

I am writing to register my strong objection to the proposed new Prisons at HMP Grendon & Springhill, application reference 21/02851/AOP. I have been a resident of Edgcott for over 20 years and will be directly impacted by the application.

In January, in common with hundreds of local people, I raised a range of issues during the consultation process for this proposal which we all believed demonstrated clearly that the site at Grendon Underwood was entirely inappropriate for a development of this type. I am hugely disappointed that the MOJ has decided to proceed, despite all the evidence presented.

I can understand why the MOJ looked at this site when tasked to increase prison capacity. Having realised that there is no local need for prison places in North Buckinghamshire and that available land does not meet the needs of a prison of this scale, either in terms of access or layout, and that this is a location which cannot be accessed without a huge impact on local transport and carbon footprint - I am at a loss to understand why they persisted.

To start with suggested benefits. It is indicated that this will provide local employment. This is an area with low population and low unemployment. There are 12 prisons within 40 miles - so it is reasonable to assume that anyone looking for a career in the prison service will have ample opportunity already. In reality there is no local benefit in terms of employment. Local house prices are likely to be unaffordable for prison staff and so the workforce for a mega-prison at Grendon Underwood would be required to travel significant distances - by car as there is no public transport. Roads round here are already too hazardous for cyclists and the minimum distance to a centre of population with train links (Bicester) is 7.5 miles.

It has also been suggested that employment during the construction phase will be of benefit locally. Within a few miles we have both HS2 and EWR projects. Thousands of people have been shipped in to work on these - so again it is reasonable to assume that anyone local looking for construction work can easily find it. Once again the construction workforce will not be drawn locally and will be required to travel long distances to the site.

Therefore during the construction and operation of a mega prison - there will be vast increase in traffic. There are no realistic ways for employees or people visiting inmates to access the site without driving (public transport is minimal and of no use to anyone wishing to access the prisons) - so this will hugely increase the carbon footprint in contravention of all government targets. This will also further clog the key trunk route of the A41 and a range of rural roads in the area. It is already practically impossible to access the A41 during the day due to volume of traffic. Heavy goods vehicles thunder through our village moving to and from the nearby construction sites causing noise, pollution, verge damage and general misery for residents who can no longer realistically walk through the village. To see this increased further, and permanently, I must admit is a deeply depressing prospect.

In addition to providing no benefit to the people of Buckinghamshire the proposed prisons will impact local services. There are genuine questions about its suitability in terms of engineering (we already suffer regular floods on the road outside our house - increased building on the hill above our property will only make this worse). There are equally questions about the impact on the Police and other local services. We recently received a circular from the Prison Service and Thames Valley Police noting an increase in criminal activity around the perimeter of the existing prison - offering a

helpline for the public to report incidents. We have had call to report incidents ourselves on at least two occasions - which required officers to respond. I can only see the manpower burden on the Police increasing.

So there is no benefit and many disbenefits for local people. In addition to these factors they will see a rural area permanently despoiled. Spring Hill on which the Prison would be built is a relatively small hill which is part of a range. Therefore ugly four storey block buildings will loom above the local villages, their scale and design completely out of keeping with a rural location. The development would at the same time dominate the view from areas all around which are set on higher ground. For instance the views from Brill, Ashendon, and Quainton all of which are popular destinations for walkers will be ruined (particularly by a vast arc of artificial light at night). The suggestion that the planting of trees will mitigate this ruination is ridiculous. In 40 years there may be some impact from this, though the experience of tree planting around the incinerator built nearby suggests that most saplings die and no visual barrier is created. So this attractive rural area will be spoiled. The fact that there are listed buildings nearby, and the impact on local ecology and wildlife will be catastrophic, will only add to this disaster.

This is an area which has had more than its fair share of development intended to deliver benefits elsewhere (waste disposal sites to serve London, train lines intended to benefit the north or improve access between Oxford and Cambridge). I fully accept that we should all play our part in meeting national objectives. But there really is no case for siting this prison here and there is a long list of reasons for siting it elsewhere.

A development of this type could benefit a community in an urban location where transport infrastructure exists, where employment is needed and where the introduction of an urban style development would be in keeping with the locality. As such I suggest that the MOJ should be asked to find a site which actually meets the requirements of a modern prison and which is appropriate for workers and visitors to it