



Public Accounts Committee

Dame Antonia Romeo
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
Westminster
London, SW1H 9AJ

By email

24 March 2025

HMP Dartmoor

Dear Permanent Secretary,

In the recent session of the Public Accounts Committee on 27 January, the Committee raised concerns about HM Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS's) lease renewal at HMP Dartmoor, given the unsafe levels of radon gas which have been detected at the site. Specifically, we were interested in any discount or other favourable terms HMPPS had negotiated when renewing the lease in 2022, and the actions and estimated costs associated with remediating the site. The site has now been closed since July 2024 and HMPPS is investigating technical solutions.

Considering the above, could you please provide the Committee with further information on the following points:

1. The cost of the current lease and what discount, or lack thereof, this represents as compared with the previous lease;
2. The benefits to HMPPS negotiated in the lease renewal, including investment secured from the lessor, as mentioned in the PAC session;
3. The elements of the lease terms which represent a cost to HMPPS regardless of whether or not it can occupy the prison, and for how long;
4. The frequency of HMPPS monitoring of radon levels, and the results of that monitoring, both before and after the lease renewal. Specifically, what were radon levels at the point the new lease was signed, given radon was first detected in 2020;
5. Any additional expenditure on Dartmoor to investigate and ameliorate the property since its closure to prisoners, and any insurance liabilities HMPPS have had to pay in the terms of the lease; and
6. The length of the lease and the frequency of rent renewal.



Public Accounts Committee

Please could you respond to this letter within two weeks of its receipt. The Committee publishes formal correspondence it receives. Please indicate clearly in your response if you are providing any information in confidence, and if you expect the information to be publishable at a later date.

Yours sincerely

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts