



Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan



February 2016

Cover photographs © Jason Smith Photography and Dara Portraits

Introductory Statement

The Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan is one of the most important documents ever produced on behalf of the Parish Council, via an Advisory Steering Group; if approved it will shape the future of the parish for the decade to come. The plan is a positive one with land use allocations and a list of projects that enable the delivery of the community's Vision of Mortimer and their aspirations for the parish's development and improvement over time.

The responses to the various consultations on the plan have shown how much people care about the future of their community. Naturally the views expressed in the consultations have been incorporated in the plan wherever possible.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to all those who have given their time and energy to producing this plan. Without this plan we would, I am sure, be a much poorer community.

Mike Dennett

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. D. Dennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Chairman of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Contents

Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan.....	1
Introductory Statement.....	3
Contents	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
1 Introduction	6
2 Executive Summary	8
3 Background to Mortimer.....	10
4 Consultation Process	14
5 Vision and Strategy.....	16
6 Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies	18
7 Residential Site Allocation.....	19
8 Housing Mix and Density.....	23
9 General Design	26
10 The Site Design Brief for “The Site”	35
11 Commercial.....	41
12 Infrastructure Development.....	47
13 Biodiversity and Environmental Gain.....	51
14 Green Spaces	55
15 Heritage	59
16 Delivery and Monitoring.....	61
Appendix A – Stratfield Mortimer Evidence Base	63

Acknowledgements

The Mortimer NDP Steering Group (Tennant Barber (Vice-chairman), Mike Dennett, Dudley Ives, Neil Kiley, Danusia Morsley and Pat Wingfield (Chairman)) thank all those who have so generously given of their time to make it possible to develop the Mortimer NDP:

- John Cornwell as volunteer planning advisor to the Steering Group
- All those in the community who took the time to come to public events and answer the questionnaire
- The volunteers who gave their time to develop and critically review the policies and to help run public events; John Bagshaw, Sue Carter, Nick Carter, Dilys Elvery, Neil Hindmarsh, Peter MacNaughtan, Gerard Moran, Chris Scognamiglio
- Nick Carter for the development and operation of the on-line questionnaire
- John Hannawin, I-Next Ltd., for providing the software and framework for the NDP website and hosting it
- Charles Mills, Budgens Shop, who gave us so much support giving space, access and insurance for the 2015 Exhibition
- Phil Bushnell and Jason Bushnell of Budgens Shop who were so very helpful in running the 2015 Exhibition
- Nicola Sumner (Head Teacher) and Paul Young (Chair of Governors) of St John's Infant School, Mortimer for being so supportive in the development of policies with regard to the future of St John's Infant School
- Alison Richardson (ex-Chair of Governors), Chris Smith (Chair of Governors) and Steve Coley (Governor) of St Mary's Junior School for being so supportive in the development of policies with regard to the future of St Mary's Junior School
- Dr Iain Rock, Mortimer Doctors' Surgery, for his contribution to the development of policies for the future of the Doctor's Surgery
- Peter Deason, Ascot and Sunningdale NDP, who gave us valuable advice and guidance on developing an NDP
- Malcolm Summers and Nicki Flipping of Willink School for help in engaging sixth form students in the consultation process
- Matthew Hensby and Stuart Roberts of Sovereign Housing Association who gave us valuable advice on Affordable Housing and Sovereign's work in Mortimer
- Burghfield Scout Group for lending tables for the exhibition
- Mortimer Village Partnership for use of the main marquee after the Fun Day, lending chairs, flip chart stands and display boards, and help with publicity
- West Berkshire Council officers:
 - Bryan Lyttle (Planning and Transport Policy Manager) who provided invaluable guidance on the conduct of the NDP and planning matters
 - Liz Alexander (Planning Policy Team Leader) and Rachael Lancaster (Senior Planning Policy Officer) who advised and guided on all planning matters
 - Fiona Simmonds and Mark Lewis who advised on St John's and St Mary's School initiatives
 - Jenny Legge and Sarah Winter who advised on the design of the questionnaire
 - Jenny Graham (Transport Policy Team Leader) who advised on parking
- Dara Portraits, Jason Smith and other photographers for donating their photos
- Bell Cornwell as planning consultants
- Jane Rabbiosi as researcher and administrator

1 Introduction

This Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) covers the whole of the parish of Stratfield Mortimer and contains policies that are in general conformance with National (NPPF) policies and guidelines West Berkshire Council's (WBC) Core Strategy. The period covered by the plan is from now until 2026.

Following an executive summary the plan outlines background facts and figures that influence life in Mortimer, before summarising the process that has been followed to formulate this plan. Emphasis is especially given to the consultation that has taken place with the community to help formulate the policies contained in the plan.

The general vision which has driven the plan is described followed by a chapter on each policy area. Each of these chapters contains the policies themselves along with the context and justification for each policy. A final short section describes how the policies and identified projects will be delivered on the ground. Throughout the document reference is made to the Stratfield Mortimer Evidence Base (henceforth referred to as the Evidence Base) which can be found at <http://www.mortimer-ndp.org.uk/Evidence/index.htm>

It is emphasised that the NDP policies are in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidelines and the West Berkshire Core Strategy.

In general in this document the term *parish* is used when the whole area of the civil parish of Stratfield Mortimer is intended and the term *village* to indicate the largely built-up area within the Settlement Policy Boundary. *Village* can also mean the whole community or whole settlement; this usage is generally clear from the context.



2 Executive Summary

The Introduction to this plan has described the form of this document. This summary is intended to emphasise the major elements of the plan and, in particular, the core policies put forward for adoption.

The various sections at the start of the plan give a picture of Mortimer as seen through the eyes of the community. A number of positive and negative factors which have informed this Plan were identified by means of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

The overwhelming view is that Mortimer is a rural village with a distinctive identity and character, and a good community spirit. It is this view that people want to be able to keep going forward. This is not to say that they are opposed to change but rather that change should be managed sensitively in order to improve matters where possible and to mitigate any downsides to development.

This view was summarised and supported through the consultation process in the form of three principles. These are:-

- 1. The NDP must make it possible for people to live the whole of their lives in the parish if they so wish**
- 2. The NDP will ensure that new residential developments will be within or adjacent to the existing Settlement Policy Boundary and, ideally, close to the centre of the village (the centre is taken to be St John's Church)**
- 3. The NDP will allocate and reserve land to make provision for the future needs of the parish with respect to schools and health/welfare infrastructure**

These principles have been taken forward by way of policy statements that:

- Allocate land behind St John's Infant School for 110 homes that will have a mix of types and tenures
- Allocate part of this site for a new St John's Infant School and doctors' surgery

In order to protect the village feel of Mortimer, specific policies have been included to address design features of new development, for example:

- Propose relevant housing densities that retain the village feel
- Require new developments to be designed in sympathy with the village ethos
- Are not lit or only lit at a low level
- Have sensible access and parking standards
- Reduce the risk of flooding
- Produce net environmental gains by increasing biodiversity

All of these requirements have been developed for the allocated site in The Site Design Brief. Site Design Briefs and Development Applications, Proposals and Plans for any future development will conform to all the policies in the Plan in their totality.

There is a strong desire to ensure that Mortimer continues to be a thriving rural service centre. To this end policies encourage the retention of existing facilities, and the introduction of new facilities, where these will not damage the village/rural feel of the parish.

To assist with the retention of such services and to improve the lifestyle of the community it is proposed to encourage the provision of better superfast broadband, schools, health and welfare, parking and reduced flood risk.

There is also an emphasis on retaining and improving the biodiversity of the area by requiring new developments to provide green spaces and green routes along with other wildlife friendly features. The protection of existing green spaces by designating a number of spaces including the Fairground, the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field and the southernmost part of the allocated development site as local green spaces is also included.



Finally the rich heritage of Mortimer is recognised in a proposal to create a Heritage Trail which will take in many sites of historical interest.

3 Background to Mortimer

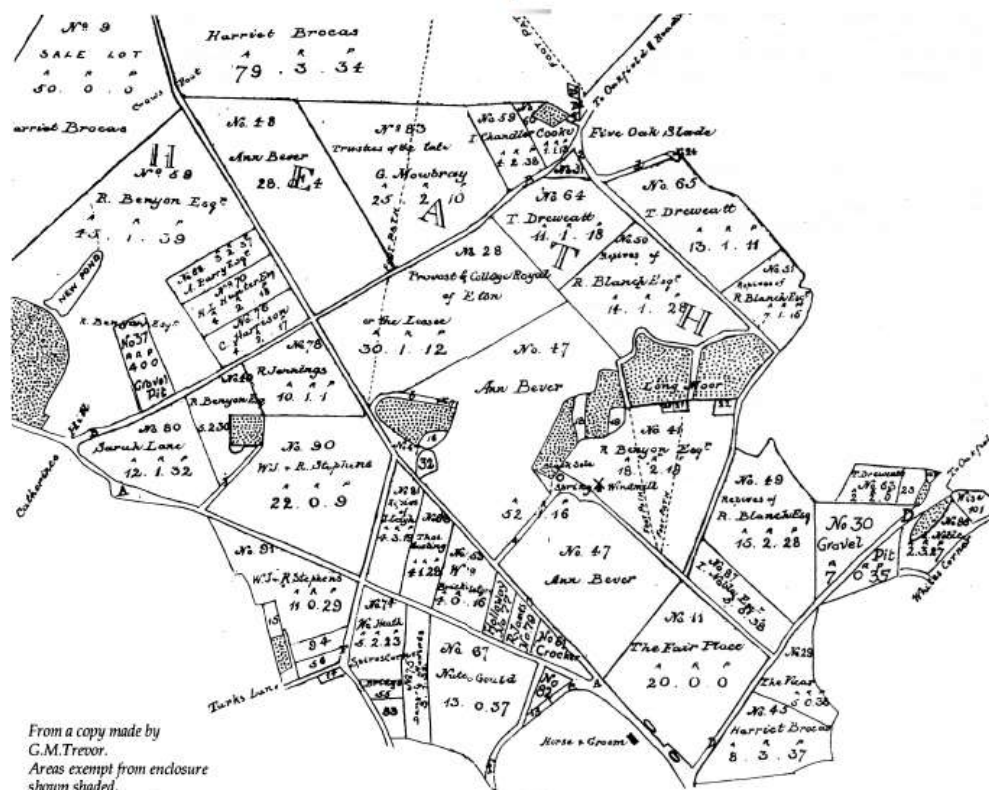
3.1 History and Location

Once central on the west – east axis of the Royal County of Berkshire, Stratfield Mortimer now lies almost at the eastern extremity of West Berkshire Council district. To the south and west it has a boundary with Hampshire, to the north east with Wokingham Council district. Rail and road links mean that people naturally look to Reading and then Newbury or Basingstoke for employment and town-based facilities. Mortimer has a railway station on the Reading to Basingstoke line but it is about 1.5 miles from the centre of the village. Although in Wokingham parliamentary constituency since 1997, people in Stratfield Mortimer do not have an obvious connection with Wokingham.

The presence of Bronze Age barrows at Holden's Firs shows that the area around Mortimer has been utilised by people since the prehistoric period, and evidence found at Mortimer Hill suggests that a Roman settlement existed here. An estimate based on the Domesday Book gives a population of about 350 in 1086. The early village was centred on the Foudry Brook, St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's School area; much of the best agricultural land being at that end of the parish. The village appears to have quietly flourished for many centuries,

The western end of the parish, Mortimer Common, was gravelly wasteland which was then enclosed in 1802, landowners of the parish being allotted plots according to their existing freeholds. As the land made poor farmland, most became conifer plantations and these still dominate the landscape to the northwest of the parish. Twenty acres were set aside for the annual fairs – this still forms the village's most valued open space, The Fairground.

Part of the 1802 Enclosure Map of Mortimer Common



An extract from *Mortimer Through the Ages* © Mortimer Local History Group, 1994

Parts of Mortimer Common started to be developed as a residential area from about 1870; by 1911 the population for the parish had reached 1,423. The houses built during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, most of locally-made bricks, still cluster around the nucleus of the village in Windmill Road, King Street, Victoria Road, West End Road, St. John's Road and St. Mary's Road.



Further development came to the parish in the 1950s with the building of Stephens Road and Stephens Firs estates. Two large old houses were demolished in the early 1960s to build the Croft Road estate, and the Crescent development and the College Piece council estate were built on woodland about the same time. In 1961 the population was 2,267 and by 1991 3,498. More recently new estates have been built at Groves Lea and Strawberry Fields and significant infill building has taken place. By 2011 the population had reached 3,807.

The centre of the village is now in what was Mortimer Common, with Post Office, bank, shops, St. John's Infant School, village hall, and churches all close together. St. Mary's Junior School is located over a mile from the centre of the village, nearer the station. For secondary schooling, students usually attend Willink School in the neighbouring parish of Burghfield.



Housing for the elderly has been provided with Windmill Court, Glenapp Grange and Badgers Croft. The village has an active community life with many clubs and societies for all ages and several annual village events.

The northeast, east and southeast of the parish is still generally arable farmland with some pasture for cattle; some fields nearer to the centre of the village are used by livery stables. Coniferous woods remain to the north and west. There is a network of well-used footpaths through the fields and woods. All roads coming into Stratfield Mortimer pass through either open farmland or woodland, thus all the approaches to the parish are rural.

3.2 Current Situation

As has been demonstrated in the previous section the parish has developed over time and the population is now approximately two and a half times that of 1950. Despite this the parish is still largely rural in nature with the overall population density of the parish being 3.94 persons per hectare. The village of Mortimer occupies the north-western corner of the parish and the rest is farmland, woods and scattered dwellings associated with the rural economy. This preponderance of rural activity is also true for the neighbouring parishes so that Mortimer is surrounded with farmland, woods or commons. This imparts a rural ambience to the village as well as the parish as a whole and is a feature much-treasured by the community.

Because Mortimer has a long history and an increasing population it has managed to retain most of its traditional facilities and to develop some new ones. As such it continues to act as a small rural centre for itself and other villages nearby. This role has been recognised in West Berkshire Council's Local Plan where Mortimer has been designated a rural service centre.

The age structure of the parish is slightly older than the average for West Berkshire and there are fewer persons in the 13 to 30 year age groups than on average in West Berkshire. However, there are slightly more children below the age of 13 than the average for the wider area. Of particular note is the age band of 25 to 30 where Stratfield Mortimer has only some 62% of the wider average.

The population is formed into households of, on average, 2.42 persons. This is the same as the West Berkshire figure. Owner occupation is average at 70.1% but social housing plays a slightly higher part, than for West Berkshire as a whole, in the housing mix and private rented property plays a slightly lower part; the figures are 15.65% and 11.51% respectively.

As far as the health of the population is concerned, a slightly greater percentage of people in Stratfield Mortimer than the West Berkshire average report themselves to be in very good health, but more people report themselves as being in bad or very bad health.

The level of qualifications for those over 16 in the parish is considerably higher than the average for West Berkshire with 38.61% being qualified to level 4 or higher compared to the average of 32.11%

The types of houses in Stratfield Mortimer, compared to West Berkshire, comprise 4% more detached and semi-detached, and consequently fewer terraced houses, and flats. The numbers of houses with particular numbers of bedrooms are remarkably close to the West Berkshire averages.

As may be expected in a rural community there are some differences between the travel-to-work patterns of the residents of Stratfield Mortimer and those of West Berkshire as a whole. More people work from home, travel by train and drive to work. Conversely less people travel by bus, are a car passenger, cycle or walk. It should also be noted that slightly more people than average are not in employment. None of these facts are surprising bearing in mind the rural nature of the parish, its age make up and the fact it has a train station.

The statistics on which this section is based are from census data and may be found in the Evidence Base (13).

3.3 SWOT analysis

The following SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) has been compiled following feedback via the various consultation exercises that have been carried out as part of the formulation of this plan. It indicates that Mortimer is a place which is thriving and a good place to live but that this very desirability may pose a future threat of a loss of its historical identity. It is seen that the NDP can be a catalyst to mitigate some of this threat while positively creating opportunities for benign development which will improve further the standard of life in the parish.

The SWOT is a useful tool to judge the policies of the plan against. As such each policy reflects points contained in the SWOT so as to deliver a better future for the parish. Further explanation of some of the points can be found in the [Evidence Base](#) (44).

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Vibrant community spirit ◦ Obvious village boundary ◦ Its history gives its distinctive identity • Rural setting & extensive footpath network • Generally thriving village amenities • Desirable state schools • Varied housing stock • Proximity to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ National rail & road network ◦ Heathrow & Gatwick ◦ Employment opportunities ◦ London • Developing an NDP 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village remote from railway station • Limited bus service • Village centre lacks some defining attractive features • Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Accelerating housing cost ◦ Lack of affordable housing to buy ◦ Lack of affordable housing to rent • Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Schools at capacity ◦ Flooding and wastewater drainage ◦ Lack of parking - both at the station and in the village ◦ Lack of cycle routes ◦ Restricted sewage capacity • Perceived dangerous walking/cycling route to St Mary's School and station • Shortage of 20-30 year olds living in parish
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of an approved, comprehensive NDP to influence and shape: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Future housing numbers ◦ Future development ◦ Housing mix ◦ Parking • Improvements to rail service • Site for new school/surgery • Manage growth to retain viability of services • Enhance village centre • Traffic management 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Proximity to employment, national rail & road networks leading to development pressure and increase in house prices • Over development leads to identity loss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Urbanisation e.g. loss of green space, light pollution ◦ Becomes a Reading suburb • Lack of investment leading to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Possible closure of Post Office ◦ Cuts to bus services ◦ No traffic management ◦ No solution to parking problems • National policy changes re NDPs • National housing shortage leading to imposition of too many new homes by WBC • Speculative planning applications for unallocated sites

4 Consultation Process

The Plan was prepared by the Steering Group in conjunction with the Parish Council, WBC planning officers and a team of volunteers. A recently retired planning consultant provided advice and guidance.

4.1 Key Events

Date	Event
March 2014	Parish council launched the NDP at a public meeting.
July 2014	Exhibition to advise the community on progress and to obtain opinions on a range of ideas structured into 9 themes
September – December 2014	Meetings with interested parties e.g. Mortimer schools, medical surgery, WBC officers (planners, education etc.) and owners of possible development sites or their agents
February/March 2015	Four week exhibition to inform the community on options that had been developed and to seek opinions. Six discussion groups were held. The exhibition was attended by over 280 households (see Where Do You Live Pin Map in the Evidence Base (39.44 and 39.45). 783 feedback cards were returned
24 April - 22 May 2015	<p>A questionnaire was distributed to every household and business in the parish. Anyone 16 years of age and over and who lived in or worked in Mortimer were entitled to complete a questionnaire either on-line or in paper form. 1285 questionnaires were completed, representing approximately 40% of those on the electoral role for Stratfield Mortimer and approximately 36% of the total estimated number of eligible people. 1259 free format comments/opinions/suggestions were returned. Many of these addressed several different points in a single written response.</p> <p>In parallel with the questionnaire a 'Housing Needs Survey' (Evidence Base 42) was undertaken. A survey form was delivered to every household at the same time as the questionnaire. 517 were returned representing 31% of households.</p>
June 2015	Draft policies were published on the NDP website for comment.
June & August 2015	Drafts of NDP published on the NDP website for comment
21 September 2015	A public meeting was held to obtain community comment and input into the Site Design Brief for chosen site; approx. 80 people attended
8 October 2015	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council accepted the Pre Submission Plan and agreed for it to go forward for consideration
9 th November - 21 December 2015	Pre-submission consultation; pre-submission NDP available online and in Mortimer library with opportunity for the public to comment by email or in writing
11 th February 2016	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council accepted the Plan and agreed for it to be submitted to WBC

A team of volunteers contributed to and scrutinised draft NDP options and policies before these were put before the public.

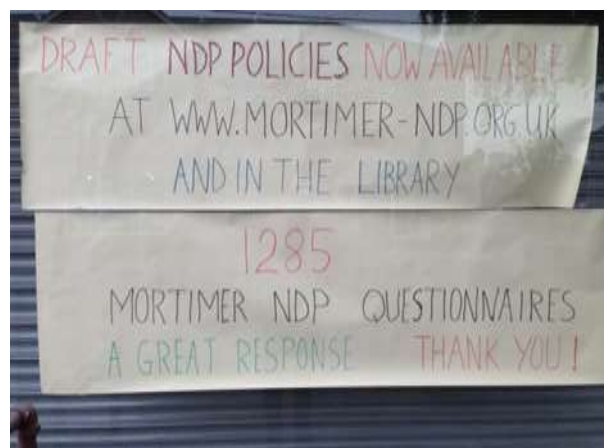
A full account of the consultation process can be found in the Evidence Base (33).

4.2 Communications

The Steering Group meetings, held in the Parish Office, were open to the public and the minutes were published. Throughout the development of the NDP progress was reported to the Parish Council at their regular meetings and, councillors were asked to ratify key proposals as they were developed. Progress reports were published in the quarterly parish council newsletter.

Advertising boards on the parish Fairground and in a local closed shop window, flyers delivered to every household, notices on the parish notice boards, the NDP and parish council websites, and the NDP and Mortimer Village Partnership Facebook pages were used to keep the Mortimer community informed of progress and up-coming events. The community was able to ask questions or comment via email or in writing throughout the whole process.

The results of the exhibitions and the questionnaire were published on the NDP website and in paper form in the local library. Developing draft policies were published on the NDP website for comment.



5 Vision and Strategy

5.1 Introduction

Mortimer has both a distinctive rural character stemming from its long history and its setting within woodland and agricultural land and a strong sense of community with a wide range of services and thriving small business economy. It is this vision of Mortimer, now and in the future, that forms the fundamental and distinctive focus for the Neighbourhood Development Plan and informs all the policies of this Plan. In order to deliver such a vision it is also necessary to have a strategy. After widespread consultation the following strategic statements have been derived which sum up this vision in a practical sense.

5.2 The Vision

The Plan will make it possible for people to live the whole of their lives in the parish if they so wish.

The rural character and setting of the parish will remain with the minimum of intrusion on the existing surrounding green and agricultural space.

The Vision picks up on the themes of:-

- Enhancing the range of housing to allow all types and ages of residents to be catered for
- Retaining the rural approaches to the parish
- Retaining open space between the Mortimer and other parishes
- Retaining the best landscape and architectural features of the parish
- Retaining easy access by non-motorised means within the parish and to the surrounding countryside
- Retaining and enhancing Mortimer's role as a rural service centre so that all the basic needs of the population can be met within the parish

5.3 Strategy

To deliver this vision, after widespread consultation, the following strategies have been developed:

- Provide a range of homes matching the needs of people in the various stages of their lives – starter homes, homes for rent, shared equity, family homes and smaller homes/bungalows for older people to downsize
- Provide new developments close to the centre of the village (near St John's church) to encourage walking and cycling



- Promote the infrastructure services of a modern and attractive parish – superfast broadband, schools, health and welfare services
- Encourage local employment opportunities and successful businesses
- Promote an attractive village centre to increase footfall to support the success of local shops
- Minimise extension to the existing Settlement Boundary and disallow further ribbon-style developments, thereby maintaining a compact village
- Avoid creeping urbanisation
- Encourage/enable walking and cycling within the village and reduce the need for car usage
- Enable new school and surgery provision, as required, at the heart of the village
- Maintain the rural approaches to the parish
- Retain the distinct identity of Mortimer and adjacent settlements



To deliver the vision the policies set out in this Plan will be followed.

Any future policy development or significant development which affects the parish will be subject to an update of this NDP involving community consultation.

Keep it green, keep it a village.
Do not join Mortimer up with
surrounding villages.

Questionnaire comment

6 Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies

The next pages of this document comprise the policies which have been developed to bring forth the Vision described in the previous section. In particular the specific policies for the allocated site are given on page 35.

Throughout the Context and Justification sections of the policies, references are made to the responses and comments obtained in the questionnaire returned by 40% of the electorate.

The questionnaire, all the responses and analyses of the responses to particular questions can be found in the Evidence Base (40) along with all the other evidence collected through consultation as well as links to all the external evidence used. The contents list of the Evidence Base is in Appendix A of this Plan.

It is envisaged that the monitoring of the delivery of all policies and the Site Design Brief will, in part, be via regular reports to the Parish Council and the Annual Parish Meeting detailing progress on all aspects of this NDP.

6.1 Future NDP Developments.

The policies in this Plan have been developed to deliver the Vision of Mortimer (see page 16). Inevitably they reflect the vision and development demands at a particular moment in time. Circumstances will change, new requirements will emerge. Some will be relatively small and will be adequately covered by the policies that have been developed. Others will involve material and significant changes to the policies and/or development demands, residential and commercial, in particular (but not only) those outside the settlement boundary. In the spirit of localism encouraging local people to produce their own distinctive neighbourhood plans on an on-going basis, which reflect the needs and priorities of the community, this Plan includes a policy, NDP1, to ensure such changes are based on a community consultation as has been this NDP. This might be undertaken either through a review or a partial review of the NDP followed by either an update of the plan or a new plan.

It is inappropriate to define a 'significant' change as this will depend on what is required, where, for what purpose and the immediate or future impact on the parish. The decision as to whether a change is 'significant' will be determined by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council. Any change to a policy other than for the purpose of clarification or to make compliant with changes to NPPF or local authority policies, alteration to the settlement boundary or a development greater than 10 new homes, will be designated 'significant'.

NDP1 - Any future policy development or significant development which affects the parish will be subject to an update of this NDP involving community consultation.

7 Residential Site Allocation

7.1 Objective

New residential developments will retain the existing compact nature of the village and minimise the expansion of the existing Settlement Boundary while providing 110 new homes and will, ideally, be close to the centre of the village (the centre of the village being taken as St. John's Church)

To do this Mortimer will accommodate its appropriate share of housing development but needs to maintain its distinctive rural character. Housing developments in Mortimer will also make efficient use of land while respecting the overall character and housing density of the area.

7.2 Policies

The policies to meet these objectives are:-

RS1 The Plan defines the new Mortimer Settlement Boundary (MSB) to replace the existing Settlement Boundary, as shown on *Map 1 – Mortimer Settlement Boundary* page 20.

RS2 Proposals for housing development outside the MSB will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Any new dwelling required to serve the essential uses of agriculture or forestry shall be sited within or immediately adjacent to an existing group of dwellings suitably located to serve the purpose, unless it can be shown that there are overriding reasons why it must be built elsewhere.

