Dear Bob

PRISON ESTATE MODERNISATION

In keeping with the undertakings given by my predecessors to keep the Justice Select Committee updated on progress towards modernising the prison estate, this morning at the Justice Select Committee hearing on prison population, I set out plans for the new prisons at HMP Wellingborough and my intention to build at HMP&YOI Glen Parva.

As you are aware, my department has made good progress towards modernising the estate with the new 206 place houseblock at HMP Stocken, due to open early next year, and outline planning permission being secured at Wellingborough, Glen Parva and on land alongside Full Sutton.

As set out today we remain committed to building up to 10,000 modern and decent prison places to replace old, expensive and unsuitable accommodation.

We intend to build the first prison at Wellingborough through public capital, with construction work expected to begin late 2018. We intend to launch a competition to appoint a framework of prison operators, from which we will select the operator for the new prison at Wellingborough and potentially further prisons following expiry of current private sector contracts.

We will also continue the ongoing work to demolish the buildings at Glen Parva and intend to deliver the second prison there through private finance. We will explore funding routes, including private finance, for the delivery of the remainder of the 10,000 places. The above plans are of course all subject to the usual planning approvals, value for money and affordability tests.

Elsewhere, our plans for simplifying the estate continue apace. HMP&YOI Durham became a reception prison and HMP&YOI Holme House became a training prison, being the first to reconfigure last year. HMP Wandsworth and HMP High Down are due to become reception and training prisons respectively this autumn. Reconfiguration of the prison estate will continue through to March 2021.

As part of the wider prison reform agenda, we are introducing a significant expansion of video capability in prisons through the introduction of Video Conferencing Centres (VCC), which DO X. New VCCs are already operational in HMP&YOI Durham and HMP&YOI Wandsworth.

We remain committed to replacing old, expensive and unsuitable accommodation. We expect to make an announcement on the former HMP&YOI Holloway site in the summer - after we have signed a contract with the chosen bidder.
I will continue to keep you and the committee up to date with any future developments regarding the modernisation of the prison estate.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the library.

RORY STEWART MP