

2nd September 2018

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

PCAP/CPRE/PPC have had a busy time since the last Pewsey Area Board promoting the need for public support for Everleigh and completion of the consultation questionnaire. Activities included a banner set up near the site entrance, and flyers have been distributed at: Pewsey Co Op on several occasions, Pewsey Community Market, Rushall, Charlton St Peter, Netheravon, North Newton, Tidworth, Ludgershall, Manningford Abbots, Manningford Bruce, Wootton Rivers, Wilcot and Eastern Royal. It has been noted that public awareness of the consultation has been even more sparse than usual. Apart from notification to Parish Councils, we request Wiltshire Council to supply a list of any other steps that they may have taken to provide information to the public and interested bodies, that the consultation existed, in order to assess the effectiveness of its communications policy in this case.

This Group has also reviewed the consultation options in detail and has raised a series of comments with the Director for Waste that has given rise to an exchange of correspondence, the last of which was received from the Council on 28th August and is therefore still under consideration. Impressions to date indicate that the costings are still largely only budgetary estimates and guesstimates with some data not supplied, commercial confidentiality being given as the excuse. The costings do not appear to be built on a common base allowing for any form of cost comparison or analysis. The costs for Option 1, (the full recovery of Everleigh) arguably appear inflated, thus promoting the closure option. The costings for Option 6, (the closure option) would also appear to have been kept to a minimum that may not correspond to reality in the event. The Group therefore reserves the right to return to these and any other costings issues, once there has been time for further consideration.

A further, but important issue has also been discovered recently in relation to option costings, namely an e-mail dated 24th July in response to a question raised by PCAP at PAB on 9th July. This e-mail, written by the Head of Waste Management, Martin Litherland, to the Chairman of PAB, Mr Kunkler, inadvertently was not received by PCAP until 30th August. While addressing the original question, it also includes the comment : “The information on the costed options has been included so that all respondents are fully aware of the options the council had considered before proposing to close the site at Everleigh. We are not therefore seeking views on these options”. The last sentence obviously conflicts entirely with Question 11 of the consultation itself, which asks” Do you have any comments to make on the other options included in the detailed background documents that the Council currently considers not viable?” An explanation of this currently inexplicable state of affairs has been requested from the Council as a matter of urgency.

At the PAB on 9th July it was identified the Consultation Questionnaire had a character limitation restricting the response to the questions. We were subsequently assured that this restriction had been removed, however, WC have been formally advised that the restriction is still in place. PCAP have asked WC how this shortfall in the questionnaire is going to be handled in the questionnaire analysis.

Lastly, following PCAP's announcement at PAB on 9th July that it intended to take legal advice with regard to the Council's consultation process proposing the closure of Everleigh, PCAP can confirm that a submission was made subsequently to their Solicitors.

The matter remains ongoing, and acting on their advice, PCAP meanwhile intends to await the Council's decision as to whether the site should remain open, or not, and in the latter event, retains its right to consider taking any legal action that it deems necessary.

Colin Gale PCAP Member