RS3 New residential developments within the new MSB, for which there is a presumption in favour, must comply with the policies of this Plan

RS4 The rural edge of any development will be carefully designed and landscaped to blend into the surrounding rural landscape rather than creating the effect of a hard edge

RS5 Housing development in the plan period will be enabled by utilising the Land to the South of St John's Church of England Infant School (shown on *Map 2 - Site Allocated* page 20), WBC SHLAA site reference MOR006, henceforth in this Plan referred to as The Site for the provision of 110 homes. Access to, and the layout of, the proposed site allocation will need to take account of Manual for Streets, or any West Berkshire Council highway design guidance if more up-to-date at the time;

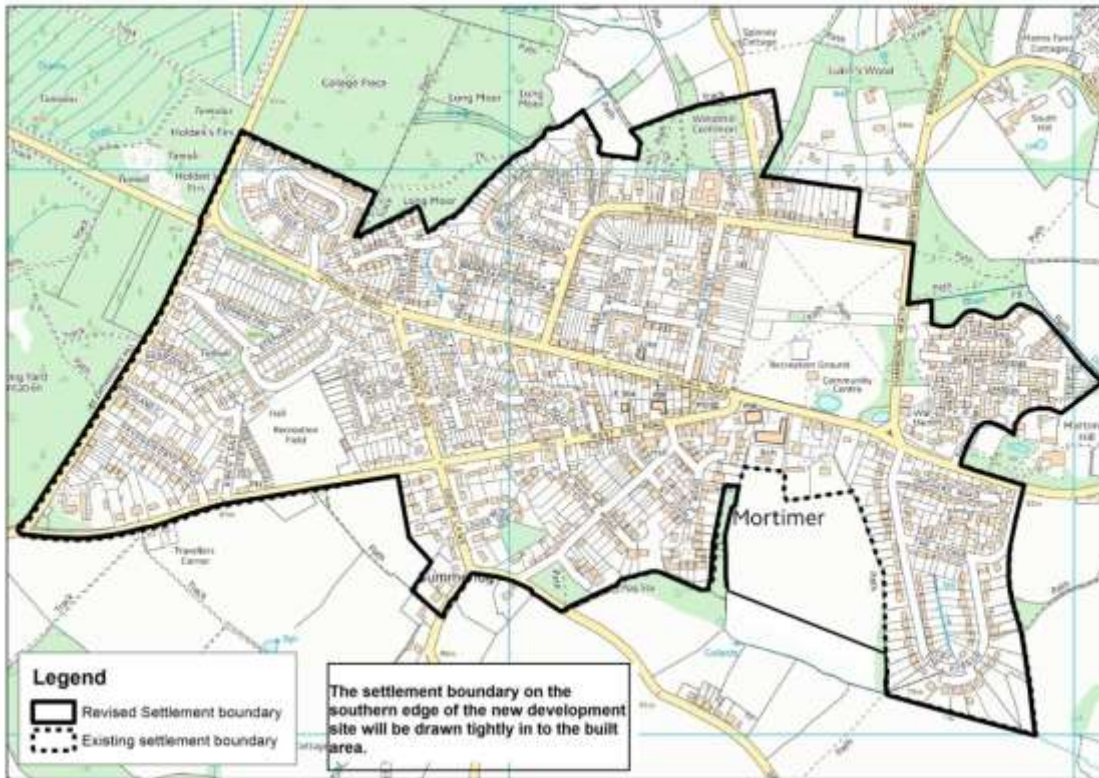
- Provide safe and suitable access for all people
- Accord with Policies CS13 and CS14 of the Core Strategy and Quality Design SPD

RS6 Residential developments on windfall sites within the MSB will be supported as long as they are well-designed and meet all the relevant requirements set out in the totality of this Plan.



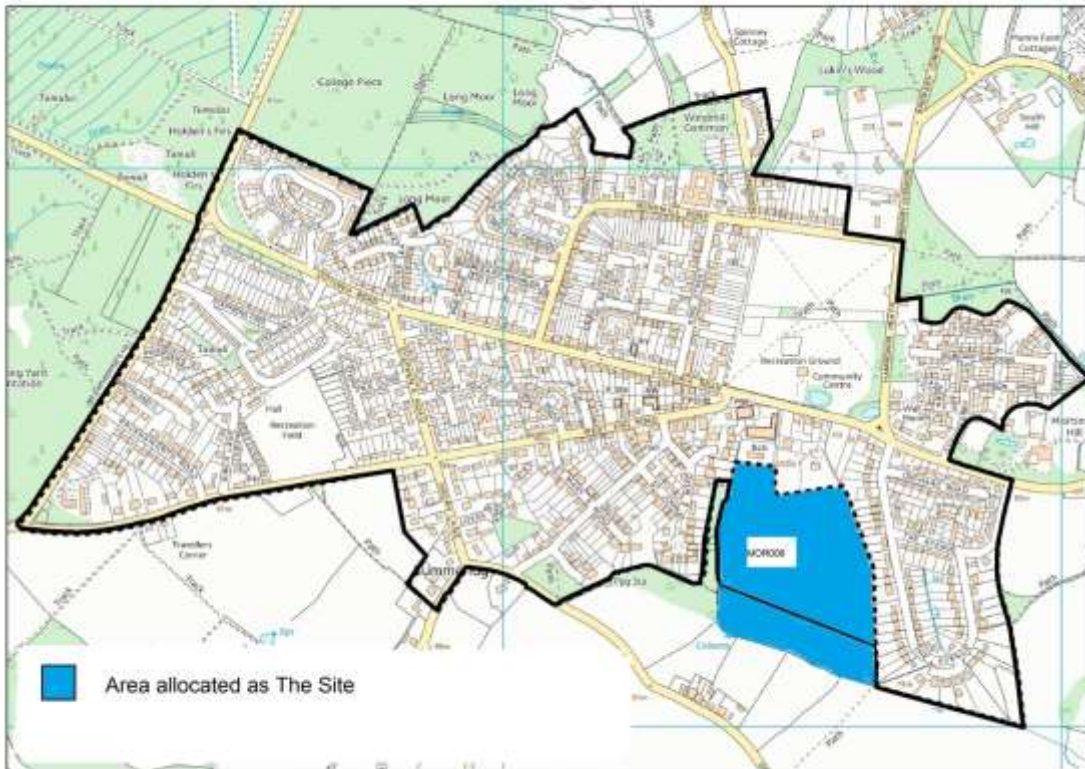
Map 1:
Mortimer Settlement Boundary

15/09/2015
1:6971
West Berkshire Council



Map 2:
Site Allocated

15/09/2015
1:6971
West Berkshire Council



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown Copyright 2015). West Berkshire District Council (15/09/2015)

7.3 Context and Justification

The West Berkshire Housing Site Allocation DPD (paragraph 2.38) requires 110 houses to be located in Mortimer. The DPD goes on to state that these will be identified through the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Stratfield Mortimer in conformity with the policies of the Core Strategy, and that the NDP will also include a review of the settlement boundary of Mortimer. These requirements are satisfied through the residential policies RS1 and RS5.

Policy RS1 establishes the key spatial priority for Mortimer, within which context all its other policies are based and defines a Mortimer Settlement Boundary (MSB). Essentially it directs all development in the plan period to minimise the extension of the existing Settlement Boundary of the village of Mortimer that lies at the heart of the Parish and serves the wider rural area which will remain open countryside. It defines the MSB as the furthest extent of development planned for the period to 2026. The extension of the present (2015) Settlement Policy Boundary to form the MSB has been drawn tightly into the allocated development for the provision of 110 new homes.

These policies have been derived to meet the expressed desire of the community that Mortimer should retain its village identity.

To retain the village feel it is felt that any extension of the Settlement Boundary should be restricted so as to retain, as far as possible, the existing size of the village. Any development should also be as close to the village centre as possible so as to aid sustainability and to promote/retain the village lifestyle of being able to easily walk to essential services such as Doctors, shops and Post Office. These concepts were supported by a substantial majority of respondents.

A village identity is also formed, in part, by the approaches to the village. Not simply access by road but views of the village from adjoining land. It is therefore important to retain those views which help form this identity. This approach was supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents. Where those views must change because of new development the edge of the development must be designed sympathetically so as to ameliorate any loss of view and where possible improve the aspect of the village.

The same argument applies with views from the village out into the wider rural landscape and hence the edge treatment of new development must take both aspects into consideration in equal measure.

It is therefore important that the edge of the MSB is drawn tightly to the development so that the edge can be specifically designed as part of that development and not left vulnerable to other unrelated development pressures.

The following steps were taken with respect to site allocation:

1. May 2014 the Parish Council agreed with WBC that the NDP would select the site(s) for 110 new homes. The Parish Council stated a preference for site(s) close to the centre of the village
2. The NDP Steering Group considered the sites in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and prepared information for a public exhibition in July 2014. Feedback from the exhibition indicated an option of smaller, distributed sites should be considered.

3. Strong community concern was noted, about the ability of village schools and doctors surgery to cope with an increase in population and also about the lack of small homes suitable for those starting out and those wishing to downsize
4. A number of smaller sites in addition to those in the SHLAA were identified and were considered in addition to those in the SHLAA. Three strategic options were developed, presented to the Parish Council and formed the basis of the February 2015 public exhibition:
 - a. Option 1: Locate 110 homes on a single site
 - b. Option 2: Locate 110 homes on a number of smaller sites distributed around the village of Mortimer
 - c. Option 3: Locate the majority of homes on a single site with one or two smaller sites (a combination of options 1 and 2).
5. Discussion with the village schools, WBC, the doctors surgery and the local health authority led to the conclusion that, although funding was not yet identified, allocating land for a possible new, enlarged infant school and a new larger doctors' surgery would keep the options open to provide the village with long term solutions.
6. At the February 2015 exhibition, the public voted in favour of Option 1 (61%), followed by Option 3 (18%).
7. Only MOR001 and MOR006 were large enough to provide Option1. The landowner of MOR006 was willing to set aside land for the possible school and doctors' surgery.
8. In the May 2015 questionnaire the community was asked to choose between:
 - a. MOR006 only
 - b. MOR006 plus up to 10 homes on MOR002 (King St.) and infill
 - c. Neither of the above in which case they were asked to suggest other solutions
9. Via the questionnaire May 2015 the community also strongly supported reserving land for a new infant school and a new doctors' surgery and voted in favour of MOR006 only.
10. The draft policy allocating MOR006 was published on the NDP website on 4th June 2015 and on two other occasions, asking for comments; none were received.

Taking all the above criteria into account the preferred site allocation for new residential development is the Land to the South of St John's Church of England Infant School (WBC SHLAA site reference MOR006), henceforth in this Plan referred to as The Site. A majority of respondents supported this site as the sole new residential site.

Access to this site has been confirmed with WBC and the developer of the 'Fairwinds and land at Tower House' site as being via the 'Fairwinds and land at Tower House' site which is located to the north of the north-east corner of the allocated site.

It is emphasised that the above policies are in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, the West Berkshire Core Strategy and with WBC's stated intent in their Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Preferred Options Consultation document that site(s) should be allocated for 110 homes.

7.4 Projects

None

8 Housing Mix and Density

8.1 Objectives

To provide the mix of types of homes and tenure that make it possible for people to live the whole of their lives in the parish if they so wish with a focus on the provision of both starter homes and down-sizing homes as indicated in the consultation responses.

To have a pattern of housing on new residential sites that maintains the essential nature of the village and the immediate surrounding area.

To do this Mortimer will accommodate its appropriate share of housing development which must provide a mix of dwelling types suitable for residents at all stages in their life. In particular a range of housing types and tenures must be provided. The housing should include small and large homes and both open-market and all types of affordable housing.

New housing development will have a flexible approach to densities, using those which are appropriate for a rural village and are directed by the Vision statement, with new housing layouts and densities going with the existing grain of development in the area and avoiding a harsh transition between agricultural land and the outer edge of a new development.

8.2 Policies

The policies to meet this objective are:-

HD1 Affordable housing will be provided on new residential developments in accordance with the policy requirements set out in West Berkshire's District Development Plan.

Affordable homes will be integrated into developments in design, layout and location so as not to be distinguishable from other homes on the development.

HD2 Stratfield Mortimer will seek a mix of home types of approximately 40% 1 or 2 bed dwellings split between apartments and houses, 20% 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows and the remainder being 3 and 4 bed houses. Identified local need and the site specifics, funding and the economics of provision will be taken into consideration.

HD3 A proportion of the new homes will be 'Starter' homes, the number and type taking into consideration identified local need, site specifics, including funding and the economics of provision and availability of government subsidies.

HD4 The density of homes on new developments shall:

- where they abut existing residential areas, be similar in character, scale and grain of that/those existing developments (densities as in 2014)
- respect the semi-rural nature of the parish and be designed to give an impression of spaciousness with uniform houses and plots being avoided
- diminish as the development approaches the open countryside, blending in seamlessly.

8.3 Context and Justification

As part of fulfilling the objective to make it possible to live in the parish for the whole of one's life it is necessary to provide a range of housing to suit all types of people at all stages of their life cycle. In particular it is noticeable that the parish has a lower representation of

people in the 20 to 30 age bracket and a higher representation in the over 65s, compared to the rest of West Berkshire or indeed the whole of South East England.

From the Consultation Questionnaire and the Housing Needs Survey (Community Council for Berkshire 2015) it is clear that there is a shortage of certain types of housing in the parish and that this shortage not only drives up prices but prevents people who would like to remain in the parish from staying. This price differential has been shown by the work undertaken by WBC to determine the correct level of CIL across the district. (The West Berkshire CIL Viability Study (January 2013)).

