

Playden DC Report February 2018

1. Shellfield - Planning Application RR/2017/1450/P

I have had a couple of concerned queries from residents regarding the delay in the decision-making regarding the above. Just for the avoidance of doubt, the delay is due to the Planning Officer taking paternity leave and only returning to work last week. It was due to the pending new arrival that he sought to get a further extension of time to cover this period.

Discussions have been raised with the applicant outlining concerns and planning issues raised by residents and the Planning Department - all in line with due process. The Planning Officer is awaiting response as to how the applicant wishes to proceed. If and/or when the application is determined it will be reported to Planning Committee.

2. Dog fouling bin - just a reminder!

3. Cabinet Meeting 15th January 2018

3.1 Camber Traffic and Parking Management: Camber traffic issues affect most of us living locally, so I thought it might be useful to provide an update on this. RDC, the Police and ESCC commissioned traffic consultants, Transport Planning Associates, in response to serious ongoing traffic issues in Camber - particularly on some summer days in 2017. The study was equally funded by the three agencies and the subsequent Camber Traffic & Parking Study (the Study) completed in October 2017 and presented to the joint agencies in December 2017. The Study is detailed (and quite interesting!) and can be accessed online <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/12999/Monday-15-January-2018>

The Study highlighted key areas as potential causes for traffic congestion: delays in accessing car parks; overall lack of car parking capacity; poor signage; illegal and inconsiderate parking; and the sheer volume of traffic trying to reach the beach.

3.1(a) Delays in accessing car parks

As recommended by the Study, in order to reduce entry time to Western car park and resulting traffic queues, Cabinet approved the installation of an Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) payment system for the car park. Costs are to be met from car park reserves and the system is to be trialled for two years. Of note, car park service suppliers will need to chase up non-payers and seek enforcement, resulting in a possible reduction in income from the car park as currently the pay on entry system ensures every car pays. Privately owned Donkey Field also operates with one cash collection point on entrance causing queues and the Study recommends that a ANPR system could be implemented here.

3.1(b) Overall lack of car parking capacity

There is currently 3,300 off street parking spaces in Camber (Western 1,800, Central 170, Johnson's Field 130, Putting Green 80, Broomhill 400 (owned by ESCC and free) and 800 at privately owned Donkey Field. The Study highlighted two additional car parking areas (the area of grassland to the north of Camber Road and west of Farm Lane and the land north of Lydd Road and west of Broomhill). However, Paul and I highlighted the Study's assertion that, whilst additional parking may be a solution to the traffic issues, it may cause safety issues on the beach due to increased visitors. When all the current car parks are full in Camber, the beach is at capacity. The traffic issue needs to be dealt with 'further up the line'. The panel's view, and subsequent recommendation to Cabinet, is that an increase in parking capacity in Camber is therefore not taken further at this time. This was agreed a sensible recommendation at this time.

3.1(c) Poor signage

Existing signage on approach roads to Camber is limited to manual static signage on the local road network. The system largely relies on local residents deploying signs at the request of the Coastal Officer. It is recommended that RDC provides high visibility signage (dot-matrix variable messaging sign (VMS)) at strategic locations on approaches to Camber advising on traffic congestion and parking availability. The messages can be controlled via smart phone and computer by the Coastal Officer and his team. This VMS signage would be supplemented by the use of social media and other media by RDC, with a communications plan being put into place. Cabinet approved the purchase (with the Community Safety Partnership Joint Action Group) a VMS for traffic management to be owned and operated by RDC.

3.1(d) Illegal and inconsiderate parking

Illegal and inconsiderate parking is the responsibility of ESCC Highways Authority and Sussex Police. The Study recommended that flexible verge markers could be installed, but ESCC have not come forth based on safety and cost grounds. Other recommendations such as the relining of double yellow lines would not be undertaken until the outcome of civil parking enforcement (CPE) is concluded. Therefore, the lack of CPE makes dealing with illegal parking difficult. Once CPE is in place, the current low fine system can be increased and appropriate signage put in place. CPE is likely to take 3-5 years to implement so, in the meantime, Sussex Police must work with RDC to manage the situation.

3.1(e) Sheer volume of traffic trying to reach the beach

Paul and I discussed issues surrounding this; when Camber is full, cars need to be dissuaded from coming anywhere near Camber. That is easier said than done when families with young children have decided to spend a day on the beach, come what may. One of the recommendations within the study is to consult with Highways England to incorporate warnings on their VMS signage on the M20; the aim being to limit the traffic coming to Camber by giving earlier warnings to drivers. The same could be done as regards the A21 (and has been done in the past). Cabinet agreed this and officers will duly consult with the relevant authorities.

There are other recommendations within the study, such as better signposted pedestrian routes. To note, is a recommendation for a dedicated Camber Sands website, with live updates (on traffic etc), access advice etc (see <http://www.westwitteringbeach.co.uk/>). Perhaps this could be tied in to the communication plan mentioned in 1.1(c) above and Camber's existing website.

It is clear that Camber (Parish Council), RDC, Sussex Police and ESCC need to work together to solve the traffic issues in Camber. We really do depend on the cooperation of Sussex Police and ESCC. Further discussions are also needed as to what Camber can do as a village based on the recommendations in the Study.

4. Fuel Poverty update (cf May & November Reports 2017)

RDC is taking local fuel poverty issues seriously and is working in partnership with other agencies. It has prepared and adopted (and agreed by East Sussex Energy Partnership) a flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent, setting out the criteria that it intends to use to identify households that meet the eligibility criteria under 'flexible eligibility'. By way of background, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. The ECO Help to Heat flexible eligibility funding is only available to private tenure households, by referral, which must fit one or more of certain criteria, for example, be living in fuel poverty but not in receipt of benefits; or be on low income and vulnerable to cold; or require Solid Wall Insulation.

See RDC's website for further details.

5. England Coastal Path - Eastbourne to Camber

Natural England has entered into Stage 2 of the implementation process along the 53km stretch of the England Coastal Path between Eastbourne and Camber, expected to be completed in 2010. There are to be a couple of drop-in sessions locally for anyone interested - Thursday 1st March 17.00-19.30 at Rye Creative Centre and Wednesday 14th March 17.00-19.30 at Fairlight Village Hall.

SAH