



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rory Stewart OBE MP
Minister of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

24 July 2018

Dear Rory

Re: changes to the population of HMP Thorn Cross

I am writing in response to a letter I received from you dated 23 July 2018. The letter was sent to me via email at 9.45pm that evening.

I have very serious concerns about the contents of this letter, in which you inform me of population changes at HMP Thorn Cross. These changes give the prison authorisation to accept category D men convicted of sexual offences as part of its population.

To be clear, this is the first time that I have received any information about the change. On receipt of your letter I contacted Warrington Borough Council to ask whether they had received any information about the Government's decision on this. They had not.

It is completely unacceptable that both myself, as the local Member of Parliament, and Warrington Borough Council, as the local authority, have not been involved in any stage of this decision-making process. Nor have we been given any prior information which would suggest that this change was likely to occur. I find this deeply concerning.

Less than 24 hours after being informed about the change, I have been contacted by the local media about this issue. I have also been contacted by local residents who, rightfully so, are deeply unhappy about having this change imposed upon them without any prior consultation or any information about what the change will mean.

HMP Thorn Cross is located in close proximity to Appleton Thorn Primary School and two nurseries. Given this, the decision to allow this change would seem to suggest that no work has been undertaken to understand the area before considering whether or not the site is suitable for this change.

Given the concerns of my constituents, which I share, I would be grateful if you could respond to the following points:

- Please clarify exactly what is meant by this category.
- What will the change mean in regards to the numbers of inmates at the prison – will this change lead to a population increase?
- Why was no consultation undertaken with me, Warrington Borough Council or with local residents?

Member of Parliament for Warrington South

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- How and when was the decision taken to make this change? The prison is located in close proximity to a local school. Was this known when the decision was taken?

In consideration of the points raised above, I urge you to stop any further action on this matter until you have met with me and the Chief Executive of Warrington Borough Council, Professor Steven Broomhead, to discuss the issue in more detail.

Please ask your staff member to contact my office to make arrangements for a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Faisal Rashid MP

c/c Professor Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council
Governor of HMP Thorn Cross