ABSTRACT
This report provides information for elected members regarding the proposed changes to the management structure for the Social Work Unit at HMP Open Estate – Noranside. It also provides information about the implications for Angus Council Social Work staff based at HMP Noranside.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS
It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:

i. note the contents of this report;
ii. agrees the change of management structure for HMP Open Estate – Noranside.

2 INTRODUCTION
Currently the Social Work Unit at the Noranside site of HMP Open Estate is managed by Angus Council Social Work and Health, Criminal Justice Social Work Service. The service is commissioned and wholly funded by the Scottish Prison Service. Social Work services at the Castle Huntly site of HMP Open Estate are managed by Perth and Kinross Criminal Justice Services.

Late in December 2006, Angus Council Criminal Justice Service requested that the Scottish Prison Service consider a resource bid for additional staffing including funding for a Senior Social Worker to be based at the then HMP Noranside. This resource request was based on social work activity levels and anticipated new burdens. The Senior Social Worker element was felt to be necessary to provide on site management oversight of the work and to provide support to the social work staff. Social work staff at HMP Noranside which had been, and continue to be, managed by senior staff based in Arbroath. This arrangement was felt to be less than ideal.

In early 2007 in response to the above request the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) requested a meeting with the Director of Social Work and during the discussion advocated that consideration be given to the Social Work Services within the Open Estate being delivered via a single management structure. This request occurred against the recent nationally based backdrop of a trend towards developing Service Level Agreements as the contractual basis for the provision and commissioning of services between local authorities and the SPS. These SLAs were to set out the level and quality of service expected and the resources necessary for their provision.

A series of meetings followed, between managers of Angus and Perth & Kinross Criminal Justice Services to explore the potential options for managing the Social
Work Services within the Open Estate, beginning in summer 2007. The conclusions and options from these discussions were reported to senior management in both authorities.

It should be acknowledged that there has been a considerable history of co-operation and effective work between the Scottish Prison Service and Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils in the delivery of prison-based Social Work Services. The nature of these services has changed considerably over the last 10 years as the welfare-based Social Work approach has receded and largely been replaced by new professional areas such as risk assessment and review, Integrated Case Management and provision of key reports (parole, lifer tribunal, home leave, sex offender assessments etc). During this same period, the role of Prison Social Work Teams in liaising with their community-based counterparts has assumed ever greater importance particularly in terms of risk assessment, risk management and the management of public protection issues for when prisoners are released into the community.

The two Prison Social Work Teams at the Noranside and Castle Huntly sites have responded to these challenges in different ways, reflecting both local expectations and available resources. It was therefore acknowledged that any review of service provision needed to include planning the way forward for both teams in a manner which maximised service quality, consistency and flexibility and provided a platform for longer-term service planning.

3 PROPOSAL

It is proposed that a single Social Work Team is created across HMP Open Estate with an identified Team Leader and enhanced management support at both the Social Work Units at the Noranside and Castle Huntly sites of HMP Open Estate. This single Social Work Team would be accountable to a single Local Authority Criminal Justice Service.

The specific advantages of this model are considered to include:

- Provision of a consistent approach in relation to service delivery and Performance Monitoring across both sites
- Enhanced transition planning and delivery across both sites
- Provision of a single contact point for the Scottish Prison Service in terms of Open Estate Social Work management
- Enhanced efficiency/flexibility of services which take account of variables such as staff absence through ill health, varying volumes of work on each site and specialist interventions required in relation to specific prisoners through the managed movement of staff across sites.
- Development of single team guidance in response to current and future legislation across both Open Estate sites.

Given that Perth & Kinross Criminal Justice Service currently manages the Social Work Services provided at HMP Perth, HMP Friarton and at the Castle Huntly site of HMP Open Estate, it was felt by officers that logically, subject to the consideration of elected members of Angus Council Social Work and Health Committee, the most appropriate authority to manage all Social Work Services in the Open Estate would be Perth and Kinross Criminal Justice Services.

Three Angus Council Social Work and Health staff are currently based at Noranside. The proposed changes would result in the posts occupied by these three staff no longer existing within our establishment. Subject to detailed discussion with Perth and Kinross Council, the three staff affected would have the option of transferring to Perth and Kinross Council and remaining at Noranside or being redeployed within Angus Council to posts considered to be a suitable match.
4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Angus Council as the Social Work Services at HMP Open Estate – Noranside are funded directly by the Scottish Prison Service. Initial enquiries indicate that Perth and Kinross Council salary scales and terms and conditions of employment would not result in staff suffering material loss should they elect to transfer. However, the process for any transfer would need to be agreed with Perth and Kinross Council.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 CONCLUSION

The introduction of a single line management structure for all Social Work provision across HMP Open Estate offers the potential both for greater consistency in relation to service delivery/performance monitoring and in relation to the provision of flexible services.

This report therefore recommends that the Social Work and Health Committee endorses the proposal that Perth & Kinross Criminal Justice Service manages the Social Work Services across HMP Open Estate.

R Peat
Director of Social Work and Health

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.