

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 09/02/2023

Neighbourhood Plan

Agenda item 22/118 1:

- b. To approve a budget of £400.00 (5 hours) for Bluestone to advise on the TA Fisher application for Outline Planning Permission for both options for the Reserved Land, keeping within the framework of the current Neighbourhood Development Plan.**
- c. To consider and resolve that SMPC writes to TA Fisher to endorse the proposals for the Reserved Land.**
- d. To consider the possibility of SMPC being a joint applicant with TA Fisher for the Outline Planning permission for the Reserved Land.**

Proposed Options for the Reserved Land

The Options for the Reserved Land are as per the leaflet that has been distributed to every household in the parish, emailed to all parent of children attending St Mary's and St John's schools and used in the 3 Public Consultations and 2 School Parents Consultations.

The proposals centre around providing outdoor play / sport space for St John's School, providing a site for a new Dental facility and to keep land reserved for the new GP Surgery, in the event that this was required.

Objectives

In the interest of reducing duplicate work and elongating the process through a formal Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) review, T A Fisher (TAF) should prepare and submit Outline Planning applications on both proposals. The reason for doing on both is because until and unless a commercial agreement is reached with the owners of Redwoods, we cannot predict which plan would end up being appropriate.

The decision to proceed to this stage was based on the following:

1. A very positive response to the proposal from the public during the consultations, with 100% support.
2. Informal discussions by Cllr Bridgeman with West Berkshire Council (WBC) Planning which suggested a pragmatic approach would be taken based on the wishes of the community and that the plan was in line with the spirit of the NDP if not the letter.
3. Recommendations from Bluestone that this has a very good chance of success.

Process

Requesting Bluestone support for TAF application at minimal cost to review the application (5 x hourly rate = Circa £400 total) is a belt and braces approach by the Steering Group (SG) to add to TAF expertise to be sure that all angles are covered and maximise the chances of a successful application.

SMPC Endorsement

One main concern from WBC was that the proposal was being driven by the community (through SG, stakeholders and community) and not being aggressively led by a developer. ie. they have a duty to safeguard the NDP.

As recommended by Bluestone, a SMPC joint application with TAF would be extremely strong in front of WBC and take away any doubt that this was being fully supported by the community and not developer led - there are some risks that would need to be mitigated, thus the wording "to consider" and not requesting.

It is noted that TAF may not wish to proceed with a joint application anyway.

In lieu of the above SMPC Endorsement of the proposal would still add considerable weight to the application.

Other Relevant Points

Leaflet document: 22-118 1b1 c d Neighbourhood Plan December 2022 V2