

Conditions 21 & 26 Correspondence Wethersfield

December 2024

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Annex A: Mid and South Essex ICB Letter 05 April 2024



Mid and South Essex
Integrated Care
System



Mid and South Essex
Integrated Care Board

Home Office UK
Westminster

Via email

5th April 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Medical Centre Provision at Wethersfield

Further to the request for confirmation that ICB has put in place necessary provision to comply with the SDO conditions, I can confirm that we have commissioned a medical centre providing comprehensive primary medical care services onsite at Wethersfield. This service is solely for the residents of the Wethersfield site. The service is staffed in line with the below SDO conditions and operates five days a week from Monday to Friday 10.00 – 16.00hrs.

SDO Conditions 24 states the following:-

The facility is a medical centre for resident service users on the Order land—

Staffed by an on-site medical team comprising at least—

- (i) a health care assistant;
- (ii) a mental health nurse;
- (iii) a general nurse;
- (iv) an advanced nurse practitioner;
- (v) a general practitioner (that is, a person whose name is contained in the General Practitioner Register as defined in section 34C (general practitioner register) of the Medical Act 1983(4) or a fully registered person, as defined in section 55 of that Act (interpretation)(5))
- (vi) register with a general practitioner;
- (vii) book and attend appointments with on-site medical staff;
- (ix) book appointments to receive other services specified in sub-paragraph (4);

Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board,
Phoenix Court, Christopher Martin Road, Basildon, Essex SS14 3HG

www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk

Chair: [REDACTED]

- (x) be treated for minor injuries and illnesses

For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of dental services (f) and optometry services (g) is provided at more specialist off site primary care locations. These are fully available to the residents of the Wethersfield site through established pathways.

The services are the following:-

- (a) medical health screening of service users when they first arrive at the authorised development;
- (b) immunisation against diseases;
- (c) a system that enables them to collect medicine that has been lawfully prescribed for them;
- (d) a low-level trauma-informed mental health support service;
- (e) confidential health advice;
- (f) emergency dental care provided by a person registered in the register kept under section 14 (dentists register and registrar) of the Dentists Act 1984(6);
- (g) eye tests, to be provided by a person registered in the register of optometrists maintained under section 7 of the Opticians Act 1989 (registers of opticians)(7).

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

[Redacted Title]

Mid & South Essex Integrated Care Board

c.c.

[Redacted]

Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board,
Phoenix Court, Christopher Martin Road, Basildon, Essex SS14 3HG

www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk | [Redacted]

Chair: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Annex B: ICB Correspondence 18 December 2024

From: [REDACTED]
 Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 9:20 AM
 To: [REDACTED]
 Cc: [REDACTED]
 Subject: RE: 241216 - Wethersfield SDO Condition 24

Do you trust this email? This email originated from outside the Home Office, or came from a Home Office system that has not been certified. Please exercise caution before opening attachments or clicking on links within this email or any suspicious email, particularly from unknown senders.

Morning [REDACTED], please see responses below.

Further to the letter dated 5 April 2024, which confirms the provision of services at Wethersfield required by Condition 24 of the Special Development Order (SDO); and various discussions concerning the staffing numbers required for the site, I can confirm:

- 1) That you have sufficient staff for Service User occupancy
 - a) up to 580 (current capped capacity)
 - b) up to 800 (intended regular occupancy)
 - c) up to 1245 (in the case of exceptional surge capacity)

Yes to all three with sufficient notice via our regular intake discussions.

Please can you also confirm:

- 2) in each case above, what number of staff this is. (We understood it to be 19 in all cases with the ability to flex hours and provide additional appointments)
- 3) and that this staffing is also sufficient for the care of those who may be accommodated in the 28 isolation beds, alongside care of the other SUs on site

Yes, as we discussed on our call earlier in the week our role in the isolation beds is to support identification and treatment only. EG, scabies – we prescribe/issue the lotion only. TB – support with diagnosis and treatment alongside TB team.

If you need anything else, feel free to contact me.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]
 NHS Mid Essex Alliance

Website: www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk
 X: @MSEssex_ICS | Facebook: MSEICS | Instagram: @MSEssex_ICS



Mid and South Essex



If I am emailing outside usual office hours, this is for my convenience, and I do not expect an immediate reply.

Annex C: Condition 26 Engagement Responses

1. Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex



[REDACTED]
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sent via email:
[Wethersfield-
CommunicationAndEngagement@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Wethersfield-CommunicationAndEngagement@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Kelvedon Park, London Road, Rivenhall,
Witham, Essex, CM8 3HB

Telephone: [REDACTED]
E-mail: pfcc@essex.police.uk
<http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk>

Date: 4 November 2024

Enquiries to: [REDACTED]
e-mail: PFCC@essex.pnn.police.uk

Special Development Order Wethersfield – Local Services Programme

Thank you for your letter dated 18 October 2024 regarding the above. In response to your specific questions:

1) What is your view on the local service impact(s)?

Through the local District Independent Advisory Group (IAG), the community has been involved throughout the planning, implementation, and ongoing delivery of Essex Police's response to the site and its service users. As you are aware, there continues to be a monthly Multi Agency Forum (MAF) chaired by Braintree District Council and attended by both Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service at a senior level that ensures engagement and communication with partners across Essex. Through these and other mechanisms, strong and consistent community engagement and consultation are being undertaken to understand levels of tension and ensure we and our partners are able to act quickly to mitigate any risk. [REDACTED]

There also continues to be a hands-on approach by the Essex Police executive with visits to the site to meet senior staff and support the team.

In general terms, the level of crime reported on the site is slowly increasing (from four cases in July 2024 to six in the period 1 - 17 October 2024). This is largely service user on service user, with there being a peak in reported disturbances during Ramadan, linked to differences between people of the Christian and Muslim faiths, which was dealt with swiftly. There has not been a concurrent increase in crime in the local area. Cases on site often involve multiple people and require multiple interpreters so, whilst contained in terms of location, can require significant resources.

In addition, Essex Police has received a volume of National Referral Mechanism Referrals (NRMs) which are dealt with ostensibly by Braintree CID. With the increasing workloads of the force's detective cohort, this is placing an additional burden on Essex Police which is difficult to quantify monetarily, or to mitigate against. However there is a resultant business impact, and there have been several incidents since the site went live in July 2023 which will undoubtedly have caused an abstraction from elsewhere in the business. Examples of such incidents include a gas canister exploding, requiring a multi-agency response, and numerous protests outside the site. There was also a large police incident recently, resulting in cases of affray currently being prepared for the court.

I welcome your consideration of the impact of the site on the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. However, I am pleased to confirm that the service engaged in a multi-agency table-top exercise in February and is satisfied that any comments from the subsequent debrief have already been fed back into plans.

2) How effective are the arrangements already made by the Home Office to avoid or mitigate any local service impact?

In terms of policing, the Home Office has provided grant funding for Year 1. As you will be aware, this funding has allowed [REDACTED] to be seconded from the Braintree Community Policing Team as dedicated officers for Wethersfield for over 12 months, and they will continue to work from the site, alongside Home Office colleagues. The estimated requirement of [REDACTED] full time officers was originally based on a site visit to Napier Barracks in Kent, which is much smaller in size than Wethersfield, and professional judgement. After over 12 months of operation in Essex, it remains the judgement of Essex Police this is the correct staffing level.

Whilst the Home Office funding covers the opportunity costs of the [REDACTED] permanent officers attached to the site, the force is not in a position to go above its formal establishment meaning that, as described above, there are impacts of this abstraction elsewhere in the force. There may well be surges in demand (perhaps over Christmas) and it may be necessary to put another officer on site if and when this happens.

The force has previously expressed concerns about the level of crime prevention and Prevent activity being undertaken on the site but is aware that the site management is taking steps to increase this.

The transient nature of the service users means that there have also been concerns raised about the level of knowledge about who is and is not on site at any one time. There have been occasions when Essex Police has received complaints from victims on site and have attended, only to find that the site management is unable to locate the complainant. Lack of knowledge of who is and is not on the site at any one time would obviously also pose risks and challenges in the event of the site having to be evacuated for any reason and all inhabitants needing to be accounted for. Work has taken place with the Home Office and the provider to address this, but the issue continues.

In terms of the health and safety of officers on site, the site continues to experience cases of TB and some challenges around people isolating. Although there have been no known cases so far, if an individual infected with TB was to leave the site, it would be the police's responsibility to locate and return them. In this scenario, suitable equipment would be needed to avoid contamination.

The site has also been the subject of discussion at the countywide Suicide Prevention Board, chaired by my Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Data on deaths by suicide is beginning to come through, which indicates that, while there has not been a known death by suicide on the site, a significant proportion (41%) have presented with suicidal ideation or planning. As you note in the report circulated, the ICB is funded to provide a medical centre on the site, and I understand they are already in dialogue with the Home Office about the provision of services going forward. It seems that access to mental health services is currently somewhat limited, with colleagues on the board raising concerns about how appropriate they are in supporting trauma.

