



## DR THERESE COFFEY MP

Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Received between  
29/9 & 10/10  
J.

Mrs Judith Hallett  
Clerk to Hollesley Parish Council  
Manor Farm  
Sutton Road  
Hollesley  
Woodbridge  
Suffolk IP12 3NB



14 September 2018

*Dear Ms Hallett*

Following our recent correspondence please find enclosed the reply I have received from the Ministry of Justice as a result of the enquiries I made on your behalf.

I will be meeting Rory Stewart MP to discuss this further. My offer still stands for your Chairman to attend this meeting in Westminster. Please contact my office on 0207 219 7164 to liaise with my secretary, Alex, if this is something you would be interested in.

Yours sincerely,

*Therese*



Ministry  
of Justice

Rory Stewart OBE MP  
Minister of State for Justice

Dr Thérèse Coffey MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: MC060381

06 September 2018

Dear Therese,

### HM PRISON HOLLESLEY BAY

Thank you for your letter of 7 August [REDACTED] about the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) plans to hold category D men convicted of sexual offences at HM Prison Hollesley Bay.

I would firstly like to assure you that I recognise your and your constituents' legitimate concerns over this change; it is right that the benefits of testing low risk prisoners in open prisons as they approach release are weighed carefully against the overriding need to protect the public from harm.

There is no intention to proceed with this population change without full consideration of any concerns raised. We expect that it will take several months to plan implementation, and we will only proceed with introducing the new offender group when we are satisfied that this can be delivered safely without putting the public at risk.

In relation to the specific questions raised in your letter: - *What assessment has been made of the local community?*

The prisoners who will be coming to this prison will be coming towards the end of their sentence or serving a shorter sentence in the first place. The prisoners will have been helped to change their lives while in prison and will have been assessed as low risk prisoners. Any temporary release will only be allowed where an individual risk assessment shows it is safe to allow them to leave the prison to access work, education or other essential services that can prepare them for release. The proximity of the prison to Hollesley Primary School was known and this risk was assessed as manageable subject to appropriate safeguards being put in place during implementation planning.

*What has been taken into account regarding absconding levels at Hollesley Bay?*

Robust risk assessment of prisoners' suitability for open prison conditions has seen abscond rates fall to consistently low levels over the last 10 years; in the year to March 2018 there were 139 absconds across the whole open prison estate and 8 from Hollesley Bay. The vast majority of these are quickly recaptured and returned to custody.

*How many offenders would be accommodated?*

No decisions have been made on the number of men convicted of sexual offences Hollesley Bay will hold and this will form part of our discussions with relevant parties.

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*What has been the experience at the other open prisons regarding absconding?*

As you are aware, the Prison Service has already integrated men convicted of sexual offences into the populations of open prisons at HM Prisons Leyhill (in Gloucestershire), North Sea Camp (in Lincolnshire) and in low numbers at Prescoed (in Monmouthshire). In 2017-18, across these prisons there were 15 absconds out of a total of 139 absconds across all open prisons.

*What out-of-prison work opportunities have been identified in the Suffolk area to accommodate sexual offenders?*

The Resettlement and Reducing Reoffending department at Hollesley Bay is now undertaking wider engagement with the local community and partner organisations (including current business partner agents and voluntary agencies) to assess what resettlement and employment opportunities will be available for this group of prisoners. This work is a key part of the implementation planning, and we will only proceed with introducing the new offender group when we are satisfied that this can be delivered safely without putting the public at risk.

With regards to HM Prison Thorn Cross, we recognised the concerns of the community and local representatives with regard to putting men who have been convicted of sexual offences into that prison. Having reflected on these, and the specific concern about the immediate proximity of Thorn Cross to a primary school, we have reviewed the decision and will not progress with this change. However, in relation to Hollesley Bay and its proximity to Hollesley Primary School, I am satisfied that subject to appropriate safeguards being put in to place during implementation planning, we will be able to implement these changes safely.

I am sure that the Governor would be happy to share details of this activity, to reassure you that the concerns of your constituents are being fully considered, or to meet you to discuss our risk management systems in more detail.

I would be very happy to meet you after Parliamentary summer recess if you still had concerns about the MoJ's proposals concerning Hollesley Bay prison.

*DBT notes*  
*Rory*

**RORY STEWART MP**