

Consultee Comments for Planning Application 21/01600/OUT

Application Summary

Application Number: 21/01600/OUT

Address: Land Adj HM Prison Welland Avenue Gartree Lubenham Leicestershire

Proposal: Outline planning application (All Matters Reserved except for means of access and scale) for the construction of a new Category B prison of up to 82,555sqm within a secure perimeter fence, together with access, parking, landscaping and associated engineering works

Case Officer: Mr Mark Patterson

Consultee Details

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On Behalf Of: Foxton Parish Council

Comments

Foxton Parish Council want to object to Planning Application 21/01600/OUT, the building of a new Prison at Gartree.

Foxton Parish Council do not think that this site is the right place for a huge new prison.

Such a large development is contrary to both the Harborough Local Plan and the Foxton Neighbourhood Development Plan. The development will contravene Policies F3 (tranquility) F17 (water management) and F5 (biodiversity) of the Foxton NDP (revised version due to be adopted very shortly).

Policy F3 states that development proposals must consider and address their potential impact on local tranquillity. Local tranquillity will be affected by the increase in traffic, especially during the long construction period.

Policy F5 states that development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) for biodiversity thus demonstrating overall net-gain. There is not sufficient detail in the available application to assess whether this will be achieved.

Policy F17 states Development proposals should support the delivery of the Water Framework Directive and its objectives as set out in the Anglian River Basin Management Plan. The Anglian Water report states that the current application does not meet its requirements and is likely to result in increased flooding which would affect Foxton.

HDC Policy BE1 does not list this site as a place for employment growth. While the new prison will create jobs these are unlikely to all be filled by local people who walk or use public transport to get to work and so will increase traffic to the rural roads.

It is also incompatible with HDC Policy GD3 and the vision of the rural Market Town. This very large development will detract from the unique rural identity of the area, including the village of Foxton. It will also affect the growth of tourism at Foxton Locks therefore it is contrary to the Harborough Local Plan objective of promoting the growth of tourism and improving visitor experience in Harborough district.

We also believe that insufficient attention has been paid to additional infrastructure required to support such a large development.

These are the issues which concern us if the building of the new prison goes ahead

1. Roads and traffic

Problem - the number of additional journeys generated every day during and after the construction phase will be considerable. In the proposed traffic plan many of these journeys will pass Foxton School and go through our village. The village itself has a humpbacked bridge over the canal which has poor visibility and only allows one vehicle to cross at a time. Sat. Nav. directions to the current prison from A6 North currently take vehicles through Foxton. The Main Road through the village is not suitable for an increase in traffic of any sort and large vehicles could get stuck on the canal bridge (as has happened in the past). The Headteacher of Foxton School is concerned that at several times during the day, there are a large number of cars which are parked on Gallowfield Road and at the top of Lubenham Road to drop children off or collect children. Large vehicles will struggle to pass the parked cars and will be a hazard to pedestrians. In addition, the air pollution caused by extra vehicles passing by the school will affect the health of the children and school staff. The position of the school is below the level of the road so fumes from traffic drops and lingers on the playground and blows into the school building.

What we would like to see

There is a track that goes from Gallowfield Road past the back of the existing prison which could be made into a road to access the new prison. Traffic would not then need to pass Foxton School. It would also remove the need to use Welland Avenue in Gartree to access the new prison. We want no access for prison traffic through Foxton at any time including during the construction phase. We would like to see measures such as the closure of the A6 junction with Langton Road or at least the routing of Prison traffic via the A6047 (as currently done with traffic to Foxton Locks).

If traffic to the prison is routed past the school, there needs to be off road parking for parents along Gallowfield Road and a pedestrian crossing for parents and children from Gartree.

Other measures such as pinch points, chicanes or speed humps at both ends of Foxton village deterring traffic and importantly slowing it down could also be considered.

Similar issues need addressing for Lubenham, especially on Foxton Road.

2. Drainage and flooding

Problem - as the Anglian Water report states, the use of the Foxton Water Recycling Centre to process foul water from the new prison would result in a need to increase the capacity considerably. This would affect Foxton residents particularly during the construction phase as some of the pipes pass under residents land. Anglian water also points out the surface water

drainage in the current plan would be likely to cause flooding downstream (which includes Foxton).

What we would like to see

A better foul drainage solution that doesn't involve the large expansion to the Foxton Water Treatment Centre.

A better surface drainage solution which will not add to existing flooding in the local area.

3. Sustainable travel cycling, walking and use of public transport.

Problem - The Outline Travel Plan is based on out of date maps and data and does nothing to address or improve sustainable transport. Proposed access to the new prison from Gallowfield Road is on a 60mph single carriageway road with no pavement or cycle lane.

There are more cycle routes/lanes already in place than National Route 6, which is the only cycle route mentioned in the proposal. Further development of these has not been considered.

The new housing on the North West side of Market Harborough will be within walking distance of the prison and deserves dedicated footpath access. Instead the outline plan has dismissed the 10.6% of people who walk to work.

The sustainability in the outline planning relies on increasing car sharing but only by a measly 5%. There is no incentive for the prison workers to car share.

What we would like to see

Extra pavements and cycle lanes are needed to make these forms of journey safe and viable. For example upgrading the existing footpath from Gartree 1 to the canal bridge on Peter Callis Way to a cycle/pedestrian all weather route.

A safe road crossing for pedestrians walking from Gartree village and a cycle route from the northern housing estates in Market Harborough to Foxton School is needed.

Measures to encourage car sharing should be introduced, e.g. charge single occupants to park and use proceeds to further enhance cycle/walking facilities and strategies (e.g. ebikes available to hire, drying rooms for clothes on wet days).

4. Health facilities, particularly A&E

Problem - although the new prison will have its own medical facilities, this does not include Accident and Emergency. A prison of this size is bound to generate visits to A&E, which will mean using existing facilities to the detriment of current users (who already face long waits). The extra staff required at the prison, many of whom will move to the area, would place pressure on existing GP surgeries which are already overstretched.

What we would like to see

Expansion of existing A&E facilities such as upgrading St. Lukes minor A&E to a 24 hour service.

Provision of a new GP surgery/Health Centre to the North of Market Harborough.

5. Biodiversity

Problem - Documents regarding biodiversity, species surveys etc are not available to view currently, so it is very difficult to assess how the claimed 10% increase in biodiversity will be realised.

What we would like to see

Introduction of measures such as wildlife corridors for animals such as hedgehogs and other small mammals.

Retention of hedgerows.

Inclusion of wildflower verges, meadows rather than lawns and planting that encourages bees and other insects.

Planting of trees.

This application needs to be considered with all the other developments that are taking place in the same area i.e. expansion of current Gartree prison, possible development of Wellington Business Park, further development at the Innovation Centre, increased use of the Showground and continued house building on Airfield Farm. Existing amenities such as the MacDonalds fast food outlet at the A6/A6047 junction for Market Harborough also need to be factored in. This also generates extra journeys through Foxton as evidenced by the amount of rubbish found on the verges along Langton Road into Foxton. The cumulative effect of all these will place unprecedented pressure upon our existing infrastructure and if the building of the new prison goes ahead, the MOJ need to provide considerable funding to mitigate the effect of such a large development on surrounding communities.