

Cambridge Office
Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge, CB2 8DR

To: All Basildon/Grays and Southend/Rayleigh Duty Scheme Members

Re: Basildon/Grays and Southend/Rayleigh Schemes

Consultation on merger of the Basildon/Grays and Southend/Rayleigh Duty Solicitor Schemes.

Introduction and Background

This consultation is in response to Essex HMCTS confirmation that court business will be listed in recognition of Local Justice Areas (South Essex and North Essex).

There are currently two Duty Schemes in South Essex as follows:–

- **Basildon/Grays** – 2 Police Stations (Basildon and Grays and 1 Magistrates' Court (Basildon).
- **Southend/Rayleigh** – 2 Police Stations (Southend and Rayleigh) and 1 Magistrates' Court (Southend).

Since the pandemic, HMCTS list cases based on Local Justice Areas (LJA's) for which there are two, South Essex and North Essex. This has led to the allocation of a Duty Solicitor from each scheme to cover a single court where HMCTS only require one Duty Solicitor as there is often insufficient work to justify the allocation of two Duty Solicitors. This has also caused confusion for Duty Solicitors and the rota production team.

Moving to a single South Essex Duty Solicitor rota would best fit the current listing practice. Consolidation of the two schemes would be a sensible option which would give a fair allocation of work to providers across South Essex. It would save costs, assist with rota production and bring the scheme into line with the remand courts which, in 2017, moved to a single remand court for South Essex Monday to Friday with a centralised, county-wide remand court on Saturdays at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court.

This is not a court or police station closure but given the significant impact of the court listing arrangements, it is deemed appropriate to consult scheme members on the options available.

Please note: there are no further amendments proposed to Contract arrangements and specifically remuneration for Police Station and Court Duty work will remain unchanged.

The timetable for this consultation exercise is as follows:

Stage	Duration	Date
Consultation Period	3 weeks	06/08/21 to 27/08/21
Consideration of responses	1 week	By 03/09/21
Publication of consultation response	1 week	By 10/09/21
Commencement of new rota		01/10/21

Proposed Options

Please find below proposed changes to the South Essex schemes:

Option A

COMBINE THE SOUTHEND/RAYLEIGH SCHEME WITH THE BASILDON/GRAYS SCHEME
This proposal would combine both schemes and would result in a single combined Duty Rota covering the CJS areas of Southend/Rayleigh and Basildon/Grays.

Scheme Members would have access to South Essex Police Station and Court Duty work and would be required to service all the police stations and courts in the combined CJS area.

THE OFFICE POSTCODE TOOL WOULD BE AMENDED TO COMBINE THE OFFICE POSTCODES THAT PROVIDE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE BASILDON/GRAYS AND SOUTHEND/RAYLEIGH SCHEMES INTO A SINGLE SCHEME CALLED THE BASILDON AND SOUTHEND SCHEME.

Option B

COMBINE THE BASILDON/GRAYS COURT DUTY SCHEME WITH THE SOUTHEND/GRAYS COURT DUTY SCHEME

This proposal would combine the Basildon scheme with the neighbouring Southend Scheme and would result in a single combined Court Duty Rota covering the CJS areas of Basildon/Grays and Southend/Rayleigh.

Scheme Members would have access to South Essex Court Duty work and would be required to service all the courts in the combined CJS area.

THE EXISTING POLICE STATION ROTAS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED AND WOULD NOT COMBINE.

Option C

NO CHANGE TO EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS AND DUTY SCHEME ELIGIBILITY REMAINS AS CURRENTLY SET WITH SEPARATE SCHEMES FOR BASILDON/GRAYS AND SOUTHEND/RAYLEIGH.

It may be the case that you consider different approaches appropriate for this scheme and if this is the case please make it clear in your response. Please explain in your response which Option(s) and scheme(s) you are referring to or indicate your reasons for preferring any other alternative suggestion.

Following the outcome of this consultation revised rotas will be issued, if required, effective from 1st October 2021. **Please note that any changes that are required as a result of this consultation may lead to a delay in publication of the rota in early September. We will do all that we can to minimise any delay and publish as soon as possible.**

You are invited to submit any comments regarding the proposals in writing, marked **Basildon and Southend Consultation** in the subject box by email to: andrew.taylor@justice.gov.uk by **5pm on 27/08/21**.