



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Stanford Hill
Church Road
Eastchurch
ME12 4AA

24 November 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI STANFORD HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2021 – 31 MARCH 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 2022, especially as you were short of members. I would like to offer my condolences to the Board for the loss of a member who sadly passed away during the reporting year. I am very much aware of the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP/YOI Stanford Hill.

I am grateful to the Board for highlighting that the new Governor made a progressive start and your positive feedback about HMP/YOI Stanford Hill. Category D open prisons deliver against a comparable set of objectives and deliver similar outcomes. Each of the thirteen male open establishments have a unique operating environment and it is often difficult to make direct comparisons on the basis there are several variables outside the control of the Governor such as establishment location and local labour market. There are opportunities for Governors of open prisons to share good practice, conduct operational briefings, and solve issues through a monthly Open Prison forum.

It is encouraging to read that HMP/YOI Stanford Hill continues to be a well-run and effective prison, noting no reports of violent incidents during the reporting period and the successful rehabilitation of prisoners. It was also encouraging to note that despite the challenges presented by the pandemic and the staffing shortages, Covid-19 infections among the prisoners were relatively low.

HM Prison and Probation (HMPPS) comments in response to the 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/YOI Stanford Hill.

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Expansion Programme

To continue the successful resettlement of prisoners at HMP/YOI Stanford Hill, HMPPS will deliver 240 category D places. However, due to the loss of 80 places which no longer met statutory fire standards, this will leave a net increase in capacity of 160 places. Although the proposed expansion of HMP/YOI Stanford Hill is delayed due to issues outside of HMPPS' control, the development will significantly enhance the physical environment for prisoners and staff alike. We expect construction to start in 2024 and occupancy in 2025. Ancillaries include construction of a healthcare office, library, record store and refurbishment of the workshop and CCTV gatehouse.

Kitchen & Dinner Area

Plans remain in place to have these two new purposeful built facilities completed in the same Timeframe as the expansion programme. The Governor will keep you informed of updates / changes to schedules.

Visits Area

The concrete base outside the visits area is not intended for use as a play area for children and is fenced off. As part of plans to expand the visiting area, the Governor has submitted a bid to build a small conservatory on the base and a decision is yet to be made.

Internet Room

Creation of an internet room has been discussed at the Open Prisons forum. Working with HMPPS Security Team, the Governor is seeking to pilot an internet room in the coming months. An internet facility within the Old Mill Village remains available for risk assessed men to conduct job searches with external employers, prepare CVs and communicate with future employers.

Facilities Management (FM)

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Property Directorate engages with the FM provider regularly to drive performance. This is measured through Key Performance Indicators, tracking results periodically and applying financial penalties where necessary; this is through an ongoing dialogue that is held monthly. Regarding the prison laundry, the contractors were unfortunately unable to resolve the issue on the first visit and several return visits were necessary. The laundry dryers are yet to be fixed, the Governor is working with the provider and the supplier to agree a suitable date to install the machinery new replacement parts. The Governor will continue to work closely with the MoJ Property Operations Manager to directly address concerns so that work jobs can be dealt with in a timely manner as possible.

All gardens equipment holds a full warranty and is routinely maintained. The FM provider employs fully trained/skilled grounds staff at HMP/YOI Stanford Hill, and the equipment procured will enable them to perform these tasks. The grounds equipment is not intended for operation or use by the prisoner work force.

Hangar Building

HMPPS recognises the issues highlighted by the Board and is currently exploring options to secure the structural integrity of the building. Discussions are to be held with the local council and heritage organisations, to establish a long-term purpose for the structures and will feature as part of any future work.

Work is due to commence shortly to erect the scaffolding from inside and outside of the hangar before a protective layer is placed around the building to protect it. It is anticipated that it will take several months for this work to be completed.