In this regard the types of housing most frequently mentioned are 'starter homes', 'downsizing' homes and sheltered accommodation. The top 5 requirements in response to the question "*What types of homes are most needed in Mortimer*" in the questionnaire consultation were:

- Bungalows suitable for downsizers (80%)
- Semi-detached 2/3 bedrooms (79%)
- Starter homes 1/2 bedrooms (77%)
- Sheltered accommodation for the elderly (66%)
- Terraced homes 2/3 bedrooms (59%)

The housing needs survey indicated that currently 60% of homes in Mortimer are occupied by 1 or 2 people. Special housing needs identified were for ground floor accommodation, residential/extra care and adaptations for disability,

'Starter' homes are defined as either

- Small, 1-2 bed dwellings for those wishing to start their own home for the first time; or
- Homes for first-time buyer below the age of 40, with a discount of at least 20 per cent off the market value capped at a sale price of £250,000, utilising the government funding assistance for which the developer has to apply.


'Downsizing' includes moving from relatively large houses to smaller, but not very small homes typically a bungalow or ground floor flat; built to Lifetime Homes standards to provide accommodation suitable for the elderly residents of Mortimer and those with disability.

The role of the NDP, in this regard, is to start to redress the balance of the mix of properties available to purchase on the open market, and that are available as part of the wider definition of affordable homes.

The starting point for the tenure split for affordable homes is West Berkshire's policy CS6, 70% social rented and 30% intermediate affordable units. Local opinion favours equity-based tenures. Current reporting in national media suggests that government thinking has a preference for ownership while recognising the need for affordable rented housing. However the housing survey points to the fact that despite the high level of aspiration for ownership or shared ownership there is little evidence of sufficient savings or earnings to make that a possibility. The Parish Council will work with West Berkshire Council to determine the split of tenures at planning application stage, to take into account local, identified requirements, any changes in government or West Berkshire policy and the economics of providing starter homes at a price that can be afforded.

The community believes that social housing should be primarily for 'Mortimer people'. When asked to rank the allocation of affordable homes this is the priority order expressed by the community:

- Living in the parish
- A member of a family living in the parish
- Currently employed in the parish
- Previously lived or worked in the parish but moved away because of lack of suitable housing
- Working or wishing to work in the parish on a priority task such as teaching or firefighting
- Resident of adjacent small parishes
- Resident of West Berkshire
- Resident outside West Berkshire



“... importantly a non urbanised feel. Sadly many of the newer developments in the village have introduced some of the very things we don't want such as street lighting and dense housing”

Comment from Questionnaire

The housing needs survey identified that here is a potential requirement for a rural exception site of up to 12 homes. This is an attractive idea but at the time of writing a suitable site as not been identified. However a project is included to investigate this option. Similarly a self-build option was suggested, as for an exception site, a suitable site has not been identified but is included as a project.

The density of homes on new residential developments is a sensitive issue. The density of houses is an important feature that influences the nature of the parish and whether the evolution of the parish delivers Mortimer's Vision of retaining its distinctive rural character. The wholesale introduction of higher densities more appropriate to urban and semi-urban environments is to be avoided.

The pattern of density in Mortimer is much lower density as the outer edges of the Settlement Boundary are approached and notably more so where it abuts farmland than in the heart of the village. All the potential sites identified in the West Berkshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment in Mortimer and as part of the formulation of this NDP abut existing residential properties with low densities per hectare or back on to open agricultural land. To maintain the rural character of Mortimer and to achieve the vision of itself it is important to reflect the current pattern of housing density and specifically that of existing properties local to the proposed new development. It is also important that there is a gradual transition from a development to the adjoining agricultural land with lower density housing and larger gardens echoing the open spaces of farmland or nature of the adjacent woodland.

The Site Design Brief for any future site will include:

- the mix of housing types and tenures which will be determined in accordance with these general policies
- the housing density pattern.

8.4 Projects

Investigate the possibilities of providing a rural exception site and/or self-build site.

9 General Design

9.1 Objective

All new developments will have design solutions that reflect and enhance the rural character of Mortimer in their scale, siting, features, layout, materials, landscaping and design details as expressed by the community in this plan.

To have a set of policies that governs the design and delivery of new developments. These policies together will maintain and enhance the rural character set out in The Vision of Mortimer.

The way that these policies are shown is as a series of bullet points under several section headings. The context & justification, projects and delivery and monitoring for these sections are set out after all the bullet points.

9.2 Policies

9.2.1 General:

GD1 In order to provide high quality developments in the Parish, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters

- New developments on allocated and windfall sites will be designed to deliver the Building for Life 12 principles
- New development will consider the amenity of existing residents adjacent to the new development
- Any new development **within** the settlement boundary will be encouraged to prepare a Site Design Brief, including community involvement, which reflects the policies set out in this Plan. This brief would then be included in any planning submission after consultation via the parish council. For any housing development proposals **outside** the settlement boundary, in addition to satisfying the requirements of WBC policy C1, the applicant shall prepare a Site Design Brief, including community involvement, which reflects the policies in this Plan and will include it in any planning submission after consultation via the Parish Council.

9.2.2 Internal & External Access and Parking:

GD2 In order to provide high quality developments in the Parish, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters

- Developments shall provide direct, safe and convenient pedestrian access to the village community facilities and the wider countryside, and will similarly seek cycle links, to encourage walking, cycling and social interaction (see also policy GS2)
- Speed inhibitors - not humps or other sharply raised surfaces – are to be integrated into the road design of any development such that the whole road layout could be designated a 20mph zone and where appropriate allow them to function as social spaces.
- Shared space roads will be used wherever practicable, including safe ‘play streets’.
- The use of full height kerbs and asphalt surfacing will be limited, using alternative surface materials wherever possible such as paviers.

- The use of street furniture will be minimized.
- Dwellings should face, rather than back onto, the public open space areas.
- Existing public footpaths are to be maintained.
- Parking design and layout should be provided in line with Manual for Streets. In particular car parking should be located close to the main access to the dwellings, and should be overlooked by habitable rooms
- Garages must be large enough to be useable - internal dimensions of 6m x 3m with adequate sized doors (2.0m high x 2.3m wide) to enable modern cars and 4 x 4s to enter and set back from the street frontage.
- The Mortimer parking standard is shown as Zone 3 in the new WBC standards; namely:-

Bedrooms	Flats (+1 space per 5 flats)			Houses			
	1	2	3+	1	2	3	4+
Zone 3	1.5	1.75	2	1.5	2	2.5	3

- The figures given in the above table are the number of parking spaces that must be provided for each dwelling. It should be noted that a garage does not qualify as a parking space for this standard.

9.2.3 Flood management

GD3 In order to ensure that flooding risk is not increased, and ideally is reduced, taking into account climate change, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- In addition to having well designed, constructed and managed flood prevention measures to reduce the overall level of flood risk in accordance with West Berkshire Council's policy CS16, developers will be encouraged to adopt a worst case scenario to manage surface water run off :
 - rain falling on saturated ground or dry compacted ground
 - a peak intensity rainfall over a 30 minute period of 20mm within the standard 6 hour period
 - the higher of either the rainfall assumptions in the standard calculations or the maximum rainfall recorded in West Berkshire over the last 20 years with an allowance of +30% for climate change.
- All Planning Applications shall include agreements for the adoption of the anti-flooding systems establishing the permanent owner, and practical management and maintenance regimes to ensure that they continue to operate effectively and efficiently.

9.2.4 Street Lighting

GD4 In order to avoid light pollution and intrusion, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- No street lighting will be installed, unless required for safety reasons
- Low level lighting for pedestrians may be used if it avoids light pollution and intrusion, and the design retains the rural feel of the site.

9.2.5 Building Design and Style

GD5 In order to develop homes which meet the requirements of 21st century lifestyles and improve the overall quality of the housing stock in the parish while remaining sympathetic to the older building styles at the heart of the village, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- New developments on allocated and windfall sites will be designed to the Lifetime Homes standard
- The adoption of energy management technology will be encouraged in all new developments
- Innovative designs which respect and are in sympathy with the rural vision of Mortimer and the vernacular style of the surrounding homes will be encouraged
- All dwellings shall be no more than two storeys in height, or three storeys where roof space is utilized; any apartment buildings should respect the scale of the surrounding houses
- There will be a mix of house types, with an emphasis on smaller starter homes and units that are suitable for local residents who wish to downsize.
- An appropriate amount and type of affordable housing must be provided, in accordance with the policies HD1 to HD4 of this plan (see page 23).
- For developments of more than 10 dwellings the minimum areas of usable, publically accessible open space will be 4.3 ha per 1000 population in accordance with WBC saved policy RL1. The plan will seek larger areas as is appropriate to maintain the rural nature and vision of Mortimer.
- The layout of any development should incorporate informal courtyards and avoid uniform house types and plot sizes in keeping with the size of the development.
- Sufficient space must be provided for the storage and collection of refuse and recycling for each dwelling
- House types should be in sympathy with the local vernacular, where appropriate, as illustrated by the images below:





9.2.6 Landscape & Environment

GD6 In order to complement the Building Design and Style parameters by carrying through those elements into the hard and soft landscaping, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- Brick or natural boundaries and/or landscaping will be preferred, rather than standard fencing panels.
- Any local pattern of trees and hedgerows will be reflected in the landscaping which will feature native trees.
- Environmentally friendly features - such as bat boxes and hedgehog gates- shall be specified in any ecology strategy and included in the landscape and building design.
- An integrated SUDS drainage strategy will be adopted, as part of these landscaping measures, taking account of sewage system capacity, flood risk and water quality.

9.3 Context and Justification

9.3.1 General

Despite residential expansion and urban influences which have continued since Victorian times, the village retains a distinctive rural identity. It is recognised that though development in the parish is inevitable, the people of Mortimer value their environment and landscape, and wish to ensure that its rural character will be retained. There is a significant, general and widely held unease that new developments have been and will be detrimental and that without care will lead to further urbanisation of the

People **need** places to live in and also have aspirations about the kind of place in which they would **like** to live. Village Development is a ratchet which inexorably satisfies the former at the expense of the latter. So when development is essential we should absolutely prioritise features which support and grow the existing sense of community and the value of living in this place rather than another

NDP Questionnaire respondent

parish. These concerns find their expression in how new developments will sit in the broader rural landscape, how they will relate to the rest of the parish, the loss of green spaces, the design of the site, whether and how it is lit.

For Mortimer to continue to be a successful parish and village a mix of home types must be provided - starter homes, family homes, homes suitable for 'downsizers'. The mix of home types in the Site Design Brief is based on housing needs analysis and in general conformity with the Housing Mix and Density policies.

This NDP sets out robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for new developments in Mortimer. These policies are based on stated objectives for the future of the area (Vision Statement and the three Principles approved in the questionnaire) and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. The community also identified a number of significant design features as important to them. These are addressed in specific policy statements on street lighting, flooding prevention measures, off-road parking and telecommunications.

General Design policies together with the specific policies regarding Internal and external access and parking, Flood management, Street Lighting, Building Design and Style and Landscape and Environment are intended to ensure that new developments:

- Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development
- Create a strong sense of place by using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, creating and sustaining an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space)
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation
- Are safe and accessible environments so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion
- Are visually attractive through good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

To ensure the NDP policies will be observed and quality site designs are delivered, the Building for Life 12 (3rd Edition) industry standard for the design of new housing developments published by the Design Council (see [Evidence Base](#) (64)) will be implemented; it was supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents to the questionnaire. In addition the provision of a Site Design Brief will not only encapsulate how a development will comply with the parameters but would demonstrate to the community how this is to be achieved at a relatively early stage of the planning process and hence avoid unnecessary misconceptions and anxiety.



9.3.2 Internal & External Access and Parking

Though Mortimer is a semi-rural parish, the majority of residents commute to their place of work outside of the parish. The latest official data (Census 2011) showed that 76% of the working population travelled to work by private transport. This travel is often to locations that are not easily reached by public transport. Only a minority of residents work in rural and local businesses

Because of the rural and commuter characteristics of Mortimer, the parking standard should be the same overall as the new Zone 3 WBC standards. Where it can be identified that these standards are, in exceptional circumstances, not sufficient then further provision should be made.

On the most recent residential developments though garage dimensions have been adequate, the garage door size has severely limited the ability to get a car into the garage. Garages must be designed to accommodate modern cars (4 x4) with the required door size (suggested to be 2.0 m high and 2.3 m wide).



Mortimer is seen as a rural community and as such arrangements should be designed to enhance a rural feel. Thus the use of low kerbs or setts as edge restraints for roads will be encouraged. Shared surfaces rather than segregated areas for different modes of transport will also be encouraged to give a village feel to the design. Low speeds should be designed into the arrangements not by the use of road humps but by the intelligent design of the shared spaces.

9.3.3 Flood Management

Mortimer suffers from surface water flooding. This occurs when the drains are unable to cope with heavy rainfall. In particular, the eastern end of The Street close to the station is flooded after exceptionally heavy rainfall.

The Flood Report following the 2007 storm (See [Evidence Base \(78\)](#)) identifies the nature and distribution of flooded properties and damage. This report is limited because it does not include all flooded properties.

The bottle neck in the waste water services is such that these are unable to cope with storm water. This is addressed under infrastructure policy IS6

[The Environment Agency map of surface water flooding](#) identifies several areas at high risk of surface flooding. The West Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) includes surface water flood risk maps for the 1:30 and 1:200 year events showing the areas at risk of surface water flooding.

The run off from the allocated site enters the water course on the Southern edge of the site which, in parts, is also identified as at high risk from surface water flooding. This water course broke its banks in the storm of 2007 flooding properties. In accordance with NPPF policies, the design of the flood management should take the opportunities offered by the

new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding both on the site and downstream.

