



Ministry
of Justice

The New Prisons Programme:

**New Prisons in Wethersfield, Braintree District
Public Consultation**

September 2021

Contents

Welcome	3
New Prisons Programme	4
Our Plans in Braintree District	9
Planning	11
Our Proposals	13
Community Benefits	17
Next Steps & Have Your Say	19
Frequently Asked Questions	20

Welcome

Thank you for visiting our pre-application consultation website on our proposal for two new prisons in Braintree. As part of our work to drive down crime, we have committed to creating 18,000 additional prison places by the mid-2020s, through a combination of building new prisons, as well as extending, refurbishing and maintaining existing prisons.

As part of this work, we believe that, following detailed feasibility work, land at RAF Wethersfield in Braintree would be an appropriate location for two new prisons as part of the prison estates strategy. Our plans, if successful, would bring many benefits to the local community, such as hundreds of jobs during construction, careers within the prison sector and an increased spend in local businesses.

Prisoner numbers change over time which is why we must have robust plans in place to make sure we will always have enough places available. We expect there will be an increase in demand for prison 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, may contribute to a higher prison population, and we therefore believe that creating more safe, secure and decent prison places will help to mitigate pressure on prison places in England and Wales in the coming years.

I hope that you find this consultation document useful, and we welcome your early feedback on our plans.



Victoria Atkins MP
Minister of State



New Prisons Programme

Our Prisons by Security Category

This consultation is about building two prisons, a category B training prison and a category C resettlement prison, both will be for adult men.

Adult male prisons have four security categories. Category A prisons have the highest security and category D prisons have the lowest security. Category A-C prisoners are kept in closed conditions which means that prisoners are kept within secure prison boundaries all of the time, except for very limited circumstances. Some men held in a category C prison may be released on temporary license (ROTL) to go to work. This is strictly risk assessed and monitored. Category D prisoners are risk assessed to live under open conditions, which means they can leave the prison for certain reasons, such as to go to work.

When the court sends someone to prison, they usually go to a local prison. At the local prison, it is decided what category of prison the prisoner will go to. Usually, they will move to a category B or C training prison. Then, they will go to a category C resettlement prison to get ready for release.

Not all prisoners follow this pattern. For instance, high-risk prisoners may go to a high-security prison and stay there. Some low-risk prisoners, or those with short sentences, may go straight to a resettlement prison.



Category A prisons

- Category A prisons are for higher-risk prisoners or those serving longer sentences.
- Sometimes these are called high-security prisons or maximum-security prisons.

Category B local prisons and training prisons

- Category B local prisons take prisoners straight from courts in the local area.
- Sometimes, local prisons are called reception prisons.
- Training prisons take prisoners from local prisons or category A prisons.

Category C training prisons and resettlement prisons

- Category C training prisons take prisoners from local prisons, or from category B prisons.
- Training prisons help prisoners to manage their risks to make them safer.
- Resettlement prisons help lower risk prisoners to get ready for when they leave prison.

Category D prisons

- Category D prisons hold the lowest-risk prisoners.
- They take prisoners from category C prisons.
- These are sometimes called open prisons as some prisoners can leave to go to work or train, or to visit their family.

New Prisons Programme

New Design

We've made a new design for safe and secure prisons, with helping prisoners to turn their lives around at the heart of the design process. We've done this by talking to prisoners and prison staff. We've also looked at prisons in other countries and talked to people who research prisons. This means we've used real people's experience for our designs so we can build a prison that will help prisoners improve their behaviour, and prepare better for life outside prison. This is important because when prisoners are properly prepared for life outside prison, they are less likely to offend again. Most importantly, the prisons will be secure and safe for prisoners, prison staff and for people living nearby.



New Prisons Programme

Inside the House Blocks

The new prisons will be very different to many of our older prisons. This will make it better for the men inside and also for people who work there.

- Each prison will have 7 separate house blocks (or living accommodation). Each house block will have 4 floors, with around 60 prisoners on each floor, making a total of around 240 prisoners in each block. The overall capacity of each prison is 1,715. These prison blocks offer men the chance to live in smaller groups than they do in some older prisons. This creates a sense of community that will lead to less violence and better relations with staff. Overall, it means a safer and more secure prison.
- Each floor will have room for group activities. Men will be able to meet for training, prayer, fitness and to talk to each other.
- Most cells will hold 1 prisoner. A few cells are designed to hold 2 prisoners. Many cells will be set up for prisoners with low-mobility. All cells will have a shower and a toilet.
- Cells and landings will be set up to make technology easier to access. Cells will be able to have a phone so prisoners can talk to family and legal representatives. Access to phone calls helps to prepare prisoners for release and are strictly supervised. Cells or landings will be set up to allow prisoners access to services such as healthcare through a digital device. Prisoners do not have access to the internet.
- This means that whether the prison is run by the public or the private sector, they can put the right equipment in place.

New Prisons Programme

Inside the Other Buildings

- There will be a central space for prisoner services. For instance, prisoners can go there for lessons, for health advice and checks, to use the library or gym, or to pray.
- The visitors' hall will be a large space that can allow visitors for up to 50 prisoners. The hall will be light and airy, and prisoners and their families can also use the outdoor family visits area. The visits hall and outdoor visits area will encourage families to visit. This helps families to stay together and prisoners who maintain strong links with their families are less likely to reoffend after they are released.
- Workshops will help prisoners to gain new skills and qualifications. This will help them to gain work after release. Having work can help stop people re-offending.
- The workshops will include both heavy and light industry. For instance, prisoners can learn how to weld or how to make clothes. The exact industries will be decided closer to the prisons opening.
- There will be space outside for gardening, which includes polytunnels. Other outside space includes a small sports pitches so prisoners can keep fit and meet up in the fresh air.



New Prisons Programme

Prisons like this one

We've already used this design at some other new prisons. HMP Five Wells is due to accept its first prisoner in early 2022, our new prison at Glen Parva will be ready in 2023 and we're about to start building next to Full Sutton Prison. Just like the prisons we are proposing to build in Braintree District, these 3 sites will provide safe, decent and secure prisons. They will help prisoners to change their behaviour so they are less likely to re-offend after release.

HMP Five Wells, Northamptonshire

We started building HMP Five Wells prison in May 2019 and it will be ready to receive prisoners in early 2022. It will look very different to our older prisons. For instance, it will have barless windows, which have been specially made. Barless windows are just as secure as windows with bars and they help prisoners to feel more settled as well as having security benefits. This can help prisoners to behave better and that makes the prison safer for prisoners and staff. The prison design at HMP Five Wells is the baseline for all new prison builds.

G4S will run this prison as a private sector operator for 10 years, until 2032.

Glen Parva, Leicestershire

We started building a new prison at Glen Parva in Summer 2020 and it is on schedule to receive prisoners in Spring/Summer 2023.

This prison will be privately operated, with an operator announced in early 2022.



Next to HMP Full Sutton, Yorkshire

We're building our next new prison next to Full Sutton prison in East Yorkshire. This new prison will also include our new designs. We have outline planning permission already and hope to start building soon.



Our new Glen Parva prison in Leicestershire, currently under construction

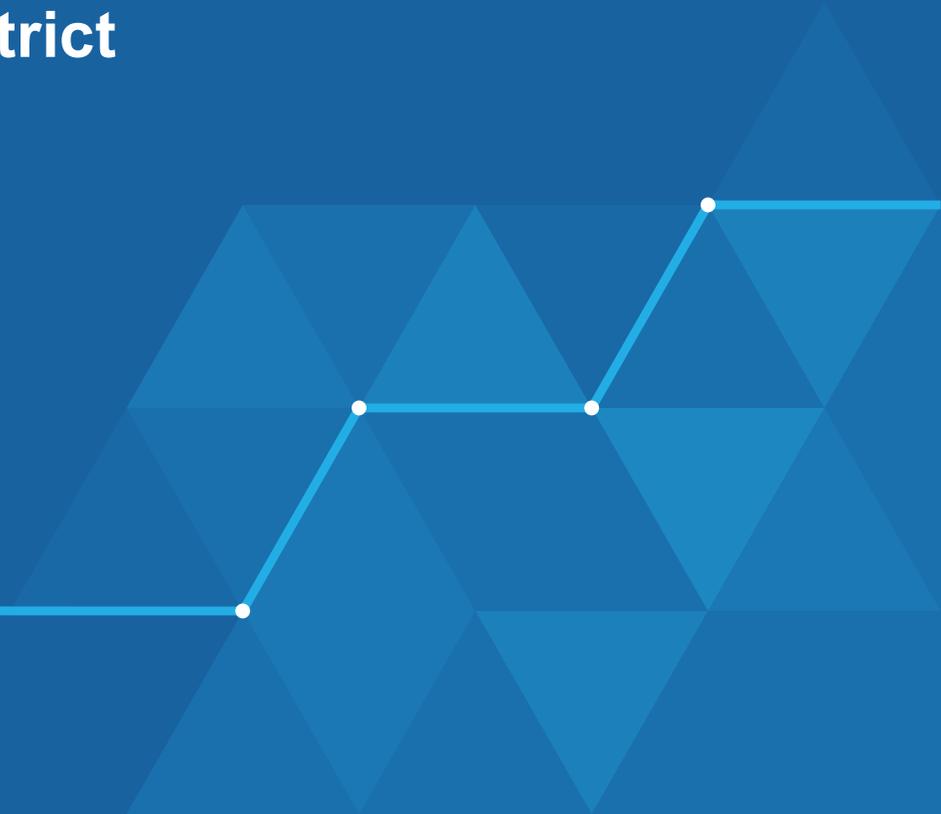


Ministry
of Justice

The New Prisons Programme:

Our Plans in Wethersfield, Braintree District

September 2021



Access and Transport

Traffic Management

A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan are being conducted to accompany the planning application for the proposed development. This will help understand and assess the likely impact the proposed development will have on the surrounding highway network and also provide mitigation measures that will address any anticipated highway issues that will arise as a result of the vehicular trips that are anticipated to be generated by the proposed development.

Mitigation measures will be considered based on the impact of the development on routes in the vicinity of the proposed development from Finchingfield to Braintree.

The transport study will also consider the assessment of the quality and capacity of transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed development and consideration of opportunities that will facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to the proposed site.

Connectivity by sustainable modes of transport will also be addressed and improved through the provision of a shuttle service to key transport locations from the proposed development, to enable staff and visitors the opportunity to travel by sustainable means.

The proposed development will have parking provision based on assessed demand and backed by local policy on parking provision. This will also include provision for electric vehicle parking and charging points as well.

Access by Road

Access to the site for construction and operation is proposed to be from Shaw Drive which branches off from the B1503 between Wethersfield and Finchingfield. The M11 is 33 miles West of the site and the turn off is Junction 9A. To the East the A1017 is the closest main road heading North to South and is accessible in 18 minutes via the Wethersfield Road (8 miles).

Access by Train

The nearest train station is Braintree station which is 10 miles away from the proposed prison site. The 9A bus covers Braintree and the B1503.



Access and Transport

Access by Bus

There are 3 main bus routes which cover the surrounding areas.

All 3 bus routes as scheduled in the table below travel through the B1503 which passes the Y-Junction at the start of Shaw Drive.

Should proposals go ahead, an additional bus stop closer to the junction on Shaw Drive and pavement installation would be discussed with the local planning and transport authorities.

Bus Nr	Bus Route
9	Blake End > Great Saling > Great Bardfield > Finchingfield > Wethersfield > Shalford > Shalford Green > Jaspers Green > Panfield > Bocking > Braintree > Braintree Town Center > Great Notley
9A	Blake End > Great Saling > Braintree > Braintree Town Center > Bocking > Panfield > Jaspers Green > Shalford Green > Wethersfield > Finchingfield > Great Bardfield > Great Saling > Blake End
16	Wethersfield > Finchingfield > Great Bardfield > Lindsell > Stebbing > Blake End > Felsted > Little Dunmow > Harford End > Ford End > Little Waltham > Broomfield > Chelmsford > Chelmsford City Center



Planning

As part of government plans to reduce crime, we're currently spending over £4 billion on 18,000 extra prison places. The proposals for Braintree District would help us in developing and delivering a longer-term strategy for the prison estate. These prison places will be decent, safe and secure.

We also need to have enough of the right kind of prison places. This means we need enough places in each security category so we can hold prisoners securely and keep the public safe. We also need to have enough training places and resettlement places so men can get the help they need to stop them re-offending after release.

A new category B and C prison in Braintree District would help meet an anticipated demand in the south for category C places, and an anticipated national demand for category B places.

Our plans

We are at the early stages of our proposals and, if we decide to proceed with an application, we would hope to build two prisons in Braintree District at the Wethersfield Air Base site. The prison blocks will have 4 floors, with 60 prisoners on each. The prison will have 7 separate house blocks (or living accommodation). The overall capacity of each prison is 1,715.

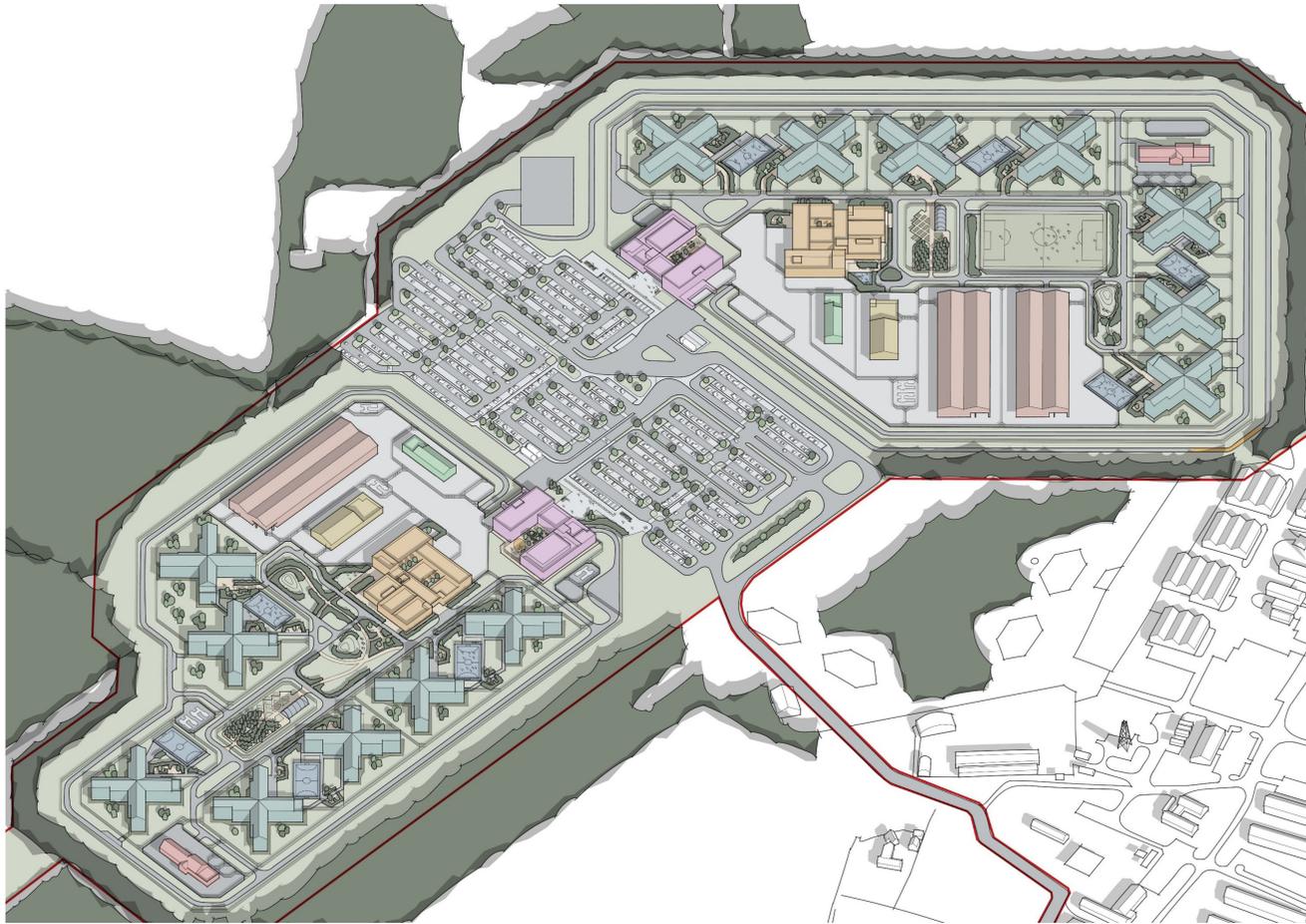
Each prison will also have support buildings. These will include a reception area, kitchens, workshops, a visits hall and offices. These buildings will range from 1 floor high to 4 floors high.



Our plans also include dog kennels, which will only be used in the daytime when prison dogs are on site. The dogs go home with their handlers each night. There will also be some polytunnels for gardening, and an outdoor family area that can be used by visitors and prisoners during visiting times. Each prison will have about 500 parking spaces for staff and visitors. The whole prison site will be surrounded by secure fencing and a road for security patrols.

Our Proposals

Here are some sketches of the site plan and a landscape plan to give you an overall view.



Our Proposals

Here are some artists' drawings of our plans to give you an idea of how the front of the prisons will look.



Landscaping

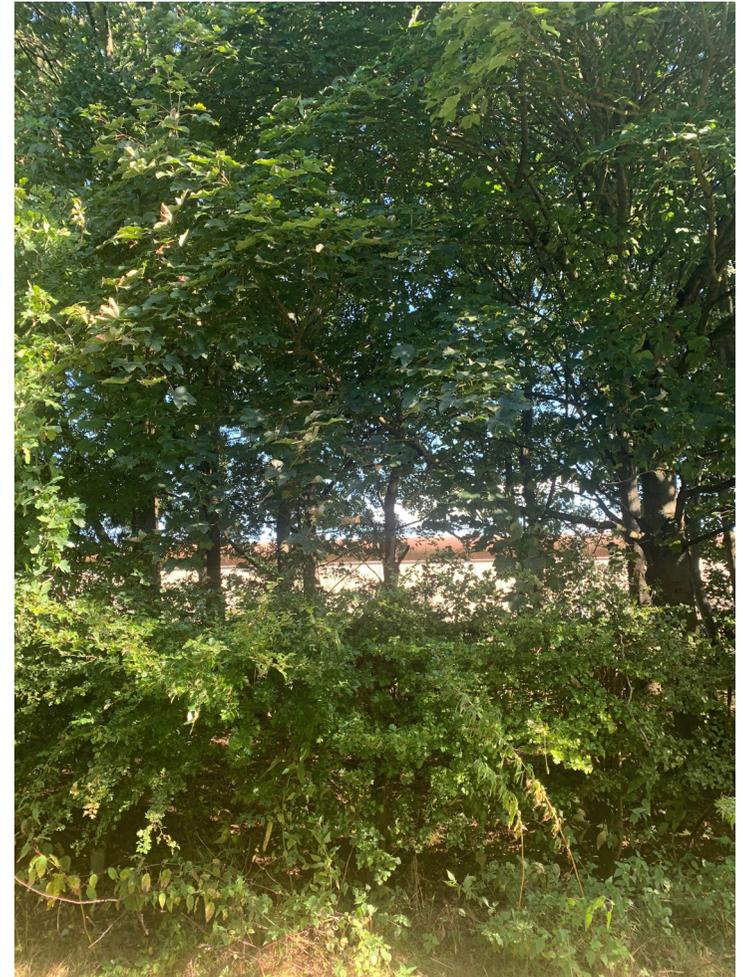
The landscape design strategy for the new prisons seek as a primary objective to protect local wildlife, plants and trees as much as possible. A lot of care has been taken to understand the existing context of site, through research, surveys and assessment, to respect the existing rural setting.

The layout of the prisons have been designed conscientiously, to ensure that there will be minimal impact to the existing green infrastructure. The site layout will sensitively integrate within the wider landscape setting, with particular attention to preserving and enhancing the existing Woodland Trust Jubilee Plantation. Consideration to the natural assets of the site forms part of the design strategy, where the existing ecological and landscape elements are protected and retained.

The entrance to the prisons will be calm and welcoming. The route from the main road to the prisons would be planted to provide a pleasant and calming approach for visitors and people passing by.

Additional enhancement tree and shrub planting will blend with the existing site landscape to improve the biodiversity of the area. Landscape improvements will extend to outside the prisons security fence to help protect local wildlife.

The design work for these proposals are still in progress and every attention is being applied to build new prisons that fits in with the local rural area and the wider landscape.



Green and Sustainable Prisons

Our plans mean that the new prisons will be the most environmentally friendly in the country.

Our green aims

We want to get a BREEAM rating for the building work. BREEAM stands for the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method. We hope to get an Excellent BREAM rating at the very least, but we'll aim for an Outstanding BREEAM rating, which is the highest rating available. To get this rating, we'll be doing the work listed below.

- ✓ We aim to reduce carbon emissions by 85% compared to our other prisons. We'll do this by using energy efficient heat pumps, lighting, appliances and equipment. We'll also build in renewable energy and choose new building materials based on their low environmental impact. We'll always use responsible suppliers. Over the next 60 years, this should reduce carbon emissions by 280,000 tonnes and save £100 million in energy costs.
- ✓ The new prisons will be all electric so there will be no need for gas boilers. This means the prisons will not use fossil fuels, except for emergency generators.
- ✓ Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be used to manage the flow of surface water. This means that surface water runoff, such as rain fall, is managed so that it is not able to flow directly into the main sewer system all at once. Instead, the water is released over an extended time, reducing the impact on the downstream network.
- ✓ We'll make sure our plans for the prisons in Braintree District and the land outside the prison fence don't significantly affect local wildlife, plants and trees. To the east a small number of trees may be affected, these will be relocated elsewhere to the east of the development. We hope to create new habitats for wildlife so that local wildlife benefits from the building overall.
- ✓ During building, we will reduce waste by using modern building methods. This means at least 95% of waste will be re-used so it doesn't go into landfill.
- ✓ We'll also manage noise, vibration, air and light pollution to keep it as low as possible. As part of this, we'll work with the local council to agree a plan to manage builders' and suppliers' traffic. This will help us manage traffic during building work so that it doesn't affect local people and businesses too much.
- ✓ When the prisons are built, we'll encourage staff and visitors to use green transport and active forms of travel. As part of this, we'll provide cycle storage and electric charging points for cars.
- ✓ We will explore ways we can protect and sustain the heritage of the site.



Braintree District will gain new jobs from the prisons

Case study: New jobs created at HMP Five Wells prison

New prisons can benefit local people and local businesses. There are benefits during the building phase and many more once the prisons are up and running.

We're building a similar prison, HMP Five Wells in Northamptonshire so we can show you the benefits from that building work. During the building work HMP Five Wells has provided:

- hundreds of jobs in construction for the community
- over 1,700 work placement days to upskill and prepare people for jobs in construction
- on- the- job training and work experience to upskill over 800 people in their roles
- opportunities for local small and medium businesses to support the building work

The new prisons in Braintree District could create about 1200-1400 permanent jobs once up and running. These jobs would include prison officers, nurses, teachers, office staff, and so on. This means local people would have the chance of a career in the criminal justice system. Jobs like these are important because they help to protect the public and they help offenders to turn their lives around.



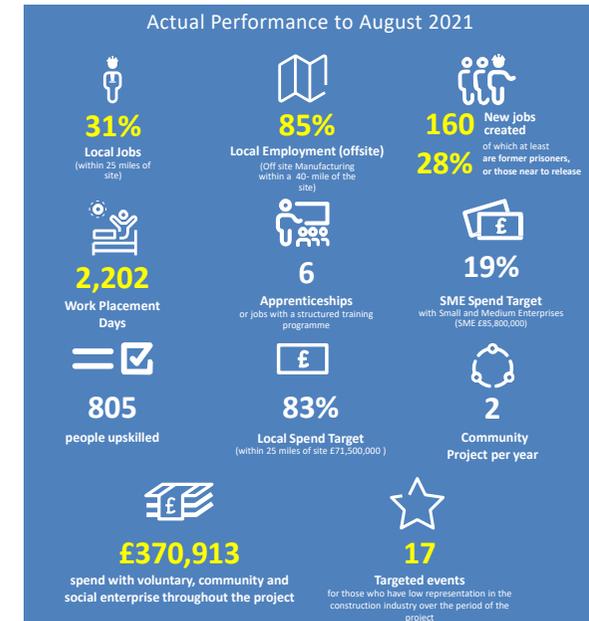
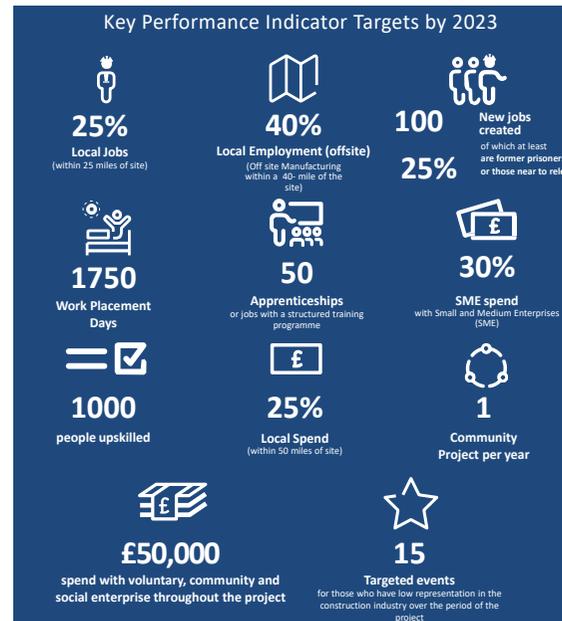
Community Benefits

