

# Notice of Meeting



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## Eastern Area Planning Committee Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 6.30pm Written Submissions

### Members Interests

Note: If you consider you may have an interest in any Planning Application included on this agenda then please seek early advice from the appropriate officers.

Date of despatch of Agenda: Tuesday 28 July 2020

### FURTHER INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact the Planning Team on (01635) 519148

Email: [planapps@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:planapps@westberks.gov.uk)

Further information, Planning Applications and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at [www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

Any queries relating to the Committee should be directed to Stephen Chard / Jessica Bailiss on (01635) 519462/503124 Email: [stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk) / [jessica.bailiss@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:jessica.bailiss@westberks.gov.uk)



WestBerkshire  
C O U N C I L

**Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 5 August 2020**  
(continued)

**To:** Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law (Chairman), Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Geoff Mayes, Graham Pask and Joanne Stewart

**Substitutes:** Councillors Peter Argyle, Graham Bridgman, Owen Jeffery, Nassar Kessell, Richard Somner and Keith Woodhams

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# Agenda

## Part I

**Page No.**

- |     |   |        |
|-----|---|--------|
| (1) | <b>Application No. &amp; Parish: 20/00674/FUL - Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer.</b>                                 | 3 - 12 |
|     | <b>Proposal:</b> Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works. |        |
|     | <b>Location:</b> Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer.  |        |
|     | <b>Applicant:</b> Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council.   |        |
|     | <b>Recommendation:</b> The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to refuse planning permission.  |        |

### Background Papers

- (a) The West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.
- (b) The West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies September 2007), the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents.
- (c) Any previous planning applications for the site, together with correspondence and report(s) on those applications.
- (d) The case file for the current application comprising plans, application forms, correspondence and case officer's notes.
- (e) The Human Rights Act.

Sarah Clarke  
Service Director (Strategy and Governance)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.

## Eastern Area Planning Committee

Wednesday 05.08 2020

### Written Submissions

<b>Item:</b>	1
<b>Application Number:</b>	20/00674/FUL
<b>Location:</b>	Land To The South East Mortimer Station
<b>Proposal:</b>	Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works
<b>Applicant:</b>	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

#### Submissions received

Parish Council	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Adjoining Parish Council	N/A
Objectors	John & Ruth Clatworthy
Supporters	Great Western Railway
Applicant/ Agent	Katherine Miles – Pro Vision

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Parish Council Office  
Mortimer Library  
27 Victoria Road  
Mortimer  
Reading  
RG7 3SH

☎ 0118 9331955

✉ [the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

💻 [www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 20/00674/FUL**

**PROPOSAL: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations**

**to the highway, landscaping, and associated works**

**SITE: Land To The South East, Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer**

SMPC fully supports the planning application for the change of use of land and construction of a 150 space car park at Mortimer Station together with alterations to the highway, landscaping and associated works. The application derives from the strong local wish for increased parking at the station evidenced over a long period and has had full support from GWR and Englefield Estate since the outset.

The project is a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) project. Stratfield Mortimer has the only adopted NDP in West Berkshire; adopted by WBC in 2017, its policies are frequently cited by WBC in response to planning applications. In the main NDP questionnaire in 2015 1006 people (92%) endorsed station car park enlargement. This was the highest single response in a lengthy questionnaire. As a result, Policy IS3 established “extension to the station car parking will be promoted and encouraged”. SMPC is carrying out the wishes of the community in this application and WBC should support this.

Our Statement of Community Involvement illustrates the methods used to involve and inform the people of Mortimer of the plans and proposals in line with the Localism Act 2011. In particular, the Community Needs survey June –July 2018 attracted 494 responses with results demonstrating overwhelming support for increased and improved station parking:

- 410 (83%) thought current parking provision poor or very poor
- 377 (76%) would travel by train more if parking more accessible
- 438 (87%) thought train use would increase with improved parking

Note that the survey was only carried out in Mortimer, thus capturing only a third of the catchment of Mortimer station i.e. excluding Burghfield Common, Silchester, Sulhamstead. The survey also did not take into account the residents of the 110 new homes allocated in the NDP and since granted permission.

Analysis of the full results establishes the need for 150 new parking spaces.

