

Evaluation of remote hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic published

News story

Evaluation assesses experiences of public users, the judiciary, legal representatives and staff.



The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a radical and swift transition to the widespread use of remote hearings – where some or all participants attend by video or audio rather than in-person to ensure justice continued to be served.

Today we published an [evaluation of remote hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) research report. This reports the experience of public users, the judiciary, legal representatives, HMCTS staff, and support professionals and their attitudes towards remote hearings.

Key findings include:

- public users attending remotely were slightly more likely to be satisfied with the overall experience of their hearing than in-person users (benefits included greater convenience, reduced costs and removing the anxiety of being in a room with another participant, who they may be in conflict with)
- legal representatives were positive about remote hearings, with 93% saying they felt remote hearings were an acceptable alternative during the pandemic (views were mixed about how they should be used in the future)
- 51% of judges thought remote hearings were effective at creating an environment comparable to in-person hearings, but raised concerns about their impact on well-being and increased workload

The evaluation also recommended more support for vulnerable users and increasing awareness of the support available to public users when attending a remote hearing.

We'll use the evaluation findings to plan developments to our services. Some of the findings have already been addressed by the new Video Hearings service that will replace the Cloud Video Platform (CVP). CVP was rolled out quickly in response to COVID-19 and has been widely used to run remote hearings. During 2022 we'll move away from CVP to the more comprehensive Video Hearings service.

The Video Hearings service was developed as a bespoke, multi-functional service built specifically for court hearings as part of the HMCTS Reform programme. The service is designed to meet the specific needs of court and tribunal hearings and addresses some of the recommendations found in the report.

The Video Hearings service better reflects the formality of a court hearing and improves on the services used during the pandemic. For example, it provides virtual consultation rooms and built-in guidance for court users.

The decision to hold a remote hearing remains at the discretion of a judge who will decide if it is in the interests of justice. We'll continue to support the judiciary to conduct hearings using their choice of remote and in-person hearings.

Published 10 December 2021

[Norfolk Boreas development consent decision announced](#)

Press release

Today, Friday 10 December 2021, the application for Norfolk Boreas has been granted development consent by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.



The Order grants development consent for this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project comprising an Offshore Wind Farm (Power Station) – Maximum Capacity 1.8GW, also associated infrastructure required to export the electricity to the National Grid substation at Necton in Norfolk. The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by Norfolk Boreas Limited on 11 June 2019 and accepted for examination on 04 July 2019. Following an examination during which the public, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, recommendations were made to the Secretary of State on 12 January 2021.

This is the 104th Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and 63rd energy application to have been examined by The Planning Inspectorate within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

The Planning Inspectorate has examined more than 100 nationally significant infrastructure projects ensuring local communities had the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in the examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views and the evidence gathered during the examination before making their recommendations.

The decision, the recommendations made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendations are publicly available on the project page of the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email:

Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Notes to editors: The Planning Inspectorate's [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

Published 10 December 2021

[DA40 N2, G-CTSB anniversary statement](#)

News story

Accident to DA40 N2, registration G-CTSB, at Cranfield Airport on 12 December 2020



This statement provides an update on the AAIB investigation into an accident involving a DA40 N2, registration G-CTSB, at Cranfield Airport on 12 December 2020.

The aircraft stalled and struck the ground from a height of about of 100-200 ft immediately after takeoff. The pilot, the sole occupant on board, was seriously injured in the accident. The investigation is nearing completion and the report will shortly be disseminated for consultation. Publication of the report is expected early in 2022.

Published 10 December 2021

[Chance to name new prison in Glen Parva](#)



- community competition launched to name new prison
- more than 600 jobs to be created in boost to Leicestershire economy
- jail part of the government's £4 billion programme to modernise prisons and cut crime

All residents are encouraged to send in name suggestions for the new 1,700-place jail, set to open in 2023, that embrace the history and culture of the area.

Earlier this week, the [government set out its strategy](#) on how modern jails – like the one in Glen Parva – will cut reoffending and protect the public by giving prisoners the education, skills and addiction support they need to live crime-free lives.

The development is part of a £4 billion programme that will see 20,000 additional prison places created by the mid-2020s.

The site has already created 230 jobs and 16 apprenticeships during construction and when open, it is expected to offer more than 600 jobs – providing a significant boost to the local economy.

Prisons Minister Victoria Atkins, said:

We want our new, modern prison in Glen Parva to be rooted in its community. That's why we are extending an invitation to local people to help choose its name.

The prison will create hundreds of jobs when open – giving a major boost to the local economy and helping to protect the public.

The names will be narrowed down to a shortlist of potential options, with a panel of local representatives deciding on the final winner.

The name must then be formally agreed by Her Majesty The Queen, the Secretary of State for Justice Dominic Raab, and the Prisons Minister.

This follows a similar competition launched in Wellingborough (Northamptonshire), where another jail is due to open early next year.

[In October 2020, it was revealed](#) that 'HMP Five Wells' was chosen by the local community in Wellingborough, paying homage to the five historic wells surrounding the town and which appear on its coat of arms.

Construction of the new category C prison at Glen Parva began in August 2020 and is being built on the site of the previous HMP/YOI Glen Parva, which closed in 2017.

Note to editors

- The scheme to name the new prison in Glen Parva is at no cost to the taxpayer.

- Those interested in taking part can send their entries to glenparvaenquiries@justice.gov.uk by Friday 21 January 2022.

Published 10 December 2021

Last updated 14 December 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 14 December 2021

Contact information about how to take part added.

2. 10 December 2021

First published.

[Defence Secretary affirms UK's commitment to High North on visit to Denmark and Sweden](#)

The Defence Secretary has met with his Danish and Swedish counterparts to discuss shared threats, including NATO's response to the situation in eastern Europe and increasing competition in the Arctic.

In meetings with Danish Defence Minister Trine Bramsen on 8 December, and Swedish Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist on the 9 December, the Secretary of State reaffirmed the UK's close defence relationship with our northern partners.

The Defence Secretary, Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, said:

At a time of growing threats and increasing competition in the High North, we have some of the closest cooperation with our Danish, Swedish and Norwegian partners.

We work together annually on military exercises and operations, learning from each other and strengthening our partnerships.

Our ability to operate in this way is the firm foundation of our shared resolve to stand up for our values.

Denmark and Sweden are both members of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) – 10 nations working together to deliver forces at high readiness, across a range of roles, complementing NATO and European security. During the visit the Defence Secretary met ambassadors from the JEF nations to discuss the co-ordination of members in response to grey-zone threats.

During a visit to Arvidsjaur in Swedish Lapland, the Defence Secretary met personnel from the newly re-established Norrland Dragoon Regiment, which focuses on Arctic Warfare and where the UK is looking to learn from our Scandinavian partners to deepen our expertise.

The UK's [Integrated Review](#) and [Defence Command Paper](#) set out the UK's commitment to the High North. As the nearest neighbour to the Arctic, the UK is committed to working with partners such as Denmark and Sweden to ensure that increasing access to the region and its resources is managed safely, sustainably and responsibly.

In addition to formal talks, the Defence Secretary also laid a wreath at the Swedish Memorial Monument.

In 2019, the UK and Sweden signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on the Future Combat Air System, known as the Tempest Programme. International partnership has been at the heart of the UK's approach to combat air for decades and the UK and Sweden continue to work on the programme which will support national and European security for decades ahead.

The Defence Secretary is greeted by the Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod.