



Ministry  
of Justice

# The New Prisons Programme:

## Public Consultation

December 2020



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# Welcome

Thank you for visiting our pre-application consultation website and accessing information on our proposal for a new category C resettlement prison on land adjacent to HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill in Buckinghamshire.

These plans are part of the Government's 'New Prisons Programme' which was announced by the Prime Minister last summer and at the recent Spending Review. The Government has committed over £4 billion capital funding to make significant progress in creating 18,000 additional prison places across the prison estate by the mid-2020s.

The Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service have been assessing where we already own space potentially available to develop and where there is likely to be most demand for additional prison capacity; the North West and South East of England have been identified as areas where there is expected to be a need for new prison places. We believe that, following detailed feasibility work, land adjacent to HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill is an appropriate location for one of these prisons as part of our programme to create additional prison places through a combination of new builds, as proposed here in Buckinghamshire, as well as extending, refurbishing and maintaining other prisons.

We recognise that prisoner numbers fluctuate which is why we must have robust plans in place to ensure we always have enough places for those sentenced to custody, and we are very aware of the likely increase in demand for places as the activity of our courts system continues to ramp up to full operating capacity following the national restrictions due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The increasing numbers of police, in line with the Prime Minister's commitment to recruit 20,000 additional officers, is also likely to contribute to a higher prison population, and we therefore believe that creating 18,000 additional prison places will, over the long-term, help to mitigate pressure on prison places in England and Wales in the coming years.



**Lucy Frazer QC MP**

Minister of State for Prisons and Probation

# New Prisons Programme

## Our Prisons by Category 'At a Glance'

Our emerging proposals are for a new Category C resettlement prison and is planned to be built on land adjacent to HMP Grendon, which is a category B prison, and HMP Springhill, which is a category D prison. Category C and D resettlement prisons are designed for prisoners transferred from other prisons for the last few years of their sentence and offers them the opportunity to develop the skills needed to find work upon release and resettle back into their communities. The major difference between a category C and D prison, is that a C is the lowest risk closed prison meaning that prisoners are held in secure conditions and are risked assessed to be held here prior to potential release or a move to open conditions. A category D prison holds those of the very lowest risk and who are very close to being released from custody at the end of their sentence.

## New Prisons, New Innovative Design

Alongside a new generation of prisons comes a new innovative design. Our approach is the result of years of developing how a rehabilitative prison should look. We believe our new design will have a positive impact on reducing offending behaviour and will improve outcomes for prisoners, reducing reoffending. Importantly, this new innovative design will become the standard prison design for all of the locations in the New Prisons Programme.

Our goal is to build prisons that focus on being places of purposeful activity, where respectful communities are fostered, improved prisoner and staff wellbeing is promoted, without compromising on security, and aimed at reducing reoffending so communities are safer.

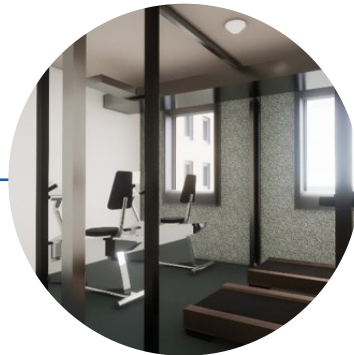
# New Prisons Programme

## New Prisons – Key Design Features

Our research has resulted in a design with a number of key differences to those found in many of our existing prisons:

The key innovations include:

- Smaller houseblocks of four storeys, that accommodate 240 prisoners - 60 prisoners per floor
  - This is to allow prisoners to benefit from a greater sense of community with fewer barriers between prison staff, and each other, promoting safety and reducing violence.
- Functional rooms on each floor - group rooms, association spaces, and cardio facilities
  - Ensures that houseblocks remain functional places of activity
- The majority of cells are for single occupancy with a small number designed for double occupancy. There are also a large number of cells specially designed for those that require additional support or have low mobility. All cells will have a shower and a toilet, access to digital technology and secure barless windows
  - This give prisoners the ability to take more responsibility for personal care and help prepare them for release and resettlement



# New Prisons Programme

## New Prisons – Key Design Features

Other key innovations are:

- A central services hub which brings together education and healthcare facilities, reception area, the library and a multi-faith space
  - Helps prisoners to gain educational qualifications and practice and celebrate faith and/or to host larger meetings
- A visitors' hall capable of accommodating visits for 50 prisoners
  - Helps encourage family visits which can remain personal in a light and open environment with access to a secure outdoor garden
- Heavy and light industry workshops
  - Gives prisoners the opportunity gain vocational qualifications and practical skills for work outside of prison
- Access to outside spaces capable of hosting allotments as well as multi-use games areas
  - Broadens the activities available to prisoners





# New Prisons Programme

## Our Design in Action

Elements of this new design have already been incorporated into two prisons that are currently under construction at HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, and at our new prison in Glen Parva, Leicestershire. These new prisons have been designed to deliver good quality, safe, decent and secure accommodation which also supports effective resettlement and rehabilitation.

Construction at HMP Five Wells started in May 2019 and is due to be completed by October 2021 and will have many new features, not traditionally used in older prisons' construction. For example, HMP Five Wells will have barless (and just as secure) windows, it will house men in smaller, self-contained communities and will focus on providing opportunities to develop useful skills for a life beyond prison.

Our next new prison within the New Prisons Programme will be built next to HMP Full Sutton, in East Yorkshire and will incorporate every element of our new innovative design. This has planning permission already and construction is due to start soon.



*Our new Glen Parva prison in Leicestershire, currently under construction*



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# The New Prisons Programme:

## Our Plans in Buckinghamshire





# The Site

The proposed site for a new prison is on land immediately to the north of both existing prisons and is already owned by the Ministry of Justice.

The village of Edgcott is immediately to the north and west along Grendon Road and Buckinghamshire Road and Grendon Underwood is a mile to the south. These local roads have good links to the nearby A41.

The existing prisons are served by bus from Aylesbury bus station which stops on Grendon Road at the foot of the access road, about 10 minutes' walk from the prison (service nos. 5, 16 and 677). The nearest rail stations are Bicester Town Station (trains to and from Oxford), Bicester North station (trains to and from London Marylebone) and Aylesbury station (trains to and from London Marylebone).



*Red line boundary of the proposed development site*

# The Planning Context

Our proposals help to deliver part of the national government policy to create 18,000 additional prison places in the coming years through the development of new prisons and expansion of existing establishments.

A new facility in Buckinghamshire also responds to demand, with an expected requirement for prison places in the North West and in South East of England, linking directly to the large urban centres located there.



# Our Proposals

Our emerging proposals for a new prison in Buckinghamshire are for a new 1,440 place Category C resettlement prison including 6 houseblocks with supporting facilities such as kitchen workshops and a central services hub.

Each houseblock is proposed to be four storeys in height and will house 240 prisoners, with other ancillary buildings ranging from one to four storeys high. We are looking at potential options to include a seventh houseblock as part of the new prison and will update you ahead of any decision. Other elements of our plans include kennels, polytunnels, around 430 car parking spaces, perimeter fencing and a perimeter road for patrolling. A new bus stop, bicycle shelter and electric vehicle charging points are being considered as part of our plans.

In terms of sustainability, the Ministry of Justice are seeking to make these new prisons the most sustainable in the prison estate achieving the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent rating as a minimum and aiming for an Outstanding rating. The prison, if approved, will also make a substantial contribution to the UK's fight against climate change by having almost no carbon emissions.

Ahead of starting construction for the new prison, the demolition of the existing education block associated with HMP Springhill prison is required and a new sports pitch will be installed to serve the existing prison. Both the relocated education block and a new sports pitch will be replaced and most of the area of woodland in the north western corner of the site will be retained as part of the proposals.

We are also considering options to expand HMP Springhill as part of our plans to deliver 18,000 prison places across the prison estate. Plans are still at a very early stage and no decisions have been made as to whether to proceed with these proposals, if they are this will be a separate planning application. Unlike the proposals to build a potential new prison on land adjacent to HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill, we are not at a stage for public consultation for any potential expansion of the Category D prison. We will write out to you again should these plans be taken forward.



# Our Proposals

We recognise the local community will be interested in seeing the new prison site layout plans and what they look like. To assist with this understanding, we have included a couple of indicative sketches, the site plan and a landscape plan in the following pages.