West Berkshire Core Strategy 2012 - Area Delivery Plan P6 Identifies “poor transport connections of the East Kennet Valley” and states “improvement to the accessibility of

Mortimer Railway station will be sought, for example through enhancements to the road bridge. This will be taken forward through partnership working". This application is clearly consistent with WBC policy.

Increasing capacity at Mortimer station also supports CS13 – "Improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly... between... main urban areas and rural service centres". Mortimer is designated as a Rural Service Centre in the Core Strategy.

The shortage of parking spaces has led to indiscriminate and very dangerous parking along Grazeley Road (up to 25 cars) eroding verges and along The Street towards St. Mary's Junior School exacerbating significant school drop off/pickup issues. This generates continued complaints from the public to SMPC and WBC.

The village centre is more than a mile from the station; there is no public transport between the two. The steep hill means walking to and from the station is not an option for many.

SMPC urges councillors to support this application and give the residents of Mortimer what they have strongly requested.

## **Written submission by John & Ruth Clatworthy – objectors**

1. The public consultation/community involvement claimed by SMPC to support their application was crude and did not adequately explore public views. Prior to the drawing up of the plans there was no consultation with the public on either site location or size and at the consultation in Feb 2019 the public was presented with a seeming fait accompli with no alternative offered.

In their attempt at rebuttal of objections submitted Pro Vision refer to "various long-term benefits of the proposal for villagers and those using the station for commuting" and claim the pedestrian link will provide access to the station "and other village community facilities". There is no definition of these "long-term benefits" or "other village community facilities." There is also reference to "significant support from the wider community" but no evidence of this is provided.

2. The claim by Pro Vision that their survey demonstrated scope for a "modal shift" to increased use of rail travel from Mortimer is now severely undermined. GWR has recently announced that they plan to revise their season ticketing strategy to accommodate the reduction in passenger numbers because of the modal shift to home working resulting from the Covid 19 epidemic. Passenger numbers are 16% of pre-Covid -19 figures, they have announced. This reduction is reflected in the fact that a daily maximum of 5 parked cars has been observed in the existing station car park since the start of easing of lockdown restrictions on 15th June.

West Berkshire Council's recent residents survey of the impact of Covid-19 reports that "almost all respondents who were able to work from home intend to continue to do so and even more in the future."

It is also worth noting that there is no prospect of electrification of this line in the foreseeable future and therefore use of diesel locomotives will continue. Encouraging increased rail passenger traffic on this line and therefore road traffic to access it is surely contrary to Greener Berkshire policy.

3. The applicants claim that their proposed car park "fully respect(s) the rural character of the area." Urbanisation of the rural landscape involved shows no respect, we would contend, and no amount of "sensitive landscaping" can mitigate the visual impact of a car park with height restriction gantry and other inevitable paraphernalia.

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03 August 2020

Planning  
West Berkshire Council

By Email

To whom it may concern,

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**Great Western Railway**

Milford House  
1 Milford Street  
Swindon, SN1 1HL

GWR.com

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 20/00674/FUL**

**PROPOSAL: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works**

**SITE: Land To The South East, Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer**

**Supporters Committee Speech**

I write to confirm GWR's strong support for expanded parking provision for Mortimer Station.

GWR has worked closely with Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (SMPC) over the last three years to progress the project. Mortimer Station has seen significantly lower growth in rail passenger numbers than the industry average over the last 15 years. The existing car parking provision at the station is full to capacity, with rail users also parking on-street in the vicinity of the station. These factors strongly suggest that the lack of car parking supply for the station is suppressing growth in rail use and limiting the station's role in the local transport network.

The 2018 Assessment of Community Survey which covered only around a third of catchment area of Mortimer Station, clearly demonstrated that use of rail services is currently suppressed by the current car park capacity. Of 494 responses received more than 350 people stated they would travel by train more often if more parking was available at the station.

The Office of Rail and Road publish estimates of station usage each year for every station in the UK. Between 2004/5 and 2018/19 the number of passenger journeys to and from Mortimer station increased by just 3%. This compares with a 95% increase in passenger numbers across the industry and, as a more local comparable, 39% growth at Bramley Station over the same period. Growth in rail use at Mortimer Station has not grown in line with background demand growth.

