



Ministry
of Justice

Accelerated Houseblock Delivery Programme

**Public Consultation for Prison Expansion
at HMP Gartree near Market Harborough**

October 2021



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Welcome

Thank you for visiting our pre-application consultation website on our proposal for the expansion of HMP Gartree. As part of our work to drive down crime, we have committed £4bn to the expansion of the prison estate 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, HMP Gartree near Market Harborough would be an appropriate location for a new housing block as part of the prison estates strategy. Our plans, if successful, would bring benefits to the local community, such as 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



Prison Expansion Programme

Our Prisons by Security Category

This consultation is about expanding HMP Gartree, a Category B prison 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. Under very limited circumstances, 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 training prison. Then, they will go to a 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 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 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 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 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.



Accelerated Houseblock Delivery 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 to 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 prison will be secure and safe for prisoners, prison staff and for people living nearby.

Our proposals are for HMP Gartree, which is a Category B training prison. We are proposing a new prison block holding up to 247 male prisoners, and supporting ancillary buildings. We have looked at the Category B prison estate and know that we require more Category B prison places than we currently have.

A similar design is being used for our proposed new prison next to HMP Gartree, the MoJ have applied for outline planning permission for this, and this is currently under consideration by the local planning authority. This consultation is about expanding the existing prison by adding one new prison block.



Accelerated Houseblock Delivery Programme

Inside the Prison's Houseblock

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

- The prison will gain 1 new houseblock (or living accommodation). The prison block will have 4 floors, with around 60 prisoners on each floor, making a total of up to 247 prisoners in the block. This will bring the overall capacity of the prison to approximately 900. This prison block offers men the chance to live in smaller groups than they do in some older accommodation. This helps to create a sense of community that will lead to less violence and better interaction 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 activities.
- Most cells will be single occupancy, however a few cells may hold 2 prisoners. Some cells will also be set up to be accessible for prisoners with a disability or impaired mobility. All cells will have a shower and a toilet.
- Cells and landings will be designed to make technology easier to access. Cells will be able to have a phone so prisoners can talk to family and legal representatives, and access support. Cells or landings will be set up to allow prisoners access to services such as healthcare through a digital device. Access to phone calls helps to prepare prisoners for release and is strictly supervised. These devices do not give prisoners access to the internet.



Accelerated Houseblock Delivery Programme

Inside the Other Buildings

- Existing buildings will be expanded to cater for the increased number of prisoners.
- We will be expanding the education facilities, as well as those for the kitchens and sports facilities.
- Many prisoners currently living in HMP Gartree are employed in prison workshops or in the prison gardens. There is also a learning department that provides education to help prepare prisoners for employment on release. New workshop capacity will be added to provide additional work and classroom spaces, and part of the workshops will be used for plantroom provisions and storage.



Prison Expansion

Prisons like this one

We've already used this houseblock 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 HMP Full Sutton, all utilising the same houseblock design to provide safe, decent and secure prisons, whilst also improving sustainability over previous designs. They will help prisoners to change their behaviour so they are less likely to reoffend after release.

We're also expanding and/or refurbishing other prisons. In February this year we received planning permission to expand HMP Rye Hill by adding a new houseblock and supporting ancillary buildings.

At HMYOI Aylesbury and HMYOI Feltham we have completed refurbishment works, helping to build back better accommodation using existing buildings.

Getting to and from the prison

The proposed expansion is at HMP Gartree, which is already owned by the Ministry of Justice. The hamlet of Gartree is located next to the site, on Welland Avenue, while the town of Market Harborough is located just over a mile to the southeast of this site.

By road

The existing prison is easily accessible via the M1 motorway (Junction 20).

By train

The nearest rail station is Market Harborough, which offers half hourly fast trains to London and Nottingham. Local services to Leicester, Loughborough, Beeston, East Midlands Parkway, Kettering, Wellingborough, Bedford and Luton Airport Parkway also run from Market Harborough Rail Station.

By bus

The number 44 bus runs from Market Harborough Rail Station and stops just outside HMP Gartree on Gallow Field Road.

Our Proposals

As part of Government plans to reduce crime, we're spending over £4 billion on creating extra prison places. These prison places will be decent, safe and secure. They'll help us to modernise prisons in England and Wales in the next few years. About 5,000 of these places will come from expanding and/or refurbishing existing prisons. The majority of other places will come from the construction of new prisons.

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 reoffending after release.

The expansion of an existing prison in the East Midlands responds to a national demand for Category B training prison places.

Our plans

We hope to build an additional houseblock and supporting ancillaries at HMP Gartree, to add up to 247 prisoners to the existing capacity.

Community Benefits: Market Harborough will gain new jobs

New jobs created as capacity increases

Prison expansion can benefit local people and local businesses. There are benefits during the short building phase and many more once the prison is up and running.

- jobs in construction for the community
- opportunities for local small and medium businesses to support the building work

The houseblock expansion would create approximately 100 jobs. 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.



Have Your Say

We hope this information has helped you to understand our proposed plans for HMP Gartree. Our plans come from many years of working to find the best ways to build prisons. We want our new houseblocks 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. Email gartreeconsultation@justice.gov.uk



Frequently Asked Questions

Why have you selected this site for the proposed expansion?

- Prison expansion responds to a national demand for prison places. It is easily accessible by train from many main cities and towns in the south of England, including London, Luton and Bedford.
- In addition, the land is already owned by the Ministry of Justice.

How 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 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 a new housing block at this prison, we will make sure it works with the local rural landscape.
- We will also use our experience of building housing blocks at HMP Stocken and HMP Rye Hill in Rutland and Northamptonshire.
- The new houseblocks 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

Are you also building a new prison?

- Our proposal is for a new category B houseblock. Category B prisons give prisoners the opportunity to develop their skills so they can find work and resettle back into the community on release, reducing reoffending.
- We have also consulted on a new prison that would hold prisoners similar to those that are held at HMP Gartree currently. Both new prisons and houseblock expansions are being used across England and Wales to meet the required change in prison capacity.
- We haven't yet decided whether to build a new houseblock here and we haven't applied for planning permission. If we do go ahead, we'll apply for planning permission later this year. We would anticipate a planning decision from the council in early 2022.

What about traffic during construction?

- We know that construction traffic can sometimes be disruptive, we're working on the best ways to keep disruption to a minimum, and your feedback will help us to do this.
- Our 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.

How will you deal with traffic from staff and visitors?

- Our planning application would also include a transport assessment. This would show how the prison would affect local roads once the prison is up and running.
- We'll review the local road network to see how the prison would affect local roads.
- We will add sufficient car parking for all additional staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many prison jobs will go to local people?

- The expansion at Gartree would create about 100 permanent jobs, and local people would be able to apply for these.
- This would provide a chance for local people to build a career 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 prison be run by the government or by a private company?

- The current prison is a public prison and there are no plans to change this.

Will the expansion affect the value of my home?

- We aren't aware of any evidence that prisons lead to a change in house prices. The majority of this development is 'inside the wire' of the existing prison perimeter.

What is the Accelerated Houseblock Delivery Programme?

- The programme is part of the MoJ's programmes to expand the capacity of the prison estate. It is using an existing design and existing sites to accelerate the programme of expansion, to help meet future population needs and delivering better value for taxpayers.

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, we will use your feedback to ensure that the design is informed by your views.
- You can also send your comments to the council during the planning application.



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