

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Consultation on the proposal to Close Bath Magistrates and County/ Family Court Scrutiny inquiry day (SID)**

(Community Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels)

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> September  
Room: Banqueting Room  
Time: 11:00 – 15:30

## **Background**

- On the 23rd June the Secretary of State announced his intention to work with the judiciary to reform the courts and tribunals in England and Wales. This involved some challenging decisions about the current system. One such decision relates to the courts and tribunals estate.
- On the 16<sup>th</sup> July, we received a letter notifying us of the start of the consultation on the provision of courts and tribunal services in England and Wales. This runs until the 8<sup>th</sup> October ( 12 week consultation period)
- This consultation proposes the closure of Bath Magistrates' and County Court and Family Court or North Avon (Yate) Magistrates' Court, and transfer the workload to Bristol Magistrates' Court.
- The capacity at Bristol Magistrates' Court would only support the workload from either Bath Magistrates' Court or North Avon Magistrates' Court and the responses to the consultation will inform the decision on whether either of the two proposals are implemented.
- The PDS Panel for Communities, Transport & Environment are the lead Panel who have been nominated to undertake a scrutiny Inquiry day (*open invite to all other PDS Panels*).
- The consultation is aimed at court users, magistracy, judiciary, and anyone else with an interest in the provision of local justice arrangements in the South West region.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the scrutiny inquiry day is to provide the opportunity to formulate our collective formal response to these proposals, with relevant experts and key stakeholders on the key questions raised within the proposal document and report back to the Ministry of Justice (HM Courts & Tribunal Services).

The Scrutiny Inquiry Day will focus on:

Gathering as much evidence on the key issues and or concerns raised by those potentially affected the proposal, and understand the positive and negative impacts of the proposal. This will then help to provide our overall BANES response.

### Approach

This is led by the CTE Panel, but does impact on other PDS Panel remits such as Children & Young people, and the Health & Wellbeing Select Committee

Whilst this SID is a public meeting, members of the public must submit any statements in advance of the meeting (with written submissions at least 5 days before the event to try to avoid duplication and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage in the event). It is envisaged these statements will be supplied as part of the briefing pack / papers on the SID day.

Outcomes will be presented to the next Timely public meeting of the Communities Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (potentially November) with all the relevant PDS Panels invited to attend this meeting.

### Exclusions:

1. Court Procedures

### Attendees (Draft list)

#### Council:

Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels: Invitations sent to all members of the CTE, PH&ED, CYP, Resources and the Health & Wellbeing Select Committee

Cabinet Members: An invitation will be sent to all Cabinet members. Those with a particular interest would include Martin Veal (Community Services), & Cabinet Assistant Chris Pearce., Michael Evans (Children's Services), & Cabinet Assistant Emma Dixon, Vic Pritchard (Adult Social Care & Health) & Cabinet Assistant Lisa O'Brien.

Town & Parish Cllrs

Policy and Partnerships (Community Safety), (Connecting Communities – Young People)

Social Care – Safeguarding Team

Criminal Justice – Youth offending Team (Sally Churchyard/ Carla Cooper)  
Licensing Team.

Open invite to the Chief Executive (Jo Farrar) and all Strategic and Divisional Directors.

Comms & Marketing

Legal Team – Victoria Wilson (Senior Child Care Lawyer)

Partners and Stakeholders:

Judge Francis Goddard

Health and Social Care Organisations:

Avon and Somerset Police, (The Lighthouse –Victim support)

Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner

Probation Services

CURO

Federation of Bath Residents Associations,

Town/Parish Councils

Residents Associations

Local Solicitors

Julian House (Street Sleepers)

Housing association

South Side Family Project

Project 28

SARI

ASPIRE Academy

Off the Record - Bath

Timescales

The planning and preparation for the Scrutiny Inquiry Day normally takes a minimum of 3 months, however due to the tight timescales of the consultation period, the final Consultation report is likely to be delivered back to CTE Panel after the event and submission to the Ministry of Justice. The plan will be for the CTE Panel to receive an update report at its September or November Panel meeting. (TBC)

Enquiries

For further information, contact:

Chair Cllr:

Lead Officer (Corporate Policy):

Lead Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer

John Bull

Samantha Jones

Donna Vercoe

**Draft Agenda**

**Consultation on the proposals to close Bath Magistrates Court and Family Court**  
**Bath Banqueting Room**

Time	Activity
11:00	<b>Registration and refreshments</b>
11:30	<p>Cllr John Bull  <b>Welcome / introductions and run through aims and objectives of the Day,</b>  <i>15 minutes max</i></p>
11:45	<p><b>Setting the Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction to the consultation process</b></li> </ul> <p>Speaker from the Ministry of Justice  Sandra Aston Delivery Director South West Region, (HM Courts Tribunal Service)</p> <p><i>10 -15 minute presentation (10-15 minutes for Q&amp;A)</i></p>
12:15	<p><b>Evidence from the local perspective &amp; Impact of change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magistrate Caroline Kington</li> <li>• B&amp;NES officer (TBC)</li> </ul> <p><i>Total Time: 30 minutes</i></p>
12:45	<p><b>Statements / evidence gathering</b></p> <p>Cllr John Bull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local residents (opportunity to speak)</li> <li>• Results from survey</li> <li>• Briefing on local travel &amp; crime figures (TBC)</li> </ul> <p><i>Total time: 30 minutes</i></p>
13:15	<b>Refreshment &amp; Comfort Break (15 minutes)</b>
13:30	<p><b>Facilitated workshop (discussion1):</b></p> <p><b>To determine whether we agree or disagree with the proposals, the following questions will be discussed:-</b></p> <p><b>Q1. Discuss in groups how the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? (Brainstorm)</b>  <b>(10-15 minutes)</b></p>

	<p><b>Q2. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts &amp; Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details. ( Brain storm) (10- 15 minutes)</b></p> <p><i>10-15 minutes (Discussions and initial collection of feedback)</i></p>
14:10	<p><b>Facilitated workshop (discussion 2):</b></p> <p><b>Q3 Do we have any comments on the evidence used or conclusions reached on these proposals. (10-15 minutes)</b></p> <p><b>Q5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? (10-15 minutes)</b></p> <p>These could include:- using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires.</p> <p><b>Please explain your answers, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible</b></p> <p><i>10-15 minutes (discussion and collection of feedback)</i></p>
14:50	<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <p>Cllr John Bull</p> <p>Summary of day (next steps/ actions) Our <b>overall comments/ findings to the proposals.</b></p> <p><i>15 minutes</i></p>
15:05	<p><b>Thank you &amp; Finish</b></p>