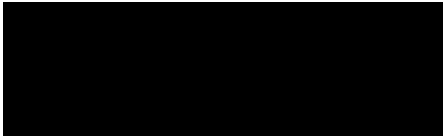
GWR has a track record of investing in station facilities and has expanded car parking provision at a number of rural stations over the last ten years where existing facilities were full, providing capacity for suppressed demand. For example, at Kingham doubling the car park capacity to 248 spaces increase the passenger numbers by 47%. At Hanborough increasing spaces from 39 to 278 saw a tripling of passenger numbers.

Following an expansion of station car parking at Mortimer, GWR would expect a similar significant increase in passengers using the station.

Access between the platforms at Mortimer is via a stepped footbridge and there is no step-free route between the platforms. The planning application recognises this through the provision of a safe pedestrian route and associated infrastructure via the proposed new car park and over the railway bridge on Station Road.

In December 2019 GWR introduced additional services on the Reading to Basingstoke line. GWR also intend to introduce 4-car trains on the route which have additional capacity compared to the current 2 and 3-car trains. These improvements will provide additional capacity and make the use of rail services from Mortimer Station more attractive, increasing demand and the role the station can potentially play in delivering modal shift away from the private car; for this to be realised however, additional car parking for the station is required.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Tom Pierpoint.

**Tom Pierpoint**

Commercial Development Director

**20/00674/FUL - Land to the South east of Mortimer Station,  
Station Road, Mortimer**

**Proposal: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150-space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works**



**Applicants Committee Speech**

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Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (SMPC) is Applicant but Great Western Railway (GWR) will construct the facility and appoint APCOA, who manage the existing car park, to deal with fee collection, safety and security.

We consulted WBC following the project being heavily endorsed in the NDP. SMPC has since worked closely with GWR and Englefield Estate (the landowner) over the last 4 years to procure studies and reports on Need, Landscape, Highways, Drainage, Trees, Ecology etc. to deal with concerns of the Council. Their three main concerns have been resolved:

Firstly, justification of need for 150 spaces:

- An independent survey was conducted in Mortimer and demonstrated overwhelmingly that at least 150 more spaces were needed.
- GWR advise that rail travel from Mortimer, currently 189,000 annual journeys and only 51 spaces, is being significantly suppressed by parking limitations and that similar rural stations have much greater parking capacity e.g. Kemble, 223,000 journeys, has 220 spaces and Kingham, 124,000 journeys, has 123 spaces.

Secondly, highway safety and accessibility for disabled and movement-restricted passengers using the road bridge and proximity of the access point to the bridge.

- A new pedestrian footpath over the road bridge is proposed. Passengers will now be able to park either side, complete a return journey, and safely return to their car via the road bridge as an alternative to the footbridge over the line. The access point has been moved further from the bridge to achieve visibility splays.

Thirdly, visual impact on the character of the area:

- A landscape and visual impact assessment has minimised the visual effect of the car park. The existing hedgerow will be maintained at a height not less than 2.5 metres. The car park will be almost invisible from the road and there are no footpaths from which walkers could see it. The car park is well screened from the station by dense existing trees and hedging along the back of the Basingstoke platform. A Grampian condition can secure additional planting.

Green Park Station will increase demand for parking at the station from those working in Green Park or travelling to Reading Stadium.

New homes in Mortimer will also increase demand.

Although MereOak Park & Ride is useful for off-peak journeys to Reading or Royal Berks Hospital, there are delays of up to 30 minutes for traffic from Mortimer/Burghfield direction at morning rush-hour and of course it is no help for passengers to Basingstoke.

Some objectors cited a possible station at Grazeley as a reason not to increase capacity at Mortimer; this has been talked about for 40 years. GWR have stated that with the opening of Green Park station there will be no station built at Grazeley. In addition the Wokingham Local Plan is on hold pending a judicial review regarding the enlarged protection zone for Aldermaston and Burghfield AWE so the prospect for Grazeley has yet again receded into the distance.

WBC should support this application to fulfil the wishes of residents to be able to make use of the transport link.