

# **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, 28 March 2022, commencing at 7:30pm.**

Present:

Cllr A Hull (Chairman) (Shalford PC)  
Cllr R Duffin (Finchingfield PC)  
Cllr A French (Shalford PC)  
Cllr T Roberts (Toppesfield PC)  
Cllr R Aggiss (Salings PC)  
Cllr P Kennedy (Great Bardfield PC)  
Cllr S Moutard (Gosfield PC)  
Cllr S Short (Wethersfield PC)  
Cllr G Southgate (Castle Hedingham PC)  
Cllr J Toocaram (Castle Hedingham PC)  
Cllr J O'Brien (Little Bardfield PC)  
Donna Roder (Deputy Clerk)  
Michelle Baker (Clerk)

In Attendance:

Members of the Public: 6

#### **WA49/21-22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Cole (Panfield PC). Cllr P King (Gt Yeldham PC), Cllr K Jiggins (Salings PC), Cllr D Coverdale (Finchingfield PC) and Cllr J Pearce (Wethersfield PC).

#### **WA50/21-22 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

None declared.

#### **WA51/21-22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2022.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2022, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposer Cllr A French (Shalford PC) , seconder Cllr T Roberts (Toppesfield PC).

**WA52/21-22 TO CONFIRM ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

**RESOLVED.** The following additional members were approved to represent their Parish Council.

- i. Castle Hedingham PC - Cllr G Southgate
- ii. Castle Hedingham PC – Cllr J Toocaram

**WA53/21-22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- i. A member of SWAP shared details on their recent activities to oppose the Prison proposal. SWAP met with the DIO on 7 March 2022 and advised there is no master plan in place currently for the disposal of the rest of the site. They confirmed they would adhere to Crichel Downs Rules should the MOJ not pursue the site. SWAP have put two banners up on Sculpins Lane. SWAP are asking questions on the prison proposal at tonight's BDC Meeting. 7000 leaflets have been printed and distributed to all households within the 11 PC's representing WASC. In addition Bocking/Braintree, Sible Hedingham and Gt Samford will be leafleted too. Wethersfield Air Museum held a presentation in Topplesfield last Friday evening where SWAP also discussed the prison proposal. SWAP have raised £16,417.00 currently from memberships and donations.

**WA54/21-22 CLERKS REPORT**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE.**

It was agreed at the Wethersfield Parish Council meeting of 9 March 2022, to update the WASC ToR's to include a maximum of 3 non Councillors to join WASC Committee Membership. Non Councillors will not hold any voting rights.

**CORRESPONDENCE.**

1. WASC and DIO met on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2022.
2. Email received from James Cleverly
3. BALC Meeting: Meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 was cancelled by BALC. Now rescheduled 30 March 2022. WASC Chairman and Councillor Juliet O'Brien to give a presentation via Zoom.
4. BDC Levelling up plan for further information sent by Wethersfield PC, a response was requested again in person to Councillor Graham Butland, at the last WPC Meeting of 9 March 2022.
5. WASC meeting with BDC Senior Business Planning and Development Management, Emma Goodings and Christopher Paggi, requested 4 March. Response received 25 March 2022, and agreed to hold a virtual meeting with WASC, dates to be finalised.
6. Email sent to Councillor Peter Tattersley for a retraction of WASC's position to both BDC and the MOJ sent 24 March 2022. Response received 26 March 2022.

**SWAP**

Fund raiser leaflet distribution to all member Parish residents began and concluded today. Close to 6000 leaflets have/are in the process of being distributed to every household in the WASC eleven parishes.

## **PARISH INVOLVEMENT**

Invitations sent out to 5 additional Parish Councils. Castle Hedingham, Stebbing, The Sampfords, Stambourne and Radwinter. Castle Hedingham voted to send representative to join WASC at their last PC Meeting. Awaiting updates from the others currently.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATE**

Councillor K Jiggins has resigned from her position at The Salings Parish Council. A second representative to be appointed and communicated in due course.

