

# PRISON ISLAND

WINTER 2021 UPDATE



Prison Expansion in  
England, Wales & Scotland

3RD  
EDITION

By Corporate Watch

# Corporate Watch

corporate-critical news and research since 1996

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## About Corporate Watch

Corporate Watch is a not-for-profit co-operative providing critical information on the social and environmental impacts of corporations and capitalism. Since 1996 our research, journalism, analysis and training has supported people affected by corporations and those taking action for radical social change.

Corporate Watch exists to investigate corporations, explain and analyse how corporate power and capitalism work. Gaining an understanding of the role corporations play, the specific mechanisms of how they operate and how they can be successfully targeted is crucial for everyday struggles against exploitation, as part of confronting and challenging corporate power and capitalism more broadly.

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# INTRODUCTION

Corporate Watch published the report *Prison Island: Prison Expansion in England, Wales and Scotland* in August 2018. We then released an updated second edition in January 2019.

This insert is our third update on the current status of prison expansion across England, Wales and Scotland. *Since our first report, the state has nearly doubled its incarceration plans, from 10,000 new prison places to 18,000.*

## **The Disastrous Prison Estates Transformation Programme**

As explored in more detail in the *Prison Island* introduction section, in 2016 the British government announced plans for one of the biggest prison building programs in generations. The Prison Estates Transformation Programme aimed to create 10,000 new prison places by 2020.



None of the original objectives of the PETP have been achieved:

- Build five new prisons by 2019-20 – FAIL
- Build an additional four new prisons by 2020-2021 – FAIL
- Build two new residential blocks in 2017-18 – just one block was constructed at HMP Stocken in the East Midlands.

In fact, only 206 places had been created by 2020. So why did the government fail so badly to meet its targets?

A National Audit Office investigation into the programme reported that construction timelines were impacted by delays in agreeing and receiving funding to build new prisons<sup>1</sup>. This includes the failure to successfully close and sell current prison sites planned for redevelopment.

The community campaign Reclaim Holloway successfully delayed the sale of the HMP Holloway site in North London, which had a knock on effect on the financing of the new prison builds. The closure of other prisons was also delayed, due to overcrowding in the prison system.

Community resistance effectively halted the proposed mega prison for Port Talbot in North Wales. Packed-out public meetings, demonstrations and negative media coverage made the Welsh Assembly withdraw its support for the project.

In Wigan meanwhile, residents stalled the building of a new mega prison there by raising environmental health concerns around asbestos threats that would be caused by dismantling the existing prison site. The mega-prison in Rochester, Kent was also scrapped, apparently for financing reasons.

# The New Prisons Programme

In August 2019 Boris Johnson reaffirmed the state's commitment to building the new prisons and the treasury announced it would provide the Ministry of Justice with up to £2.5bn of funding as part of a "plan to crackdown on violent crime"<sup>2</sup>. The Prison Estates Transformation Programme was rebranded to the "New Prisons Programme".

The government is now trying to push the programme through faster, as part of a spending package to "boost the economy" following the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. A new government taskforce has been created called "Project Speed", led by Chancellor Rishi Sunak, to make the construction happen faster<sup>3</sup>.

**The government has nearly doubled its target: it now wants to create 18,000 new prison places by the mid 2020s.** This will involve a combination of constructing new prisons and expanding existing ones with new cell blocks.

Prison expansion is driven by multiple factors, explored in more depth in *Prison Island*. One factor of note is the

significant increase in policing. In June 2021, then-Minister of State for Prisons and Probation Alex Chalk said in a consultation document:

"We expect there will be an increase in demand for prison places as the activity of our courts system continues to ramp up to full operating capacity following the national restrictions due to the COVID 19 pandemic. **The increasing numbers of police, in line with the Prime Minister's commitment to recruit 20,000 additional officers, is also likely to contribute to a higher prison population,** and we therefore believe that creating 18,000 additional prison places will help to mitigate pressure on prison places in England and Wales in the coming years."<sup>4</sup>

The government has also stated that the projected demand is driven by changes to sentencing and an ongoing increase in the number of long-sentenced offenders. Both of these are features in the new **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill** which will be a major driver of incarceration (read more about this in [huckmag](#), [here](#))<sup>5</sup>.



