

Meeting Record –Summary of meeting 2026 08 27 – 11am - Pavilion

Compound and Car Park Project – Phase 2 Detailed Design Discussion

Present

Cllr Gary Blandford-Hull (GBH) - online	Cllr Claire Forbes (CF)
Cllr Maria La Femina (MLF)	Cllr Charlotte Blackman (CB)
Cllr Pete Edge (PE)	Comms Officer – Neil Durrant (ND)
Pete Blackman (Chair FaRMAC) (PB)	Town Clerk – (BL)
Clive Onions FRA (until 11:45) (CO)	

This meeting was held as a project group meeting. The project group is not a formal committee of the Council and has no delegated decision-making authority. Its purpose is to review the available information, consider the options and develop a recommendation on the preferred scheme for submission to Full Council. Any recommendation made by the project group is advisory only, with the final decision resting with Full Council.

Summary of meeting including actions

1. Purpose of the meeting

The meeting received preliminary civil engineering and flood-risk advice to inform the emerging layout for the Castle Meadow compound and car park. The discussion considered the implications of the site's flood-zone designation, appropriate construction levels, drainage, surfacing, the positioning and support of the storage cabins, inclusive access, parking and the amount of vegetation and meadow that could be retained.

The objective was not to finalise every construction detail, but to identify the preferred layout to recommend to Full Council noting the next steps are to establish the technical matters in collaboration with the subject matter experts that must be developed before submission of the planning application.

2. Flood risk and proposed development levels

CO presented the available preliminary flood-risk information via a [slide presentation](#).

The site lies within Flood Zone 3, although the surface-water mapping does not predict surface-water flooding on the site. It was noted that the mapped position of the existing flood defences may not be accurate, and a marked-up plan showing their correct position is required for the Flood Risk Assessment.

The preliminary modelling indicated:

- existing ground level of approximately 53.25 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD);
- Environment Agency defence levels of approximately 53.8 metres AOD;
- a modelled 1-in-100-year event, including climate-change allowance, of approximately 53.71 metres AOD; and
- a possible additional increase of approximately 150 mm under a more extreme climate-change sensitivity assessment.

The existing pavilion floor level was discussed as being approximately 53.7 metres AOD, only just above the modelled design-event level. CO therefore recommended that the proposed cabin floors should be set at approximately 54.0 to 54.1 metres AOD, subject to verification through the detailed design and Flood Risk Assessment.

The cabins should be mounted on open piers or similar supports so that floodwater can pass beneath them without the cabins displacing water or increasing flood risk elsewhere. Solid concrete foundations beneath the full footprint should be avoided where practicable.

3. Topographical information

The topographical information currently available does not provide complete, up-to-date levels across the whole route to the entrance gates. Drawing 214 L.01, Issue B was identified as the wider survey showing the original pavilion and entrance-gate area and have since been provided to CO.

The existing containers currently sit on a concrete base; a single slab extending beneath both containers and the storage space between them. The existing concrete base is not considered large enough to accommodate the proposed four-container arrangement, which would require a minimum footprint of approximately 32 feet by 20 feet. The extent and construction of the existing base will therefore be verified on site to inform the detailed design.

4. Consideration of layout options

Three layout approaches were discussed. Option 3 emerged as the preferred compromise because it would reduce the extent of hard surfacing, retain more meadow and vegetation, maintain vehicular access and provide a workable parking and turning arrangement.

The principal elements of Option 3 discussed were:

- a macadam access aisle kept to the minimum practical thickness and approximately six metres wide;
- permeable gravel parking bays;
- retention of a turning area, subject to further consideration of whether a reversing arrangement could provide an alternative;
- adjustment of the turning circle to maximise retained vegetation;
- possible modification of the entrance alignment;
- further review of parking space 24, which does not work in its currently shown position;
- careful consideration of parking close to the sports-use area; and
- stable, permeable routes between the compound, cabins, Men's Shed and parking area.

PB considered Option 3 the option most likely to be acceptable to the planning authority. The project group expressed support for Option 3 in principle, subject to the outstanding technical work.

