

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting held at Methodist Church Hall, Mortimer on Tuesday 15 April 2025 19:30

Attendees

Joanne Emberson-Wines – Meeting Chair (JW); Tennant Barber (TB); Graham Bridgman (GB); Bob Coe (BC); Neil Kiley (NK); Doug Overett (DO); Sallyann Taylor (ST – Minute Taker)

One member of the public

1. Apologies

Nick Carter (NC) and Amanda Marsden (AM)

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of 18 February 2025 were agreed with no amendments.

#DO introduced the member of the public, who talked about their background in Community Energy and biodiversity and what they could bring to the Steering Group were they to join.

#DO reported that another member of the public who not present and has experience with policies may be able to help us further with the AECOM reports. Any appointments to the Steering Group need to go through the SMPC.

4. NDP - Reserved Land

DO reported that we are still waiting on the planning application for the reserved land. The details for the Dental surgery are taking longer than expected and it is hoped that it will go through in May.

GB reported that TA Fisher have submitted a Planning Application to modify the Planning Obligation in relation to the Public Open space. They have proposed to amend the wording from 75% to 85% occupations to allow further time to form the new public open space. The SMPC Planning Committee has objected to this as they see no reason to change it.

In addition, GB reported that SMPC has made it clear to West Berkshire Council (WBC) that SMPC are not going to take over the maintenance of the Public Open space. In addition WBC is being asked who will maintain the retaining wall.

5. Neighbourhood plan

AECOM/Locality

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)

BC reported that he has received an amended HNA and will share it with the SG for comment. TB said we should check how this report influences our policies.

Action: BC

6. Review Draft Design codes report

BC reported that TB, GB and himself had met and put together a spreadsheet with their own thoughts and comments, and had circulated that to the SG for further comments.

The SG went through all the comments submitted and agreed a response to AECOM, for BC to return to AECOM on 16 April.

TB also reported that he made contact with a local SUDS expert to see if we can add and enhance the Design codes/SUDS policy based on local evidence.

TB also pointed out the Design codes report provides us with the evidence to write the policies.

Action: BC

7. Review AECOM EBPD draft agreement and agree response

TB suggested to sit down and go through each policy and decide whether we agree or not. We also need to start engaging with WBC to start the dialogue and ensure we get the policies right. AECOM also mentioned we have not provided evidence in all cases. TB has an action to send them the detailed evidence they need.

BC reported AECOM mentioned a lot of projects that are not relevant to the NP. TB mentioned we can reject their advice and include what is important to us.

It was agreed that AECOM are providing advice, and we will thank them for it and can choose to comply or explain.

It was also agreed to point out to AECOM that referring to this process as being a review is incorrect – what the NPSG is doing is creating a new Neighbourhood Plan to commence when the NDP expires (in 2026 since the NDP is aligned to the existing West Berkshire Council Local Plan). (Nb, the NDP has been formally reviewed by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council - see minutes of Full Council meetings on 14 September 2023 and 11 July 2024).

So, references to the existing plan should be to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, or Made Neighbourhood Development Plan, or NDP. References to the new, emerging and draft plan should be to the Neighbourhood Plan or NP. BC will feed this back to AECOM.

Actions: TB & BC

8. AOB

The SG discussed how we are now going to bring all this forward. We need an author to write the policies, but we need a review what policies to include before we pass it over to someone to write the policies. The SG needs to write a 2–3-page summary based on all the information received. The SG has someone in mind who may be able to help with this.

TB will also send all the past online survey evidence to AECOM to demonstrate we have consulted three times.

It was agreed to review the draft policies at the next meeting. TB to email the latest copy to the SG. Also we need to decide how are going to engage with WBC regarding the policies and let them know what stage we are at.

Action: TB

Close

Meeting ended 21:20

Next meeting 20.05.2025 at 19:30 at Methodist Church Hall, Mortimer