

**Appeal Reference: APP/D2320/W/22/3295556**

**Proposed Prison on Land adjacent to HMP Garth and HMP Wymott**

***Introduction***

My name is Michael Green and I declare that I have lived in the adjacent Moss Side Ward for 35 years.

I have been the Borough Councillor for Moss Side Ward for almost 20 years and the County Councillor for the Moss Side community for 13 years, serving currently and for eight of those years as a Cabinet Member.

- 1) I would acknowledge that there are some benefits which this development would provide, namely the provision of prison places and the employment opportunities.
- 2) There is a prison estate in this location, with a combined capacity of 2,000 prisoners at HMPs Wymott and Garth. Nevertheless, the imposition of a very large additional prison, which would virtually double the number of prisoners and staff on the estate, would not be sustainable in this location.
- 3) I would submit that the decision by Chorley Council was correct. It has been acknowledged that this proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which will cause harm and to which substantial weight must be afforded.

- 4) In addition to the significant reduction in openness, the scale and mass of the proposed development will have an adverse impact upon the character of the local area.
- 5) The proposed development would indeed have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety due to the significant increase in traffic movements and the current inadequate highway infrastructure.
- 6) The potential noise nuisance and disturbance associated with the traffic movements that would be generated by the development would result in a harmful impact upon the amenity of residents in the locality.
- 7) If the regional need for this proposed new prison is accepted, I would argue that it could be built anywhere in the North West.
- 8) The site is located in the Borough of Chorley, but close to the Borough of South Ribble, and is located in the South Ribble constituency. Neither Chorley nor South Ribble are areas of low employment. There clearly are areas across the North West with much higher levels of low employment.
- 9) Recently approved planning applications and further proposed developments in Chorley and South Ribble will deplete what already is a small pool of potential local employees. Recruitment of staff is already becoming difficult, as experienced by many local employers.

- 10) The Appellant has indicated that the operational employees will be recruited from a 40-mile radius and therefore the weight that may be attached to those benefits for the residents of Chorley and South Ribble is clearly reduced.
- 11) The rural location of the site would make it difficult for construction traffic, prison staff, visitors and service providers to access.
- 12) Should the Appeal be successful, I would submit that it is crucially important that improvements to infrastructure are made, in order to support a significant development of this scale.
  - a. Ulnes Walton Lane (and School Lane to the north) is a winding country lane, with a lack of pavements and lighting, but with dangerous bends. It is used by pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders and farm equipment, in addition to cars and HGVs.
  - b. The speed limit is 40mph, which reduces to 20mph in the more built-up area at the northern end, but these are rarely enforced.
  - c. This development would virtually double the prison population, together with the employees, visitors and supply companies.

- d. Whilst we can promote pedestrian and cycling routes, the reality is that in this rural location, over 90% of journeys will be by motorcar and car-sharing by the staff is unlikely due to the majority of the staff being shift-workers.
  
- e. The impact upon the junctions and highway network, both within Moss Side and across other parts of South Ribble needs to be robustly assessed, including the cumulative impact of other committed developments.
  
- f. If this development is to be permitted, we need significant mitigation to avoid an unacceptable impact upon highway capacity and the safety of road users, to include:
  - i. Junctions of School Lane with Dunkirk Lane and Slater Lane need to be improved
  
  - ii. A contribution be made to the dualling of the A582 and the B5253. These roads are referred to as the South Ribble Western Distributor. The A582 is one of the busiest roads in Central Lancashire and suffers from considerable congestion at peak times.

iii. To ensure that the speed limits on Ulmes Walton Lane and School Lane are complied with, traffic-calming measures need to be implemented along the lane, with a significant traffic-calming scheme to be implemented at the northern end of Ulmes Walton Lane, to include

1. Gateway treatments
2. Road narrowing
3. A Pegasus pedestrian crossing

iv. And we need Public transport improvements, including

1. A fully-funded regular bus service to Leyland, Chorley and Preston
2. Funding to re-open the railway station at Midge Hall, which is close to the development site. This station would be on the Preston – Liverpool (via Ormskirk) railway line. This would provide easier access to the prison for staff & visitors, which would be particularly beneficial given that the prisoners would be from the North West and likely to be from our larger cities. This would therefore reduce the impact upon the highways network and upon the amenity of local residents.

## ***Conclusion***

- In conclusion, I believe that the decision by Chorley Council was correct. This development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and the harm to the Green Belt, and other harm, is not outweighed by the various matters which the Appellant is seeking to rely upon.
- The proposed development would have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety due to the significant increase in traffic movements and the current inadequate highway infrastructure.
- The potential noise nuisance and disturbance associated with the traffic movements that would be generated by the development would result in a harmful impact upon the amenity of residents in the locality.
- However, should the Appeal be successful, I would urge that the improvements to the highways network which I have highlighted be implemented in full and that a railway station be provided at Midge Hall.
- These improvements to our highways and transport infrastructure would make this development more sustainable and would reduce the negative impact upon the amenity of residents within the locality.