The calculations for determining flood risk require that climate change shall be taken into account. Recent events demonstrate that storms causing severe flooding are in part because they fall on saturated ground and in the case of the Mortimer 2007 floods exacerbated by intense rainfall for a short period. To allow for these climate change induced storms in addition to the standard storm assumptions the developer shall consider the management of surface water flooding based on the higher of either maximum recorded rainfall over a 6 hour period in Berkshire in the last 20 years or the rainfall in the standard calculations, falling on saturated ground and within the 6 hour period a short intense period of rainfall of 20mm in 30 minutes.

9.3.4 Street Lighting

Mortimer is a rural parish and is largely unlit. Except for key warning signs and at the four mini-roundabouts, the old roads of Mortimer are unlit. In the older residential parts of the village there is no street lighting. The more recent residential developments are lit and have introduced light pollution in this rural settlement. It is the stated preference of parishioners, according to the Parish Plan, the NDP Exhibition and NDP Questionnaire to minimise detrimental environmental factors, to

preserve an unspoilt and dark night sky, and to ensure that electrical energy is not wasted.

The more recently developed residential sites and new road junctions have had lighting provided as standard. The lamps used tend to create light pollution both of individual homes and in general cast a glow in the night sky

The NDP questionnaire conducted in April/May 2015 asked the parish for its opinion on street lighting with the following options:

- No public lighting
- Ground level lighting on pavements and paths
- Lamp post lighting at junctions only
- Lamp post streetlights throughout

A majority of respondents preferred 'no public lighting' or 'ground level lighting on pavements and paths only'. A small minority want street lighting throughout

"I believe the issue of street lighting should be re-addressed. There must surely be a compromise in the current age of technology with the consideration of led/ low emission lighting that can be switched off in the late evening to conserve costs. To be in keeping with the village 'dark' feel, to provide strategically placed low level lighting ... "

NDP Questionnaire Respondent

"Care should be taken to avoid light pollution and intrusion, particularly in rural areas. In some cases it may not be appropriate to provide lighting, for example in a new development in an unlit village.

Manual for Street, Communities and Local Government



Accordingly, this Plan requires that all new developments within the parish shall feature either no lighting or only low-level lighting for pedestrians. (Low-level lighting refers to the height of the lighting source, not the strength of the light, and is set in the ground or less than approximately 1 metre high) The presumption will be in favour of no lighting. This decision will pay particular attention to the impact on light pollution and intrusion, wildlife, safety of pedestrians, power consumption in the context of a rural village with a tradition of no street lighting.

Where lighting is provided it shall be in accord with the most up-to-date lighting standards to minimise light pollution and power consumption.

9.3.5 Building Design and Style

One of the core policies of this plan is to allow people to live out their lives in Mortimer, if they so wish. To this end it seems only appropriate that new homes should be built to the Lifetime Homes standard. This will assist people to stay in their existing homes as they get older and will also assist those with a disability.

A significant amount of local work has taken place to identify the features that make Mortimer unique. In 2007 the parish council published the Village Design Statement, founded on a detailed understanding of the village's landscape setting, its shape and grain and the style and nature of its buildings. The Village Design Statement describes the distinctive surroundings and character of the District, with clear guidance that all new developments must follow to be successfully accommodated into the Parish. Though 8 years old, much of the statement continues to be supported.

Designs with decorative features common to the older buildings in the village and red/orange bricks, red tiles or grey slates are thought to compliment the original architecture better than the designs from the 1950s; this is supported by the responses in the parish-wide survey (May 2015)



The following building design features all had overwhelming support from respondents to the questionnaire:

- Have no buildings higher than 2 principal storeys (or 3 if using roof space)
- If bricks are used these will be red/orange in colour, similar to those of the Victorian buildings in the village
- Have roofs of red tile or grey slate
- Have gabled or hipped roofs rather than flat roofs
- Use details such as coloured brick inserts, mouldings or patterns of raised brick around windows or between levels, similar to those on existing buildings in the village.



Mortimer, like most villages has developed over time with different designs reflecting the period in which they were built. Some of the more modern ones are thought to sit somewhat uncomfortably with the predominant core village style. Though there is strong support for the propositions put forward in the questionnaire, concern was expressed that slavish adherence to those guidelines could inhibit the evolution of the nature and character of the parish. It is thought appropriate that proposals for innovative design that are aesthetically a natural evolution of Mortimer should be encouraged and certainly not prohibited.

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 95) emphasises the importance of energy efficient designs to support government's zero carbon buildings policy. The overwhelming majority of respondents support the proposition to '*Encourage energy management technology*' in the design of new homes.

9.3.6 Landscape and Environment

Hard landscaping is just as important as building design in establishing the character of any development. As such the landscaping policies have been designed to complement the Building Design and Style policies. Therefore the justification for these policies is the same as the justification for the Building Design and Style.

For soft landscaping the same criteria applies with the addition of the environmental aspects. In the Biodiversity section of this plan it is made clear that there is widespread support for the encouragement of wildlife in the parish. Soft landscaping and the inbuilt design of wildlife friendly features into developments will help meet these objectives.

9.4 Projects

The design, need for and use of existing lighting will be reviewed to determine the benefit of bringing that lighting into line with the lighting policies in this plan.

10 The Site Design Brief for “The Site”

10.1 Objectives

To set out the principles and criteria to be used to prepare the design of The Site so as to ensure the development conforms to the requirements of this plan and the expressed views of the community with regard to development.

10.2 Policies

10.2.1 General Features

SDB1 The Site will deliver a high quality development in accordance with the following parameters:

- The Site must provide 110 dwellings
- The Site must include an area of at least 1.0 hectare for community facilities, to be used for the relocation of St John’s Infants School, a new doctors’ surgery and associated shared parking for staff and patients or visitors together with a drop off area for pupils.
- The site shall be allocated for a period of 5 years from the formal adoption date of this NDP. If, at the end of this period, outline planning permission has not been obtained for the development required by policy SDB1 a review of the allocation shall be carried out via a review or partial review of the NDP. In addition, if within 5 year period outline planning permission for the development has been obtained, but no progress has been made to secure the relocation of St John’s Infant School or the doctor’s surgery, a review of that part of the allocation shall be undertaken through a review or a partial review of the NDP
- A detailed design brief must be prepared by the developer. This brief must be subject to discussion with Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council and the community within a reasonable period prior to the submission of a planning application to West Berkshire
- Incorporate areas of usable, accessible open space, utilising the natural topography to create a ‘soft’ edge to the residential development with attractive views into and from the surrounding countryside.
- An integrated water supply and drainage strategy will be provided in advance of development to ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructure for water supply and waste water, both on and off site. Development will be occupied in line with this strategy.
- The scheme will be informed by an archaeological desk-based assessment as a minimum and field evaluation, if required, to assess the historic environmental potential of the site.

10.2.2 Internal & External Access and Parking:

SDB2 The Site will deliver a high quality development in accordance with the following parameters

- The development should provide a safe and suitable access for all people from The Street to the residential areas, community facilities and open space, in particular a separate non-vehicular pedestrian and cycle access must be provided to the village centre
- The scheme will be supported by a Travel Plan and Transport Assessment
- The main access to the site should not be via a traffic light-controlled junction as this would be counter to the rural ethos of the village. See *Access Plan* on page 37

- The highway and pedestrian layout will include readily identifiable focal points, to provide easy vehicle and pedestrian navigation.
- An acceptable system of controlling access to the school at drop-off and collection times will have to be devised to avoid road safety issues on the site and on The Street while allowing unrestricted access to the doctors' surgery for patients.
- Existing public footpaths are to be maintained, with new landscaped connections into The Site and the wider footpath network.
- During construction all construction vehicles will be parked on site and not in the village. The scheme will be supported by a construction traffic management plan

The Site - Initial Development Concept





Access Plan

Access to this site has been confirmed with WBC and the developer of the 'Fairwinds and land at Tower House' site as being via the 'Fairwinds and land at Tower House' site which is located to the north of the north-east corner of the allocated site.

10.2.3 Building Design and Style

SDB3 The Site will deliver a high quality development in accordance with the following parameters

- There will be a mix of house types, with an emphasis on smaller starter homes and units that are suitable for local residents who wish to downsize. An indicative mix of dwellings to make up a total of 110 on the site is 24 one or two bedroom apartments, 23 two bedroom starter homes, 25 three bedroom houses, 21 four bedroom houses, 3 five bedroom houses and 14 two or three room bungalows.
- Residential density shall vary across the site with the highest density being at the centre of the developed site and lower densities around the eastern, western and southern edges of the site.
- The overall net density of the developed part of the site will be no more than 32 dwellings per hectare.
- The layout should have a spacious feel, incorporating informal courtyards, avoiding uniform house types and plot sizes.

10.3.4 Landscape & Environment

SDB4 The Site will deliver a high quality development in accordance with the following parameters

- The scheme will comprise a development design and layout that will be further informed by a full and detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
- The scheme will be informed by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA will advise on appropriate mitigation measures.
- The scheme will be supported by an extended phase 1 habitat survey together with further detailed surveys arising from that as necessary. Appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures will need to be implemented, to ensure any protected species are not adversely affected
- At least 3 hectares of publically accessible landscaped open space must be provided in the south of The Site as public open space in perpetuity, incorporating an area of retained trees and enhanced natural habitat on its eastern boundary.
- The provision of a landscape buffer to the Eastern boundary of the site is to be provided to shield the existing dwellings from the development but still allow open vistas to the further views; this should exceed 20m in depth
- The landscaping to the Eastern boundary should be designed to shield the existing dwellings from the development but still allow open vistas to the further views.
- Existing natural environment and biodiversity features on The Site shall be maintained and enhanced.
- The use of native trees and hedging will be provided to soften and screen the surgery, school and parking spaces.
- The open space on the southern part of The Site, as shown in *The Site – Initial Development Concept* on page 28, shall be laid out as an informal recreation and play space.

10.3 Context and Justification

The context and justification for these policies is largely the same as that contained in the previous policy area of General Design Policies. This is not surprising as the above policies are really an interpretation of those contained in General Design Policies for the one allocated new residential site in this plan. What they do is clearly set out the essential requirements for The Site to meet the demands of the rest of this plan.

However, there are specific allocations of land for a new school and doctors' surgery on this site. The context and justification for this are that St John's Infant School is under pressure as it does not have the required area for outside activities and has had to restrict its intake of pupils because of capacity restrictions. Because of the constrained site there is minimal scope to enlarge the school. At the same time an extra 110 homes will add to the pressure on the school. The logical way forward is to build a new school on the land behind the existing school.

Such an approach has the advantages that:-

- The infant school will remain close to the village centre
- It can be designed to meet the needs of the increased population
- It can be designed to meet the requirements for outdoor activities



- Parking can be taken away from the main road of the village

The same logic applies to the Doctors' surgery which is also on a very cramped site with insufficient off-street parking. In addition the existing surgery is not as close to the centre of the village as the proposed site. It is considered that the co-location of the surgery and the new school would act as a beneficial focus for the village close to the existing centre.

Naturally the same arguments apply to St Mary's Junior School. The potential benefits of relocating St Mary's and co-locating with St John's school have always been recognised. However due to the low probability of funding being available in the period of this Plan for a new relocated St Mary's, and that St Mary's can expand on its existing site, reservation of land could not be justified.

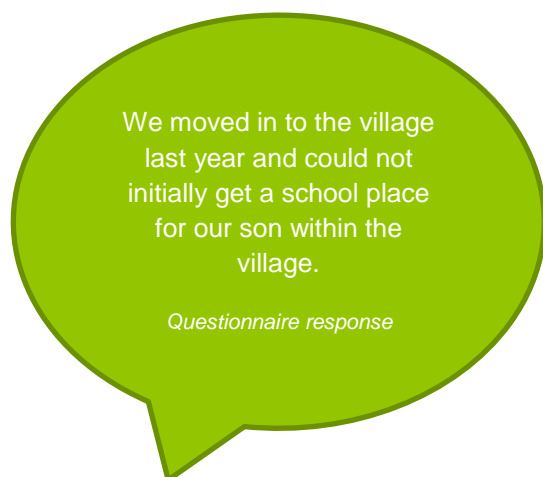
Representations from the Stratfield Mortimer Benefice and St Mary's school suggested that St John's Infant and St Mary's junior schools work together to assess the benefits and practicality of a co-operative development of the two schools including co-location for the benefit of future generations of children. St Mary's requested that the reservation of land for a relocated school be included in the NDP. At this time there is no evidence that the position on funding has changed and therefore land is not reserved for a relocated St Mary's school. However if after discussions



© Dara Portraits

between to the schools and the Benefice a reasonable prospect of funding is identified then the Parish Council would investigate the potential of such a scheme with all the interested parties. Such a project has been included in the Infrastructure section of this Plan, see page 50.

When these proposals were put to the community as part of the questionnaire they were endorsed by a large majority. The overwhelming majority of respondents wanted space reserved for a new St John's Infant School and space reserved for a new Doctors' surgery. The further question about moving St Mary's Junior School closer to the village centre in the fullness of time was not so well supported with a majority agreeing or strongly agreeing while a minority were against the idea.



We moved in to the village last year and could not initially get a school place for our son within the village.

Questionnaire response

These policies reserve the land for a new St. John's Infant School and for a possible new medical services facility. In doing so the Plan seeks to send a clear signal to education authorities and healthcare service providers and investors of the need and opportunity for the proposal and lowers planning risk by allocating suitable land for this purpose.

Site Design Brief

Because of all the factors listed in the context and justification for Site Design and the need for the school and doctors' it is considered essential that a Site Design Brief is included as part of this plan to guide development.

The development of the Site has been assessed for potential detrimental consequences. Possible mitigating actions have been identified (See Site Impact and Mitigation Statement Evidence Base 50). This statement will inform the development of the Site Design Brief and planning applications.

10.4 Projects

Seek to organise an area TPO on the existing trees on the western flank of The Site.

11 Commercial

11.1 Objective

To have a thriving parish economy and village centre of local retail outlets, small businesses, services (e.g. pubs, cafes) and social amenities providing local employment opportunities.

Progressively enhancing the village centre encouraging greater use of the local shops and services with an increased range of shops, clear and attractive signage, clear safe pedestrian and cycle routes, appropriate traffic management and a welcoming green spaces away from traffic is seen as an attractive means of achieving the objective.

11.2 Policies

11.2.1 General

C1 Development of the centre of the village as an increasingly attractive place for residents and businesses will be sought and encouraged.

C2 Local economic innovation that creates a range of job types and higher added value employment will be encouraged.

C3 All developments will adhere to all policies in total in the Plan and will not add to the urbanisation of Mortimer – perceived or real

11.2.2 Retail/Services Development

C4 Applications for new independent local retail/services outlets and expansion of existing outlets will be supported.

- The scale and nature of development will be appropriate to the size and character of the immediate surroundings.
- The business will not adversely affect the locality and the amenities of local residents.
- These developments will be directed towards the commercial centre of the village (see map on page 43)

11.2.3 Local Businesses and Office Space

C5 The creation of additional business accommodation through small scale expansion of existing employment premises, the conversion of existing buildings and new premises will be supported. They will:

- be within the Mortimer Settlement Boundary or are the reuse of farm or rural buildings (see policy C6 on next page);
- adhere to the design policies set out in the development plan and the scale and nature is appropriate to the size and character of the immediate surroundings
- not adversely impact the locality and the amenities of local residents and other countryside users.

Developments within the settlement boundary should be close to the commercial centre of the village.

11.2.4 Use of Farm Buildings

C6 Conversion of redundant farm and rural buildings to commercial use will be supported.

Proposals will:

- respect the surrounding rural landscape and be sensitive to the amenities of neighbouring residents and other users and its setting in regard to size, light pollution, noise, dirt, loss of wildlife habitat.
- not have any unacceptable impact on the local road network.
- work in harmony with agriculture and other land-based activities and rural recreational activity.
- be accompanied by appropriate protected species and habitat surveys, and that avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and seek to achieve a net gain through enhancements

11.2.5 Other

C7 New, renovated or extended buildings for employment and commercial activity will be supported if they:

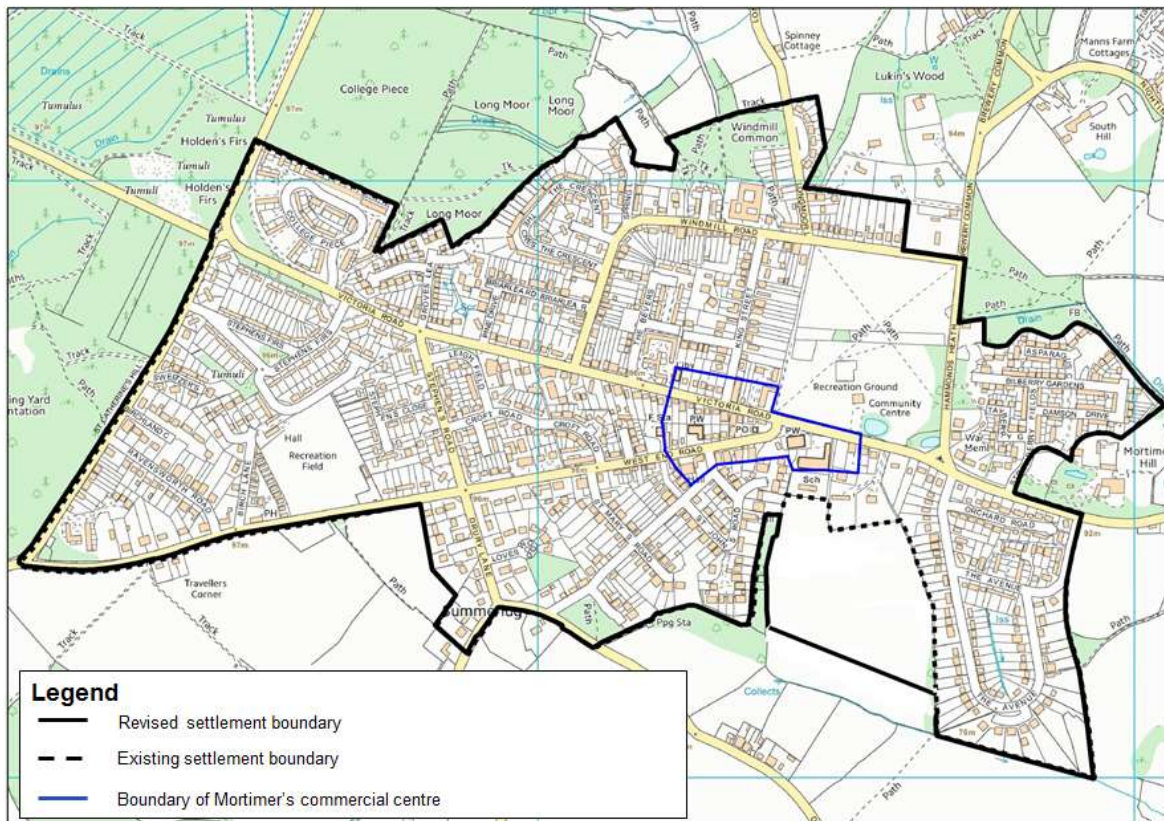
- add high value sustainable employment
- enhance the delivery of the Vision of Mortimer and preclude the characteristics and feel of creeping urbanisation
- retain and respect any architectural or historic features of the building(s)
- are sustainably located and of appropriate scale, form and high quality design so they do not adversely affect
 - the setting of the village of Mortimer,
 - the character (visual, use, feel) and the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside in particular in areas identified in the West Berkshire Landscape Character assessment as having 'High' or 'Medium-High' sensitivity
 - views within the village
 - the locality and the amenities of local residents and other countryside users.

Outside the settlement boundary priority will be given to protecting the countryside from inappropriate development. Such developments will be supported if, in addition to the above, they:

- make a long-term contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise or other land-based activities
- are accompanied by appropriate protected species and habitat surveys, avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and seek to achieve a net gain through enhancements.

Large commercial, office and Industrial activity, warehousing and distribution developments shall be directed towards Protected Employment Areas and existing suitably located employment sites and premises as set out in CS9 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy.

Mortimer Settlement Boundary



11.3 Context and Justification



Historically farming has been the key driver behind the prosperity of the parish. But in line with experiences across the British countryside employment opportunities in the agricultural sector have reduced. Mortimer parish has seen a steady growth in population with a substantial number of working outside the parish commuting to the local towns of Reading, Basingstoke, Newbury and to London. Despite the rise of the commuting population Mortimer village has retained a successful retail and service centre including a bank, post office, two general purpose grocery shops, hardware store, chemist, travel agent, dentist,

doctors surgery and services of a pub and cafe. The parish has over 100 small businesses and many farm buildings now converted and used for a range of business enterprises.

Taking into account the National Planning Policy requirement that local plans:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses
- plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries,

this plan provides a framework for economic activity and development that reflects and responds to the parish's own distinctive local character, the Vision of Mortimer and the needs and priorities of the community.

The principle of maintaining local employment and encouraging successful business is supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents. There is a strong desire to retain a vibrant and prosperous retail, service and business activity for the convenience they represent to local residents and the economic and social benefits they bring. This plan has the aim of progressively enhancing the centre of the village as an attractive place not only for business, but also as an economic and social centre for the parish (See map showing the commercial centre of Mortimer on page 43).

Sustainable growth of existing businesses and enterprises through conversion of existing buildings, expansion of existing premises and new buildings that are 'suitably located' and of appropriate scale, form and high quality design and adhere in total to the policies set out in this plan will be supported. For those located within the settlement boundary 'suitably located' means where they do not adversely affect the locality and the amenities of local residents and that support the continuing commercial viability of the village by siting them in the village centre providing a focus for such activity within easy walking distance of each other.

The creation of new employment opportunities up to 10 people is considered most appropriate with an emphasis on high added-value sustainable employment. Proposals for an employment exceeding that number will need to demonstrate that they help deliver the vision of Mortimer as set out in this plan, in particular, but not only, that there is not an unacceptable impact on residential amenity, the transport network, parking conditions or an unacceptable environmental impact..

The conversion and reuse of farm buildings is widely supported and this Plan seeks to enable appropriate farm diversification. However, re-use of rural buildings for residential purposes would not normally be supported.

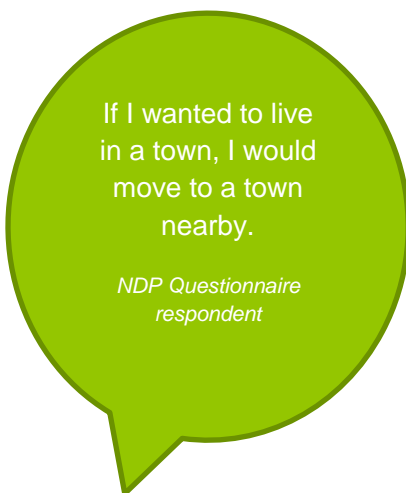
The integration of residential and commercial use within the same unit is encouraged.

When asked for their opinion on specific proposals for the development of office and retail space, the community expressed an underlying concern that over-development and influx of

more retail outlets and business would bring about urbanisation that the community is strongly against and/or developments that would be inappropriate in scale or activity.

The concern about creeping urbanisation and inappropriate development finds greatest expression in the overwhelming rejection by the community of:

- Large commercial or industrial activity, or warehousing
- Applications for retail space by high street chain businesses



Large commercial and Industrial activity, large scale offices, warehousing, distribution and high street chain retail business developments will be directed to appropriate sites in accordance with West Berkshire's policy on 'Employment and the Economy' CS9 which establishes the inappropriateness of industrial, warehousing, and distribution developments in the rural parts of the district, and seeks to direct them to the District's defined Protected Employment Areas and existing suitably located employment sites and premises.

While this plan supports economic development it seeks to ensure that developments accords with the Vision of Mortimer now and into the future. Proposals for business development must be in keeping with the surrounding environment and not conflict with existing uses. New and expanded enterprises and buildings that take fully into account the rural nature, character and infrastructure of the parish is an essential requirement if they are not to have a detrimental impact on the visual character and ambience of both the village and countryside, the life of residents and rural activities.

The screening of new or redesigned businesses by vegetation will not normally be sufficient. Such enterprises must have well-designed premises that are suitably located and of appropriate scale, form and high quality design in particular in areas identified in the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment as having 'high' or 'medium-high' landscape sensitivity. The location, scale and nature of the business must pay due regard the visual amenity, road network, residential amenity and the rural nature of the parish. The assessment of impact shall take into account potential cumulative impact of possible further development on the urbanisation of the countryside and public amenity value.



This Plan has not allocated land for new retail units, business units, or office space as these were not supported in the questionnaire.

11.4 Projects

- Local businesses will be encouraged to contribute to the setting up of a Mortimer specific business directory and website.
- Develop an overarching vision for the progressive development of the village centre.

12 Infrastructure Development

12.1 Objectives

To provide the infrastructure services and amenities required in a modern rural parish.

To ensure that any new development has good and sustainable water and waste water services.

The opportunity provided by the new development, the Community Infrastructure Levy and other financial sources, will be exploited to extend and improve the infrastructure services of the parish. An adopted NDP means that the Parish Council will receive 25% of the CIL receipts from new housing development.

12.2 Policies

IS1 Telecommunications

A superfast broadband strategy statement will be expected with all planning applications. The statement shall outline how the developer will provide a development which provides the maximum broadband speed currently feasible in Mortimer, show how predicted future speeds will be obtained and explains what discussion have taken place with the operators in advance of submitting a formal planning application.

IS2 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects

The potential infrastructural enhancements, listed under projects, will be pursued within the limits of budget and resources available with the priorities determined by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council.

IS3 Station Car Parking

Extension to the station car parking will be promoted and encouraged

IS4 Day Nursery

The NDP will support a proposal for a day nursery to open a facility during the plan period, reusing an existing property. The amenities of adjoining residential properties must not be harmed by the proposed location, design, and car-parking/drop-off arrangements.

IS5 Traffic

Proposals for new developments that accord with the policies in the Plan and result in improvements in the management of traffic, in particular contributing to appropriate traffic calming measures in the village, will be encouraged and supported.

IS6 Water and wastewater

Agreed water supply and wastewater drainage strategies to inform the provision of adequate infrastructure for both water supply and wastewater provision shall be prepared prior to the submission of planning applications; these shall include agreements for the adoption of the wastewater systems establishing the permanent responsibility for the management and maintenance regimes to ensure that they continue to operate effectively and efficiently.

12.3 Context and Justification

For a rural parish to continue to be an attractive location requires the infrastructure to continuously to evolve and the introduction of new modern services and amenities. This principle is supported by the overwhelming majority of questionnaire respondents.

