

WETHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING WETHERSFIELD, BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END



MINUTES of the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee Meeting held at Blackmore End Village Hall on Monday, 30 May 2022, commencing at 7:30pm.

Present:

- Cllr A Hull (Chairman) (Shalford PC)
- Cllr R Duffin (Vice Chairman) (Finchingfield PC)
- Cllr J Pearce (Wethersfield PC)
- Cllr A French (Shalford PC)
- Cllr T Roberts (Toppesfield PC)
- Cllr R Aggiss (Salings PC)
- Cllr P Kennedy (Great Bardfield PC)
- Cllr M Lee (Sible Hedingham PC)
- Cllr J Toocaram (Castle Hedingham PC)
- Cllr David Coverdale (Finchingfield PC)
- Cllr J O'Brien (Little Bardfield PC)
- Donna Roder (Deputy Clerk)

In Attendance: Members of the Public: 2

WA15/22-23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr S Moutard (Gosfield PC), Cllr Alan Collard (Toppesfield PC), Cllr Sue Short (Wethersfield PC), Cllr G Southgate (Castle Hedingham PC), Cllr Sebastian Harris (Sible Hedingham PC) and Cllr D Hockley (Great Bardfield PC).

WA16/22-23 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None declared.

WA17/22-23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2022, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposer Cllr J Pearce, seconded Cllr T Roberts.

WA18/22-23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- i. A member of SWAP confirmed they have raised £22,791.95 so far, and membership of The Fields Association currently stands at 144.
- ii. A member of SWAP advised they are currently circulating 10K new leaflets. On foot in Sible Hedingham to some 2K houses. SWAP have also written again to James Cleverley MP, asking for an independent review to be held on the MOJ Wethersfield Prison proposal. James Cleverley MP replied that this has been passed to the MOJ. FOI's from ECC are being circulated on social media, and letters for schools are underway. SWAP also attended many PC Annual Parish Meetings in May. The Wethersfield Museum also highlighted the opposition for the prison proposals, on Essex Radio recently.

WA19/22-23 CLERKS REPORT

CORRESPONDENCE

1. WASC and DIO. A further request has been sent for WASC and it's Consultants to access to the site to complete WASC surveys. The email was sent on May 26th, and awaiting response and date selection.
2. BALC: Wethersfield PC have agreed to join BALC and paid the annual subscription invoice.
3. BDC: A further communication was sent to Councillor Peter Tattersley for a retraction of WASC's position to both BDC and the MOJ sent 24 March 2022. Further responses has been received and subsequent meeting set up on June 23rd.
4. MOJ: Communication to arrange a meeting with the MOJ and WASC is in progress.
5. Prison Officers Association: Email sent 20 May 2022, on the Prisons Trust Reform Paper 2007, regarding Titan Prisons and if the POA position still stands.

SWAP

Banners: Wethersfield PC have agreed and purchased a Banner. It will be displayed above the bus shelter next to the Village Hall in June.

Chris Packham now behind the SWAP Campaign on the prison proposal. The Government Petition is now at >10K signatures and awaiting a Government response.

PARISH INVOLVEMENT

No further updates from Stebbing, The Sampfords, Stambourne and Radwinter currently. Birkbrook PC invitation sent 3rd April 2022, and follow-up correspondence sent 20 May 2022. Rigewell PC invitation also sent 20 May 2022.

WA20/22-23 SUB-COMMITTEES UPDATE

Cllr A Hull gave an update on communication and strategy. The Titan Prisons opinion and papers were finalised over the weekend. How to proceed with the information and intelligence will be discussed further next week. Two members of the Communications Sub-Committee will meet with Cllr P Tattersley, on June 23rd.

Cllr J Pearce gave an update on the Technical Work Program (see below). The Technical Sub-Committee are sticking and progressing with the Work Program as previously agreed. Their next Technical Sub-Committee Meeting will be held next week. In the Levelling up BDC paper, rural Braintree scored badly on qualifications, pay, jobs and connectivity, including a lack of shops. Relative deprivation across all UK prison sites will be discussed. There is evidence of negative health outcome v deprivation. Digital model and modelling work has been completed and tested on the southside of the base. The drone will do a full circuit this week, including the Pant Valley. Visuals should be ready in couple of weeks. Transport: Lots of information and data already identified in recent FOI's, to challenge. Consultant needed to prepare a full report; our own estimates are already done and the numbers are in line with those in the FOI's. Landscape assessment and baseline report will be ready in the next two weeks. Ecology: Awaiting Natural England's report within the next month. BDC's Local Plan is still not fully adopted. Modifications have been requested by the Inspectorate, however should be in place and fully adopted in the next 2-3 weeks. Heritage: Baseline study and assets in the area completed. There is a potential for listing the base, conservation area or scheduled monument. The buildings have been identified for listing, and those that could be listed. Advocating conservation area status will require an additional £4K cost to move forward. An agreement to pursue this was agreed by all WASC members.

WASC - Technical Sub Committee Phase 1 Work Programme

Task	Description	Lead	Estimated Cost	Progress
Preparation of database	Set up a WASC research database which could be shared with SWAP	RS	£100.00	Estimate obtained but could be reduced through sharing within the team. 5-6 people can access. JP to send email addresses to RS for those sub-committee members to access. Database implemented
Digital model of proposal/flyaround	Preparation of a digital model of the prison proposals set in the context of the surrounding area and enabling a fly around (later phase) the site/area to demonstrate the landscape impact. Need for CAD support and drone photography	MN	£2,900.00	Three coordinated contracts needed. Modeling - Sedley Place £2100, Digital capture - Septra Studio's £800. Drone footage - FOC GT. £3K saving on previous quotes with VAT. v. £5175 originally + VAT. Draft model progressed
Landscape character assessment	Assess landscape character, determine visual envelope and take photographs of representative views. Appraise the baseline landscape and visual context. Identify sensitive landscape elements/features / risks to be taken into account. Identify sensitive visual receptors to be considered. Set out the planning context, local landscape character, visual amenity, constraints and opportunities (landscape and visual baseline). The purpose of the report is to establish well-founded design recommendations to evaluate the impact of the development.	JP	£4,900.00	Three quotes obtained. Preferred consultant interviewed and to be appointed. Work phased so that this phase will be baseline assessment. Discount applied in conjunction with heritage work set out below. Contract commenced with CBA
Economic assessment	The creation of jobs and economic benefits to the area is like to be a major argument to support a planning application for the prisons. However the evidence to support that assertion is thin on the ground. This economic assessment study seeks to review the evidence and draw conclusions about the likely benefits that the proposal would bring when weighed against the locational disadvantages	RS	In house	Draft document prepared for discussion. Ongoing research in progress
Critical Down assessment	When a public body acquires land compulsorily or by requisition and later declares that land surplus to requirements there is an obligation to offer the land back to the original owners or their successors provided there is no material change in the character of the land. This is an arguable point that needs to be resolved.	SS	In house	SS prepared an initial issues paper for consideration. Decided to take no further action at present. Local landowners may progress.
Previously Developed Land assessment	To consider the argument being advanced that as a brownfield site there is a presumption in favour of the development. If accepted this would be a material consideration and needs to be challenged with robust research and legal opinion if necessary	JP/SS	£1,000.00	Fixed quote received from planning consultant. Report completed. Consideration to be given at later stage to obtaining Counsel opinion
Prisons Strategy White Paper	To prepare a response on behalf of WASC/ SWAP which demonstrate that the proposal would be in conflict with the White Paper	SS/RS	In house	Response prepared and submitted to meet the consultation deadline
Traffic Modelling data	Traffic count proposed at four locations (either side of Sculpins Lane junction with Finchingfield Road, Hedingham Road and Braintree Road) to give base data to build up a model of traffic movement which can be used to assess the traffic impact of the proposals on the local area taking into account traffic generated at other new prisons.	MN/RS	£600.00	Traffic count completed. Initial analysis undertaken, expectation based on several assumptions, traffic increase best case scenario +114% overall. HGV's will be significantly higher, plus organic growth in traffic levels coming 10yrs. Expert traffic analysis needed (see below).
Strategic accessibility study	A study which is looking at the relative remoteness of the site from major roads when compared to the rest of the UK. This will demonstrate the effect this would have on costs of construction, costs on the supply chain once operational, the need to travel by private vehicles, and the conflict with prisons policy for prisoners to be closely accessible to jobs, family and health services.	MN	In house	Study been progressed. Demonstrates relative isolation of MoJ site contrary to prison strategy
Levelling Up assessment	ECC have published a so called White Paper relating to levelling up across Essex. Based on the Indices of Deprivation Rural Braintree is identified as one of five Priority Area alongside Harlow, Basildon, parts of Colchester and Jaywick. The implications of this need to be considered.	RS/JP	In house	Comments made directly to Cllr Butland at WPC who responded to deprivation in Rural Braintree based on ageing population, access to services and public transport, but implications need to be evaluated. Cllr Butland asked in writing to clarify data. Reply chased up by WPC. Paper prepared showing economic benefits of
Ecology assessment	To carry out an ecological survey of the site which will map the Phase 1 habitats and assess the potential of the site following implementation of proposals to support protected and priority species and habitats. Report should identify any likely significant impacts on key biodiversity receptors, including statutory designated and non-designated sites, make recommendations for further detailed Phase 2 surveys where appropriate, highlight how features of ecological value can be protected and suggest mitigation and enhancements to enable biodiversity net gain to be achieved. Carry out a desk-based study to identify records of rare and protected species, and protected areas/habitats, in or around the site.	RG	£3,000.00	Three quotes sought. Two obtained. Need to consider possibility of open mosaic habitat. Reports need update but access to site required. JP present consultants quotes to review required work. Discussions with NE being progressed
Heritage assessment	To carry out an initial heritage assessment of impact on setting of listed buildings in area around base; consider heritage assets within base and impact of prison proposals consider impact on setting of Wethersfield Conservation Area; consider WASC application to designate base heritage assets, make case for Cons Area status	JP	£3,800.00	CBA appointed. Phase 1 work to include baseline assessment and assessment of non-designated heritage assets and potential for conservation area/monument designation at base. Additional £4500 budget needed if undertake designation application. Historic England and Place Services response to Scoping request a helpful indication of heritage issues
Architectural assessment	Obtain an authoritative view of architectural merits of prison proposals	JP	TBC	Consider possible consultants
Review local and national planning policies	Draw together all relevant policies in Local Plan Part 1 and 2 of BDC Local Plan and NPPF and guidance. Part 2 examination expected to be concluded soon followed by adoption at Council	JP	In House	Lot of this work covered in previous consultation responses. Update to include Part 1 and 2 of Local Plan 2022 when approved by BDC. Meeting with BDC 25/04 to discuss determining issues and procedure
Respond to EIA scoping request	Provide a WASC response to the Scoping request submitted by MoJ with a December deadline. This seeks a BDC opinion on what matters need to be covered in an Environmental Impact Assessment	JP	In house	Completed. Submitted on 24/12/21
Transport Assessment	To give a qualified and accurate traffic assessment impact statement. Detailed analysis needs to be fully qualified and broken down by type of vehicles generated by prisons plus organic local growth next 10 years.	JP/MN	£2,500.00	Quote being sought
			Estimated Total + VAT	£22,975 - £28,467
			Revised. Estimated Total + VAT	£22,858 - £28,350

WA21/22-23 BDC FOI'S:

Correspondence from ECC has been identified in the FOI's. Many concerns in line with those WASC has identified. Next steps to be discussed by the Communications and Strategy Sub-Committees.

WA22/22-23 JOINT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

As the base is not in BDC's local plan, this could be filled by the Neighbourhood Plan. The base touches four parishes, and therefore a joint plan would give scope for us to decide what happens to the base in the future should a plan be put in place. The DIO are also very keen for us to do this in conjunction with them. It was agreed that the four parishes would meet together in the first instance, for an informal discussion.

WA23/22-23 ECC LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

A response has been produced on the above. Currently £123K is planned to be spent, however that's representative of <1% of those living in the most deprived areas in the UK. BDC are launching their levelling up plan in Sible Hedingham on June 10, 2022. Many parish councils in the area have not been invited despite the hall capacity is around 200 people. ECC would not give us information on the data in their report, we could only get this information by requesting FOI's.

WA24/22-23 WASC NEWSLETTER

Cllr R Duffin will produce a newsletter to be distributed to all WASC PC members after each meeting. The News Letter can be used for distribution to electorates in their respective parishes.

WA25/22-23 SWAP NEWSLETTER

Currently 10K leaflets are being produced each month and being distributed by the WASC member parishes that have their own newsletter or magazine. The exception being Sible Hedingham with approx. 2000 houses to deliver to. Cllr M Lee kindly agreed to discuss this further, to see how this can be managed through Sible Hedingham PC's newsletter.

WA26/22-23 FINANCE

WASC Finance			
Updated 27/05/2022			
Invoices Received			
<u>Date</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount ex VAT</u>
27/02/2022	Captial Road Safety	Traffic Monitoring	£ 600.00
10/03/2022	Sedley Place	Prison Model	£ 2,137.50
01/03/2022	CBA	Mobilisation Payments	£ 2,000.00
28/02/2022	Andrew Martin Planning	Briefing note and research	£ 1,000.00

		Total	£ 5,737.50
Income Received			
<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
21/02/2022	Shalford Parish Council	10% Contribution 21/22	£ 2,150.00
14/03/2022	Toppesfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 500.00
11/04/2022	Little Bardfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 300.00
08/04/2022	The Fields/SWAP	Grant	£ 5,000.00
15/05/2022	Great Bardfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 1,000.00
		Total	£ 8,950.00
		Current Position	£ 3,212.50
Wethersfield PC contribution is salaries of the Deputy Clerk, and Village Hall hire for WASC Meetings.			

Cllr R Aggiss (Salings PC) and Cllr M Lee (Sible Hedingham PC) will follow-up with their respective PC's to push for some financial contribution to WASC.

WA27/22-23 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA

Feedback Levelling Up Launch Meeting..

WA28/22-23 NEXT MEETING OF THE WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

The next meeting of Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee will be held on Monday June 30th 2022.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Signed:
Chairman

Date: