

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 26 September 2022, commencing at 7:30pm.

Present:

Cllr A Hull (Chairman) (Shalford PC)
Cllr R Duffin (Vice Chairman) (Finchingfield PC)
Cllr S Short (Wethersfield PC)
Cllr J O'Brien (Little Bardfield PC)
Cllr J Pearce (Wethersfield PC)
Cllr D Coverdale (Finchingfield)
Cllr A French (Shalford PC)
Cllr C Ruffle (Great Bardfield PC)
Cllr S Harris (Sible Hedingham PC)
Cllr T Roberts (Toppesfield PC)
Cllr M Gurney (Ridgewell PC)
Donna Roder (Clerk & RFO)

In Attendance: Members of the Public: 3

WA78/22-23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr G Inch (Ridgewell PC), Cllr D Hockley (Great Bardfield PC), Cllr P Kennedy (Great Bardfield PC), Cllr M Lee (Sible Hedingham), Cllr S Moutard (Gosfield PC).

WA79/22-23 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None declared.

WA80/22-23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 August 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2022, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record. and signed by the Chairman. Proposer Cllr R Duffin, seconded Cllr S Short.

At 7.33pm Cllr J O'Brien entered the meeting.

WA82/22-23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A member of the public confirmed he had received a letter from James Smith / MOJ with an update on the prison proposal. The update confirmed that no application was decided yet and that the MOJ would consult further on it once a decision was made.

Some others at the meeting including Wethersfield residents, advised that they had not received this letter.

WA83/22-23 CLERKS REPORT

Appendix I

REPORT FROM THE CLERK

CORRESPONDENCE

1. BDC: A follow-up meeting has taken place with Head of Planning - Emma Goodings and Christopher Paggi on September 22, 2022.
2. DIO: The DIO have requested a meeting in October 2022 to commence talks on the joint neighbourhood plan for the Airbase. They further advised that the outcome from the MOJ should be available end September/early October 2022. As they understand it the MOJ are working with Highways to agree a transport solution for their proposal.

THE FIELDS ASSOCIATION / SWAP

Banners: The Salings banner is now displayed on their green.

AGM: The Fields Association will be holding their AGM on September 25 2002 at Finchingfield Village Hall. WASC Chair will attend to give a update.

FOI: An FOI was received by SWAP, with the DIO masterplan for total disposal of the site (distributed to WASC Members). It was noted that in addition to heavy redaction of the document, Pages 22-37 have been totally removed. The Clerk has followed up with The Fields Association on this, and it has further been discovered that other pages are also missing. It was confirmed that this was not an error, and that the removal of various pages were made as part of redaction on this FOI.

PARISH INVOLVEMENT

Following the end of Cllr Richard Aggiss co-option at The Salings PC, a new representative will be appointed shortly. Richard Aggiss however will still work on other topics on behalf of The Salings, with WASC included in the planning.

No further updates from Stebbing, The Sampfords, Stambourne, Radwinter, and Birkbrook PC currently.

WA84/22-23 SUB-COMMITTEES:

Cllr A Hull gave an update on strategy and communication: The paper on Mega Prisons in the National Interest has been kindly printed by ESco and 150 copies are ready for distribution. WASC will compile a covering letter and distribute to key Councillors in BDC and ECC. SWAP will also distribute these to MP's, Prison associations, the Media etc together with their covering letter next week. BBC Essex contacted SWAP today for an interview – they were informed to contact WASC also for an interview. A financial appraisal is underway headed by Tech Sub-Committee members Dr. Richard Sidebottom and Colin Cottage.

South East New Energy, who partner with ECC in helping deliver sustainable community energy projects and community housing, in support of local communities. A community interest company is now underway for the site potentially.

Cllr J Pearce gave an update on the Technical work undertaken. Virtually all works planned in the programme has been undertaken now. Transport assessment consultants have now been appointed and are underway. Focus also at looking on mitigation measures at all pinch points plus sustainability issues. Met with BDC Head of Planning and Head of Development last week who are well informed of both WASC and SWAP. The prison proposal is still in pre app stage currently. BDC have regular meetings with the MOJ and advised that the MOJ are well aware of the local feeling on the proposal. A Planning Performance Agreement has been agreed between BDC and the MOJ and paid for, however the agreement is still not signed. WASC asked for a 3 month commitment from BDC should an application come forward, in order to respond. BDC confirmed that they cannot commit to that currently. WASC also pointed out that the MOJ plan only covers around 15% of the total base and that the rest should be part of the overall development consideration. BDC confirmed that they will consider MOJ plans only. Concern raised that an outline application with all details excluded will come – BDC advised they have visited Five Wells and admit the design doesn't fit the landscape at Wethersfield. It was also agreed that no local plan currently exists for site or policy. BDC also volunteered concern about the loss of the Wethersfield Museum. There was some debate also on the MOJ's definition of local. Local is actually a radius of 45 miles. BDC didn't disagree about the incorrect presumption that the site is brownfield. BDC also shared their enthusiasm on the joint Neighbour hood plan between the 4 parish councils WASC are planning and mentioned that it is probably unprecedented. They further confirmed that they have no plans to review their Local Plan.

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. vv £5175 originally + VAT. Draft model progressed. Initial shots to be available for SWAP display 03/ 07/22. Completed
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 and report received 08/22. Revised version received 26/08.
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	Document re mega prisons and national interest prepared for discussion at WASC 27/06/22. Ongoing research in progress. Reports completed.
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 Areas 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 which analyses implications of levelling up data for WASC To be discussed at WASC 27/06
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. Awaiting NE assessment
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 completed:- baseline assessment of designated and non-designated heritage assets and potential for conservation area/scheduled monument designation . . Additional £4500 budget needed to undertake designation application. Historic England and Place Services response to Scoping request a helpful indication of heritage issues. Report received . Listing application being made as separate contract below.

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 Adopted 07/22. Meeting with BDC 25/04 to discuss determining issues and procedure. Site visit being arranged with DIO for 07/22. Further meeting with BDC 09/22
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 12/21
Transport Assessment	To give a qualified and professional traffic assessment of local impact. 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	£4,750.00	Quotes obtained from John Eliot Consultancy, . Prelim assessment of the proposals and related background documents and information inspection of the locality and the wider area to renew longstanding familiarity. Compilation and analysis of traffic and other relevant data. Preparation of report, discussions, presentation to WASC, and finalising report. TPC appointed and work underway.
Review planning decisions elsewhere	Analysis of planning permissions and refusals elsewhere	JP/PJ	In house	Three refusals at Chorley, Buckingham and Market Harborough Approvals at Wellingborough, Glen Parva and Sutton. Analysis in progress to see what lessons can be learned
Listing application	Submit applications for listing structures on existing base in accordance with consultant's recommendations	JP	£4,500.00	Work being progressed by CBA in consultation with Historic England, Museum and others
		Estimated Total + VAT		£22,975 - £28,467
		Revised Estimated Total + VAT		£22,858 - £28,350

WA85/22-23 CO-OPTION

RESOLVED. It was agreed to co-opt Richard Aggiss as a non Councillor member of WASC. As a non Councillor member Richard Aggiss will not hold any voting rights per the Terms of Reference. Proposer Cllr T Roberts, Seconder Cllr R Duffin. Unanimous vote.

WA86/22-23 JOINT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

An update was received: Toppesfield and Wethersfield PC's are ok to proceed. Finchingfield will discuss at their next PC meeting tomorrow. Sible Hedingham PC will also discuss at their next meeting on 10 October 2022.

WA87/22-23 FINANCE

WASC Finance			
Updated 1/9/2022			
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
05/05/2022	CBA	Consultancy	£ 2,800.00
15/07/2022	Spectra Studios	Prison Model	£ 1,200.00
01/08/2022	CBA	Landscape assesment	£ 3,895.00
		Total	£ 13,632.50
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
05/05/2022	Bardfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 1,000.00
18/05/2022	Finchingfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 4,474.20
20/06/2022	Sible Hedingham	Contribution	£ 500.00
01/08/2022	The Fields/SWAP	Grant	£ 5,000.00
10/08/2022	Castle Hedingham	Contribution	£ 300.00
		Total	£ 19,224.20
		Current Position	£ 5,591.70

WA88/22-23 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA

- Review meeting date

All items should be sent to the Clerk by 24 October 2022.

WA89/22-23 NEXT MEETING OF THE WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

The next meeting of Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee will be held on Monday 31st October 2022.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.55apm.

Signed:
Chairman

Date: