

Clarification on NDP and Planning Issues

SMPC would like to clarify the current issues in the Parish and how they fit together.

1. NDP

Following the examiner's report on the NDP three actions were taken:

- a) SMPC and West Berkshire Council (WBC) agreed to extend the deadline for making a decision on the NDP until 1st May 2017, to allow time for a full consideration of the recommendations and issues in the report. These comprised the issue of landscape and suggested minor modifications. Without the extension of time we risked losing the current NDP completely.
- b) WBC commissioned a landscape study of the sites within the village and SMPC are awaiting the results of this.
- c) The minor modifications were agreed by the Full Parish Council at its meeting on 12th January. (Full details can be found on the home page of the SMPC web site).

What next?

The findings of the landscape assessment will be taken to a Full Parish Council meeting which will consider whether these, and any other factors, are sufficient to overcome the examiner's objections. The Council's views will be sent to WBC to inform their decision as to whether the NDP proceeds to a referendum.

If WBC agree to proceed to a referendum this would be held some weeks later (probably late June/July). If 50% of those who vote in favour the NDP immediately becomes part of WBC planning policy.

If the NDP does not go to referendum, or the outcome is to reject it, then the location of housing in Mortimer becomes a WBC decision, unless there is a reworking of the NDP based on a new set of consultations.

2. Planning Appeal regarding 50 dwellings at Monkey Puzzle Field Mortimer

The original application was considered by SMPC planning committee on 9th November 2015 and the Council objected on six grounds. WBC refused the application on 11th May 2016. The applicant has appealed and the provisional start date for the inquiry is 25th April 2017.

At the Full Parish Council meeting on 12th January the Council passed a motion stating that its original objections remain valid, it wished to raise some additional comments and that it wished to speak and give evidence at the inquiry (see a full paper on the SMPC website).

3. Community Consultation Event - T A Fisher in conjunction with Englefield Estate 26 January

The first information the Parish Council received on this was by phone calls on the evening of 12th and morning of 13th January. A meeting was held on 19th January between a consultant for T A Fisher and two councillors and the Clerk so that the former could explain the proposals. At the meeting the consultant stated:

- The driver for the outline application at this time was to strengthen the case against the Monkey Puzzle Field appeal
- There would be separate applications for the two sites, this would make it easier to withdraw / modify either / both if desired.

- The applications would be reviewed following the results of the WBC landscape study for the NDP coming available
- The proposed plans have 75 units on 'The Site' (MOR06 behind the Horse and Groom) and 35 units on MOR05 (off West End Road).
- These outline plans were in conformity with the NDP's policies on the mix of dwellings and the provision of affordable housing
- The land for the school / doctors surgery is maintained as in the NDP
- All the land to the south of the dwellings on 'The Site' (MOR06) down to the edge of the field will be maintained as public open space.
- The design would conform to the NDP's design brief.

4 Tower House Site

TA Fisher have planning permission for 17 dwellings on this site. WBC imposed a condition that 5 units of affordable housing must be provided.

SMPC Planning Committee objected to the removal of this condition on 13th October 2016 and recommended that there should be three or more units of affordable housing on this site. The decision was taken at the Eastern Area Planning Committee in December 2016 to uphold the affordable housing requirement.

How do these fit together?

- a) If the Monkey Puzzle field appeal succeeds it would threaten the integrity of the NDP and could add **50 additional** house in the village
- b) Because of the hiatus with the NDP, T A Fisher are putting forward proposals which would meet the requirements of 110 house requested by WBC. This is entirely their own initiative and neither the Parish Council or NDP Steering Group have had any part in this.
- c) At present the Parish Council is focusing on resolving the NDP issues and opposing the Monkey Puzzle appeal. It can only comment on the latest proposals from TA Fisher / Englefield when the actual planning applications have been submitted and received by the Council.

M D Dennett
 Chairman SMPC
 20th January 2017.