Justice Committee

Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2013-14

Written submission from the Scottish Prison Service

1. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written evidence to the Committee. I apologise for the slight delay in submitting the Scottish Prison Service’s evidence.

2. My evidence focuses solely on the financing of the Commission on Women Offenders’ findings as they relate to the Scottish Prison Service and the consequent implications for the 2013-14 draft budget, the plans for 2014-15 and forward years which are, of course, subject to the outcome of the next Spending Review.

3. By way of context, the Committee may find it helpful to see the Scottish Prison Service’s budget for this financial year and the draft budget for 2013-14 which has been set in line with the Scottish Government’s spending plan. The table below also shows SPS’s proposed spending plans for 2014-15 which includes the additional £20m capital funding provided by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance in February 2012, specifically for investing in the modernisation of the women’s estate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£m</th>
<th>2012-13 Budget</th>
<th>2013-14 Draft Budget</th>
<th>2014-15 Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Expenditure</td>
<td>325.1</td>
<td>342.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capital Expenditure</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>22.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400.6</td>
<td>364.5</td>
<td>398.7</td>
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4. The Committee may also wish to note that during the current financial year, HMP Low Moss was opened providing an additional 700 prisoner places; the HMP Shotts development programme was completed and construction begun on HMP Grampian, the first custom made community-facing prison which will include a unit for women offenders. Looking forward to 2013-14, the development of HMP Inverclyde will get underway and work will begin to acquire a site for the proposed HMP Highland (to replace HMP Inverness). I believe that these investments will enable SPS to continue to provide a safe, humane and progressive offender management regime for all offenders.

5. The Committee has, of course, expressed a particular interest in the financing of the findings of the Commission on Women Offenders. The Committee will be aware that the 37 recommendations made by the Commission on Women Offenders includes 6 recommendations relating directly to women offenders in a custodial setting. Of those 6 recommendations, 3 dealt with the way that women offenders should be treated in custody. In summary, these 3 recommendations make up a blue print for the future provision of support and management of women offenders. The Commission recommended the replacement of HMP Cornton Vale with a new national prison supported by local regional units to enable women to be managed in a way that better takes account of their risk and needs and also supports community re-integration.
6. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice has already accepted all 6 recommendations and work is already underway to take these forward. In the initial response to the report by the Commission, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice confirmed that over the course of the summer, SPS would consult on the size, nature and location of a national facility as a replacement for HMP Cornton Vale and that SPS would bring forward proposals in the autumn for the development of the new national facility in the central belt.

7. I duly conducted an extensive consultation exercise covering proposals for the new national prison and for regional units for women offenders. The proposals aimed at providing fit-for-purpose accommodation for women capable of being delivered as soon as possible were:

- That a new specialist unit at HMP Edinburgh should be built.
- Utilising the accommodation and opportunities presented by the planned HMP Inverclyde for women.
- Taken together, these 2 facilities would provide the specialist unit envisaged by the Commission and that they would provide appropriate accommodation to required support for:
  - women with a range of complex needs;
  - women during the first stages of long-term sentences; and
  - women in need of multiple or high level interventions.
- These facilities would be supplemented by HMP Grampian, which opens in 2013-2014 and includes a 50 bed regional unit to accommodate women from the North East.
- SPS would also continue to maximise the opportunity, where appropriate, to locate women offenders as close to their communities as possible.
- That work would continue to improve the facilities at HMP Cornton Vale whilst work was on-going on the above.
- In the longer term, should funding be available beyond the next spending review, that the new national facility should be in a new HMP Glasgow or on the existing site at HMP Cornton Vale.

8. The views expressed during that consultation exercise have been independently assessed and based on those findings, I have made recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice about how best to deliver on our objectives.

9. Subject of course to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice agreeing to the recommendations I have made to him, I would hope that the programme of
measures proposed for the new facilities for women offenders could be broadly complete by 2016. Final decisions will, of course, be contingent upon the outcome of the next Spending Review. However, it will be SPS's intention to bid for capital of some £70-80m to enable the completion of HMP Inverclyde, and early estimates suggest a further £16-20m would be required for a regional unit at HMP Edinburgh (should that be the final outcome).

10. SPS is also making improvements within the current budget cycle. As a first step, I have instructed works to refurbish 3 of the houseblocks at HMP Cornton Vale which will significantly improve the quality of facilities available to women offenders in advance of a more permanent solution being implemented. This work will cost around £2m. It will be funded from the existing capital budgets in 2012-13 and 2013-14 and begin in February, completing in the Autumn 2013. During this time, some women offenders will be re-located to alternative facilities at HMYOI Polmont which offers modern facilities.

11. I am also pleased to say that working with the Fife and Forth Valley Community Justice Authority and local faith groups, SPS will deliver the facilities for a family support centre at HMP Cornton Vale. This modest investment will be funded within existing budgets. We hope that the centre will be open and operational by Spring 2013.

12. Looking forward to 2014-15, the current capital spending plan comprises a proposed £12.5m to invest in the development of the estate including women offenders. In addition, the £20m provided in February 2012 will go a long way to further supporting the future development of the women’s estate to ensure fit-for-purpose facilities.

13. Since I took office, I have made it clear that the issue of women in custody would be my highest priority. I believe that SPS is now getting in place structures which will deliver first class accommodation and services for women in custody in Scotland. I hope that this evidence shows the substantial and substantive progress that has been, and is being, made by the Scottish Prison Service to improve the current situation as it applies to women offenders, and to develop more fully our responses to the recommendations in the Women’s Commission Report. The situation continues to evolve and I would hope to be able to provide the Committee with further detail at the evidence session on 30 October.

Colin McConnell
Chief Executive
23 October 2012