



Cambridge Office
Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge, CB2 8DR

To: All Essex Duty Scheme Members

Re: Chelmsford/Harlow Scheme

Consultation on temporary changes to the Police Station Duty rotas following the decision of Essex Police to close Chelmsford Custody Suite from Saturday 10th August until December 2020.

On 8th August 2019, Essex Police notified the Legal Aid Agency that Chelmsford Custody Suite was to close temporarily from 10th August until December 2020 for building work to be undertaken.

Initially, where a Duty Solicitor was requested our approach was to encourage Essex custody staff and the DSCC to use their best endeavours to identify the cases that would otherwise have gone to Chelmsford custody, so they could be allocated to Chelmsford/Harlow providers. Unfortunately, that approach has not worked effectively and scheme members have reported instances where no requests for a duty solicitor have been received.

This letter constitutes formal notice, under paragraph 6.6 of the 2017 Standard Crime Contract Specification - Duty Solicitor Provisions, which states we may consult on a proposal to change the postcode boundaries in respect of a scheme following the closure of a police station.

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

This letter will deal specifically with proposed changes to the schemes affected by the closure of Chelmsford Custody Suite. Mention has been made of Chelmsford cases being taken to Colchester, Clacton, Basildon and Grays police stations however in reality, for operational reasons, Essex Police may take detainees to any police station in Essex. Therefore, Scheme members from all the Essex Duty Schemes are invited to respond.

The timetable for this consultation exercise is as follows:

Stage	Duration	Date
Consultation Period	2 weeks	03/10/19 to 17/10/19
Consideration of responses	1 week	By 24/10/19
Publication of consultation response	1 week	By 31/10/19
Commencement of new rota		December 2019

To help to minimise the impact of the closure on Chelmsford/Harlow Scheme members, the Consultation Period is reduced to 2 weeks.

Proposed Options

Please find below proposed temporary changes to the Essex schemes.

We have tried to keep changes to schemes to a minimum, whilst taking into account the likely impact on levels of service to clients from solicitors whose offices will no longer be local to the police station dealing with their matter.

Below are the options being proposed:

Option A

COMBINE THE CHELMSFORD/HARLOW POLICE STATION SCHEME WITH THE BASILDON/GRAYS POLICE STATION SCHEME

This proposal would temporarily combine the Chelmsford scheme with the neighbouring Scheme to the south and would result in a single combined Police Station Duty Rota covering the CJS areas of Chelmsford/Harlow and Basildon/Grays.

Scheme Members would have access to, and would be required to service all the police stations in the combined CJS area.

THE EXISTING COURT DUTY ROTAS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED AND WOULD NOT COMBINE.

Option B

COMBINE THE CHELMSFORD/HARLOW POLICE STATION SCHEME WITH THE COLCHESTER/CLACTON POLICE STATION SCHEME

This proposal would temporarily combine the Chelmsford scheme with the neighbouring Scheme to the east and would result in a single combined Police Station Duty Rota covering the CJS areas of Chelmsford/Harlow and Colchester/Clacton.

Scheme Members would have access to, and would be required to service all the police stations in the combined CJS area.

THE EXISTING COURT DUTY ROTAS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED AND WOULD NOT COMBINE.

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, effective from December 2019. Chelmsford Custody Suite is due to reopen in December 2020 and we anticipate operating a 3-month rota from October 2020 and then issuing new rotas from January 2021 which revert to the pre-combined schemes.

You are invited to submit any comments regarding the proposals in writing, marked **Chelmsford Consultation** in the subject box by email to:

Diane.hayward@justice.gov.uk by **5pm on 17/10/19**.