

Major investment in small businesses through justice system improvements

- extra £285 million spending on courts and prisons will go to local businesses
- funding boost will create thousands of jobs and sustain thousands more
- improvements will help speed up justice and reduce reoffending

The funding comes on top of an estimated £600 million already earmarked for capital projects this year, including the construction of 2 new prisons.

With courts and prisons spread across England and Wales, this funding boost will create and sustain thousands of jobs nationwide in the construction and digital industries and related sectors.

Over £140 million will be spent installing temporary prison cells, repairing and refurbishing prisons, approved premises and young offender institutions, and improving IT in jail.

A further £142 million will be pumped into the courts system to speed up technological improvements and modernise courtrooms, building on the rapid progress made to keep the system running during the coronavirus pandemic. Combined with the £48 million already set aside this year, there will be £153 million for improvements to court and tribunal buildings – the biggest single investment in maintenance of the court estate for over 20 years.

The investment will end up in the hands of hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses, their suppliers and, ultimately, in the pay packets of tens of thousands of people across the country.

The Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

We have already launched the most ambitious prison building programme for generations, delivering over 13,000 places by the mid-2020s, and have dramatically increased the use of technology in the courts system.

This extra spending will keep thousands of people in work and generate jobs for thousands more, helping the UK recover from the economic freeze brought on by coronavirus.

These improvements will also help to speed up justice through the courts and improve education in prisons and youth custody so that offenders leave less likely to reoffend.

One thousand temporary cells will be installed to increase capacity and help speed up maintenance work, allowing the Prison Service to close wings at

other prisons for refurbishment. Sixty million pounds of funding will go towards the UK-based small and medium companies which produce this specialist accommodation.

A further £40 million will be spent on repairs outside the prison gate generating immediate employment for local maintenance companies across England and Wales. The former HMP Camphill site on the Isle of Wight will be demolished so the area can be regenerated with new housing and former aircraft hangars near prisons on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent will be restored to safeguard these historically important buildings.

Over 100 courts will see improvements as part of the extra investment, with at least 2,250 jobs created in the process nationwide. A further £30 million will be spent to give 750 more court rooms the ability to hold remote hearings within six months. Around £10 million extra will be spent building new court facilities and £95 million on maintenance this year, on top of the £48 million already planned.

This includes courts such as Wrexham, Hull, and Leeds which will benefit from new court cells, court rooms, and improved accessibility as part of this investment. Maintenance at over 100 courts will see buildings across the country refurbished and become more energy efficient.

An extra £20 million will be spent improving IT in prisons so that more court and parole hearings can be heard remotely via video conference suites. The funding will also go towards technology which improves prisoners' digital literacy and education so that they are better able to find work on release and move away from criminal behaviour.

Some £10 million has been set aside to refurbish the youth custody estate, installing in-room showers, improving existing and building new education facilities and to roll out secure in-room learning technology. The projects will help rehabilitate young offenders, while providing millions of pounds of contracts to businesses in Yorkshire, the West Midlands and the South East where these establishments are based.

Approved Premises – which are used by the Probation Service to monitor high-risk offenders recently released from prison – will see £10 million worth of building and security improvements, including upgrading CCTV and alarm systems.