

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Stratfield Mortimer Designation of Neighbourhood Area</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Task Group
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13th December 2013
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	

**Purpose of Report:** To inform members of the results of the recent consultation into the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Stratfield Mortimer

**Recommended Action:** That the Portfolio Holder for Planning Transport (Policy), Culture, Customer Services, Countryside and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Equalities, Communities, Community Safety, Hungerford and Eastern Area Visions

**Reason for decision to be taken:** To comply with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Localism Act 2011  
To enable Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to undertake a Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Other options considered:** none

**Key background documentation:** The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6)  
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012  
Application to designate a Neighbourhood Area submitted by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

**CSP7 - Empowering people and communities**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:

<b>Portfolio Member Details</b>	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Please select
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	Please select @westberks.gov.uk
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer Details</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Bryan Lyttle
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## Implications

<b>Policy:</b>	As stated in the report
<b>Financial:</b>	As yet undetermined – the Parish Council has made provision for £8,000 and applied for additional funding from other sources.
<b>Personnel:</b>	Not Consulted as deemed not appropriate
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	Not Consulted as deemed not appropriate
<b>Property:</b>	Not Consulted as deemed not appropriate
<b>Risk Management:</b>	Not Consulted as deemed not appropriate

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Outcome</b> (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at <a href="http://www.westberks.gov.uk/eia">www.westberks.gov.uk/eia</a>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

# Executive Report

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and orders and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum.

1.2 The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6 chapter 3) sets out the LPA responsibilities as:

Designating the area of the NDP

Advising or assisting communities in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan

Checking a submitted plan meets the legal requirements

Arranging for the independent examination of the plan

Determining whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements

Subject to the results of the referendum/s bringing the plan into force

1.3 Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is the relevant body to undertake neighbourhood planning in the area in accordance with section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and section 5C of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and has applied (Appendix A) for the entire parish to be designated the "Neighbourhood Area".

## 2. Consultation

2.1 All of the information submitted by Stratfield Mortimer was correct and in accordance with the legislation.

2.2 The application to designate Stratfield Mortimer as an area for a Neighbourhood Plan was published in the Reading Chronicle and on the West Berkshire consultation database for a period of six weeks (11<sup>th</sup> October – 22<sup>nd</sup> November). In addition emails advertising the consultation were sent to everyone of the objective database including Parish Councils, Members, Statutory consultees (including all District/ Unitaries and Counties neighbouring West Berkshire) and members of the public.

2.3 The Council received just 10 responses which are set out in appendix C.

## 3. Consultation Responses

3.1 Of all the responses only that submitted on behalf of T A Fisher (a Mortimer based property company) questions the validity of the proposed Neighbourhood Area, stating:

"It seems to us the search area identified in the link on your web site is unduly large particularly having regard to sustainability matters. We would suggest the eastern limit for the study area should be the Reading/Basingstoke railway line".

## **4. Determining the application for Neighbourhood Area**

- 4.1 In determining the application, the Local Planning Authority must consider;
- a) How desirable it is to designate the whole of the parish area as a neighbourhood area, and
  - b) How desirable it is to maintain the existing boundaries of areas already designated as neighbourhood areas (as areas designated must not overlap) as well as;
  - c) Whether they should designate the area as a business area.
- 4.2 With regards to the designation of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Area 4.1 B does not apply as this is the first application for designation in West Berkshire in addition the Council has not received any correspondence from the neighbouring authorities.
- 4.3 Stratfield Mortimer is designated as a Rural Service Centre in the West Berkshire Core Strategy, it is not wholly or predominantly business in nature and it is therefore not appropriate for the area to be designated as a business area.
- 4.4 Representation has been made (see 3.1) that the designation should be limited to just the part of the parish that lies to the west of the Reading / Basingstoke railway line in the interests of sustainability.
- 4.5 In the application the Parish Council state that the sole intention “is to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the area. A Neighbourhood Plan will enable the Parish to guide future development and ensure that Mortimer remains an excellent place in which to live and work”. The statement goes on “though much of the population and most businesses are concentrated in the south west of the Parish, the farmed and wooded areas and commons are an integral part of the parish and we therefore wish the designated area to be the whole Parish”.
- 4.6 This notion that the wooded areas and commons are an integral part of the Parish is also recognised by the response from the Woodland Trust.
- 4.7 Given that the stated aim of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is to guide future development and ensure that Mortimer remains an excellent place to live and work, there is no justification for a modification to the proposed Neighbourhood Area.
- ## **5. Recommendation**
- 5.1 Given the responses received to the consultation on the designation of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Area and the criteria for determining such an application it is recommended that the proposed Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Area be approved.

## **Appendices**

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Appendix A – Application to designated Neighbourhood Area

Appendix B – Map of Neighbourhood Area

Appendix C – Response to consultation

## **Consultee**

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**Local Stakeholders:** As listed in 2.1

**Officers Consulted:**

**Trade Union:**