

UPDATE FROM GRENDON UNDERWOOD AND EDGOTT PARISH COUNCILS



The new prison being built at Wellingborough

The consultation period ended on 5th February 2021

We have recently been informed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) that in order to fully consider responses received during the public consultation period, they have taken a decision not to submit an Outline Planning Application (OPA) at this time whilst they review the consultation responses in more detail. This is a great outcome as the MoJ was originally planning to submit an OPA in mid-February.

However, this does not mean that an OPA will not be submitted so the fight goes on!

Across the eight-week consultation period there were 3,734 online submissions alongside 70 emails and 6 written responses. This is a total of 3,810 submissions, and includes comments from a range of local Parish Councils, Buckinghamshire Council and the Member of Parliament for Buckingham. 1,147 submissions were from a postcode within Buckinghamshire, with the remainder coming from postcodes located across the UK or without an address. This was a fantastic response bearing in mind the Christmas and New Year distractions and the lockdown difficulties.

The MoJ recently met with Bucks Council and stated that further surveys, e.g. on great crested newts and some infrastructure investigations, would take place prior to any final decision being made on whether or not to submit an OPA. However, we have to assume that an OPA will be submitted and the best estimate we have of the timing of a submission at the moment is mid-end May.

The Grendon Underwood and Edgott Parish Council's Joint Working Committee has continued to work on the strategy for dealing with an OPA. Along with input from our MP, Councillors and other residents, some with expertise and insight into planning matters and new prison projects, a wide range of activities have been ongoing including:

- A number of Freedom of Information requests have been made to the MoJ and other Local Authorities to gather information related to such matters as site selection justification and other sites assessed in addition to Grendon Underwood
- Communications with the Planning Department at Bucks Council to highlight failings of the MoJ and emphasise the recent rejection, at appeal, to plans for residential accommodation on the field just inside the prison gates (rejected for the same issues that the new prison would bring to the area)
- Communication with the MoJ to challenge them on a range of issues
- Literature review on the impact of light and noise on wildlife to emphasise the damage the new prison development would inflict on wildlife in the locality
- Gathering information, facts and figures on other prisons in the South East including the post code, prior to sentencing, of inmates in prisons located nearby and details to refute claims made by the MoJ
- Landscape photographs of the prison site from a wide range of positions which have been marked onto a map
- Photographs of the wildlife areas in and around the prison site
- Photographs of standing water in and around the prison site as well as of flooded ditches and footpaths
- Photographs of the very narrow footpaths both in Edgcott and on the route to Grendon Underwood plus their poor condition
- Further correspondence is planned with different parties to emphasise both the current and past mis-management by the MoJ
- Collating data gathered to date so it is in an easy to read and accessible format for residents to use in their objections

The Working Party Committee will keep you informed and should an OPA be submitted then you will be advised of the objection procedure and the strongest and most relevant planning matters on which to object. **This will be a very critical part of the campaign against the new prison.**

Thank you all for your time and effort in submitting your comments at the consultation stage and a similar response at the planning stage will hopefully result in an application being refused.

Should you require any more information at this stage then please contact one of the people in the footer of this flyer.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS