

Great Haseley Parish Council

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Mr Steven Corrigan
Democratic Services Manager
Legal and Democratic
South Oxfordshire District Council

Dear Steven

Community Governance Review 2022

Great Haseley Parish Council wholeheartedly supports the revised draft proposals, agreed by the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee at its meeting held on 25 May 2022 to make **no** change to the requested boundary change between Great Haseley and Thame parishes.

For completeness, please find below Great Haseley Parish Council's (GHPC) response submitted previously.

In Thame Town Council's justification for the proposed boundary changes it states:

- *Thame's Cattle Market, once relocated, would be within the Thame parish, rather than Great Haseley which would be the case with the current parish boundary.*
- *GHPC counter that despite planning permission being granted no movement has been made to develop the site. Development may not take place at all thus there is no justification to move the boundary at the present time. Successful companies and organisations often outgrow their place of origin and move sites, keeping their corporate identity operating within different parishes, counties or countries without detrimental effect to their business or the local area.*
- *Potential for Thame to have more influence over future development in this area if its Neighbourhood Plan area was also extended to include it.*
- *GHPC counter that a draft agreement is in place (see second set of bullet points, page 2).*
- *Within the proposed new parish boundary is a live Reserved Matters planning application for employment land that currently falls under the parish of Great Haseley. This would be dependent on / serve predominantly Thame's facilities and people but Thame currently would not receive any support to manage the impact on its infrastructure. By moving the parish boundary, Thame would be eligible to receive developer contributions to offset the impact of the development on Thame's infrastructure.*

- GHPC counter that the Reserved Matters application has now been approved and that the eligibility to receive developer contributions will be considered and shared to offset the impact the development will have on both parishes.

The Parish Council reiterates that despite its largely rural character, Great Haseley Parish is in fact an interestingly varied area:

- 252 houses in 4 village “centres” (Great Haseley, Little Haseley, Milton Common, North Weston)
- 3 significant light industrial estates (Thame Road, Farol, Ariens) with other developments, principally changes of use from agricultural to light industrial or services
- Development of planned and completed renewable energy farms
- Predominantly agricultural land.

This balance gives GHPC a range of different perspectives, and the need to respect the interests of a wide range of citizens, residents and commercial interests.

We note that Thame Town Council proposes a change to its southern / our northern border to incorporate the new industrial estate north of Thame Road, and including the settlement of North Weston. We understand that the principal benefit to Thame Town Council would be to secure provision of ‘employment land’ in their neighbourhood plan above and beyond that allocated in the District Local Plan on the basis of evidence of need. This can be done through negotiation of Neighbourhood Plan boundaries as has already been agreed rather than hard parish boundary change, and this is indeed the position that GHPC agreed in principle to approve:

- Negotiations were concluded between the two parties to agree that Thame should include the whole of the industrial estate for the purposes of its Neighbourhood Plan
- And that in return, GHPC would agree a split of any s.106 and CIL money that might accrue.

The reason that this was not finalised is that Thame Town Council informed GHPC that they needed to push on with their Neighbourhood Plan process and could not wait for GHPC to secure its own legal advice.

Nevertheless, GHPC remains open to conclude the deal with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan boundaries should Thame Town Council wish to re-engage.

However, the GHPC position in the consultation response from Thame is misrepresented and overstated. GHPC did not agree to a change in the Parish boundary, as the Thame response suggests – and we are happy to share the relevant paperwork relating to the draft agreement set out to above.

Furthermore, GHPC would not, and does not, agree to redrawing the parish boundary for the following reasons:

Planning

- Retaining a strong influence and planning responsibility for the industrial estates that form the boundary of the parish is, and remains, an important safeguard against over-development: our ability to protect and preserve that boundary if we lose that part of the parish is significantly weakened: we become simply a party to be consulted by Thame rather than a statutory consultee ourselves.
- In particular, if Thame secure a change of boundary it could weaken our ability to resist ribbon development along the A418 and A329 within the area Thame wish to secure into their parish to increase their evidenced employment need. Great

Haseley would argue that there are other development areas within the existing Thame parish that can be identified for commercial development but GHCP would not be a statutory consultee.

- We have a very direct interest in such development, not least because of the significant increase in HGV traffic to service these estates – which, coming direct from the M40 to the industrial estates outside Thame has no impact on the centre of Thame itself, but will have a real impact on the A329, which is the only viable route into and out of the village, and is already being used as a “rat run” by heavy traffic to avoid Oxford.
- SODC will already be aware of the problems of heavy traffic on this road: we share with our neighbours in Little Milton the desire for Oxfordshire County Council to act to reduce HGV traffic on this road, by imposing weight restrictions and enforcing 20mph speed limits: further industrial strip development will only increase it, but a change in parish boundaries will reduce GHPC’s role in commenting on any such proposals.

Resources

- The dwellings and residents of North Weston represent roughly 10% of our funding base. The loss of these properties, as well as the commercial development that is already underway, as agricultural buildings are converted to business use, significantly impacts on GHPC revenues and represents at least a 10% reduction in our direct funding.

For these reasons, GHPC strongly argues that the redrawing of this boundary is unnecessary and inappropriate and should be resisted.

Yours sincerely

Cllr David Lindsay
Chairman
Great Haseley Parish Council