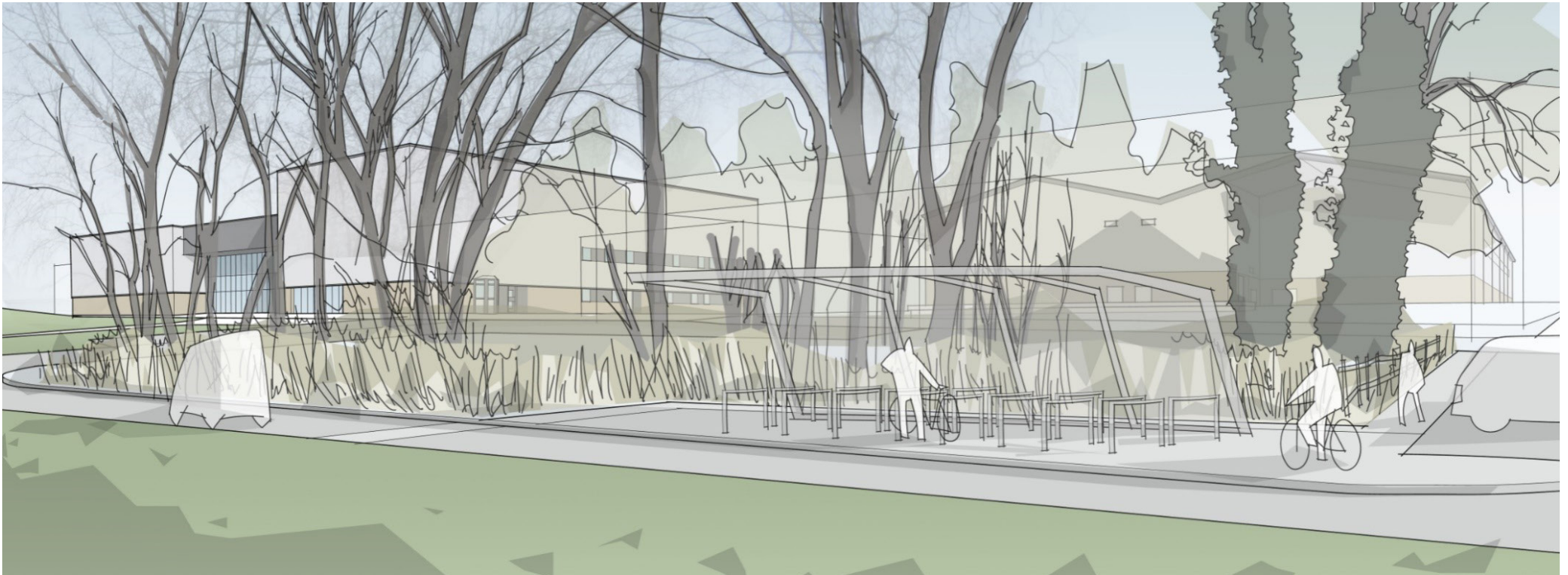


*New prison at Wellingborough, HMP Five Wells, under construction*

# Our Proposals

## Artists Impressions

Alongside the 'birdseye' image, the next two pages give an artists' impression of our plans:

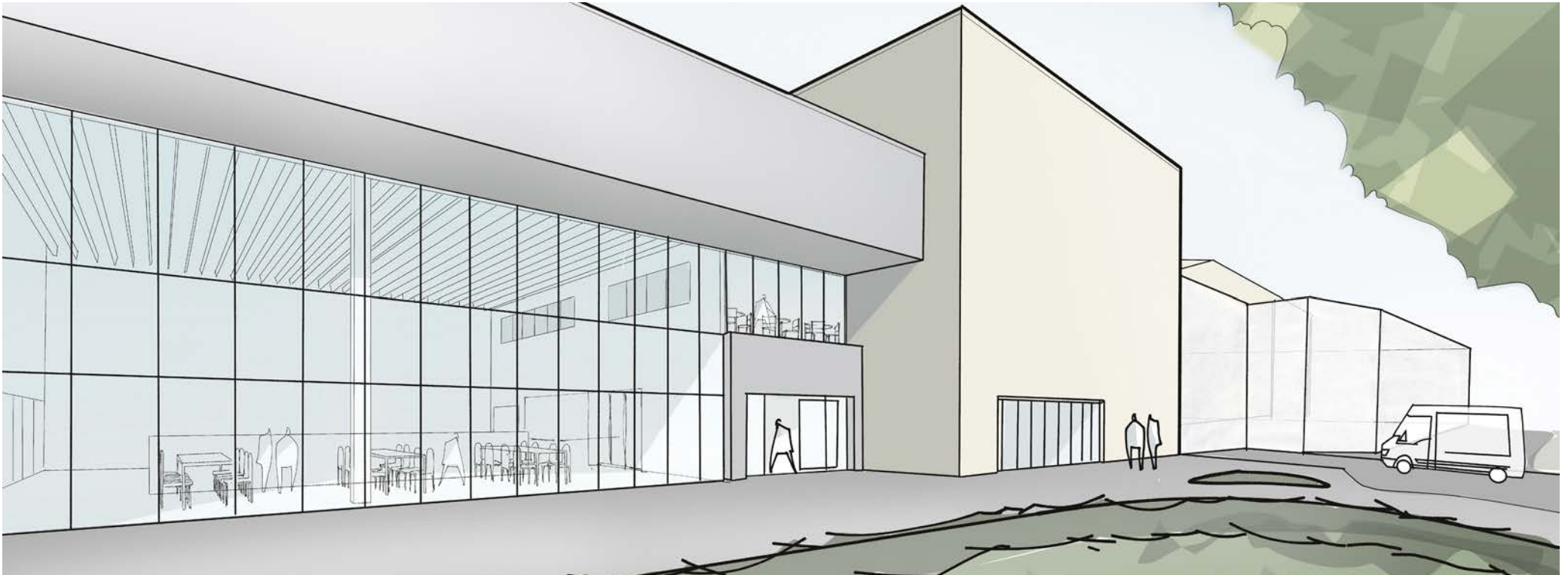


*Sketch image of the main entrance to the prison*



# Our Proposals

## Artists Impressions



*Sketch image of the new prisons entrance*



# Our Proposals

## Indicative Layout

The image to the right shows our current indicative plans for our new prison. These include the proposed six houseblocks as well as a range of other buildings in the context of the two existing prisons immediately to the south. The image also shows our current overall landscape plan, including planting and green spaces to protect biodiversity across the site.



*Indicative site plan of the proposed new prison*

# Landscaping Approach

The Ministry of Justice and the wider project team have taken great care in drawing up their approach to landscaping, given the site's rural location.

The landscape strategy therefore seeks to consider, protect and reinforce existing habitats and plants where possible, and proposes a soft landscape scheme which aims to maximise biodiversity whilst taking into account the current tree, ecology, landscape and visual constraints.

As a result, the entry and arrival area of the prison is designed to blend into the rural environment with a series of woodland areas, ponds and wildflower meadows. The existing pond to the north-east is retained, along with the associated vegetation where possible.

The public face of the reception building offers a calm and welcoming environment for what can be for some a difficult and trying time. The approach from the main road is to have a strong focus on tree planting and habitat areas that will create a calming environment. The main car park, enclosed by the existing boundary vegetation, will be further enhanced with the planting of medium size trees and low shrubs.

So, whilst our proposals are continuing to evolve, we have and will continue to work hard to deliver a new prison with an approach to landscaping that helps it fit within its immediate and wider setting.



*Indicative images of proposed planting and landscaping*

# A Sustainable Prison

Our prison plans not only reflect the latest design innovations that put rehabilitation at their heart and help play their part in meeting a key government policy, but they will also be the most environmentally sustainable of any prison in the country.

**Specifically, the proposals aim to:**

- ✓ Achieve at least a 50% reduction in energy consumption compared to similar prisons currently in construction, with a target to achieve a 70% reduction in energy
- ✓ Ensure no fossil fuels will be used on site, other than for emergency generators
- ✓ Target the installation of 11,000 square metres of solar panels (PVs) across the site. These will be mounted on the buildings and on the ground inside the prison boundary.
- ✓ Seek to achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'Excellent' rating as a minimum, and aim to achieve BREEAM Outstanding.
- ✓ Make sure that both inside and outside of the prison fence boundary the plans have been developed to protect existing sources of biodiversity. The existing pond, woodland and perimeter hedgerows will mostly remain untouched, and the strategy inside the prison has been developed to secure a biodiversity net gain.
- ✓ Sustainable drainage systems are being developed to manage surface water. These are being combined with water treatment and biodiversity requirements to provide a multifunctional landscape.
- ✓ We also recognise that a considerable amount of construction traffic is already using local roads. We would work with the Council on a Construction Traffic Management Plan to ensure that any construction traffic movements are co-ordinated.