# A Racist Economy Built on Cages

The government has been criticised for using carceral punishment as a means of "boosting the nation's financial well-being"<sup>6</sup>. Waves of prison construction and prison privatisation since the early 1990s have created an economy built on cages, with England, Wales and Scotland having the highest rates of imprisonment in Western Europe<sup>7</sup>.

According to the National Audit Office, in 2018-19, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) spent around £1.69 billion to operate prisons and £184 million on capital spending, comprising of £113 million on maintenance and £71 million on constructing prisons and reorganising the estate<sup>8</sup>.

Despite the phenomenal amounts of money involved, **prison conditions continue to deteriorate**. As of April 2019, there were 63,200 outstanding maintenance jobs. HMPPS estimated in November 2019 that it could cost £916 million to address its major works backlog<sup>9</sup>.

**Meanwhile, the harm experienced by people behind bars continues to escalate**. Between 2015 and 2018, there were 378 self-inflicted deaths, and a 73% increase in self-harm incidents, as well as a 63% increase in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. Self-harm rates are now the highest on record<sup>10</sup>.

As documented in *Prison Island*, prison sentences are extremely racialised,



classified and gendered. In December 2018, it was recorded that **over a quarter of people in prison in the UK are people of colour**, when

they make up only 14% of the total population<sup>11</sup>. Research has shown the odds of imprisonment for indictable offence at the Crown Court are 53%, 55%, and 81% higher, respectively, for Black people, Asian people, and those of other minority ethnic groups, even when factoring in higher not-guilty plea rates<sup>12</sup>.

In April 2020 at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, Corporate Watch reported on the huge ruptures the pandemic was creating in the prison industrial complex, with the first instances of major corona-related social unrest and urgent calls for prisoner solidarity and prison abolition<sup>13</sup>.

Tens of thousands of prisoners started being released worldwide to mitigate the effects of the virus, while those still confined experienced deteriorating conditions. States exploited prisoner

**ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND HAVE THE HIGHEST RATES OF IMPRISONMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE**



labour to make masks and other items to sell during the pandemic, while prison riots and breakouts erupted across the world. The UK stood out internationally in its disinterest in releasing anyone to save lives.

It was a difficult and devastating period for people in prison who experienced often more than 23 hours a day inside their cells, enduring total social isolation and a ban on visits from partners, family or friends. Research published in the Lancet showed that in England and Wales, **the death rates of prisoners from Covid-19 was more than three times higher than that of the general population**<sup>14</sup>.

Many people recognise the racism and oppression that the prison system is founded on and seek alternatives to prison and policing. Community Action on Prison Expansion, who have been resisting prison expansion since 2014, say:

"We are trying to shrink the state's capacity to repress. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fight these prison expansion projects, and that time is now."

Get involved with Community Action on Prison Expansion by finding them at [info@cape-campaign.org](mailto:info@cape-campaign.org) [www.cape-campaign.org](http://www.cape-campaign.org) @CAPExpansion

# THE PRISONS

This section introduces the locations of the prisons that make up the New Prisons Programme.

## HMP Five Wells, Wellingborough

**Status:** In construction

**Timeline:** Due to open in January 2022.

Construction started at HMP

Wellingborough in September 2019, two years after it originally received planning permission.

The prison will lock up to 1,680 people at a time and is being built by Kier, another company profiled by Corporate Watch<sup>15</sup>. In August 2019, construction was stopped for six hours by anti-prison campaigners



who occupied the site<sup>16</sup>. It was occupied again in 2021 for two days, costing Kier £1.5million. G4S has won the £300 million contract to run the prison<sup>17</sup>. Find a longer history in *Prison Island*.

# HMP Glen Parva, Leicestershire

**Status:** In construction

**Timeline:** Building due to finish in 2023.

The new mega-prison in Leicestershire will incarcerate over 1,600 people. Despite securing planning permission in 2017, construction work only began in May 2020<sup>18</sup>. The process was slowed by the government scrapping Interserve as a project partner and then starting a rebidding process that was won by Lendlease. Read an overview of Lendlease's controversial construction projects here<sup>19</sup>. Find a longer history of the prison in *Prison Island*.



# Full Sutton, East Yorkshire

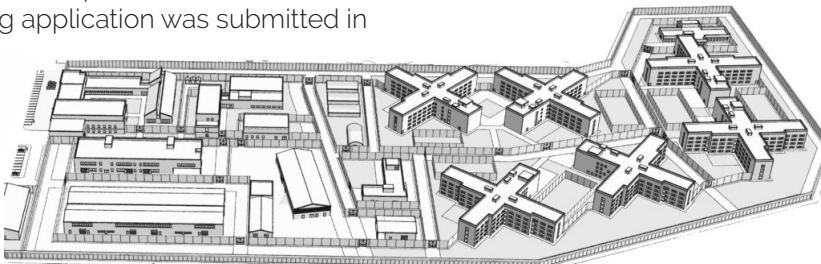
**Status:** Contracting phase

**Timeline:** Contractors and suppliers being confirmed, construction starting in 2022, to be finished by early 2026.

On 12 September 2019, plans for a mega-prison next to HMP Full Sutton in East Yorkshire were approved despite 2,700 objections<sup>20</sup>. The prison will have the capacity to imprison 1,440 people. The plans have been 'super-sized' for an additional 423 prisoners since the first planning application was submitted in 2017.



Mace is the British multinational company overseeing delivery of the prison build. Corporate Watch wrote an extensive profile of the company in 2018<sup>21</sup>, highlighting the deadly working conditions people are exposed to on the company's projects in the Middle East, as well as its role in the construction of the habitat-destroying HS2 High Speed Railway and developments for Heathrow Airport. Find a longer history in *Prison Island*.



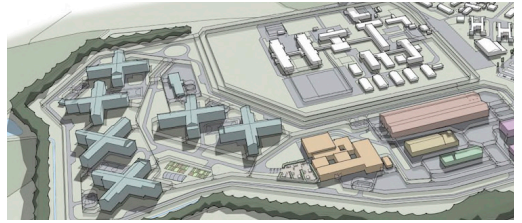
# Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire

**Status:** Planning permission phase

**Timeline:** Subject to planning permission, construction could start in 2022/23, with the prison opening in 2025.

A planning application was submitted in June 2021 for a new mega-prison in rural Buckinghamshire. If built, the prison will lock up 1,468 people.

The site is adjacent to HMP Springhill and HMP Grendon, both of which are in bad condition. In HMP Springhill's latest inspection report, poor living conditions were reported including rats. Inspectors wrote about HMP Grendon: "The buildings have not aged well and they are tired and dilapidated; it is one of only a



few prisons that still does not have in-cell sanitation."<sup>22</sup> In their survey, 38% of Black and minority ethnic prisoners reported being victimised by staff. One in five prisoners said it was easy to get illicit drugs. So the MOJ wants to build a huge prison next to two prisons they already fail to 'manage'.

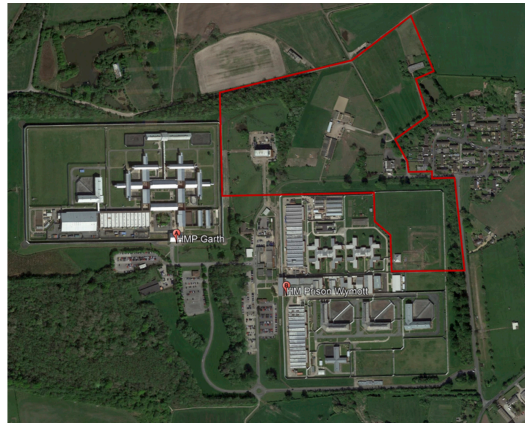
The local community are already experiencing a high volume of construction traffic and disruption from HS2 and East West Rail developments in the area. Local councillors and community members are actively resisting the project<sup>23</sup>.

# Chorley, Lancashire

**Status:** Planning permission phase

**Timeline:** Planning application submitted, decision expected by the end of November, construction planned for 2022 or 2023 before opening in 2025.

The government announced plans to build a new category C mega prison in Chorley, Lancashire in June 2021, with plans to imprison more than 1715 people<sup>24</sup>. The site is owned by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and sits next to two existing prisons, HMP Garth and HMP Wymott. Corporate Watch has detailed the disturbing history of these two prisons and the 97 people that have lost their lives behind their walls<sup>25</sup>. The prison will include 7,367m<sup>2</sup> of workshops to exploit prisoner labour. The site is



close to Chorley, Leyland, Preston, and Southport and only a train ride away from Manchester. It will no doubt imprison people from communities across the North West.



# Market Harborough, Leicestershire

**Status:** Planning permission phase

**Timeline:** Planning application submitted on 10 September 2021, decision expected by 20 December, construction planned for 2022 or 2023 before opening in 2025.

