

## **Draft Test Valley Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2**

### **Consultation Response from Michelmersh and Timsbury Parish Council**

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The Parish Council has a number of comments on the Draft. The Draft is lengthy and complex, and the Council is not qualified to comment on much of the content. Our comments are therefore concerned only with those elements of the Draft that are directly related to our parish.

#### **General**

It is unfortunate that the parts of the Draft Plan (particularly the inset maps) continue to identify Michelmersh and Timsbury as separate settlements. Historically there were two settlements, but they have coalesced and there is no longer any significant physical separation between them. Michelmersh and Timsbury is a single village administered by a single Parish Council. Apart from some disparity in postal addresses, we are a single community, and it would be preferable if documents such as the Local Plan fully recognised this. There should be no question that different planning policies (such as those relating to housing) could apply to areas of the village on opposite sides of a historical boundary.

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#### **Spatial Strategy**

##### **3.18 onwards**

The Council considers that the criteria and rating method adopted in determining the Hierarchy Designations for the rural settlements are well-reasoned and logical. We would welcome Michelmersh and Timsbury being included in Tier 4 and the settlement boundary being removed. The current situation, with a presumption of development within a defined settlement boundary, tends to lead to large houses being built on divided 'garden' plots with adverse effects on the character of the area. There is no incentive for developers to construct the smaller, lower cost housing more appropriate to local needs.

The Council accepts that additional housing development in and around the settlement will be required during the Plan period, to meet local needs. A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the parish area is in course of preparation and it is anticipated that this will identify future housing needs, based on a robust Housing Needs Assessment supported by consultation with residents, and will seek to allocate sites. Two potential sites, with a maximum combined capacity of up to 40 dwellings, have been identified.

##### **3.41 – 3.43**

If the draft policies relating to Hierarchy Designation and Settlement boundaries are retained, our settlement (being in Tier 4) would not have a settlement boundary and therefore policies relating to development in the countryside would apply to the settlement. It is noted that the Inset Maps *do* include settlement boundaries for Tier 4 and Tier 5 settlements, which is somewhat contradictory. These are presumably retained at this stage for completeness, in the event that the draft policies are revised and that settlement boundaries would still be defined for these settlements.

We note that it is proposed to revise the settlement boundaries for Michelmersh and Timsbury from those defined in the current Local Plan. These changes are explained in Appendix 1 to the 2040 Draft Plan '*Settlement Boundary Assessments*'. It is not clear whether it is intended to modify the current Local Plan to incorporate these changes, or whether they would only apply to settlement boundaries in the 2040 Plan (if they were included). In either event we have comments on these revisions: these are attached in Appendix 1 to this response.

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## Housing Market Areas

### 3.65 – 3.70

The Council welcomes the re-definition of the boundary between 'southern' and 'northern' HMAs such that Michelmersh and Timsbury would be with the southern HMA. The parish has a much closer relationship, both geographical and functional, with Romsey than with Andover.

### 3.87 and PolicySS5

The discussion and the associated policy indicates that a housing allocation would be given by the Borough to rural settlements on the designation of a neighbourhood area for an NDP or at the time of a NDP Review. One objective of a NDP is to establish local housing needs and to put forward developments that have community support. Therefore for the Borough to seek to impose a housing requirement at a Neighbourhood Plan area designation stage, or on review of a made Plan, appears perverse and at odds with the statement in 3.47 and other policies that emphasise the principle of local involvement. As noted above, we intend to allocate sites and promote development to meet local needs via our NDP (In progress) and/or via the community-led development route. The Local Plan should allow communities to take the lead in defining housing needs.

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## Sustainable Transport and Movement

### Policy TR1

We support the Draft Plan's aspirations in terms of enhancing the provision of cycling and walking routes.

We would like to raise one specific issue which, although not a 'policy' issue and therefore outside the general scope of a Local Plan, is often raised by residents and would ask that this is given some consideration at the appropriate time.

**There is no safe cycle or walking route from the settlement to Romsey.** where many of the facilities required by residents are located. The difficulties of completing the cycleway alongside the A3057 are appreciated although it is hoped that these can be overcome. However, a safe walking route from Timsbury to Romsey could be provided relatively simply via Cupernham Lane by the construction of a relatively short section of footpath up Yokesford Hill, to connect the existing Sandy Lane footpath to the Timsbury cycleway/footpath. This would be of great benefit to the village and would open up additional safe walking routes to people of Romsey.

## **Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

### **Paragraphs 5.415 onwards**

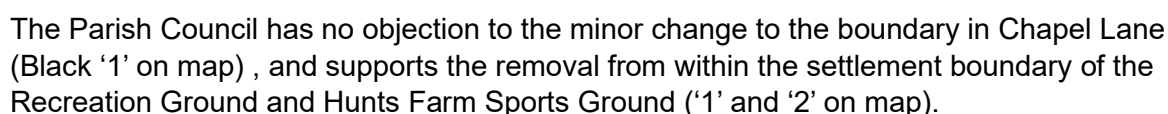
The Parish Council accepts the need to provide permanent sites for these groups and has no comments on the proposed policies. The only site proposed in the draft Plan is at Bunny Lane, which is in our parish. The Council is concerned about the access to the site. Bunny Lane is relatively narrow, has uneven raised verges and no footpaths and carries regular HGV traffic serving the recycling sites. It is a very hazardous road on which to walk or cycle. Future residents at the site wishing to go to Timsbury to access the village or the A3057 (including children picking up school buses) would need to travel by car for reasons of safety.

We strongly recommend that if this site is allocated as a travellers' residential site then some means of providing safe pedestrian access from the site to Timsbury should be provided to provide safe pedestrian access and reduce dependence on private car use.

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1. The Neighbourhood Plan Status states '*Not designated.*' This is incorrect: it should read: '*Designated Neighbourhood Plan area covering parish area. The parish plan is progressing and has not yet reached Reg 14 stage.*'
2. Timsbury is listed as being in Braishfield and Ampfield Ward. This is incorrect: except for a small area which in any case is outside the settlement boundary, Timsbury (as a part of Michelmersh and Timsbury) is in Blackwater Ward.

## Appendix 1 Settlement Boundary Assessments



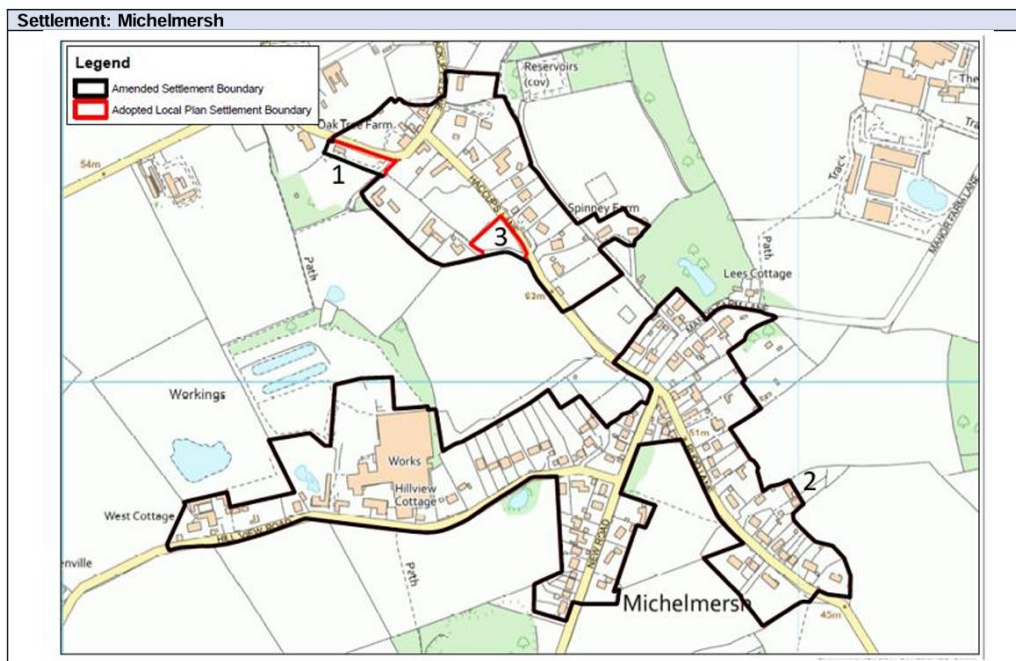
## Michelmersh (pp. 134 – 137)

### Correction:

1. The Neighbourhood Plan Status states '*Not designated.*' This is incorrect: it should read: '*Designated Neighbourhood Plan area covering parish area. The parish plan is progressing and has not yet reached Reg 14 stage.*'

### Comments on proposed changes

#### Appendix 1 Settlement Boundary Assessments



#### Land between Haccups Lane and Staff Road – '1' on Map)

The PC agrees that the this area on the edge of the settlement has a rural nature and that the houses referred to relate more to the open countryside than the settlement itself.. However, the PC does not consider that 'land at The Winery ' should be singled out for inclusion in the SB, One reason given for the proposed change is that it is guided by the 'logical drawing of the boundary at this point'. The 'logic' is not explained. The Council **objects** to this proposed extension of the settlement boundary . If the settlement boundary approach to development were to be retained in the village then this change could allow houses to be built on this lane which would, in the Council's view, have a significant adverse effect on the character of the area.

**Site at Rudd Lane. Ref 19/0827/FULLS ('2' on map)**

The Council has no objection to the minor adjustment to the settlement boundary to include the full footprint of the houses Ty Derw and Hunts Lodge.

**Site at Haccups Lane Ref: 21/01595/FULLS ('3' on map)**

The PC **objects** very strongly to the parcel of land to the SE of the site currently under development being incorporated within the settlement boundary. This field is designated in the Michelmersh Conservation Area map as an 'Important Open Area' bounded by important hedgerows. It presents an open outlook to the left of the lane when approaching the Conservation Area. The site has unfortunately been devalued by the scale of work being carried out on the adjoining development site, being almost completely stripped of vegetation and accommodating large piles of excavated spoil and building materials. However, restoring the land to create orchard spaces, as required in the site landscaping plan, will retain the open aspect. The presence of the access road was not considered by TVBC Planning, when considering the application for the adjoining site, to have such a detrimental impact on this land that it presented any obstacle to the development on the adjoining site. Therefore it is difficult to see why the presence of the road should now justify the inclusion of the land within the settlement boundary. Such a change could, if implemented, and subject to other policies, allow further development on the land that would result in the further loss of valuable (and valued) open space in this sensitive area.

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