

Agenda Item IMD5

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD: 2016/5

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| TITLE | Considering the response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation on the Stratfield Mortimer Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan |
| DECISION TO BE MADE BY | John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways |
| DATE AND TIME | 14 January 2016 at 1pm |
| WARD | Shinfield & Swallowfield |
| DIRECTOR | Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment |
| REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON | 6 January 2016 |
| VENUE | 1st Floor, Room FF11, Wokingham Borough Council Offices, Shute End, RG40 1BJ |

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That development proposed through the Stratfield Mortimer Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan produced by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Highways:

- 1) approves the comments outlined in the report; and
- 2) that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation on the Stratfield Mortimer Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council has published their Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan for consultation between 9 November and 21 December 2015. The consultation document includes an allocation for housing, infant school and doctors' surgery within their Parish.

Since the sites are close to Wokingham Borough, it is important to respond so that any issues for Wokingham Borough Council associated with their development can be addressed.

Background

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is consulting on the Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan from 9 November until 21 December 2015. A draft response based upon the contents of this report will be forwarded to the Parish Council as the Council's provisional position prior to 21 December 2015. This will be subject to confirmation once the Executive member has considered the item.

This Pre-submission document relates to the West Berkshire Proposed Submission Housing Sites Allocations Development Plan Document which sets out where sites will be allocated to meet West Berks outstanding need to 2026 of their currently adopted Core Strategy. The West Berkshire Proposed Submission document suggests that 110 dwellings in Stratfield Mortimer are to be identified through a Neighbourhood Plan.

It is important to provide a response to the consultation so that those factors which could concern Wokingham Borough can be resolved. This includes addressing the impacts of housing in West Berkshire close to Wokingham Borough's boundary for issues such as school place planning, transport, flood risk, etc.

Analysis of Issues

The West Berkshire Core Strategy indicates that in the part of their district adjoining Wokingham Borough, sites for around 320 dwellings would need to be found between 2011 and 2026. Their Core Strategy (for the Kennet Valley between Thatcham and Reading/Grazeley) indicates that the two rural service centres including Mortimer (lying around 5km from the borough boundary) would be the focus of development in this part of their authority. The West Berkshire Proposed Submission document, currently being consulted upon, suggests that, amongst other allocations in this part of their District, 110 dwellings in Stratfield Mortimer are to be identified through a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Stratfield Mortimer Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan consultation sets a new settlement boundary for Mortimer and allocates land for 110 homes, relocating St John's Infant School and proposes new doctors surgery as part of the allocation. This is consistent with the overall approach in the West Berkshire Housing Sites Allocations Consultation for meeting their housing need.

The relocation of St John's infant school will assist in providing space for outside activities and providing new school capacity which will be needed for the development of 110 new homes in the area. Whilst the document acknowledges that St Mary's Junior School is under pressure and has space to expand the Neighbourhood Plan does not indicate what additional capacity may be needed in the area for other education provision such as primary and secondary education as a result of the proposed allocation.

Whilst the Neighbourhood plan positively seeks to address traffic impact within the village, it is unclear whether the wider traffic implications of the allocation have been considered. It is therefore considered that further clarification on transport impacts should be provided to ensure that any issues associated with the development upon Wokingham Borough have been/can be resolved.

Wokingham Borough Council welcomes clarification on the following areas:

- That the education needs for primary and secondary schools arising from the

- proposed development have been assessed and appropriately addressed.
- That the transport impacts potentially arising from the proposed allocation have been assessed and appropriately addressed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

| | How much will it Cost/ (Save) | Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall | Revenue or Capital? |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Current Financial Year (Year 1) | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2) | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | Nil | Nil | Nil |

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications

Decisions in West Berkshire on the location of sites for residential development and could affect how the authority needs to resolve impacts on services such as transport, education, etc. within the borough.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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| Director – Finance and Resources | No comments |
| Monitoring Officer | No comments |
| Leader of the Council | “I fully support the comments made by officers. It is particularly important that any neighbourhood plan demonstrates that they have considered any knock on effects to neighbouring authorities / parishes.” |

List of Background Papers

[Stratfield and Mortimer Pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan](#)
[West Berkshire Proposed Submission Housing Site Allocations DPD](#)
[West Berkshire Core Strategy \(2012\)](#)

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| Date 08/12/2015 | Version No. 2 |

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