

# **People, place and performance**

Are rural Mega prisons in  
the National Interest?

**Richard Sidebottom & Frank Easton**

on behalf of the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny  
Committee, (WASC) Technical Sub-committee

September, 2022

This report entitled “People, place and performance: Are rural Mega prisons in the National Interest?” was written by Richard Sidebottom<sup>i</sup> & Frank Easton<sup>ii</sup> on behalf of the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee (WASC) Technical Sub-committee.

WASC is formed under the statute of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 102. Its purpose is to actively engage with all stakeholders in connection with development proposals involving Wethersfield Airbase through collaboration between Local Parish Councils. The Technical sub-committee provides research and analysis to facilitate this objective.

The authors gratefully acknowledge comments received from the Howard League for Penal Reform on an earlier version of this report. All errors and omissions remain the authors’ own.

---

<sup>i</sup> The lead author has conducted research for public and private institutions on sustainable rural development, employment, skills, malnutrition and affordable housing. He has a PhD from the University of Cambridge; and Masters qualifications in Development, Finance and Economics from The University of Cambridge, London Business School and the University of Oxford.

<sup>ii</sup> The associate author is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and was a senior manager in local government for 20 years.

*“In all affairs it's a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted”<sup>1</sup>*

- **Bertrand Russell**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Background</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1.The Prison population	<b>3</b>
1.2.The Prison estate	<b>3</b>
<b>2. What is the government’s position?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. What does the research say?</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1.The importance of scale	<b>7</b>
3.2.The importance of people	<b>8</b>
3.3.The importance of place	<b>10</b>
<b>4. What do the Inspectors’ reports say?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. What does the data say?</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Financial metrics	<b>15</b>
5.2 Performance metrics	<b>18</b>
5.3 Construction cost benefit analysis	<b>22</b>
<b>6. Conclusions</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>32</b>
- Data used in calculations	
- Letter received from Howard League for Penal Reform	
- Specific aspects relevant to Wethersfield	

## Objective:

This paper surveys the publicly available evidence of the effectiveness of the Mega prison model from an operating and financial perspective. It reviews a range of sources including statements from Government Ministers, Ministry of Justice (MOJ) commissioned research, academic studies, press reports, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) reports and prison financial and operating data from government websites and a number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

It focuses on the issue of *scale* and how these are obviously exacerbated by issues of *place* through their impact on *people* – both prisoners and staff. It asks whether rural prisons can be construed to be in the national interest but does not directly address whether they are also in the regional or local interest in terms of the specific social, economic or environmental impacts. Though these issues are obviously inter-linked, these are discussed in other WASC reports<sup>iii</sup>. We define National Interest as whether or not a prison is fit for purpose as defined by the UK Government and also incorporate elements of site selection relevant to National and Local Planning policy. However, we make no comment on the relative merits of incarceration as a means to reduce crime.

According to the UK Government's 2021 Prisons Strategy White Paper<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of a prison of any size is not only to punish offenders, maintain public safety and act as a deterrent to criminal activity but also to facilitate the levelling up of society through rehabilitation of persistent offenders. Inherent within this is the need to address educational, mental health and substance abuse issues for inmates throughout the entire period of a prisoner's sentence and scope for temporary release on license; productive employment and adequate accommodation upon its completion<sup>3</sup>. Though there would appear to be rather obvious limitations in achieving any of these some distance from the supporting judicial network, probation office, employment hubs or suitable and affordable accommodation, Mega prisons appear to be the MOJ's latest silver bullet<sup>4</sup> irrespective of location.

Although the specific interest of the Wethersfield Airfield Scrutiny Committee (WASC) is the proposed prison development at Wethersfield, the body of this paper focuses on generic issues regarding Mega prisons in terms of scale, people and place. Specific references to the Wethersfield proposal are detailed in footnotes where relevant and summarised in Appendix III.

The paper represents a genuine attempt to follow the evidence, rather than a preconceived pathway. We were very struck by the direction in which we were led.

---

<sup>iii</sup> Empowering local communities to level up: a people and place-based approach, WASC April, 2022; Prisons, and jobs: A preliminary review of the evidence, WASC, Jan, 2022; Rural Mega prisons: Are they in the local interest? WASC, forthcoming

## Executive summary:

### *General*

- A number of elements of the MOJ's current prison construction model appear to repeat strategic errors for which it has been widely criticised in the last two decades.
- The case for prison modernisation, is not synonymous with building at scale in remote locations. Land is a tiny fraction of capital costs and place has a key impact upon performance. Having to pay staff bonuses to attract them to rural sites negates the purpose of locating there in the first place. Even for Mega prison proponents, proximity to urban fringes is seen as key to their success.
- The UK Government's legislative obligations under the Climate Change Act, 2008 make it imperative that avoidable emissions are averted through consideration of people and place.

### *Scale*

- The government's case for building large scale prisons appears to be based on short-term horizons, assertion, anecdotes and hopeful promises focused on physical and technological infrastructure. The investment of public money warrants a more transparent, systematic and robust evidence base that incorporates a nuanced appreciation of people and place.
- Much of this evidence already exists but lessons are not being heeded. Research from a range of sources suggests that a prison's performance is a function of multiple factors including site location, the nature of the prison population and staff recruitment and retention.
- The recent Mega prison flagship, HMP Berwyn, has not achieved the savings or performance targets used to justify its construction. With rising capital costs, the operating cost savings to justify the construction of new Mega prisons have increased significantly since its completion.
- The justification of current capital costs of greater than £300,000,000 per prison rely on the assumption that more expensive prisons can be closed. As this is simply not happening in light of increasing demand for places, the notion of 'opportunity cost' needs to be reformulated.

### *People*

- The capacity shortage issue reflects the fundamental failure to break the cycle of reoffending by addressing the underlying causes of crime, including a focus on the importance of people – prisoners, prison staff and prisoners' families.
- Prisoner-staff relationships are critical to breaking this cycle through rehabilitation but recent years have seen growing problems with retention of experienced staff and recruitment of fewer less experienced staff. Resignation rates are particularly high in medium sized overcrowded local and large category C prisons.
- There is an abundance of evidence from UK Government and other sources which highlights that contact with families from the start of their sentence is a proven factor in reoffending rates, so affordable and regular physical access to a prison is key.

### *Place*

- Numerous Inspectorate reports and government reviews highlight the difficulties of staff and family access and in replicating employment opportunities in inaccessible rural areas.
- There is no deficit of prison capacity in the East of England. Increasing capacity in this region is simply an inadequate substitute for addressing site issues in London and risks exacerbating problems in the same way as the Carter review rebuked the MOJ 15 years ago.

## 1. Background

*1.1 The prison population:* In March, 2022, just over 76,000 adults were imprisoned in England and Wales (E&W), roughly 90% of the UK total. Although this is nearly double the 1990 population, it remains below its 2011 and 2017 peaks<sup>5</sup>.

The nature of this population and their offences are changing. 96% of prisoners are male, 27% are from a minority ethnic group, 12% are foreign nationals and 17% are now over 50<sup>6</sup>. Violence and sexual crimes account for nearly 50% of offences, followed by robbery and theft (18%) and drugs (16%)<sup>7</sup>. 50% of prisoners are currently serving sentences longer than 4 years; 16% are on remand awaiting trial or sentencing; and the balance are serving less than 2 years (just over 6,000) or have been recalled<sup>8</sup> (over 9,500) due to a breach of release terms<sup>9</sup>. However, this population is not static. 15-20% are new prisoners or released each quarter<sup>10</sup> and large numbers are periodically moved across the country.

*According to the MOJ, around 80% of convictions are by previous offenders<sup>11</sup>. Of adults released, 38.6% reoffend within 12 months, especially those serving short sentences or with a history of multiple offences<sup>12</sup> at a cost of a staggering £18 billion<sup>13</sup> per annum - several times the budget of the entire prison service. If these figures are correct and we presume 62,770 are released annually, this implies each reoffender costs society £740,000 per year<sup>14,15</sup>.*

The underlying causes of offending and re-offending are complex. Compared to the general population, adult prisoners are 12 times more likely to have been in care; 10 times more likely to have been regularly truant from school; 40 times more likely to be expelled; 3 times more likely to have no qualifications; 8 times as likely to have been unemployed in the month before their offence; and 5 times more likely to have used Class A drugs<sup>16</sup>.

Reoffending rates are dramatically higher for those serving short sentences but dramatically lower for those who received family visits, those who can hold down a job and those with a home. In 2021, only 8% had a job 6 weeks after release and 12% were sleeping rough<sup>17</sup>.

*1.2 The prison estate:* With one of the highest incarceration rates in Europe<sup>18</sup>, rising police recruitment and a preference for longer custodial remedies, the demand for UK prison places is forecast to increase to nearly 99,000 in the next 4 years<sup>19,20,21</sup>. UK prisons were built either in the Victorian era, from 1940 to 1970 or in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. Even though prison population forecasts have been prone to error in the past<sup>iv</sup>, much of the estate is already deemed unfit for purpose in terms of infrastructure, cost, performance and location<sup>22</sup>.

In light of criticism from the National Audit Office (NAO)<sup>23</sup> (amongst others) for its repeated failure to increase prison places, cut costs and reduce re-offending rates, the MOJ is under pressure to provide short-term high-profile solutions at scale. To increase capacity by 18,000, the UK government's New Prisons Programme (formerly The Prison Estate Transformation Programme (PETP))<sup>24</sup> instigated in 2012, relaunched in 2019 and reiterated in the December, 2021 White Paper, includes plans to construct so-called 'Mega prisons' with more than 1,500 prisoners.

---

<sup>iv</sup> For example, in 2014, the MOJ incorrectly forecast the prison population would exceed 90,000 by 2020. <https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/PSJ%20225%20May%202016.pdf>

Depending upon which MOJ database is referenced and at which precise point in time, England and Wales have between 117 and 125 prisons separately housing adult males, adult females and youth offenders costing nearly £4 billion per year to run<sup>25</sup>. Each adult male is categorised A to D<sup>v</sup> in accordance with a descending scale of their perceived risk to society<sup>26,27</sup>. Category A prisoners are moved to ‘Dispersal’ prisons to avoid concentration of serious offenders in one location. However, prisoners of other categories are often on the same site and get moved around as their categorisation can change throughout their sentence. Prison categorisations refer to the maximum risk but do not necessarily exclude prisoners below it<sup>28</sup>. Several prisons have multiple designations and some (mainly urban) sites close to courts perform a ‘local’ or ‘reception’ function, as well as housing longer-term prisoners. Chelmsford, for example, is a local prison with Category B and Youth offenders.

Based on a number of different MOJ sources and categorised on the basis of primary function in 2020-2021, there were 5 Category A prisons<sup>vi</sup> (eg HMP Wakefield) with 3,278 places; 9 category B (7,805), 42 category C resettlement prisons (33,586) (eg HMP Highpoint) and 13 category D Open prisons (eg HMP Sudbury) (5,932), as well as 31 local or reception prisons (eg HMP Chelmsford) (24,065) which may also house multiple categories. The remainder are female or youth offender prisons (Figure 1). Note that this is a categorisation of prisons, not of prisoners and may vary by source depending upon how local prisons are categorised.

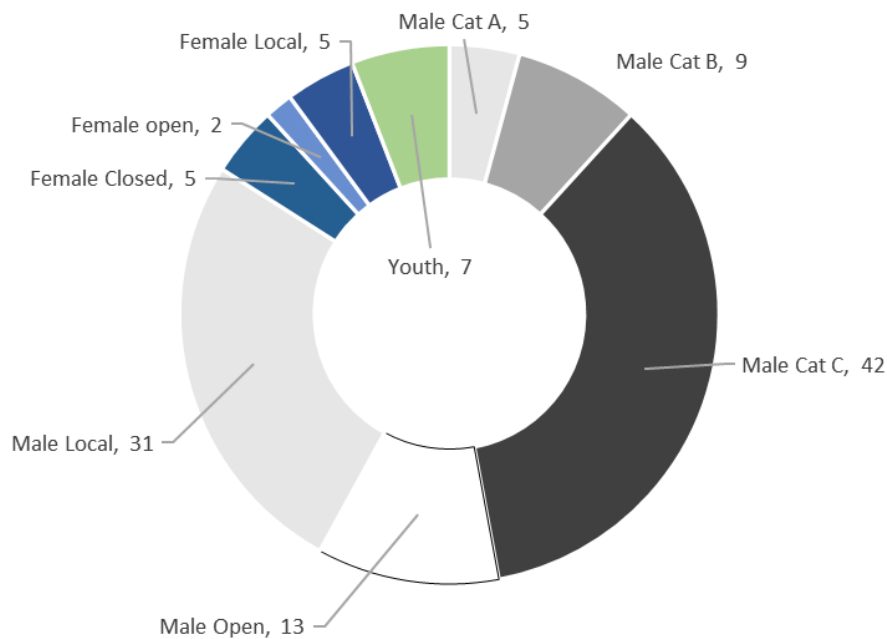


Figure 1: Prisons by primary category in England and Wales

On average, adult male prisons have 736 places but this ranges from 213 at Leicester’s local prison to approximately 2,000 at HMP Berwyn (Cat C). The new Mega prisons at Glen Parva and Five Wells will add a further 3,360 Category C places in total when they are fully operational but are excluded above.

<sup>v</sup> Category A prisoners are seen as a public threat. Category B are long-term and high-security prisoners for which escape should be made difficult. Category C are not deemed a threat so are housed in training and resettlement prisons. Category D prisoners are low risk and can spend time outside the prison.

<sup>vi</sup> This excludes Belmarsh which is a Category A but also serves as a local prison



## 2. What is the Government's position?

The government's rationale for Mega prisons relies heavily on physical infrastructure, at the expense of a nuanced appreciation of the importance of people and place<sup>29</sup>.

The case for alternatives to custody for less serious offences, the scope for cost reductions through improved performance management and a radical change to capacity provision through construction of so-called Titan or Mega prisons with 2,500 prisoners were all outlined in the Carter Report in 2007<sup>30</sup>. However, attention seems to have focused on the latter, rather than the former two.

Carter also criticised the MOJ's neglect of the importance of place through its focus on the speed of delivery and short-term cost savings. This has resulted in a prison estate that reflects historical accident, rather than strategic forethought with a number of ill-suited old Ministry of Defence sites *"situated significant distances from large urban centres and without well-developed transport links"*<sup>31</sup>. The report noted that the expansion of capacity at rural sites at HMP Wayland, HMP Haverigg and HMP Highpoint had exacerbated, rather than resolved regional imbalances between the supply and demand for prison places and necessitated regular transport of prisoners across the country.

However, the importance of location and connectivity appears to have been quietly forgotten by the Government since. In its persistent pursuit of ill-conceived quick fixes, the MOJ appears to be deaf to such advice and thereby continues to misallocate public resources.

This strategic floundering has been exacerbated by policy U-turns and evidence vacuums. Political support for so-called Titan or Mega Prisons has been inconsistent and robust evidence rather elusive.

In 2009, David Cameron, leader of the opposition, stated: *"The idea that big is beautiful with prisons is wrong... experience suggests to us these large prisons are dangerous and inefficient"*.

His shadow justice minister Nick Herbert added *"Prisons should be places where people can be contained humanely, rehabilitated and taught to read and write, and get off drugs. This is most unlikely to be achieved in enormous Titan prisons"*<sup>32</sup>. He followed this up by labelling Titan jails as 'monstrous warehouses' and asking Home Secretary, Jack Straw: *"After all the urging by prison reform experts about the importance of local family links to the reduction of reoffending, why are the Government pursuing the policy of titan jails?"*<sup>33</sup>.

In response to strong criticism of its plans, in 2009 the Labour government agreed to reduce the capacity of Mega prisons from 2,500 to 1,500 and stated that *"we believe they are unlikely to provide the correct environment in which to rehabilitate offenders."*<sup>34</sup>

Their prior opposition to Labour's plans and the 2009 consultation critique did not prevent Tory support of a Mega prison with over 2,000 places at Berwyn in 2013<sup>35</sup> without any improvement in the evidence base or government bank balance. In a shift in the narrative, support for the prison leaned more on purported local economic benefits than it did its being fit for purpose<sup>36</sup>.

By this stage modernising the estate (rather than rescaling per se) was also put forward as the key to potential economic and performance benefits but these continued to rely heavily on rhetoric, rather than hard facts.

In January, 2013, the Justice Secretary outlined his strategy to build: *“cheaper modern capacity which is designed to better meet the demand for prison places and supports our aim to drive down stubbornly high reoffending rates.”*<sup>37</sup>

In September, 2013, he gave a nod to geographical imbalances by claiming that the government was also *“reshaping the rest of the prison estate so that we are able to release offenders closer to home which we know improves their resettlement and prevents reoffending”*.<sup>38</sup>

Whilst this appeared to pay some heed to distance, it ignored specific issues of local capacity and accessibility. Proximity to prisoners’ families is a function of transport infrastructure, not simply the distance as the crow flies.

By 2020, the rationale for Mega prisons was extended to include employment, sustainability and reduced construction costs. According to Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer<sup>39</sup>:

*“These new jails form a major part of our plans to transform the prison estate and create environments where offenders can be more effectively rehabilitated and turned away from crime for good. As well as a boost to our justice system, these prisons will create thousands of new jobs and send a clear signal that the Government can and will continue to invest in the vital infrastructure this country needs”*.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay MP, added:

*“We are not only delivering on our commitment to provide 10,000 more prison places, but also signalling a shift in how we build public buildings through a major increase in factory built, modern methods of construction”<sup>vii</sup>. Building on lessons from recent school construction, this will be part of a much wider change, to be embedded at the next comprehensive spending review, ensuring public buildings benefit from the quicker assembly times, lower energy, and stronger green footprint offered by new construction technology”*.

These statements continue to be assertions with little systematic or objective evidential foundation. To act as a potential local economic pump primer is not a primary role of a prison, even it was true<sup>viii</sup>. This has the air of *ex post* justification of site choice, rather than an *ex ante* evaluation of specific sites that can facilitate or hinder a prison’s capacity to fulfil its social purpose.

Pursuance of its silver bullet of scale appears to have blinded the MOJ to alternatives and resulted in a lost opportunity in which modernising has been conflated with super-sizing.

As the 2015 House of Commons Justice Committee put it, *“the policy of replacing older establishments with newer ones is being implemented in a way which results in the creation of large, multi-purpose prisons, while questions arising from available evidence on the relationship between the size and effectiveness of institutions do not appear to have been addressed by the Government, and we argue that reconfiguration of the estate provides an opportunity to build smaller, more specialised, establishments”*<sup>40</sup>.

---

<sup>vii</sup> The fact that centralisation of the manufacture of construction materials would reduce local economic multipliers was not something that occurred to ministers.

<sup>viii</sup> There is an array of evidence suggesting that economic multipliers are only effective in urban fringe locations and that prisons harm rural areas. See Prisons, and jobs: A preliminary review of the evidence, WASC: Jan, 2022

### 3. What does the research say?

This section examines a range of publicly accessible evidence in terms of the importance of *scale, people and place*.

The 2007 Carter report's endorsement of large modern prisons relied heavily on economic, rather than social outcomes. It focused mainly on scale, made rather vague reservations about place and neglected the importance of people<sup>41</sup>. It was not based on a systematic review of the importance of prison size in terms of cost or performance and was contradicted by an array of historical and contemporary evidence. It urged an increase in capacity as a short-term measure but did not provide a long-term strategic foundation for a reliance on scale. Building a few large prisons was simply seen as the quickest way to resolve a capacity crisis that had been long in the making<sup>42</sup>.

The concentration on quick supply side solutions based on cement, rather than people and the neglect of demand side measures to reduce pressure on the system and of local geographical realities to improve its effectiveness (in terms of supply and court logistics, health and support service access, family visit feasibility and post-release rehabilitation capacity) have been widely criticised by academics, the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, the Prison Governors' Association, the Prison Officers' Association and the Prison Reform Trust (PRT).

*3.1 The importance of scale:* PRT have labelled Mega prisons a 'gigantic mistake' that the French authorities had already recognised in light of problems faced at their own Mega prison at Fleury-Merogis. Although, the governor at Fleury-Merogis advised the UK Government to limit prison populations to 600, it would appear that the Government listened only to a few private contractors and a number of its own departments<sup>43</sup>. This is group speak, not evidence-based policy making.

Critique of large-scale incarceration has a long history and a strong evidential foundation. In 1980, Farrington and Nuttal found no robust relationship between prison size and prisoner outcomes<sup>44</sup>. In 1991, Lord Woolf's Report<sup>45</sup> proposed a maximum of 400 prisoners, a preference for locations with whom prisoners had communal links and the need to facilitate family visits. Academic studies have highlighted the importance of over-crowding<sup>46</sup>, cell size<sup>47</sup> and staffing but not building size.

Using 2007 data, the PRT found that *"larger institutions are consistently poorer at meeting prisoner needs and creating a healthy prison environment"*<sup>48</sup>. One contributor to the Carter report conceded that smaller prisons were more *effective* but suggested that operating costs were higher<sup>49</sup>, so a potential trade-off existed. However, this presumed a robust relationship between size and operating costs<sup>ix</sup> that was based more on anecdote, rather than systematic evidence<sup>50,51</sup> and ignored the enormous social and economic cost of ineffectiveness in terms of rehabilitation<sup>52</sup>. This tendency to look only at one side of the cost equation continues in current MOJ evaluation procedure.

In 2009, HMIP assessed the probability of a UK prison performing well across a range of indicators (safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement)<sup>53</sup>. It concluded that larger prisons (above 800 inmates) were nearly 80% less likely and public prisons (rather than privately run) were 5 times more likely to perform as well in terms of safety. The scale effect was mirrored in terms of overall performance scores and the respect indicator. These findings were supported by numerous Prison Inspectorate reports and the National Audit Office (NAO)<sup>54</sup>.

---

<sup>ix</sup> See Section 5 below

In 2013, the Policy Exchange<sup>55</sup> highlighted the importance of prison age, rather than size. They suggested that issues of size and performance could be mitigated by segregating prison buildings into autonomous units on the same site in a 'hub system' but proven evidence for this model is unclear. The principal author of the Prison Exchange report - Kevin Lockyer (a former prisoner regional manager) – reiterated his belief in the importance of age to the House of Justice Committee in 2015.

Other Committee witnesses (Professor Jewkes<sup>x</sup> then at the University of Leicester, the Howard League for Penal Reform and the Prison Reform Trust (PRT)) lamented the one size fits all approach and pointed to weaknesses in the scale and modernity arguments.

- First, evidence (including the MOJ's study) did show a link between small scale, location near families and performance.
- Second, as there were no new modern small-scale prisons, the evidence based was fundamentally biased<sup>56</sup>.

In 2016, these arguments were vindicated when Madoc-Jones et al<sup>57</sup> re-iterated that smaller UK prisons were several times more likely to score well on performance outcomes and claimed that the impact of building age was unclear as pre-war and post 1970s prisons performed equally well. In 2017, Hennebel et al<sup>58</sup> attempted to resolve the cost-performance trade-off debate. Although their sample set is problematic (it only includes 34 local prisons that differ in many respects to other types of prison and includes both public and private operators, even though their costs are not comparable), their findings are noteworthy.

1. They noted that several prisons under or overperform in terms of costs and outcomes irrespective of size. This suggests that many factors affect cost and performance, not just size.
2. Second, they found a limit to the cost benefits of scale and calculated the optimum scale of 554 to 1187 places. Moreover, for a range of performance metrics, they suggested the top end of this scale should be less than 1,073.

In the authors' words - *"The main conclusion is that we cannot reject medium scale to be optimal"*.

*3.2 The importance of people:* Evidence of the detrimental effect of scale upon prison outcomes has been supplemented by research on why these occur. Johnsen et al (2011) showed that a more personalised approach in smaller prisons can have direct benefits in terms of reduced reoffending<sup>59</sup>. Other studies have suggested that larger prisons actually *inhibit* rehabilitation as they limit prison officers' ability to build relationships and use discretion in daily prison life.

As O'Donnell (2005) noted:

*"Large prisons need to be highly regimented and life within them has an assembly line quality. Individual needs can quickly become lost in the drive to meet institutional priorities"*<sup>60</sup>.

In their response to the UK Government's 2021 White paper, the Howard League for Penal Reform highlighted issues of staffing and rehabilitation, over infrastructure *"too few people can take part in*

---

<sup>x</sup> Along with a number of other academics, Dominique Moran and Yvonne Jewkes have also highlighted the importance of architectural design. See, for example, <https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/does-prison-location-matter-for-prisoner-wellbeing-the-effect-of-location-within-greenspace-on-self-harm-and-violence-in-prisons-in-england-and-wales> and <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0004865818766768>

*real work or progress in education and many prison leavers are effectively set up to fail. Many staff are demoralised, and many have only worked in prisons under the restricted Covid regimes”<sup>61</sup>.*

The human dimension is also emphasised by those who actually work in prisons. In 2019, Andrew Baxter, of the Prison Officers’ Association, highlighted the immense difficulties of managing *“supersized, very large prisons”<sup>62</sup>.*

In 2022, the Howard League for Penal Reform concluded, *“There is no reason to believe that new mega prisons will solve the many problems in the prison estate and every reason to think that they will simply compound staffing issues and the lack of purposeful activity in prison”<sup>63</sup>.*

When opening the new Mega prison at Five Wells, Victoria Atkins, Minister of State, Ministry of Justice conceded *“it is nothing if we don’t have our staff and officers in there making sure that it works for the people who will be staying there”<sup>64</sup>.*

The importance of staffing has been amply illustrated at the new flagship Mega prison HMP Berwyn<sup>xi</sup> opened in 2017. Berwyn is still operating below capacity due to staff recruitment problems. Moreover, of those in place in 2019, 75% had less than 2 years’ experience<sup>65</sup> - a point of major concern in the 2019 HMP Berwyn Inspectorate report<sup>66</sup>. Inexperience is a major problem across the entire prison workforce. After a 26% cut in frontline staff 2010-2017, only 41% in 2021 had been in the service for more than 10 years<sup>67</sup>. In a submission to the 2019 Welsh Affairs Committee, Andrea Albutt, President of the Prison Governors Association highlighted that a lack of staff experience was a serious impediment to the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes<sup>68</sup>.

**Box 1: Pay and conditions have a key bearing upon the feasibility of local recruitment.**

The starting salary for prison jobs is often quoted as around £30,000 per annum (pa). However, entry level posts are advertised as low as £22,000 pa for officers and £18,000 for support staff depending on where you are in the country. Government websites state you can earn up to £23,052 pa or £27,688 pa including unsocial hours but this reduces by 11% if you only work 37 hours per week. G4S is currently advertising jobs at HMP Five Wells for £25,667.

Alternative salaries, working conditions and the rate of unemployment have an important bearing upon career choices. With diesel at nearly £2 per litre, commuting costs are also becoming a key factor in where people choose to work, as well as unsocial hours and the risk to their physical and mental health.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noms-careers/prison-officer>, <https://www.g4s.com/en-gb#careers>, <https://uk.jooble.org/salary/prison-officer>

In 2019-20, these inexperienced officers were faced with a major increase in assaults on staff and prisoners, as well as a number of hostage incidents which made the prison one of the most violent in Wales. The impact of staffing issues is widespread and continuing in a fiercely competitive post Brexit and post Covid labour market (Box 1). This impacts prison performance directly. In December, 2021, HMP Woodhill inspectors concluded that *“failings stemmed from a fundamental problem in recruiting and retaining staff”<sup>69</sup>.*

<sup>xi</sup> A University of Bath study on Berwyn is still pending <https://www.bath.ac.uk/projects/the-rehabilitation-prison-an-oxymoron-or-an-opportunity-to-radically-reform-imprisonment/>

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS),<sup>70</sup> Brexit and the Covid pandemic have induced a non-temporary paradigm shift in the supply of labour. Job vacancy rates are at record highs and significant sector and place specific labour shortages are evident, particularly in a budget constrained public sector in the current inflationary economic environment. This shift has made access to an affordable local labour supply a key criterion in site selection<sup>xii</sup>. Across the country, there is already a recruitment and retention crisis in our prisons. The PRT summarises the current situation thus<sup>71</sup>:

*“A leaving rate of 14.5% amongst band 3-5 prison officers—an increase of 5.4 percentage points compared to the year ending 31 March 2021. A leaving rate of 18.3% for band 2 operational support staff—an increase of 6.4 percentage points compared to the year before. Half of officers (50%) who left the service last year had been in the role for less than three years, more than a quarter (26%) left after less than a year. Throwing inadequately trained new recruits at the problem is no solution”.*

Although exacerbated by recent events, this is a structural issue. In 2015, the House of Commons Justice Committee had already highlighted the importance of retention and recruitment. The Committee found that delays in prison transfers and a shortage of prisoner vocational training places could be directly attributed to a shortage of experienced staff<sup>72</sup>. As PRT highlights, the post-2010 operating cost savings in the prison system have in no small measure been due to cuts in staffing numbers. As this policy is reversed these savings may prove to be ephemeral.

The importance of people (rather than infrastructure) is not just important in terms of staffing but also in the role of family ties in order to realise the rehabilitation outcomes for which Berwyn was designed. The Carter report in 2007, the Prison Ombudsman in 2014<sup>73</sup> and the Farmer Report in 2017<sup>74</sup> each highlighted the importance of prisoner access to family visits as an integral part of rehabilitation. These findings complemented those of the MOJ’s own research study in 2008 which identified that prisoners who maintained family contact were more likely to find employment upon release and that this was a key factor affecting their probability of re-offending<sup>75</sup>. The positive impact of family ties and employment on reoffending rates was reiterated in a further MOJ study in 2013<sup>76</sup>, the Lammy Review in 2017<sup>77</sup> and the PRT’s Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile in 2022<sup>78</sup>. However, HMIP Inspectorate reports reveal that only 20% of prisoners receive weekly visits<sup>79</sup>. Whilst some prisoners may not be eligible, there is an obvious geographical dimension to which the government currently appears to remain oblivious.

*3.3 The importance of place:* Once again, it is not as if the government has not been made aware of the problem. The 2007 Carter report highlighted poor site choices and HMIP’s 2009 study not only questioned the importance of scale but also highlighted the importance of people and place. One of its key findings was that *“a 10% increase of prisoners living within 50 miles of home would increase a prison’s likelihood of performing well by 30%”*<sup>80</sup>.

In apparent recognition of basic geography, the MOJ’s own consultant’s review of the impact of Mega prisons in 2013 discounted the possibility of locating them anywhere other than urban fringes. *“New prisons would respond to prison over-population and be located close to localities which have the largest supply and demand gaps and would therefore be expected to be located in urban areas”*<sup>81</sup>. Not only would this optimise prison costs and performance but also maximise economic spill-over benefits. The consultant’s case studies suggested that the income and jobs generated could be three times

---

<sup>xii</sup> Wethersfield relevance: the average salary in 2021 in the Braintree district of Essex, for example, was £34,600. <https://www.plumplot.co.uk/Essex-salary-and-unemployment.html>

higher in an urban site, rather than a rural one<sup>xiii</sup>. This suggests that in terms of the national interest, choice of place for Mega prisons should be a major consideration but it is unclear how this is factored into current cost benefit methodology.

Even the Policy Exchange's Mega prison hub model proposal in 2013 concluded that *"New large prisons should be located close to major population centres and be well connected, in particular by public transport"*. It also noted that their construction should be used as a means to close down ineffective and inaccessible rural sites<sup>82</sup>. In a submission in support of modernisation to the House of Commons Justice Committee in 2015, the Policy Exchange added that *"broadly speaking, prisons are not in the right places"* and the Committee's report noted how *"this affects both the costs of running the estate, and efforts to rehabilitate prisoners, with many prisons being in rural areas"*<sup>83</sup>. The Prison Officers' Association attributed geographical barriers to prison performance to the MOJ's repeated mistake of *"building where it was cheapest and moving the prisoners accordingly"*.

Committee members also highlighted how site choice could limit policy flexibility. For example, it could prevent the evolution of prisons towards the more open Danish model as families would need to be living nearby. This report makes no comment on whether or not this is a desirable strategic option but simply notes that this may be less feasible in a rural setting.

Evidence on the importance of poor site choice, accessibility and familial connections were noted again during the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee's investigation into the ongoing problems at HMP Berwyn in 2019<sup>84</sup>. Peter Clarke, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons told the committee that being in a prison close to home and family was *"a very positive influence in preventing reoffending"*. The committee also received updated evidence on the relationship between scale, people and place from Ruth Doubleday at Cardiff University who stated that *"Better outcomes for prisoners and better working conditions for staff are more likely to be achieved in smaller establishments tied to local communities with a high ratio of staff to prisoners"*.

The presumption that a building can be divorced from the people it houses and its specific geographical setting has fundamental implications for costs, staff recruitment and prisoner rehabilitation. This is therefore not simply a case of 'NIMBYISM' but recognition that location has a fundamental bearing upon whether or not a prison is fit for purpose and therefore in the national interest. Poor site choice not only impacts visible and invisible operating costs for the prison and employees but more fundamentally can inhibit a prison's rehabilitative social role.

However, the MOJ appears to disregard the evidence and adopt a narrow analytical lens focussed on the internal, rather than the external prison environment<sup>85</sup> and ignore the wider cost of poor performance<sup>86</sup>. Site selection methodology pays lip-service to the distribution of the prison population and of potential recruits with the appropriate skillset with no apparent understanding of some basic tenets of economic geography. It makes glib references to 'local' and defines it as covering an area of over 5,000 square miles. It thereby continues to repeat historical mistakes highlighted in The Carter Report of choosing old military sites, irrespective of suitability for staff, prisoners or society.

---

<sup>xiii</sup> At urban HMP Peterborough site 44 jobs per 100 prisoners and £11,800 local spending per prisoner. At rural HMP Whatton corresponding estimates were 14 jobs and £4,400 local spending.

## 4. What do the Inspectors' reports say?

Evidence of the importance of people and place is powerfully supplemented by HMIP reports. They suggest that prison site selection should take explicit account of local, not just regional geography, as they clearly show that inaccessibility is already a major impediment to the rehabilitative purpose of several rural prisons, both large and small.

Reports from Northumberland<sup>87,88</sup>, Highpoint<sup>89</sup>, Portland<sup>90</sup>, Ranby<sup>91</sup>, Stoke Heath<sup>92</sup>, Swaleside<sup>93</sup>, Sudbury<sup>94</sup>, Dartmoor<sup>95</sup> and Wayland<sup>96</sup> detail inspectors' repeated concerns (including staff recruitment, prisoner rehabilitation, family connectivity, drug misuse, security and healthcare) that are often directly attributable to the prisons' location. These reports cover relatively large modern facilities run by both the public and private sector. All are Male Category C except Sudbury (Male open) and Swaleside (Category B). As Table 1 shows, each has some accessibility issues. All except Northumberland are ranked in the most deprived 20%<sup>xiv</sup> in terms of geographical connectivity<sup>97</sup>.

Location	Category	Capacity	Distance to train station (miles)	Distance to an A road	Minutes travel to town with popn > 20,000	Travel time to emergency hospital	LSOA Geographical deprivation decile
Highpoint	Male Category C	1308	11.0	0.1	11	33	1
Portland	Male Category C	463	7.2	0.1	15	30	2
Stoke Heath	Male Category C	662	8.8	0.1	36	36	1
Swaleside	B	1112	6.5	1.1	18	26	1
Sudbury	Male open	662	8.8	0.1	36	36	1
Dartmoor	Male category C	642	15.6	6.5	36	36	2
Northumberland	Male Category C	1368	2.1	2.6	29	19	5
Ranby	Male Category C	893	2.5	1.4	6	13	1

*Table 1: Geographical characteristics of HMIP Inspectorate report case studies*

Despite its geographical deprivation ranking of 5 and relative proximity to a major A road, HMIP inspectors still found inaccessibility to be a significant problem at HMP Northumberland. Their report states: *"The issues around the location and size of HMP Northumberland change little from year to year, with distance from other prisons and hospitals continuing to affect transfers and movements"*.

Geographical issues are also seen at Highpoint: *"prisoners being held some distance from home and in a remote and rural location, continues to create significant performance challenges for the prison"*.

Given the people centric nature of prison management, many of operating problems stemmed from recruitment issues exacerbated by remoteness. For example, HMP Swaleside inspectors highlighted:

- *"Systemic issues relating to recruitment and retention"*
- *"a chronic shortage of staff across the prison, especially at prison officer grade. New entry prison officer courses run at the prison barely kept up with losses, as staff regularly left, we were told, for*

<sup>xiv</sup> A ranking of 1 means a site is amongst the 10% most poorly connected in the country; 2 means the next 10% and so forth.



*better paid jobs, including at other government agencies. This meant that many of those who staffed this complex and often difficult prison were inexperienced and lacked confidence.*<sup>98</sup>

At HMP Highpoint inspectors noted widespread and persistent recruitment problems across all types of prison staff. In particular, they noted<sup>99</sup>.

*“Recruitment campaigns for uniformed staff prove problematic” and also that “The recruitment of workshop instructors by the education provider is still proving difficult”. In addition, the prison was “struggling to recruit the following craftsmen: Electricians; Plumbers; Painters; Carpenters; Supervisor. Specific concerns include: General repairs to electrical equipment; General repairs to plumbing; Repairs to kitchen equipment, both on the North and South sites. All of these have an impact on the day-to-day regime” (emphasis added).*

The last sentence here is key. Staffing levels can be reduced to cut costs<sup>100</sup> but have a real impact on a prison’s ability to function, including provision of healthcare. Highpoint, for example, had persistent difficulties filling a GP vacancy. At Northumberland, repeated inspections found *“concerns over waiting times for routine GP and dental appointments.”*<sup>101</sup> At Stoke Heath *“only 21% of prisoners said the quality of GP support was good against the comparator of 47%”*<sup>102</sup>.

Healthcare impacts emergency services (Box 2) and prison staff, as hospital visits require at least two escorting officers, even more if an overnight stay is involved. In 2019, the Northumberland inspectors noted *“108 hospital stays of overnight or longer”* which was a particular problem given the prison’s rural isolation - *“few establishments are located as far from an acute hospital”*<sup>xv</sup>. Travel times to hospital have a direct impact on staffing costs and staff allocation to rehabilitation programmes. At Swaleside, prisoners’ external health appointments were frequently cancelled due to a lack of escorts thereby causing frustration and resentment<sup>103</sup>.

#### **Box 2: Burden on NHS**

Data obtained through a Freedom of Information request reveals that an ambulance was called to HMP Chelmsford 170 times a year on average during the period 2019-2021. They also attended 136 times on average to HMP Highpoint.

Remoteness may also have a more direct impact on rehabilitation through multiple pathways:

In terms of substance misuse, HMP Sudbury Inspectors raised security concerns due to the rural location and long perimeter fence<sup>104</sup>, whilst at Highpoint they noted the high volume of drugs being thrown over the fence<sup>105</sup>. Where security problems occur, the police are often required (Box 3).

#### **Box 3: Burden on Police force**

Data obtained through a Freedom of Information request reveals that the police were called to HMP Chelmsford over 900 times during the period 2019-2021.

*Source: FOI 16884 Disturbances at Chelmsford Prison Attended by Essex Police 2019 to 2021*

<sup>xv</sup> Wethersfield relevance: being situated a long distance from an emergency hospital is also evident at Wethersfield and HMP Highpoint and Wayland.

In terms of family relationships, the Inspectorate’s findings are equally damning. Despite the findings of the Farmer report (2017), HMP Highpoint inspectors noted that up to 400 prisoners could not receive visits. They concluded that the prison’s *“remoteness and lack of door-to-door public transport makes it difficult for visitors to attend”*.

This was echoed at HMP Wayland where inspectors noted that *“Most prisoners were far from home, which made visiting expensive and difficult”*<sup>106</sup> and at HMP Bure where inspectors concluded that the prison’s rural location was a key barrier to visitor frequency<sup>107</sup>. Inspectors at HMP Stoke Heath<sup>108</sup> and HMP Ranby<sup>109</sup> noted how many prisoners said it was not easy to get to the prison. This was not only due to the distance from prisoners’ homes but the distance of the prisons from the local train station. Remoteness from a station is particularly evident at Dartmoor and Portland where 4 out of 5 prisoners complained that family access was problematic. The Dartmoor inspectors found that *“only 4% of visitors had travelled via public transport. There was no bus service from the nearest train station and a return taxi cost at least £50. The prison had explored if transport could be provided, but it had been considered too expensive”*<sup>110</sup>. The Portland inspectors noted that *“the relative remoteness of Portland meant that promoting good family ties remained a challenge”*<sup>111</sup>.

Remoteness may also have an impact on life after release in terms of finding accommodation or employment which have a direct impact on reoffending rates. This is particularly relevant to Category C prisoners who may be close to their release date but also has implications for those in early stages of their sentences.

At Northumberland, inspectors stated *“The prison’s location has an adverse impact on the ability to mirror life outside through employment and education”*.

At Highpoint and Swaleside recruitment issues meant that training workshops were closed due to a lack of instructors and that release was delayed or post-release accommodation not organised. Inspectors found *“fewer than half of respondents thought their time at Swaleside would make them less likely to offend”*.<sup>112</sup>

These reports are powerful, detailed and consistent. The question remains – is anyone reading them? This is not simply a matter of fulfilling a national staffing quota but being able to recruit, train, retrain and retain experienced staff across all types of staffing within a remote prison with long commuting times and local affordable housing in short supply. These issues are not unique to rural prisons<sup>xvi</sup> but obviously exacerbated by location.

*As indicated in Table 1 (p12, above), most of the HMIP reports cited above which highlight the problems of accessibility are located in Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are classified as belonging to the most deprived quintile in UK in terms of geographical access. Moreover, Northumberland is an example of where remoteness is also an issue despite A road proximity.*

Commuting long distances to a rural site costs time and money, especially when connectivity is poor and during the current energy price crisis. It also has an impact on the burden to the NHS and our emergency services. Quite simply place matters because people matter.

---

<sup>xvi</sup> From Sept 2020 to 2021, 11% of prison officers resigned. 52% had served less than 12 months (ibid).

## 5. What does the data say?

Using MOJ statistics and a number of FOIs, we looked at *financial and performance operating metrics* and how these are used in construction cost benefit analysis.

*5.1 Financial metrics:* Although several studies cited in this report have used regression analysis to evaluate the case for Mega prisons, the sample is small and heterogeneous and the dataset is riddled with inconsistencies. The variations between prisons matter because for those with mixed category populations, costs will be influenced by prisoner type but we have performance<sup>113</sup> and cost<sup>114</sup> data only by primary prison category.

A further problem is the difference between direct and overall costs. The media and proponents of Mega prisons often cite only *direct costs* incurred at prison level and ignore those attributable to a prison but accounted for at the regional or national level. This can lead to a 60% underestimate of costs. If we include overall costs (not just those directly incurred at the prison level), the average cost for a publicly operated prison place ranges from just under £34,000 for Category D males, approximately £44,000 for category C males and more than double this for male youths<sup>115</sup>.

Inaccuracies can also occur when the average prison population deviates from the prison's capacity. Overcrowding may reduce costs on a per prisoner basis but this may impede outcomes if prisoner - staff ratios are too high. In the MOJ dataset we used, we found this was often the case in local prisons. A prison operating under capacity may appear more expensive on a per prisoner basis but this may reflect underlying infrastructure or recruitment issues (such as HMP Berwyn). Clearly, neither situation is optimal. As most of the literature we reviewed used certified normal accommodation (CNA)<sup>xvii</sup> to gauge prison size, rather than average population, we adopted this methodology and noted how this affected analysis where relevant.

However, we did not follow the rather common practice of comparing across operator type. Several prisons are managed by one of three private sector companies (G4S, Serco and Sodexo)<sup>xviii</sup>. These are usually large, modern Category B and C male prisons<sup>116</sup> and include Northumberland and the new Mega prisons at Five Wells and Glen Parva but not Berwyn<sup>117</sup>. Two privately run Secure Training Centres were found to have serious inadequacies in 2020 and G4S's contract to run HMP Birmingham was terminated 7 years early in 2019 as it was found to be "*in an appalling state*"<sup>118</sup>. *The MOJ itself concedes that the scope of the services provided by private operators is not comparable with public sector prisons such that cost comparisons across operator type are invalid.* Despite this admission and evidence from several MOJ responses to our FOI requests that they do not have detailed information on private prisons, comparisons across operating type continue to appear in government publications, including those from the MOJ<sup>119</sup>.

Using MOJ data for 120 prisons, we therefore excluded 24 on the basis of them being privately managed, youth institutions or for which cost and performance data was incomplete. Our sample of 96 still covered a wide range of prison types including 86 male (5 A, 5 B, 38 C, 11 Open and 27 local) and 10 female prisons. We analysed this data in terms of scale, place and people.

---

<sup>xvii</sup> According to HM Prison & Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, CNA is the uncrowded capacity and reflects "good, decent standard of accommodation that the Service aspires to".

<sup>xviii</sup> Private prisons were opposed in the 2019 Labour manifesto and by the Prison Officers' Association (ibid).

5.1.1 *The importance of scale*: For these 96, we found a relatively weak correlation between prison capacity and overall costs per place of only  $-0.38^{xix}$ . Figure 2 appears to indicate this may vary by prison type. However, there are insufficient observations to conduct correlation analysis within each category.

Unsurprisingly, Category A prisons (eg Whitemoor) are more expensive irrespective of scale. Category C prisons are cheaper and more clustered. Although the Mega prison Berwyn compares favourably in terms of cost per place, it is in fact very similar to the medium sized Cat C prison at Stafford. Moreover, when you allow for the fact that Berwyn operates below capacity, its cost per prisoner is actually 12% higher. Although Highpoint is one of the largest prisons, it is not the cheapest.

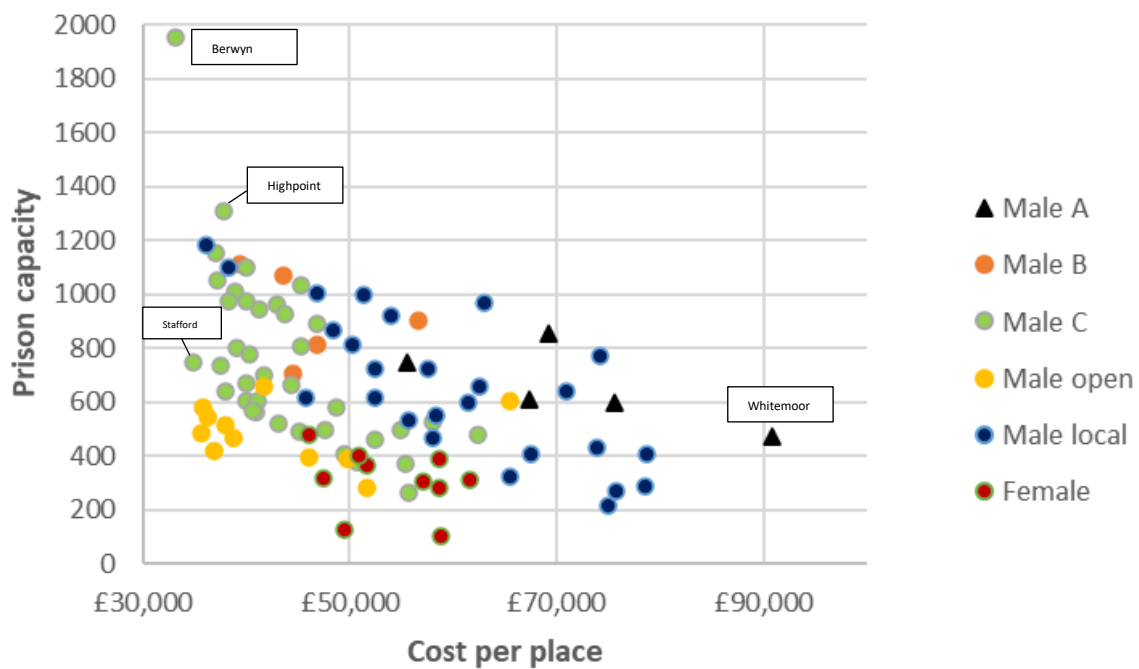


Figure 2: Relationship between Prison scale and overall costs per prisoner by male prison category

However, this does not necessarily mean there is no relationship between scale and costs, just that it may be non-linear, as highlighted by Hennebel et al (2017)<sup>120</sup>. This means that the cost impact of scale may weaken as prisons get very large (or vice versa).

To re-evaluate Hennebel et al's findings on a wider dataset (they only looked at local prisons), we applied a *very* basic test. We allocated each of our 96 adult prisons into one of 4 capacity buckets: less than 500 places, 500 to 750 places, 751 to 1000 and greater than 1,000.

We found sufficient observations in each bucket only for local and Category C prisons and plotted the average costs on Figure 3. This shows that for both types of prison economies of scale begin to accrue once you get above 500 places. Above this threshold, 75% of prisons have below average costs. The incremental gain of exceeding 1,000 places is relatively small.

*This confirms Hennebel et al's finding that medium scale may be more optimal, than 'mega'.*

<sup>xix</sup> This correlation was the same when we used actual prison population data

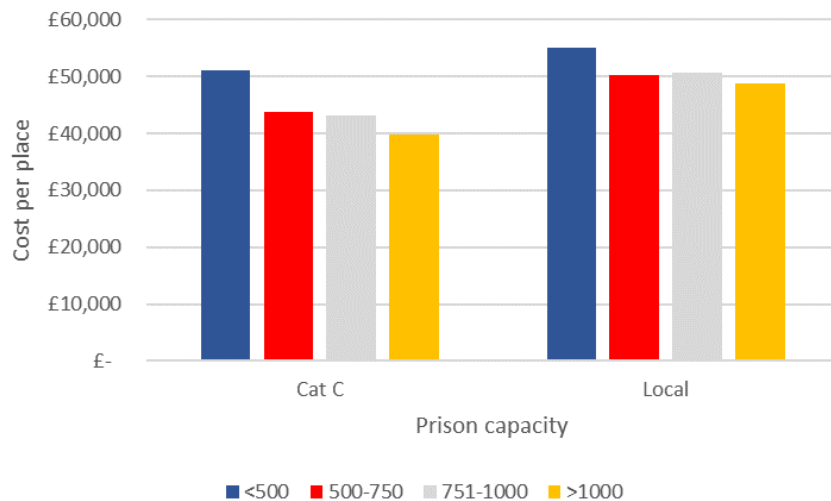


Figure 3: Relationship between Prison scale and overall costs per prisoner for Cat C and male local prisons

5.1.2 *The importance of place:* We found little cost difference between prisons in well-connected or poorly connected sites as measured by the Government’s Geographical barriers sub-domain Deprivation index<sup>121</sup>. This does not suggest that small local prisons can simply be replaced with medium sized rural ones, as they perform core functions, including links to urban courts, provide initial reception accommodation for newly convicted inmates before they are sent to other prisons and house other longer-term prisoners. As Kevin Lockyer (a former prison governor) emphasised, these local functions are not interchangeable with other types of prison or suitable for poorly connected sites<sup>122</sup>. A rural category C prison and an urban local prison are simply not fungible.

5.1.3 *The importance of people:*

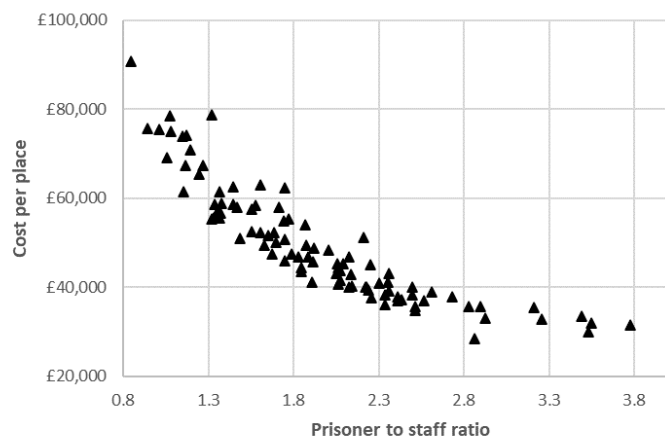


Figure 4: Relationship between Prison cost per place and number of prisoners per staff member

As operating costs are largely a function of staffing<sup>123</sup>, it is relatively simple to cut costs by making people redundant. We found a strong correlation of 0.88 between costs and prisoner to staff ratios which is illustrated in Figure 4. Given the potential trade-off between staffing, cost and rehabilitation outcomes, there is a problem with reliance upon cost as a sole decision driver.

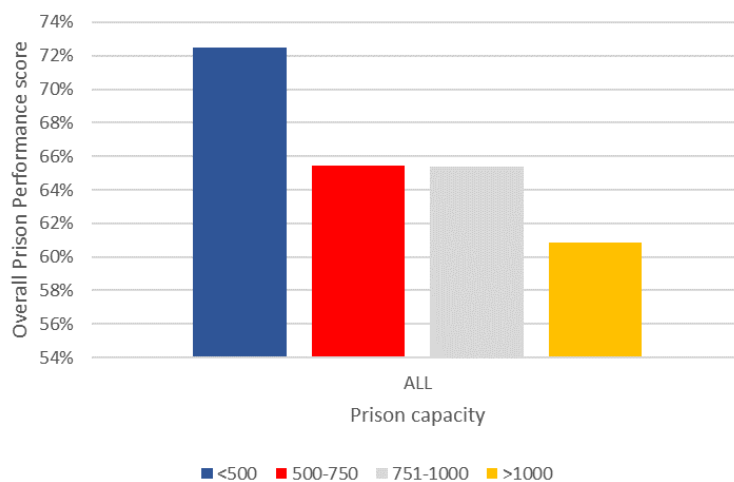
As the PRT recently noted, “We know what happens when there are too many prisoners and too few prison staff — more violence, self-harm and suicide, and less rehabilitation”<sup>124</sup>.

**5.2 Performance metrics:** To supplement HMIP Inspectorate reports, the MOJ put in place a Prison Performance Tool (PPT) in 2018 to compare prisons’ effectiveness using 33 measures of safety, security, respect, purposeful activity, rehabilitation<sup>xx</sup> and organisational effectiveness<sup>xxi</sup>. These domains generate a performance score which is then used to rank a prison 1 to 4, where 1 indicates serious concern; 2 is concern; 3 is acceptable and 4 is exceptional performance<sup>125</sup>. Performance indicator weightings are sometimes altered to reflect prison type and data availability, so they may vary slightly between prisons. Security, drug use and assaults normally carry high weightings<sup>126</sup>.

The latest data available is from 2019-20 as the process was suspended during the pandemic. The MOJ ranked nearly 54.6% of 119 prisons as acceptable; 16% exceptional; 23.5% as a cause for concern and 5.96% a cause for serious concern. The latter were usually local prisons. 40% of local prisons (eg Chelmsford) and 29% of Category C prisons (eg Berwyn) were rated as below acceptable standards<sup>127</sup>.

As we excluded private and youth institutions from our dataset, our split was slightly different. Of our 96 prisons, 6.3% scored 1 (cause for serious concern); 26% scored 2; 53% scored 3 and 14.6% scored 4. We analysed our prisons’ performance in terms of scale, costs and staffing ratios. To generate sufficient variance, we also used the MOJ performance scores (0-100%) as well as the ranking groups.

**5.2.1 The importance of scale:** We found no strong linear correlations between overall performance scores and prison capacity, cost per prisoner, cost per place or staffing ratios. However, as Figure 5 shows, we did confirm HMIP and academic findings that smaller and medium sized Cat C and local prisons (the majority of all prisons) below 1,000 inmates seem to have better outcomes<sup>xxii</sup>.



*Figure 5: Relationship between Prison scale and Overall Performance score by prison type*

In our sample, only 2 (out of 13) prisons with more than 1,000 inmates had an above average performance score. Figure 6 shows that nearly 54% of these Mega prisons had a performance score that warranted concern or serious concern, including the flagship Berwyn, as well as older large local prisons at Birmingham, Elmley, Liverpool, Mount, Swaleside and Wormwood Scrubs. This by far exceeds the proportion of poor performers in any other scale category.

<sup>xx</sup> Including Accommodation on the first night of release and Employment at six weeks following release

<sup>xxi</sup> Including Staff sickness and resignation rates

<sup>xxii</sup> See Section 3

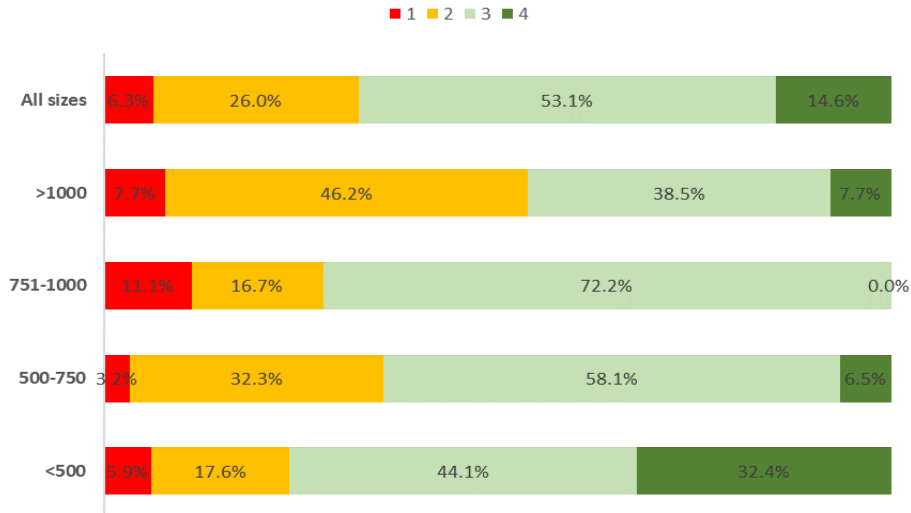


Figure 6: Distribution of performance categories by prison scale

In terms of specific indicators that contribute to these rankings, we also found some interesting patterns. As Figure 7 shows, the average rehabilitation domain score was higher for smaller and medium sized prisons, especially Category C. In part this reflected higher employment rates 6 weeks after release which were 20% higher in local prisons (which tend to be urban based) compared to Cat Cs (of which many are rural).

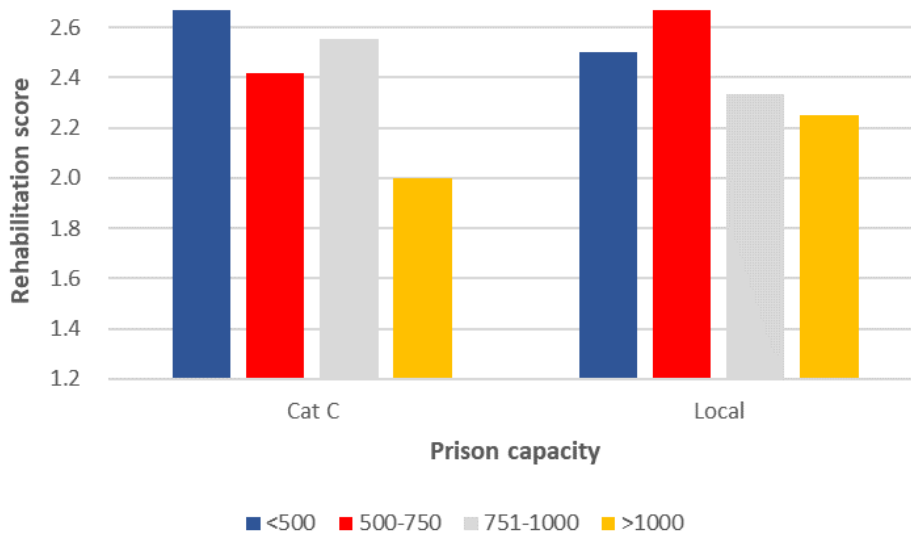


Figure 7: Relationship between Prison scale and Overall Performance score by prison type

**5.2.2 The importance of people:** Staff resignations averaged 7.7% across our sample and were particularly high in medium sized overcrowded local prisons and large category C prisons. Foremost amongst the latter were Berwyn (19.8%), Mount (15.4%) (both rated 2 – of concern) and Wayland (15.1%) and Highpoint (13.4%) – (both rated 3 – acceptable). All of these prisons had prisoner to staff ratios of approximately 2.5 or greater compared to a category C average of just over 2.

None of the 4 large Category C prisons (Berwyn, Highpoint, Littlehey and Mount) in which the staff to prisoner ratio was above 2.5 scored above 2 in terms of rehabilitation. All but Littlehey missed targets in terms of assaults and all but Berwyn significantly missed post-release employment targets.

*5.2.3 The importance of place:* One of the purported site selection criteria for new prisons is the strategic fit with the remainder of the estate. However, it is not entirely clear the relative weighting of cost considerations compared with more strategic matters<sup>xxiii</sup>.

