

Commercial Development

Commercial Development in this context is covers land use for commercial as opposed to residential purposes so it Includes agriculture, retail, manufacturing, service industries, forestry – all forms.

In this section I am covering what the West Berks local plan discusses in terms of **Hierarchy of Centres CS 11, Employment CS 9, and the Rural Economy C S10**

Our draft objective is that **Mortimer will have a thriving economy while retaining the existing rural character of the area.**

But what do we have to do in the NDP to promote this objective?

Hierarchy of Centres

You've heard that Mortimer is defined as a **Rural Service Centre** – we have and are expected to continue to have, services (surgery, schools, shops) etc to a level which serve a wider area than just our own parish. But the WB Local plan doesn't say what these should be or how we get them.

The NDP can define the details of this – what needs to happen to retain the services and facilities we have, are there further services and facilities which would be appropriate for our Rural Service Centre role and whose potential land use could be documented? This area of the plan needs to work closely with the Infrastructure area you are going to hear about shortly.

Employment and the Rural Economy

The WB Local Plan talks about Employment and the Economy in terms of

- 1) appropriate location of business development**
- 2) protecting employment areas and**
- c) managing the scale and type of business development**

It doesn't have anything specific to say about Mortimer; it does say that existing Protected Employment Areas in East Kennet such as Young's Industrial Estate, Calleva Park, Beenham Industrial Area, Theale Lakes Business Park will continue to play a vital role in the local economy; their role and boundaries will be reviewed through Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

The WB Local Plan says that proposals to **diversify the rural economy** will be encouraged especially when they are in Rural Service Centres. Proposals for appropriate use of farm buildings and associated land for non-farming related businesses will be encouraged where it helps sustain the long term running of farms.

It doesn't say anything specific about Mortimer – we have the opportunity to look at what is needed from land usage to retain and create jobs.

To do this we need to:

- Examine ways to encourage business growth and hence employment within the village that is appropriate to the village context.
- Establish policies that will encourage such employment.
- Ensure other policies within the plan are consistent with this aim.

So the Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan could include the views of residents and local businesses about things like

- The type of new businesses (e.g. small retail, office or workshop) we wish to encourage in Mortimer and the types of business not to be encouraged within the village (e.g. warehousing, larger light industry)
- Where we want any commercial development to be – are we happy for it to be mixed in with residential buildings or are any small sites or areas we wish to designate for a dedicated employment zone
- The infrastructure needs of local businesses as well as residents
- Sustainable growth and expansion of businesses through re-use of existing buildings and new build
- The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses
- Sustainable rural leisure activities that benefit businesses in the area and respect the character of the countryside

Examples of policies that could come from this - I'm not proposing these – they are examples taken from other parishes NDPs

The creation of additional business accommodation in Mortimer is desirable with new development employing up to 10 people considered most appropriate, providing that it conforms to all relevant policies of this Plan

Proposals for change of use of existing business premises away from employment activity will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable.

Proposals for development that combines living and small-scale employment space will be encouraged provided there is no adverse impact on the character and amenity of nearby residential area.

These are just examples of the type of things that need to be covered. The involvement and input of Mortimer businesses will be very important; work will be needed to identify current businesses, their infrastructure needs, whether current premises restrict possible employment expansion etc

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