, in particular the draft criteria (detailed below at question 3).*
 - iii. *Later, on the actual boundary line.*

2. If WNC's consultation does not directly consult with residents, who will speak for parishioners?

- a. *Details of the public consultation have now been announced, see above. However, Parish Councils are an essential part of the structure of local democracy and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent. Parishioners should make the Parish Council aware of their thoughts on the matter.*
- b. *The Parish Council have sought advice from an independent Town Planner with extensive experience in the Northamptonshire area. His advice was to request WNC attend a meeting to discuss the matter further.*
- c. *The Council are pleased to announce that WNC will attend an extra-ordinary meeting with the Parish Council on Tuesday 30th April 2024, 6.30pm at the Church Rooms, St Johns the Baptist Church.*
- d. *All are welcome to attend the Council meeting but please let the Parish Clerk know so she can set the room accordingly. clerk@boughtonparishcouncil.co.uk or 07918329763.*

3. How does this proposed change affect our countryside and protecting our green fields?

a. Page 301 of the draft Local Plan sets out the proposed approach to the confines of Towns. This describes the policy approach; the boundary changes proposed to be applied to Boughton. This is the same criteria which was sent to Boughton Parish Council, a copy of which can be found on the Council website <https://boughtonparishcouncil.co.uk/wnc-local-plan/wncs-draft-local-plan-february-2024-update>.

b. The suggested criteria is as follows:-

The following will be classified as being inside the confines boundary:

- 1 Buildings and curtilages, which are:
 - contained by strong physical boundaries,
 - visually separate from open countryside, and;
 - clearly part of a coherent network of built development
- 2 Green spaces where they occur within built development
- 3 Areas of land allocated for future built development, which are contiguous With other existing or proposed built development.

The following will be classified as being outside the confines boundary:

- 4 Areas of open space which are wholly on the edge of existing built development
- 5 Areas of land allocated for open space which are wholly on the edge of existing or proposed built development
- 6 Individual and groups of buildings that are detached or peripheral to the urban area and relate to the open countryside rather than the built form of the settlement.

4. Are they proposing that the parish boundary remains the same, but the village will have two separate planning authorities.

- a. As part of the merger of the district/borough councils in 2021, the unitary councils of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire were created. WNC is the sole planning authority for West Northamptonshire.
- b. No alteration is suggested to the parish boundary.
- c. Planning boundaries are necessary to provide for different planning approaches (policies) to development in a principal town (urban) and outside (countryside).
- d. In the course of the 2021 local government review the borough of Northampton ceased to exist. The "Town" of Northampton is an imprecise term. It is necessary to draw a new line demonstrating clearly where the urban approach will be taken and where the country approach will be taken.
- e. Against that background the proposal is to incorporate the current built part of the village ("Boughton Settlement Confines") in the area to which "town" policies

apply and allocate the remaining land of the parish to policy relating to the countryside.

5. Why do they want to include Boughton as part of Northampton

What is suggested is that the planning policies that apply to the built or urban area of Northampton should also apply to the built area of Boughton, leading the unbuilt areas outside that planning policy area.

6. What are the practical implications. Does it mean that Boughton village will have a different planning and conservation officer to the rest of the parish.

The biggest difference is that that part of Boughton within the new boundary will be governed by planning policies that apply to Northampton. Whether Boughton forms part of the Northampton planning boundary or not, it will continue to be governed by the same planning authority.

7. Do we lose any voice we have? (Albeit we don't seem to have much of a say regarding what is built in our village.)

- a. *Under the current planning documents Boughton is defined as a "Secondary Service Village". It is now proposed that that part of Boughton within the new boundary will be governed by planning policies that apply to Northampton. The remainder of the parish will be outside that policy area.*
- b. *The draft Local Plan states Northampton is a "Principal Urban Area". The draft Local Plan includes the policy 'SP1 – Spatial Strategy (Distribution for Development)', on page 33 it states "Development will be concentrated primarily in the Principal Urban Area of Northampton through the regeneration of previously developed land and vacant or underutilised buildings. Limited, planned, peripheral growth will also be required to meet housing need in the plan period." There is no growth proposed in the parish in the plan period (to 2041).*

8. Does it affect our funding in any way?

The proposed change is to the "planning boundary" only. The Parish Council will still raise the precept in the normal way.

9. If Boughton ceases to be a separate entity in planning terms, does this mean CIL funding goes to WNC?

Boughton will remain a Parish Council. Just like Kingsthorpe is a Parish Council within the planning boundary of Northampton. We will continue to receive 15% of CIL paid in respect of relevant development in the parish.

10. Will the need to mitigate against traffic as a result of the NWRR no longer apply if Boughton doesn't exist in planning terms?

- a. *Planning condition 25 for the NWRR states that "prior to the new road opening the applicant [WNC] shall consult with Boughton Parish Council to agree the extent and detail of a scheme of measures..."*

- b. Boughton Parish Council will remain a legal entity regardless of whether the built part of Boughton is within the planning policy boundary of Northampton or not. The condition is a legal obligation under the planning permission.

11. Do we lose any ability to object to decisions effectively?

Parish Councils are a legal statutory consultee on planning applications in the parish. WNC, as the local planning authority, must consult with Parish Councils on pending applications. E.g. Kingsthorpe is part of the Northampton planning boundary (this is currently called the “Northampton Related Development Area”). Kingsthorpe Parish Council are consulted on planning applications. So, there should be no changes to the current system.

12. How long has this been going on? It’s somewhat of a bolt out of the blue. Do we get any choice in the matter?

- a. WNC invited all Parish Councils to an online meeting on 27 February 2024. Parish Councils were informed that the draft Local Plan is due to go before WNC’s Planning Committee on 14 March 2024. The meeting papers, including a copy of the draft Local Plan, were published online on 6th March 2024.
- b. Boughton Parish Council put this information on their website the same day. The Parish Council also requested details were put into the next BVM newsletter.
- c. WNC launched a public consultation on the draft local Plan on Monday 8 April. Further details can be found here:
<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/planning/west-northamptonshires-local-plan-reg18/>