

# RSA TRANSITIONS...

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) is working with HMP Everthorpe on Transitions. In 2011, the RSA published [Transitions](#) a new vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century prison. It is now working to make this vision a reality by undertaking a major feasibility study, which will complete in January 2014. This includes assessing the business case of bringing back to life a 45-acre site – including a manor house and farm – adjacent to the prison as a ‘Transitions park’, a space for prisoners, those on license, ex-offenders and those at risk of crime to work with social enterprises, employers and resettlement services.

## Background

When the government launched its ‘rehabilitation revolution’ most people welcomed its emphasis on getting prisoners into employment, even where there were worries about whether the resources and systems were in place to address the wider issues facing many prisoners.



When the Transitions idea was being developed, we worried about the combination of privatisation and work; not wanting to end up more like the US, where many prisoners work for very little and companies make huge returns. Without often succeeding in getting prisoners resettled or in to work on release. *Was there a more ethical model that was not profit driven and designed to meet offenders’ wider needs and help make them employable?*

Back in the UK, the prison service has seen increased privatisation, in the context of recession and spending cuts. The argument about private vs. public is one that will not go away and has a massive impact on the prison service. When we were developing Transitions, we wanted to look at whether there was scope for a different approach. *Was there a way to benefit from the innovations and freedoms that can come with private investment and partnership, but with the ethical constraints and focus of the public and voluntary sector?*

We were struck by the fact that the work of prison officers and the service was largely invisible or misunderstood by the public. Whereas people would defend the NHS and schools and believed they understood health and education services, the prison service is something that happens ‘out of sight’, and is largely ignored, until something goes wrong. Yet in polls the public put crime at the top of their concerns. *What kind of approach would better involve people, communities, and employers in helping prisons to do the work that we ask of them?*

These questions and more will inform the study the RSA is undertaking as we assess the potential for taking the Transitions idea to the next stage.

## Q How would Transitions work in practice?

Transitions could help to join up work and employment inside and outside the prison. For example, someone currently working in the prison kitchen could be paid to provide for the Transition's park café or similar employers outside of the prison. Prisoner's working in horticulture could potentially secure contracts doing work for the local council. Prison joinery workshops could expand their offer of skills and products to the public. Ex-offenders could work at the Transitions park is social enterprise schemes that support employment and resettlement for others.

## Q Why is the RSA interested in prisons?

The RSA is a charity, founded over 250 years ago; it is an enlightenment organisation committed to finding innovative practical solutions to today's social challenges. It undertakes research and runs practical projects with the ultimate goal of better understand human capability and to develop ideas, projects and institutions that support citizens' ability to fulfil their potential. The RSA has around 27,000 Fellows around the world, mostly in the UK. They pay a membership fee to support the RSA's work and develop their own ideas.

The RSA undertakes research and runs practical projects and has a long history of work in education (including five academy schools) and drugs services. It is also interested in the future of public services and in community engagement. Transitions was based on thinking about why the public and politicians do not approach prisons like a core public service in the way that they do schools and hospitals and in 'opening up' the service to communities.

## Q Why HMP Everthorpe?

The Governor contacted the RSA about the site next to the prison that includes 45 acres of land, Everthorpe Hall (built 1871) and a farm. As a resettlement prison with a regional population, HMP Everthorpe is well suited as a site for testing and modelling Transitions, which depends on being able to offer work and resettlement services on site and in release areas. HMP Everthorpe is next door to HMP Wolds, which is due to transfer to the public sector in Summer 2013, with the possibility that the two prisons will become a cluster or be merged into one facility.

## Q How will it benefit the prison?

It aims to make it easier for the prison to do what it is there for: protecting the public and working with offenders to increase their chances of not coming back. Transitions won't work unless it is embedded in the prison and brings tangible benefits to the facility and individual officers. The project will act as a hub to assist the prison and other services in taking a 'whole person' approach: as well as skills and employment issues, it will seek to address alcohol and drug misuse, behaviour and family problems, for example. We hope that this approach and the project's external focus will enable it to bring additional opportunities to officers, including skills and broader networks.

## Q Who else will Transitions work with?

This will include people who are current and former prisoners at HMP Everthorpe and HMP Wolds but the model is also designed to work with offenders who may be on license in the community and ex-offenders. We will also work with prisoners families and are also in discussion around crime prevention and working with young people at risk of offending.