The MOJ's Capacity Planning Tool as at November 2018 shows the Eastern Region prison capacity was 9,000 with a requirement of 6,200. With ongoing expansion at Bure and Highpoint, this excess capacity is set to rise. According to data received through an FOI request<sup>128</sup>, 70% of inmates who come from Essex are already in regional prisons including Chelmsford and Highpoint. London inmates account for nearly a quarter of the populations of HMP Bure, Littlehey and Wayland. It would therefore seem self-evident that any further prison construction in the region would be designed purely to address excess demand from London and further concentrate officially designated Category B prisons in particular locations<sup>xxiv</sup>. Inaccessibility for inmates' families from London could therefore be a key barrier to rehabilitation<sup>xxv</sup>.

As the Inspectorate reports in particular highlighted the problems faced by remote prisons in replicating the external environment and providing work place experience and training, we analysed the link between geographical accessibility as measured by the Government's Geographical barriers sub-domain Deprivation index and the percentage of inmates released who had a job 6 weeks after release. We focused on 61 Local and Category C prisons as the data was most consistent and prisoners were more likely to be close to their release date.

For these 61 prisons, the average employment rate was 10.11%. Prisons in sites ranked 2 or above in terms of Geographical barriers sub-domain Deprivation index (meaning they were *better* connected to local services) were above average but the average for those in sites ranked 1 was less than 7.5%. Though the percentage differences may seem small, given the link between employment and reoffending, the marginal difference (over 35%) is very significant.

---

<sup>xxiii</sup> Wethersfield relevance: In 2016, the MOJ asked several district councils to highlight potential sites that fulfilled their construction criteria. These included a flat land area of 25 acres; no clear impediments to achieving planning permission; ground conditions with no abnormal costs to redevelop (non-flood zone); easy access to utilities and transport; no ecological or historic designations on site; manageable contamination; and previously developed Brownfield status. In response Tendring District Council proposed three sites all located close to the A120 and adjacent to areas of substantial economic deprivation. The MOJ appears to have rejected these sites purely because of their non-Brownfield status. Rather it selected Wethersfield (with its contestable Brownfield status) despite the fact that it failed on a number of other site selection criteria including economic uplift potential (it is not an area of high unemployment), its remote and inaccessible location, likelihood of higher cost and delays due to its inaccessibility and a number of unresolved ecological and historical legacy issues

<sup>xxiv</sup> Wethersfield relevance: There are currently 7,805 Category B prison facilities in England and Wales. The construction of a 1,715 Category B prison at Wethersfield would mean approximately a fifth of officially designated prison B places would be in one very remote site in the South East of England. Although there are likely to be more Category B prisoners than designated Category B prison places at any one time, this suggests a significant geographical concentration that is completely at odds with the MOJ's purported rehabilitation ethos outlined in the UK Government's recent White Paper.

<sup>xxv</sup> Wethersfield relevance: Given the likelihood that Wethersfield would be used as a spill-over from London prisons, we investigated barriers to family access using travel cost data from a number of areas in London using the cheapest return fares on 22/05/22. Return journeys by public transport from South-West, West and South London cost up to £54.70, took up to 5 hours and involved multiple changes of transport mode.



An alternative way to demonstrate this is Figure 8 which shows employment rates grouped by quartile. This highlights that prisons in more accessible sites are far more likely to be ranked in the top quartile of employment results. Prisons in LSOAs that have a Geographical barriers sub-domain ranking of 1<sup>xxvi</sup> are more than twice as likely to be in the lowest quartile of employment rates below 7.4%.

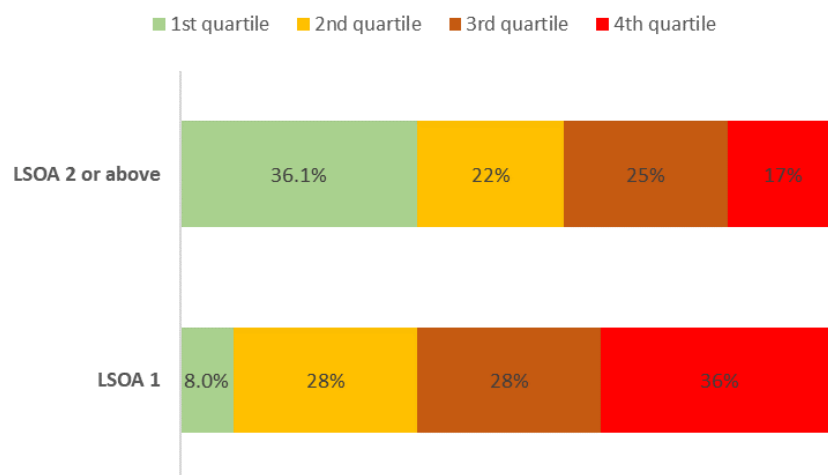


Figure 8: Post release employment and prison accessibility (75<sup>th</sup> percentile 10.3%; median 8.8%; 25<sup>th</sup> 7.4%)

The over-riding conclusion from Sections 3-5 is that attempts to explain prison cost and performance in terms of one characteristic (such as scale) are too simplistic. Evidence can also be skewed by what you compare each prison against. In its performance evaluations, the MOJ allows for a wider variety of factors in addition to scale including age, gender, nationality and category of inmates; the nature of their offence; site complexity and population diversity; building scale and age; and prisoner turnover<sup>129</sup>. This enables the MOJ to identify similar types of prison for comparative purposes.

Prison	Capacity	Cost	Performance score	Performance category	Rehab category	Staff ratio	Resignations	Jobs	LSOA
Highpoint	1308	£ 37,893	65.1%	3	2	2.68	13.4%	8.9%	1
Ranby	893	£ 46,825	65.6%	3	2	1.78	7.8%	9.1%	1
Lindholme	924	£ 43,722	72.7%	3	2	2.02	9.4%	8.3%	1
Mount	1008	£ 38,962	50.1%	2	1	2.56	15.4%	10.0%	3
Berwyn	1952	£ 33,122	60.1%	2	2	2.87	19.8%	13.6%	6
Stocken	974	£ 39,988	76.7%	3	2	2.45	6.5%	8.5%	1
Wayland	973	£ 38,275	70.1%	3	3	2.44	15.1%	6.7%	1
Wealstun	810	£ 45,238	66.1%	3	3	2.04	10.5%	8.2%	1

Table 2: Cost, Performance and Accessibility characteristics of Highpoint comparator group

Table 2 shows that HMP Highpoint, for example, is evaluated by the MOJ against a number of other Male Category C prisons, including HMP Berwyn. The MOJ's comparator group also includes HMP Parc but as this is run by a private contractor and costs are high (£52,522) due to their inclusion of Youth offenders, it is excluded from our analysis.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Wethersfield and Finchingfield have an Access to Services ranking of 1, meaning they are amongst the 10% most inaccessible areas in the entire country.

The remaining 8 can be given a score of 1-8 depending on how they rank in terms of each data point. For example, Berwyn scores 8 on costs as it is the cheapest of the group but Stocken scores 8 on performance because it has the highest overall score. Figure 9 shows that the larger prisons rank higher in terms of costs but Table 2 shows that the differences between Highpoint, Mount, Wayland and Stocken are relatively small. Figure 9 also shows that performance scores are higher for the medium sized prisons, especially Lindholme and Stocken. Compared to larger prisons at Mount and Berwyn, these differences are quite large.

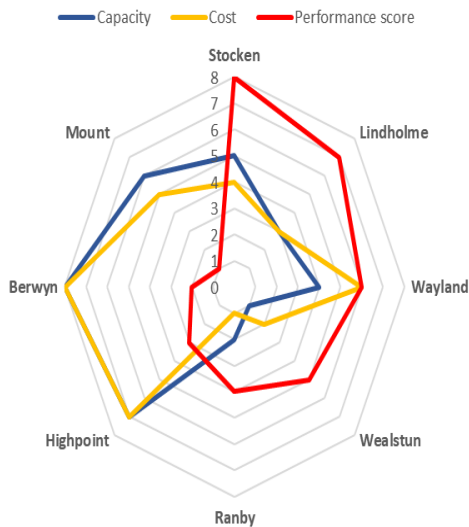


Figure 9: Capacity, cost & performance

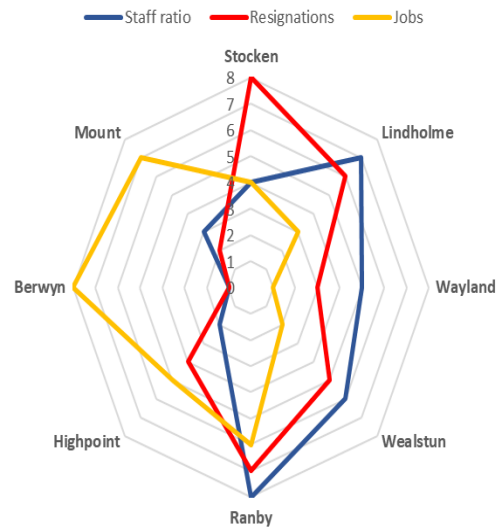


Figure 10: Staff ratios, resignations and jobs

Figure 10 also shows that prisons with higher performance rankings (Stocken and Lindholme) also have lower prisoner to staff ratios and resignation rates. Placing released inmates into employment is highest in those prisons located in areas classified as more accessible in LSOA deprivation rankings – Berwyn and Mount.

Clearly, (as the MOJ’s own comparative methodology confirms) the financial and operating performance of a prison is the function of complex interactions between an array of characteristics, including people (both staff and prisoners) and place. To say that Mega capacity is a silver bullet is therefore an unhelpful approach that can lead to misleading policy conclusions.

**5.3 Construction cost-benefit analysis:** Unfortunately, this rather obvious conclusion does not seem to have filtered through to the method used to evaluate the cost benefit for building new prisons. Project evaluation presumes new prisons can match the current cheapest operating prison, irrespective of complexity, location or type and with no regard to the invisible costs of under-performance or of commuting to inaccessible sites.

Through various announcements the government has promised up to £4billion of investment in prison refurbishment or construction. Of the 18,000 new places targeted<sup>130</sup>, most are at new prisons<sup>xxvii</sup>, in addition to the 5,000 underway at Five Wells, Full Sutton and Glen Parva. The balance is due to be met by expansion on existing sites<sup>xxviii</sup>.

For prisons built in the period 2006-12, the capital cost per place was approximately £120,000<sup>131</sup>. Due to potential economies of scale, Berwyn was projected to cost £106,000 per place but came in at £119,000. If we factor in the fact that in 2020 it was still operating at only 80% of its projected 2,106 capacity, this number jumps to over £145,000 (see Box 4).

In 2015, the House of Commons Justice Committee estimated costs had risen to £158,000<sup>132</sup>. HMP Five Wells was completed for slightly less than this – just under £151,000 per place. Despite the adoption of new building protocols designed to save costs, Glen Parva, however, has overshot its budget by **68%** such that the final bill will equate to £170,000 per prisoner place.

According to the ONS, construction costs in March, 2022 were over 30% higher than 2015 and currently rising at over 8% pa<sup>133</sup>. As such, the cost for projects due for completion in the next 5 years could quite conceivably exceed £200,000 per place. Give the impact of Brexit and the Pandemic, the cost savings threshold for new Mega prisons has been raised quite considerably.

The cost savings generated depend not only on the projected operating costs of the new prison but the costs at the prisons which can then be shut down. Projections then become extremely sensitive to how many places are shut down (if any) and at which prisons because costs vary widely. The private contractor G4S has been awarded a £300,000,000 10-year contract to run the new Mega prison at HMP Five Wells<sup>134</sup>. This equates to direct costs of £17,587 per place. However, what these costs include (for example, health and education) is unclear. So, we cannot say what overall costs are.

Whilst this may or may not be economical for Five Wells, given higher costs of construction now, this 36% saving compared with the current category C average would only be enough to generate a positive Net Present Value if the same number of places were simultaneously closed elsewhere<sup>xxix</sup>. Given the current issues of under-capacity in the prison system as a whole, this seems unrealistic. If Category C prisoners were re-allocated from a more expensive local prison, then the cost savings would appear to be higher. However, as an urban local prison may not be closed down completely when some of its prisoners move to a rural site<sup>xxx</sup>, this saving is to some extent illusory.

As the evaluation for HMP Berwyn shows (Box 4), the cost benefit for building new prisons is extremely sensitive to these assumptions.

---

<sup>xxvii</sup> Including rejected planning applications at Grendon/Springhill (1,440); Garth/Wymott (1,715); and Gartree (1,715), as well as 3,430 at a new site at Wethersfield for which no application has yet been submitted.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Including at HMP Stocken, Highpoint, Guys Marsh, Rye Hill, High Down, Liverpool and Birmingham.

<sup>xxix</sup> We used standard Net present Value analysis over a 60-year period and HM Treasury discount rates to make this calculation in accordance with the methodology that appeared to be followed in the FBC provided to us.

<sup>xxx</sup> It is uncertain whether a Wethersfield Cat B and Cat C prison can facilitate the full closure of HMP Chelmsford as they perform different functions.

#### **Box 4: Cost benefit analysis of HMP Berwyn**

Through information obtained via a Freedom of Information request, we analysed the MOJ's Full Business Case (FBC) analysis for the new Category C prison at HMP Berwyn conducted using 2014 data. Unfortunately, this FOI request took several months to be received and significant parts were redacted. As such, our understanding is partial but we were able to piece together the following:

Place selection is driven by availability of a suitable site; local economic potential; speed of construction; potential cost savings and strategic fit with the remainder of the estate. At the time of the Berwyn FBC, MOJ were also investigating sites at Wellingborough (which eventually became HMP Five Wells) and the Isle of Sheppey where there is already a prison complex. However, as the major strategic consideration was to deal with under-capacity in London, these were viewed as inferior options to expansion at HMP Feltham. Berwyn was designed to address capacity shortages in the North West of England.

The 2014 FBC for Berwyn was based on the presumption that it would have direct operating costs similar to those of HMP Oakwood which at the time were £13,200 per prisoner. This target was used despite the same document stating clearly on page 47 that "The operating cost per place for Oakwood is not wholly comparable with the costs shown for the other prisons as Oakwood is a privately run prison – for example, items such as profit are not included in the costs for the other (public) prisons". It is unclear whether education and health costs have been included in cost projections. As these can amount to £5,000 per prisoner, their omission or inclusion is an important detail. Unfortunately, much of this section was redacted.

An additional curiosity was that the potential cost savings this implied were calculated as the difference between the average cost of prisons that could be closed, irrespective of their category type. Using a construction budget of approximately £224,000,000 including £12,000,000 for land (4.6% of the total), the FBC then calculated a positive Net Present value for Berwyn based on these projected cost savings. However, the FBC also noted that this conclusion was sensitive to delays in reaching its full capacity, the failure to close sufficient more expensive places and the inability of Berwyn to manage costs to be within 20% of those at Oakwood.

In reality, Berwyn cost closer to £250,000,000 and by 2020 was still operating below capacity due to staffing difficulties. As a result, Berwyn's cost per prisoner remains 33% higher than Oakwood. In effect Berwyn's construction appears to have relied on a cost structure that was neither comparable or achievable. Based on these figures, the economic case appears to be a little fragile.

## 6. Conclusions

The prison system appears to be failing in two of its primary goals – deterrence and reoffending but the social and economic cost of this is not accounted for in evaluating prison construction. The MOJ continues to repeat historical strategic errors and ignore evidence from multiple sources, including its own Inspectorate.

