

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE CONSULTATION ON PRISON SERVICES IN THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK			
Date: 6 DECEMBER 2005	Ref: JS/JS		

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

To advised Committee of the contents of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) consultation paper on Prison Services in the North East of Scotland and to seek homologation of the response sent on behalf of the Lanarkshire Criminal Justice Grouping (attached as appendix)

2. Background

- 2.1. The consultation paper contains the Scottish Prison Services current assessment of the options for replacing the prison capacity provided at HMP Peterhead and possibly also HMP Aberdeen.
- 2.2. The paper is a response to the Justice Ministers request to SPS to update its Prison's Estate Strategy. The Minister will then decide on the way forward.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The consultation paper identifies six options and poses questions in relation to the appropriateness of the actions

- 3.2 The options are as follows:

Option 1: no capital investment, relying on operational changes to ensure compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights;

Option 2: refurbish the accommodation blocks at HMP Peterhead;

Option 3: replace the accommodation blocks at Peterhead with "quick-build" units similar to those being constructed at Cornton Vale and Castle Huntly;

Option 4: replace Peterhead and possibly Aberdeen with a new prison on the existing site;

Option 5: replace Peterhead and possibly Aberdeen with a new prison on another site in Aberdeenshire; or

Option 6: replace Peterhead with a new prison in the central belt

- 3.3 The options have been discussed between Social Work Criminal Justice managers across the Lanarkshire Grouping and the grouping response has been attached as appendix.
- 3.4 The grouping response comments on each of the options and identifies option six as the most appropriate way forward. Option six allows effective partnership between the prison and local services to ensure the management of the transition to the community and plans for supervising offenders in the community are as effective as possible.

4 **Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications**

- 4.1 Presently there are no immediate implications for the Council.

5 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - (i) note the contents of the report and homologate the Lanarkshire Criminal Justice Grouping response.



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SPS CONSULTATION – Prison Services in The North East of Scotland

(Response from Lanarkshire Grouping – On behalf of Social Work Services North and South Lanarkshire Councils)

The Lanarkshire Grouping has considered the issues raised in the paper and of the options outlined would support option 6. We recognise that this is a particular sensitive issue but the reality is that if we are going to establish effective Throughcare arrangements for sex offenders, locating them in the Central belt would make long term planning easier to manage. A location in the Central Belt would ensure greater ease of accessibility for by far the majority of offenders. It would encourage more effective working relationships and support the development of effective plans for resettlement in the community. It could also facilitate joint work in prison between community and prison based staff.

In response to the specific questions:

Question 1

Our arguments in relation to each of the options are as outlined below:-

Option one – This is not an option. The current building at Peterhead is not fit for purpose.

Option two – Although this would be better option than option one, we do not believe a realistic option. The majority of prisoners come from the Central belt and in terms of long term planning it is difficult to establish the type of relationship and contact required in order to ensure effective transition into the community.

Option three – Although it would be preferable to replace the option blocks with units similar to those being constructed elsewhere, the arguments against the location remaining at Peterhead remains as stated above.

Option six – We believe this is the only realistic long term alternative to ensuring effective management of offenders between community and prison services and ensuring effective transition of offenders back into the community.

Question two

It is our view that the first five options are not realistic. Given that the majority of offenders come from within travelling distance to the Central belt of Scotland it is unrealistic to suppose that effective Throughcare arrangements can be made with a prison located in the North East of Scotland. Although we recognise that option six is a sensitive issue we think the more important question that requires to be addressed is developing a service that allows effective partnership between the prison and local services to ensure the management of the transition to the community and plans for supervising in the community are as effective as possible.