## Q Who are Transitions talking to?

- Prison Officers, Governors and other HMP staff
- Prisoners and ex-offenders
- Employers and social entrepreneurs
- 'Through the gate' services (drugs, alcohol, housing etc.)
- Criminal justice services (police, probation etc.)
- The community and voluntary sector
- The local community (surrounding villages)
- RSA Fellows
- NOMS and the MOJ

## Q How will it benefit offenders?

Transitions will provide opportunities for employment, skills development and resettlement. Working with the prison, it seeks to make it easier for people to return to the community, secure work, change their behaviour and build a new life.

## Q How will it benefit the community?

As we develop the business, we need to make sure we balance benefits to all. So if we are providing a gym facility for offenders, for example, can this be available to officers as well as the community. If the research shows us that there is a need for a community transport company, how can we make sure this fills transport gaps in the local area? More simply, the community are keen to see the Hall and land used and we need to do all we can to bring them with us and keep talking and listening to them as the project develops.

## Q How will offenders secure work?

There will be three basic routes, as much as possible open to those inside as well as on release. First, some people will work with partner employers. Secondly, some will want to work on their own as sole traders. Some will have a core skill – such as plumbing – but may need help in getting them up and running, marketed and so on.

Finally, some will be employed by Transitions: as peer mentors, administrators, drivers and so on. The aim is that those who go through Transitions will be less likely than their counterparts to reoffend and that some will come back and work with the project to take it forward.

## Q Will offenders be paid?

It depends on the status of work. Some will work with Transitions as Cat Ds on the basis of the current prison salary. Others will be employed by Transitions as staff. In general the principle is to pay the minimum wage where it is appropriate and to ensure that the business case is not based on exploiting free labour.

## Q What partners will be involved?

The most important partner will be the prison itself. Without joint working and a sense of shared aims, the project will not last. Beyond that Transitions will be working with: employers (with the aim of securing one or two major partnerships based on taking on people when they leave); Probation (in Humber and West Yorkshire); state and voluntary services providing through the gate services; the local community and national policy makers.

## Q How many Transitions staff are involved?

The Transitions team now have an office on site, which has been refurbished and furnished by prisoners and prison officers. The team reports to the RSA's board of Trustees and consists of a Project Director, Project Manager, Administrator, some of RSA's research director's time. We have also seconded a Coordinator from the prison. Costs also include an Architect, a Quantity Surveyor, local surveyor and covers travel for interns and an Advisory Panel made up largely of RSA Fellows who give their time at no cost. The budget also covers costs for buying in additional expertise on social finance, governance and organisational change.



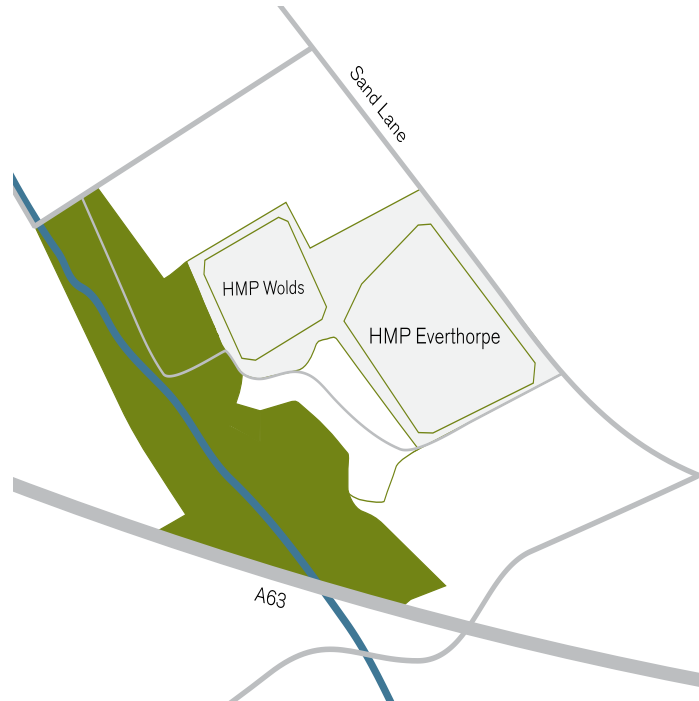
## Q How much money is being spent on the study?

£280,906. The budget is split between the costs of all surveys (build and land), research, communication, events, materials and staff costs as well as the final masterplan and report. We will try and raise additional funds for discreet projects that we want to do in the short-term: for example, work on developing a food strategy and a community transport scheme.

The RSA and HMP Everthorpe are very grateful for the support we have secured from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Tudor Trust. Without organisations like this backing us, Transitions would remain just an idea. RSA's work depends on the support and engagement of its Fellowship and we have been fortunate to have had the benefit of Fellows' insights, expertise and enthusiasm in developing this project.

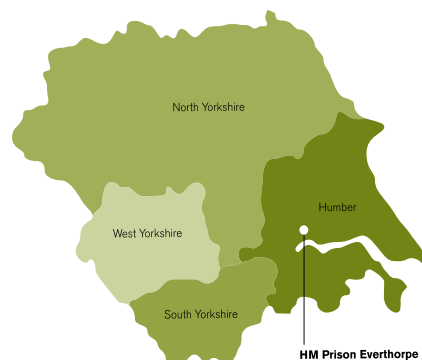
## Q Who owns the land?

Currently the MOJ own the land but it has indicated that – if they approve and believe in the business plan developed – that they are willing to transfer all the land and buildings to the ‘Transitions company’, whatever form that ends up taking.



## Q What region will it cover?

HMP Everthorpe has a population that will return to East Riding, Hull, northern Lincs and West Yorkshire. Much of the work being done now is to develop relationships with employers and services in these areas. The project is also working with HMP Hull, Leeds and Askham Grange and the regional governors' to work out how we can add value to the regional strategy and the wider region. Transitions in practice aims to prove that an ambitious but common sense approach can work and work well. It is a nationally significant project and our aim is to show that what we do in Yorkshire, can work elsewhere



## Q What is the timetable?

The idea is being tested on one main site: HMP Everthorpe, in East Yorkshire. The RSA has secured funding to work with the prison for a year (between end of 2012 until January 2014) to assess whether the Transitions idea could work in practice.

- *End of 2012 – Jan 2013*: Setting up the Transitions office and team and identifying the key people and organisations the project would need to engage. The project was launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside, Matthew Grove, at the end of January.
- *Feb – April 2013*: Undertaking a range of building and land surveys in working out the costs of bringing the site back into use. Early engagement and consultation with stakeholders, identifying potential evaluation partners and getting feedback and advice on potential use of the site, linked to economic trends in the region.
- *May – July 2013*: A formal consultation with stakeholders in order to focus down on priority areas and model three options for the site, linked to emerging partnerships and early discussions with potential investors. Designing of evaluation process.
- *Aug – Dec 2013*: Further detailed research with prisoners and ex-offenders and prison staff and managers on organisational change. Development of the governance and ownership structures, alongside refining the site model, partnership agreements and investment strategy.

## Q Why will it take so long?

This is a large-scale project and the model has never been done before. For it to get the go ahead and secure investment, the study we do now needs to prove that Transitions is sustainable over a long period of time. This means showing that we have based the model on working with prisoners, prison officers, local services and the community and that we have the support from the prison, employers and others.

## Q What will be the output?

The masterplan – including business and investment strategy – will be published in early 2014. Assuming the feasibility shows that the model is possible and sustainable, the project would then go into a next stage of planning and implementation and focus on transporting the approach elsewhere.

## Q How much will the final project and build cost?

We do not know yet. This is a central question for the business modelling work being undertaken over the next few months. The initial capital outlay is likely to be in the region of £5m plus and it is not yet clear whether this is staged or in year one. In terms of annual running costs, it is too early to know.



## Q How will it be funded?

There will be two key elements. The first will be social investment at a large scale to cover initial capital outlay and servicing any mortgage/debt over an extended period of time. The second will be revenue raised through contracts and income through the range of social enterprises. This may include, for example, work contracts with the council, retail income and revenue raised through leasing out space.

## Q Who will invest?

Social investors who invest on the basis of low interest and long-term return in order to support social enterprises that are high risk and not for profit. This is a growing area of investment aimed at getting charities thinking more about balancing their books and long term sustainability.

## Q What kind of business will it be?

A not for profit business either run as a community interest company, a mutual or a company limited by guarantee. Some parts of the enterprise will be profitable but the model is based on paying offenders working as well as ploughing any profits back into the model.

## Q Who will own it?

The work we do around governance and ownership later in the year will determine this but the assumption is that it will be owned by offenders, officers, the community, with representatives of all owners involved in running and setting direction of the business and a board to ensure it remains within its ethical framework and is financially sustainable.

## Q How can I get involved?

The Transitions team is keen to learn from other social innovations in related areas. As the project develops, there will be opportunities to share these and discuss related areas through an online space. Longer term the project will develop opportunities for hands on involvement including employment (focused on offenders and local people) partnerships and volunteering (see overleaf for contact details).

## Contact

Please contact the team with any queries you have and to sign up for our regular updates. If you are interested in becoming an RSA Fellow or want to learn more about RSA Transitions and our work with HMP Everthorpe, please contact one of the team

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