The government unveiled plans for a new mega prison in Market Harborough in June 2021. The 1,715 place prison

is proposed for land owned by the Ministry of Justice adjacent to HMP Gartree. Unlike the other new prisons, this one would be a Category B prison receiving people from local courts. HMP Gartree's latest inspection report described residential accommodation as 'unacceptably poor' despite multiple bids to fund the refurbishment of the prison<sup>26</sup>.

## Essex Prisons

**Status:** Consultation phase

**Timeline:** Planning applications to be submitted in 2022.

At the end of September 2021, the government announced plans to build two new prisons in Essex. The prisons will each lock up 1,715 people. One is a category B prison and the other is a category C resettlement prison.

The site is the Wethersfield Air Base site, six miles north of Braintree. It has a long

history of military use (including nuclear weapons)<sup>27</sup>.

How to use the land made available by the Ministry of Defence's land disposal programme has been contested. The local council submitted the site to the Ministry of Justice as a potential site for a prison in 2017<sup>28</sup>. Plans for up to 5,000 homes have been replaced to make way for the prisons<sup>29</sup>.

## Expansion plans at Four Existing Prisons

In October 2020, the government released the details of four prisons that are set to be expanded over the next three years<sup>30</sup>. The new buildings will create more than 930 new cells.

HMPs Guys Marsh in Dorset, Rye Hill in Warwickshire and Stocken in Rutland will have additional house blocks and High

Down, Surrey will get a new workshop. Planning permission is being sought for works to begin, and the first prisoners are expected to arrive from Winter 2022 at Rye Hill, and throughout 2023 at the remaining sites. Construction work across the four prisons is expected to cost around £200 million.



# WOMEN'S PRISONS UPDATE

As part of the New Prisons Programme, the government also want to create an additional 500 prison places in women's prisons. Plans were announced in January 2021 with a budget of £150 million<sup>31</sup>. HMP Drake Hall, Eastwood Park, Foston Hall, Send and Styal have all been earmarked for possible expansion.

Then-Prisons Minister Alex Chalk said in July 2021 that the building programme "is still at a relatively early feasibility investigation stage". He added: "final decisions will only be taken on each site once surveys and investigations have been completed, and after the established local consultation and planning application processes have been concluded."<sup>32</sup>

In commenting on the proposals, Feminist group Sisters Uncut describe new prisons as "dangerous distractions" saying that:

"At least 46% of the people held in women's prisons are survivors of domestic violence, and at least 53% are survivors of emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood. We don't know exactly how trans women and non-binary people in custody are represented in these numbers, as their identities are continually disregarded and excluded from research efforts.

These plans are yet another dangerous distraction from the fatal funding cuts that the Tory government have made to women's services and refuge provision – which has been slashed by a quarter since 2010 and has left survivors locked out of services, locked up in prisons and detention centres, and locked in to violent relationships."<sup>33</sup>

*Below are some images of feminist resistance to prisons and policing.*



# CHILDREN'S PRISONS

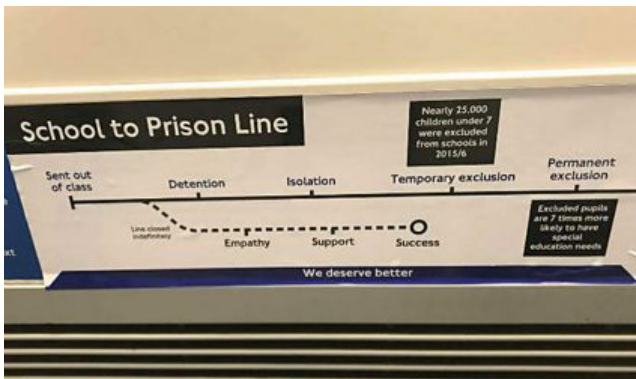
Corporate Watch reported in *Prison Island* about government plans to open a new 'Secure School' as part of a wave of children's prisons. The contract to take over Medway Secure Training Centre (STC) in Kent from G4S was put out to tender after abuse was exposed in the prison.

Christian charity Oasis won the contract to manage the prison that locks up 12-17 year olds. The government will pay Oasis more than £160,000 a year for each child imprisoned in Medway (with 70 being able to be locked up at once)<sup>34</sup>. The prison was closed in March 2019 and is not expected to be operational until 2022<sup>35</sup>. Corporate Watch released a detailed profile of Oasis in February 2020<sup>36</sup>.