I hope this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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2. East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust



East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Hammond Road
Bedford
MK41 0RG

By Email Only

Wethersfield Comms and
Engagement Team

Wethersfield-CommunicationAndEngagement@homeoffice.gov.uk

Date: 4th November 2024

Dear Wethersfield Comms and Engagement Team

Requirement of Condition 26 of The Town and Country Planning (Former RAF Airfield Wethersfield) (Accommodation for Asylum-Seekers etc.) Special Development Order 2024 for a Local Services Programme for the Wethersfield Site (Site)

Thank you for providing East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) with the opportunity to respond to the SDO 2024 for the Local Services Programme for Wethersfield.

The Local Services Programme for Wethersfield proposal is for a maximum of 800 service users during its lifetime with an additional surge capacity of 445 bed spaces to be used for short and defined periods of time if needed for single adult male asylum-seekers between the ages of 18 to 65 with decommissioning by 10 October 2027, ie a maximum of 1,245 bed spaces.

You have requested we respond on two key items:

1. What is your view on the local service impact(s)?
2. How effective are the arrangements already made by the Home Office to avoid or mitigate any local service impact?

Health Care

EEAST notes the impacts and mitigations already established to reduce the demand on local health services:

- Assessment of existing medical conditions (active tuberculosis; infectious/active communicable diseases; serious mental health issues where there is a high risk of suicide, serious self-harm or risk to others; chronic disease; and HIV).
- Re-accommodating service users who are no longer suitable to be accommodated on-site
- Provision of on site includes a Medical Centre staffed by a medical team comprising: a health care assistant; a mental health nurse; a general nurse; an advanced nurse practitioner; and a general practitioner open Monday to Friday, between the hours of 10:00 to 18:00.

Chief Executive: [REDACTED]

Chair: [REDACTED]

www.eeastamb.nhs.uk

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- Medical Centre provision includes health screening of SUs when they first arrive at the authorised development; immunisation against diseases; collection of lawfully prescribed medicine; low-level trauma-informed mental health support service; and confidential health advice
- Transport to off-site treatment is provided by the service provider and is demand-led
- Establishment of pathways to access supplementary medical care (including in-patient hospital care), dentistry and ophthalmology as required
- Addressing asylum seekers needs to support physical, mental, emotional and social well-being through events and collaboration as required.

To further support the measures initiated by the Home Office, EEAST created a Standard Operating Procedure for Wethersfield's use as an asylum centre (available on request).

EEAST, therefore, considers the mitigation identified above will significantly help reduce the demand on emergency ambulance services during the hours the medical centre is in operation. To date, the measures in place have proven effective.

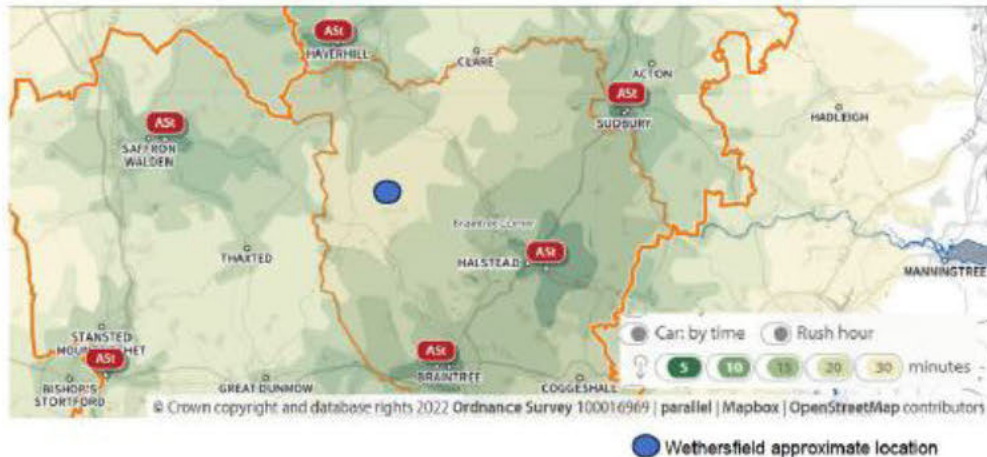
However, our main concerns remain as:

- 1) The potential level of need during hours the Medical Centre is not in operation (10pm to 10am Monday to Friday and weekends from 10pm Friday to 10am Monday and bank holidays).
- 2) The ability to access the site in the event of a major incident requiring significant emergency ambulance support as the local road network is mans response times from nearby ambulance stations is around 20-30 minutes in usual rush hour traffic (as defined by ShapeAtlas)

Local ambulance stations which may respond to incidents at Wethersfield are:

Local Station	Response time	Local Station	Response time
Braintree	20 minutes	Saffron Walden	20 minutes
Halstead	20 minutes	Stansted	30+ minutes
Haverhill	20 minutes	Sudbury	20 minutes

The map below shows the current ambulance stations in and around Wethersfield and drive times during Rush Hour Traffic from current ambulance station locations:



Chief Executive: [REDACTED]
Chair: [REDACTED]
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Conclusion

In its capacity as a healthcare and emergency service EEAST has identified the SDO should further consider issues which may affect the emergency ambulance service in the event of:

- 1) Increased level of need during hours Medical Centre is not in operation (10pm to 10am Monday to Friday and weekends from 10pm Friday to 10am Monday and bank holidays and whether further mitigations are required
- 2) Impact of travel times to the site in the event of a major incident. Further discussion on processes to ensure safe evacuation of service users and staff and on-site medical care whilst awaiting emergency ambulance services.

Please send any further communications to [REDACTED], Head of Business Relationships via planningnotifications@eastamb.nhs.uk.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Head of Business Relationships

Chief Executive: [REDACTED]
Chair: [REDACTED]
www.eastamb.nhs.uk

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3. National Highways



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 24-02) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: [REDACTED]
Operations Directorate
Eastern Region
National Highways
PlanningEE@nationalhighways.co.uk

To: Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Council's Reference: Local Services Impact Summary: Wethersfield Site
(September 2024)

National Highways Ref: NH/24/08438

Location: former RAF Airfield Wethersfield Near Braintree Essex

Proposal Discharge of Condition 26 of The Town and Country Planning (Former
RAF Wethersfield) (Accommodation for Asylum Seekers ECT) Special Development
Order 2024

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated referenced above, in the
vicinity of the A120 that forms part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby
given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

- a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- ~~c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);~~

National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 24-02) February 2024

~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority not propose to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@dftr.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to PlanningEE@nationalhighways.co.uk.

Signature: 	Date: 29 November 24
Name: 	Position: Spatial Planner
National Highways Woodlands Manton Lane Bedford MK42 3LL	

¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A **National Highways' assessment of the proposed development**

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

The site has been in operation for some months and has not resulted in any detrimental impact upon the SRN and therefore we have no objection to the discharge of the condition

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's [2022 Report to Parliament](#) notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 74 and 109 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 108 and 114 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up.

Moreover, the build clever and build efficiently criteria as set out in clause 6.1.4 of [PAS2080](#) promote the use of low carbon materials and products, innovative design solutions and construction methods to minimise resource consumption.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.

National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 24-02) February 2024

4. Essex County Council Adult Social Care

From: Overseas Arrivals <OverseasArrivals@essex.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, November 4, 2024 4:14 PM
To: Wethersfield - Communication And Engagement <Wethersfield-CommunicationAndEngagement@homeoffice.gov.uk>; Overseas Arrivals <OverseasArrivals@essex.gov.uk>
Subject: Special Development Order Wethersfield - Local Services Programme - Response to Home Office and Documents Dated 18th October requesting representation from local services for which Essex County Council hold a statutory responsibility

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FAO Wethersfield Comms and Engagement Team

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to offer feedback.

Essex County Council acknowledges that this response is limited to our statutory responsibilities within Adult Social Care, we have reviewed the materials provided and have outlined our feedback accordingly below.

Adult Social Care policy context

Essex County Council has duties under S2 Care Act to provide support and services that prevent, reduce, and delay the need for long term care to adults including asylum seekers placed at Wethersfield. Essex County Council's prevention and enablement offer is delivered in collaboration with partners from Braintree District Council, the NHS and with voluntary care sector organisations.

Under Section 9 of the Care Act 2014, Essex County Council has a statutory duty to assess the needs of any adult or carer who appears to have needs for care and support and then to determine whether those needs are eligible for support or services from the council. This includes individuals within the UK asylum system as social services' support is not classed as a public fund for immigration purposes and can be accessed by a person who is subject to the 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) condition,

Adult Social Care response

Adult Social Care notes, and is concerned, that there is no specific reference to adult social care in 'Local Services Impact Summary' document shared as part of the consultation process, so the following is within that context.

Given this large-scale site is for adult males – this is an unfortunate omission in respect of the impact on adult services / Mental Health and takes no account of cost incurred by ASC resources to fulfil statutory requirements under the Care Act 2014.

The estimated ASC costs to date are £98,513.00 pounds. This figure was not based on a full financial year and ASC resource demand to respond to Wethersfield has increased and therefore the cost to Essex County Council has increased (further information to be shared directly with Braintree District Council on current year costings)

Essex County Council ASC is under financial pressure, and ASC are not receiving extra funding to offset the pressures, with increasing adults more assessments/enquiries. Additionally, ASC have provided considerable professional support to ensure assured safeguarding arrangements are in place and reported upon.

As part of the consultation process ASC is requesting:

- A. Home Office recognition of the ASC role in any future review of the SDO.*
- B. Home Office acknowledgement of the new burden on ASC financial resources the Wethersfield site represents.*
- C. Home Office firm proposals for reimbursing costs to date will be made by the Home Office and this will be accompanied by clear arrangements for funding ASC ongoing work at the site.*

Kind regards

Essex County Council
Overseas Arrivals on behalf of Essex Adult Social Care

From: Wethersfield - Communication And Engagement <Wethersfield-CommunicationAndEngagement@homeoffice.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 October 2024 13:49
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Local Services Impact Summary

CAUTION: This is an external email.

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

As part of our ongoing work to discharge the conditions of the Special Development Order for Wethersfield, please find attached a letter from the Home Office and a copy of the Local Services Impact Summary.

As the letter notes, we are seeking your feedback and would be grateful if you could respond by Monday 04 November 2024.

Please send your return to
wethersfield-communicationandengagement@homeoffice.gov.uk

Kind regards

Wethersfield Comms and Engagement Team

5. Strategic Migration Partnership



Improving the East

Chair: [REDACTED]

Chief Executive: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Home Office

Please ask [REDACTED]
for:

Mobile: [REDACTED]

email: [REDACTED]

Date: 4 November 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Special Development Order Wethersfield - Local Services Programme

The East of England Strategic Migration Partnership would like to make representations as requested in your letter dated 18 October 2024 regarding the above.

The SMP is responsible for regional coordination of the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) across the East of England. Any referrals to Essex County Council from Wethersfield which necessitate the need to conduct an age assessment as a result of an asylum seeker accommodated on site claiming to be under 18 may adversely affect the council's capacity to accept NTS referrals, especially as referrals from Wethersfield (or any contingency site) do not count towards the council's NTS allocations.

The local services impact summary document for Wethersfield states the following:
From July 2023, the Home Office introduced an age dispute mitigation strategy for the site at Wethersfield, which excluded any person from being routed to the site who had claimed to be a child since entry, regardless as to whether they have subsequently been age assessed as significantly over 18. A process has been implemented for those who, after being accommodated on site, claim to be under the age of 18. Where the Home Office or Local Authority challenges the claimed age of a service user (SU), an age assessment is likely to be completed.

Funding arrangements with Braintree District Council (a one-off payment of £3,500 to the Local Authority for new and occupied dispersal beds) are also quoted as a measure to mitigate impact. However, as far as we are aware (and in line with grant 6 funding instructions 2024/25), payments received under Grant 395 Asylum Dispersal for the number of asylum seekers in the Local Authority and an increase in Dispersal beds on a quarterly basis should not include sites

East of England LGA, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

covered by Grant 530 AAP(ND). Wethersfield is the last remaining large site covered by grant 530 now that Bibby Stockholm has closed.

However this funding is not paid directly to Essex County Council and the key concern is an increased number of referrals from the site and Essex County Council's ability to participate in and accept transfers from the NTS when a surge in referrals occurs. This happened in November 2023 when the numbers of asylum seekers on site increased considerably over a few weeks and there were about 30 age assessment referrals to Essex County Council's children's services that month which required increased staff resource and in some cases the need to provide accommodation for those assessed to be under 18. The issue of high number of referrals from the site was raised at the time and the Home Office identified that the policy had not been correctly implemented.

Once the Special Development Order conditions are lifted, this will result in an increased capacity to accommodate on site. The Home Office needs to ensure that the policy of referrals to Wethersfield continues to be applied and properly executed (individuals selected to move there would not include anyone who had at any stage claimed to be under 18). It would also be helpful if the new arrivals on site could be staggered over a few weeks to mitigate for potential increase in referrals to children's services.

Hopefully this will not happen but it is something that will need to be closely monitored by both Essex County Council and the SMP.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name and title]