

Turning to some of the positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to receive your comments that the people at HMP Kirkham are treated fairly, humanely and their relationship with staff has markedly improved. It was pleasing the Board again recognises the leadership of the Governor particularly around the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. I appreciate your comments highlighting there has been a much stronger focus and greater awareness of equality and diversity issues through regular bulletins and the positive emphasis on religious festivals / history events. I was also pleased to see in your report the impressive artwork created in the library and to learn some pieces of work were commended by Koestler Arts.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Justice Secretary and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Kirkham.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chalk'.

ALEX CHALK MP

HMP KIRKHAM: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Facilities Maintenance and Repairs

The pandemic has understandably affected some elements of the service delivery at HMP Kirkham and the availability of third-party contractor(s). HMPPS has worked hard along with Amey colleagues to minimise these effects and staff absences, although some delays have been outside their control due to preventing the spread of the virus. At the Estates meeting attended by the Governor various performance elements of the facilities management contract is monitored (also attended Amey).

There has been progress made to the lighting improvement work, additional luminaires around the perimeter outskirts of the prison and lighting to the temporary accommodation is complete. Several boilers have been identified as requiring replacement in the accommodation billets, the funding has been agreed and HMPPS PMG are working alongside Amey to determine the scope and cost of this project. As the Board are aware, it is unfortunate that this work will not be completed before 2022.

Regarding the demolition of the old hangars, this Ministry of Justice (MoJ) funded project began in January 2021 and after some delays due to the recruiting of Operational Support Grade escorts for the project, work is now progressing and is expected to take 18 months. A new gymnasium (another MoJ funded project), timber workshop and industries store will be built as part of the hangar replacement programme. The timber workshop structural steelwork frame has been erected and work is progressing. To enable some timber production to continue at HMP Kirkham and support the wider prison estate, a temporary workshop has been developed.

Detailed building design work of the gymnasium is currently underway to determine matters such as the size, layout, planning factors and environmental performance. Whilst there isn't an agreed start date, early indications are favouring late 2021. In terms of the temporary accommodation units, all four units are occupied, helping reduce double occupancy. Although temporary power via generators were considered as an immediate solution but were prone to high cost and maintenance, funding to upgrade the power supply has now been received and work is currently underway.

Phone Call Charges

As mentioned in last year's response, call tariffs set for the PIN phones are commensurate with those that are used for fixed line telephony within private homes, with calls made at weekends attracting a lower charge than those made during the core week and calls to mobile phones attracting a much higher premium. BT has reduced the cost of PIN phone system calls during this pandemic until visits can resume. While the PIN phone system is not directly comparable to any other public payphone service, security and monitoring is essential to the specific requirements of HMPPS, services and costs are currently being reviewed.

Purple Visits (video calls)

There have been some technical challenges in terms of call quality and user experience, as a result, some adjustments have been made, which appear to have improved feedback and this can be seen in the continued rise in the take up of video calls. HMPPS is committed to keeping a secure video calling

capability as a core tool to support family ties beyond the pandemic. Within open prisons, mobile phones are permitted as a transitional measure for family contact as part of regime mitigations. Further considerations for their use are being made in line with regime recovery work.

Locally, HMP Kirkham has created an additional slot for purple visits at weekends. Post regime recovery from Covid-19, this facility will be available during the profiled domestic visiting time Friday to Sunday. Additional resources have been funded which will provide a further mid-week visits period including purple visits. It is hoped that there will be a greater interest in purple visits at HMP Kirkham in the coming months ahead.