

WETHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
REPRESENTING WETHERSFIELD, BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END
Clerk@Wethersfield-pc.gov.uk



6 April 2023

Ms Emma Goodings
Head of Planning and Growth
Braintree District Council
Causeway House
Bocking End
Braintree
CM7 9HB

Dear Ms Goodings

Finchingfield and Wethersfield Joint Neighbourhood Plan

I refer to recent discussions between officers, parish councilors and Neighbourhood Plan Team members regarding the proposal of a Joint Neighbourhood Plan for the parishes of Finchingfield and Wethersfield. This letter is an application to your Council on behalf of both Parish Councils in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 as amended, for the designation of both parishes as a single Neighbourhood Plan Area. I attach a plan which defines the area which is the subject of this application

The Parish Councils are satisfied that they are capable of delivering the plan in a reasonable timescale and have agreed the Terms of Reference of a Neighbourhood Plan Team. This will comprise a range of individuals who live or work within the Finchingfield and Wethersfield parishes and who have diverse and relevant skills to deliver the project. I anticipate that the core Neighbourhood Plan Team will comprise around twelve members including councillors from each parish. This will be supplemented by individuals who wish to contribute in a more limited way, support from Council officers and specialist consultants when needed. You are aware of the considerable work undertaken by the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee. This has demonstrated the benefits of close collaboration and will be a valuable source of research material for the project.

The reasons for designating a joint area include the interplay and historical associations between the parishes, similar issues facing both, close proximity of boundaries to clusters of population and the shared interest in the future of Wethersfield Airbase because of its scale and juxtaposition to both parishes. The plan will embrace the whole

of both parishes and enable a holistic approach to identifying local needs and opportunities and the approach to research and engagement. As you know we considered the inclusion of parts of Toppesfield and Sible Hedingham parishes but Toppesfield is already well advanced with its Neighbourhood Plan and that omission would leave Sible Hedingham isolated. Nevertheless Toppesfield have committed to ensuring compatibility of policies as far possible. The reason why it was decided not to pursue a 'base only' option was because of the need to acknowledge that proposals involving the base cannot be divorced from the needs and characteristics of the wider area.

In terms of approach, clearly this needs to be developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Team in conjunction with the local community and early evidence gathering will be done through workshops, an understanding of existing and emerging policies, surveys, new research and use of existing information. Efforts will be made to engage closely with key stakeholders such as the BDC/ECC officers, local community organisations, Ministry of Defence, local landowners, business community, statutory undertakers, government bodies and developers, inclusion of Parish Councillors on the Team and strong reporting mechanisms will ensure regular updates and oversight by the elected Councils as part of an ongoing process. We anticipate the plan will take around 18 months to complete with further time for examination and referendum.

I would be grateful if you gave this application your attention as soon as possible and of course would be happy to respond to any queries you may have and arrange any further meetings that you feel would be helpful at this stage. In the meantime, many thanks for your assistance.

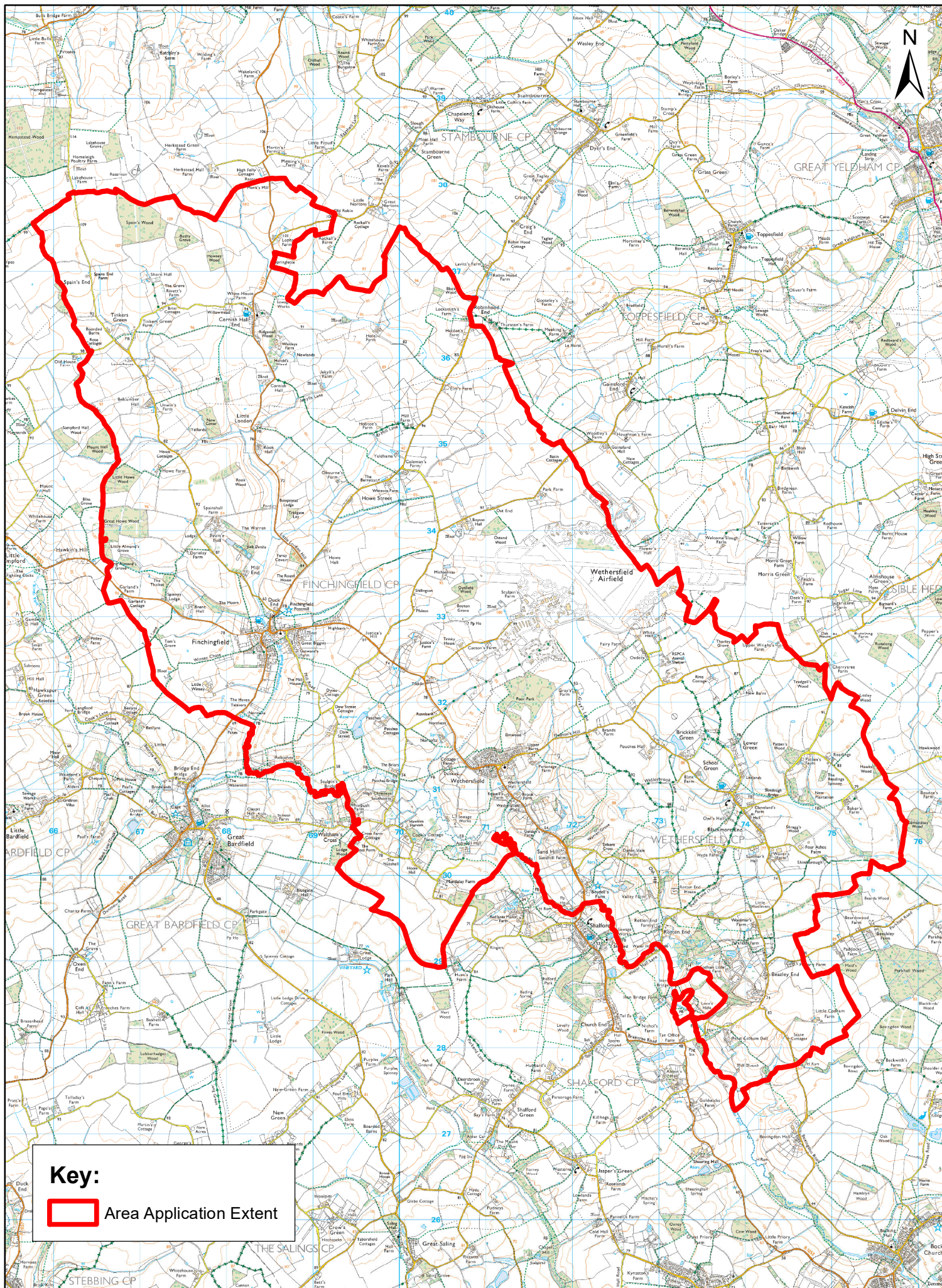
Yours sincerely

D. Roder

Donna Roder
Wethersfield Parish Council Clerk

Cc Finchingfield Parish Council Clerk

Finchingfield and Wethersfield Neighbourhood Plan Area Application.



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