

**P-05-781 Port Talbot Community Against the Super Prison –
Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 26.10.17**

Firstly, we, the community of Neath Port Talbot would like to thank the petitions committee for accepting our petition against the proposed Ministry of Justice development of land at Baglan Moors in Port Talbot to build a prison to house up to 1600 inmates.

We would like to submit the following response:

At present the Welsh Assembly Government are still the owners of the land at the proposed site at Baglan Moors, so our efforts are concentrated in this direction.

The impact of a prison on the town of Port Talbot has not been considered by the Welsh Assembly Government.

We are not a huge town, our resources have been slashed year after year. We don't even have a police station to serve the town.

Our hospital services have also been cut to the point where we only have a nurse led local accident centre, not a fully functioning A & E. The nearest A & E departments are at Morriston, Swansea & Bridgend.

Should the proposed prison go ahead, an area already suffering high employment will suffer even more as the proposed prison will be a rehabilitation centre? Inmates would be allowed limited daily release for training placements/work experience etc.... placements and training that should go to local residents not inmates.

Local housing stock from housing associations etc. would also be affected as released inmates may choose to stay in Port Talbot after release. Their families could relocate here, pushing the private rental market prices up as private landlords take advantage of the increase in demand. This would push locals out of the area due to higher rents & less rental properties available.

Some local industries will suffer as it is well documented that large prisons such as this one proposed house factories/industries inside them, which will take work away from local businesses. These industries include metal working, machine shop producing uniforms for national businesses, laundry services for large chain hotels around the UK. All of this will have a detrimental effect on the local economy here in Port Talbot.

There has been significant ground work done to improve the drainage in this well documented flood plane for many years. This has resulted in the flood risk

categorisation of that area to be downgraded to a lesser risk of flooding. This was done in the same period that the Welsh Assembly Government offered up Baglan Moors as a potential site to the MoJ. The re-categorisation was announced just days before the prison news became public knowledge.

As there are no firm statements that either Swansea or Cardiff prisons are closing any time soon..... WHY is there a need for this new prison in Port Talbot?? Unless of course the First Minister, Mr Sergeant & Mr Skates know differently??

It would appear Port Talbot would be the last to know in any case.

There is a covenant on the land, and as it stands a prison goes against two of the restrictions:

Schedule 2 (a): Not to use the property hereby conveyed or any part thereof other than as an industrial park in accordance with the planning permissions granted in respect of the said property.

And:

Schedule 3: The Agency shall not use the (demised premises, property) or permit the same to be used for offensive, noisy or dangerous trade business manufacture or occupation of for any purpose or in the manner which may be a nuisance to the Agency or the owners or occupiers of neighbouring or adjacent premises.

The infrastructure of Port Talbot despite investment in the last few years will not cope with the increased traffic, especially during the construction period which would last in excess of 24 months. Ysgol Bae Baglan has caused enough problems with traffic, the new Welsh Medium School which opens in 2018 will add to this problem. A prison, during and after construction will make the problem unimaginable.

Which brings us onto the next point. Due to the land being on what is called a 'natural soak', a form of construction called pile driving will have to be used to ensure any building on this land has secure foundations due to the water levels. A build of the magnitude of a massive prison and required storage/parking facilities could and probably would make subsidence issues already experienced by the local residents dramatically more severe. Would the Welsh Assembly Government be responsible for compensating these residents as and when these subsidence problems occur as they would be caused as a direct result of the Welsh Assembly Government selling/releasing the land to the MoJ??

That the Cabinet Secretary for Communities & Children Mr K Skates even considers such a site as Baglan Moors as suitable for a prison needs to be questioned closely. In the response laid out above it is more than obvious that Port Talbot stands to lose more than it will gain from this proposed prison being built in the town.

We want to grow as an industrial/manufacturing town. We need to build for future generations to come, not leave them the legacy of a prison that will impact the town for at least the next 60 years.

As a town we are prepared to fight this proposal on every level, but The Welsh Assembly can stop this now by listening to the people of Port Talbot, over 8,000 signatures show that the majority of the town are against this.

Please do not release or sell this land to the Ministry of Justice, listen to the people of the town and put a stop to this proposal to build this prison here.