



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

**HEADLINE – Selection Disaster will lead to Further Wasted Government Spending.**

**PRESS RELEASE SUMMARY**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has abandoned its own selection criteria in blatant disregard of Government policy on the use of brown field sites and the ‘levelling up’ agenda for major infrastructure projects. Ministerial approval has been given for the MoJ to submit a £300m planning application for a Mega Prison in the rural Buckinghamshire countryside adjacent to two prisons (HMP Springhill and HMP Grendon) on a site which is completely unsuitable.

**PRESS RELEASE BODY** During the pre -planning consultation MoJ officials said “we chose this site because it is where we have space available to develop quickly”. There is no evidence that the MoJ has considered other sites in London or the South East that would be better located for a new Mega Prison. Furthermore, there is no justification for not building on a brownfield site. Building on a green field site ignores the significant environmental impact and is against the UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy’s commitment to build on brownfield sites.

There are already 11 prisons (including Five Wells Mega Prison) within a 40 mile radius of the proposed site providing a total of 7,804 prison places, (11% of the prison places in England and Wales) The demand for prison places in the South East primarily comes from London and other South East counties.

Proposing to build a Mega prison in a location where families, from London and the South East counties particularly, those with young children who will find it hard to visit by public transport is indefensible. Maintaining family relationships contributes to reducing re-offending with accommodation and a supportive family on release.

With the Government due to publish its ‘landmark Levelling Up White Paper’, the MoJ cannot possibly justify to the Treasury that it should build a £300m mega prison in an area with historically low unemployment, high house prices and limited housing stock.

Building a Mega Prison in the middle of the countryside with significant numbers of staff and visitors who will predominantly travel by car is an emissions catastrophe. Car sharing is impractical as staff would be driving in from a wide area and on different shift patterns. In addition, the proposal will at the very least result in significant and irreversible environmental harm.

Have the Treasury and the National Audit Office been misled by the MoJ or are they looking the other way? They should be ensuring that the MoJ develop a long-term, value for money strategy that will deliver enough prison places, in the right type of prisons, in the right locations and at the right time to meet demand.

**PRESS RELEASE CONTACT**

Cllr Paul Jackman, Grendon Underwood Parish Council: [pj.gupc@outlook.com](mailto:pj.gupc@outlook.com), 01296 770 568