

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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**Land to the South of HMP Gartree
Welland Avenue
Market Harborough
Leicestershire
LE16 7RP**

Job No 200GH200

August 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains the public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to support an outline planning application for a new prison and associated ancillary facilities at land to the south of HMP Gartree, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7RP, submitted by Cushman & Wakefield on behalf of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The application is an outline planning application with all matters reserved except access.
- 1.2 Consultation has been undertaken in line with the requirements and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) which explains how the community should be consulted in respect of significant development proposals.
- 1.3 This statement includes a summary of how stakeholder consultation was organised, advertised, key outcomes and how these have influenced the proposed development.

Description of Development

- 1.4 The description of the proposed development is as follows:

Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved except for means of access and scale for the construction of a new Category B prison of up to 82,555sqm GEA within a secure perimeter fence together with access, parking, landscaping and associated engineering works on land adjacent to HMP Gartree, Gallow Field Rd, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7RP

- 1.5 The indicative site layout proposes a range of buildings and facilities typical of a Category B Training Prison prison, including:
- Seven new houseblocks each accommodating up to 245 prisoners (1,715 prisoners in total), totalling c.53,122 sqm GEA
 - Supporting development including kitchen, workshops, kennels, entrance resource hub, central services Hub and support buildings, totalling c. 29,433 sqm GEA
 - Ancillary development including car parking (c. 523 spaces), internal road layout and perimeter fencing totalling 1463 linear meters enclosing a secure perimeter area of 11.69 ha.
- 1.6 The house blocks will be four storeys in height, whilst the other buildings will range from one to three storeys.
- 1.7 Other development proposed includes kennels, polytunnels, car parking (c. 523 spaces), internal road layout and perimeter fencing. A bicycle shelter is also proposed.
- 1.8 The new prison will be designed and built to be highly sustainable and to exceed local and national planning policy requirements in terms of sustainability. MoJ's aspirations include targeting near zero carbon operations, 10% biodiversity net gain, and at least BREEAM 'Excellent' certification, with endeavours to achieving BREEAM 'Outstanding'.

2. Relevant Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 The 2011 Localism Act (part 6 chapter 4) sets out how developers should consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments. Section 122 introduced a requirement upon prospective developers to consult local communities before submitting applications for certain developments. The Act requires a prospective developer to carry out Pre-Application consultation by publicising a proposed application for planning permission in order to bring it to the attention of the majority who live at, or otherwise occupy premises in the vicinity. The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2015 as amended sets out minimum standards of publicity and notification relating to planning applications, depending on the nature of the application.
- 2.2 As required by s.38 of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004, planning applications must be determined in accordance with relevant policies set out in the appropriate development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The main planning policies at national and local level relevant to the determination of this application are summarised and explained in this section.
- 2.3 The development plan for Harborough District Council ('the Council') is the Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031(adopted April 2019) and the Lubenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016 - 2031). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) is also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) and Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

- 2.4 The NPPF sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a positive approach to planning as a means of supporting the country's economic and housing growth, while protecting the environment. It directs local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.
- 2.5 Paragraph 39 of the NPPF sets out that pre-application discussions enables improved outcomes for the community. Paragraph 40 states applicants are encouraged to engage with the local community before submitting their applications. Paragraph 41 further states that "*the more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage... the greater the benefits.*"
- 2.6 Paragraph 42 of the NPPF outlines that "*the participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage.*"
- 2.7 Paragraph 43 of the NPPF states that in order to avoid delay "*applicants and the local planning authority should discuss what information is needed with the application... as early as possible.*"
- 2.8 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals, "*early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.*"

Harborough District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI, 2021)

- 2.9 The Council's SCI contains information on how Harborough District Council (HDC) will consult for the different aspects of planning in Planning Policy and Development Management and show how and when community engagement will take place for planning and development.
- 2.10 The Council's main principles for community involvement in the planning process are:
- Providing timely and easy access to information on planning matters,
 - Giving the community opportunities to contribute ideas and take an active part in developing proposals,
 - Providing opportunities to comment on formal proposals, and to value the opinions and insight of consultees at all stages,
 - Being open and transparent in its decision making, and explaining the influence of consultation,
 - Using appropriate, fit for purpose and cost-efficient consultation techniques and methods which take account of the differing skills and abilities of the community,
 - Keeping people informed about progress and outcomes,
 - Showing fairness and equality to residents in creating opportunities to be involved in planning matters, and
 - Writing consultation documents as simply as possible and including a glossary where necessary.
- 2.11 Community involvement relating to planning applications, where appropriate, can include explaining the proposals to residents, workers and users of the area around the site of the proposed development, requesting the views of people in the community, considering those views, and where appropriate, the applicant amending the proposals to take the views of the community into account.

Pre-Application Advice

- 2.1 Early involvement enables issues and concerns to be discussed and addressed with key stakeholders before decisions are made. As well as the council, the key stakeholders can include infrastructure providers. Pre-application involvement by developers allows those issues to be raised at an early stage and may enable them to be addressed and to shape or influence the development proposals.
- 2.2 Section 122 of the Localism Act (2011) has amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to require applicants to carry out pre-application consultation where a proposed development is of a description specified in a development order issued in December 2013. HDC strongly encourages developers and agents to engage with the planning service, statutory consultees and the local community at the earliest opportunity, especially on major applications. This ensures the best information on which to base proposals and enable any subsequent planning application to have the best chance of success.

3. Pre Application Advice

- 3.1 In accordance with the NPPF, National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), Localism Act and the SCI, Pre-Application advice has been sought from the Local Planning Authority (HDC), the Local Highways Authority (Leicestershire County Council LCC) and a consultation exercise undertaken to present the proposed development options to residents and stakeholders.
- 3.2 The purpose of this consultation was to allow residents, local Councillors and other interested parties the opportunity to be involved in development of the proposals, provide information on the proposed development and an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.
- 3.3 Details of consultation with key stakeholders (i.e. Ward and Parish Councillors) and the general public is detailed in Section 4 of this report. This section relates to pre-application discussions with HDC and LCC.
- 3.4 A pre-application meeting was held with the Local Planning Authority Harborough District Council (HDC) on 25th September 2020. The Local Highways Authority - Leicestershire County Council (LCC) also attended this meeting. Details of this meeting and written feedback are provided in section 3.5 (below).
- 3.5 A series of meetings have been held with HDC and LCC. A list of the meetings held is detailed below:
- Meeting with Chief Executive of HDC and Leader of the Council – 14th June 2021.
 - Meeting with Chief Executive and LCC and Lead of the Council – 25th June 2021.
 - Meeting with Chief Executive of HDC – 19th August 2021
 - Meeting with HDC to discuss viewpoints for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) – 8th June 2021.
 - Meetings with LCC Highways (HDC also in attendance) to discuss highways matters – 11th November 2020, 3rd June 2021 and 5th August 2021.
 - Meeting with County Ecologist (LCC) to discuss ecological matters – 15th July 2021.

Pre-Application Meeting and Feedback

- 3.6 A pre- application meeting was held with HDC on 25th September 2020 (LCC Highways officers were also in attendance. Written feedback was provided on 9th October 2021. This identified the following planning constraints:
- Badger Setts known to be located on site;
 - Great Crested Newts (GCN) – control ponds to the east of the application site have been created as mitigation for a large residential development to the south of the site (known as the Airfield Farm site).
 - Site is a former World War II Airfield and there is therefore potential for archaeological finds.
 - Site is within the open countryside (but not within the Green Belt) and therefore Landscape and Visual Impact will need to be carefully considered (particularly night-time visual impact and use of lighting).

- The associated increase in traffic will impact on local pinch points and the associated traffic analysis will need to carefully consider whether traffic will increase through the villages of Lubenham and Foxton.

3.7 Pre-application advice received from HDC confirmed the following:

- The site is contrary to Local Plan policy (within the open countryside) and therefore justification is needed as to why the proposed prison is needed in this location. The feedback states that any justification should be based on the need for prison spaces and the specific reasons why this site is preferable to others being considered.
- Notwithstanding the above, the socio economic benefits of the scheme are recognised and the principle of development is deemed acceptable to HDC subject to receipt of the detailed reports and information submitted with the planning application.
- There are no designated heritage assets on or adjacent to the site but, notwithstanding this, the site was a WWII Airfield and therefore a desk based Archaeological report is required.
- Highway Issues – the need to ensure traffic does not use the residential part of Welland Avenue was identified. The need to ensure the development does not exacerbate existing highway issues including rat runs: from the A6/A427 Roundabout through Great Bowden, from the A6 through Foxton Village and from the A4304 turning left into Lubenham and along Foxton Road. This should be reflected in any adjustment to traffic modelling.
- Landscape and Visual Impact – advice stated that a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment would be required to assess the landscape visual impact.
- Ecology – Badgers and GCN identified as the key ecological constraints.

4. Local Community and Stakeholder Consultation

- 4.1 Public consultation on proposals for the proposed new prison took place between 28th June 2021 and 2nd August 2021. The consultation involved a series of webinars, meetings with ward and parish councillors and a face to face event held at Lubenham Parish Council on 21st June 2021. 1,503 residents were notified of the consultation.
- 4.2 The event was advertised via (a second) letter sent to 1,503 residents in the local area. Local councillors were also informed.
- 4.3 The consultation material at the face to face event was presented as boards explaining the project objectives to support the proposed new prison and the need for new prison places. Consultation material is provided at Appendix 1.

Meetings with Councillors

- 4.4 A series of (online) meetings have taken place with Ward and Parish Councillors, these are detailed below. The meetings involved a short presentation and questions.
- Lubenham Parish Council (Cllr Cook) – 6th July 2021 (evening).
 - Harborough District Councillors (Cllr Bremner, Cllr Knowles, Cllr King, Cllr Foster) – 12th July 2021 (evening). This meeting was also attended by officers from HDC (David Atkinson and Mark Patterson).
 - Foxton Parish Council (Cllr Rogers, Cllr Billington, Cllr Hall, Cllr Brown and Cllr Chambers) – 13th July 2021 (evening).
- 4.5 The key issue arising from the meetings with Ward and Parish Councillors was the increase in traffic the new prison would generate. Lubenham Parish Councillors and Foxton Parish Councillors raised concerns about increased traffic being routed through their respective villages. Other issues raised were staffing and recruitment, the sustainability credentials of the new prison and the potential community benefits that the new prison may be able to provide.

Webinars

- 4.6 Webinars were held on 15th July 2021 (evening) and 16th July 2021 (lunchtime). The Consultation material for the webinars was presented as a PowerPoint presentation which the project team talked through. Comments were provided via the chat function in zoom.

Meeting with Residents of the Gartree Estate

- 4.7 A separate (online) meeting was arranged with the residents of the Gartree Estate on 7th July 2021 (evening). This meeting was arranged as the Gartree Estate is the closest residential area to the proposed site and it was anticipated that there would be site specific issues from this group. The meeting involved a short presentation and questions.
- 4.8 At the meeting the Gartree residents raised concerns about the potential for traffic to use the (unadopted) residential part of Welland Avenue to access Gartree Road. They raised concerns related to highway safety (if traffic does increase on this route). Opinion was divided amongst the residents on how best to mitigate this, some residents suggested closing off the road, whilst

others stated that the road needed to remain open to allow them access to Foxton Road (via Welland Avenue). Open space and play space were also discussed.

Public Exhibition (Face to Face Event)

- 4.9 As Covid restrictions eased MoJ were pleased to be able to host a (socially distanced) face to face event for the new prison proposals. This was held at Lubenham Village Hall and ran from 3 -8pm. 93 people attended the event. Presentation boards were set up around the hall and the project team were available to discuss the proposals and answer questions. Many of the Parish and Ward Councillors and those members of the public who had attended earlier meetings also attended this event. The feedback from this event is largely captured within the feedback Section detailed at paragraph 4.10 below.

Consultation Responses

- 4.10 Across the consultation period a total of 387 responses were received. Of these all were online submissions, save for one letter received by post. Of the 383 responses, 117 were from residents in Harborough and 78 responses were from an IP address in Vancouver, Canada, with the remainder from addresses in the UK. It is understood that the submissions to the application from Canada has been prompted by a campaign by CAPE (Community Action against Prison Expansion) via social media (Twitter and Instagram) to generate consultation responses to the proposals.
- 4.11 Topics raised in submissions from Harborough addresses are summarised below, with a count of the number of times a theme is mentioned:

Theme	Count
Traffic	53
Local services	23
Loss of greenspace	16
House Prices	13
Employment opportunities	15
Impact on local wildlife	11
Support	15
Road improvements	10
Visual Impact	10
Bus Route	8
Construction	8
No Prison	8
Speed of Vehicles	8
Adoption of Welland Avenue	7
Increase in traffic through Lubenham	7
Amenity of neighbouring properties	10
Noise	5
HGV's through neighbouring villages	4
Landscaping	4
The planned access road is unsuitable	4
Amount of Car Parking (not enough)	4
Increase in traffic to M1	4

Traffic

- 4.12 Traffic was the most commented issue in the consultation. Comments related to the general increase in traffic the new prison would generate, the potential increase in traffic through the neighbouring villages of Lubenham and Foxton and concerns that traffic would use the residential part of Welland Avenue to access the site. Concerns were also raised about the suitability of the (non-residential) section of Welland Avenue as an access point for the new prison. Particular concerns related to the increase in HGV traffic on associated local roads.

Local Services

- 4.13 The impact on local services was a key theme in the consultation responses. Respondents advised that local health and community facilities are at capacity.

House Prices

- 4.14 The impact on house prices was raised in the consultation responses and at the face to face event. Residents of the Gartree Estate in particular were concerned about the impact of the new prison on house prices.

Employment Opportunities

- 4.15 The consultation feedback revealed that residents of Harborough are sceptical that the employment opportunities generated by the new prison will benefit local people.

Impact on Local Wildlife

- 4.16 Some of the consultation responses focussed on the potential loss of habitats for wildlife, particularly badgers.

Road Improvements

- 4.17 Some of the residents comments questioned whether the current road network could accommodate the additional traffic generated by a new prison. They suggested that road improvements were needed, with some suggesting a new bypass for Market Harborough and others suggesting improvements to the junction with Gallowfield Road and B6047.

Visual Impact/Amenity

- 4.18 Comments were made in respect of the visual impact of the prison in middle and longer distance views. Comments were also made from residents of the Gartree Estate that they were concerned that the houseblocks could overlook their properties or gardens and create security issues (as some residents work at HMP Gartree). Comments were also made related to amenity issues related noise and lighting.

Bus Route

- 4.19 Comments were raised in respect of the current bus service to HMP Gartree. There is a bus stop for the Prison which is adjacent to Gallowfield Road. Comments advised that the bus service is infrequent. Comments were also raised that visitors arriving to the new prison by bus would currently need to walk through Welland Avenue to access the new prison. There is no dedicated footway on this route.

Construction

- 4.20 Concerns were raised in respect of construction traffic and access, and associated noise and dust. Concerns were also raised that construction traffic may run through Lubenham and Foxton Villages.

Support

- 4.21 A number of respondents wrote to express their support for the new prison advising that the new jobs and wider supply chain benefits would be beneficial to the local area. A number of people at the face to face event expressed interest in applying for a job at the new prison.

5. Response to Local Community and Stakeholder Consultation

- 5.1 Following consideration of the consultation feedback, response has been provided to stakeholders in relation to the key concerns raised.

Traffic

- 5.2 A Transport Assessment has been prepared and is included in the planning application for the new prison. The Transport Assessment has been scoped and discussed with HDC and LCC. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that there are no capacity issues on the current highway network, this has also been confirmed by the Local Highways Authority (LCC). Therefore proposed junction improvements (and the suggested bypass) are not required and could not reasonably be requested by the Council as part of this planning application. Moreover, the evidence presented within the Transport Assessment concludes that the proposed development would not have a material detrimental effect on the existing highway network.
- 5.3 The concerns of residents within the Gartree Estate regarding traffic using the residential part of Welland Avenue have been noted. Traffic calming is proposed on the part of Welland Avenue which MoJ own (adjacent to the access point for the proposed prison) will be supplied to discourage people visiting the prison from using this route. Staff will be briefed to not use this route (as detailed in the Travel Plan submitted with the application) and HGV delivery drivers will be contractually obliged to use the Gallowfield Road/Foxton Road/Welland Avenue (non-residential) route to the new prison. Appropriate signage will be provided to enforce this and monitoring of the route and Welland Avenue will take place as part of the Travel Plan monitoring.

