

**ULNES WALTON ACTION GROUP  
APP/D2320/W/3295556**

**APPEAL BY THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
LAND ADJACENT TO HMP GARTH AND HMP WYMOTT**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF  
LYNETTE MORRISSEY MA JP**

**Addressing: ACCESSIBILITY AND TRAVEL**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. I, Lynette Morrissey, retired Local Government Officer, of the Ulnes Walton Action Group (“UWAG”) provide this proof of evidence in relation to the ongoing appeal brought by the Ministry of Justice (“the MoJ”) concerning its proposal to develop a new prison on the site to which this appeal relates.
2. UWAG comprises local residents who came together in October 2021 following an open public meeting attended by many local people who were unanimous in their objections to the proposal to build a third prison in this locality. A clear mandate was given, by a show of hands, to the formation of an Action Group to represent the residents' views and objections. As a result, a small committee was formed to gather and submit evidence in support of the objections being voiced. These include the negative impacts on:
  - the Green Belt and openness of the countryside due to the scale and mass of the proposed development
  - the highway infrastructure due to the predicted 50% increase in traffic
  - the sustainability of the proposed site due to lack of alternative modes of travel
  - the poor accessibility due to its rural location
  - public safety due to the increase in vehicle movements and increased number of prisoners
  - noise and disturbance both during construction and once operational.
3. My evidence will relate solely to the issue of ‘accessibility and travel’ as relied upon by the MoJ in their Planning Statement, Transport Assessment, Outline Travel Plan and Consultation Document. I note that the local planning authority, in refusing planning permission, included a reason for refusal relating to highways matters, and UWAG supports the Council’s position in this regard.
4. I append to this proof of evidence the following documents:
  - Appendix 1 - Report on a scrutiny visit to HMP Wymott by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 18 and 25–26 August 2020
  - Appendix 2 - Appendix 2 - Report on an announced inspection of HMP Garth by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 17 December 2018–18 January 2019
  - Appendix 3 - Ulnes Walton Lane - Road Width Measurements
  - Appendix 4 - LCC Highways Traffic Survey
  - Appendix 5 - HMP Wymott Travel Plan Position Statement
  - Appendix 6 - Comparative Journey Times.

## **B. THE MoJ’s CASE**

5. The MoJ’s case is that the proposed development will not give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

6. The MoJ recognise there will be increased traffic movements but suggest that the proposed mitigation measures will be such that the resulting highways impact will not be unacceptable.
7. The MoJ submit that the outline travel plan to encourage the uptake of sustainable travel amongst staff and visitors, a Public Transport Strategy to provide public transport information, and the provision of shower and changing facilities to encourage cycling trips, will encourage greater access to sustainable travel methods.

### **C. UWAG's RESPONSE**

8. The MoJ consultation document states: "*The new site is also easy to reach for future staff, suppliers and visitors as it is close to Leyland, Preston, Chorley and Southport*".
9. The site is situated in the countryside 4.5 miles to the south-west of Junction 28 of the M6 at Leyland (15 minutes drive time). Preston lies about 8.7 miles to the north (25 minutes drive time), Blackburn about 17 miles to the north-east (35 minutes drive time), and Liverpool about 30 miles to the south-west (56 minutes drive time). Junction 29 of the M6 at Bamber Bridge is 7.7 miles away (17 minutes drive time); Junction 27 at Shevington is 12 miles away (25 minutes drive time). The journey time by public transport from Leyland town centre is 50 minutes; from Preston Bus Station is 1 hour 25 minutes; from Chorley 1 hour 10 minutes; from Southport 1 hour 48 minutes.
10. Paragraph 105 of the NPPF states: "*Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.*"
11. This development is not, and cannot be made, sustainable as there is only one mode of transport available - i.e. the motorised vehicle. The MoJ anticipate that staff will be recruited from up to 40 miles away (point 1.27, page 10 of Socio-Economic Statement submitted as part of outline planning application) which would include places as far away as Cheshire, North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and Cumbria. Journey times by car from such places are between one-and-a-half and two hours; by public transport well over two hours. Prisoners' families could be travelling even greater distances. In 2020, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP) reported that HMP Wymott held prisoners from all over England and Wales (Appendix 1 - Report on a scrutiny visit to HMP Wymott by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 18 and 25–26 August 2020).
12. In a prisoner survey undertaken by HMCIP at HMP Garth in 2019, 68% of prisoners stated visitors found the site either 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to access. (Appendix 2 - Report on an announced inspection of HMP Garth by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 17 December 2018–18 January 2019)

13. Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, facilitate access to high quality public transport, create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, and allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles.
  
14. As the main access road to the site is a ‘C’ class winding country lane with no street-lighting or pavements, it is impossible to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements. Vehicles exceeding the 40mph speed limit are commonplace along Ulmes Walton Lane which renders walking or cycling during peak periods (ie 0700-0900hrs and 1500-1800hrs) extremely dangerous. Due to the number of properties and other infrastructure situated along Ulmes Walton Lane, no suitable mitigation measures can be (or are proposed to be) put in place to improve the environment for anyone who wishes to walk or cycle. This factor was acknowledged by the MoJ highways representative in discussion with a member of the Ulmes Walton Action Group at the public consultation meeting in Croston on 15 September 2021. Appendix 3 - Ulmes Walton Lane - Road Width Measurements - illustrates the varying width of Ulmes Walton Lane which has a 7.5 ton weight limit, a narrow bridge on a bend and a sharp bend at Norris’s Farm which has been the site of numerous collisions, near-misses and has seen countless large vehicles (including buses) encountering difficulty negotiating the turn.
  
15. There are no high-quality public transport services offering speedy, regular or efficient access for staff or visitors to the site. The proposal to improve the frequency of the 112 bus service from 60 minute to 30-minute intervals will have no impact due to the length of journey times involved, e.g. Wymott, Willow Road to Preston Bus Station is 1 hour 20 minutes. The MoJ indicate in their own evidence (Transport Assessment, page 31, table 5.6) that only eleven arrivals and 13 departures per day will utilise the service which renders it unsustainable and a waste of the proposed £500,000 investment over five years. This bus service has been withdrawn in the past due to lack of use, so it seems very likely that once the five-year investment ends, so will the service.

**Bus times**

Departures from:  
**WYMOTT, Willow Road**

**112** CROSTON - LEYLAND - CLAYTON BROOK - BAMBER BRIDGE - PRESTON  
via Wymott - Midge Hall - Runshaw College - Clayton Green - Walton le Dale - Frenchwood

**Mondays to Fridays**  
0659\$ 0805\$ 0912\$ 1019\$ 1119\$ 1219\$ 1319\$ 1419\$ 1519\$ 1625\$ 1733\$ 1836\$ 1936\$

**Saturdays**  
0719\$ 0819\$ 0919\$ 1019\$ 1119\$ 1219\$ 1319\$ 1419\$ 1519\$ 1619\$ 1729\$ 1836\$ 1936\$

**No Sunday Service**

Notes:  
\$=Operated on behalf of Lancashire County Council.

Note: To catch your bus, please arrive 5 minutes before the departure time shown, as times from this stop may be estimated.

16. The efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles is seriously compromised by the road infrastructure. There are several examples of vehicles, large and small, damaging overhead telephone lines or demolishing telegraph poles, resulting in vulnerable members of the local community being deprived of access to landline or broadband services for periods up to 7 weeks (e.g. from 30 March 2022 to 17 May 2022, ten properties were affected in this way following damage caused to overhead lines by an HGV). In a rural community, with poor mobile reception, this could have life-endangering consequences.
17. Due to the precast and modularised construction methods which will be adopted (as set out in Mr Parker's evidence), tens of thousands of precast concrete elements, all mechanical and electrical installations, and pipework, etc. will be manufactured off site, delivered and craned into position. This will involve large numbers of HGVs, plant and machinery accessing the site via a narrow, winding country lane.
18. The mitigations proposed by the MoJ, in consultation with Lancashire County Council Highways, (i.e. traffic calming measures at the Dunkirk Lane/School Lane junctions, along with additional 40mph repeater signs and different coloured road-surfacing on two bends, plus minor junction improvements with Moss Lane and Southport Road), will not mitigate the effects of the 50% increase in vehicle movements along Ulmes Walton Lane. These are merely a conciliatory gesture which will cost money and achieve nothing. Evidence gathered by Lancashire County Council's traffic survey from 7-13 October 2019 (and summarised in Appendix 4 - LCC Highways Traffic Survey) demonstrates a worrying disregard of the current speed limit, with over 4096 vehicles in that week exceeding the 40mph limit, reaching speeds of up to 100mph! It seems unlikely that 'repeater' signs and coloured surfaces will make a significant difference to that. There is little or no speed enforcement by Lancashire Constabulary and the introduction of two SPIDs in January 2022 has seen no noticeable change in drivers' behaviour.
19. Lancashire Constabulary posted the following on social media in April 2022 describing the A581 between the A59 and Ulmes Walton as the worst stretch of road in the County for motor cycle collisions. To increase traffic by 50% will only increase the level of danger to all users.



20. The MoJ state in their consultation document and planning application that *“When the prisons are built, we’ll encourage staff and visitors to use green transport and active forms of travel. As part of this, we’ll provide cycle storage and electric charging points for cars”*.

21. The secure cycle storage area at HMP Garth/Wymott never contains more than half-a-dozen cycles – see, for example, this photograph taken at 0946 hrs on Tuesday 29 June 2021. I walk or cycle past it all the time, and I have never seen more than six bikes in there.



22. Whilst the use of green transport can be encouraged, it cannot be enforced, especially when the travel options are so limited. The current cycle storage at HMPs Garth and Wymott is not well-used, which is not surprising given the poor conditions for cycling on surrounding roads. The proposed £50,000 to improve cycle access along Nixon Lane/Pump House Lane by patch-repairing will be insufficient to provide sustainable access due to serious flooding issues. This

photograph, taken on 22 May 2022, illustrates the state of the track after just two days of intermittent rain. After sustained heavy rain in the wintertime, the track is impassable for weeks at a time. The track is used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders for leisure pursuits but also by large farm vehicles which need to gain access to the neighbouring fields.



23. As part of a planning application for extensions to HMP Wymott in 2007, an update to the Travel Plan Position Statement submitted in 2004 was provided (Appendix 5 - HMP Wymott Travel Plan Position Statement). Six key proposals were reviewed, only two of which had been fully actioned, i.e. the establishment of the role of Travel Co-ordinator and the provision of access to a car sharing scheme. The promised Ulnes Walton Multi-Use Path to benefit cyclists had not happened but the free Mars Bar incentive and gift of a hi-visibility aid for those cycling to work was in place! The use of the Prison minibus as a staff shuttle had been trialled and failed, and the interest-free loans for staff to purchase annual rail season tickets had not been introduced due to *“there not being a close enough rail station”*. Whilst a more regular 112 Bus Service was introduced in 2005, it was later withdrawn due to lack of use. Its subsequent reintroduction is heavily

subsidised by Lancashire County Council but it is still little used. The two remaining proposals of a yearly Travel Awareness Day and Travel Plan Surveys had not been implemented.

24. At the junction of Ulnes Walton Lane and Moss Lane is the site of Longton Riding Club show ground which is accessed from Moss Lane, some 200 metres from the proposed car park entrance. The Riding Club has 250 members, 60% of whom are under the age of 18. Throughout the Spring and Summer months, the show ground is in regular use, attracting between 300 and 400 competitors and spectators.
25. Appendix 6 - Comparative Journey Times - clearly demonstrates that the transport infrastructure around the site at HMP Kirkham is more accessible and sustainable for contractors, staff and visitors. It is only three miles from the junction with the M55 and accessed from the A585 dual-carriageway and the A583. This is addressed further in Paul Parker's evidence about alternative sites.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

18. The Government's stated policy is for the new prisons to be situated in close proximity to large urban conurbations. Ulnes Walton is not close to a large urban conurbation, and as a result, it is not sustainably located.
19. The Government states it is committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. Bearing in mind that 27% of the UK's carbon emissions are generated from transport, the present proposals do not appear to contribute towards that goal: in fact the vast majority of trips to and from the site will be by the private car..
20. If this development is allowed to proceed, the effect on the health of the residents of Ulnes Walton and surrounding Parishes will be adversely affected due to the increase in carbon emissions brought about by the MoJ's predicted 50% increase in vehicle movements each day. This would bring the total number of vehicles using Ulnes Walton Lane and the surrounding roads to over 6000 per day or 2.19 million per year. The safety and mental well-being of residents will also be impacted as this increase in traffic will make it even more dangerous for them to continue to engage in leisure pursuits such as walking, jogging, cycling or horse riding around the area.
21. The 2004 Travel Plan was a failure and there is little or no prospect of any future proposals of this nature being any more successful.
22. Accordingly, I would invite the Inspector to dismiss this appeal for the reasons given in UWAG's evidence.