The rationale for seeking to move St. Mary's Junior School closer to the centre of the village is discussed under The Site Design Brief for The Site but is included as a project here.

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis identified several weaknesses of the present parish, including lack of parking, notably at the station.

An advanced telecommunications infrastructure is an essential pre-requisite for sustainable economic growth and in facilitating the provision of local community facilities and services. The availability of very high speed telecommunications infrastructure capable of supporting future services was supported by an overwhelming majority of respondents as the most important service for local business activity – home working and office based businesses. The lack of public Wi-Fi in the parish was next most important service identified by a little less than half of respondents.

The space for car parking at the station has not kept pace with demand and is routinely at capacity early in the morning. This lack of parking space at the village station is unsurprisingly a major issue for the community, the overwhelming majority of respondents to the questionnaire support the enlargement of the available space. Several sites have been suggested and as part of this NDP a project is included to identify a site. The site selection and design will conform to all relevant policies in the Plan.



The questionnaire suggested a number of possible projects that could be supported using the financial gain accruing from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) of which the following received majority support:

- More bike racks at the station (a substantial majority of respondents)
- Contribute to the development of a community/sports centre on the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field (a majority of respondents)
- Provision of Allotments (a majority of respondents)

The provision of public toilets in the centre of the village sharply divided respondents with similar minorities of respondents in favour and against provision; a proposal for their provision is not built into this plan. The provision of a new village hall was rejected by a majority of respondents and similarly is omitted.

A little less than half of respondents were in favour of a policy to support the building of a commercial day care nursery with a small minority against. Policy IS4 has been developed to help find a local solution for working parents; current provision in the village is of the pre-school type with very limited hours and nothing for children under 2 years of age.

A major concern expressed repeatedly throughout the responses to the questionnaire related to traffic levels; 68 traffic comments were received. The concerns related to existing traffic levels (volume, movement and speed) and the impact new developments will have on what are considered to be difficult traffic conditions in the village. Making the village safer for pedestrians and cyclist is vital particularly to address concerns about the danger to children walking to and from the schools. It is considered important therefore that opportunities to manage and reduce traffic movement and speed are identified and pursued. Increased walking and cycling with the associated health and welfare benefits will be encouraged. These changes will give Mortimer a more enjoyable and congenial environment.

Both sewage and rain water drainage networks are at capacity and in some places with heavy rainfall are unable to pass the volume of water safely with consequent flooding at the east end of the parish by the station. Thames Water has raised concerns regarding water supply capability, and wastewater network and treatment capacity in the area so new developments will need to be assessed. (See Evidence Base (81)). Therefore a water supply strategy and a drainage strategy policy is required.

In order to ensure that the water supply and drainage requirements of development proposals are understood and that any upgrade requirements are identified developers should engage with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity and in advance of the submission of planning applications to establish the following:

- The development's demand for water supply infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met;
- The development's demand for wastewater infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met;
- The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met.

It may be necessary for developers to carry out studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing water and wastewater infrastructure. Where there is a capacity constraint and no improvements are programmed by Thames Water, then the developer needs to contact Thames Water to agree what improvements are required and how they will be delivered prior to any occupation of the development.

The questionnaire respondents suggested a number of other possible projects; the most popular are listed in the projects section. The number and range of possibilities is more than the CIL can finance. This plan will inform the decision-making process to determine where the CIL finance and any other source of finance will be distributed to the greatest benefit of the community.

12.4 Projects

- Once discussions between the schools and the Benefice identify a reasonable prospect of funding the Parish Council will investigate the potential of moving St Mary's Junior School nearer to the centre of the village scheme with all the interested parties.
- Investigate Mortimer becoming a connected village through public Wi-Fi
- Provision of more bike racks at the station
- Investigate options for increasing car parking provision at the station and identification and allocation of land for this.
- Contribute to the development of a community/sports centre on the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field
- Provision of Allotments
- Extension of Fairground facilities (various - see questionnaire feedback Q19 in [Evidence Base 40.22](#))
- Extension of sports facilities (various - see questionnaire feedback Q19 in [Evidence Base 40.22](#))
- Traffic management features.
- Several biodiversity suggestions (see questionnaire feedback Q19 in [Evidence Base 40.22](#))
- Improvement to the footpath to St Mary's school and the station
- Provision of footpath and cycleway connecting Mortimer and Burghfield

13 Biodiversity and Environmental Gain

13.1 Objective

To maintain and where possible enhance the quality and diversity of the natural environment of the parish.

To achieve this it will be necessary to ensure that new developments do not threaten biodiversity and positively encourage it. The opportunity provided by new developments will be used to enhance the wildlife habitats of Mortimer. At the same time existing areas and corridors in the parish could be enhanced to aid biodiversity.

13.2 Policies

The policies to meet this objective are:-

B1 No development shall lead to a loss or deterioration of protected habitats including Ancient woodlands, Habitats of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and Local Wildlife Sites. Within the part of BOA13 identified by the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership such development will need to show positive changes for biodiversity. Opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats and biodiversity improvements will be actively pursued within Biodiversity Opportunities Areas. Opportunities will be sought to restore, expand, link and buffer existing priority habitats within the BOA including Ancient Woodland, Habitats of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and Local Wildlife Sites.

B2 All new developments shall provide an enhanced wildlife friendly environment by installing such things as hedgehog gates and bat roosts.

B3 Developments with boundaries to green space shall augment and enrich wildlife corridors and seek to incorporate habitat-rich wildlife areas which deliver net gains in biodiversity

13.3 Context and Justification

To change the biodiversity of the area for the better it is necessary to increase the area of species-rich land and to link such areas to allow animals, birds and insects etc. to travel from one habitat to another.

Area 13 Biodiversity Opportunity Area



The plan area only contains one area of particular national importance in terms of biodiversity. This is Biodiversity Opportunity Area 13 as identified by the Berkshire Local Nature partnership. This area lies largely to the west of the plan area but does wrap round the northern edge of the parish. There are several protected species in the area including bats, newts, stag beetles, otters, grass snakes, badgers and bluebells. However no comprehensive wildlife survey has been carried out so there could well be other protected species in the area.

However, the rest of the plan area also contains a wide range of mixed habitats which does support a wide spectrum of fauna and flora. It is to protect this existing biodiversity, both within Area 13 and without that policies should be directed.

In addition it is accepted that the opportunity may well arise in the course of development to create further enhancements to biodiversity.

These proposals are consistent with The National Planning Policy Statement which says at para 109:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*
- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

In particular the Lawton Report in 2010 identified the following action plan to help with the national decline in biodiversity:-

“Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management (and enhance heterogeneity)

- *Increase the size of current wildlife sites*
- *Create new sites*
- *Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’*
- *Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites”*

Clearly not all of the above is achievable in this NDP but several of the points are relevant. In particular:-

- Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’
- Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites

New development, can, by definition reduce the areas of species-rich land and can block existing wildlife routes. Similarly the sub-division of existing large gardens in the parish reduces wildlife habitat. As such it is essential that while improving existing areas that new



development is made as environmentally friendly as possible. Indeed in many cases a well-planned new development may be better for biodiversity than an area of monoculture.

In order to ensure that the Plan has appropriate regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paras 6, 9, 17, 109, 114, 118, 125, 165) and is in compliance with the statutory obligations of the Section

40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

The idea of improving biodiversity was supported by the results of the questionnaire where all the relevant propositions had a large majority in agreement. The only exception to this was when respondents were asked if *“Existing green spaces may be used for development as long as more than equivalent provision is provided close at hand.”* The majority of respondents disagreed with this concept and hence it has not been included in the plan.



National policy is to minimise impacts on biodiversity and to provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. The objective is to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. (NPPF Paragraph 108 page 25). The planning policy goes on to say opportunities to incorporate

biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.



It is essential therefore that new developments, at a minimum, replace the loss and wherever possible further enrich the wildlife habitat features. Indeed in many cases a well-planned new development may be better for biodiversity than an area of monoculture.

An overwhelming majority of respondents support the proposition that all new developments should be wildlife friendly with a range of wildlife areas.

Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) can include features such as ponds, swales, and wetlands as an integral part of the site design all of which can achieve enhanced wild habitats. The adoption of SuDS to enhance biodiversity was supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents to the questionnaire.

Open spaces and community woodland can be provided in new developments, and connect these spaces with others in the parish which deliver environmental gains for residents and wildlife.



13.4 Projects

- Identify and map existing wildlife corridors
- Identify and map existing corridors that have the potential to be 'greened'
- Identify and map gaps in the existing and potential wildlife corridors
- Seek funds to enhance the existing network of wildlife corridors and to fill in any gaps
- Organise such enhancement

14 Green Spaces

14.1 Objective

To maintain and, where possible, improve green spaces and green routes.

To achieve this it will be necessary to ensure that new developments incorporate green spaces and routes within them that link to the wider network of such features in the parish. At the same time existing green spaces and routes in the parish could be enhanced, in part to aid biodiversity.

14.2 Policies

The policies to meet this objective are:-

GS1 Designate the following as Local Green Spaces:

- The Fairground, the Pound and Heath Elm Pond (pond outside the fence) and War Memorial island
- The Alfred Palmer Memorial Field
- Foudry Brook - the watercourse and footpath and 10m strip either side from St. Mary's Church SW to the parish boundary
- Summerlug Common
- Windmill Common
- Brewery Common
- Bronze Age Barrows and surrounding land (Holden's Firs)
- The green space along the southern side of The Site

GS2 Connect new development sites into the wider area with pedestrian footpaths and where appropriate cycleways and link them with the existing network of green spaces and routes in the parish

GS3 All new cycle or pedestrian routes will be green e.g. they could have green margins and where possible will be surfaced with porous material

14.3 Context and Justification

Natural and semi-natural open spaces are highly valued by local residents, not just for their recreational value, but also for their landscape character, quiet enjoyment and biodiversity.

In particular recreation fields, etc. are valued open spaces that the community wishes to see protected. This is demonstrated by the highest approval rating for any question in the questionnaire when an overwhelming majority agreed with the statement that the Fairground should be designated as a Local Green Space. A similar result was obtained for the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field

