

Mortimer NDP – FAQs

What is the situation following the public examination of the NDP:-

The Examiner has recommended that WBC does not hold a referendum on the NDP on the grounds that insufficient work was carried out with regards to landscape assessment for the various sites.

It is up to West Berkshire Council (WBC) to decide whether to accept or reject that recommendation. There is a statutory timetable for WBC to make that decision. However it can be varied at the request of the qualifying body, which in this case is the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council. They have requested such a delay to allow full consideration of the Examiner's report.

What is happening now:-

Meetings have been held between the parish council and WBC to discuss the future of the NDP.

As a result of those meetings WBC are commissioning landscape assessments of the sites in Mortimer so that they are better informed about that aspect of the examiner's report. This will assist them in preparing their report to their Council meeting which will make a decision on a way forward.

At the same time both the parish council and WBC are considering the minor amendments to the NDP document that were suggested by the examiner. WBC are going to send through their suggestions to the parish council for comment. It is recognised that most of the minor amendments are just that, minor, and as such should be acceptable. The intention is to report back on this issue to the January meeting of the parish council.

Why is the recommendation of the Examiner not simply being accepted:-

The Examiner has made it clear in his report that the reasons for his recommendation are extremely limited and that the vast majority of the NDP is acceptable, subject to very minor amendments. As the NDP is firmly based on the wishes of the community, as shown in the NDP evidence base, it seems appropriate to try and make those wishes a reality.

Can I make further submissions on the NDP or Comment on the Inspector's Report:-

Only if you have made comments or were consulted previously. This only happens if WBC is minded not to accept the Examiner's recommendation because of new evidence. Under these circumstances WBC will give you a further opportunity to comment.

What happens if the NDP is rejected by WBC:-

There is no certainty.

However, the WBC Housing Site Allocations DPD requires 110 homes in Mortimer and it states that

“The Council reserves the right to identify opportunities to address any shortfall through the DPD process if the NDP is not adopted within 2 years of the adoption of the Housing Site Allocations DPD.”

The NDP policies to determine the type of development in Mortimer will be lost. The design of new developments will be more likely to be determined by the developers.

Without the NDP there is a greater possibility that other sites will be submitted for development and there will be no NDP policies to resist such proposals

Finally, the additional Community Infrastructure Levy money that comes to the parish council with an adopted NDP will be lost.

In the meantime, what is happening:-

The Parish Council has established an NDP Implementation Committee. The Committee is pressing ahead with some of the projects arising from the NDP consultations. The projects currently being progressed are, an 'Extension to the Station Car Park', 'Extension of Fairground Facilities and Sports Facilities', and 'Identify Heritage Sites and Develop a Mortimer Heritage Trail'. Other projects will be initiated when resources become available.

If you wish to become a volunteer and contribute to this process please contact the Parish Clerk.