
To: North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority

On: 13th March 2015

Report by: Chief Officer

Heading: Womens Services Across the Justice System

1. Summary

- 1.1** On 26th January 2015 the new Justice Secretary Michael Matheson announced that plans for a new female prison in Inverclyde would not go ahead. Instead, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service will now undertake a period of extensive engagement with key partners with a view to developing smaller regional and community based custodial facilities across the country.
- 1.2** NSCJA has been asked to support the consultation process by organising a local event for our partners and others with an interest. The other 7 Scottish CJAs are making similar arrangements and as Government wishes the process completed quickly with all 8 events taking place during March 2015. The local NSCJA event is being held on 3rd March 2015 in Greenock. The Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service are co-facilitating all the events.
- 1.3** NSCJA, Inverclyde Council and the Scottish Prison Service along with a range of other partners had already begun a process to design Throughcare services for HMP Inverclyde and the full design group numbered around 30 people. Having considered the implications of 1.1 above and the uncertainty around the exact shape of the future female prison estate, we have decided to continue with the process of service design as we are likely to have 1 national facility and a number of regional units all of which will hold women who require Throughcare support. The next part of the process is to hold a large logic modelling workshop on 29th April and a first service design workshop in June. A final service design workshop will be held in September. This will enable us to take into account the development of the female prison estates as it emerges from the engagement events.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Authority is asked to note the content of this report.
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3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Commission on Women Offenders published its final report and recommendations in April 2012. Dame Elish Angiolini QC chaired the commission which recognised that female offenders have very different needs to their male counterparts and require very specific support. One of the key recommendations was that HMP Cornton Vale should be closed and replaced by developing smaller regional units.
- 3.2** At the press conference on January 26th Mr Matheson said “I believe we should be investing in smaller regional and community-based custodial facilities rather than a large new prison for women. This approach would be more closely aligned with the vision set out by Dame Elish. It also demonstrates the Scottish Governments commitment to tackling inequalities”.
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Implications of the Report

Equality & Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals’ human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Authorities website.

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