In the year ending March 2020, there was an average of just over 780 children in custody at any one time<sup>37</sup>. The STC prisons have a long legacy of abuse and violence. You can read Corporate Watch's investigation into Youth Prisons here<sup>38</sup>.

Children were moved from Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre to other accommodation in June 2021 after serious abuse at the prison<sup>39</sup>. Inspectors reported that there were many occasions "where children were not taken to medical appointments and going without their prescribed medication, frequent incidents of racist and transphobic abuse not addressed by prison guards and allowed to escalate to bullying, intimidation, physical assaults and fights, and finally difficulties in recruiting and retaining enough prison guards who when they are supervising know little about the children's health needs or risks."<sup>40</sup>

The campaign No Kids in Jail – Playgrounds Not Prisons launched following the announcements. They are an abolitionist collective organising to fight these youth prisons. They say: "Our fight begins with Medway, but extends to all of the UK as children's jails must not continue to be folded into normalcy."<sup>41</sup> Learn more at: [www.nomorekidsinprison.wordpress.com](http://www.nomorekidsinprison.wordpress.com)



# PRISON EXPANSION IN SCOTLAND

In the second edition of *Prison Island*, we shared an article on a new mega-prison proposed for Glasgow<sup>42</sup>. We also reported on other prison projects started by the Scottish government, including HMP Highland, a new women's prison at Corton Vale, and five mini-prisons called

'Community Custody Units', as well as a potential non-binary prison.

Below are some brief updates on these prison expansion projects.

## HMP Glasgow

**Status:** Planning and Contracting Phase

**Timeline:** Outline planning permission granted, remediation work, surveys and more detailed planning submissions needed before construction can take place, completion scheduled for 2025.

The new prison is designed for 1,200 people. It is meant to be a replacement for the overcrowded HMP Barlinnie prison. Outline planning permission was granted in August 2020 subject to certain conditions<sup>43</sup>.

Land remediation is a significant need at the highly polluted Provan Gas Holder Station site, with the council only approving works once a remediation scheme has been carried out. Environmental reports identified localised toxic contaminants arsenic, lead, copper, zinc, PAH's and widespread asbestos at concentrations which are considered to pose a potential risk to human health<sup>44</sup>.

The Justice Secretary said he expects the development to be completed by 2025<sup>45</sup>. The prison has been designed by architect firm BakerHicks. Other



companies involved in the planning phase include Colliers International (planning consultants), Mason Evans (geo-environmental consultants), Transport Planning Ltd (transport surveys), Nevis Environment Ltd (environmental impact assessment consultants), and ITPEnergised (ecology consultants). Construction contractors have not been announced. See the planning documents here<sup>46</sup>.





## Corton Vale

**Status:** Construction phase

**Timeline:** Planned to open in early 2022.

Corton Vale women's prison near Stirling is to be bulldozed and replaced. The prison was nicknamed 'the vale of death' after 11 prisoners killed themselves. Find a longer history in *Prison Island*.

The prison hit the news in July 2021, after it came to light that mentally ill women in distress were being segregated for up to 82 days and subject to excessive force from officers<sup>48</sup>. Isolation and confinement is no solution for complex mental health needs. The prison can currently lock up 307 people but a smaller prison for 80 people is planned for the site.

Morrison Construction has won the £54m contract to demolish the prison and build another in its place<sup>49</sup>.

## HMP Highland

**Status:** Planning and Contracting Phase

**Timeline:** The planning application is in process, completion scheduled for 2026.

Plans for a new prison in the Scottish highlands were announced in 2017 when outline planning permission was originally granted.

Work was meant to begin in 2018 with plans to open in 2020 however there have been significant delays. Justice secretary Keith Brown blames Brexit for loss of regional funding, materials and labour shortages<sup>47</sup>.

When built, it could lock up 200 people at one time. Find a longer history in *Prison Island*.



# Community Custody Units

Explored in more depth in our *Prison Island* Report, Community Custody Units are described by the Scottish Prison Service: "Units will have security, a perimeter fence and be staffed 24/7 but they won't look like traditional custodial facilities". The Scottish government had wanted to build five new CCUs by 2020 yet only two have made progress so far.

The Liliac Centre is being built at the site of a former health centre in Maryhill, Glasgow. It will house up to 24 people including mothers and babies. Taking two years from planning to construction, the prison is now being built by Ogilvie Construction<sup>50</sup>.

