

Building work starts on new Wellingborough jail

- Justice Secretary marks the start of construction at Wellingborough site
- New jail will deliver major boost to the local economy and help to cut crime
- Significant step in the Government's vision of a modern, efficient prison estate

The Justice Secretary was joined at the site by council leaders and senior representatives from Kier – who were awarded a £253 million contract earlier this year for the design and construction of the new prison.

The 1,680-place category C jail is a major element of the Government's bold strategy to create a modern, efficient prison estate that is fit for the future.

The prison is expected to open in 2021 and will be built on the site of the previous HMP Wellingborough, which closed in 2012.

Speaking at the event, the Justice Secretary told attendees that HMP Wellingborough will provide a major boost to the local economy – creating 100 new jobs and 50 apprenticeships, with a target of at least 25% of jobs being filled by ex-offenders. Once the jail becomes operational, hundreds of additional new jobs will be created in the prison.

Justice Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

Modern and efficient jails are at the heart of the Government's plan to create a justice system that protects law-abiding citizens and cuts crime.

The new prison at Wellingborough will create and support hundreds of jobs, both during construction and afterwards, and will be a major boost to the local economy.

The prison will also provide a better environment to rehabilitate offenders and ultimately keep the public safer.

The new jail at Wellingborough will provide almost half of the 3,500 new prison places that are already being delivered – with construction of a further prison at Glen Parva in Leicestershire, due to start in 2020, while a new houseblock at HMP Stocken in Rutland, opened in June.

The Prime Minister also announced last month that the [Government will invest £2.5 billion](#) to transform the estate further, creating an additional 10,000 new places that will boost rehabilitation and cut reoffending. Outline planning permission for a new 1,440-place prison at Full Sutton was granted last week.

The funding will also be used to bring previously decommissioned prison places back into use through extensive refurbishment and maintenance work.

This comes alongside an investment of £100 million to bolster security and stability in prisons, in addition to £70 million committed previously.

This will fund tough airport-style security, including X-ray scanners and metal detectors, across the prison estate to clamp down on the drugs, weapons and mobile phones that increase the risk to our officers and hinder rehabilitation.

[Contact the Brexit imports and exports helpline](#)

Contact the helpline to get information about how you can import or export after Brexit.

[Call for views for independent review into local authority audit](#)

An independent review is calling for views on the quality and effectiveness of the audit and financial reporting of local authorities in England.

The review, led by the former President of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Sir Tony Redmond, was launched in July 2019 to examine the effectiveness of local authority financial reporting and the audit regime.

It will also examine whether the financial information provided in local authority accounts facilitates scrutiny by local taxpayers and by local press.

Today (17 September 2019) the independent review has announced it is seeking views on the topic and encourages practitioners who work in the local government sector, the audit community, representative bodies and other

relevant or interested parties, to submit their response to an open set of questions.

Local Government Minister Luke Hall MP, said:

It's important that local authorities are held financially accountable to reinforce public confidence and deliver value for money for taxpayers.

That's why the independent review being carried out by Sir Tony Redmond, to ensure a robust local audit system, is so vital. I encourage all interested parties to submit evidence to help inform the review's recommendations.

Lead of the independent review, Sir Tony Redmond, said:

This call for evidence is a key part of my review of the effectiveness of audit in local authorities and the transparency of their financial reporting.

I will look to test the assurance processes in place with regard to value for money arrangements together with the financial resilience in local councils.

I am keen to hear from practitioners as well as the audit community, and will consider all information as I formulate my report to the Secretary of State.

Sir Tony is a former local authority Treasurer and Chief Executive. He has also worked as a Local Government Boundary Commissioner and held the post of Local Government Ombudsman, along with a number of non-executive positions in the public and third sectors.

The call for evidence will close on 22 November.

Sir Tony Redmond is expected to submit his report with initial recommendations the Secretary of State in January, with a final report published in March 2020.

Read the [call for views](#). Views can be submitted to the review team using the email address redmond.review@communities.gov.uk.

Local authorities in England are responsible for 22% of total UK public sector expenditure.

The review will also look at how councils publish their annual accounts and if their financial reporting system is sufficiently transparent to be held to account.

Read the full [terms of reference](#) of the review.

The review of financial reporting and external audit follows the full implementation of the [Local Audit and Accountability Act of 2014](#).

The responsibilities for local authority audits and how they are conducted is set down within the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

The 2014 Act gave effect to manifesto commitments to abolish the Audit Commission and its centralised performance and inspection regimes and put in place a new localised audit regime, refocussing local accountability on improved transparency.

Now the Act has been fully implemented, the government is required to review its effectiveness. This review will meet the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's commitment to undertake a post implementation review of the audit framework and financial reporting elements of the Act.

'Get Ready For Brexit' campaign launches in Belgium

The UK government has launched a major information campaign urging UK nationals living in and travelling to the EU to take steps to get ready for Brexit on 31 October 2019.

'Get Ready For Brexit' campaign launches in Belgium

The information campaign, launched on 16 September 2019, will inform the more than one million UK nationals living in the EU about specific actions they need to take to secure their rights and services in their host country, including information on residency, healthcare, driving licences and passports.

It will also encourage people travelling to the EU to make all necessary preparations by checking passports, buying travel insurance and checking driving licenses and pet passports.

The campaign will use multiple channels – from Facebook posts to newspaper ads – urging people to take action ahead of 31 October.

Martin Shearman, British Ambassador to Belgium, said:

Protecting the rights of UK nationals in Belgium is an absolute priority as we leave the European Union.

I'd urge UK nationals in Belgium to visit our Living in Guide for Belgium where they can find out about the steps they need to take and get specific information about residency, healthcare, passports and driving permits in Belgium.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

We are stepping up efforts to ensure Britons abroad are prepared for Brexit on 31 October. This campaign provides practical advice to the more than one million British people living in the EU, as well as British tourists and business travellers.

There are over one million UK nationals living in the EU, with around 25,000 British nationals living in Belgium.

The UK government recently announced up to £3 million in grant funding for charities and other voluntary organisations who can inform UK nationals about the need to register or apply for residency and to support them as they complete their applications.

The Government also allocated an extra £300,000 to British Embassies and Consulates across the EU to engage with 'hard to reach' UK nationals such as disabled people, those living in remote areas or people who might need extra help to complete any paperwork in preparation for Brexit.

This extra assistance will build on the support that British Embassies are already providing with more than 541 outreach events with UK nationals since November 2017. So far the UK Embassy in Belgium has organised 23 outreach events across Belgium, and another 4 are scheduled.

Europe is the most popular travel destination for British travellers, with around 60 million visits every year.

Living in Belgium guide

The new information campaign asks UK nationals to take action to prepare for Brexit by [checking the Living in Belgium Guide](#) and:

- apply for residency
- register for healthcare
- exchange their UK driving licence for a Belgian one
- check their passport is valid for travel