

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Steering Group Meeting held at Methodist Church Hall, Mortimer on Tuesday 21 November 2023 at 19:30

Attendees

Doug Overett – Meeting Chair (DO); Graham Bridgman (GB); Neil Kiley (NK); Tennant Barber (TB); Bob Coe (BC); Amanda Marsden (AM)

Apologies

Joanne Emberson-Wines (JE); Sabina Netherclift (SN); Ana Hernandez (AH)

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes of Last Meeting (17 October 2023)

Agreed unanimously (DO confirmed that congratulatory flowers had been sent to Ana).

NDP - Reserved Land

DO – The school had been updated that TAF intended to bring a planning application before Xmas. There had been an informal meeting on 26 October between the SMPC Planning Committee, Steve Davis (TAF), and DO and GB for the NPSG (GB, as Chairman of the Committee was dual-hatted) regarding plans for the reserved land. Whilst the Committee made it clear that these discussions would not pre-determine their views on any planning application, they were generally positive.

NP – Policies

Reflection on recent email exchanges.

Discussion re two themes (each the subject of briefing notes previously emailed to SG), led by BC and TB. Presentation set out specific policies in emerging WBC Local Plan submission, with possible additions/amendments (particularly from other NDPs). Questions generally: are the emerging LP policies sufficient, or do existing NDP policies need to be carried over into new NP, or do we need new NP policies?

Highways & Transport

Community Focus

Four principal themes emerged from the questionnaire, together with specific concerns.

- pedestrian Safety – traffic speed, to station, to Burghfield, parking on pavements, lack of pedestrian crossings;
- cycling safety – traffic speed, lack of cycleways, to Burghfield, to station;
- parking – schools with emphasis on St Mary's, and at the station, and stations on rail routes;
- traffic speed management.

However, these generally relate to existing issues and potential projects rather than policies regarding land use, so outside the purpose of the NP?

Specific Policies

Discussion re WBC emerging policies DM42 and DM44.

DM42

“Proposals for new development will be expected to demonstrate the type and level of travel activity likely to be generated. In order to assist in tackling the climate emergency, this travel activity will be expected to be minimised by the design of developments that support low levels of travel with a focus on local journeys that can be made sustainably.

Developments will be required to be supported through a range of infrastructure associated with different transport modes. New development will only be supported where the relevant transport infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner. Where required, new developed will be expected to make a contribution to the provision or improvement of a range of transport infrastructure. This transport infrastructure will specifically, but not exclusively, include the following:

- a. Connections and improvements to local pedestrian, cycle and equestrian networks, including access to public transport routes;*
- b. Walking, cycling and equestrian infrastructure identified in relevant Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans;*
- c. Secure cycle and motorcycle parking;*
- d. Improvements to passenger facilities across a range of transport interchanges;*
- e. Provision of real time passenger information at bus stops along key bus routes;*
- f. New or improved passenger transport services;*
- g. Improvements to the safety and operational capacity of the local road network;*
- h. Works to allow the re-use of former railway line alignments as walking, cycling, and equestrian routes; and*
- i. Provision of electric vehicle charging points and associated infrastructure.”*

Existing NDP policies:

IS3 Station Car Parking - *Extension to the station car parking will be promoted and encouraged.* Decided to retain.

IS5 Traffic - *Proposals for new developments that accord with the policies in the Plan and result in improvements in the management of traffic, in particular contributing to appropriate traffic calming measures in the village, will be encouraged and supported.* Decided covered by DM42.

Possible policy additions from other NDPs:

- Safe Streets/Home Zones Area requirement on new developments – not required.
- Designate Quiet Lanes (through WBC highways) – useful to include.
- Proposals that improve and extend the existing footpath and cycle path network – covered by DM42.
- Funds raised from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be put towards the costs of maintaining and improving the network of footpaths and cycle paths; developer contributions

towards those costs will be sought in appropriate cases – rejected as tying hand of PC regarding use of CIL.

- Applications for any development adjacent to Public Rights of Way should ensure that links are provided to those routes – covered by DM42?

DM44

Parking (replicates existing WBC Policy P1 [adopted in NDP] so far as numbers of spaces per property are concerned).

Possible policy additions from other NDPs:

- Where possible, locate parking between houses (rather than in front) so that it does not dominate the street scene – covered in DM44;
- Development proposals must, wherever possible, provide adequate (proportionate to the scale of development) parking on-site and not rely on on-street parking – covered in DM44;
- Development that includes a reliance on parking on existing streets shall not be permitted where the streets are narrow, already heavily trafficked, have identified parking issues, and where such on-street parking would impact on the safety of road users or impact adversely on the character of the area – covered in DM44.

New Policies?

Discussion regarding a number of potential policies. A number didn't really relate to Mortimer or were already in emerging WBC policies, or the principle, eg to use CIL, had already been discounted.

Possible: development will be encouraged to provide links with safe walking and cycling routes to the village centre, facilitating access to schools, the surrounding countryside and station - minimising the need for car use. The loss of existing footpaths and cycleways will be resisted. New development should be built round the idea of a walkable village with integrated adequate pathways directly connecting to the centre of the village.

Check List – “How Green is Our Plan”

Check list noted – will be useful reflection on policies as we go forward.

Renewable Energy

Sub-themes

Three sub-themes suggested for possible inclusion in the NP (projects for commercial energy generation to be outside the scope of the NP):

- Community energy generation on a commercial scale (eg solar farm);
- Community energy generation via new residential/business developments sharing common energy generation facility;
- EV charging.

The LPR has a limited amount to say on Renewable Energy and the text is generic.

Discussion re incorporating renewable energy (solar panels, heat pumps, etc) in design codes?

Also discussion as to whether community energy generation (on a quasi-commercial scale) was possible – land, size of facility, etc?

Led to question – are the NPPF and WBC policies sufficient?

NPPF 161

“Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.”

DM4

The Council will support proposals for renewable energy provided that the technology:

- is suitable for the location;
- not on the most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a);
- is accompanied by a landscape/visual impact assessment; and
- would not cause harm to residential amenity by virtue of noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker or other harmful emissions.

Conclusions:

Leave domestic renewable energy (solar panels, heat pumps, etc) to design codes.

Have a policy about supporting any community energy generation scheme along the lines of Appendix C within the presentation (nb see NPPF 155 to 158).

Community energy generation (quasi commercial)

Must be led by the community, for the benefit of the community - the proposed development has community involvement at the heart of the project's development process. Examples include:

- proposals which are conceived in partnership between a community organisation and a developer (commercial or non-profit), or another party;
- proposals which are supported, or promoted by a community at the planning or pre-planning stage.

Must meet the needs of the community - the proposal is capable of producing social, economic or environmental benefits, which are inclusive and accessible to all within the local community over the lifetime of the project. Examples of such benefits include:

- community ownership and control over renewable energy assets (and their energy and financial outputs);
- the generation of surpluses which can be spent by the local community;
- cheaper and more secure local energy supply (which could be achieved through measures such as deployment of smart energy management technologies, energy storage and through community controlled energy supply);
- benefits to the local environment, which are identified and desired by the local community.

Community energy generation via new residential/business developments

Leave to design codes.

EV Charging

EV charging for new developments is covered by the Building Regulations 2010 – these require the installation of EV charging points in the following circumstances:

- new residential homes - each home with onsite parking must have its own charging point;
- new residential buildings with parking in a covered car park – each dwelling with a parking space must have a charging point;

- buildings converted for residential use and which have a car park – each dwelling with a parking space must have a charging point;
- residential buildings undergoing major renovation work which will have more than 10 parking spaces – each dwelling must have one charging point and all other parking spaces cable routes;
- new non-residential buildings with more than 10 parking spaces – must have a minimum of 1 charging point and cable routes for at least 20% of the remaining spaces;
- mixed-use buildings - the requirements for residential buildings above and non-residential buildings above apply (calculations are required based on the number of parking spaces designated for use by the respective classes of occupant).

NP wouldn't propose imposing EV charging on existing public spaces.