Another CCU is being built in the area of Hilltown, Dundee at the site of a former primary school. It will house 16 people. It is also being built by Ogilvie Construction. Both areas are among the hardest-hit by government cuts and austerity.



## Non-Binary Prison

There are no further developments since the idea was referenced in a government consultation document. Find a longer history in *Prison Island*.

# NIGERIA PRISONS UPDATE

In 2018, Corporate Watch reported on the British Government's plans to fund prison expansion in Nigeria<sup>51</sup>. A new 112-bed wing would have been built at Kiri Kiri Maximum Security Prison in Apapa, Lagos State, Nigeria, and was initiated to enable the deportation of prisoners from the UK to Nigeria.

Fortunately, the plans were cancelled. When asked about the progress of the prison's construction, the Foreign Office said in a Freedom of Information Request: "The UK has decided not to proceed with the proposed construction project", citing "challenges associated with design and cost"<sup>52</sup>. It did not mention the backlash to the project that was sparked after the announcement.

# PRISON PROFITEERS

Opposition to prisons is often discussed in a conceptual way – organisers and communities contest their validity, explore alternatives and talk about abolition.

However, they are also very much real physical constructions, with companies profiting from, and intimately involved in, their creation. Architects and engineers pore over designs of cells and wings, construction companies

build the structures and a range of other businesses create locks, alarm systems and fences. The 'prison industrial complex', is a term used to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems.

So, which companies make up the prison industrial complex? Who is building the mega-prisons?

## Alliance 4 New Prisons (A4NP)

The government announced the launch of the Alliance 4 New Prisons (A4NP) in July 2021<sup>53</sup>. The alliance brings together four contractors who will collaborate on "a delivery methodology that prioritises standardised precast concrete components." This basically means they will build components of the prisons off-site in factories, transport them and assemble them on site.

The new mega-prisons will share nearly-identical designs of certain features, such as house blocks. The prisons they will build include Full Sutton, Grendon Underwood, Chorley and Market Harborough.

The four contractors making up the alliance are ISG, Kier, Laing O'Rourke and Wates. The companies will be paid over £1bn between them. The contractors in the next section were all identified before the Alliance 4 New Prisons was



announced. They are mainly involved in building HMP Five Wells and HMP Glen Parva. However, we are confident that a number of them will be subcontracted by the new alliance.

# CONTRACTORS

## Kier

Kier is a multinational construction company and the principal contractor behind the new mega-prison in Wellingborough, recently called HMP Five Wells. Nearly complete, the prison is set to create cells to imprison more than 1600 people.

Corporate Watch previously published a detailed profile about Kier that covered issues such as worker blacklisting, animal laboratory construction, and their role in building the controversial high-speed railway, HS2<sup>54</sup>.

Kier were awarded £1.4 billion of HS2 projects in 2017 and are part of a group of companies managing the mega-project, which has faced resistance for over a decade<sup>55</sup>. There are decentralised and autonomous camps across the HS2 route.



## Lendlease

Lendlease is a global property developer and construction company that are the main contractors building the mega-prison HMP Glen Parva in Leicestershire. They were awarded a contract after the

original winner, Interserve, went under. The cost of building the prison jumped from £170 million to £286 million<sup>56</sup>. After years of delays, Lendlease started building in September 2020.

Corporate Watch profiled LendLease in 2017 highlighting previous prison builds in Australia and the UK, gentrification, worker blacklisting and even Donald Trump<sup>57</sup>.

## Bison Precast and Forterra

Bison Precast is manufacturing more than 4900 components for Wellingborough mega-prison. Their scope includes bespoke precast walls, hollowcore flooring, columns, stairs and landings. The order also includes insulated brick-faced sandwich panels to the entry building façade.

Bison Precast have three factories in the Midlands: Swadlincote and Somercotes, Derbyshire and Hoveringham, Nottingham<sup>58</sup>. A worker was crushed to death at their factory site in Swadlincote after health and safety failings<sup>59</sup>. The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the company has resulted in plans to mothball the factory site, leading to 225 job losses<sup>60</sup>.

Bison are seasoned prison builders, having worked with Kier to build HMP Oakwood, a mega-prison that opened in 2012<sup>61</sup>. It regularly locks up over 2000 people and is run for-profit by G4S. It





**BISON PRECAST**

a **Forterra** brand

has been named an increasingly violent prison with many assaults, deaths and high rates of self-harm<sup>62</sup>.