## **WA55/21-22 SUB-COMMITTEES UPDATE**

Cllr A Hull gave an update on communication and strategy. The levelling up data for Rural Braintree is pending from BDC. This data is needed to understand why we are in deprivation in the area. It is understood there are funds available now to support the Levelling Up Plan by BDC. An email was sent to Cllr P Tattersley in response to the FIO's received from BDC where Cllr Tattersley confirms on numerous occasions that PC's welcome the prison proposals positively. A response has been received and Cllr Tattersley noted that his recollections and notes at the PC meetings reflected this position. From other points raised, it is clear that Cllr Tattersley has no understanding that there is a clear separation between WASC and SWAP. A copy of this correspondence to be sent to all WASC members plus the FOI summary for reference. WASC and the DIO met on Monday 21 March 2022. The final disposal plan for the site cannot be completed until the MOJ confirm they will proceed with the prison proposal. It was also mentioned that Solar at the site is unlikely due issues on distance connecting with the grid. Additional small scale residential development was a possible option amongst the existing housing stock. A collaboration was agreed to work with WASC on the final plan. Time constraints were discussed and the timeline for the DIO changed from 2024 to 2025, The DIO confirmed they would need 24 months minimum to implement the final disposal plan.

Cllr A Hull gave an update on the Technical Work Program (see below). Historic England and Place Services response to Scoping request was a helpful indication of the importance of heritage issues. This confirms the technical sub committees opinion, and a baseline heritage assessment has been initiated with a view of looking at the potential for conservation area/monument status. At the DIO meeting with WASC, it was discussed again why WASC consultants have been refused access when other government bodies and Historic England has statutory consultee access to the site. The DIO have agreed to review this again. Landscape: Digital modelling progressing. Also currently pinpointing other viewpoints to those agreed. Brownfield study completed and will be distributed to WASC Members. Traffic modelling data initial analysis best case scenario outcome, >3000 extra vehicles per day, plus construction traffic during the construction phase which will be completed in two parts, one prison will be built, then they will start the second. So we will be faced with operational and construction traffic in phase 2. An in-depth assessment needed to conclude final figures plus organic growth in addition to the prisons. Natural England have also expressed they are very interested in the site.

The Technical Sub-Committee were relatively pleased with BDCs response to the scoping application but felt it could have gone further on certain issues. such as landscape viewpoints.

This is estimated now to put any planning application back by around six months. They are also starting to formulate now the WASC response to a planning application. The Technical Sub-Committee are also meeting BDC Senior Planning Management in April (date TBA) and will qualify if an application of this size, will be give 21days or more to oppose.

| 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. vv £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 Finchfield 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                                                                            |
| 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 sent 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 Cnservation 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 £4500budget 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 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                     | Approved by sub-committee. Awaiting fee proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |       | Estimated Total + VAT         | £22,975 - £28,467                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |       | Revised.Estimated Total + VAT | £22,858- £28,350                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

**WASC Finance**  
**Updated 24/03/2022**

**Invoices  
Received**

| <u>Date</u>  | <u>Supplier</u>           | <u>Description</u>            | <u>Amount ex<br/>VAT</u> |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 27/02/2022   | Capitall 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<br>Planning | Briefing note and<br>research | £1,000.00                |
| <b>Total</b> |                           |                               | <b>£5,737.50</b>         |

**Income  
Received**

| <u>Date</u>             | <u>Payee</u>               | <u>Description</u>     | <u>Amount</u>      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 21/02/2022              | Shalford Parish<br>Council | 10% Contribution 21/22 | £2,150.00          |
| <b>Total</b>            |                            |                        | <b>£2,150.00</b>   |
| <b>Current Position</b> |                            |                        | <b>(£3,587.50)</b> |

Shalford PC have submitted their 10% precept, Toppesfield, Little Bardfield and Finchingfield is pending. A Grant of £5K has been requested to The Fields Association / SWAP.

**WA57/21-22 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA**

*To request a meeting with the MOJ.*

*To contact the Secretary of State regarding Cllr P Tattersley response.*

**WA58/21-22 NEXT MEETING OF THE WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

The next meeting of Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee will be held on Monday April 25th 2022.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8:43pm.

Signed: .....  
Chairman

Date: .....