

## **Mickleton Parish Council Summary Document of South Warwickshire Plan February 2025**

### **Introduction**

Warwickshire County Council has been developing its next-generation strategic plan for South Warwickshire over the past few years. This is being done in close collaboration with Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council. This has recently resulted in a request for comment from anyone who may be impacted by the plan. One of the options being considered is to expand the housing development at Meon Vale and Long Marston Airfield beyond the original 3,500 dwellings, up to 6,000, 10,000 or possibly even 25,000 if the government's 'new town' guidelines were to be adopted for this site.

Such a big change in the number of dwellings could have significant implications for Mickleton, as one of the closest villages to the expanded development. Mickleton Parish Council intends to submit comments about its concerns and is trying to coordinate responses with other impacted parish councils (Clifford Chambers, Quinton and Long Marston), Cotswold District Council and local groups. Mickleton Parish Council would also strongly encourage individuals to offer comment.

The South Warwickshire Plan itself is complex, comprehensive and somewhat technical, all of which makes it a long and challenging read. The following paragraphs are an attempt to summarise:

1. Why is further development at Meon Vale and Long Marston Airfield an attractive option for the planners?
2. Why should the Meon Vale and Long Marston Airfield site not be considered?
3. What are the risks for Mickleton?
4. Are there any opportunities?
5. Where can details of the consultation be found?
6. How can I provide comment?

### **1. Why is further development at Meon Vale and Long Marston Airfield an attractive option for the planners?**

The original planning activity, which started a few years ago, was already considering the question of additional housing, and a 'call for sites' exercise was conducted to understand where land might be available for further residential development. The new target of 1.5 million new homes being aggressively pursued by the government has further increased pressure on the planning teams.

Around 800 sites were nominated across South Warwickshire. Many of these were small, suitable for only a few dwellings, but some were at the other end of the scale. After evaluation of these nominated sites, Meon Vale and Long Maston Airfield (referred to as site E1 in the planning documentation) was identified as one of 12 sites that might be considered for significant additional development. Further analysis of these 12 sites was undertaken and,

despite E1 being found to be unsuitable against several of the evaluation criteria, it was put forward as one of four possible sites to go forward for further investigation.

E1 is appealing to the planners for several reasons:

- The old airfield is a ‘brownfield’ site, something the government has specifically targeted for redevelopment.
- There is already approval for a significant number of houses (up to 3,500).
- The site is not designated as ‘green belt’, and it does not have any special environmental or social protections – ancient woodland, area of outstanding natural beauty etc.
- Historically, the site has not been especially prone to flooding.
- The agricultural land that would be lost is not in the most protected categories (1 and 2).
- **The only criterion which links all four of the chosen sites is that of something called ‘call for coverage’, which represents how much of the total land under consideration was originally proposed in the ‘call for sites’ activity. This criterion fundamentally speaks to the financial opportunity offered to the owners of the land, and takes no account of environmental, societal or other economic concerns.**

## 2. Why should the Meon Vale and Long Marston Airfield site not be considered?

There are two main areas of concern which the consultation documents have failed to address so far, and a host of secondary issues:

### 2.1 Employment

Under the heading of ‘sustainability’, the plans assert that substantial new employment will be created near the housing developments, such that more than 40% of working residents will either work locally or work from home, hence minimising the need for work-related travel.

Given the rural location, Mickleton Parish Council is highly sceptical about the opportunity to create sufficient new, local employment opportunities to sustain the number of properties being considered.

### 2.2 Transport

The consultation documents do provide an in-depth analysis of transport options and volumes. Two extracts from the ‘Site E1: Strategic Transport Assessment Summary’ are included below:

Rating Summary:

Active Travel	<b>RED</b>
Rail	<b>RED</b>
Bus	<b>AMBER</b>
Highway (Strategic)	<b>RED</b>
Highway (Local)	<b>RED</b>
Overall Assessment	<b>RED</b>

Rating Comment:

The results of the assessment [for Option E1] are broadly consistent with the findings of the previous Jacobs work, demonstrating that these sites have multiple challenges from a transport perspective, driven by:

- Their rural location and subsequent poor relationship/distance to existing settlements/service centres, either within Warwickshire or adjoining areas of the West Midlands;
- The dispersed nature of employment and retail trips generated by a new settlement with limited on-site employment and the difficulty of serving those trip demands by public transport and active travel; and
- Resultant levels of high car dependency and longer trip lengths due to distances to nearest settlements/service centres.

### **2.3 Secondary Issues**

- 2.3.1** Although not being of the highest quality (categories 1 and 2), a significant proportion of the agricultural land that would be lost is classed as category 3, 'good to moderate'.
- 2.3.2** Mickleton Parish Council could find little detail about the current habitat and the possible need to protect some wildlife species.
- 2.3.3** There are clearly concerns about the ability of development of the infrastructure to keep pace with dwellings. This includes schools, shops, doctors and dentists.

### **3. What are the risks for Mickleton?**

By far the most tangible risk to Mickleton comes from increased traffic volumes through the village on the B4632. Traffic volumes and speeds are already a concern to many, as are general road safety and consideration of pollution issues.

Traffic data analysis provided with the plan suggests, **even at the most optimistic level**, 35,000 external vehicle trips per day from the Meon Vale and Long Marson Airfield sites if the number of dwellings reaches 6,000. The analysis also predicts that 13% of these trips will be through Mickleton. This equates to a five-fold increase in the traffic volumes we see today. If the number of dwellings were to increase further, then the traffic numbers could be expected to increase proportionally.

Increases in traffic volumes on the B4632 will also lead to significantly extended journey times, particularly into Stratford, which is already blocked frequently at Clopton Bridge and surrounding roads. Traffic volumes on other local roads will also increase as people look for ways to avoid congestion on the B4632.

### **4. Are there any opportunities?**

Having significantly more people located close to Mickleton could offer a financial opportunity for businesses located in the village.

If the infrastructure at Meon Vale and Long Marston Airfield were developed in proportion to the number of dwellings, then this might offer Mickleton residents additional choice for schools, shopping, leisure and medical facilities.

**5. Where can details of the consultation be found?**

Access to all key documents and the consultation document can be found [here](#):

**6. How can I provide comment?**

The website referenced above includes a section entitled “How to Have Your Say” (via the Consultation Portal button). It is accessible directly [here](#):

**The consultation period closes on 7 March 2025**