

I live in Edgcott and am opposed to the proposal to build a new prison nearby. My objections are numerous and the main ones are as follows:

- 1) Where is the data to support the claim that there will be an increased need for prison places in the South East and hence a new prison has to be located in Buckinghamshire? The crime rate in Buckinghamshire is much lower than in other parts of the South East.
- 2) The South East is a large region and there must be other sites more appropriate than the one proposed; just one example is the nearby site at HMP Bullingdon. The long term economies of operation of a larger Category C unit at that site rather than a separate new build at Edgcott must surely outweigh the cost of land acquisition at Bullingdon.
- 3) The unemployment rate in Bucks is below the national average so there are more appropriate areas to create jobs through this project (Bucks ranges from 2.5 to 3.3% whereas the national average is 3.9% plus some hotspots have unemployment rates up to 9%).
- 4) The local infrastructure is already overburdened and the stress of adding a further 20,000 square metres of buildings, around 1,000 contractors for a 2-3 year period, 1,440 and possibly 1,680 new prisoners, 5-600 new staff and additional external support from daily deliveries etc. is completely unsustainable and would exacerbate the existing adverse effects on the local community, particularly:
 - a. The unclassified rural road through Edgcott is already carrying around 3,500 vehicles per day (with a high percentage of these travelling above the 30 mph speed limit). Large numbers of HGV's use the road and are increasing due to the EWR and HS2 major works in the locality and there is a forecast of additional sub 7.5 tonnes traffic using the road from these projects of over 500 vehicles a day. HS2 and EWR works are forecast to coincide with the timeframe expected for the development works for the prison.
 - b. Even after completion of EWR and HS2 construction projects (still many years to run) around 300 people and related traffic will result permanently from its operation. The rural road is unsuitable for this level of traffic, never mind the cumulative effect of increases that would result from the new prison.
 - c. The sewers in Edgcott are a continual problem as they are at or over capacity. Even the main sewer from the current two prisons has leakage problems in the field in which it is planned to site the car parking. This has been an ongoing problem for many years and has not been addressed.
 - d. The sewage issue is also exacerbated by flooding issues. The impact of the proposed scheme will add to this issue.
 - e. The proposed car park would result in a significant increased risk of flooding to that area of the site in addition to destroying the landscape character of this field.
 - f. In terms of a flood risk assessment it is no good considering just the site on which any prison might be built but a much wider area has to be considered due to the height of the prison site, the clay subsoil, limited number of ditches and the impact on the surrounding locality.
 - g. There is even frequent flooding around the main entrance gates to the prison site which has never been taken seriously and addressed.
 - h. Local bus services are inadequate (only bus 16 goes past the prison) and entirely unsuitable for large numbers of visitors to an expanded prison. It would be impossible for contractors or new staff to use public transport as a means of travelling to and from the site.
 - i. The roads are already so dangerous to small vehicles, and in particular bicycles, that very few staff, if any, would wish to choose cycling as a means of transport to the site.

- j. Local schools, GP services etc are already at or close to capacity and increasing demand on any of them by the increase of 500-600 permanent jobs in the local community would be unsustainable.
- 5) Nowhere do you mention the environmental impact of the additional journeys by 1,000 contractors twice daily for a 2-3 year construction phase, the long term additional 1,400 staff journeys made each day after the completion, the multiple service vehicles that will need to visit the site daily plus the potential long return journeys that many visitors will make. Nor do you consider the damaging impact that these additional vehicle movements will have on the local residents and the increase in local pollution level.
- 6) There would be a reduction in the current green space separating the existing prison from Edgcott reducing open land that contributes to the form and character of this rural settlement. Hence this will damage the local environment and adversely affect the character and appearance of this rural area and is totally unacceptable.
- 7) The current prison site has a pond and various wildlife facilities like bat and bird nesting boxes. The access to the site where the buildings are to be located will pass close to or even through some of the areas designated for wildlife and hence cause potential disruption to and or a loss of parts of the current wildlife habitat. Edgcott is a known area for the presence of both great crested newts, red kites, kestrels, a wide variety of small birds, foxes, butterflies and bats so some of these species could be lost or disrupted due to this development.
- 8) In addition to the point above, much other wildlife could be damaged or misplaced due to development of such a large area of green field spaces. Certainly some hedges and trees will have to be removed just to access the development site again causing further loss of and disruption to wildlife.
- 9) The increased light pollution that will result from the expanded prison site is unacceptable.
- 10) The proposed prison will increase the existing prisoner population on the extended site by over 200% and would make the site the largest prison in England and Wales. The total prison population on the site would be more than double the population of Grendon Underwood and Edgcott combined and hence represents a major imbalance.
- 11) The other new prisons that you are, or will be building, are located close to large urban areas. The proposed site is not close to a large urban area but is surrounded by a cluster of small villages. How can you possibly justify building such a large unit in this rural location?
- 12) You mention in the proposal that the proposed site has good road links to the A41. Firstly this road link involves a number of narrow and tight bends, goes across a narrow bridge and passes very close to Grendon Underwood Church. In addition the junction of the A41 and the road to the proposed site is very dangerous and there have been a number of accidents there including fatal ones.
- 13) Only a portion of the contractors, staff and visitors to the new prison would use the link road to the A41. The remainder would travel in the opposite direction and pass through Edgcott and subsequently through other small villages on narrow, windy country roads.

- 14) The volume of construction traffic involved in building such a new prison would be hugely significant and would have a devastating impact on the local villages. You state that you would work with the Council on a traffic management plan, just as HS2 and ER promised. These plans have been frequently ignored by the contractors despite many objections. How can you expect local residents to expect your contractors to be any different from those already passing through the locality?
- 15) The volume of traffic using 'rat runs' through other local villages will increase. In addition new 'rat runs' may be created as contractors and staff find the main routes to the site congested.
- 16) Your plans for an Outline Travel Plan are unworkable in a rural location like the proposed site. The bus services are poor (only one of the bus services that you mentioned passes the current prison) , the roads are too dangerous for staff to even consider using a bicycle and staff members will be coming from a wide range of destinations due to the poor availability of local housing, hence making it untenable for car sharing. Your travel plan is a non-starter.
- 17) Without additional housing there will be a significant travel element for the proposed new prison employees which does not match with the low carbon agenda required for the future and of course would have a long-term impact on local traffic and environmental noise and pollution.
- 18) The proposed plan shows the site of the football pitch being much closer to residential property, and in particular close to many more residents with younger children, than the current location. The noise from the current location, and in particular the language, is disgraceful and can be heard throughout parts of Edgcott. How do you intend to minimise the noise pollution from the new location and avoid the inevitable harm that this will cause to the local community and ensure that no foul language is spread across further residential areas close to the sports pitch?
- 19) You claim that you are not aware of any evidence that a new prison in an area leads to a fall in house prices. Since the announcement about this proposal, two residents of Edgcott have lost their buyers for house sales, one of these being in the very late stages of the process. This means that these house owners would have to reduce the price of their property significantly to sell, hence resulting in a price reduction.
- 20) The proposed 4 storey buildings cannot be effectively screened from the existing hedging and trees. The current green building in the location where the 4 storey buildings will be located is around three storeys high and that is very evident from the North end of Edgcott and the visual impact of the enlarged prison complex in this rural location is unacceptable.
- 21) There are public rights of way across the field where the car park is to be sited as well as around the edge of the area where the new prison buildings will be located; will these be lost forever or retained?
- 22) There has been a steady flow of absconders/escapees from HMP Springhill over the years which already makes the local community feel insecure. Category 3 prisons present a very different potential risk to local communities. A location so close to such a small and relatively remote settlement is inappropriate and will put significant additional strain on police, ambulance and fire services in the case of any emergencies.

- 23) How will you prevent drugs entering and circulating in the new prisons that you are building?
- 24) The consultation document claims that the expanded prison will deliver a comprehensive set of social and community benefits. These benefits may or may not be realised for the wider locality but for Edgcott, Grendon Underwood and nearby villages there is nothing but an adverse impact. In addition the plan will bring new employment buildings into a rural environment which is against local council policies.
- 25) The figures that you included for the jobs etc created at Five Wells prison being built in Wellingborough were inconsistent across the two versions of the proposal. In the second version you mentioned that 'hundreds of jobs for the community' would be created, in the first version you mentioned just 144 jobs had been created. Are you manipulating data to make the numbers look more favourable?