

2nd December 2018

Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP), Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and Pewsey Parish Council (PPC) Statement to Pewsey Area Board, 3rd December 2018, on the status of Everleigh HRC

The majority of people will be aware that despite the significant response to the consultation on the proposal to close Everleigh HRC and with 94% of the public response opposed to the closure, on the 9th October Wiltshire Council took the decision to close Everleigh. It should be noted that our three Wiltshire Councilors all put in a strong response in favour of keeping Everleigh open and proposed alternative options to satisfy the Councils cost saving measures.

Everleigh HRC finally closed to the public on 6th November with the alternative sites being Marlborough, Devizes and Amesbury.

As a direct result of the public concern relating to how WC conduct consultations and then observe the consultation output a task has been raised on the Overview & Management Scrutiny Committee to investigate this issue. Clearly it does not sit well with the public for the Council to conduct a consultation and then totally ignore the public opinion especially when the public opinion is overwhelming with its view.

It is public knowledge that PCAP has had concerns over the way that Wiltshire Council conducted its consultation and was taking legal advice as a result. The legal advice identified that despite a number of unfortunate flaws in the process, the Council's overall handling of the consultation did not sufficiently contravene the principles laid down by the Supreme Court for public consultations, to a point where further legal action would be considered necessary. The legal advice identifying the Councils shortfalls was provided to WC Cabinet on 27th November and was published as part of the agenda pack.

A further consideration was identified with respect to the Council's apparent failure to comply with the publicity requirements required in respect of "Key" decisions under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access Information) (England) Regulations 2012. This point has already been the subject of a PCAP Question to Cabinet on 27th November which was put forward with the support of Pewsey Parish Council and CPRE. Although WC has provided a response on this item further action is being considered.

Colin Gale

PCAP Member