Construction Traffic

- 5.4 Construction Traffic will be carefully managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan. This plan has been submitted with the planning application and has been subject to consultation with HDC and LCC to gain their input and experience. The Construction Traffic Management Plan will include key details including hours of operation, cleaning of vehicles and the highway and signage. Key signage will be provided in advance of Lubenham and Foxton Villages instructing construction traffic not to go through these villages to access the site. Similar signage will be provided at the residential part of Welland Avenue. The Construction Traffic Management Plan will also include details of the Liaison Officer for the project who stakeholders can contact to get information on the construction phase of the development.
- 5.5 The Construction Traffic Management Plan will also address issues related to construction noise and dust.

Local Services

- 5.6 A number of submissions queried whether a new prison in Harborough will have a detrimental impact on local residents' ability to access public services, such as health services. Alongside public consultation work, all local 'blue light' emergency services have been consulted. Detailed operational planning will take place with these agencies to manage any demand from a new prison without impact on the services for residents.

- 5.7 NHS England provide primary health services in prisons, rather than local GP practices, and have also been consulted to ensure relevant services are planned.

Employment Opportunities

- 5.8 Based on comparison data from the MoJ the proposed development could employ 778 staff employed directly at the prison; this data suggests that that 737 of these could be undertaken by people residing within a 40-mile radius.
- 5.9 The MoJ identified during consultation the social value that the new prisons at HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough and Glen Parva in Leicestershire, are expected to deliver to local people both during construction and when the prison is operational. These include hundreds of career opportunities within the prison, construction apprenticeships and training days, and targeted spend within the local economy.
- 5.10 MoJ are committed to working with SMEs to ensure that the positive social value derived from a potential new prison here is felt not just by people living across the wider Harborough area, but also by the communities immediately adjacent to the proposed site. MoJ are committed to making a positive contribution for local people and are keen to work with local communities to ensure as many local people benefit as possible.

House Prices

- 5.11 The proposed development is located adjacent to an existing prison facility, therefore, based on information from The Effect of Custodial Properties on House Prices study it is unlikely that it would have a long-term impact on the rental or selling of residential property in the local area. Further detail on this issue is included in the Socio Economic Statement submitted with the planning application.

Impact on Local Wildlife

- 5.12 Ecological Surveys have been undertaken for this site and are included in the application pack. The surveys confirmed the presence of a colony of badgers and identified two main badger setts, a subsidiary and four outliers. To accommodate the proposed development a programme of licenced sett closure, badger exclusion, replacement sett construction and habitat creation will be undertaken. New badger setts will be provided as part of the proposed development (details of the design of the badger setts are included in this planning application).
- 5.13 In addition the proposals will provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity and an area of the site (to the west of the existing MoJ storage depot) has been identified as as an area of biodiversity enhancement. This area will still remain open space for recreational use but with enhanced planting and management will become an area of biodiversity enhancement also.

Visual Impact

- 5.14 The visual impact of the proposals has been assessed as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which concluded that given the scale and form of the proposed development is likely to result in change to an area already characterised by prison development, in combination with a notable reduction in identified effects further from the site, on balance, the remaining landscape and visual effects are not likely to be significant.

Furthermore, the proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping will deliver enhancements as part of the landscape strategy, in terms of the physical landscape and landscape character.

- 5.15 Some comments were made in respect of overlooking from the proposed prison blocks. It should be noted that the houseblocks are over 100 metres from the nearest property on Welland Avenue. Overlooking is therefore unlikely to be a significant issue.

Wider Community Benefits

- 5.16 In the discussions with residents of the neighbouring Gartree Estate it was mentioned repeatedly that there is a lack of dedicated space for children to play safely in the estate. In response to this an area of open space within the Gartree Estate has been identified within the planning application boundary. MoJ will work with the residents of the Gartree Estate to determine whether the area should have some small scale children's play equipment or whether it should be landscaped to provide informal play space for all. Those discussions are ongoing.
- 5.17 Similarly MoJ is in discussions with LCC Highways departments over potential improvements to the footway close to Foxton Primary School. Whilst these works are not required by the highways department MoJ has reached out to the LCC Highways department to provide tangible community benefits as part of the development proposals.

Appendix 1

A link to be consultation material is provided below:

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/proposed-new-prison-in-market-harborough>

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