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I am Chair of the Fields Association, which runs the SWAP campaign.

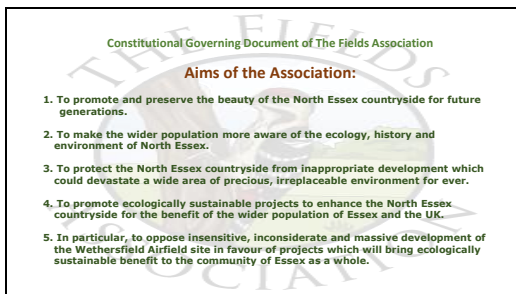
We are a residents association, all volunteers. We are open to membership to anyone who supports the principles of the association.

Others who are presenting
Ros Gourgey who was Sustainability Manager on the base about ecology and the environment

Andrew Hull, chair of WASC

John Pearce, heads the tech team

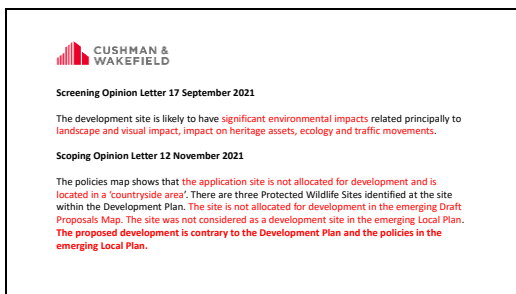
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First to point out, we are apolitical
Second, we are not anti-prisons per se, we are just anti a huge unsustainable inappropriate development in a remote site right in the middle of some of the most beautiful Essex countryside that will despoil the area for ever.
Third, SWAP has a formidable team of people with the skills and determination to see out this campaign.

WASC is also a formidable team, planner, rural economist, lawyer, quality consultants.

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Chronology of the Mega Prisons Proposal

2016

Feb 2: MoJ sends letter to councils seeking suitable sites for prisons

Feb 18: Braintree replies saying the Airfield could be a suitable site

March: MoD announces intended disposal of Wethersfield Airbase

Mar 31: Cllr Butland suggests the site could be good for a prison (Dunmow Broadcast and others)

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Braintree District Council
 Subside Development
 Coopers House
 Braintree
 Essex CM7 9JG
 Tel: 01276 353100
 www.braintree.gov.uk

- 1. Site of a minimum of c.10 flat hectares (c.25 acres) of developable area**
The site is significantly in excess of this
- 2. No clear impediments to achieving planning permission for a prison**
Sustainable transport to the site for staff and visitors may be an issue. Appropriate travel planning and bus service may need to be put in place
- 3. Ground conditions such that no abnormal costs expected during development (i.e. not marsh/flood plain/avoiding high probability flood zone)**
The site is not located within flood zone 2 or 3
- 4. Possible to connect to water/sewage/gas/electricity without unreasonable cost**
Expect that the site is already connected to the services but may wish to check directly with the MOD
- 5. Good access to public transport and motorways/trunk roads**
At present the site is poorly connected to public transport routes being located in a rural location, at a distance from the local village. The site is accessed by B roads for approximately 7miles, before it links to the A120 at Braintree.
- 6. Accessible for prison construction without major enhancement of existing transport infrastructure**
Whilst the site is accessed via a B road, this should not constrain "normal" highway suitable traffic, although it would need to pass through several villages.


7 miles, should be 9 miles.

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- 7. No known major factors such as ecological or historic designations on the site or on adjoining land that could prejudice development**
No
- 8. Any contamination is manageable**
Not aware of any contamination, although dependent on the current uses
- 9. Suitable shape for development**
Yes
- 10. Previously developed/brownfield site**
The site is currently in the ownership of the MOD, but we understand much of the site is developed
- 11. No significant Public Right of Way (PRoW), 3rd party rights of access or covenants**
No significant Public Rights of Way as the land is currently in the ownership of the MOD

If you have any further questions or require clarification on any point please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Hayden
Corporate Director
c.c. Councillor Graham Butland

Very short cursory answers you wouldn't expect from a professional

The development site is likely to have significant environmental impacts related principally to landscape and visual impact, impact **on heritage assets, ecology** and traffic movements.

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Dunmow Broadcast
Land at RAF Wethersfield could be used for homes or prison
Angela Singh Published 8:58 AM March 31, 2016 Updated 9:21 AM November 1, 2020

Instead of building houses on the former RAF base at Wethersfield, the land could be more suitable for a prison, a council leader has said.

On Thursday, the Ministry of Defence listed the base as one of 10 sites to meet the target of 160,000 new homes in the UK by 2020, including a possible 4,500 at Wethersfield.

