

# NDP FAQs

## When is the referendum?

The referendum will take place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June

## What will I be asked to vote on?

The words on the ballot paper will be:-

*“Do you want West Berkshire District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Stratfield Mortimer to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”*

## Where can I obtain a postal ballot?

All the information about the referendum can be found at:-

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=33860>

## What Does a Yes or No vote in the referendum actually mean?

A **NO vote will not stop future development in the village** but it means that West Berkshire Council will not take into consideration the Neighbourhood Plan policies to help determine planning applications in the parish.

A **YES vote will allow homes to be built behind the Horse and Groom** and mean that in the future West Berkshire Council will use the Neighbourhood Development Plan policies to help determine planning applications in the parish.

**Note:** 110 new homes have to be built in Mortimer, between now and 2026, to fulfil the house building needs set out by West Berkshire Council. A NO or abstain in the NDP Referendum will not change this, it is just that West Berkshire will decide where they go.

## If there is a Yes vote when does the NDP come into effect?

Immediately. In practical terms the day after the referendum result is announced.

## How does the NDP get implemented?

If the Plan is adopted following a majority YES vote at referendum, then it will sit alongside West Berkshire's Local Plan. This means any planning application submitted in the parish, including speculative applications by developers, must by law be decided by reference to those plans.

In addition the NDP identified a number of desirable projects, such as providing more car parking spaces at the station. These have all been taken on board by the Parish Council and are being prioritised and progressed. There are for example ongoing discussions taking place with Great Western Railways and Englefield Estates with a view to significantly increasing car parking at the station.

## How long does the NDP last for?

The stated time scale is up to 2026. However, practically this is a loose estimate and will depend on such things as national policy and the development of a new Local Plan by West Berkshire Council. None the less the NDP will set the scene for planning in Mortimer for the foreseeable future.

## Will there be an update to the NDP?

Inevitably as West Berkshire Council develop their new Local Plan to conform to national planning policy guidelines there will be a need to review and update the NDP. When this needs to happen is unknown at the moment. Any significant change to the Plan will, of course, involve community consultation, just as this Plan has.

### **What is the status of the planned new community facilities on The Site behind the Horse and Groom?**

The NDP has a policy SDB1 which states:-

“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 the same 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.”

It can be seen from this that what the NDP is doing is allocating land for community facilities. The NDP cannot guarantee that those facilities will be built. However, the Examiner states in his report that:-

“I was informed at the public hearing that the need for a new infant school is now being treated by WBC as a “critical” level of priority to reflect the need to accommodate the level of housing proposed in Mortimer. (I understand that the School is already at capacity and does not meet standards for play space.) This is confirmed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (“IDP”) Appendix A Schedule (April 2016)<sup>97</sup> and it is stated that “the facilities, in whole or part, will need to be in place prior to the occupation of first dwelling as insufficient capacity in existing provision.”<sup>98</sup> At the hearing WBC indicated that the provision of temporary additional accommodation might well be regarded as constituting “facilities being in place” and thus enable the delivery of housing on The Site to be achieved sooner.”

As such it can be seen that West Berkshire Council are aware of the situation and have given the provision of the school serious consideration.

If, notwithstanding the above, there is no progress on the provision of these facilities the 5 year review will have to take a view on the best use for that reserved land going forward. It is to be hoped that even if the facilities have not been provided they will be in the preparation stage by then and hence the land can continue to be reserved.

### **What happens to the areas set aside for community facilities if they are not built within the 5 year period?**

There will be a review of the situation after 5 years and if it seems likely that progress towards providing the facilities will be made then the reservation of the land will continue.

If it seems as though no progress will be made, and this seems unlikely at the moment, then a review of the Plan will take place to determine what to do. That review will include consultation with the community.

## Will the new development mean more flooding?

There are several policies in the NDP that should stop any development creating a flooding risk. Indeed the plan is stricter in this regard than general policy and hence offers a marked advantage over reliance on general policies.

Some of the relevant policies are set out below:-

**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 (100% runoff)
  - a peak intensity rainfall over a 30 minute period of 20mm within the standard 6 hour period critical event duration<sup>1</sup>
  - the higher of either the rainfall assumptions in the standard calculations or the maximum rainfall recorded in West Berkshire at the closest approved weather station to Stratfield Mortimer 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.

**SDB1**..... 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.

**SDB4**.....The scheme will be informed by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA will advise on appropriate mitigation measures.

### **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.

## Why is the Examiner's recommendation not to hold a referendum not being followed?

The Examiner said:- "1. *Whilst the draft NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, I find that potential landscape and visual impacts have not been considered properly when promoting The Site (the land to the south of St John's Infants School) for development. ....My recommendation must therefore be that the proposal to make the NDP be refused.*

2. *But for this issue of site selection (which is, however, a central part of the draft NDP), I would have recommended that the draft Plan be submitted to referendum with modifications (set out below). I also find that the legislative requirements have otherwise been met."*

Being mindful of the Examiner's views a Landscape Assessment has been undertaken by an independent consultant. Taking the results of that assessment into account the Parish

Council still considered that The Site was the appropriate place for new housing. However, the wording with regard to the number of houses has been changed, as suggested by the Examiner, from the provision of 110 houses to the provision of up to 110 houses. This allows for the site to be developed taking into consideration the possibility of restrictions on numbers being required for such things as extra landscaping or archaeological finds.

There were also a series of minor amendments to the submitted plan that were recommended by the Examiner. These have all been incorporated into the amended plan.

With these amendments and having the results of the Landscape Assessment to hand West Berkshire Council have agreed with the Parish Council that the plan should now go forward to referendum.

**Is there any financial benefit of approving the plan?**

Yes. Without a Plan the parish will receive a small amount of money for each house built to be spent on facilities that would benefit the community. If the Plan is approved then 25% of the money that developers have to pay West Berkshire Council will instead come to the parish to be spent.

**Does the Parish Council support the Plan?**

The Parish Council is the sponsor of the Plan and submitted it to West Berkshire for approval.