# Community Benefits

## Supporting Local Communities

We know that new prisons can have a positive impact on the local area and economy not just in the short-term construction phase, but importantly in the long-term once a prison is operational. Recent experience from a similar project at HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough has delivered community benefits such as:

- hundreds of jobs for the community during the construction phase;
- over 1,700 work placement days;
- over 600 people upskilled through training and experience.

Our work in Wellingborough also helped create opportunities for local small and medium-sized businesses to support the delivery of construction.

Once the prison is operational, it will create around 500-600 permanent jobs in a wide range of roles, providing opportunities for members of the community to build a career within the criminal justice system and with partner agencies.

Various roles will be available such as office administration staff, chaplaincy, education and of course, prison officers. Roles like these are integral to protecting the public and play a vital part in helping offenders turn their lives around.



# Community Benefits

The Ministry of Justice's plans for a new prison not only respond to projected changes in the prison population but will also deliver a range of short and long term benefits for the local community.

Making a real and lasting improvement to the communities we operate in is a key goal for the Ministry, and with the new Glen Parva prison being comparable to our Buckinghamshire plans, the infographic to the right shows what we believe can be achieved locally:

## Glen Parva Prison Project – Key Performance Targets



## Next Steps & Have Your Say

We hope that the information available here has been helpful in setting out our initial plans for a new prison in Buckinghamshire. They are being brought forward following years of development into the most effective ways to design prisons which help promote rehabilitation and reduce re-offending, are as sustainable as possible and which deliver a range of benefits for the local community.

Your feedback is important to us. Your comments can influence a range of elements in our plans such as the orientation of our proposed buildings, proposed building materials, colours and our approach to landscaping.

Now is an ideal time to have your say as our plans are continuing to evolve and all comments received will be considered and reviewed by the project team.

Passing your views to us is easy - simply fill in and complete the online survey found at our consultation website.

No final decision has been made on whether to progress with our proposals and no planning application has been submitted to Buckinghamshire Council. The deadline for receiving your feedback has been extended to 18:00 on **Friday 29 January 2021**.

### Our Consultation Website:

#### To visit our consultation website go to:

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/potential-new-prison-in-buckinghamshire>

#### To have your say, visit:

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/potential-new-prison-in-buckinghamshire/consultation/intro/>

#### To email us directly:

[PSDenquiries@justice.gov.uk](mailto:PSDenquiries@justice.gov.uk)





# Frequently Asked Questions

## Why have you selected this site for the proposed new prison?

This site is situated in an area, South East England, where we expect substantial demand for new prison places. It is close to HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill. It is also relatively close to existing urban centres, in this case Bicester, Aylesbury and Buckingham.

The land is already owned by the Ministry of Justice. Other nearby locations such as land adjacent to HMP Bullingdon are not owned by the Ministry of Justice and are therefore likely to be more challenging to develop.

The Ministry of Justice carried out surveys to determine whether the construction of a new prison is practical on this site and concluded that it is. Should a planning application be pursued at this site, the details of these works will be submitted to the local planning authority for review. At this point they will also be made available to the public via the planning portal.

## How have you decided on the design?

Our proposals are still under development, which is why we are currently consulting the local community and stakeholders on them. No final decision has been taken on whether to proceed with these proposals and submit a planning application to the council.

Our design is the result of years of developing how a rehabilitative prison should look and work. We believe our new prison design will have a positive impact on reducing offending behaviour and will improve outcomes for communities, by reducing reoffending.

Ultimately, a new prison would be shaped by the constraints and opportunities the site presents and would draw on what we've learned from building new, modern prisons such as at HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, and the prison we are currently building in Glen Parva, Leicestershire.

The new prisons that we build will be our most sustainable prisons yet; with a focus on lowering carbon emissions as near to zero as possible making a substantial contribution to the UK's fight against climate change.

## What type of prisoners will this new prison hold?

Our proposal is for a new Category C resettlement prison. Category C prisons give offenders the opportunity to develop their skills so they can find work and resettle back into the community on release, reducing reoffending.

The existing prisons on the site are HMP Grendon which is a Category B prison, and HMP Springhill which is a Category D, or open, prison.

The new prison would hold prisoners similar to those that are held at HMP Bullingdon, which operates primarily as an adult male Cat C training prison.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is your delivery timetable for a prison here?

No final decision has been taken on whether to proceed with these proposals and submit a planning application to the council. If we decide to go ahead and submit formal proposals to Buckinghamshire Council, this would be in early 2021, and we would expect a planning decision in the summer of 2021. We would then expect to start construction in 2022/23 and aim to open the new prison in 2025.

## What about construction and other traffic?

Any planning application will contain detailed plans explaining how we intend to manage construction traffic and reduce any impact on residents, especially in light of current HS2 and East West Rail vehicles. Our construction traffic plans would be part of any formal planning application submission which residents can review and comment on

Similarly, a planning application will include a transport assessment detailing what impact, if any, there will be on local roads when the prison is up and running.

## How will you deal with increased traffic from a new prison from both staff and visitors?

A review of the Local Highway Network will be undertaken to assess the impact of the development proposals. This will include standalone junction capacity assessment at specific junctions as agreed with the Local Highway Authority.

If we choose to submit a planning application, an Outline Travel Plan (OTP) will be submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application which will include a range of measures to encourage travel by sustainable modes (walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing) amongst staff and visitors to the prison.

An OTP is a long-term management strategy for the development that aims to minimise travel to and from the site by single occupancy car. Principally, the OTP aims to increase modal choice through the implementation of a package of measures and initiatives.

## How many of the jobs at the proposed prison will go to local people, and will local construction companies be able to get involved in the building of the proposed prison?

From our experience of delivering other new prisons across England, we believe that hundreds of jobs will be created for the community during the construction phase, including apprenticeships and work placements.

Once the prison is operational, it will create around 500-600 permanent jobs for people to build a career within the criminal justice system. Various roles will be available such as office admin staff, chaplaincy, education and of course, prison officers. Roles like these are integral to protecting the public and play a vital part in helping offenders turn their lives around.

# Frequently Asked Questions

We are also keen to ensure that small local companies and the local community benefit from the construction of a new prison. Our new prison in Wellingborough saw 51% of the construction spend going to local businesses, and 25% of on-site spend went to companies in the local Wellingborough area.

## **Will the proposed prison be publicly or privately operated?**

No decision has been taken on the future operation of this site but we will be considering this issue and make a decision in good time for its opening.

## **Will my house price be affected by the proposed prison?**

The Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service is not aware of any evidence that a new prison in an area leads to a fall in house prices. In many cases the availability of long term, permanent jobs will bring people to the area and potentially increase the demand for housing.

## **I am afraid of prisoners escaping – how likely is this?**

Extremely unlikely. The prison will be a secure establishment holding category C prisoners, the lowest risk of prisoners that can be held in closed conditions.

## **Will you take into account our thoughts?**

Yes, we will consider all comments and suggestions relating to the proposed prison before we decide whether to submit a planning application. If we submit an outline planning application, please remember that you can also make the council aware of any comments you have during the formal planning process.

## **Why have you updated your consultation documents and extended the deadline for feedback?**

Our plans are evolving and after we initially engaged local residents and other stakeholders in early December, we have sought to share more information with the community as it has become available.

Stakeholders felt that an extension of the deadline beyond 24 December 2020 would give more people more time to have their say. We have therefore been happy to extend the feedback deadline to 18:00 on Friday 29 January 2021.

## **The area suffers from flooding and drainage problems. How will you address these?**

The proposed drainage for the site has been carefully developed with consideration to the existing site characteristics, including the existing reported drainage and flooding issues.

We will undertake a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment, which will identify all key issues relating to flood risk on the site.

# Frequently Asked Questions

This key document will provide important data on potential flood levels, and will be used to inform the design of the development to minimise the impact of any flooding.

We will also gain vital information from local landowners who are best placed to provide historical knowledge on the behaviour of any streams or watercourses that lie within or close to the development site, and we will use this information to help shape the drainage design.

## **How will you seek to mitigate the impact on local health services?**

NHS England is responsible for commissioning healthcare for people in prisons and young offender institutions in England (with the exception of emergency care, ambulance services and out-of-hours services).

The range of services which are directly commissioned for prisons include primary (GP) and secondary (hospital) care services, public health (including substance misuse services (under a section 7a agreement with the Department of Health), dental, ophthalmic (eye care) and mental health services.

NHS England works very closely with key partners to ensure the delivery of high-quality services for all in need. The Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Care, HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS England and Public Health England have set out how we align, enable and support health and substance misuse, and social care services in prisons in a National Partnership Agreement.



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