Bison Precast is owned by the Forterra Group, one of the largest manufacturers of building products in the UK<sup>63</sup>. Forterra employ 1800 people and have 18 manufacturing sites. They are trying to build the largest brick factory in Europe at Desford in Leicestershire<sup>64</sup>. You can find a list of Forterra's shareholders here<sup>65</sup>. Workers at Forterra's Newbury site previously went on strike over wages. One worker and GMB member said "It really sticks in our members' throats when they are being offered low pay rises, only to see directors pick up higher and higher bonuses."<sup>66</sup>

In 2017, a worker lost his arm and was paralysed from the waist down due to Forterra failing to maintain its machines properly<sup>67</sup>. The company was fined £200,000.

## Banagher Precast Concrete

Banagher Precast Concrete is "very proud" to be supplying 3,600 precast cell wall units and heated floor slabs to Kier for Wellingborough prison.

The company currently operate a 50 acre site with over 70 gantry cranes<sup>68</sup>. With a total of 5 mixers, Banagher has the capacity to produce over 150,000m<sup>3</sup> of concrete per year. They are an Irish company that has expanded into the UK.

They have offices in Banagher, Ireland and Norfolk and employ over 270 people. They also having a trading arm called Banagher Slats that profits from the dairy industry in Ireland by manufacturing slats for animal farm sheds<sup>69</sup>.

**BANAGHER**  
PRECAST CONCRETE



## FP McCann

FP McCann are the largest precast concrete manufacturer in the UK<sup>70</sup>. They are supplying ground beams, internal cross walls, corridor walls, cell slabs and sandwich panels for HMP Five Wells mega-prison<sup>71</sup>. They write: "Our early involvement in the supply chain ensured that our specialist skills and knowledge were embedded within the project."

They have twelve manufacturing facilities across the UK, as well as seven quarries and a sandpit in Ireland. They have depots in Northumberland, Cheshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire and Glasgow<sup>72</sup>.

**McC**  
**fpmccann**

A quarry worker who had worked for FP McCann for 19 years was killed in a dumper truck accident. The HSE inspector said the vehicle had "not been maintained in a safe condition and was not fit for use in a hazardous environment"<sup>73</sup>. FP McCann and two other building firms were also fined £36 million for taking part in an illegal price-fixing cartel<sup>74</sup>.

Campaign group, Save our Fens, have been resisting FP McCann's plans to expand a concrete manufacturing site in Littleport, Ely, Cambridgeshire since 2013. They fear the health risks of increased silica dust and echo the Environment Agency who consider that the proposed development may pose an unacceptable risk of causing detrimental impact to the surface water quality, amongst other environmental concerns<sup>75</sup>.

## PCE

Kier has appointed PCE Ltd as Wellingborough's superstructure and façade delivery partner<sup>76</sup>. They will deliver a precast concrete DfMA (Design for Manufacture and Assembly) solution for substructure, superstructure and facade for the seven four-storey Houseblocks, Care And Separation Unit (CASU) and Entry and Visits building.

PCE have pocketed millions in the 'custodial sector' e.g. building prisons and police stations. They were part of building North Wales Police Eastern Command Centre, that includes 32 police cells, as well as Blackpool Police Headquarters. They also built Basingstoke Police Centre and were part of building HMP Oakwood.

Unlike many companies, PCE continued to work through the pandemic, happy to put their workers at risk<sup>77</sup>.



## Curtins

Curtins has been employed as the structural engineer to design the seven house blocks, the CASU unit and the entrance building at Wellingborough prison<sup>78</sup>. In addition to this they also worked for PCE to produce all the precast concrete fabrication drawings. Eleonora Rocci is their project manager at Wellingborough, meanwhile Louise Rice is the design engineer for the project.

The Samaritans was PCE's dedicated charity in 2020<sup>79</sup>. This is ironic given the overwhelming number of people that kill themselves in British prisons. 334 people took their own life inside in 2018-19<sup>80</sup>, many people fear that rate will be higher due to the increasing amounts of bang-up during the pandemic.

Curtins are also experienced in the custodial sector. Previous projects include HMP Oakwood and HMP Jurby, a prison on the Isle of Man where a man died in March 2020<sup>81</sup>. They have also built courts in Caernarfon and Stockport.



# Mitchellson

Mitchellson Formwork and Civil Engineering Ltd is a structural engineering firm making £8 million from Wellingborough prison<sup>82</sup>. They are carrying out the substructure works on the site which includes the groundbeams and pile caps, underslab drainage, external drainage, cross site services and hard landscaping.

The company was fined £400,000 after a carpenter plunged to his death when a temporary platform collapsed during a £25m project<sup>83</sup>. Two other workers were also seriously injured. The Health and Safety Executive ruled that there was no design for the unsafe temporary platform and no risk assessment.



# Assa Abloy

The Assa Abloy Group is a multinational company that designs and makes locks, doors and security systems. They are a major supplier of custodial products to prison authorities both nationally and globally, used in prisons, immigration and detention centres, courts and other 'correctional' facilities. Their products include door and cell locks, holding room screens, prison gates, interview chairs, cell benches and handcuffs<sup>84</sup>.

They own a number of brands, such as Yale and HID. Assa Abloy sold their Israeli subsidiary, Mul-T-Lock, after pressure from the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement in 2009<sup>85</sup>.

# ASSA ABLOY



# British Gypsum

British Gypsum make 'interior lining systems' such as plaster, plasterboard and ceiling solutions.

The company made £160k working as a contractor to build HMP Berwyn in Wrexham<sup>86</sup>. This is the most recently built mega-prison which repeatedly makes the headlines for increasing violence<sup>87</sup>. Over a thousand prisoners have been sharing cells throughout the pandemic. More than 60 prison staff and prisoners had contracted the virus between March and June 2020<sup>88</sup>.

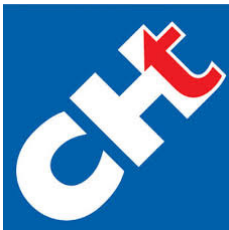
They are part of the Saint-Gobain group, the french multinational linked to environmental health scandals across the United States<sup>89</sup>. Celotex, another arm of Saint-Gobain, provided insulation for Grenfell Tower where 72 people lost their lives in 2017<sup>90</sup>.



## Crown House Technologies

Crown House Technologies is an engineering firm providing the mechanical works at Wellingborough Prison<sup>91</sup>. They are owned by Laing O'Rourke and were one of eight construction firms subject to scrutiny over their blacklisting practices<sup>92</sup>. In 2013 a worker died, and six others were injured after a preventable explosion of gas cylinders on one of their construction projects<sup>93</sup>.

Crown House Technologies are no strangers to prison construction. They were actively involved in building HMP Shotts in Scotland and HMP Berwyn in Wales<sup>94</sup>.



## William Hayley Engineering

William Haley Engineering is the programme's steelwork fabricators. They are a family owned business based in Somerset. The company also helped to build mega-prison HMP Berwyn. They are part of a company group called The Haley Group that includes FLI Structures and George Jackson Ltd<sup>95</sup>.

## Kingspan

Kingspan is a large building materials company based in Ireland that trades in over 70 countries. The specifics of their contract with the prison builds is unclear beyond 'component assembly', however, their major product is insulation.

Controversy has hit the company during the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, where it emerged that Philip Health, a technical manager with the insulation boards division until December 2009, said a builder who questioned the safety of the company's Kooltherm K15 product should "go f\*\*k themselves"<sup>96</sup>.

Quantities of Kingspan's K15 were used on Grenfell Tower, although much of the insulation on the building was made by Celotex (part of Saint Gobain who own British Gypsum listed above).



## WMS Underfloor Heating

WMS Underfloor Heating is providing 2,110 underfloor heating mats for Wellingborough prison<sup>97</sup>. The Cooper family-run company is based in Hertfordshire and supplies underfloor heating to a number of construction projects, including the headquarters for Greater Manchester police<sup>98</sup>.



# CONCLUSION

Through resisting prison expansion, connections can be made between the violence of the state and the power of corporations, who both build prisons and exploit the prisoners within them. By questioning this fundamental feature in society that is the prison system, more radical visions of society can be nurtured in our communities. Arguments for prison can be dismantled and solidarity extended beyond bars. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fight these prison expansion projects, and that time is now.

To get involved in campaigns against prison expansion contact Community Action on Prison Expansion – <https://cape-campaign.org/>

To learn more about prison expansion, download Corporate Watch's Prison Island Report – <https://corporatewatch.org/prisonisland/>

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