

Response to Consultation

Impact of Court Closure: Lowestoft Magistrates Court

Schemes directly affected by the changes:

Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft scheme

Change effective:

End September 2016 (date to be confirmed)

Introduction and Background

In the South East Region, the following Magistrates' Court is due to close at the end of September 2016 (date to be confirmed):

- Lowestoft

Cases will be dealt with primarily in Great Yarmouth Magistrates Court. Some cases may also go to Ipswich and Norwich Magistrates Courts.

As a result of this closure, we need to revise the following scheme:

- Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft Scheme.

Consultation

On 5th July 2016, we published two regional consultation papers in response to HMCTS's announcement of the closure of Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft Magistrates' Courts. The papers were sent to all Contract Holders who are currently members of the following schemes:

Bury St Edmunds, West Suffolk & Thetford Scheme

Ipswich, Felixstowe & Woodbridge Scheme

Norwich & District Scheme.

Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft Scheme

The consultation papers outlined the court closures and Duty Solicitor Schemes that will be affected and the options that had been identified to change the Duty Solicitor Schemes within the local region.

The consultation on these proposals ran for 3 weeks to 26th July 2016.

Response to Consultation

This consultation response is published on 11 August 2016.

In total, one written response was received. We wish to thank the Contract Holder who took time to respond to the consultation.

The consultation paper set out a single proposal, which we considered was the only viable option. Respondents were invited to comment on this proposal and, if not in support of it, to offer an alternative suggestion.

Our proposal:

Following closure, as the first receiving site will be Great Yarmouth Magistrates Court, which is located within the same Scheme, we proposed to take no action to change the membership of the Scheme or its boundary.

Consultation Response

The respondent agreed with this option.

No alternative suggestions were put forward.

Conclusion

It has been decided to implement the proposal.

Membership of the Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft Scheme will continue with the existing Scheme Boundary and will give all Scheme members access to Great Yarmouth (Gorleston) Police Investigation Centre rota and Great Yarmouth Magistrates Court Duty rota.

This option maintains the current police station arrangements and gives all Scheme members access to some Court Duty work.

It should be noted there is no intention to list Lowestoft work separately at Great Yarmouth Court. Cases will be listed and heard in accordance with court capacity and anticipated plea, and not where the offence was committed.

For Court Duty work, it should be noted that the current contract rules for claiming travel costs & expenses will apply, which can be found in the Remuneration Regulations.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2016/313/schedule/3/made>

The LAA will continue to review whether the increase in defendants at Great Yarmouth Magistrates Court will require additional Court Duty Solicitor on any specific days.