

Craven District Local Plan

Review of Green Wedge Designations in Craven

Background Paper

June 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 Green Wedges are designated by Policy BE3 and shown on the Proposals Map of the Craven District Local Plan (1999). They comprise the open areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside and built up areas, prevent the coalescence (merging) of adjacent places and can also provide recreational opportunities. This topic paper provides a review of the policy and considers whether or not it should be carried forward into the emerging new local plan. The paper begins by assessing how effective the policy has been in maintaining distinct gaps between Craven settlements, then reassesses the appropriateness of current Green Wedge boundaries and concludes with recommendations for the future.

2. Effectiveness of the Green Wedge policy

2.1 Green Wedges are utilised in Craven District in a number of selected areas where the primary objective has been to prevent the merging of adjacent urban settlements. They are recognised in Policy BE3 of the Craven District Local Plan (1999), as detailed below:

BE3. GREEN WEDGES

Within the Green Wedges as identified on the proposals map, i.e.:

1. Land between Low and High Bentham;
2. Land between Glusburn, Cross Hills, Sutton-in-Craven, Farnhill, Kildwick and up to the County boundary, near Eastburn;

development will be resisted where it would compromise the gap between settlements. The Council will seek to consolidate, strengthen and enhance the appearance and, where appropriate, the recreational value of these areas.

2.2 As identified in the Craven District Plan, 1999 (page 46), the justification for the designation of these Green Wedges was the objective of maintaining and reinforcing the individual character of settlements in close proximity through restricting developments that would cause their physical coalescence. Policy BE3 therefore seeks to resist new development that would compromise the spatial gaps of land identified as Green Wedges, and it was intended that planning decisions should be made in accordance with this policy unless material considerations indicated otherwise.

2.3 In addition, the Green Wedges are viewed as providing a valuable recreation resource, which should also be afforded protection and thus reinforce the space between settlements that are in close proximity. Green Wedges have not been intended to denote the landscape value of the areas identified, as other policies within the 1999 Local Plan addressed this issue. Instead, the overarching intention behind Policy BE3 has been to strengthen and enhance the spaces between those settlements which are in relatively close proximity to each other, in order to maintain their individual character and identity.

2.4 In effect, in terms of the separation of urban areas within Craven, there are three distinct Green Wedges, the boundaries of which can be seen on the maps below. The first Green Wedge separates the villages of Low Bentham and High Bentham (Map A), the second designation separates Glusburn & Cross Hills from Farnhill & Kildwick (Map B), and the third Green Wedge provides a division between Glusburn & Cross Hills and Sutton-in-Craven (Map C). In terms of separation of Craven's urban settlements from an adjacent administrative area's settlements, the eastern sections of both the second and third Green Wedges act as this separation with settlements north of Bradford. This topic paper now examines the effectiveness of each of these Green Wedges in turn, as described below:

- **Green Wedge between Low Bentham and High Bentham:** this has been a largely effective designation since the Craven Local Plan Policy of 1999 came into effect, as 'ribbon development' alongside the B6480 route between the two settlements has been restricted as Policy BE3 intended. This Green Wedge consists of agricultural fields either side of the B6480. Since 1999, the Bentham Community Primary School has been constructed on the western edge of High Bentham, incorporating the eastern most edge of this Green Wedge (decision no. C5/08/2013/13575).
- **Green Wedge between Glusburn & Cross Hills and Sutton-in-Craven:** in terms of area, this is the smallest Green Wedge, and has a particularly thin boundary between the two settlements at the intersection of Holme Lane and Holme Beck in the centre of the Green Wedge. However, it has been particularly effective in restricting further encroachment into the spatial gap between the two settlements to the west and east. A prominent example is a previous application site featuring 2.8 hectares of land on the north-western edge of Sutton-in-Craven and to the south of Glusburn. Here, an appeal on the refusal of planning permission (decision no. 66/2011/12210) has previously been rejected by an inspector, who stated that *"the proposed development would compromise the gap between Sutton-in-Craven and Glusburn and would constitute large scale development beyond the settlement boundary"*. This Green Wedge has also been effective in assisting the maintenance of the separation of development in terms of the built up area of Sutton-in-Craven and neighbouring settlements in the Bradford administrative area to the east.
- **Green Wedge between Kildwick & Farnhill and Glusburn & Crosshills:** the largest of the designated Green Wedges in Craven District, this green area comprises of a large portion of land to the east of Glusburn & Crosshills, in addition to the green area separating the aforementioned villages. The Green Wedge consists of agricultural fields in addition to the River Aire which runs between the two settlements. This Green Wedge has been effective in maintaining the separation of the villages since Policy BE3 came into being. The effectiveness of this Green Wedge in terms of a valuable recreational resource is somewhat limited, in its central area at least, due to the busy roundabout intersection of the A629, B6172 and Skipton Road. This Green Wedge has been effective in helping maintain the separation of development in

terms of the built up area of Glusburn & Crosshills and neighbouring settlements in the Bradford administrative area to the east.

2.5 In conclusion, it is considered that Policy BE3 of the 1999 Local Plan has been largely effective in restricting development in terms of the objective of preventing the coalescence of settlements. The spatial gaps between the settlements previously discussed have remained coherent and identifiable, and have maintained the settlement identity of each town or village.

3. Appropriateness of Green Wedge boundaries

3.1 Some development has been justified and accepted on land within Green Wedges and it would now be appropriate to withdraw the designation from that land, namely:

- Bentham Primary School, High Bentham (decision no. C5/08/2013/13575) – see Map A
- The Crossings Industrial Estate, Cross Hills (decision no. 5/32/535/N) – see Map C
- Holmeville Farm, Holme Lane, Sutton (decision no. 66/2000/0919) – see Map C

3.2 As a knock-on from the Bentham primary school development it is considered that there is little justification for or effectiveness in maintaining the remaining pocket of Green Wedge located between the school site and the approved residential development site at Felstead to the west (decision no. 08/2014/15067) – see Map A.

3.3 Similarly, the detached pocket of Green Wedge located at Wenning View, Low Bentham, which is sandwiched between existing development, is not considered to be strongly justified or effective in maintaining separation between High and Low Bentham and may therefore be deleted – see Map A.

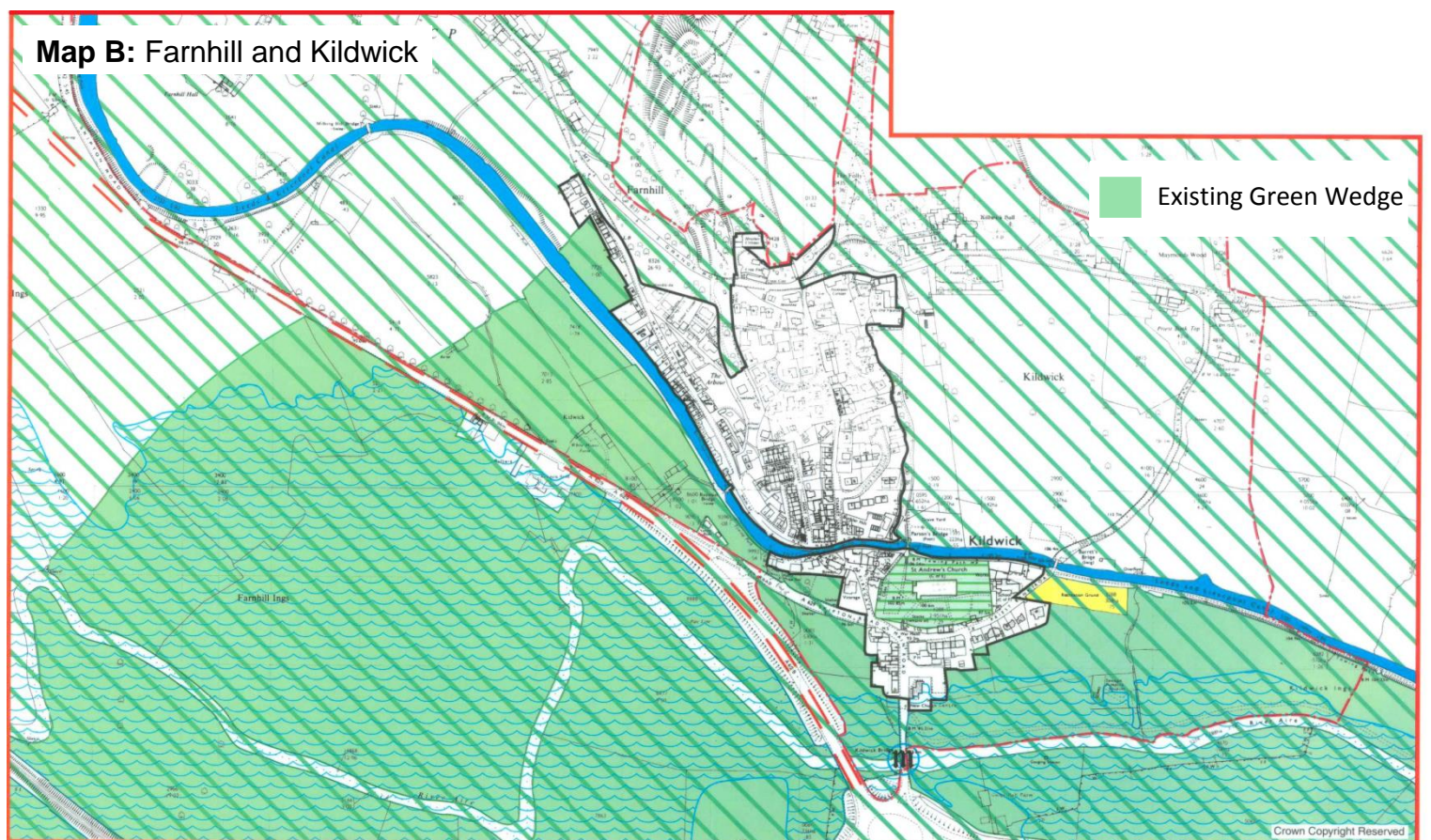
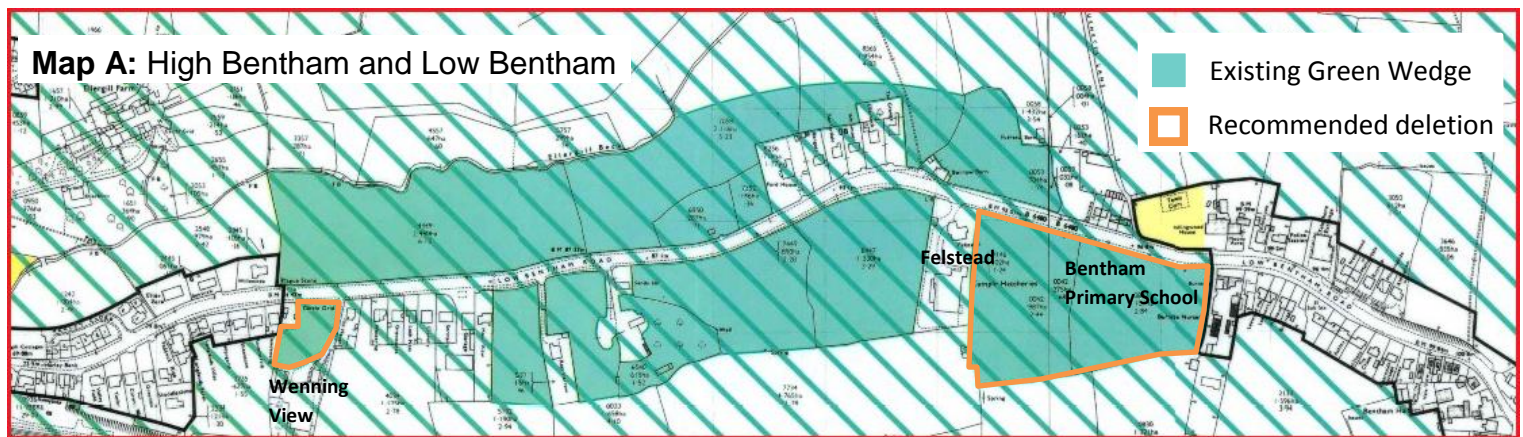
3.4 Residential development proposals for greenfield land to the east of Sutton, south of Sutton Lane, have been refused by the Council, dismissed on appeal and opposed locally, partly on grounds that development would compromise an important gap between Sutton and Eastburn (decision nos. 66/2015/15334 and 66/2016/16745). Therefore, an extension of the Green Wedge to cover this area would improve the designation's effectiveness in achieving the policy objective of maintaining the gap between Sutton and the county boundary near Eastburn – see Map C.

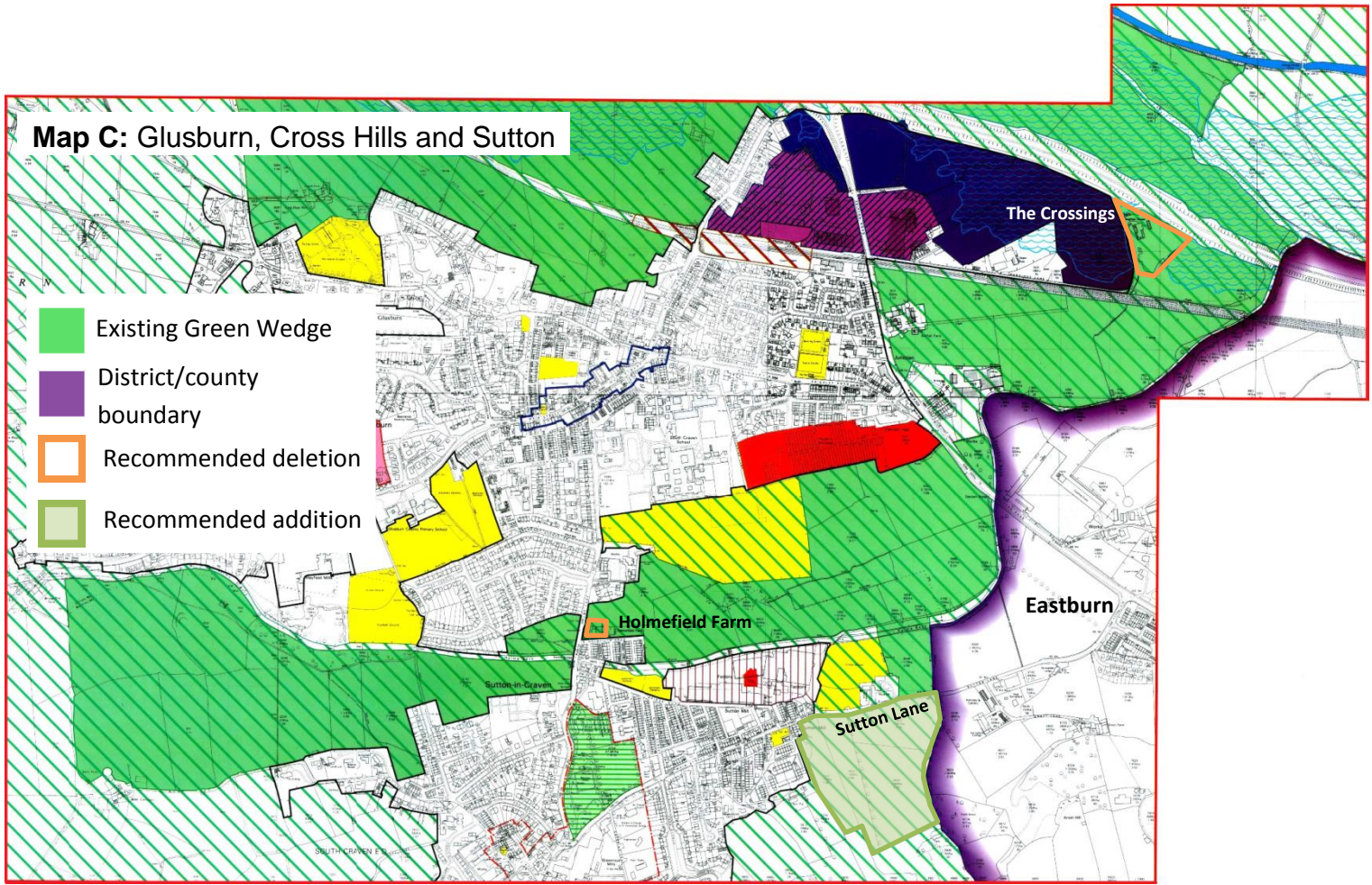
4. Recommendations

4.1 The Green Wedges policy has provided an important and relevant role in maintaining and reinforcing the individual character of settlements in close proximity and, in addition, providing a valuable recreation resource in some cases. It would be appropriate, therefore, to carry the policy forward into the new local plan to ensure that relevant open areas continue to exist and prevent adjacent places from coalescing, whilst also offering recreational opportunities.

4.2 In carrying forward the policy, adjustments should be made to the policy wording – to reflect current spatial planning practice – and to the designation boundaries at High Bentham, Low Bentham, Cross Hills and Sutton, as discussed above and illustrated on the following maps.

5. Maps: Green Wedge boundaries with recommended modifications





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