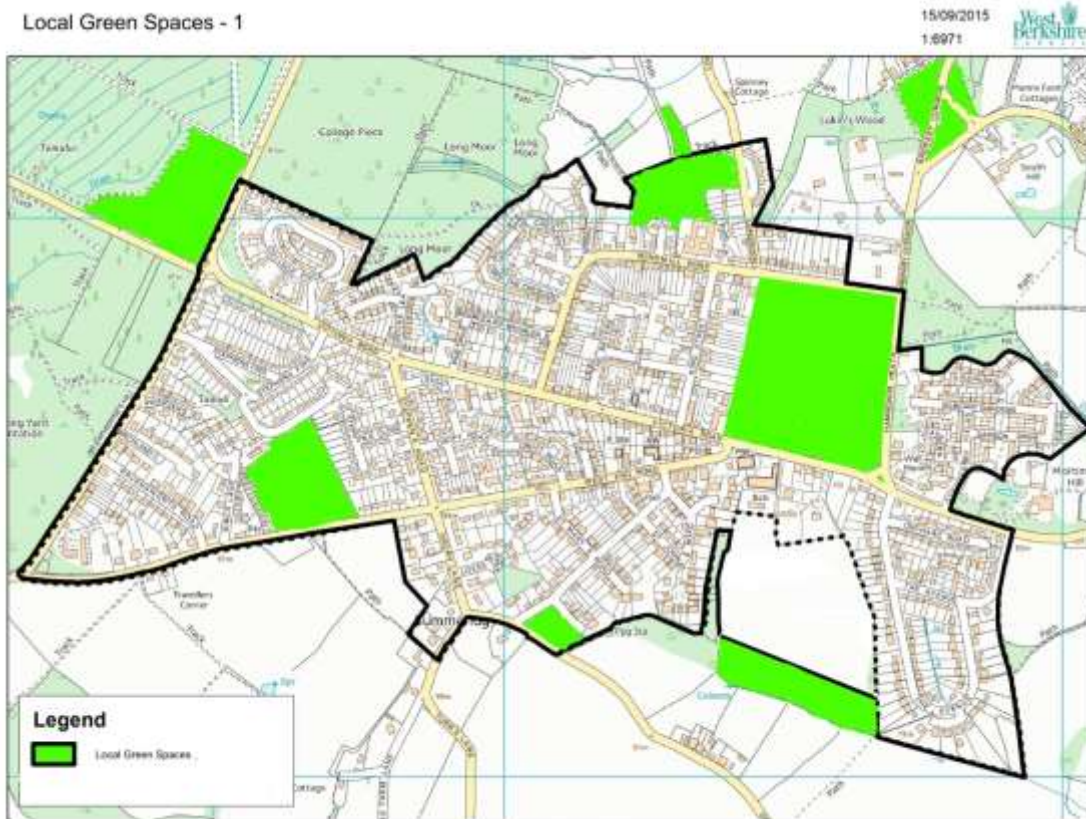


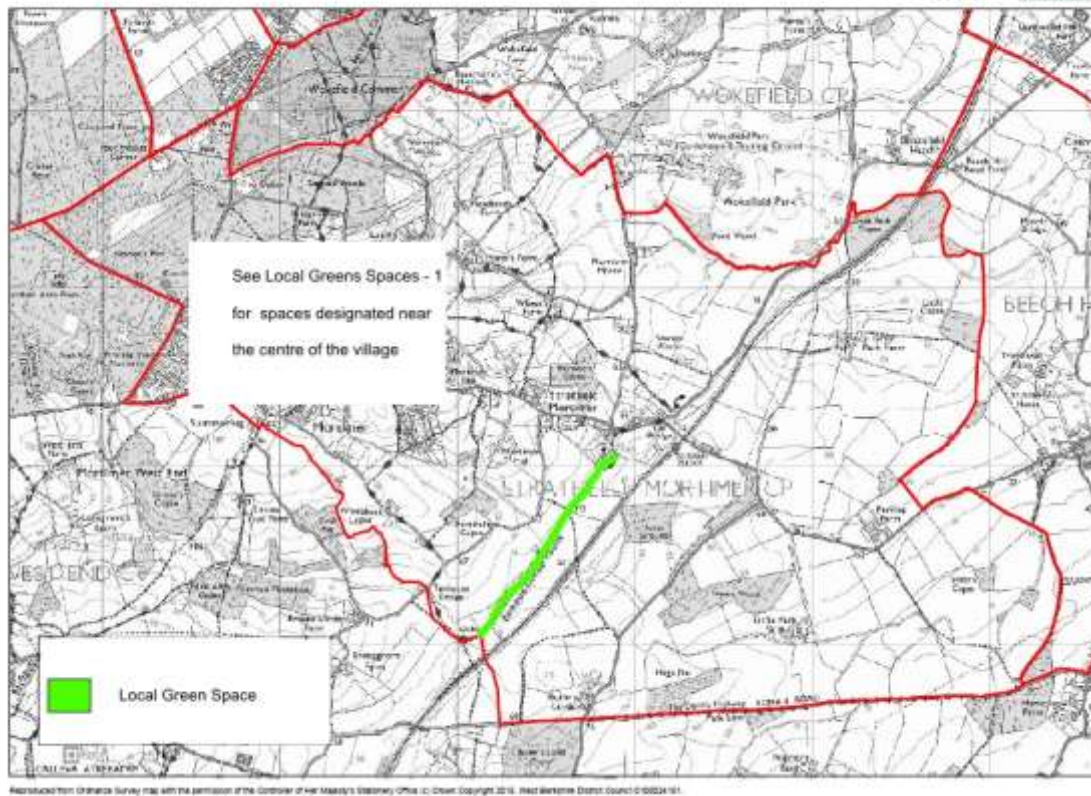


©Dara Portraits

Green spaces proposed by the public as Local Green Spaces were assessed against the NPPF criteria. See [Evidence Base \(88\)](#).

In addition to maintain its rural ‘green feel’ the community would like to see more open space, woodland and public paths to be a part of any significant new developments.





However, green spaces are of limited value if they cannot be accessed and so it is considered important that non-motorised access to these spaces is maintained and enhanced. In this a minority of the respondents to the questionnaire favoured more rural public footpaths as opposed to smaller number of respondents who felt there was no additional need.

Keep schools accessible on foot/ by cycle to cut down on the need for travelling to school by car - encourage safe walking routes. This is our chance to incorporate these elements into the plans. I used to cycle to Willink School from my childhood home in The Street - enable this again for future healthy generations

NDP Questionnaire comment.

Two specific proposals for new footpath/cycleway routes were considered as part of the questionnaire and both the proposals for additional facilities, away from the existing road, linking the village to St Mary's school and the station, and a link between Burghfield and Mortimer were agreed with by substantial majorities of respondents.

A very important side effect of this sort of approach is that areas that support a diverse range of flora and fauna will become linked by what in effect may be considered as wildlife corridors. To assist in this regard any new non-motorised access arrangements be made as wildlife friendly as possible.

This will assist in maintaining the biodiversity of the area. Thus if the routes are not just a

surface to travel along but contain such elements as grass, shrubs, trees and other types of wildlife friendly vegetation. Such 'green' routes were positively supported by a majority of respondents to the questionnaire

14.4 Projects

- Identify and map existing green corridors
- Identify and map gaps in the existing green corridors
- Seek funds to enhance the existing network of green corridors and to fill in any gaps
- Organise such enhancement
- Develop parish cycleways, in particular investigate and if possible provide a pedestrian/cycleway:-
 - linking Burghfield & Mortimer
 - away from the road connecting the village with St Mary's Junior School and the station



15 Heritage

15.1 Objective

To develop the heritage of the parish and provide an added amenity for the community.

To achieve this it will be necessary to negotiate with landowners to allow access and to provide information to the public.

15.2 Policies

No policies beyond CS19 in WBC Core Strategy were identified.

15.3 Context and Justification

The West Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) provides the primary index of all known archaeological and historical sites in the parish, including those which are nationally designated.

Within Stratfield Mortimer parish there are 4 areas which have been placed on the Schedule of Ancient Monuments, and 15 buildings and structures which are listed. There are no Registered Parks or Gardens, or Registered Battlefields. There are also currently no local heritage designations, ie the local

planning authority has not defined any Conservation Areas or added any assets to its new Local List. However there are about 100 other sites on the HER for Stratfield Mortimer, ranging from findspots to cropmarks, and prehistoric earthworks to designed landscapes, Roman roads to historic farmsteads, and many other significant buildings and structures.

In addition, a project called Historic Landscape Characterisation recorded the historic evolution of the landscape of West Berkshire; this indicates the dynamic nature of land-use change, but also highlighted which areas seems most sensitive (historically significant and vulnerable). This data would help in the Vision's wish to retain the best landscape features of the parish. Mortimer has a number of areas identified as 'high' and 'medium-high sensitivity' in WBC Historic Landscape Characterisation.



There are several sites in the parish which have an interesting history and it is considered useful to try and make this history better known. These sites include the station, which was Brunel's model rural halt for the Great Western, the churches, World War II defences, the war memorial, the old fire station as well as a set of Bronze Age barrows.

The Bronze Age barrow cemetery of Holden's Firs and three outlying barrows at the western end of the parish are Scheduled Monuments. They are owned and managed by the Englefield Estate;

West Berkshire Council in partnership with the estate and English Heritage, erected an

interpretation panel at Holden's Firs in 2005. The development of the Bronze Age barrows, at the western end of the parish, as an attraction/amenity was supported by a minority of respondents to the questionnaire. A smaller number of respondents had no particular view and a small minority were against the idea.

The NDP's concept of recognising heritage assets is consistent with The National Planning Policy Statement which says at paragraph 126:

Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

15.4 Projects

- Identify heritage sites
- Negotiate new or better access where appropriate
- Seek funds for information boards at sites where appropriate and erect such boards with the agreement of landowners
- Develop a Mortimer Heritage Trail: seek funding for the publication of a Mortimer Heritage Trail leaflet to identify and suggest routes for visiting heritage sites
- Seek funding and agreement to the installation of heritage trail signage



16 Delivery and Monitoring

16.1 Delivery

Most of the policies in this plan will be delivered as part of the planning process. As such it is how planning applications and pre planning enquiries are dealt with that will determine, in large part, the success of this plan.

Specifically Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council will take into account the NDP policies when reviewing planning applications and confirm the applications meet the objectives of these policies. In particular:-

- All new development planning applications, designs and delivery will be assessed for adherence to the design policies, including the production of Site Design Briefs, adoption of the '*Building for Life 12 principles*' and the '*Lifetime Homes standard*'.
- Planning applications will be scrutinised to ensure the access arrangements and off-road space standards and the minimum garage and door sizes meet or ideally exceed the policies and standards.
- The design of the sites and individual buildings will also be considered so that the rural feel of Mortimer is not lost while making sure developments meets 21st century requirements and standards.
- Flood Risk Assessments submitted with planning applications will be reviewed to confirm these meet the objectives of these policies.
- Lighting schemes submitted with planning applications will be reviewed to confirm these meet the objectives of these policies

Of course Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is not the planning authority so if an application does not comply with the policies in the plan all it can do is draw this to the attention of the planning authority (WBC) and request that the application be refused. WBC will also have the plan as part of the policy framework for the parish and as such it is expected that they will take the same approach as the Parish Council.

The refusal of a planning application is a last resort and both the Parish Council and WBC will work with developers at the pre-application stage to try and influence any application so that it does meet the requirements of the plan. In this regard there are policies asking for site design briefs for applications. Developers will be encouraged to consult with the community, WBC and the Parish Council on the preparation of such briefs in order to arrive at an eventual application that is acceptable to all parties.

As part of this approach the delivery of the policies for The Site will be via a detailed design brief and in consultation with WBC and housing associations.

However, with regard to the new school and doctors' surgery it must be emphasised that all the plan and the Site Design Brief can do is to allocate land, it cannot make them happen. The actual implementation is in the hand of others and is dependent on funds being available.

It is because of this uncertainty of delivery that policy SDB1 has been included so that a reasoned judgement can be taken as to the appropriate way forward after a reasonable time has elapsed since the inception of this plan.

While the above covers the planning policies contained in the plan there are also the projects that have been listed, where relevant, at the end of each section. Many, if not all, of these projects will require the cooperation and active involvement of individuals, organisations, landowners or groups. In order to take these projects forward the Parish Council has resolved to establish a Committee to review all the projects put forward in the NDP, prioritise and initiate actions to progress them (see Parish Council minutes of 12th Nov 2015). It is envisaged that the Parish Council itself will take forward some of the projects but that others will be taken forward by the Community-Led Plan which is due to commence in 2016.

16.2 Monitoring

Much information is already collected by WBC with regard to such things as planning completions and relevant housing and education statistics. They will be requested to provide the Parish council with an abstract of the relevant statistics for the Parish councils use and for wider dissemination. It is expected that these and other relevant data will be considered by the Parish council on a regular basis.

In addition the Parish Council has resolved that at the Annual Parish meeting there should be a report on how the NDP policies and projects have been adopted, how they have benefited Mortimer and how they have influenced planning applications (see Parish Council minutes 12th Nov 2015).

Appendix A – Stratfield Mortimer Evidence Base

All the evidence used in the preparation of this NDP can be found on the Stratfield Mortimer NDP website at <http://www.mortimer-ndp.org.uk/index.htm>. Here is the main contents list of the Evidence Base:

Neighbourhood Plan Overview

[Application to designate a Neighbourhood Area - Stratfield Mortimer](#)

[Guide to Neighbourhood Planning CPRE](#)

[Neighbourhood Development Plan guidance – Hereford Council](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning Road Map Locality](#)

[Proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area West Berkshire Council](#)

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Overview

[Background statistics of Stratfield Mortimer, March 2011](#)

[Census 2011 - Mortimer Key Data Statistics](#)

[Mortimer House type map](#)

[Mortimer Parish Map](#)

[Mortimer Ward Profile](#)

[Parish Boundaries map](#)

[Stratfield Mortimer Area Map](#)

[Stratfield Mortimer Parish Aerial Map](#)

[Stratfield Mortimer Village Aerial Map](#)

[West Berkshire District Profile 2013](#)

[Dataset for Mortimer Profile doc](#)

Key Policies

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[West Berkshire Core Strategy \(2006-2026\) Development Plan Document Adopted July 2012](#)

[West Berkshire Council Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment Dec 2013](#)

[West Berkshire Council Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment Maps](#)

[Spatial Strategy The East Kennet Valley - The Vision](#)

[Housing Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options East Kennet Valley Spatial Area \(Mortimer\) Aug 2014](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations 2012](#)

[West Berkshire Council Statement of Consultation App D \[Page 68\]](#)

Consultation, Justification and Evidence

Summary Justification and Evidence

[Introduction](#)

Consultation Statement

Policies - Summary of Evidence and Justification

Site Selection

Initial Public Meeting March 2014

Exhibition 6th July 2014

Exhibition February/March 2015

Questionnaire Consultation April/May 2015

Site Design Review September 2015

Housing Needs Survey Report

Designation of 'Local Green Spaces

Explanation of SWOT Points

NDP Steering Group Minutes

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Minutes

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Response to Consultation 2014

Residential Development

Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock CS 1 WBC

April 2007 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Affordable Housing CS6

Housing Type and Mix CS 4 WBC

The West Berkshire CIL Viability Study (January 2013)

West Berkshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 2015

West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD Housing in the Countryside Policies: Preferred Options Consultation September 2014

SA and SEA Assessment Mortimer (pp68) Site Assessment Forms

WBC Housing Site Allocation DPD Preferred Options - Stratfield Mortimer (PP4)

Design

Design Principles CS 14 WBC

Building for Life 12 (3rd Edition)

HARAH-Rural-Design-Guide-Combining Policy and Quality May 2013

Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) West Berkshire Council June 2006

Achieving Quality Design Part 1

Residential Developments Part 2

Residential Character Framework Part 3

Sustainable Design Techniques Part 4

External Lighting WBC Part 5

Stratfield Mortimer Village Design Statement 2007

Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice (2007)

Planning Practice Guidance - Design (National Planning Policy Framework)

Flooding

[Flooding Policy CS 16 WBC](#)

[Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Map of Parish](#)

[Environment Agency Surface Water Interactive Flood Map](#)

Stratfield Mortimer 2007 Flood Report

[West Berkshire Council Flood Report](#)

[West Berkshire Council - Spring Lane Flood Map](#)

[West Berkshire Council - Eastern End of Village Flood Map](#)

Commercial and Employment

[Rural Economy CS10](#)

Biodiversity

[Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network
Professor Sir John Lawton 2012](#)

[Biodiversity Area 13 Berkshire \(Berkshire Local Nature Partnership\)](#)

Green Spaces

[Local Green Space Designation](#)

[Designating Local Green Space in Mortimer](#)