

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

Social Work Committee : 25th January 2000	Subject :
From : Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work Prepared by : John S Scott, Principal Officer, Criminal Justice	Scottish Prison Service Closure of Longriggend Remand Unit

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to :

- inform the Committee of the closure of Longriggend Remand Unit, at the end of March 2000, and the consequences for North Lanarkshire Council.

2. BACKGROUND

Longriggend Remand Unit provides accommodation for those aged under 21, who are remanded to prison by courts. This includes young people under the age of 16 who are dealt with by courts, rather than the Children's Hearings, on the basis of the seriousness of alleged offences and who are remanded to custody. In addition, the Unit holds a small number of long term prisoners and prisoners awaiting deportation.

The Chief Executive of the Prison Service announced on October 21st that Longriggend Remand Unit would close at the end of the financial year, on the basis that Scottish Prison Service (SPS) statisticians had suggested that future prisoner numbers will be lower than previously forecast, and following the Government's announcement, a few days earlier, that £13m of Scottish Prison Service under spends would be reallocated elsewhere in the Justice programme.

Young people under 16 will, in future, be located at Polmont Young Offenders Institution, those aged 16 - 21 at Barlinnie in a refurbished wing, separate from older prisoners, long term prisoners will be transferred to long term prisons, and prisoners awaiting deportation will transfer to Greenock Prison.

The Social Work service in Longriggend is purchased by the Scottish Prison Service. No cost accrues to North Lanarkshire Council.

Social Work Services in the Remand Unit are provided through a small unit comprising one Senior Social Worker, a Social Worker, and a Part Time Addiction Counsellor. The addiction post is currently vacant. The Senior Social Worker in the Remand Unit has already made contact with managers of Social Work Units in prisons who will receive those transferred from Longriggend, to ensure that information is effectively passed on.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSFER OF SOCIAL WORK STAFF

Contractual arrangements between Social Work and the Scottish Prison Service are laid down in National Standards for Throughcare. Section 493 indicates that 12 months notice of any proposed change for staffing should be given, to minimise any adverse effects on either party. The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) failed to meet this requirement and in fact gave only 5 months notice on this occasion.

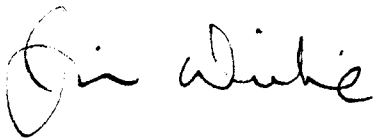
Arrangements now require to be put in place to relocate the Social Work staff concerned into suitable, alternative posts within the Social Work Department.

Further discussion needs to be held with the Scottish Prison Service concerning the financial impact on the Council, should suitable alternative posts not be immediately available.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to :

- note (with concern) the closure of Longriggend Remand Unit, and the failure of SPS to adhere to the agreement on notice for such proposals.
- seek clarification of the proposals for use of Barlinnie for 16 to 21 year old young men.
- approve that the Director of Social Work put in place arrangements to find alternative posts for the Social Work staff concerned within the terms laid down in Council Redeployment Policy.
- approve that the Director of Social Work enter into negotiations with the Scottish Prison Service concerning the financial impact on North Lanarkshire Council, of closure of the Unit.
- Remit this report to Personnel Services Committee for its interest.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work

December 13th 1999

For further information contact John S Scott, Principal Officer, Criminal Justice (01698 332029)