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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.