

17 COMMUNITY CUSTODY UNIT IN DUNDEE – DIJB70-2018

On 22nd October, 2018 the Planning Committee of Dundee City Council approved the application by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to build a Community Custody Unit (CCU) for 16 females in Dundee, on the site of the former Our Lady's Primary School in Coldside. The intention is that the facility will open in 2020 and will build on the well-established approach to women delivered through the Justice centre based at Friarfield.

The rationale behind a small local CCU embedded within a community ,as opposed to a large institutional conventional prison, flows from the 2011 Commission on Women Offenders (Angiolini Report) which emphasised that women in prison often have clusters of support and vulnerability issues, such as being victims of domestic abuse, childhood sexual abuse, mental health and substance misuse issues. Women in prison are assessed as being lower risk to others than males. Women in prison can also lose contact with their own children and their family networks when separated by geographical distance. The CCU will prioritise admission to women from the Tayside and North Fife area, as well as prioritising admission to women who are assessed to be heading toward a transition phase, most commonly toward the end of a sentence. Women in the CCU should be able to maintain stronger links to family supports and stronger links to community support, including increasing contact with community services, as and when they meet the criteria for community access.

Initial discussion has begun about how the health and social care services should be delivered to support the women in the CCU. There will require to be some in-unit provision, as not all women will qualify for community access, yet alongside this the ethos of the CCU will be to encourage links to local services, as women prepare to re-enter the community. The negotiations around support provision also need to factor-in that not all the women will be normally resident in Dundee and also look at social work provision.

A further report to IJB will be submitted when these discussions, involving Prison Healthcare (hosted by NHS Perth) and Dundee Health and Social Care partnership , are further advanced.