Whilst there may be a clear case for modernising infrastructure, including the use of in-cell technology (which has been more widely adopted in the private prison sector), this does not equate with ill thought-out major capital expenditure that ignores considerations of people and place. Even Mega prison proponents advocate their construction in accessible urban fringes.

However, they are unable to provide robust systematic evidence that scale per se is a dominant driver of prison financial or operating performance. The MOJ's justification for sites like HMP Berwyn was based on unrealistic assumptions regarding cost savings and prison closures elsewhere. With a capital cost now likely to top £300,000,000, the hurdle for a Mega prison to jump over is now extremely problematic given the failures at Berwyn.

The prison system is caught in a cycle of doing too little to address the underlying causes of crime. 80% of convictions are of previous offenders. There is a host of staff and stakeholders engaged in a range of schemes to address this but they are often hampered by strategic errors that neglect the paramount importance of people and place.

In 2015, Berwyn was hailed by the MOJ as *“the flagship for the rest of the country to emulate”*<sup>135</sup>. By 2019 persistent issues with recruitment and violence prompted the Howard League for Penal Reform to conclude, *“Ultimately, at the root of Berwyn's troubles is the fact that the prison is far too large”*<sup>136</sup>.

The Justice secretary's verdict on HMP Five Wells in March, 2022 has an air of familiarity: *“HMP Five Wells is a flagship example of this Government's plan to create secure and modern prisons that cut crime and protect the public”*<sup>137</sup>.

*From the evidence used in this report, the case that the construction of Mega prisons is in the national interest is unproven (particularly in rural areas). To invest hundreds of millions without unequivocal evidence would appear to be a gross misallocation of taxpayers' money.*

## References

---

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/6372-in-all-affairs-it-s-a-healthy-thing-now-and-then>
- <sup>2</sup> Prisons Strategy White Paper CP581 published by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), December 2021.
- <sup>3</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee Prisons: planning and policies, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15 Report, together with formal minutes
- <sup>4</sup> UK's greenest and most innovative prison unveiled, Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab has unveiled the greenest and most innovative jail in the country <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-s-greenest-and-most-innovative-prison-unveiled>
- <sup>5</sup> Story of the Prison Population: 1993 – 2016 England and Wales, Ministry of Justice, July 2016 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/541667/prison-population-story-1993-2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541667/prison-population-story-1993-2016.pdf), accessed 8/5/22
- <sup>6</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022 <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Prison population: 31 March 2022, Offender Management Statistics Quarterly, Ministry of Justice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2021> accessed 8/5/22
- <sup>8</sup> Guide to Offender Management Statistics, England & Wales, Min. Justice, Guidance Documentation, April, 2022, [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment\\_data%2Ffile%2F1071779%2FGuide\\_to\\_Offender\\_Management\\_Statistics-probation-update.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F1071779%2FGuide_to_Offender_Management_Statistics-probation-update.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
- <sup>9</sup> Prison population: 31 March 2022, Offender Management Statistics Quarterly, Ministry of Justice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2021> accessed 8/5/22
- <sup>10</sup> National statistics Offender management statistics quarterly: January to March 2021 Published 29 July 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021?msckid=cc747fe4cea811ec85b4e8ae470650bd>
- <sup>11</sup> Ministry of Justice Outcome Delivery Plan: 2021-22 Published 15 July 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-justice-outcome-delivery-plan/ministry-of-justice-outcome-delivery-plan-2021-22>
- <sup>12</sup> Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, April to June 2020, Ministry of Justice, 28 April 2022, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1071741/Proven\\_reoffending\\_stats\\_bulletin\\_April22\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1071741/Proven_reoffending_stats_bulletin_April22_Final.pdf)
- <sup>13</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022 <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf>
- <sup>14</sup> Managing offenders on short custodial sentences, REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL HC 431 SESSION 2009–2010 10 MARCH 2010 National Audit Office 24 February 2010
- <sup>15</sup> Economic and social costs of reoffending Analytical report Alexander Newton, Xennor May, Steven Eames & Maryam Ahmad, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Analytical Series, 2019
- <sup>16</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022 <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf>
- <sup>17</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022 <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf>
- <sup>18</sup> 167 prisoners per 100,000 of the population aged over 15 in England and Wales (ibid).
- <sup>19</sup> In 2010 33% of sentences were longer than 4 years compared to 48% in 2020 (ibid).
- <sup>20</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022 <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf> accessed 20/5/22
- <sup>21</sup> UK Prison Population Statistics, Research Briefing: Georgina Sturge and Richard Tunnicliffe, October, 2021, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04334/> accessed 7/5/22

- <sup>22</sup> The Prison Estate, Beard, J., House of Commons Library, Number 5646, October, 2021 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05646/SN05646.pdf> last accessed 7/5/22
- <sup>23</sup> Improving the prison estate, National Audit Office, <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/improving-the-prison-estate/>
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>25</sup> Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison HM Prison & Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20, Management Information Addendum, Ministry of Justice, Information Release, Published 29 October 2020; [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment\\_data%2Ffile%2F1029860%2F2021-11-01\\_The\\_Prison\\_Estate\\_\\_CPA\\_and\\_Probation\\_Service\\_Region\\_register.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F1029860%2F2021-11-01_The_Prison_Estate__CPA_and_Probation_Service_Region_register.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
- <sup>26</sup> The Prison Estate, Beard, J., House of Commons Library, Number 5646, October, 2021 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05646/SN05646.pdf> last accessed 7/5/22
- <sup>27</sup> House of Commons Library, BRIEFING PAPER, Number 07437, 29 December 2015, Categorisation of prisoners in the UK, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7437/CBP-7437.pdf>
- <sup>28</sup> The Prison Estate, Beard, J., House of Commons Library, Number 5646, October, 2021 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05646/SN05646.pdf> last accessed 7/5/22
- <sup>29</sup> UK's greenest and most innovative prison unveiled, Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab has unveiled the greenest and most innovative jail in the country <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-s-greenest-and-most-innovative-prison-unveiled>
- <sup>30</sup> The Carter Report, Carter,P (2007) Securing the Future . Proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales London Cabinet Office accessed 7/5/22
- <sup>31</sup> The Carter Report, Carter,P (2007) Securing the Future . Proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales London Cabinet Office, page 20
- <sup>32</sup> David Cameron calls for league tables to improve UK prisons, Guardian Newspaper 6/1/09 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/jan/06/cameron-conservatives-business-economy>, accessed 9/5/22
- <sup>33</sup> Jones,R (2013) Spinning in favour of a north wales Jail. Institute of Welsh affairs <http://www.clickonwales.org/2013/12/spinning-in-favour-of-north-wales-titan-jail/> last accessed 9/5/22 <https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2013/12/spinning-in-favour-of-north-wales-titan-jail/>
- <sup>34</sup> New Prisons Consultation Response, CRP 10/08 27 April 2009 Ministry of Justice, <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/resource/policy/NewPrisonsConsultation.pdf> accessed 9/5/22
- <sup>35</sup> "Prison Service Journal September 2016 No. 227 Prison Building Does Size matter? A Re-Assessment by Dr. Iolo Madoc-Jones r Iolo Madoc-Jones, Dr Emyr Williams, Dr Caroline Hughes and Joanne Turley available at <https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/PSJ%20227%20September%202016.pdf?msclkid=7796f329cf5d11ecb44550ea630c4657> last accessed 9/5/22
- <sup>36</sup> Jones,R (2013) Spinning in favour of a north wales Jail. Institute of Welsh affairs <http://www.clickonwales.org/2013/12/spinning-in-favour-of-north-wales-titan-jail/> last accessed 9/5/22 <https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2013/12/spinning-in-favour-of-north-wales-titan-jail/>
- <sup>37</sup> The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Chris Grayling) <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2013-01-10/debates/13011037000009/PrisonCapacityManagement>
- <sup>38</sup> The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Chris Grayling) <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130904/wmstext/130904m0001.htm>
- <sup>39</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/four-new-prisons-boost-rehabilitation-and-support-economy>
- <sup>40</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee Prisons: planning and policies, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15 Report, together with formal minutes <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmjust/309/309.pdf>
- <sup>41</sup> Titan Prisons: a gigantic mistake, Prison Reform Trust, 2007, [www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Titan%20prisons%2020a%20gigantic%20mistake.pdf](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Titan%20prisons%2020a%20gigantic%20mistake.pdf)
- <sup>42</sup> European Services Strategy unit, 2008, Economic Impact of Prisons in Rural areas, a review of the issues, Whitfield, D., Adjunct Associate Professor University of Adelaide
- <sup>43</sup> Titan Prisons: a gigantic mistake, Prison Reform Trust, 2007, [www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Titan%20prisons%2020a%20gigantic%20mistake.pdf](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Titan%20prisons%2020a%20gigantic%20mistake.pdf)
- <sup>44</sup> Farrington, D. P., and Nuttal,C. (1980). 'Prison Size, Overcrowding, Prison Violence, and Recidivism.' *Journal of Criminal Justice* 8: 221–231.
- <sup>45</sup> The Woolf Report, A summary of the findings and main recommendations of the inquiry into prison disturbances, Prison Reform Trust, London, 1991 accessed 8/5/22 at

---

www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Woolf%20report.pdf?msckid=a1aa505ecef11ecb3361a4af11c22ef

<sup>46</sup> Megargee, E. I. (1976) Population density and disruptive behavior in a prison setting. In A. Cohen, G. Cole, & R. Bailey (Eds.), *Prison violence* Lexington, Massachusetts. D. C. Heath pp.135–146

<sup>47</sup> Roush, D.W (2008) The Relationship between Group Size and outcomes in Juvenile Corrections: a partial review of the literature. *Journal for Juvenile Justice and Detention Services* Volume 17, Number 1, Spring 2008

<sup>48</sup> Titan Prisons: a gigantic mistake, Prison Reform Trust, 2007,

www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Titan%20prisons%2020a%20gigantic%20mistake.pdf

<sup>49</sup> The Carter Report, Carter, P (2007) *Securing the Future . Proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales* London Cabinet Office accessed 7/5/22

<sup>50</sup> Farrington, D.P. and Nuttal, C 1980 Prison Size, Overcrowding, Prison Violence and Recidivism *Journal of Criminal Justice* 8 221-231

<sup>51</sup> Homel, R & Thomson, Causes and prevention of violence in prisons *Corrections criminology* p101-108 Sydney Hawkins P.

<sup>52</sup> The Lammy Review, 2017, An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System,

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf) accessed 21/5/22

<sup>53</sup> The prison characteristics that predict prisons being assessed as performing well: A thematic review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Jan 2009

<sup>54</sup> Is there a prison size dilemma? An empirical analysis of output-specific economies of scale

Veerle Hennebel, Richard Simper and Marijn Verschelde, available at

<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/41423/1/PrisonSizeDilemmaRevision%20%28Final%29.pdf> accessed 23/5/22

<sup>55</sup> Future Prisons, A radical plan to reform the prison estate by Kevin Lockyer Edited by Max Chambers, Policy Exchange Future <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/future-prisons-a-radical-plan-to-reform-the-prison-estate/> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>56</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee Prisons: planning and policies, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15 Report, together with formal minutes

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmjust/309/309.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> "Prison Service Journal September 2016 No. 227 Prison Building Does Size matter? A Re-Assessment by Dr. Iolo Madoc-Jones r Iolo Madoc-Jones, Dr Emyr Williams, Dr Caroline Hughes and Joanne Turley available at

<https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/PSJ%20227%20September%202016.pdf?msckid=7796f329cf5d11ecb44550ea630c4657> last accessed 9/5/22

<sup>58</sup> Is there a prison size dilemma? An empirical analysis of output-specific economies of scale

Veerle Hennebel, Richard Simper and Marijn Verschelde, available at

<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/41423/1/PrisonSizeDilemmaRevision%20%28Final%29.pdf> accessed 23/5/22

<sup>59</sup> Johnsen, Berit & Granheim, Per & Helgesen, Janne. (2011). Exceptional prison conditions and the quality of prison life: Prison size and prison culture in Norwegian closed prisons. *European Journal of Criminology - EUR J CRIMINOL.* 8. 515-529. 10.1177/1477370811413819.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Johnsen, Berit & Granheim, Per & Helgesen, Janne. (2011). Exceptional prison conditions and the quality of prison life: Prison size and prison culture in Norwegian closed prisons. *European Journal of Criminology - EUR J CRIMINOL.* 8. 515-529. 10.1177/1477370811413819.

<sup>61</sup> Letter to the SWAP campaign from the Howard League for Penal Reform, May 2022

<sup>62</sup> House of Commons, Welsh Affairs Committee, Prison provision in Wales, Fourth Report of Session 2017–19 Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report, 30 April 2019

<sup>63</sup> Letter to the SWAP campaign from the Howard League for Penal Reform, May 2022

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the Virtual Annual General Meeting of the All-Party Group on Penal Affairs, held on 26 April 2022 available at <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/policy-legislation/>

<sup>65</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Berwyn by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons March, 2019

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/Berwyn-Web-2019.pdf> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

<sup>67</sup> What went wrong at Britain's prison of the future <https://www.ft.com/content/e8454c86-3f9d-11e9-9bee-efab61506f44> last accessed 23 May 2022

<sup>68</sup> House of Commons, Welsh Affairs Committee, Prison provision in Wales, Fourth Report of Session 2017–19 Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report, 30 April 2019



- 
- <sup>69</sup> HMP Woodhill - many problems caused by staff shortages and inexperience, <https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/media/press-releases/2021/12/hmp-woodhill-many-problems-caused-by-staff-shortages-and-inexperience/> accessed 22/5/22
- <sup>70</sup> Vacancies and jobs in the UK: Office for National Statistic, May 2022  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/jobsandvacanciesintheuk/may2022#main-points>
- <sup>71</sup> New figures reveal exodus of prison staff, Prison Reform Trust, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
[http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/News/vw/1/ItemID/1117?fbclid=IwAR2xbzmpyOR1e4cYWdDSvCCy\\_9-gWDDr38UjwizTc0eN-kiolnUgn7lrsPM](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/News/vw/1/ItemID/1117?fbclid=IwAR2xbzmpyOR1e4cYWdDSvCCy_9-gWDDr38UjwizTc0eN-kiolnUgn7lrsPM) accessed 23/5/22
- <sup>72</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee Prisons: planning and policies, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15 Report, together with formal minutes
- <sup>73</sup> Prison and Probations Ombudsman, Learning lessons bulletin Complaints investigations issue 5, Sept 2014
- <sup>74</sup> The Farmer Report. Lord Farmer The Importance of Strengthening Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime for the Ministry of Justice August 2017
- <sup>75</sup> May, C., Sharma, N. and Stewart, D. (2008) Factors linked to reoffending: a one-year follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004, Ministry of Justice Research Summary 5. London: Ministry of Justice
- <sup>76</sup> Analysis of the impact of employment on re-offending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching, Ministry of Justice, March, 2013, accessed 22/5/22  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/217412/impact-employment-reoffending.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/217412/impact-employment-reoffending.pdf)
- <sup>77</sup> The Lammy Review, 2017, An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System,  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf) accessed 21/5/22
- <sup>78</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022  
<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf>
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid
- <sup>80</sup> The prison characteristics that predict prisons being assessed as performing well: A thematic review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Jan 2009
- <sup>81</sup> Peter Brett Associates, Economic Impact of a New Prison, page 1, May 2013  
<https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/Economic%20Impact%20of%20a%20New%20Prison.pdf> last accessed 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- <sup>82</sup> Future Prisons, A radical plan to reform the prison estate by Kevin Lockyer Edited by Max Chambers, Policy Exchange Future <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/future-prisons-a-radical-plan-to-reform-the-prison-estate/> accessed 22/5/22
- <sup>83</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee Prisons: planning and policies, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15 Report, together with formal minutes  
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmjust/309/309.pdf>
- <sup>84</sup> House of Commons, Welsh Affairs Committee, Prison provision in Wales, Fourth Report of Session 2017–19 Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report, 30 April 2019
- <sup>85</sup> European Services Strategy unit, 2008, Economic Impact of Prisons in Rural areas, a review of the issues, Whitfield, D., Adjunct Associate Professor University of Adelaide
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid
- <sup>87</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Northumberland for reporting Year 1 January to 31 December 2020 Published June 2021 <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/imb-prod-storage-10cod6bqky0vo/uploads/2021/05/Northumberland-AR-2020-for-circulation.pdf>
- <sup>88</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Northumberland for reporting Year 1 January to 31 December 2019 Published May 2020 <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/imb-prod-storage-10cod6bqky0vo/uploads/2020/05/Northumberland-AR-for-circulation.pdf>
- <sup>89</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Highpoint for reporting Year 2019 Published June 2020
- <sup>90</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP/YOI Portland by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, August 2019, <https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/01/Portland-web-2019.pdf> accessed 22/5/22
- <sup>91</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Ranby by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, June 2-18

---

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/10/HMP-Ranby-web-2018.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP/YOI Stoke Heath by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nov 2018, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-yoi-stoke-heath/> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>93</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Swaleside by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 18–19 and 25–29 October 2021 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/02/Swaleside-web-2021-1.pdf> accessed 11/5/22

<sup>94</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Sudbury For reporting year 1 June 2019 – 31 May 2020 accessed 9/5/22

<sup>95</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Dartmoor by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 14–24 August 2017 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/12/Dartmoor-Web-2017.pdf> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>96</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Wayland by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, June 2017 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-wayland/> accessed 20/5/22

<sup>97</sup> English Indices of Deprivation 2019 File 4 Sub-domains of deprivation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local government

<sup>98</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Swaleside by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 18–19 and 25–29 October 2021 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/02/Swaleside-web-2021-1.pdf> accessed 11/5/22

<sup>99</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Highpoint for reporting Year 2019 Published June 2020 accessed 9/5/22

<sup>100</sup> Is there a prison size dilemma? An empirical analysis of output-specific economies of scale  
Veerle Hennebel, Richard Simper and Marijn Verschelde, available at <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/41423/1/PrisonSizeDilemmaRevision%20%28Final%29.pdf> accessed 23/5/22

<sup>101</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Highpoint for reporting Year 2019 Published June 2020 accessed 9/5/22

<sup>102</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP/YOI Stoke Heath by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nov 2018, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-yoi-stoke-heath/> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>103</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Swaleside by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 18–19 and 25–29 October 2021 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/02/Swaleside-web-2021-1.pdf> accessed 11/5/22

<sup>104</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Sudbury For reporting year 1 June 2019 – 31 May 2020 accessed 9/5/22

<sup>105</sup> Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Highpoint for reporting Year 2019 Published June 2020 accessed 9/5/22

<sup>106</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Wayland by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, June 2017 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-wayland/> accessed 20/5/22

<sup>107</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Bure by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 27 March–7 April 2017 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/08/Bure-Web-2017.pdf> accessed 12/5/22

<sup>108</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP/YOI Stoke Heath by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nov 2018, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-yoi-stoke-heath/> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>109</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Ranby by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, June 2-18 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/10/HMP-Ranby-web-2018.pdf>

<sup>110</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Dartmoor by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 14–24 August 2017 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/12/Dartmoor-Web-2017.pdf> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>111</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP/YOI Portland by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, August 2019, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/01/Portland-web-2019.pdf> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>112</sup> Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Swaleside by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 18–19 and 25–29 October 2021 <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/02/Swaleside-web-2021-1.pdf> accessed 11/5/22

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-performance-ratings-2019-to-2020>

<sup>114</sup> Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison HM Prison & Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 Management Information Addendum Ministry of Justice Information Release 29/10/20

<sup>115</sup> Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison, HM Prison & Probation Service, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 Management Information Addendum, Ministry of Justice, Information Release, Jan, 2022

<sup>116</sup> The Prison Estate, Beard, J., House of Commons Library, Number 5646, October, 2021 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05646/SN05646.pdf> last accessed 7/5/22

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*

<sup>118</sup> HMP Birmingham - progress in tackling violence and squalor but still weak in education and management of sex offenders, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/media/press-releases/2019/06/hmp-birmingham-progress-in-tackling-violence-and-squalor-but-still-weak-in-education-and-management-of-sex-offenders/#:~:text=Peter%20Clarke%2C%20HM%20Chief%20Inspector%20of%20Prisons%2C%20recalled,that%20he%20invoked%20the%20rarely-used%20Urgent%20Notification%20Protocol.>

<sup>119</sup> "Notes to Table 3: Cost by establishment: 6. *Private prisons and public prisons are included. The unit costs are not directly comparable because of different methods of financing and of scope*", from Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison, HM Prison & Probation Service, Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 Management Information Addendum, Ministry of Justice, Information Release, Published 27 January 2022

<sup>120</sup> Is there a prison size dilemma? An empirical analysis of output-specific economies of scale  
Veerle Hennebel, Richard Simper and Marijn Verschelde, available at

<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/41423/1/PrisonSizeDilemmaRevision%20%28Final%29.pdf> accessed 23/5/22

<sup>121</sup> Indices of deprivation, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019> last accessed 1 June 2022

<sup>122</sup> Future Prisons, A radical plan to reform the prison estate by Kevin Lockyer Edited by Max Chambers, Policy Exchange Future <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/future-prisons-a-radical-plan-to-reform-the-prison-estate/> accessed 22/5/22

<sup>123</sup> Is there a prison size dilemma? An empirical analysis of output-specific economies of scale, Veerle Hennebel, Richard Simper and Marijn Verschelde, available at

<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/41423/1/PrisonSizeDilemmaRevision%20%28Final%29.pdf> accessed 23/5/22

<sup>124</sup> Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, Winter 2022, Prison Reform Trust, Jan 2022

<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202022%20Factfile.pdf>

<sup>125</sup> OFFICIAL STATISTICS, Annual Prison Performance Ratings 2019/20, Ministry of Justice

<sup>126</sup> Annual Prison Performance Ratings Guide 2018/19, Ministry of Justice, Official Statistics Bulletin, July 2019, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/820601/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2018-19-guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820601/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2018-19-guide.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> Official Statistics Bulletin, Published 30 July 2020, Annual Prison Performance Ratings

2019/20 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/913004/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2019-20-bulletin.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913004/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2019-20-bulletin.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> Ministry of Justice, FOI 211218001, Jan, 2022

<sup>129</sup> Annual Prison Performance Ratings Guide 2018/19, Ministry of Justice, Official Statistics Bulletin, July 2019, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/820601/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2018-19-guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820601/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2018-19-guide.pdf)

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-new-prison-places-to-rehabilitate-offenders-and-cut-crime>

<sup>131</sup> Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 220117024, Ministry of Justice, March 2022

<sup>132</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee Prisons: planning and policies, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15 Report, together with formal minutes

<sup>133</sup> Construction output price indices, Office for National Statistics, May, 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/constructionindustry/datasets/interimconstructionoutputpriceindices>

<sup>134</sup> <https://insidetime.org/g4s-confirmed-to-run-hmp-five-wells/>

<sup>135</sup> What went wrong at Britain's prison of the future <https://www.ft.com/content/e8454c86-3f9d-11e9-9bee-efab61506f44> last accessed 23 May 2022

<sup>136</sup> HMP Berwyn: Soft approach on prisoners a 'disaster', March 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-47745031>

<sup>137</sup> <https://insidetime.org/five-wells-hailed-as-first-smart-prison/#:~:text=Raab%20said%3A%20%E2%80%9CHMP%20Five%20Wells%20is%20a%20flagship,prisons%20that%20cut%20crime%20and%20protect%20the%20public.>

# Appendix I: Data used for calculations

Prison	Function	Cost per prisoner	Cost per place	Capacity	Prisoner/Staff ratio	Overall rating	Perf score	Rehab	Resignations	Employment	Geog LSAO decile	LSOA Skills
Askham Grange	Female Open	£ 68,366	£ 49,449	128	1.58	4	94%	4	2.6%	36.2%	-	
Bedford	Male Local	£ 61,479	£ 78,571	287	1.03	1	45%	2	18.80%	8.60%	9	5
Belmarsh	Male Local	£ 75,952	£ 74,193	774	1.12	3	67%	3	6.20%	14.60%	8	5
Berwyn	Male category C	£ 37,629	£ 33,122	1952	2.87	2	60%	2	19.80%	13.60%	6	4
Bristol	Male Local	£ 56,760	£ 67,490	406	1.22	1	53%	2	9.40%	11.80%	10	9
Brixton	Male category C	£ 44,073	£ 58,035	529	1.66	3	67%	2	12.10%	5.20%	9	5
Buckley Hall	Male category C	£ 46,570	£ 49,521	409	1.83	3	79%	4	5.60%	5.90%	5	1
Bullingdon	Male Local	£ 40,562	£ 48,415	869	1.95	3	68%	2	10.51%	10.300%	1	2
Bure	Male category C	£ 41,042	£ 39,960	604	2.08	3	81%	2	1.80%	5.00%	1	5
Cardiff	Male Local	£ 41,993	£ 55,656	534	1.28	3	76%	3	6.41%	11.30%	2	6
Channings Wood	Male category C	£ 43,844	£ 41,661	698	2.02	2	61%	2	9.20%	9.60%	1	7
Chesterford	Male Local	£ 48,244	£ 58,341	552	1.52	2	58%	3	8.60%	9.90%	4	8
Coldingley	Male category C	£ 51,156	£ 45,172	493	2.20	3	70%	4	11.80%	13.80%	3	7
Dartmoor	Male category C	£ 39,992	£ 37,937	642	2.36	3	66%	1	2.50%	3.20%	2	3
Donville	Female Closed	£ 84,459	£ 51,614	363	1.60	3	65%	3	5.7%	9.7%	-	
Drake Hall	Female Closed	£ 59,997	£ 47,477	315	1.62	4	87%	4	6.4%	14.7%	-	
Durham	Male Local	£ 40,814	£ 61,393	597	1.31	3	69%	2	2.90%	5.70%	8	3
East Sutton Park	Female Open	£ 73,807	£ 58,793	102	1.32	4	95%	4	0.0%	23.3%	-	
Eastwood Park	Female Local	£ 58,705	£ 50,921	400	1.43	3	63%	2	10.5%	2.6%	-	
Elmley	Male Local	£ 44,114	£ 46,899	1007	2.07	2	57%	2	5.20%	9.60%	1	1
Erenington	Male category C	£ 50,751	£ 47,558	494	1.74	2	54%	2	19.00%	0.00%	1	8
Exeter	Male Local	£ 49,319	£ 65,530	324	1.20	2	61%	3	16.40%	10.90%	7	9
Featherstone	Male Category C	£ 41,923	£ 40,002	671	2.18	3	65%	3	12.90%	11.10%	1	5
Ford	Male open	£ 36,243	£ 31,530	544	3.73	3	80%	3	0.0%	28.1%	-	
Foston Hall	Female Local	£ 63,794	£ 57,082	307	1.30	3	66%	3	5.3%	0.5%	-	
Frankland	male category A	£ 71,225	£ 69,212	853	1.00	3	76%	3	2.2%	0.0%	-	
Full Sutton	male category A	£ 78,184	£ 75,538	596	0.96	3	76%	3	4.8%	0.0%	-	
Guys Marsh	Male Category C	£ 53,071	£ 43,159	518	2.00	2	59%	3	10.90%	7.30%	1	6
Hatfield	Male open	£ 49,749	£ 35,673	387	2.46	4	88%	4	0.0%	26.7%	-	
Haverigg	Male open	£ 65,420	£ 28,577	602	2.81	3	69%	3	10.4%	20.6%	-	
Hewell	Male Local	£ 50,524	£ 50,225	816	1.65	1	48%	2	26.40%	10.60%	1	4
High Down	Male Local	£ 45,287	£ 51,274	999	2.16	2	58%	2	6.00%	8.40%	1	4
Highpoint	Male Category C	£ 38,820	£ 37,893	1308	2.68	3	65%	2	13.40%	8.90%	1	4
Hindley	Male Category C	£ 53,173	£ 48,757	580	1.87	2	53%	3	5.20%	9.00%	3	1
Hollesley Bay	Male open	£ 35,714	£ 33,499	485	3.44	4	88%	3	9.3%	19.9%	-	
Holme House	Male Category C	£ 41,683	£ 45,264	1036	2.00	3	62%	2	2.90%	8.40%	3	1
Hull	Male Local	£ 42,571	£ 57,599	723	1.51	4	83%	3	4.40%	11.70%	3	2
Humber	Male Category C	£ 44,360	£ 42,916	965	2.08	3	79%	3	2.90%	7.40%	1	6
Isis	Male Category C	£ 54,063	£ 62,338	478	1.70	3	65%	2	15.10%	8.30%	8	5
Kirkham	Male open	£ 41,766	£ 32,024	657	3.49	3	79%	3	4.0%	29.4%	2	
Kirklevington Grange	Male open	£ 51,630	£ 37,035	283	2.36	4	86%	4	0.0%	31.8%	-	
Lancaster Farms	Male Category C	£ 54,087	£ 54,943	495	1.69	2	60%	2	6.20%	9.60%	2	10
Leeds	Male Local	£ 39,844	£ 62,497	659	1.39	3	71%	3	12.20%	9.40%	10	1
Leicester	Male Local	£ 52,356	£ 74,961	213	1.03	2	61%	3	9.30%	7.70%	8	2
Lewes	Male Local	£ 52,071	£ 45,741	617	1.86	1	49%	2	10.90%	8.80%	6	8
Leyhill	Male open	£ 37,967	£ 35,436	515	3.16	4	85%	3	1.5%	9.7%	-	
Lincoln	Male Local	£ 55,741	£ 78,659	408	1.27	3	74%	3	3.00%	9.40%	5	3
Lindholme	Male Category C	£ 43,702	£ 43,722	924	2.02	3	73%	2	9.40%	8.30%	1	2
Littlehey	Male Category C	£ 38,285	£ 37,038	1154	2.51	4	82%	2	3.40%	8.30%	1	6
Liverpool	Male Local	£ 58,821	£ 36,101	1186	2.29	2	59%	4	5.20%	10.80%	8	5
Long Lartin	male category A	£ 72,510	£ 67,300	610	1.12	3	67%	3	7.4%	0.0%	-	
Low Newton	Female Local	£ 74,714	£ 61,548	314	1.11	3	69%	3	3.4%	1.5%	-	
Moorland	Male Category C	£ 43,133	£ 41,182	947	2.30	3	79%	2	8.80%	5.70%	1	2
Mount	Male Category C	£ 38,968	£ 38,962	1008	2.56	2	50%	1	15.40%	10.00%	3	5
New Hall	Female Local	£ 67,717	£ 58,670	389	1.29	3	74%	4	2.7%	0.9%	-	
North Sea Camp	Male open	£ 36,923	£ 32,887	420	3.21	4	86%	4	3.4%	7.0%	-	
Norwich	Male Local	£ 46,565	£ 52,392	616	1.63	2	50%	2	12.20%	11.80%	4	3
Nottingham	Male Local	£ 45,693	£ 52,446	724	1.50	3	65%	3	10.80%	6.30%	8	5
Onley	Male Category C	£ 41,755	£ 37,603	735	2.21	2	58%	2	12.30%	10.00%	1	9
Pentonville	Male Local	£ 50,760	£ 53,967	921	1.82	1	43%	2	12.00%	8.40%	9	3
Portland	Male Category C	£ 51,221	£ 52,392	463	1.55	2	53%	2	8.50%	9.80%	2	3
Preston	Male Local	£ 48,135	£ 73,895	428	1.10	3	70%	3	4.70%	9.50%	8	2
Ranby	Male Category C	£ 43,693	£ 46,825	893	1.78	3	66%	2	7.80%	9.10%	1	4
Risley	Male Category C	£ 38,493	£ 37,229	1051	2.38	3	64%	2	4.20%	8.60%	2	5
Rochester	Male Category C	£ 48,191	£ 39,100	804	2.31	2	56%	2	11.50%	13.00%	3	3
Send	Female closed	£ 80,461	£ 58,562	282	1.40	3	71%	4	3.4%	4.8%	-	
Stafford	Male Category C	£ 38,874	£ 34,819	749	2.46	3	78%	3	1.70%	11.60%	7	4
Standford Hill	Male open	£ 38,835	£ 35,766	464	2.85	4	87%	4	6.7%	29.2%	-	
Stocken	Male Category C	£ 38,521	£ 39,988	974	2.45	3	77%	2	6.50%	8.50%	1	5
Stoke Heath	Male Category C	£ 41,764	£ 44,409	662	2.01	3	78%	3	1.50%	4.90%	1	3
Styal	Female Local	£ 61,030	£ 46,059	479	1.70	3	67%	4	6.4%	3.3%	-	
Sudbury	Male open	£ 35,807	£ 30,019	581	3.48	3	78%	3	1.3%	33.9%	-	
Swansea	Male Local	£ 60,051	£ 75,742	267	0.89	3	70%	2	1.00%	8.80%	2	5
Swinfen Hall	male category c	£ 45,532	£ 41,122	604	1.86	2	59%	3	8.70%	8.70%	1	6
Thorn Cross	Male open	£ 46,139	£ 35,725	397	2.78	4	83%	4	1.4%	28.0%	-	
Usk	Male Category C	£ 43,860	£ 50,789	378	1.70	4	89%	3	3.40%	10.30%	1	4
Wakefield	male category A	£ 57,954	£ 55,469	749	1.27	3	79%	3	2.2%	0.0%	-	
Wandswoth	Male Local	£ 40,630	£ 62,970	967	1.55	2	51%	3	7.10%	7.00%	10	9
Warren Hill	Male Category C	£ 59,631	£ 55,674	263	1.32	4	92%	4	6.70%	4.30%	1	5
Wayland	Male Category C	£ 40,536	£ 38,275	973	2.44	3	70%	3	15.10%	6.70%	1	2
Wealstun	Male Category C	£ 46,354	£ 45,238	810	2.04	3	66%	3	10.50%	8.20%	1	5
Whetton	Male Category C	£ 40,008	£ 40,326	775	2.09	3	74%	4	3.00%	3.10%	1	7
Whitemoor	male category A	£ 94,692	£ 90,721	473	0.80	3	74%	3	3.4%	-	-	
Winchester	Male Local	£ 56,270	£ 58,017	467	1.42	2	53%	2	9.00%	16.90%	6	9
Woodhill	Male local	£ 93,806	£ 70,855	637	1.14	2	55%	3	13.20%	7.60%	3	6
Wormwood												
Scrubbs	Male Local	£ 46,082	£ 43,199	1162	2.31	1	50%	2	11.50%	10.60%	5	6
Wymott	Male Category C	£ 44,645	£ 40,027	1101	2.17	3	63%	3	5.90%	2.20%	1	3

---

## Appendix II: Letter received from Howard League for Penal Reform

**Howard League** for Penal Reform

1 Ardleigh Road  
London N1 4HS  
Tel: 020 7249 7373  
Email: [info@howardleague.org](mailto:info@howardleague.org)  
Web: [www.howardleague.org](http://www.howardleague.org)

9 May 2022

Dear Frank,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of SWAP.

The Howard League agrees that megaprisons are not the answer and that the government's prison expansion plans will only worsen existing problems.

The government's recent [Prisons Strategy White Paper](#) sets out their vision for the future of prisons, including the creation of 20,000 new prison places. It imagines a bigger prison estate which is also, somehow, more intimate.

The White Paper suggests that in future, staff will have an in-depth understanding of the people in their care and will be able to prevent problems before they happen. In our [response](#), we explained that the government cannot simultaneously expand the prison estate and transform relationships between staff and people in prison.

The prison estate is already experiencing significant problems with staffing, including staff shortages and – according to [Howard League members in prison](#) and [young people who are in contact with our legal service](#) – a decline in constructive relationships between staff and prisoners. Staffing will become an even bigger issue with the construction of new, larger prisons.

Instead of exploring how prisons and the people in them can begin to recover from the pandemic, the government is pursuing an approach which has already failed.

The most recent example of this failure is Berwyn prison, which opened in North Wales in 2017. The prison cost £250m to build and was designed to hold more than 2,100 men.

In 2019, [an inspection report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons](#) found that Berwyn's population was capped at 1,300 while the prison waited for more staff. More than three quarters of the existing staff had less than two years of experience, which had a negative impact on many aspects of the prison regime. Staff physically restrained people in the prison much more often than at other, similar prisons, and assaults against staff were also more common.

Inspectors also found that there was a lack of activity places, that too many people were locked up during the working day, and that many of the jobs which were available in the prison lacked purpose.

The government has not learnt from the experience of Berwyn and is on the verge of making the same mistakes all over again. There is no reason to believe that new megaprisons will solve the many problems in the prison estate, and every reason to think that they will simply compound staffing issues and the lack of purposeful activity in prison.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Coomber

Chief Executive

## Appendix III: Specific aspects relevant to Wethersfield

### 1. Prison strategy:

- a. Cost savings: It is questionable whether the construction of a prison at Wethersfield would allow for the full closure of HMP Chelmsford as they each perform different functions.
- b. Regional excess capacity: There are currently 7,805 Category B prison facilities in England and Wales. The construction of a 1,715 Category B prison at Wethersfield would mean approximately a fifth of officially designated prison B places would be in one very remote site in the South East of England. Although there are likely to be more Category B prisoners than designated Category B prison places at any one time, this suggests a significant geographical concentration that is completely at odds with the MOJ's purported rehabilitation ethos outlined in the UK Government's recent White Paper. As Figure 11 shows, there is no deficit of prison capacity in the East of England. Increasing capacity in this region through the expansion at nearby HMP Highpoint and the proposed construction at Wethersfield is simply an inadequate substitute for addressing site issues in London and risks exacerbating problems with rehabilitation in the same way as the Carter review rebuked the MOJ 15 years ago.

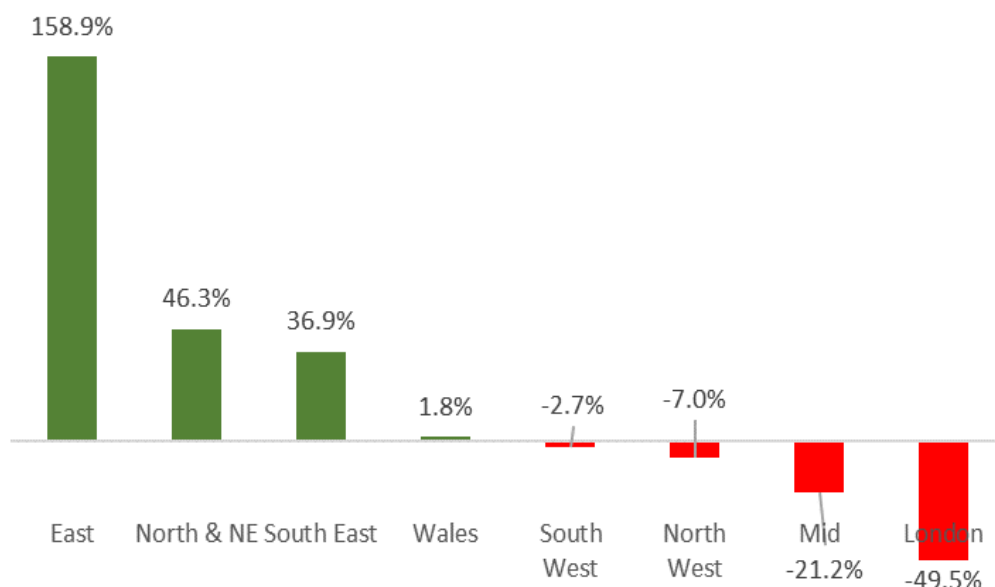


Figure 11: Regional prison capacity compared with regional prisoner origin

Derived from HMP Prison capacity data and Local Authority prisoner data provided under Freedom of Information Request 211218001, 17/12/01. Note the planned Highpoint expansion is not included in these numbers.

### 2. Site selection criteria:

- a. The Wethersfield site does not meet the MOJ's own requirements for a prison. The only reason it has been selected as a potential site is that the land is currently owned by the Ministry of Defence.
- b. In 2016 the MOJ asked several district councils to highlight potential sites that fulfilled their construction criteria. These included a flat land area of 25 acres; no clear impediments to achieving planning permission; ground conditions with no abnormal costs to redevelop (non-flood zone); easy access to utilities and transport; no ecological or historic designations on site; manageable contamination; and previously developed Brownfield status. In response Tendring District Council proposed three sites all located close to the A120 and adjacent to areas of substantial economic deprivation. The MOJ appears to have rejected these sites purely because of their non-brownfield status. Rather it selected Wethersfield (with its contestable brownfield status) **despite the fact that it failed on a number of other site selection criteria** including economic uplift potential (it is not an area of high unemployment), its remote and inaccessible location, likelihood of higher cost and delays due to its inaccessibility and a number of unresolved ecological and historical legacy issues

3. Geographical access

- a. Given the likelihood that Wethersfield would be used as a spill-over from London prisons, we investigated barriers to family access using travel cost data using the cheapest return fares on 22/05/22. Return journeys by public transport from South-West, West and South London cost up to £54.70, took up to 5 hours and involved multiple changes of transport mode. It seems inconceivable that this is any way facilitates family-prisoner relationships.
- b. According to Index of Multiple Deprivation data published by the UK Government, Wethersfield and Finchingfield have an Access to Services ranking of 1, meaning they are amongst the 10% most inaccessible areas in the entire country. The proposed Wethersfield site is located a long distance from an emergency hospital and all other amenities. HMIP reports suggests that remoteness is a key barrier to prisoner rehabilitation.

- 4. People: Labour markets: The average salary in 2021 in the Braintree district of Essex in which Wethersfield is situated, was £34,600 which is far higher than most entry level prison salaries. As Figure 12 shows, two mega prisons at Wethersfield would have to compete for staff with several other regional prisons who are already facing severe recruitment and retention issues.

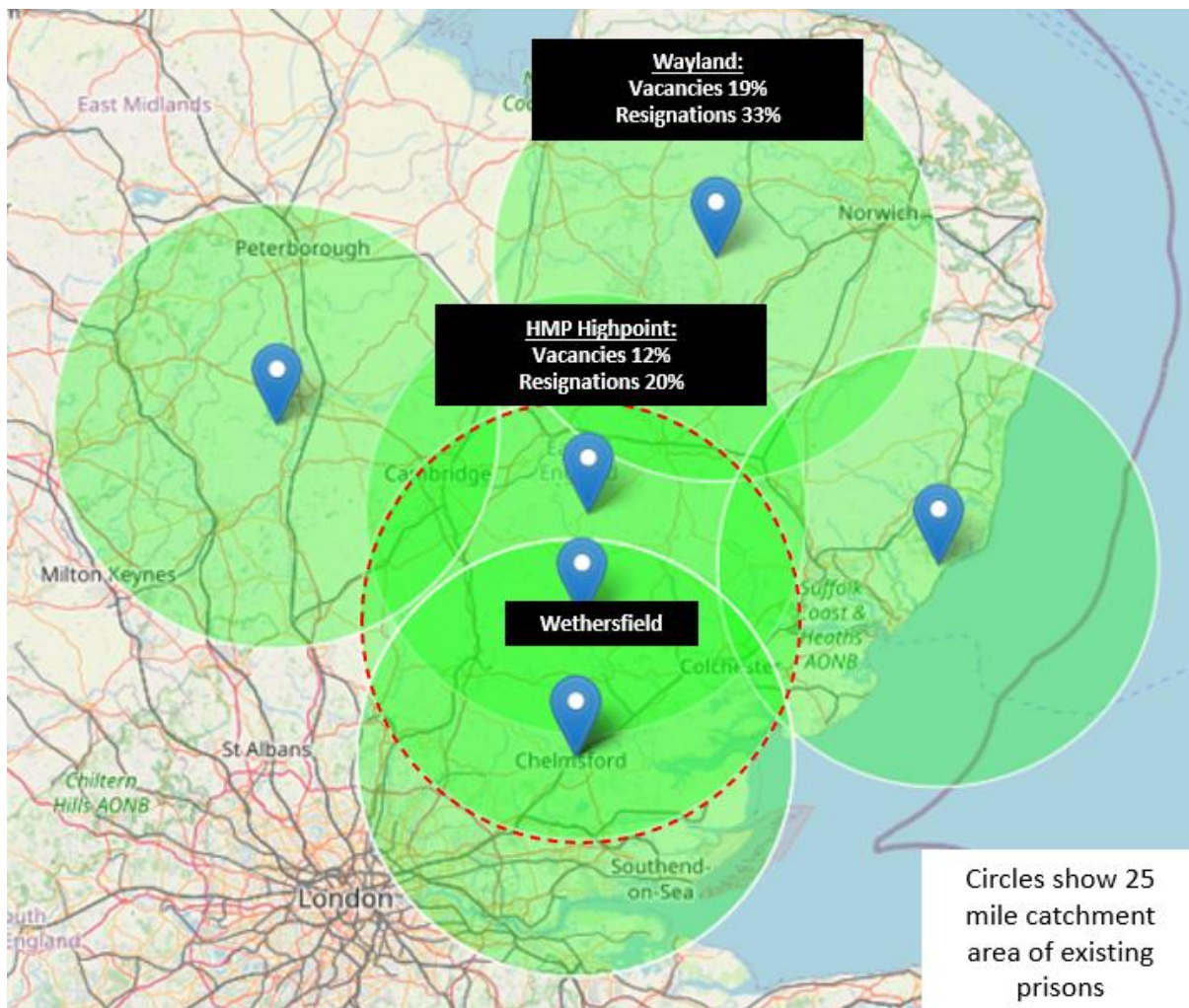


Figure 12: Competition for prison staff in a region already facing issues

Diagram constructed using Freemaptools, 2021