Some of the benefits from new prisons at HMP Five Wells and Glen Parva

Our new prison plans help to provide new prison places and they also help local people. Whenever we build a new prison, we also aim to provide a long-lasting benefit to the local area.

We work closely with the local Job Centre to ensure local people have opportunities for jobs and training. We work with local schools and charities to give back to the community, such as providing replacement fencing, new outdoor facilities for local schools and providing visits and learning sessions to school children about sustainable and green projects.

We hope to provide similar benefits for local people in Braintree District. The new prison at Glen Parva in Leicestershire is like the ones we hope to build in Braintree District. The image here shows what we hope to achieve.



Have Your Say

We hope this information has helped you to understand our proposed plans for the new prisons in Braintree District. Our plans come from many years of working to find the best ways to build prisons. We want our new prisons to help prisoners turn their lives around, so they stop offending. They will also be as green as possible, so they are friendly to the environment. Finally, we want to help local people by providing jobs and spending in the local and regional economy.

We want to hear what you think about our plans before we decide whether to apply for planning permission. Your comments really count. They can affect the position of the buildings, the kinds of building materials we use, colour schemes and landscaping.

We haven't decided yet if we'll go ahead with these plans, and we haven't applied for planning permission. So, now is a good time to have your say. Our planning team will read all comments and consider them before we decide.

It's easy to have your say. Just fill in the survey on our consultation website. Either click [here](#) to go to the consultation website or copy and paste this link address into your internet search bar: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/proposed-new-prisons-in-wethersfield-consultation>

Throughout the consultation period, you can also send your views by post to us at: PO Box 347, Manchester M21 3ES.

If you want to have your say, please let us have your comments by 8 November 2021.

Contact Us

You can view our proposals and give feedback via the link to our website above. To give you an opportunity to hear directly from the development team and ask any questions you have about the project, we are hosting a series of online and in-person events on the following dates and times:

Virtual meeting via Zoom – 7pm on Thursday 14 October (Sign up here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dSzABzG0Ry-qrQPPGGN0wg)

Virtual meeting via Zoom – 1pm on Friday 15 October (Sign up here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p0aBTMknT7SX3DBW7SolRw)

We will also be holding two public exhibitions in the local area during the consultation period. Residents have been issued letters which provide more detail about these events.



Frequently Asked Questions

Why have you picked Braintree District for your new prisons?

- We need to build new category C prisons in regions where we expect a shortage of these types of prison places in future. Category B prison places are required nationally, and the site would be big enough for two new prisons.
- We've surveyed the site to check if it's suitable for building new prisons and it is suitable. We have been able to agree a purchase of a suitable amount of land, subject to planning permission being granted.
- If we apply for planning permission, we'll share the survey reports with the local council and they will be available to view online.

What type of prisoners will these new prisons hold?

- The prisons would be a category B training prison for adult male prisoners, and a category C resettlement prison for adult male prisoners.

What is a category B training prison?

- Category B training prisons will likely hold prisoners serving longer sentences, where they will be given skills training and the opportunity to address their offending behavior.

What is a category C resettlement prison?

- Category C resettlement prisons are for low risk prisoners coming towards the end of their sentences, usually less than 2 years.
- They are usually fairly close to a prisoner's home so he can have family visits. This helps to keep him in touch with his family and will mean a smoother transition into the community when he is released.
- Prisoners will also start to prepare for work on the outside and the lowest risk prisoners may be allowed out for short visits or to go to work, this is called Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL).

Prisoners are individually risk assessed to decide if they are eligible and safe for temporary release (ROTL) and it will only apply to a limited number of prisoners.

Have you decided on the design?

- We're still working on our plans and that is why we are consulting with you now so you can have your say.
- Our design is based on years of researching and building prisons.
- We believe our new prison design will help prisoners to turn their lives around and reduce re-offending. In turn, this helps to protect the public and keep people safe.
- If we build new prisons here, we will make sure it works with the local rural landscape.
- The new prisons will be the greenest so far. They will lower carbon emissions so they are as close to zero as possible. This will help the UK's fight against climate change.



Frequently Asked Questions

When will the prisons be built?

- We haven't yet decided whether to build any prisons here and we haven't applied for planning permission.
- If we do go ahead, we expect we would apply for planning permission next year.

What about traffic during construction?

- We're working on how we could keep disruption to a minimum, and your feedback will help us do this.
- Any planning application would contain detailed plans explaining how we would manage traffic during construction.
- We'd work with the council to reduce any disturbance to local people and businesses.
- Our traffic management plans would be included with our planning application. You'd be able to view this and comment on it. A traffic management plan is designed to ensure that construction vehicles can enter and leave the site safely and that we put in place measures to reduce any temporary impact on the existing highway network.

The traffic management plan covers:

- The number and type of vehicles required during the construction phase of the project;
- The construction timescales including peak construction periods;
- The construction access routes for use by construction vehicles;
- The specific construction traffic impacts which would require mitigation; and
- The specific mitigation measures which require either specific construction management or physical measures.

How will you deal with traffic from staff and visitors?

- Our planning application would also include a transport assessment. This would show how the prisons would affect local roads once they are up and running.
- We'll review the local road network to see how the prisons would affect local roads.
- When we apply for planning permission, we'll also submit an outline travel plan that will balance providing car parking facilities and encouraging staff and visitors to use green transport.
- Our outline travel plan will help reduce travel to and from the site in cars carrying only one person. Mainly, the plan aims to increase green travel choices and then encourage staff and visitors to use them.



Frequently Asked Questions

How many prison jobs will go to local people?

- Two new prisons in Braintree District would create about 1200-1400 permanent jobs once up and running, and local people would be able to apply for these.
- This would provide a chance for local people to build a career working in the criminal justice system.
- There would be different kinds of jobs, including prison officers, teachers and trainers, office workers and chaplains.
- Jobs like these are important to protect the public. They also help prisoners to turn their lives around and this helps to reduce re-offending.

Will the new prisons be run by the government or by a private company?

- We haven't decided yet who would run the new prisons.
- We would consider this and decide long before any new prison is up and running.

Will my house price be affected by the proposed prison?

- We aren't aware of any evidence that new prisons lead to a change in house prices.

Will local builders be able to work on the new prisons?

- We expect that hundreds of building jobs would be created. This is based on what happened when we built other new prisons such as HMP Five Wells.
- Hundreds of jobs would be created for the community during the building phase, including apprenticeships and work placements offered through job centres, job fairs and other schemes.
- We want to make sure that small local businesses and local people benefit from the building work of a new prisons.
- We set construction targets to ensure that at least 25% of the workforce are employed locally and 25% of the project spend is spent locally, and monitor these targets throughout the build to ensure they are met or exceeded.

I'm afraid of prisoners escaping. How likely is this?

- It's extremely unlikely that a prisoner would escape.
- Both of the proposed prisons would be secure.
- Some lower risk category C prisoners may be allowed to leave on a temporary licence, if they are risk-assessed as suitable.
- Licences are strictly controlled, the police and probation service are always made aware of any prisoner leaving the prison on licence.



Frequently Asked Questions

Will you listen to what we say?

- Yes, we'll read all comments from you before we decide if we'll apply for planning permission or not.
- If we do apply for planning permission, you can also send your comments to the council during the planning period.

How will you assess flooding and drainage issues?

- We'll do a full flood risk assessment which will provide important information about flood levels. We'll use it in our planning and design to reduce the risk of flooding.
- We'll also get important information from local landowners who can share their knowledge about past problems with streams and so on near to the prison site. We'll also use this information to help plan the drainage.

How will the prisons affect our local services?

- The NHS arranges most healthcare inside prisons for people in prison, except for emergency care, ambulance services and out-of-hours services.
- The NHS will provide prison healthcare services such as GP and hospital services. They will also provide substance misuse and mental health services, and also dental health and eye health services.
- The NHS works closely with us and many other organisations to make sure our prisons have all the healthcare services they need, including mental health services, substance abuse and social care services.
- We work closely with police and the fire service to ensure any impacts to local services are minimal.



Ministry
of Justice

