

From: Nick Carter

Sent: 17 September 2025 10:51

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Subject: Proposed allocation SPS5.15 – Land at West End Farm, Mortimer West End (approx. 350 homes)

Hi Andy & BDBC Local Plan team,

I write in my capacity as West Berkshire district councillor for Burghfield & Mortimer to register my strong objection to the proposed allocation of Land at West End Farm, Mortimer West End (Policy SPS5.15) for approximately 350 homes.

Although situated within Basingstoke & Deane, the site lies immediately adjacent to Mortimer (West Berkshire). Any such development would serve as a major extension of Mortimer and have significant cross-boundary impacts.

I note that this proposal appears to have been put forward without prior engagement with West Berks Council (beyond their being informed of it), me as ward member, my colleagues or Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council. Cllr Carr appeared to query your consultation approach at the 4 Sept committee meeting that decided to put this site forward for the BDBC emerging Local Plan regardless.

My specific concerns are as follows:

1. Scale, Settlement Impact and Location

- Mortimer West End is a small rural hamlet. A development of 350 homes would overwhelm its identity.
- The proposed development would impose a large, probably out-of-keeping, urban extension on Mortimer itself. By out-of- keeping, I fear urban housing types and densities that conflict both with what exists both in Mortimer and Mortimer West End and with any future development, the latter as defined in the Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan.
- Whilst the claim, in section 5.15 of the report used to inform your committee's decision to allocate the site, that it "...would form an extension to Mortimer" is literally incorrect (the site is after all in Hampshire), Mortimer residents made clear in the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan that *"Any development should also be as close to the village centre as possible so as to sustain shops and services and to promote/retain the village lifestyle of being able to easily walk to essential services such as Doctors, shops and Post Office"*. This policy informed the decision to allocate new housing that was imposed on us to the village centre. This entailed going to

lengths to tackle topographical challenges to be able to deliver it. The community explicitly ruled out the site shown below in red as too remote. Your site is even more remote.

- If you do allocate your site, it's bound to give credence to speculative planning applications in the red area (MOR004).
- It strikes me that the site, on the edge of Hampshire as it is, is being put forward as "out of site and out of mind", with little regard for the impact on the hamlet of Mortimer West End or the neighbouring village of Mortimer. It is perhaps in that sense of the "Grazeleystoke" plan put forward by Wokingham. My observations on the latter turned out to be correct.

2. Infrastructure and Services

- The site would inevitably rely on Mortimer's services and facilities all of which are already under pressure.
- Because the site lies in Basingstoke & Deane, no Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 contributions would flow to West Berkshire to mitigate this cross-boundary impact. This represents poor strategic planning.

3. Active Travel and Connectivity

- There is currently no safe or direct active travel connection between Mortimer West End and Mortimer – there is no regular bus service nor a safe walking/cycling route. Whilst your proposal appears to introduce two foot/cycle routes to West Berkshire, one of those (circled in blue above) appears to link to a field that is detached from the Mortimer settlement. I'm not sure how useful that would be.

4. Farming, Environment and Heritage

- The proposal would remove farming land at a time when the country arguably needs to maintain or grow it (some suggest a need to become more self-sufficient).
- The site lies close to sensitive landscapes, ancient woodland and heritage assets including Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester). Development at this scale would potentially erode the rural setting and harm the local environmental character.

5. Duty to Cooperate and Strategic Planning

- By proposing significant growth immediately on the boundary, Basingstoke & Deane risks exporting adverse impacts into West Berkshire while taking no responsibility for mitigation.
- This appears contrary to the spirit of the Duty to Cooperate and undermines cross-boundary strategic planning.

Whilst I understand your obligation to formulate a new Local Plan, and am aware of the pressures that all council's face in responding to the government's house building targets, the fact remains that I believe allocation of SPS5.15 represents unsound planning strategy because it is disproportionate in

scale, in the wrong place, unsupported by infrastructure, environmentally harmful, and shows a lack of proper cooperation with neighbouring authorities.

I therefore ask that Basingstoke & Deane reconsider inclusion of this site before Regulation 18 consultation. Should the site nevertheless be carried forward to consultation, it should please be clearly identified as highly controversial. In that event, I will work with West Berkshire Council and local parish councils to bring forward evidence to oppose it and will engage with residents to encourage them to respond too.

Please forward this to your Planning Policy team, since the BDBC Local Plan email address doesn't seem to work.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Carter

West Berks District Councillor - Burghfield, Mortimer, Beech Hill & Wokefield ("Burghfield & Mortimer" ward)

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Home page: <https://bit.ly/CllrNick>

Newsletter: <https://bit.ly/WBCJuly25>

CC: West Berks Council Planning Policy, West Berks Council Planning Portfolio Holder, Mortimer West End Parish Council, Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

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