The MOD land sell-off will generate an estimated £640million to be used for defence spending.

Graham Butland, leader of Braintree District Council, said living near a prison was one of the safest places to be: "Either the people inside them are locked up – or if they do escape, then they don't hang around."

Councillor Butland told the Broadcast: "I had a letter from the Ministry of Justice about two months ago, asking council leaders for sites suitable for prisons.

"I wrote back and said the MOD had empty land that could well be suitable. This was just my idea, it has not been put to the council.

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Dunmow Broadcast

"It's a fairly isolated site, there is no significant housing there and it is close to Stansted Airport. It's not a greenfield site, it's a brownfield site because it has a ruddy great runway on it. "RAF Wethersfield is an eyesore and something needs to be done.

"Prisons bring jobs, not just prison officers but support services and maintenance."

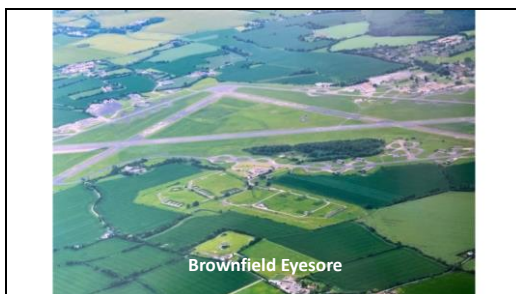
Cllr Butland said he was one of the few council leaders in Britain who had been inside most of Britain's prisons. He added: "I've been inside about 80 prisons, some of the oldest ones like Holloway and Wandsworth are appalling.

"Before I retired, I was responsible for transferring health services to prisons as the chief executive of South Essex Health Authority."

He added: "We are committed to building some 15,000 houses in the district in the next 17 years and you need to provide jobs to go with them.

Worry about mindset..... the leader has affinity and familiarity with prisons

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Chronology of the Mega Prisons Proposal

2017 to 18

Considerable amount of work between MoD and BDC, including raising the possibility of the Airbase becoming a Garden Community, which the planning dept thought was OK.

2019

Feb: Homes England/MoD announces intention to build 4,850 houses on the Airbase. 3 weeks later the proposal is withdrawn

THIS IS NOT A BINARY CHOICE – HOUSING OR PRISONS

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Chronology of the Mega Prisons Proposal

2021

MoJ letter to 1,600 homes locally about the prisons proposal

Sep: Pre-application consultation by MoJ, presentations in Wethersfield, Finchingfield. 1,800 responses.

Clrs. Butland, Tattersley and Santomauro visited a number of parishes *

Screening Opinion letter from Cushman & Wakefield

Nov: Scoping Opinion letter from Cushman & Wakefield – what to include in an Environmental Impact Assessment

Demonstration in Wethersfield ITV News Anglia
FB Prison Forum page

Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee formed

Butland, Tattersley and Santomauro visited a number of parishes
Tattersley emails
Santomauro not been seen since.

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2021

Dec 2: The Fields Association formed to run the SWAP campaign

Campaign against the Mega Prisons proposal put forward alternatives and raise monies for WASC to help fund consultants



STOP WETHERSFIELD AIRFIELD PRISONS

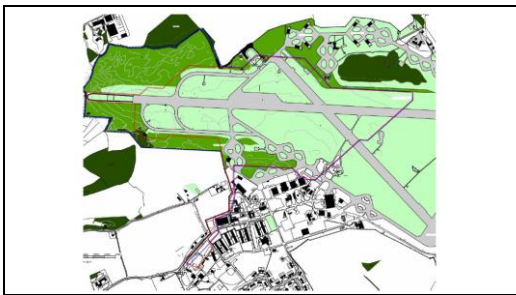
REWILDING • RENEWABLES • COMMUNITY • EDUCATION

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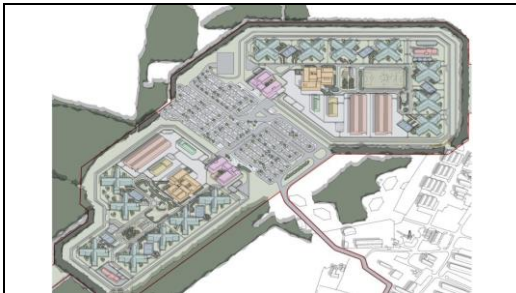
Wethersfield Airbase: 800 acres,
Prison position not brownfield,
117 acres, only 15% of the whole site,
no Masterplan for the rest,
MoD housing (148? From Wethersfield News
1993),
Technical Site.

