



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair
Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Long Lartin
South Littleton
Evesham
WR11 8TZ

MoJ ref: SUB135588

19 July 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP LONG LARTIN INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Thank you for submitting the Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for HMP Long Lartin. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the considerable time and dedication given to providing independent oversight within a particularly demanding Long-Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE) prison. Your report offers a detailed and thoughtful account of both the challenges faced and the efforts made to address them.

I was very sorry to learn that there were multiple deaths in custody during the reporting year, leading to HMP Long Lartin being designated a *cluster death* establishment, additional support is being provided as a result. Every death in custody is a tragedy and my condolences are with the families, friends and all those affected. All deaths are subject to independent investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and although some procedural weaknesses have been identified, which will be addressed, it was encouraging to read that clinical care was found largely to be of an equivalent standard to that in the community. My thoughts are also with the family, friends and colleagues of Prison Officer, Ryan Horton following his tragic death last year, which I recognise will have been deeply felt across the establishment.

I recognise that the threat posed by drone incursions has been raised in successive reports, reflecting the seriousness and persistence of this challenge across prisons. During the reporting period, HMP Long Lartin has worked closely with the LTHSE Serious and Organised Crime Team, the Counter-Drone Taskforce and West Mercia Police to assess risks and deploy targeted mitigations. These actions included focused operational intensification periods and locally tailored physical measures. These efforts have delivered measurable progress. Recorded drone sightings reduced during 2025 and fell further during the first quarter of 2026, with an 81% reduction in sightings when comparing Quarter 1 2025 with Quarter 1 2026. While the threat is an evolving one, this reduction demonstrates the value of sustained, multi-agency action. This has been supported by recent investment in physical security measures, including wires and netting, which will further strengthen the establishment's ability to disrupt drone activity and reduce the number of incursions over time.

I note that concerns regarding the condition and reliability of security and surveillance systems have been highlighted by the Board previously. Funding has been approved nationally for the full replacement of security systems at HMP Long Lartin through the Major Capital Programme. Unfortunately, an initial tender exercise in 2025 did not attract compliant bids, the scope of the project has subsequently been expanded to improve its commercial viability, supported by further surveys and design work.

The programme is now being prepared for re-tender via an alternative framework with the tender planned for release in June 2026. Alongside this longer-term programme, targeted interim measures are being delivered in priority areas to maintain resilience while the wider replacement project progresses.

I am aware that concerns relating to the prison's condition and maintenance delivery have been raised consistently, reflecting both the age of the site and the complexity of maintaining a LTHSE prison. A pipeline of investment activity for HMP Long Lartin is in place and remains under active review. Projects progressing through approval pathways include works to mesh and render cells, replacement of macerators, high voltage cabling, fire and water mains upgrades, heating and hot water systems and flooring in cells and communal areas. The kitchen replacement and flat roofing schemes have been approved and are progressing to the tender stage. Contract management arrangements with the facilities management provider continue to be strengthened. Enhanced performance monitoring is now in place through a Performance Improvement Plan, supported by regular meetings involving prison leaders, MoJ Property and contractor senior management, aimed at driving sustained improvement.

I acknowledge that the absence of in-cell sanitation on four wings remains a longstanding concern for the Board. A proposal to deliver full in-cell sanitation across the remaining wings was submitted in 2025. This scheme had previously been considered. To progress the works, the establishment would need to lose approximately 40% of its operational capacity, as the existing cell sizes are too small to accommodate in-cell sanitation. Because of estate-wide capacity pressures, the proposal cannot be taken forward at this time but will be reconsidered when capacity pressures ease.

I recognise the Board's concern regarding staffing pressures and the importance of attracting, developing and retaining skilled staff. A resourcing and retention plan is in place for HMP Long Lartin, supported by a range of national initiatives. These include targeted recruitment campaigns, internal transfer routes, conversion schemes, alumni engagement and the deployment of first deployment officers. The establishment has also benefitted from focused recruitment marketing and regional media engagement. The introduction of values-based recruitment assessments in April 2026, together with reforms to initial training and structured professional development are intended to improve both recruitment outcomes and retention in challenging custodial environments.

Whilst I appreciate the frustration you must feel at raising a number of repeat concerns, I was encouraged to note the Board's observations of a strengthened focus on safety and care during the year. This included improvements in safer custody practice, reductions in recorded self-harm incidents and increased attention to the quality and consistency of key worker engagement. The Board's recognition of the contributions made by specialist provision, such as the pre-PIPE and improved multidisciplinary working is particularly important in the context of managing vulnerability within a high-security setting.

Issues raised in your report that fall within local operational responsibility will continue to be addressed by the Governor, who will keep the Board informed of progress. Responses to matters raised for HMPPS are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I continue to appreciate the value and scrutiny brought by members of Independent Monitoring Boards to improve the estate and we extend our thanks for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP Long Lartin.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

HMP LONG LARTIN INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Preventative Measures Against Drone Activity

HMP Long Lartin has been identified as a high-risk site for drone enabled ingress. In response, the establishment continues to work closely with the Counter-Drone Taskforce, LTHSE Serious and Organised Crime Team and local law enforcement to analyse threat patterns and deploy targeted operational and physical mitigations. These arrangements have contributed to a reduction in recorded drone activity during 2025 and early 2026. Given the evolving nature of the threat, sustained multi-agency engagement and regular reassessment remain in place to ensure mitigations remain effective.

Progress on Surveillance System Replacement

As outlined in the Ministerial response, the replacement of security and surveillance systems at HMP Long Lartin forms part of a nationally managed Major Capital Programme. Following an unsuccessful tender exercise in 2025, the project scope has been expanded with additional surveys and design work now underway. The programme is being prepared for re-tender through an alternative commercial framework with tender release planned for June 2026. Local delivery teams will be engaged once contractor appointment and mobilisation timelines are confirmed.

Infrastructure, Maintenance and Capital Projects

Over the next three years, investment at HMP Long Lartin will focus on risk-based priorities, including risk to life, safety compliance and critical infrastructure. Please see the Ministerial response for further detail on projects being progressed.

Prison Work Contracts in the LTHSE

Securing suitable and meaningful work opportunities within the LTHSE prisons remains a challenge. HMPPS continues to work through Prison Industries and functional leads to identify appropriate contracts within necessary security constraints. At HMP Long Lartin, existing workshops have been diversified where possible, including progress on recycling activities and the re-profiling of current industries. Further development of work opportunities remains linked to staffing stability, escort availability and security requirements.

Selection, Training and Retention of Officers

HMP Long Lartin has been included in targeted workforce retention activity within the LTHSE. This has included a centrally led bespoke retention deep dive to better understand drivers of attrition at the establishment. The findings from this work are being used to inform local and regional action, alongside estate-wide retention oversight arrangements. At a national level, HMPPS continues to strengthen selection, training and early career support for prison officers. A refreshed values-based recruitment assessment, introduced in April 2026, is designed to support better alignment between candidates and the demands of challenging custodial roles, with the aim of improving longer-term retention. In parallel, Foundation Training Reform is being progressed to develop an extended training model over 12 months, centred on experiential learning and structured workplace support. This approach is intended to better equip new officers during their first year in post, building confidence, professional competence and resilience. To reinforce professional identity and progression, formal graduation milestones are being rolled out across the prison estate. These currently mark completion of the probationary period and will evolve to recognise achievement on completion of the extended Foundation Training Programme once fully implemented. Together, these measures are intended to strengthen capability, consistency and retention across the estate, including at HMP Long Lartin.