



PRESS RELEASE

NEW ALLOA COURT TO HERALD SWIFTER JUSTICE

Criminal justice partners in Central Scotland have welcomed the opening of refurbished court facilities in Alloa which will lead to speedier and more efficient justice in Clackmannanshire.

The Scottish Court Service has invested £1.5 million upgrading the courthouse to improve the criminal justice service to members of the public, witnesses, victims of crime and accused persons.

The improvements have been welcomed by the Central Criminal Justice Board, whose membership includes the Chief Constable of Central Scotland, the Area Procurator Fiscal and senior representatives from the Scottish Court Service. They said the modernised courtroom facilities provided a better working environment which was a reflection of the aim to enhance the professional care given to witnesses and victims of crime as well as to ensure offenders were brought to justice more swiftly.

Alloa's second court room which will open for business on 28 January will provide much needed extra capacity to deal with cases and the court extension ensures much improved modern facilities for witnesses and better access to support for victims and witnesses.

Linda Reid, Sheriff Clerk at Alloa said:

"The additional courtroom will ensure cases are disposed of more quickly and we have made great improvements to help those appearing as witnesses in court. These include the provision of separate access routes for witnesses and jurors, as well as separate rooms for prosecution and defence witnesses. We also have facilities for vulnerable witnesses enabling them to give evidence remotely from outside the court room and these changes will make giving evidence or serving as a juror a less stressful experience.

"As a partnership, the Criminal Justice Board has signalled that the opening of the new Alloa Court will provide a focus for all the agencies concerned to work together to use the new resources effectively and allow more cases to be prosecuted swiftly and efficiently which will improve the delivery of justice for the local community in and around Alloa."

Clackmannanshire Area Commander Superintendent Andrew Price said:

“The advent of the refurbished court provides a real springboard for the delivery of swifter justice in Clackmannanshire. We will be dedicating police resources to ensuring that those who are meant to turn up at court, do so, and do not flout the authority of the court, but also that witnesses can carry out their duty without hindrance.

“We are committed to working with our criminal justice partners in safeguarding the public, caring for the community and preventing crime. The work at Alloa Sheriff Court reflects that focus and we are certain the number of improvements to working practices and environment over the coming months can make a real difference.”

Area Procurator Fiscal for Central, Michelle Macleod, said:

"The newly refurbished Sheriff Court at Alloa is a major asset in providing the local community with the criminal justice system it deserves. In particular, the additional facilities for witnesses are a significant improvement and will provide witnesses with more support when giving evidence. The Procurator Fiscal is committed to working with other criminal justice partners to obtain the maximum benefit from the improved facilities and to provide speedier and more effective justice for the people of Clackmannanshire."

Notes for Editors

Work began at the end of December 2007 to refurbish Alloa Sheriff Court following a successful bid to Clackmannanshire Council to acquire the adjacent Council offices.

The new court also houses the Area Procurator Fiscal Service and Citizens Advice Bureau.

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