5. Surfacing and drainage

The existing compacted access track could potentially be improved by scraping off high points, filling potholes and applying the thinnest practical macadam layer, rather than undertaking extensive excavation. Runoff should then be directed towards permeable parking and landscaped areas.

Permeable gravel, potentially approximately 300 mm deep, was proposed for the parking bays and compound areas. This would offer temporary storage within the material's voids during heavy rainfall. Traditional deep soakaways were not considered likely to be effective because of the high groundwater conditions.

The meeting discussed whether French drains might be required at the end of the parking bays or along the meadow edge. However, their location, purpose, discharge point and relationship with the permeable gravel system remain to be confirmed. It was noted that an existing French drain near North Street is no longer functioning effectively.

Subject to technical advice and contractor confirmation, the existing concrete cabin slab could be broken up and potentially reused as part of the parking sub-base. Removing the slab and replacing it with permeable gravel could increase available surface-water storage, create a level non-slip working area and improve access for wheelbarrows, sandbags, pumps and other equipment.

6. Cabins and inclusive access

The cabins should be raised on piers to protect them from flooding and permit water to flow underneath.

The detailed design will need to coordinate:

- the floor levels of all cabins;
- steps, ramps and handrails;
- the width and construction of the walkway;
- wheelchair accessibility;
- movement of heavy equipment from the Men's Shed;
- access for wheelbarrows, trailers and flood-response equipment;
- lighting and safe movement between cabins; and
- the position and orientation of the containers.

Loose gravel alone was not considered suitable for an accessible route. A cellular grid system filled with fine gravel or grass was discussed as a means of providing a stable, permeable surface. Grass-filled grid could be used on the meadow side, with fine gravel used where more intensive pedestrian or equipment access is required.

7. Planning, biodiversity and maintenance

The Flood Risk Assessment will need to explain why the cabins and associated facilities must remain in this location, including their relationship with the existing facilities and flood-response equipment. The planning case should also demonstrate that the scheme has been designed to minimise floodplain impact and, where possible, improve surface-water storage compared with the present compacted and concreted areas.

The detailed proposals must also address:

- retention of vegetation and meadow;
- biodiversity considerations;
- tree roots and the effect of the proposed surfaces on water reaching them;
- the need for a tree-root assessment;
- inspection and maintenance of permeable surfaces and drainage features; and
- ongoing maintenance of the compound, which is currently uneven and overgrown.

These requirements should ultimately be reflected in the construction specification review and, where relevant, the Council's grounds-maintenance arrangements.

8. Technical evidence considered

The group confirmed that it had now considered the available technical evidence developed at this meeting and at its previous meetings. This included:

- the [trial/test-hole findings](#) relating to the existing ground conditions and proposed construction works;
- the updated [Preliminary Ecological Appraisal](#) for Castle Meadow Pavilion Car Park, prepared by Wessex Ecology;

- other ecological advice relating to the Castle Meadow wildflower area; [ID Verde report](#), Dr Appleyard [appraisal](#) and [plant species list](#); and
- the preliminary flood-risk and civil engineering advice presented by CO at this meeting.

The group noted that tree-root information and some detailed technical matters remain outstanding and will need to be incorporated as the preferred layout is developed. However, it considered that the evidence now available was sufficient to identify a preferred option in principle and make a recommendation to Full Council. Approval of the final design, project scope, expenditure and planning submission remains a matter for Full Council.

9. Assessment of the options

The group considered all three layout options against the available flood-risk, ecological, access and practical requirements.

- **Option 1 was discounted** because the layout did not adequately respond to the emerging technical requirements, including the access, parking and turning arrangements that had subsequently been identified through development of the scheme.
- **Option 2 was discounted** because it involved a greater extent of macadam and hard surfacing than was considered necessary. This would provide less permeable area for the temporary storage and drainage of surface water and result in greater loss of vegetation.
- **Option 3 was preferred in principle** because it offered the most balanced approach. It retained the necessary access, parking and turning provision while reducing hard surfacing, retaining more vegetation and meadow, and making greater use of permeable surfaces. The civil engineer also considered it the option most likely to be acceptable to the planning authority

10. Recommendation

The project group's recommendation is that Option 3 should be presented to Full Council as the preferred layout in principle.

The recommendation should make clear that approval of Option 3 would not fix every construction detail at this stage. It should include delegated authority for the Town Clerk, working with Cllr Gary Blandford-Hull and Pete Blackman (as Chair of the Flood and Rover Management Advisory Committee) in collaboration with the relevant subject-matter experts; Edenvale and Marshway, to develop the technical aspects of the detailed plan. This should include cabin supports, levels, inclusive access, parking, turning arrangements, surface construction, drainage, entrance modifications and vegetation retention.

MLF left the meeting at 12:18

CB left the meeting at 12:18 and rejoined the meeting at 12:25

It was agreed by the remaining group members that Pete Blackman, as Chair of the Flood Advisory Committee, should be invited to explain the flood-related advice and the basis of the recommendation when the matter is considered by Full Council. To further clarify the formal decision on the detailed design will remain with Full Council.

Action table

Ref.	Action	Lead	Supporting input	Status or dependency
1	Send drawing 214 L.01, Issue B, covering the pavilion and entrance-gate area, to CO.	PB	Relevant Council records	Required to inform the Flood Risk Assessment and design levels.

2	Provide CO with a marked-up plan showing the understood position of the flood defences (noting the official maps shown were incorrect).	PE	Town Clerk	Required because the government mapping may not accurately show the defence alignment.
5	IF approved by the council, develop the detailed Option 3 layout, including access, parking, turning provision, vegetation retention and entrance modifications.	BL	GBH and PB	Subject to Full Council resolution
6	Confirm the proposed macadam construction, including the minimum practical thickness and any preparatory work required to the existing track.	GBH/ PB	Marshway Construction and CO	Required for the technical specification and cost plan.
7	Confirm the construction specification for the permeable gravel parking and compound areas, including the proposed depth and cellular grid system.	GBH/PB	Civil engineer (CO) / Marshway Construction	Must provide a stable surface suitable for vehicles, pedestrians and equipment.
8	Determine whether French drains are required and, if so, establish their location, discharge point and interaction with the permeable gravel areas.	CO	GBH and PB	Outstanding technical matter.
9	Develop the cabin access design, including walkway width, ramps, steps, handrails and accessible routes.	GBH/PB	CO/PE	Must reflect the different cabin uses and movement of heavy equipment.
10	Confirm the required cabin floor and support levels and whether additional survey or sectional level information is needed.	CO/ Marshway	Surveyor / project team	Preliminary recommendation is approximately 54.0 to 54.1 metres AOD.
11	Check whether the proposed changes can be constructed given the existing ground conditions, levels and platform materials.	GBH/PB	Civil engineer (CO) / Marshway Construction	Construction-feasibility check required before finalising the plan.
12	Assess whether the existing concrete slab can be broken up and reused within the parking construction.	Marshway	CO and project group	Subject to material suitability and construction requirements.
13	Resolve the position or removal of parking space 24 and any potential conflict between parking and sports use.	GBH/PB		Outstanding layout matter.
14	Obtain the quotation for the tree-root assessment and incorporate relevant arboricultural information into the design.	BL	Arboricultural adviser	Required to assess effects on retained trees and roots.

15	Include appropriate biodiversity, landscape inspection and maintenance requirements within the scheme and future maintenance arrangements.	BL	Grounds contractor	To cover permeable surfaces, meadow, planting and the compound area.
16	Prepare the Full Council report recommending Option 3 in principle and clearly identify the outstanding technical details.	BL	Project group	Report to include flood-risk advice, test-pit findings, ecology information and the proposed delegation.
17	Invite Pete Blackman to brief Full Council on the Flood Advisory Committee's advice and the basis of the recommendation.	BL	Project group	