

Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan – SWOT Analysis

Supporting Evidence

Purpose

The SWOT analysis contained within the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan summarises the principal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified during the preparation of the Plan.

The analysis has been informed by community engagement, published evidence, technical studies and the existing Evidence Base. Its purpose is to provide a concise overview of the key characteristics and issues affecting the parish and to demonstrate how these have helped inform the Vision, objectives and Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This supporting note identifies the principal evidence relating to each element of the SWOT analysis. Abbreviations and acronyms in the Neighbourhood Plan are adopted.

Strengths

SWOT finding	Principal supporting evidence
Strong village identity and sense of community	November 2022 consultation; October 2025 consultation; SMVDS; SMNDP. The level of participation throughout preparation of the SMNP also provides evidence of continuing community engagement.
Clear separation between village and countryside	SMVDS; DGC; settlement and parish mapping identifying the settlement form, rural setting and relationship between the built-up area and surrounding countryside.
Valued green spaces, commons and landscape setting	SMVDS; DGC; consultation responses; Local Green Space information and mapping contained in SMNP and/or WBC online map (see 'Maps and Plans' in SMNP).
Rich historic character, settlement pattern and heritage assets	SMVDS; DGC; SMNDP.
Range of local services and facilities for a parish of its size	SMNDP; community consultations; information gathered during preparation of the Employment, Facilities and Services Policies.
Good rail and road connectivity supporting access to employment	Parish and transport mapping; DGC; SMNDP.
Well-used footpaths and public rights of way	Public Rights of Way mapping contained in WBC online map; SMVDS; DGC; community consultations.
High levels of community engagement and civic involvement	See 'Consultation Process' in SMNP.
Established Neighbourhood Development Plan providing a locally driven planning framework	SMNDP and associated referendum/adoption information.

Weaknesses

SWOT finding

Limited public transport beyond rail services

Distance between parts of the village and the railway station

Parking pressure near the station, village centre and schools

Capacity constraints for SEND places, healthcare, drainage and wastewater infrastructure

Flooding and surface water management issues in parts of the parish

Housing affordability challenges, particularly for younger people

Limited smaller and downsizing homes

Perceived gaps in walking and cycling connectivity

Principal supporting evidence

Community consultations and local knowledge regarding bus routes and timetables.

Parish mapping; DGC; walking and transport information.

2022 and 2025 consultation responses, including community feedback concerning station, school and village-centre parking.

Community consultations and engagement with relevant service and infrastructure providers.

Prolonged Day Darkness and Extreme Rainfall in Berkshire, 20 July 2007; SMNDP, Surface Water Risk Management – notes on selection of design rainfall amounts; flood-risk information; community consultations.

Community consultations; HNA.

Community consultations; HNA.

2022 and 2025 consultations; DGC.

Opportunities

SWOT finding

Use the Neighbourhood Plan to shape the scale, location and quality of growth

Deliver a more balanced housing mix focused on local need

Improve walking, cycling and sustainable transport links

Enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure and environmental resilience

Secure infrastructure improvements alongside development

Principal supporting evidence

SMNDP; LPR; DGC; community consultations.

HNA; community consultations.

Community consultations; DGC; Public Rights of Way and transport mapping.

DGC; environmental and Local Green Space information.

Community consultations and available evidence relating to drainage, transport, utilities and community facilities.

SWOT finding

Strengthen the village centre and support local services

Principal supporting evidence

Community consultations; evidence gathered in developing the Employment, Facilities and Services Policies; SMNDP.

Threats

SWOT finding

Development pressure arising from Mortimer's accessibility and Thames Valley location

Principal supporting evidence

West Berkshire planning context; SMNDP; DGC.

Risk of overdevelopment and loss of village identity

SMVDS; DGC; community consultations.

Gradual urbanisation, including loss of dark skies, green space and rural character

SMVDS; DGC; Natural Environment Policies evidence; community consultations.

Infrastructure failing to keep pace with growth

Community consultations; drainage and flood evidence.

National planning policy changes reducing local influence

NPPF.

Speculative development outside allocated sites

NPPF; LPR, community consultations.

Increasing house prices further limiting affordability for local residents

Community consultations; HNA.