



GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING 01		PROPOSED THIRD PRISON at Grendon Underwood	
Held on: 10/12/2020 at: 19:00hrs		Location: REMOTE	
PRELIMINARY FACT FINDING MEETING			
Steering	GU Parish Council Cllrs Kim Moloney (Chairman), A. Benfield, P. Jackman, H. Mackenzie, M. Hedgecox, Buckinghamshire County Council Cllrs A. Macpherson & Branston. Clerk		
	Some 40 residents from GU & Edgcott attended		
	Apologies Greg Smith, MP, 3 residents had emailed their comments,		
P01/01	<p>Purpose of Meeting On 3rd December 2020, the Council was forwarded a letter from Lynda Rawsthorne, Prison Infrastructure Director at the Ministry of Justice giving notice of their intention to apply for planning permission to build a third, (Cat C, 1440 bed) prison on the same site as the two existing (Cat A & Cat B) prisons in Grendon Underwood. A consultation period of some three weeks, ending on 24th December 20, was notified. NOTE: subsequent to meeting and after the intervention of our MP, Greg Smith, this has been extended to end January 2021. The Parish Council is committed to acting as an impartial representative of the views of residents. To this end GUPC called the meeting to ascertain those views - for & against – to collate them and to incorporate them into any representations to be made when the Planning Application goes in to Buckinghamshire Council. She confirmed the meeting would be recorded for ease of collation, but full names will not be minuted for GDPR reasons.</p>		
P01/02	<p>Scope of Meeting The Chairman explained the meeting was a preliminary fact finding meeting and would be limited to the sole purpose of obtaining the opinions of residents. She explained the participant engagement protocol and requested everyone to have their say but to keep any repetition to a minimum. She confirmed it was essential that the Council be made aware of all views both in favour and in opposition.</p>		
P01/03	<p>Background Overview. The Chairman gave a brief overview of the current situation and how the Council had approached the notification, so far. There was overwhelming disgust, both locally and at County, that the MoJ had seen fit to impose a three week consultation in the run up to Christmas, without warning, and this was not the action of someone wanting to engage constructively with a community. She had been in direct discussions with Michael Stanworth of LexCom consultants, the nominated MoJ representative, our MP, Greg Smith, our Buckinghamshire councillors, Angela MacPherson & Cameron Branston. She had also contacted other parish councils around Grendon Underwood and advised not all feel the proposal would affect them so would not support our initiative. She has also sought the views of other parishes already hosting prisons of this scale. She had been told some 700 permanent jobs would be created but that prison staff salaries would not be sufficient to buy homes locally. Most would travel in from out of area as would children attending school. It had been confirmed that no S106 monies would accrue. One of the 4 prisons of this type, proposed across England, would be run by MoJ & 3 privately. This one to be advised.</p>		
P01/04	<p>Executive Summary the overwhelming view of residents is to unreservedly oppose this Planning Application. The single most important concern for residents is sustainability and the ability of local infrastructure and amenities to absorb the incremental impacts arising from this project on top of the existential cumulative threat from multiple National infrastructure projects already imposed on the Parish. The Chairman requested volunteers for a small steering group to carry this mandate forward and to report back to residents. It would be important that volunteers be prepared to apply any skill sets they may have from</p>		

relevant experience be that directly pertaining to planning but also to include data research, collation & presentation – offers were made by Angela, Cameron, Roger, Steph, Carol, Chelsea, Amanda, Jayne.

P01/05

Open Forum for Input

The following comments are transcribed directly from resident input as forwarded at the meeting to preserve inclusivity integrity. There have been no amendments, corrections, modifications, abridgement, redaction or changes either by addition or omission.

General:

“They make several general claims in their announcement document which they need to substantiate, many appear very 'loose' and somewhat random. They are trying to force home their perceived advantages with no data to back these claims. We should focus on the most tenebale and challenge them hard.”

“any objections we raise will have to match the criteria the powers that be use to decide whether or not to approve the development. NIMBYism will not lend weight to our argument”

“with Bucks likely to move into tier 3 (COVID) will the necessary meetings be F2F or will all meetings and consultations take place over zoom?”

BCC- “I have asked MoJ to embellish their consultation material. if there's anything i particular people want to see please feed it in“

“We need to spread the word quickly beyond Grendon and Edgcott. What co-ordinated plans are in place to let many other parishes aware.”

“Yes we need a plan to involve neighbour parishes”

“when we we know Bucks C position?”

“Agree with Paul we need to be working on it now!”

By email: “1. It has insufficient detail for a consultation on such a significant development.

2. It will not consult on access routes until it submits the planning application which will only provide 21 days to submit comments. MoJ have suggested 1000 movements a day, so this aspect alone is unforgivable.

3. The developer appears to have no interest in directly engaging with PCs or their communities.

4. There is no information on infrastructure improvements that would be required.

5. There is no information regarding Community contributions (I recommend that you get involved now to maximise any benefit and make sure it addresses issues identified by GUPC and not by Buckinghamshire Council).

As promised I have taken a look at the Government Policy on consultations, link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

I think it can be argued that MoJ have not entered into the spirit of the guidance in many aspects including the level of detail provided.”

“Thank you Kim for all of the work you have put in so far.”

“Thank you all, this has been very helpful!”

“It is reassuring that our Parish Council is supporting us on this “

“Thank you PC for pulling this together for us and getting this info out to us in such a short time underthe current circs.”

“should we set up a working party or team then to work on it?”

“Happy to help Kim as you know”

“I think Covid 19 will play into the MOJ's hands with this”

“Happy to help.”

“really powerful if parishes could work together “

“Thanks Kim”

“thank you for all your hard work”

“Thank you very much Kim and the team!”

“If I was cynical I would say they have launched this idea now exactly because there are so many other things in the go! Also you wonder whether the Govt is trying to get this through because they need to ramp up the economy following Covid and now Brexit”

“thanks for driving this - dynamic response that we can get behind”

“im about; no problem”

“can we be updated the committee and agendas at my emails? “

“Thank you Kim and PC”

“thanks to you all for all your help.”

“thank you very much, we'll support you anyway we can”

“Thanks Kim and parish council for your speedy response on this critical discussion.”

“Thanks Kim and everyone at the parish council. The household will help where we can 👍”

“happy to help where we can”

“Thank you for a very positive meeting”

Sustainability – Infrastructure:

“Having been onsite at Wellingborough I can confirm that during construction there would be circa 1000 individuals involved most that will travel individually to site. Initially there will be circa 60 grab lorries attending site from 7:00 a.m. and making repeated journeys, these are then replaced by concrete lorries and are in addition to all other vehicle movements all other trades drainage, windows cladding fencing etc.... there are 30 – 40 skip lorries per week!

Vehicle movements are estimated between 1200 and 1800 per day including contractors.

They clean roads constantly through the day so a cleaning lorry will go up and down roads slowly every day of the build.” – *good information, noted, thanks.*

“can you advise if this will have any bearing on the new houses being proposed at Springhill. is there any opinion as to the PCC’s opinion on these being approved?”

“just done some research Springhill fall within the LCA 7.1 Poundon - Charndon Settled hills (LCT7) will this have bearing on the planning application?” – *being addressed.*

“We need to consider cumulative impact of traffic from HS2/EWR the Prison impending new developments”

“if policing will be increased will this include speeding? The trucks coming through for HS2/EWR have no consideration for the community let alone another 3 plus years of building the prison, lets face it when has a government project ever come in on time?

we also need to be aware of the already high traffic”

“interestingly you may wish to ask the Management Consultants how many oversized lorries got stuck in the village of Doddington.”

“thanks for mentioning us. our bend is getting worse and worse with all these big lorries”

“these big lorries are shaking our house and are driving too fast. Our neighbour has seen lorries mounting the kerbs”

“Ahead of Greatmoor EfW opening, the HGV traffic was awful with sadly regular accidents happening especially on the corners between Grendon and Edgcott - especially in the winter months....”

“reports say that employees travel into their place of work rather than live in the area especially as the rates of pay are generally low”

“Lets not forget the visitors on weekends as well....”

“That’s a very good point, the noise pollution from the carpark will be extreme in the thought of future where the large car park of possibly of crime e.g drug, nuisances and younger hangout of revving cars?”

“The prison as a Cat C will likely have visits through the week too”

“the whole infrastructure of the area will need considerable improvement and updating. Who will pay?”

“How accurate are the job figures of 500 to 600?”

“What is the weight limit on the bridge over the river Rea? As this may need replacing to accommodate the oversized vehicles?”

“they rebuilt the bridge a few years ago.it’s the full legal limit,”

Sustainability – Environment:

“Yet another nature reserve is going to be destroyed by new developments - how many more are we going to loose? The countryside that I chose to live within is rapidly changing and we have little control... this is a huge development that would not blend into the landscape.... “

“Light Pollution / Noise Pollution / Drains /Security for Family’s /Traffic /House Prices
Two Many Prisons in One Location / Loosing Country Side”

“there’s a government white paper out for consultation 'protect green belt' but M of J look to build on it!”

Sustainability – Amenities:

“Alongside the demographic info for prison staffing, can we have an estimate of the number of additional pupils at Grendon School? (And other schools)”

“they say there are three bus to Grendon road. there is only one. one of the other 677 is a school bus service! there are no buses on Sunday!” – *Staff & visitor data to be addressed.*

“Doctors and other public services?”

Alternative locations:

By email- “Having spent 31 years working for the Prison Service (27 of them at HMP Grendon/Springhill) I am aware what impact such establishments have on the local community. Wherever prisons are built there will always be a negative reaction particularly with such a huge development. Until a magic solution is found we will always need new up to date places of incarceration that reflect modern views on care and rehabilitation which includes the ease and ability of access for visitors. With this in mind and the need if possible to use Brownfield sites, it

makes far more sense to locate this new establishment within the vast MOD sites available close to Bicester, Oxon which has very good transport links and would alleviate the need to build on a Greenfield site.”

“Can the Parish Council contact the Parish Councils where the other prisons were/are being built and ascertain how much influence they were able to assert?” – *done*.

“On the location, the consultation paper refers to demand for additional places in Buckinghamshire. As we live in one of the lowest crime areas in the UK, do we have any background to this claim.? Additionally, the Ministry of Justice’s own 2019 report for projected prison populations shows some significant uncertainty on anticipated growth!”

BCC – “I understand the MoJ are lumping us in with the South east in general”

“Have they considered outskirts of towns such as Aylesbury or Bicester - more likely to recruit to the local community reducing the commutes out to the countryside”

“We really need to exhaust the possibilities of Bullingdon as an alternative.”

“Bullingdon also has a far better road access. worth mentioning.”

“the down side for us is the MOJ ownership of the land.... :- (“

“Bullingdon is a similar Cat c of 1100 inmates and employs 200 staff”

“So because of timescales we need to destroy greenland when there are many other sites that would also be well suited but might take longer?”

Community / Stakeholders:

“I think raising a point around mental health is important too. Although crime rates may be low from existing prisons, having another prison in the area will increase anxiety. Especially for elderly people and parents with young children. I think it will put a lot of locals from going out more.” - *really important point; noted; thanks*.

BCC – “this has impacts on many public services. schools a v good point, CCG, mental health provision, policing etc” “they may say they can put bus routes in etc but that cost could shunt to the local authority which could impact on council tax”

“is there anything to be learned from the campaign against the incinerator?”

“The house prices especially in Springhill is a real concern so would be very helpful to know as you say where they believe the house prices would be positively impacted.... I cant personally see that happening”

“As three planning applications during 2016 totaling 214 dwellings have subsequently been declined (though subject to further appeal) within 2 miles of the proposed prison site presumably as being unsuitable for the area. Assuming this does not change, the implication is that the additional employment associated with this proposal will almost entirely be occupied by people remote from the locality which in addition to the travel already mentioned means that long term local financial benefit through spend and investment will be minimal! But would approval for the prison mean an about turn on future planning for housing?”

“bullingdon struggle to get staff so where will staff come from”

“house prices are considerably lower on Springhill compared to Grendon or Edgcott already”

“We will no longer live in a Village”

“absolutely agree Kim, how much more. we have lived in for 26 years. it’s just so sad to be faced with one thing after the other.”

“We would look to move if it went ahead”

“Agreed”

“Carpark is about 5-10 meters from my house ha ! “

Accept & Mitigate:

“It would be a mistake to go for mitigation too early. New need to oppose holeheartedly”

“Agree we need to appose first 100%”

“agree, house prices have nothing to do with it and would damage any complaints if mentioned.”

“If this gets the go ahead, have we thought of what we would like to try and get out of this? if we can get anything? like help towards upkeep, roads, paths, etc?”

“Is there any chance the development could be used to encourage the authorities to finally adopt the roads in Springhill (which I believe they were supposed to do years ago?), or at least for the prison to take better care of the greens etc which have recently been neglected.”

“If it went ahead could we get the MOJ to use the new access road to the whole prison. That way avoiding all visitors and prison staff having to come through Springhill”

“Could the MOJ re-train inmates of Springhill to work some of the jobs in the new prison while serving there sentences? Reducing the commuting?”

By email- “Whilst I am not necessarily in favour of the proposal is it at all possible that this provides the residents of Springhill with the opportunity to obtain some of the infrastructure changes that are regularly highlighted? The ‘comprehensive set of social and community benefits’ could include, but are not limited to: a complete refurbishment of the drainage system; re-surfacing

	<p>of all roads around the estate; refurbishment of the green spaces; replacement street lighting. The list could go on. If the Ministry of Justice has the budget to build the prison then it wouldn't be a huge additional cost to include these items (and others) within the overall proposal. There is also the possibility that these requests are enough for the MoJ to realise that the project is not viable because of the additional costs so we get the benefit of not having the new work as well as having highlighted the issues to the correct authority.”</p> <p>Accept – no mitigation: “I would be interested to hear if anyone thinks this is a good idea and why”</p>
<p>P01/06</p>	<p>Actions arising. GUPC - The Parish council will continue their ongoing dialogue directly with the designated MoJ liaison, our MP, Buckinghamshire Council representatives, other Parish Councils, the school, the prison governor and report back to residents. Further information will be sought on the data on which the ministry is relying to make this site their preferred location. This to include how they have arrived at house prices rising; the number of jobs for local residents, the capacity of local housing to accommodate staff & the carbon contribution of so many travelling by car from other towns; how they have calculated what effect so many families coming into the area will have on road infrastructure, school places, doctors lists & emergency services resource; what income Bucks County will receive from rates etc.; how they have factored in current National infrastructure projects already blighting the area - especially construction traffic data from HS2 & EWR; how crime statistics will change; an increased propensity for local, large scale housing developments to be granted; what incremental impacts to drains, lighting, roads and green space maintenance. The Council will present their findings at further open, public meetings and publicise timing, giving good notice, on the Parish Council web site at www.gupc.org.uk and through letter boxes with flyers. The Council will develop a steering group and seek permissions to use emails for rapid communication. Buckinghamshire County Council – will resolutely represent the views of the local community regardless of any potential benefits accruing to any wider County considerations. Residents - It was repeatedly stressed that each & every resident should formally log their views themselves with the Ministry directly using the links provided on the Parish & Ministry web sites and to spread the word with friends & family.</p>