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Site Boundary

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2 MEGA prisons, 1,715 prisoners each
total 3,430 prisoners
1,000 space car
Biggest prison complex in the whole of Europe,
1 mile long, 3 miles around the perimeter
sitting on a 300 foot high plateau
Landscape consultant

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Five Wells

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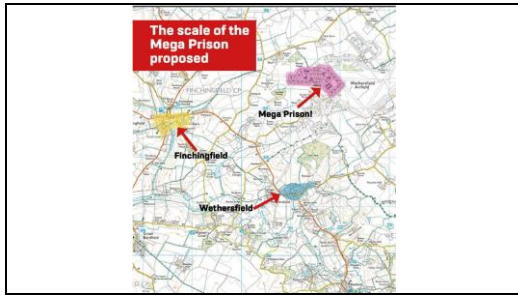
Brutal design - CPRE

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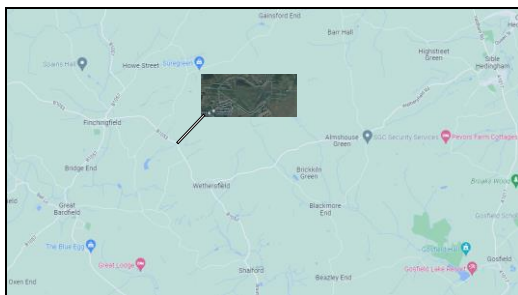
Floodlit on 300 foot plateau

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3,430 prisoners bigger population than Finchingfield and Wethersfield combined. Plus prison officers and other support staff.

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road network - medieval based – we still have hundreds of listed buildings in existence, not least of all next to the roads. 139 in Wethersfield, 152 in Finchingfield, 107 in Great Bardfield, 146 in Sible, 95 in Shalford.

pinch points can't be mitigated for at:

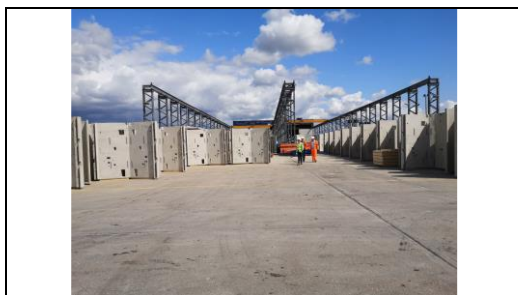
Sible (Hedingham Omnibus) and Rectory Lane, Great Bardfield bridge and layout
Finchingfield (the 200 year old bridge due to be replaced like for like, single carriageway), the turn at the Guildhall,
Wethersfield -Silver Street, which is blind to the primary school.

Mitigation comes by double yellow lines, speed bumps and traffic lights – that does not work at these pinch points.

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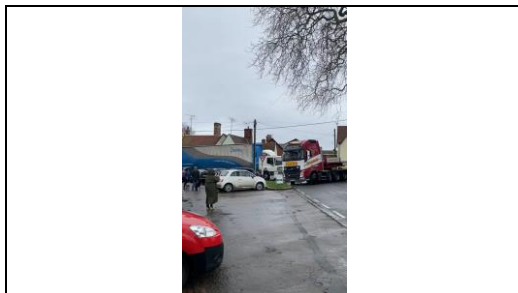
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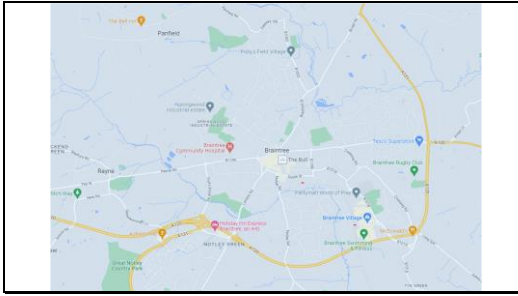
Construction 6 years 30,000 pre-cast concrete panels. 1,000 construction workers were on Five Wells at its peak.....

Low loaders in Wethersfield

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Further away the construction traffic has to come via some over congested routes on the A120, A131, B1053. MacDonalDs Galleys Corner, Tesco Marks Farm

Plans for link road Springfield Industrial site to Panfield Lane. Towerlands, (575 house to be built) does not get over the B roads and unclassified roads around here. Springwood Drive roundabout.

Now, the leader of the council is always on about the difficulty with the roads as a possible show stopper.

He is not wrong in pure planning terms, but he forgets about the environment, the ecology, the air pollution, the mental well being of people, the reasons people live in the countryside, the fact that if you concrete over the countryside it is gone forever, for this generation and all generations to come.

Again, I do worry about the mindset at the top of the council when it has wanted to concrete over the Sailings for the West of Braintree Garden Community (13,000 houses) and now the initiation of this whole prisons proposal through the original response to the MoJ letter.

history and up to date with where SWAP is.

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4 sub committees:

- Promotions
- Direct Engagement
- Alternative Uses
- MIS

About 25 people actively engaged, including our eco warrior Rosie Pearson

What have we done:



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Brilliant social media:

Facebook (about 2,000 on the Prison Forum site, about 1,000 on the SWAP site)

Twitter

Instagram

Web Site www.thefieldsassociation.org



SWAP - Stop Wethersfield Airfield Prison
@SWAPWethersfield - Environmental Conservation Organization





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Arranged gatherings Wethersfield, Finchingfield, Great Bardfield, BDC AGM

local parish annual meetings, at their invitation: Wethersfield, Finchingfield, Shalford, The Sailings, Great Yeldham, Castle Hedingham, Sible Hedingham, Toppesfield

Presented at Bendlowes Meet & Greet in Shalford, Wethersfield History Group with Wethersfield Airfield Museum

Met with James Cleverley (sitting on the fence)

Met with Defence Infrastructure Organisation (as has WASC)

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Banners bottom of Sculpins Lane

2 banners are used for gatherings

Banners Wethersfield and Finchingfield, Shalford has ordered one.

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Many people not on social media had to address this.

first leaflet - run of 7,000

second leaflet - run of 10,000

Newsletters on a monthly basis

A brochure was produced to target fund raising

Direct Engagement Team - individual letters written to MPs Cleverley and Badenoch, Dominic Raab the Justice Secretary, Victoria Atkins Minister for Prisons, Michael Gove, others within the MoJ, local district councillors, Uttlesford.

Been calling for an independent review as consultants will never stop.

Writing to cycling clubs, equestrian centres, schools.

Encouraging everyone to write.

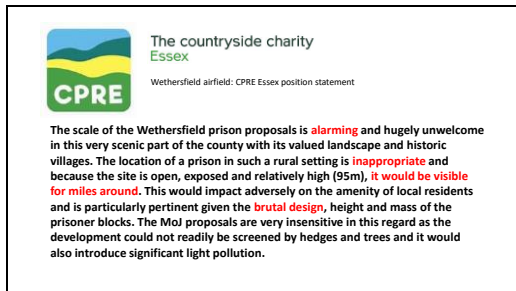
laid questions down at BDC's Public Question Time.

FOIs received from a variety of bodies - ECC letter to MoJ Nov

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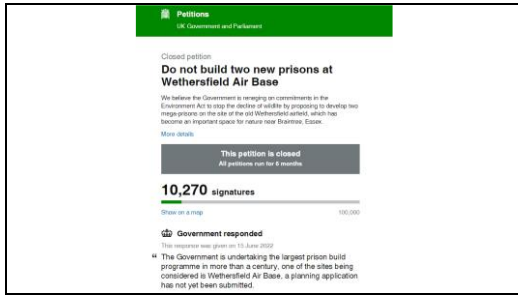
Campaign to Protect Rural England up to the base, issued a long statement damning the prisons proposal

MoJ stopped visitors

James Cleverley next up to visit was told to go away

Rosie Pearson been in touch with Natural England, they are due to visit the site

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Membership over 160, many more have donated
 We've raised nearly £30,000
 £5,000 granted to WASC, requested further £10,000

We are the body to get people engaged, to inform people to raise the community's concerns with those who make the decisions. Government bureaucracy tries to steamroller things through until people make themselves heard.

We want local people heard - that can have significant impact, at least to get those decision makers realising they have to think.

However, if this does get to a planning application then much more of the emphasis will go on the technical side run by WASC with its consultants. SWAP will need to be just as high profile, if not more so, to make sure the counter arguments against the assessments put forward by the MoJ's agents (which will be naturally biased) are heard properly.

One last thing to any councillors present. You do need to look at work being undertaken by WASC when available, WASC is preparing now because the volume of assessments, reviews, data that is going to come through on a proposal which could cost £700m+ is going to be huge and I don't believe you are going to be

able to handle it, in the depth it should be scrutinised, in the time that will be allowed. That's why WASC has been working with their consultants now, to get them prepared, otherwise it would be absolutely impossible to do so when or if an application arrives.

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Needs to be financially viable,
rent of light industrial units, storage,
turn barracks into holiday rents,
café on site.
Cinema, gym, community centre

Will become a white elephant for the MoD.