

Rebuttal to Gartree Action Proofs of Evidence on Socio-Economic Matters & Planning and LPA Planning Proof of Evidence – Final.

Gartree 2.

Ministry of Justice

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1. Introduction

Scope and Purpose

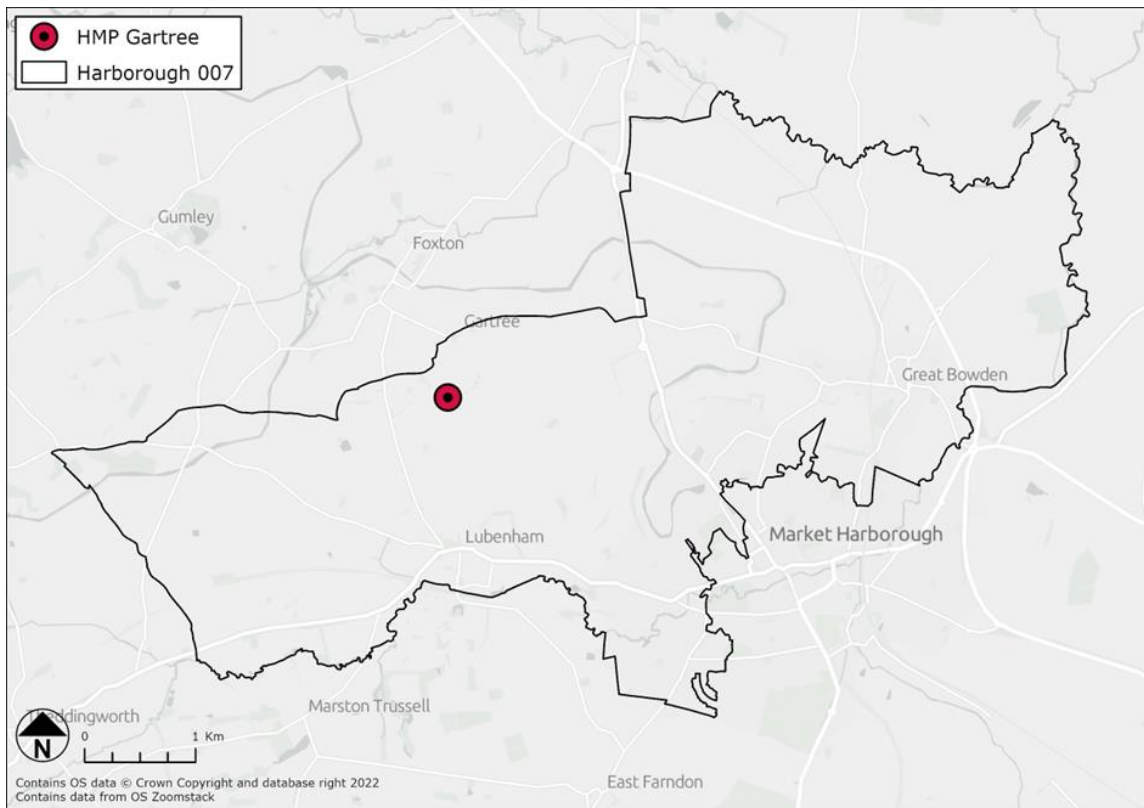
- 1.1. This rebuttal responds to the evidence of Gartree Action in its Proof of Evidence on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) and its Proof of Evidence on Planning (CD/G1). It also provides a response to the LPA's Planning Proof of Evidence (CD/F1).
- 1.2. The rebuttal is structured as follows:
 - A response is first provided to the evidence of Gartree Action and the LPA relating to the 'local' impact of the new prison in terms of job creation.
 - A response is then given in response to Gartree Action's evidence on wages of the prison staff.
 - I then respond to the evidence of Gartree Action in relation to Harborough's low unemployment, along with staff retention at prisons.
 - Finally, I provide my conclusion.

2. Rebuttal to Points on Socio-Economic Impact made by Gartree Action and the LPA

Gartree Action and LPA Evidence - Geographical Area of Impact

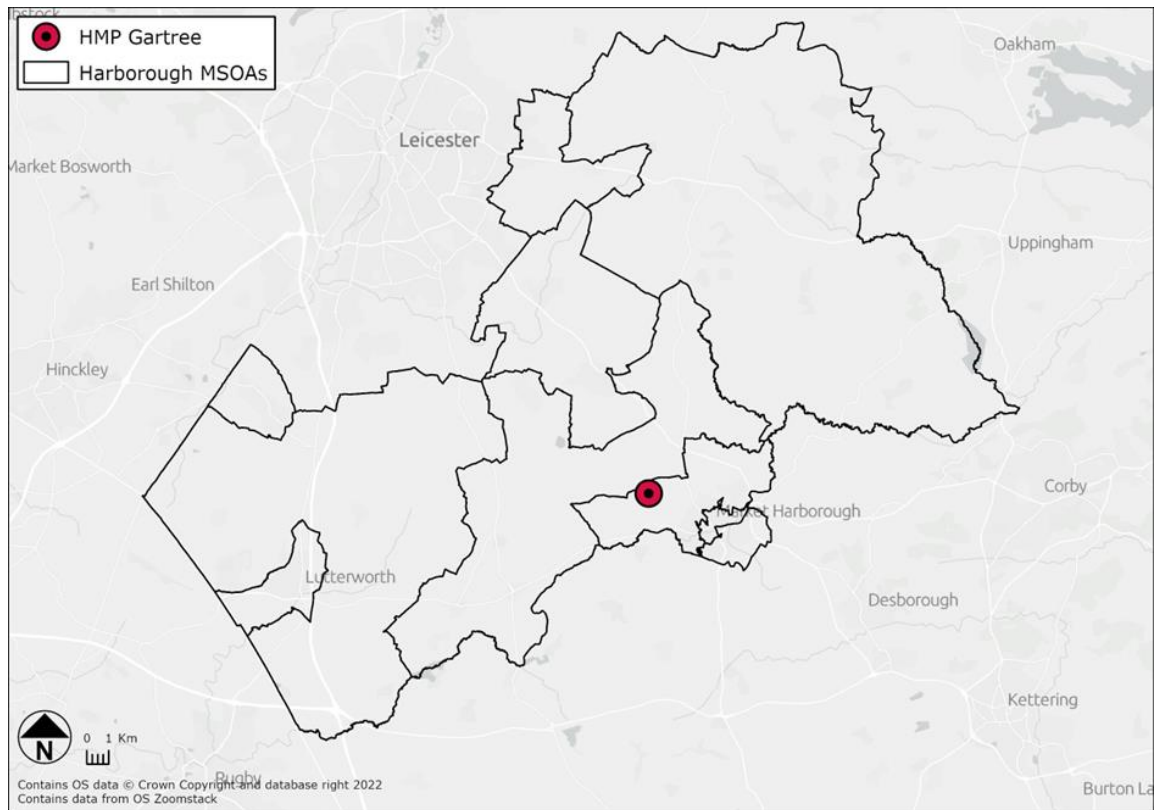
- 2.1. All three Core Documents that reference the socio-economic impacts of the prison (CD/G1, CD/G4 and CD/F1) consider the issue of how many jobs will be 'local'. There appears to be some confusion as to how 'local' is defined. For example, the third bullet point under paragraph 5.27 of Gartree Action's (GA) Planning PoE states that 'local' is 'within 40 miles'. This is incorrect and I provide clarification on this below.
- 2.2. To be clear, 'local' refers to jobs taken by people living in the same local authority as the proposed prison, in this case Harborough. This is consistent with analysis presented in the 2013 economic impact study of prisons undertaken by Peter Brett Associates (CD/J1), which indicates that 54% of employees at the case study prisons analysed live in the same local authority as the prison they work at. As I state in paragraph 4.19 of my Socio-Economic PoE (CD/E4), I take a more cautious approach with my analysis and estimate that around 40% (313) of the 778 jobs at the prison could be taken by residents of Harborough. This is based on the assumption that commuting patterns will be similar to those identified by the 2011 Census results, which show that 40% of people working in Harborough also work in Harborough.
- 2.3. It is possible to look at the issue of how many jobs at the prison could be taken by Harborough residents in more detail by analysing commuting flows by Middle Super Output Area (MSOA). A MSOA is a statistical geography with a typical population of 7,000 – 10,000 people. There are 7,201 MSOAs in England, of which ten are in Harborough local authority. As shown in Figure 2.1, the existing prison at Gartree and the proposed new prison are located in Harborough 007 MSOA.

Figure 2.1: Harborough 007 MSOA with location of HMP Gartree



- 2.4. Data from the 2011 Census show that 1,823 people work in Harborough 007 MSOA, of which 1,087 (around 60%) either live in Harborough 007 MSOA or one of the other nine MSOAs within Harborough. HMP Gartree accounts for several hundred of these jobs. Figure 2.2 shows each of the Harborough MSOAs, along with the location of the existing prison at Gartree.
- 2.5. Taking into account the analysis outlined above, the proportion of Harborough residents taking jobs at the prison could be circa 60% if existing commuting patterns in the Harborough 007 MSOA (where HMP Gartree is located and where the new prison would be built) are replicated. This would translate to 464 jobs taken by Harborough residents if the 60% is applied to the 778 on-site positions, which would be a significant local impact. Even if the lower estimate of 313 locally based jobs is used (outlined in paragraph 2.2), the new prison will still be creating several hundred jobs for residents of Harborough.

Figure 2.2: MSOAs within Harborough with location of HMP Gartree



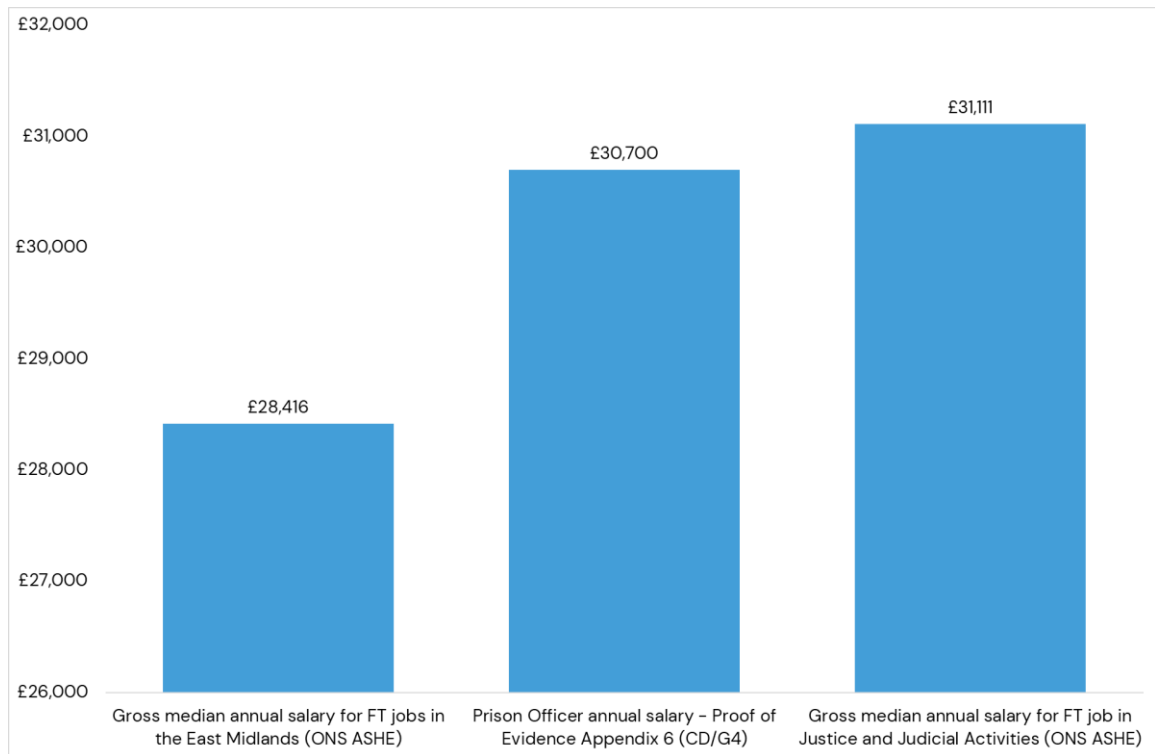
Gartree Action Evidence – Salaries of the Prison Staff

- 2.6. Paragraph 5.12 of the GA PoE on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) states that prison staff are comparatively poorly paid. Appendix 6 of the same document references the typical annual salary of a prison officer at £30,700. The salary has been sourced from Indeed.co.uk.
- 2.7. To verify the analysis presented in the PoE, I have looked at data from the 2021 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), which was published by the Office for National Statistics. The ASHE data provide estimates on typical salaries across all jobs at a regional level, as well as breaking down salaries for different sectors. It is interesting to note that the gross median annual salary of a full-time worker across all sectors in the East Midlands, in which Harborough is located, was £28,416 in 2021¹. This is actually lower than the salary identified in CD/G4.
- 2.8. Furthermore, ASHE data at a UK level show that the gross median annual salary for full-time workers in the “justice and judicial activities” sector, which includes people working in prisons, was £31,111 in 2021². This aligns closely with the estimate for prison officers sourced from Indeed.co.uk. Figure 2.3 presents the salary information discussed, helping to show that the point made in GA’s PoE on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) about prison staff being comparatively poorly paid is incorrect.

¹ Earnings and hours worked, UL region by industry by two-digit SIC: ASHE Table 5: Office for National Statistics, October 2021. Available here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/regionbyindustry2digitsicashetable5>

² Earning and hours worked, industry by four-digit SIC: ASHE Table 16: Office for National Statistics, October 2021. Available here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/industry4digitsic2007ashtable16>

Figure 2.3: Average wage of prison officer vs median annual salary in the East Midlands



Source: ONS and Gartree Action Proof of Evidence on Socio-Economic Matters – Appendix 6 (CD/G4)

Gartree Action Evidence – Low Unemployment

- 2.9. Paragraphs 5.12 and 5.13 of the GA PoE on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) make the point that unemployment in Harborough and the East Midlands is low. The implication of this could be to make recruitment at the prison difficult because fewer people are looking for a job.
- 2.10. It is not disputed that unemployment in Harborough and the East Midlands is low. However, the area still needs to attract new investment and see new jobs created if it is to grow sustainably. As noted in my Socio-Economic PoE (CD/E4), Harborough has an ageing population, a net outflow of commuters and has seen low jobs growth in recent years when compared to neighbouring authorities. New job creation is needed to attract younger people to the area and to encourage long-term labour market growth, which the proposed scheme will undoubtedly support. Just because an area has low unemployment, it does not mean that employment creation should be discouraged or that the benefits of job creation should be given less weight.

Gartree Action Evidence – Staff Retention

- 2.11. The GA PoE on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) highlights issues relating to staff retention at prisons, as well as recruiting staff to fill vacant positions. As noted in paragraph 4.21 of my Socio-Economic PoE (CD/E4), the HMPPS workforce team is already taking steps to address these issues, which includes launching a retention toolkit and a peer-to-peer learning scheme. It is worth noting that at the existing prison in Gartree, specific local activity on recruitment and retention includes:

- The prison has its own landing page – About HMP Gartree – <https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/prison-officer/about-hmp-gartree/>
- Gartree is included in an awareness raising campaign to promote prison roles through:

- Outdoor posters.
- Audio, for example Spotify and radio adverts.
- Advertising at petrol pumps.
- Facebook marketing activity.

2.12. It is expected that similar activities will be undertaken at the new prison.

Other Issues

2.13. Paragraph 4.15 of the GA PoE on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) correctly notes that the socio-economic statement by Mace (CD/A12) refers to the local authority area of Fylde on more than one occasion. It also correctly notes in paragraph 4.16 that the Mace analysis incorrectly refers to the scheme as being in the West Midlands as opposed to the East Midlands. Neither of these errors impact on the main socio-economic analysis presented in the Mace report and which I have used in my Socio-Economic PoE (CD/E4) and in this rebuttal, in particular the job numbers supported by the new prison.

Conclusion

2.14. The GA PoE on Socio-Economic Matters (CD/G4) raises a number of concerns regarding the socio-economic benefits of the new prison, including: the jobs will be comparatively poorly paid; it will be difficult to recruit and retain staff; and the prison is being proposed in an area of low unemployment. The GA PoE on Planning (CD/G1) and LPA PoE on Planning (CD/F1) also highlight issues with the socio-economic benefits, with the former raising concerns with the size of the 40-mile catchment area of the labour force.

2.15. Having reviewed the arguments put forward in the three Core Documents referenced in paragraph 2.14, the benefits outlined in the MoJ socio-economic statement (CD/A12) are still considered to be significant. Contrary to the views expressed by GA in particular, the scheme will generate significant benefits for local people and while prisons may be experiencing recruitment difficulties, the HMPSS workforce team has already taken steps to address these. It is also highly questionable as to whether the jobs created by the new prison will, as implied by GA, be comparatively poorly paid.

2.16. Harborough's ageing population, its outflow of commuters and lower jobs growth in recent years compared with surrounding local authorities mean the area needs to see new investment that will support employment creation and the new prison will do this.

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