

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	21 January 2010
TITLE	Notice of Motion to locate a prison in Tonfannau, Tywyn
AUTHOR	D P Lewis – Corporate Director
PURPOSE	Present background information to the Council to assist in considering of the notice of motion

1 Background

- 1.1 The report is presented to ensure relevant information is given with regards to the discussion on the notice of motion to the Council.
- 1.2 Members will be aware of the previous discussions with regards to siting a prison at the Ferodo site in Caernarfon with the site being recommended following the discussion of various options across North Wales. Unfortunately there was a change of heart regarding the Ferodo site and now new arrangements are in place to identify new options.
- 1.3 To assist the discussion information is given under 4 headings:-
- (a) The requirements of the Criminal Justice
 - (b) Details about the site at Tonfannau
 - (c) Social, Cultural and Economic considerations.
 - (ch) Arrangements for deciding on a site.

2 The requirements of the Criminal Justice

- 2.1 When the Ferodo site was offered the requirements were for a site suitable for up to 700 prisoners and details of the site requirements were given in order to consider the different options. Now however the requirements have changed with the aim of providing for 1500 prisoners for North Wales and the North West of England. From the latest information available about 700 North Wales residents are in prisons across England and Wales.
- 2.2 Although the need to provide for women and young offenders was identified the aim of the Criminal Justice would be to provide for males only.
- 2.3 The original site requirements remain the same (copy enclosed in Appendix 1) although now the area identified needs to be about 35 acres.

3 Tonfannau Site, Tywyn

- 3.1 The Tonfannau Site is a former military camp which is located approximately 3 miles north-west of Tywyn. Access to the site is gained along an unclassified road off the A483 between Tywyn and the village of Llwyngwrl. This road, and the Cambrian railway divides the site in two.
- 3.2 The site was very busy at one time, and the closure of the camp during the late 1960s resulted in the loss of over 250 jobs. Over the last 35 years, most of the buildings have been demolished and agricultural use reintroduced to the site.
- 3.3 The total area of the site extends to approximately 64 hectares.
- 3.1 It is understood that the Ministry of Defence sold the site a number of years ago, and it remains in private ownership since then.

4 Social, Cultural and Economic Considerations.

- 4.1 It is foreseen that a prison for 1500 would create about 1000 direct posts with the possibility of further posts in providing services to the prison. These would be permanent posts, and the pay would be higher than the local average. It should also be noted that there would be a variety of posts on offer, including managerial posts, prison warden posts, administrative posts, financial posts, and posts for cooking, cleaning etc.
- 4.2 At present there are 8,286 posts in the Dolgellau/ Abermaw/ Machynlleth/Tywyn Travel to Work area , with 5,018 full time and 3,268 part time.
- 4.3 In November 2009, there were slightly over 420 out of work in these Travel to Work areas.
- 4.4 There is a potential to create a centre that could provide for nearly 2,500 people if we consider the prisoners and those working there. In considering the rural nature of the area, it would be necessary to assess the effect of the development on the economic, social, environmental and linguistic character of the area. It must be remembered that the number of prisoners to be sited in the new prison is double what was being considered for the Caernarfon site - and therefore, the effects will of course be quite different too.

5 Arrangements for Deciding on a Site.

- 5.1 An invitation has been extended to North Wales authorities to offer sites that they feel would meet the requirements by mid February 2010.
- 5.2 Following this the Ministry of Justice will consider the sites with the hope of reaching a decision by June/July. We understand that Agents have been appointed to act on their behalf and to provide a list of sites available in the North West.