

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL OBJECTIONS
TO PLANS FOR TWO PRISONS ON
WETHERSFIELD AIR FIELD

Finchingfield Parish Council is whole-heartedly against the plan to built two prisons each capable of holding over 1700 inmates on Wethersfield Airfield. There would also be a staff of between 1200 and 1400 needed to run the facility. That means that there would be about 4300 on the site at shift change over.

Using the four headings: Roads & Transport; History & Ecology; Economy: Pollution, the Parish Council using bullet points will set out its opposition to the plan.

ROADS & TRANSPORT.

- The roads surrounding the site are at best B roads and at worse class 3 or unclassified.
- The nearest B road is the B1053. Not the B1503 as stated in the consultation document.
- The nearest A road the A1017 is 8miles away. The road from the site joins it as it becomes Sible Hedingham High Street. Sible Hedingham is a small village.
- The closest junctions to M11 if you want to join the M11 to go either North or South are either Junction 8 Bishop's Stortford or Junction 10 Duxford.
- The nearest railway station, Braintree, is 10 miles away.
- The nearest bus stop to the site is at least 10 minutes walk from the current site entrance on Sculpins Lane (not Shaw Drive).
- Sculpins Lane is an unclassified road.
- There are 3 bus routes that pass Sculpins Lane.
- The 9/9A. Hourly from about 06.00 until 19.00 hours Monday to Friday. Braintree - Great Bardfield.
- No service Saturday or Sunday.
- The 16. 4 journeys a day. Monday to Saturday Wethersfield – Chelmsford.
- There is no bus service on Sunday.
- This is the road and transport infrastructure that is at first going to support the building of the site.
- Numerous numbers of heavy vehicle journeys to and from the site during the building phase.
- This is on roads that are already quite heavily used considering the rural nature of the area.
- Once built the same roads, and the transport system will have to carry people to and from the site.
- Without the visitors the total number of staff (1200-1400) will have to be moved on a daily basis to and from the site.
- Possibly fewer staff if some are housed on site.
- Clearly private vehicle journeys will happen.
- Although not in the consultation document a 1100 space car park is under consideration. This would match the proposed 525 spaces for the suggested new prison in Chorley Lancashire.
- Finally the council cannot see how the NPPF policy for sustainability, reducing single car usage, and increasing use of public transport, with more walking and cycling where possible can be achieved by this plan.

HISTORY & ECOLOGY.

- The site has a diverse ecology
- Park Wood the ancient woodland on the site.
- The Queens Diamond Jubilee Wood started 10 years ago.
- 74 species of bird have been identified on the site.
- Many of the birds are on International “Red & Amber endanger and protected lists”
- The birds are on the proposed site for the prisons.
- Development and damage during construction will threaten the inhabitat.
- All flora and fauna will suffer during building on the site.
- NPPF requires an increase in bio-diversity for sustainability.
- The council cannot see how bio-diversity can be increased if this proposal is taken to conclusion.
- The history of the site is closely linked with the many small villages that surround it.
- It was an american airforce base during WW2.
- Many americans married English girls forming long lasting links with the area.
- There is a museum on the site.
- During the “Cold War” it was a base for nuclear bombers and “Ban the Bomb” demonstrations and marches.
- Building the prisons will remove the atmosphere that links the base to its past

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Will building the prisons bring benefit to the local neighbourhood?
- Will there be hundreds of jobs. If there are, only 25% will be for local companies.
- How local is local to Finchingfield?
- The new prisons catchment area will be the area covered by the local crown and magistrates courts, That is the whole of Essex.
- The new prisons are being built by a consortium of four building companies: Kier; Laing O'Rourke; ISG; Wates. They will be recruiting subcontractors from all over
- Small local businesses in Finchingfield might not get chosen
- Could the local hospitality trade and shops benefit from site workers?
- There might be a slight increase, but not much with the site being where it is.
- Will there be vacancies when the prison opens for local people?
- There will be some, but most positions will require some specialised training and as said will be open to a much wider local area.

POLLUTION.

- Will the site increase or lower pollution?
- The actual buildings may with solar panels, heat pumps, and better insulation lower pollution.
- The building process, while it lasts will increase pollution.
- The getting to work, since it will require a lot more car journeys will also increase pollution.
- The illumination at night of the prison will increase light pollution, which will have an adverse affect on night creatures like bats and owls upsetting the ecological balance.
- The councils main concern is with surface water and sewage.
- The local sewage systems are in trouble.
- Finchingfield has had sewage coming up through the manhole covers and flooding on to the green. This has happened regularly after heavy rain over the last 6 months.
- After heavy rain foulwater has been backing up into the sinks of the houses on Wethersfield

Airfield. Councillors have been told this by people who live on the base.

- The sewage system infrastructure for the prison needs to be a complete new system and not have any connection with current systems. The parish council can't see this happening.

To sum up the council feel that it would be irresponsible for the M O J to proceed with its plan to build two prisons on Wethersfield Airfield and therefore will not support this application. The council would like to see the feasibility study that led to this decision