

# Public Document Pack



## Executive Board

Thursday, 1 October 2015 2.00 p.m.  
The Boardroom, Municipal Building

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

**Chief Executive**

### ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

#### PART 1

Item	Page No
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b>	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
<b>3. CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO</b>	
<b>(A) PROPOSAL TO RE-PROFILE THE DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT - KEY DECISION</b>	<b>1 - 9</b>

*Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 511 8670 or  
Angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.  
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 15 October 2015*

Item	Page No
4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO	
(A) SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (VULNERABLE ADULTS) TENDER	10 - 13
5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO	
(A) UPDATE ON LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS INITIATIVES	14 - 19
6. RESOURCES PORTFOLIO	
(A) INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/2017	20 - 39
(B) TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	40 - 42
7. COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO	
(A) PROPOSAL ON THE PROVISION OF COURT AND TRIBUNAL SERVICES IN THE NORTH WEST REGION - CONSULTATION PAPER	43 - 112

*In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.*

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 1 October 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director People and Economy

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to Re-profile the Dedicated School Grant

**WARDS:** Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide a summary of the funding challenges faced in balancing the Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) and to seek permission to consult School Forum and special schools on the proposals to address the funding gap to ensure a sustainable and balanced DSG.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) the Board approves the proposal to consult the Schools Forum on the proposal to re-profile the DSG funding for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018;**
- 2) the Board supports Option B;**
- 3) the Board supports the proposal to review and revise the top up funding for special schools within the Borough to bring the funding in line with the budget available; and**
- 4) the Board requests a further report on the outcome of the consultations.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1** The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is allocated to Halton annually based on the number of pupils in primary and secondary schools, in early years provision and receiving high needs (special educational needs) provision. Using the number of places offered for September 2015, the estimated amount of grant for 2016-17 is £101,572,789. No uplift of DSG is expected for indicated.
- 3.2** The DSG is allocated to mainstream schools and academies in Halton using the same funding formula which the LA Finance Team calculates. The Authority is required to consult with schools and academies on the funding factors and criteria used within the funding formula but are not required to consult on actual cash values.

- 3.3 Schools Forum are then presented with the recommended funding formula for approval and the funding formula (but not actual cash values) have to be submitted to the Education Funding Agency by the end of October. The cash values attributed to each funding factor are calculated once the indicative grant settlement and actual pupil data is released in mid-December and have to be submitted to the EFA by 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016.
- 3.4 Although School Forum is consulted on the funding factors used it is the role of the Local Authority to propose and decide any decisions on formula changes including the redistributions of funding. The School Forum must be consulted on the proposed changes and governing bodies must be informed of all consultations. For any financial issues related to special educational needs the School Forum should give their view and inform governing bodies of all consultation.
- 3.5 Since April 2010 there has been no uplift to the cash value per pupil that the local authority receives; although the amount received each year varies based on the number of pupils. Schools have been protected to a large extent as savings have been made to the central services funded by the grant instead. However, the expenditure over the past year and forecast for the current year is that there will be an overspend covered only by contingencies brought forward from previous financial years.
- 3.6 The indicative grant was £101,773,600 for 2014-15 and we carried forward £5.35m of central balances from previous years into 2014-15. By the end of the year those central balances had reduced by £2.73m to £2.62m.
- 3.7 Over the same period school balances for primary and secondary schools had increased by £0.75m from £5.94m to £6.69m even though within that year one secondary school and two primary schools had converted to academies so there were three fewer schools at the end of the year.
- 3.8 The indicative DSG for 2015-16 for Halton was £104,006,000 due to an increase in pupil numbers. After the top-slice for monies paid directly to academies and non-maintained special schools Halton will receive £77,506,000 in actual payments.

3.9 The estimated outturn for 2015-16 is as follows:

Devolved directly to maintained schools:	£65,216,403
Forecast central expenditure	<u>£12,833,613</u>
	£78,050,016

This gives a forecast overspend of £544k for this current year. The balance of contingencies at the end of 2015-16 is therefore expected to reduce to £2.076m.

- 3.10 The estimated grant for 2016/2017 is £101.6m based on the number of places offered for September 2015. From this we require £14.2m to cover all central services leaving £87.4m for schools. However, using the 2015-16 cash values for the 2016-17 estimated pupils we require £89.9m for schools. This leaves a funding gap of £2.5m.
- 3.11 The Early Years phase which covers all 2, 3 and 4 year old provision has a budget of £5.3m and a forecast spend of £7.0m, leaving an overspend of £1.7m. This is due to the take up of free entitlement being more than we are funded for. As participation increases so our grant allocation will increase however we are only given an increase (or decrease) in budget after the end of the financial year.
- 3.12 The High Needs block of DSG covers special schools, resource bases, enhanced provision, independent school provision and a range of central services mainly within the Inclusion division. We will receive £13m allocation for 2016-17 but are expecting to spend £15.6m, leaving a gap of £2.6m.
- 3.13 The breakdown of costs is given below:
- |                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Special Schools including PRU | £6.6m        |
| Resource bases                | £1.6m        |
| Enhanced Provision            | £1.7m        |
| SLA's for the Resource Bases  | £0.4m        |
| Post 16 independent provision | £1.1m        |
| Independent schools           | £2.5m        |
| Other                         | <u>£1.7m</u> |
| Total                         | £15.6m       |
- 3.14 The schools block of DSG covers mainstream primary and secondary schools. Just over £1.1m is retained centrally and the level and purpose is strictly defined by the regulations. The majority is devolved directly to schools however we have historically not passed on the full amount as this block of DSG has covered the overspends in the Early Years and High Needs areas. We have reached a point whereby the underspend in this block no longer achieves this.

#### 4.0 BUDGET OPTIONS

- 4.1 **Special Schools Funding** - The issues faced are mainly around the numbers and costs of high needs pupils. The cost for the special schools in 2013-14 was £5.2m while the forecast cost for 2015-16 is £6.6m, an increase of £1.4m. Of this, £268k relates to new provision – that of the sixth form at Ashley special school.
- 4.2 The cost of the special units within mainstream schools has stayed at £1.6m; the cost of enhanced provision has increased by £0.2m. However the cost of independent school provision has increased by £0.9m from £1.6m in 2013-14 to £2.5m expected in 2015-16.

- 4.3 Consequently a review is being undertaken of the funding for special schools with a view to aligning spend to the budget available. This will require an application to the Schools Minister for permission to disapply the minimum funding guarantee. Thereby allowing an overall reduction to the special schools budgets of more than 1.5%.
- 4.4 The DSG covers the costs of all Halton pupils whether educated in Halton schools or educated in either other LAs or independent special schools. Over the last few years there has been an increase in the number of pupils placed in independent provision outside the Borough as schools have said that they are not in a position to meet their needs. Consideration will need to be given at School Forum as to the implications of this trend and whether there are other better more efficient ways to meet the needs of many of these children and young people within the Borough. The School Forum will be advised that the costs of placing children and young people from the Borough is significantly higher than educating them with Halton schools and that the more pupils we place in independent provision the greater the reduction will be on delegated schools budgets.
- 4.5 For Primary and Secondary schools, every attempt has been made to protect the budget within each funding factor, adjusting only for increases or decreases in pupils numbers. The exception has been the funding for Looked After Children which despite the significant increase in numbers has remained at £1,517.25 per pupil. This has meant the total amount passed to schools for LAC increasing from £151.5k in 2013-14 to £232k for 2015-16. (An increase of £80.5k, or 53 pupils). This increase has been offset by a corresponding decrease in other funding factors for schools.
- 4.6 **Option A** - The Minimum Funding Guarantee protects schools from budget reductions of more than 1.5% on their previous years' budget other than for falling pupil numbers. This means that if we need to reduce the cash values of the funding factors by more than 1.5% it has no impact on the overall budget received by a school. A reduction of 1.5% across all funding factors would save £863k and so reduce the funding gap to just over £1.7m.
- 4.7 If a further reduction of 1.5% was considered across all funding factors for 2017-18 within the primary and secondary sectors, this would give approximately £850k of savings. Therefore over the two years 2016-17 and 2017-18 we could reduce the primary and secondary budgets by £1.7m which in conjunction with the special schools review will ease the pressure overall on the grant. If the funding formula remains unchanged, by 2018-19 we should be in a position to cover all our expected costs within the grant and hopefully be able to start rebuilding our contingencies which have served us so well over the last couple of years.

- 4.8 **Option B** -There is an alternative option available to schools to reduce their funding. This is the recommended option as it will reduce the overall level of cuts each school has to their budget over the two years. The option is to reduce the funding factors by 1% and take out the funding for Pupil Growth (budget of £180,000) and the Additional Notional SEN funding (budget of £108,500). These combined actions should produce a similar level of saving as the 1.5% reduction in funding factors of £794k in year 1 and a similar sum again in year 2. This along with the reduction in special schools budgets should balance the budget.

### **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Government Policy is that the current funding allocation will be replaced by a National Funding Formula. There is no detail at this stage as to what this would look like and when it is likely to be introduced. However, in order to ensure Halton Schools are in the best position if and when the National Funding Formula is introduced every effort has been made to keep schools at the mid-range of cash values for each funding factor.
- 5.2 Consultation will be undertaken with schools in September on how the funding formula will be set for 2016-17 and this will be considered by the Schools Forum at its meeting on 12th October 2015. At this meeting a report will be presented outlining the LA proposals and seeking the views of School Forum. Governing bodies will then be advised of the consultation. School Forum will also be consulted on the proposed review of Special Schools funding and consultation will then be undertaken with the schools and their governing bodies. A report on the outcome of these consultations will be provided to Executive Board so that a final decision can be made.
- 5.3 There is a possibility that when the indicative grant is received along with the actual pupil data in mid-December that the funding gap will alter as the figures used within this report are estimates based on 2015/2016 budgets and numbers. Agreement to the proposal is however essential at the October Board as the indicative budget is received towards the end of December and the cash values must be calculated and submitted to the Education Funding Agency by 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

### **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The DSG funding gap is estimated to have increased to approximately £2.5 million. In previous years any funding gap has been covered through the use of unallocated funds and the carry forward contingency from previous years.
- 6.2 To address the funding gap it is proposed that the primary and secondary school budgets are re-profiled in line with either Option A or Option B with a maximum of 1.5% reduction taken from each school in the next two financial years. In addition, a review of special schools

funding is undertaken which brings spend in line with their original funding allocation.

- 6.3 Appendix A shows the impact of the proposed reductions on the different categories and sizes of schools.

### **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

#### **7.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

The funding changes will ensure that we have sustainable budget can meet the needs of all Halton pupils whether educated within the borough or in other LAs or independent specialist provision.

#### **7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None.

#### **7.3 A Healthy Halton**

None.

#### **7.4 A Safer Halton**

None.

#### **7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

### **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 8.1 These changes will reduce schools budgets over a two year period. These losses will be capped at 1.5% through the minimum funding guarantee for primary and secondary schools. Schools with balances will be able to use these balances to cushion the impact of the budget reduction.

- 8.2 For the special schools the proposed changes, if agreed by the Schools Minister will mean a significant reduction in funding by comparison with the previous financial year. However, the revised funding allocation will be more in line with the funding levels schools received in previous years. The balances for 2014/2015 for the three maintained special schools stood at 12.4% with a total of £671,525 this funding could be used to mitigate any changes.



**9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 It is the aim of the School Funding review to create a fairer funding system and ensure the funding is more responsive to the individual needs of pupils and students with high needs whether they are educated in the borough in mainstream provision or outside the borough in independent specialist provision. The profiling of the DSG is aimed at ensuring that there is sufficient funding available to meet the needs of all pupils.

**10.00 REASON FOR DECISION**

10.1 To ensure that there is a fair distribution of resources across the DSG and that the DSG is profiled so that its budget commitments are sustainable.

**11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

11.1 Consideration was given to reducing schools budget by £1.8 million to balance the budget in 2016/2017, however, the minimum funding guarantee would cap any reductions to 1.5% i.e. approximately £863,000.

**12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

12.1 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

**13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
School Funding Arrangements 2016/2017	DFE website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Ann McIntyre – Operational Director- Education, Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director - Resources
Schools Funding: Moving Towards a National Funding Formula. Briefing Paper 6702 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	House of Commons Library	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Education Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director Resources
School Forum agenda, papers and minutes	HBC website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Education Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director Resources

DSG 2016-17 - impact of 1.5% reduction across all funding factors for Primary and Secondary

Phase	Size	No pupils	2016-17 budget based on:		
			15-16 cash values	1.5% reduction	Difference
Primary	Small	96	£ 495,168	£ 489,492	£ 5,676
Primary	Medium	151	£ 627,195	£ 620,168	£ 7,027
Primary	Large	399	£ 1,243,224	£ 1,224,649	£ 18,575
All Primaries			£ 40,362,035	£ 39,984,586	£ 377,449
Secondary	Small	655	£ 3,612,761	£ 3,558,755	£ 54,006
Secondary	Medium	944	£ 5,172,213	£ 5,101,500	£ 70,713
Secondary	Large	1526	£ 8,415,945	£ 8,295,585	£ 120,360
All Secondaries			£ 40,058,898	£ 39,573,337	£ 485,561
Total			£ 80,420,933	£ 79,557,923	£ 863,010

y schools

1% reduction Difference

£ 490,232 £ 4,936

£ 620,983 £ 6,212

£ 1,230,829 £ 12,395

£ 40,024,124 £ 337,911

£ 3,576,832 £ 35,929

£ 5,120,704 £ 51,509

£ 8,332,227 £ 83,718

£ 39,711,645 £ 347,253

£ 79,735,769 £ 685,164

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director People and Economy

**PORTFOLIO:** Health and Wellbeing

**SUBJECT:** Supported Accommodation (Vulnerable Adults)  
Tender (relates to Minute 15 - 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 )

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Executive Board approval to offer Direct Award contracts for the delivery of community based supported accommodation services from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. In addition, Executive Board are requested to endorse the revised procurement timetable for the supported accommodation services for vulnerable adults (Learning Disabilities, Autism, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health) during this period.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) the Board supports the recommendation to extend the current '*Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notice*' (VEAT) Notice and Direct Award to supported accommodation providers (listed in paragraph 5.2) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016; and
- 2) the Board confirms its continuing approval of the procurement of the vulnerable adult supported accommodation services framework with a contract start date no later than 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016. The contract will be for a period of three years with an additional 1 year extension based on the quality of service delivery.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 Executive board endorsed a Direct Award of a contract to 13 supported accommodation providers from 1 November 2015 to 31 March 2016. Board also approved the procurement of the vulnerable adult supported accommodation services framework during 2015 with a contract start date of 1 April 2016, and a contract length of three years with an additional two year extension based on quality of service delivery.

- 3.2 Board also noted the remodelling of the service to move from dispersed provision across the Borough to clustered services based on a geographic zone. This would enable providers to concentrate resources, utilise assistive technology to manage risk and offer better value for money. TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings - Protection of employment) regulations apply to these services.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 The procurement process has been implemented and the Invitation to Tender was issued on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Providers had an opportunity to submit questions to clarify the process/specification. In this instance a number of questions were received which raised concerns relating to the pricing structure. Tenderers felt they would be unable to submit prices that gave sufficient consideration to variations in the size of zones and the higher costs arising from TUPE in some of these zones.
- 4.2 Managers reviewed the concerns raised and the need for the market to be confident it can deliver quality, sustainable services which offer the Council best value. Following discussion with Procurement it was decided that the approach needed to be modified and the tender process was aborted on 8<sup>th</sup> September.
- 4.3 Work is being prioritised to review and revise the specification and pricing model. A new procurement process will then commence. However given the delay and the complexity of the service remodelling it will be difficult for successful tenderers to mobilise the new contracts by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and there is a high risk of vulnerable adults experiencing disruption in their support.

#### **5.0 PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 It is proposed to comply with EU Procurement regulations by extending the current '*Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notice*' (VEAT) and give Direct Award contracts up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 to the providers listed in 5.2. The justification for the extension will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

5.2 The cost of the extension for each provider is listed below:

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Direct Award Cost 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016</b>
Alternative Futures Group	£823,288
Community Integrated Care	£748,899
Creative support	£343,727
Embrace	£837,691
Future Directions	£232,733
Options for supported Living	£99,462
Sanctuary	£36,585
Making Space	£54,425
M-Power	£9,376
1 <sup>st</sup> Choice Support	£30,897
Focus on Care	£30,955
PSS	£15,980
United Response	£20,543
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,284,563</b>

The above figures are subject to change based on assessed needs

5.3 Subject to approval of an extension, procurement of a longer term contract (3 years plus 1 year extension subject to service quality) will be implemented.

5.4 The contracts awarded will be on the same cluster model previously reported to Board. An achievable mobilisation period will be set ensuring safe transfer of care and support and continuity of services for vulnerable adults.

5.5 If the proposal is not agreed, or if there is a significant challenge as part of the VEAT process, the procurement will be implemented immediately with a shortened mobilisation period.

## 6.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The method of procurement will comply with the Public contract Regulations, 2015 and the Council's own Procurement Standing Orders and will utilise a VEAT Direct Award as described in 5.1.

## 7.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The financial implications are highlighted in 5.2 and are allocated within the Directorate's budget.

## 8.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 8.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Appropriate accommodation for some young people through the transition planning stage is essential, with a particular focus on young people in care.

- 8.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**  
Halton's adult accommodation model works in partnership with other agencies to promote employment and skills, working towards greater independence of individuals.
- 8.3 **A Healthy Halton**  
Individuals with additional needs or vulnerability can have disproportionate health related issues or life-long conditions. The current and future modelling will continue to promote health equalities
- 8.4 **A Safer Halton**  
All providers will continue to safeguard individuals and will be ensure that individuals are aware how to stay safe, how to report incidents and to promote safe community inclusion.
- 8.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**  
None identified
- 9.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**
- 9.1 The extension of the contracts to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 will allow sufficient time to complete the successful procurement and implementation of the new service model. This will ensure market sustainability whilst minimising risk relating to service continuity for vulnerable adults.
- 10.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
- 10.1 Equality and Diversity issues have been considered, the models of service delivery proposed will ensure personalised care and support to meet the identified needs of the vulnerable adults of Halton.
- 11.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**  
None.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director People and Economy

**PORTFOLIO:** Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** Update on Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Initiatives

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on Liverpool City Region (LCR) Employment and Skills initiatives which are having a positive impact in Halton.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Board support the positive progress being made to deliver Liverpool City Region initiatives in Halton.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Employment and Skills Board is the Liverpool City Region's lead strategic voice for improving the employment, skills and productivity of the Liverpool City Region's residents and workforce.

3.2 Halton's Portfolio Holder for Economic Development represents the borough on the board, and the Board has been responsible for developing a number of initiatives arising out of for example, the Liverpool City Region Growth Deal, the development of the Combined Authority, as well as ongoing discussions regarding the devolution of more powers and freedoms to the area.

3.3 It is therefore, worth advising Members of four programmes where Halton is benefitting and taking a leading role on implementing these initiatives.

**3.4 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT GATEWAY**

3.5 On September 18th 2014, Executive Board Members were asked to approve Halton's involvement in the Youth Employment Gateway Programme.

3.6 The Liverpool City Region secured £5.9million of Government investment to deliver this programme to reduce youth unemployment across the City Region over the next three years.

3.7 Each Local Authority was given an allocation to deliver the scheme in respective areas. In Halton this was £143k for phase 1 and £296k to



deliver phase 2.

- 3.8 The Youth Employment Gateway (YEG) programme provides support to young people aged 18-24 who have been unemployed for 8 weeks or more.
- 3.9 Halton's allocation is being managed by the Council's Employment Learning and Skills Division.
- 3.10 It is being delivered in two stages, with Phase 1 now well underway, accepting referrals from the Job Centre onto the programme between September 2014 and September 2015.
- 3.11 Phase 2 is planned to open on 1 October 2015 and will close on 31 December 2017.
- 3.12 During Phase 1 each participant is being given access to an Individualised Budget, whereas during Phase 2 each participant will be given access to a Personalised Budget: the difference between the two is the amount of control that participants have over the funding, with participants in Phase 2 having significant control over how the funding is used.
- 3.13 It is pleasing to note that Halton's programme performance is very positive with Halton being the best performer in the Liverpool City Region for job outcomes at 37%. The outcomes to date are summarised below.

Phase 1	Halton		
Outcome	Actual to Date	Target to Date	Target Phase 1
Referrals	162	NA	NA
Starts	126	65	93
Jobs	47	33	47
Sustained Jobs 13 weeks	33	NA	NA
Sustained Jobs 26 weeks	2	1	33
Client Customised Expenditure	£9,310	£28,700	£46,500
Start to Job Outcome Rate	37%	50%	50%

**3.14 Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub**

3.15 Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning & Skills Division has been allocated £150,000 of devolved Skills Funding Agency grant to manage the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub and associated staffing and financial resources on behalf of the city region until the end of March 2016.

3.16 The LCR Apprenticeship Hub which is chaired by Halton's Divisional Manager for Employment Learning and Skills has received funding in the past to support the growth of apprenticeships in the city region, with the most recent funding ending on 31 July 2015.

3.17 This last allocation of funding was provided by the Skills Funding Agency's Local Response Fund. This was managed by Wirral Metropolitan Council on behalf of Merseyside Colleges' Association.

3.18 This arrangement ended when the funding ceased on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

3.19 However, in recognising the valuable work of the Apprenticeship Hub, the Combined Authority agreed to allocate £150,000 of Growth Deal funding to Halton Borough Council to continue the support for apprenticeships and manage the Apprenticeship Hub and associated resources. This includes 2 FTE Apprenticeship Hub Co-ordinators.

**3.20 Skills for Growth Capital Fund**

3.21 This funding is part of the Liverpool City Region's £232 million Growth Deal that was secured by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) last year.

3.22 Working together, the City Region will invest the Skills Capital Investment Fund, consisting of £41.1 million across 2015/16 and 2016/17 as an integral part of the overall Growth Deal.

3.23 The funding will be used to upgrade to skills training facilities across the area, helping to meet employer demands for skills training by improving the quality of the learning experience and enhancing the job prospects of learners across the City Region.

3.24 Riverside College has bid for funding to deliver a Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Innovation Centre at the College's existing Cronton Campus, focusing on Advanced Manufacturing. The project is supported by key large employers and if successful will include the college working with 150 additional employers and a 25% increase in employment and Apprenticeship progression for current learners.

3.25 **Calls for European Funding**

3.26 Government has made it clear that small, geographically focused, bids will not be considered. Rather government is seeking a small number of large bids which encompass a functional economy, typically based around City Regions. Government has also imposed a minimum bid threshold of £500k ERDF and £100k ESF.

3.27 Partners across the LCR have, therefore, been working together to form consortia of shared interest to create bids of an appropriate scale **SME/Competitiveness**; the Council's Business Improvement & Growth team has been working with colleagues across the LCR to submit a European Project that will provide businesses with the support they need to grow and prosper.

3.28 The project will be a bridge between start-up and more bespoke, intensive or specialist support typically provided by the private sector.

3.29 The project will provide participating SME's with the following:-

- An intensive Business Diagnostic
- A Strategic Business Plan
- A dedicated Growth Adviser
- Informed brokerage into specialist/commercial business support
- More intensive support, where appropriate, focusing upon the management of people, processes and resources

3.30 The total amount of funding that has been requested is approximately £3m of European Regional Development Funding, of which £265k of funding will be spent in Halton up to December 2018.

3.31 A total amount of £265k in match is required to secure the delivery of the project in Halton.

3.32 **Access to Employment**; The Council's Employment, Learning and Skills is supporting City Region colleagues in producing a joint ESF bid for the 'Ways to Work' Programme an integrated programme for young people & adults, designed to improve personal resilience and progress to sustainable employment.

3.33 Incorporating Youth Employment Gateway (YEG) principles outlined above, workless and inactive people, including those furthest from the labour market will access a suite of individually tailored products which respond to employer needs. High quality Information, Advice & Guidance, transitional employment and skills development are essential components

of the project.

- 3.34 The total amount of funding that has been requested is approximately £28m of European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), of which approximately £1.7m of this comprises European Social Fund grant funding to be spent in Halton.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 It is likely that in the future rather than allocating resources directly to providers locally, Government will transfer resources to the City Region level. The direction of travel is that the current Growth Plan concept will be extended and that the Combined Authority and Employment and Skills Board will have more influence over how resources are allocated in the City Region. It is, therefore, important that Halton continues to maintain its Member and Officer presence at City Region events, meetings and forums. To date this input has had positive benefits for Halton.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 A summary of indicative allocations relating to the above initiatives is set out below:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Liverpool City Region Allocation</b>	<b>Halton Allocation</b>
European Social Fund Ways to Work	£28m	£3.2m includes ESF and YEI
Apprenticeship Hub	N/A	£0.15m
Youth Employment Gateway		£0.439m
(ERDF) Business Competitiveness	£3m	£0.265m
Skills Capital	£41.1m	tbc
		<b>Total £4.054m</b>

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES**

**6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

Young people across the city region, including Halton, will have access to a range of opportunities supported by the Apprenticeship Hub, and Youth Employment Gateway

**6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The initiatives identified in this report support the Council’s Employment Learning and Skills Priority. In particular, by providing training and skills development opportunities for Halton residents; bespoke training or

generic employability skills; apprenticeships advice and support.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

None identified.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

None identified.

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no major risks arising from this report.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no Equality and Diversity risks arising from this report.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Finance

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Initial Budget Proposals 2016/17

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To recommend to Council initial revenue budget proposals for 2016/17.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Council approve the initial budget proposals for 2016/17 set out in Appendix 1.**

### 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecasts potential revenue budget funding gaps for the Council, of approximately £16m in 2016/17 and £9m in 2017/18.

3.2 Budget saving proposals for 2016/17 are currently being developed by the Budget Working Group.

3.3 The first set of these proposals is listed in Appendix 1. It is proposed to implement these immediately in order to also achieve a part-year saving in 2015/16, which will assist in keeping the Council's overall spending in line with budget. In addition, a number of the proposals will take time to implement and therefore commencing the process as soon as possible will assist with ensuring they are fully implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Appendix 1 also presents the impact in 2017/18 of certain of the savings proposals

3.4 The following table summarises the budget proposals of the Budget Working Group and identifies the remaining forecast budget gaps.

	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	Total £m
Forecast Budget Gaps as per MTFS	16.0	9.0	25.0
Less Initial Budget Savings Proposals;			
Community & Resources Directorate	-3.8	+0.9	-2.9
People & Economy Directorate	-4.0	+3.0	-1.0
<b>Remaining Forecast Budget Gaps</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>21.1</b>

3.5 The Government will announce its Grant Settlement for Local Government in late December, at which point the Council's actual budget gap for 2016/17 will be identified, along with indications for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

3.6 A second set of budget saving proposals is currently being developed by the Budget Working Group, which will be recommended to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Further saving proposals to enable the Council to deliver a balanced budget for 2016/17, will then be recommended to Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The revenue budget supports the Council in achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Community Strategy for Halton and the Council's Corporate Plan.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

5.1 The revenue budget supports the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities. The budget proposals listed in Appendix 1 have been prepared in consideration of all the Council's priorities.

#### **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 Failure to set a balanced budget would put the Council in breach of statutory requirements. The budget is prepared in accordance with detailed guidance and a timetable, to ensure statutory requirements are met and a balanced budget is prepared which aligns resources with corporate objectives.

#### **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

#### **8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1072**

8.1 None.

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
<b>COMMUNITY &amp; RESOURCES DIRECTORATE</b>							
<b>INCOME GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES</b>							
1	Community & Environment	Review charges and staffing at Stadium Fitness.	<b>Income 294 Staffing 190</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
2	Community & Environment	Community Centres - Continue to improve efficiencies and increase income – this year has seen an improvement in the operating costs of this service area, further work is needed to continue this improvement.	<b>205</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
3	Community & Environment	Select Security Stadium – additional income from increasing the rent for major tenants above inflation.	<b>146</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
4	Community & Environment	Registration Services – additional income from increasing charges above the rate of inflation.	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>



	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
5	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Schools Forum contribution towards the cost of Internal Audit services provided for schools. A similar contribution was provided for 2015/16.	20	20	-20	T	M
6	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Increased income to be generated from having further suppliers sign up to the Invoice Early Payment Scheme.	30	5	0	P	D
7	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Recovery of credit notes from a review of supplier accounts. The review has already recovered £100,000 relating to previous years as a one-off saving. A target of £10,000 will also be set for on-going annual reviews.	n/a	10	0	P	D
			n/a	100	-100	T	D
8	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Income from increasing the charges to clients for the provision of the Appointeeship Scheme from £6 to £7 per week. The new charge will still remain comparable with those of other North West councils.	76	15	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
9	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Increased income from schools buying back the Finance Department SLA.	227	5	0	P	D
10	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Income recovered by Direct Payment audits to be utilised to fund the Direct Payments Team, with any balance returned to the Community Care budget.	151	151	0	P	D
11	ICT & Supp Dept/ ICT Services	Additional income to be generated from provision of ICT services to external partners.	1,400	100	0	P	D
12	Legal & Dem Services Dept/ Legal Services	Additional income to be generated from SLAs with schools for the provision of legal services.	54	10	0	P	D
<b>SHARED / COLLABORATIVE SERVICES</b>							
13	PPT Dept/ Policy & Dev Div	Operational saving from a shared service arrangement with Knowsley MBC for the provision of Building Control Services.	n/a	6	-6	T	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
<b>PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES</b>							
14	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Restructuring and retendering of insurance policies in accordance with the risk and insurance strategy	<b>1,041</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
15	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Reduced support and maintenance costs arising from the renewal of cash collection kiosks.	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
16	Community & Environment	Reduction in the cost of the contract for bar provisions.	<b>175</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES</b>							
17	Finance Dept/ Audit & Op Finance Division	Voluntary reductions in hours agreed for three staff within the Audit and Operational Finance Division.	<b>74</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
18	Finance Dept/ Procurement Div	Deletion of two vacant HBC5 Contract Officer posts within the Procurement Division.	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
19	HR/EPO/Policy	Management restructuring to bring together HR, Learning & Development, Efficiency Programme Office and P&R Policy and Performance into one Division.	<b>2,300</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION / SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
20	ICT & Supp Dept/ ICT and Support Svcs Divisions	Organisational restructuring within ICT and Support Services Department.	5,382	100	0	P	D
21	ICT & Supp Dept/ Support Services Division	Reduction in various non-staffing budgets relating to Councilwide purchases of stationery, printing, postages, furniture, equipment etc.	600	100	0	P	D
22	Public Protection	Utilising previous years' underspends to provide a one-off saving for 2016/17.	724	500	-500	T	M
23	Legal & Dem Services Dept/ Legal Services	Reduction in the Legal Services books and publications budget.	15	10	0	P	D
24	Legal & Dem Services Dept/ Customer Intelligence Unit	Delete a vacant HBC6 Research Officer post within the Customer Intelligence Unit.	32	32	0	P	D
25	Legal & Dem Services Dept/ Customer Intelligence Unit	Cease the external contract for website design as now undertaken in-house.	20	20	0	P	M

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION / SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
26	Legal & Dem Services Dept/ Comms & Mktg	Balance of a previous year's part-year saving item within Communications & Marketing.	6	6	0	P	D
27	Legal & Dem Services Dept/ Civic Activities	Reduction in Civic Activities hospitality budget.	10	4	0	P	D
28	PPT Dept/ Traffic Division	Cease the external decorative lighting on the Silver Jubilee Bridge.	25	25	0	P	D
29	Community & Environment	Review of Leisure Centres.	1,670	250	0	P	D
30	Community & Environment	Brindley - continue with recent improved efficiency savings and maximise income streams.	157	50	0	P	D
31	Community & Environment	Waste – introduce a Food Waste Collection Service to deliver savings by diverting food waste from land fill. This will require invest to save funding in order to use an alternative waste treatment facility.	1,799	100	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION / SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
<b>OTHER BUDGET SAVINGS</b>							
32	Finance Dept/ Financial Mgt Div	Reduction in the capital financing budget given exceptional low borrowing cost rates, returns on investments and capital programme requirements.	<b>2,970</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
33	Finance Dept / Revs, Bens & Customer Svcs Division	One-off saving from unspent New Burdens transitional grant funding provided for changes to business rates, council tax and benefit arrangements, which have instead been implemented utilising existing staff resources.	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>D</b>
34	Finance Dept/ Financial Mgt Division	Deletion of the budget for technical consultancy support for Asset 4000 computer system.	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
35	Community & Environment	The specification for environmental maintenance will be reduced and re-written and the Open Spaces service will be restructured.	<b>2,953</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
36	Community & Environment	Deletion of a vacant Arts Development Officer post.	<b>84</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION / SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
37	Community & Environment	There has historically been a significant underspend each year against the total Area Forum budget. It is proposed to reduce the funding but this would still allow Area Forums to support community projects within individual wards.	550	150	0	P	D
38	Community & Environment	Review the Councils reward and incentive scheme for Waste Recycling	123	80	0	P	D
39	Community & Environment	Restructure the Community Development Team with the deletion of two vacant part-time posts.	176	20	0	P	D
40	Community & Environment	Reduce the Council's grant to Norton Priory Museum Trust and the Council provides some professional advice and assistance to market the services.	222	50	0	P	D
41	Community & Environment	Review Civic and Café catering provision in order to bring about a number of efficiency and income improvements.	20	20	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION / SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
42	PPT Dept/ Logistics Division/ Transport Co-ord	Reduction of 5% in the funding provided for bus support. This will have a direct impact upon supported bus services and thereby the LTP stated priority of public transport provision and the MG Sustainable Transport Strategy.	560	28	0	P	D
43	PPT Dept/ Traffic Division	Reduction in street lighting energy and maintenance costs, through introduction of LED light bulbs.	1,383	100	0	P	D
44	PPT Dept/ Traffic Division	Release of a one-off reserve held in relation to previous years undercharge for street lighting electricity charges, which is now time expired.	100	100	-100	T	D
45	Subscriptions	Cease the Council's LGIU subscription.	12	12	0	P	D
<b>TOTAL PERMANENT</b>				2,901	0	P	
<b>TOTAL TEMPORARY (ONE-OFF)</b>				926	-926	T	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				3,827	-926		



	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
<b>PEOPLE AND ECONOMY DIRECTORATE</b>							
<b>INCOME GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES</b>							
1	Economy Enterprise & Property	To charge a levy for providing funding advice to external organisations	11	5	0	P	D
2	Economy Enterprise & Property	To charge a levy for providing business advice on business support projects	n/a	5	0	P	D
3	Education Inclusion and Provision	School and Setting Improvement Officers – generation of income from selling school improvement services to academies.	n/a	3	0	P	D
4	Children's Social Care: Early Intervention	Increase charging for activities in children's centres provided by commissioned service for Music and Movement increase from £1 to £2 – aim for this service to be fully self- sufficient via charging	9	7	0	P	M

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
5	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Income from charging Adults with a Learning Disability in Supported Accommodation who have never been charged under preserved rights.	N/A	50	0	P	D
6	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Income from initially a one-year contract for the delivery of the Positive Behaviour Support Service for Cheshire East and Sefton councils.	244	100	-100	T	D
7	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Income from initially a one year contract with Riverside College for providing placements within Community Day Services based at Simms Cross.	N/A	40	-40	T	D
8	Prevention & Assessment	Undertake a review of Intermediate Care for Warrington Borough Council.	N/A	4	-4	T	D
<b>SHARED / COLLABORATIVE SERVICES</b>							
9	Communities	Deletion of Strategic Director post.	143	143	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
10	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Contribution from the DCLG Transitional Challenge Fund for the provision of a Strategic Commissioning Manager across the Liverpool City Region.	70	70	-70	T	D
11	Prevention & Assessment	Contribution from Sefton Council for provision of a Supporting People Development Manager.	46	46	-46	T	D
12	Prevention & Assessment	Contribution from Sefton Council for provision of a Divisional Manager, Mental Health Services.	74	35	-35	T	D
<b>EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES</b>							
13	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Reduction in cost of the YMCA contract.	275	133	0	P	D
14	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Supporting People efficiencies.	300	300	-300	T	D
15	Prevention & Assessment	Cease use of the ADL Smartcare computer software, resulting in an annual software licence cost saving.	15	15	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
16	Prevention and Assessment	Review premium pay for Community Warden Service in line with other direct care services.	36	22	0	P	D
17	Commissioning & Complex needs	Delete the vacant Representations post.	50	50	0	P	D
18	Economy Enterprise & Property	Property Services Restructure	227	60	0	P	D/M
19	Economy Enterprise & Property	Reduce Markets Promotions Budget	30	20	0	P	D
20	Education Inclusion and Provision: 14-19 Division	Delete the vacant Young People Caseworker post from the Participation Strategy structure.	248	34	0	P	M
21	Education Inclusion and Provision: Policy Provision & Performance Division	Reduction in Supplies and Services budget within Transforming Children's Environment.	37	37	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
22	Education Inclusion and Provision: Policy Provision & Performance Division	Reduction Supplies and Services budget for Childcare Sustainability.	5	5	0	P	D
23	Education Inclusion and Provision: Policy Provision & Performance Division	Management Restructure and reduction in post (Play Resource Team)	133	50	0	P	M
24	Education Inclusion and Provision: Policy Provision & Performance Division	Reduction in Professional Fees Budget	28	18	0	P	D
25	Education Inclusion and Provision: Policy Provision & Performance Division	Management restructure – reduction in post (HBC9) within Policy & Performance Team	349	46	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT / DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PER M OR TEMP (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
26	Education Inclusion and Provision: Education	Reduction in allocation for training and statutory school improvement intervention	113	40	0	P	M
27	Education Inclusion and Provision: Inclusion 0-25 Transition	Reduction in advertising budget relating to Transition, as now funded by Dedicated Schools Grant.	10	2	0	P	D
28	Education Inclusion and Provision: Cognition and Learning	Reduction in the supplies and services budget for Cognition and Learning.	5	3	0	P	D
29	Education Inclusion and Provision: Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Reduction in the external training budget for Communication and Language.	7	5	0	P	D

	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED  (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
30	Education Inclusion and Provision: Special Education Needs	Reduction in the supplies and services budget for the Parent Partnership for children with SEN.	4	2	0	P	D
31	Education Inclusion and Provision: Educational Welfare	Reduction in the supplies and services budget relating to training and development for the Education Welfare Service.	10	5	0	P	M
<b>OTHER BUDGET SAVINGS</b>							
32	Economy Enterprise & Property	To reduce the matching funding available for Halton's European Projects and reduce the number of bids	n/a	125	-125	T	D
33	Child Protection Unit	EVR - Deletion of Divisional Manager (Safeguarding) post	80	30	0	P	M

	DEPARTMENT / DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PERM OR TEMP (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
34	Children's Social Care: Children's Centres	Review services commissioned – increase other agencies contribution and generate income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult Learning – reduce services provided in centres as can still access other provision within Borough</li> <li>- Fit4Safety (home safety equipment) Cheshire Fire &amp; Rescue – proposal to transfer costs to Health Improvement Team/Public Health.</li> <li>- Physical Activity Play in Children's Centre – contract terminated because of performance</li> </ul>	103	12	0	P	M
			8	8	0	P	M
			11	11	0	P	M
35	Commissioning & Complex Needs	One-off saving from the release of the un-committed balance of funding set aside for implementation of the Care Financials computer system.	370	300	-300	T	D
36	Commissioning & Complex Needs	Reductions in the Social Worker and Surestart training budgets.	127	68	0	P	D
37	Prevention & Assessment	One-off contribution from Complex Care Pooled budget funding under the Section 256 agreement with NHS.	2,979	1,600	-1,600	T	M



	DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ SERVICE AREA	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL	TOTAL BUDGET  £'000	ESTIMATED BUDGET SAVING		PER M OR TEMP  (P / T)	MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY SERVICE AFFECTED (M / D)
				2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000		
38	Prevention & Assessment	One-off savings achieved as part of the implementation of the Care Act.	997	183	-183	T	M
39	Prevention and Assessment	Review all voluntary sector contracts, including adult social care and voluntary grants.	700	70	0	P	M/D
40	Prevention and Assessment	Deletion of a vacant Commissioning post.	50	50	0	P	D
41	Communities	One-off reduction in bad debt provisions to align with the levels of outstanding debts.	711	200	-200	T	M
<b>TOTAL PERMANENT</b>				1,009	0	P	
<b>TOTAL TEMPORARY (ONE-OFF)</b>				3,003	-3,003	T	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				4,012	-3,003		

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE:</b>	1 October 2015
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director People & Economy
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Resources
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Term Maintenance Contracts
<b>WARDS:</b>	Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to notify members that the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise & Property has given approval to proceed with a procurement process with regards the provision of corporate term maintenance and minor works contracts for mechanical, electrical and building elements for use across the Borough.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Board note that a procurement process will be entered into via the chest with the purpose of securing maintenance and minor works contracts for mechanical, electrical and building elements for use across the Borough.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The existing maintenance and minor work term contracts for mechanical, electrical and building elements across the borough will all have come to an end by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016.

3.2 The existing arrangements allow for six separate contracts, one each for each discipline for both Widnes and Runcorn. It is proposed that the tender documents for the new arrangements will comprise of three contracts covering the borough complete.

3.3 It is proposed that the new arrangements are set up for a 3 year period with the potential for up to a 1 year extension subject to satisfactory performance. The anticipated tender date is circa 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 with the anticipated commencement date being 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016.

3.4 The tender submissions will be evaluated on both price and quality, this being on a 60% price, 40% quality ratio.

3.5 Based on previous expenditure it is anticipated that the annual value of the contracts in total is likely to be in the region of £1.75m thus making

the value of a 3 year contract in the order £5.25m. This figure is above the OJEU threshold as such the contract is subject to European procurement rules and will be tendered accordingly. The restrictive procedure will be used whereby expressions of interest are obtained which are then assessed, a tender list of circa 6 contractors in each category then being selected.

- 3.6 The cost of the works will be met from existing budgets, this being a combination of the Property Services repairs and maintenance budget together with other revenue and capital budgets where appropriate.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The method of procurement fits with the Council's procurement policy, the tender process being carried out in conjunction with the Procurement Centre of Excellence, using 'The Chest' procurement portal.

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The above contracts will ensure that we continue to deliver the maintenance and servicing of plant and equipment within the authorities' buildings in a cost effective manner which will enable us to provide fit for purpose accommodation for staff and public alike.
- 5.2 The above will also help with the delivery of the department's aims and objectives which amongst others are to 'manage the Council's land and property portfolio in a safe, cost effective and fit for purpose condition' and to contribute to increasing the number of Halton residents in employment.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

#### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None

#### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

The letting of these contracts will help contribute to the employment within the borough as we are building into the contract clauses to encourage the providers to employ Halton residents on the strength of the contracts.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

None

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

None

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1. These contracts are being procured as the existing arrangements are coming to an end. Failure to ensure new contracts are in place will potentially leave us liable to higher costs due to not having gone through a competitive process since the existing contracts were awarded 4 years ago.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Community Safety

**SUBJECT:** Proposal on the Provision of Court and Tribunal Services in the North West Region – Consultation Paper

**WARDS:** Borough-Wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To invite Executive Board to agree a response to the Consultation Paper received from HM Courts and Tribunals Service on the proposal on the provision of Court and Tribunal Services in the North West region.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That HM Courts and Tribunal Service be notified that the Council does not agree with the proposals set out in the Consultation Paper, for the reasons contained in Appendix 2 of this report.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Council received a letter from HM Courts and Tribunal Service introducing a consultation on proposals to change the provision of the Court and Tribunal estate. This is wide-ranging across the country, and the Consultation Paper in so far as it relates to the North West region is attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 There are proposals to close Runcorn Magistrates Court, which are set out on page 34 of the Consultation Document. The work presently carried out at Runcorn would be transferred to Warrington Magistrates Court if, under a linked proposal, Warrington County Court is closed. Warrington Magistrates Court would then move into the Warrington Combined Courts Centre. The Warrington section of the proposals is at page 47 of the Consultation Document. In essence, if Warrington County Court were to be closed, then the work presently dealt with there would be split between Liverpool and Manchester.

3.3 The questions to which a response is invited are on page 52 of the Consultation Paper, and are primarily whether the consultee agrees with the proposals, and what the impact would be.

3.4 All Members of the Council have been invited to express their views to the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, on the proposals, and regular Court users amongst the Council staff have also been asked for their opinions.

- 3.5 All of those who have responded have indicated that they do not agree with the proposal, and have asked that HM Court and Tribunal Service be notified of this. There have been a range of reasons given, and these have been summarised as far as possible in a draft response, which is at Appendix 2 of this report. The key areas are the increased cost and difficulty of travel for Halton residents, the impact on staff and their time, the pressure on Court provision, and the view that Runcorn Magistrates Court should be removed from the proposals as it is comparatively well used.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no specific implications in respect of the Council's policy framework arising from this report.

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Implications for residents of the Borough and Council staff using the Courts are set out in detail in Appendix 2 to this report.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Ensuring access to justice is a fundamental issue which cuts across many of the Council's priorities. The issues are highlighted in Appendix 2.

### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 There is a risk that the implementation of the proposals contained in the Consultation will adversely impact on Halton residents and other Court users. For these reasons, Executive Board is invited to inform HM Courts and Tribunal Service that the proposals are not agreed.

### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 It is intended that the response to the Consultation Paper demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring equality of access to Court provision.

### **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 9.1 Responses received from Members and Officers to the Consultation Paper are held by Mark Reaney, Operational Director Legal and Democratic Service, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes.

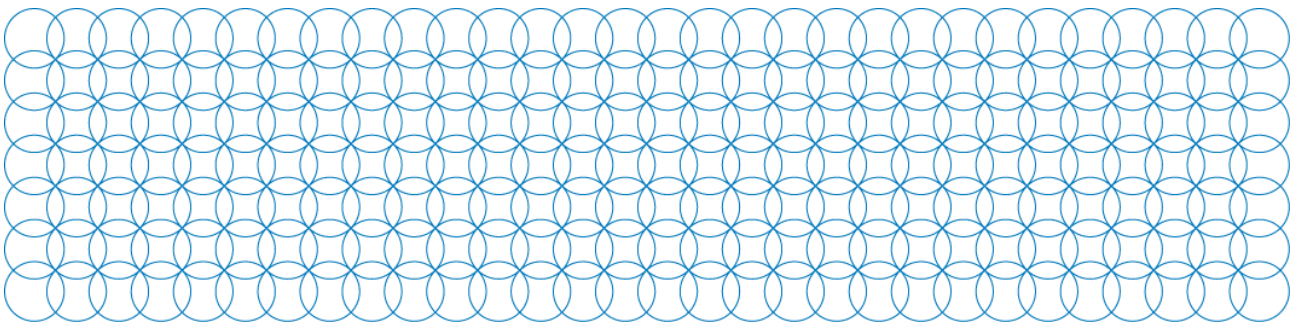


Ministry  
of Justice

# Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North West region

This consultation begins on 16 July 2015

This consultation ends on 8 October 2015



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Ministry  
of Justice

# **Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North West region**

**A consultation produced by the Ministry of Justice. It is also available on the Ministry of Justice website at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)**

## About this consultation

**To:** This consultation is aimed at court users, partners, judiciary, staff and other parties with an interest in the provision of local justice arrangements in the North West region.

**Duration:** From 16/07/15 to 08/10/15

**Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:** HMCTS Consultation  
Ministry of Justice  
Post point 1.13  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 0161 240 5021

Fax: 0870 761 7768

Email: [estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)

**How to respond:** HMCTS Consultation  
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Email: [estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)

**Additional ways to feed in your views:** If you cannot respond to this paper by means of e-mail or letter, please contact the Ministry of Justice using the details provided above.

**Response paper:** A response to this consultation exercise will be published in due course at: [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)

## Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
The proposals	8
Questionnaire	52
About you	53
Contact details/How to respond	54
Impact Assessment	56
Consultation principles	57

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## Foreword

HM Courts and Tribunals Service is committed to working with the judiciary to reform our services so they better meet the needs of the public in the modern age. Considerable investment will enable us to transform how justice is delivered, creating a modern, efficient service. Taking this opportunity, however, will require challenging decisions about the current system. One such decision relates to the courts and tribunals estate.

I am responsible for managing the operations of HM Courts & Tribunals Service in the North West region, and I have reviewed the court and tribunal estate against the estates principles set out in the national consultation. I have identified buildings where I believe our ability to deliver an efficient service has been compromised by poor facilities, where usage is low and where the building does not provide appropriate value for the public money spent on it.

I have carefully considered the impact of the proposed changes – both locally and across the North West. This consultation is an opportunity for the public to use their knowledge of their local areas to review and help us with our proposals.

Of course, staff would be affected by these proposed changes. Although the impact will be limited, I will make sure this is managed properly. Any transition to new arrangements will take place in a fair and transparent manner in consultation with the Departmental Trade Union.

I understand that these proposals could result in some people having longer journeys to the courts and tribunals. I appreciate that there are particular challenges accessing public services in some parts of the North West – in, for example, Cumbria.

I am committed to working with rural communities to provide alternative ways for the public to access the justice system. These could include the use of civic or other public buildings for occasional hearings, video links or telephone or paper hearings to avoid travel altogether. In my region we have already established these facilities at the Virtual Court in Cheshire enabling defendants to have initial hearings over video link. It is vital we understand the demand for alternative provision as we plan services for the future.

I am keen to hear people's views on the different ways they would like to interact with their courts and tribunals, particularly from those in rural communities. It is important we understand the demand for these different methods as we plan provision for the future.

Thank you for considering this consultation.

**Gill Hague**

**Delivery Director  
HM Courts & Tribunals Service North West**

## Introduction

This consultation for the North West is part of a national consultation on the future of the court and tribunal estate in England and Wales. The national consultation document provides important information about the reform of courts and tribunals and how we have decided which buildings to consult on. It also includes a full list of the courts and tribunals we are consulting on and our other plans to integrate courts into existing buildings within a local area.

**You should make sure you read the national consultation document alongside this.**

The national consultation sets out:

- the requirement for changes to the estate;
- the utilisation levels across the estate;
- the accompanying Impact Assessment; and
- implications for local justice areas and listing changes.

Responses to questions in both the national consultation and this consultation are welcome but need not be duplicated.

### HM Courts & Tribunals Service

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is an agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It is responsible for the administration of the criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales<sup>1</sup> and non-devolved tribunals in Scotland and Northern Ireland. It operates as a partnership between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals.

In March 2014, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and the Senior President of Tribunals announced details of a programme of reform for the courts and tribunals. This will improve the court and tribunal estate, deliver greater use of technology, modernise practices and processes, and improve services for our users.

At the heart of this programme are the use of technology and the principle of proportionality. Straightforward, transactional matters (such as the administration of probate or pleading guilty and paying a fine) can be dealt with using digital technology to make the processes as straightforward as filing a tax return, or renewing car tax online. Straightforward cases do not necessarily need face to face hearings; judges will be able to reserve the full proceedings of a court hearing for the more sensitive or complex cases. Modern technology can be used not just to make the justice system more accessible but also to reduce the costs of the whole justice system by not requiring extensive

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<sup>1</sup> Some tribunals which are part of HMCTS in England are devolved to the Welsh Government in Wales.

transportation of prisoners for bail hearings, or the police to take full days off their priority work to sit in a court room.

Ahead of full implementation of the reform programme, we are seeking views on the closure of courts and tribunals which we believe do not meet our ideas of how best to deliver justice in the future.

## **Access to justice**

We recognise that the public should not have to make excessively long or difficult journeys to attend hearings at courts and tribunals. We also know, however, that in an increasingly digital age, the public expect to be able to engage with any service through a variety of channels, and many prefer to do that digitally. They do not always want or need to attend hearings in person. Delivering effective access to justice does not necessarily mean providing access to a building. This challenges the assumption that there needs to be a court or tribunal in every local area.

We already have well established alternative ways that users can access the justice system. There are examples of this: enabling police officers to give evidence over a live link, processes to enable victims, witnesses and defendants to attend hearings over video link, and users in some jurisdictions having cases progressed or considered through telephone hearings or on papers, meaning that they do not need to attend a hearing in person at all. Where attendance at a hearing is needed other civic or public buildings could be used for hearings where security requirements are low.

These types of alternative provision could be particularly useful in rural communities and/or areas with limited public transport, for example, Cumbria. We are very keen to hear views on alternative provision, for example video link in civic or other public buildings.

## **Deciding which courts to include in the proposals**

In order to achieve a radical transformation of the justice system, any investment must be targeted and sequenced across all three key areas of ICT, estates and business processes to create the efficiencies that will allow HMCTS to modernise its current practices and to adopt more streamlined ways of working. We are therefore, as a first priority, addressing the current surplus capacity within the HMCTS estate. This will enable us to use the remaining estate more intelligently and flexibly, to reduce our running costs, to focus our investment on improving the estate we need for the future and to increase the multifunctional court space – allowing different court and tribunal jurisdictions to share locations. The intention is that capital receipts from the sale of any surplus assets would be reinvested as part of the funding for the reform programme.

To ensure we deliver business effectively and meet our future strategic requirements, HM Courts & Tribunals Service has applied a set of principles against which the proposals in this consultation were developed.

The principles are:

### **Ensuring Access to Justice**

- To ensure continued access to justice when assessing the impact of possible closures on both professional and lay court and tribunal users, taking into

account journey times for users, the challenges of rural access and any mitigating action, including having facilities at local civic centres and other buildings to ensure local access, modern ICT and more flexible listing, when journeys will be significantly increased.

- To take into account the needs of users and in particular, victims, witnesses and those who are vulnerable.
- To support the requirements of other agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service, Social Services, Police Forces and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).

### **Delivering Value for Money**

- To reduce the current and future cost of running the estate.
- To maximise the capital receipts from surplus estate for reinvestment in HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

### **Enabling Efficiency in the longer term**

- To reduce the reliance on buildings with poor facilities and to remove from the estate buildings that are difficult and expensive either to improve or to upgrade.
- To move towards an estate with buildings which are larger and facilitate the more efficient and flexible listing of court and tribunal business whilst also giving users more certainty when their cases will be heard.
- To increase the ability to use the estate flexibly across the criminal jurisdiction and separately across the Civil, Family and Tribunal (CFT) jurisdictions.
- To move towards an estate that provides dedicated hearing centres, seeking opportunities to concentrate back office function where they can be carried out most efficiently.
- To improve the efficient use of the estate by seeking to improve whole system efficiency, taking advantage of modernised communication methods (wi-fi and video links) and adopting business processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- To increase the efficient use of the estate wherever possible irrespective of current administrative boundaries.

### **Responding to the consultation**

We are keen to obtain views on the proposals to change the provision of court and tribunal estate and how we can make sure the public can still access the justice system. We have committed to consider each response. The responses will help us make sure that the courts and tribunals are based where the work is and that communities can access the justice system and that cases are heard in buildings with suitable facilities.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office. It will run for 12 weeks.



This consultation and the consultation stage Impact Assessment are also available at [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk).

## The proposals

Having considered the estate in the North West region against the principles set out in the 'Introduction' section, we recommend the closure of 14 buildings. In addition we are proposing to close three courts (Bolton County Court and Family Court, Tameside County Court and Warrington County Court), but not the actual building.

This consultation proposes the closure of the following courts<sup>2</sup> and tribunals:

- Accrington County Court
- Accrington Magistrates' Court
- Bolton County Court and Family Court
- Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court
- Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court
- Macclesfield County Court
- Macclesfield Magistrates' Court
- Oldham County Court
- Oldham Magistrates' Court
- Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court
- Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court
- St Helens Magistrates' Court and County Court
- Stockport Magistrates' Court and County Court
- Tameside County Court
- Trafford Magistrates' Court and Altrincham County Court
- Warrington County Court
- West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court

In addition, there are three integrations set out below.

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<sup>2</sup> Reference in this document to magistrates' courts, county courts, crown courts and combined courts refers to buildings (a singular structure providing the physical hearing rooms for criminal, civil, family and tribunal cases) which house that activity in a particular location. Strictly, legislation provides that there is a single crown court, county court and family court.

## Travel times

As part of our work to assess the impact of these proposals on the public, we have included information on the distance by road between the court proposed for closure and the court where the work would transfer. There are also details of public transport costs and journey times which are provided as a guide only and are subject to change. This information does not illustrate the potential impact on travel times for the public in the catchment area of the court. We have developed a model to analyse this.

The model analyses the current catchment area of the court and the population within it, calculated to the smallest geographical area available with current national statistics (known as a Lower Super Output Area or LSOA). The model then calculates the travel time from the centre of each LSOA to the current court separately by car and public transport and then calculates the proportion of the population who could travel to court in set time bands. The model then calculates new journey times based on the location of the court where the work would be heard should the court close. These travel times are displayed in a table format within each site proposal

Due to the nature of the rural areas of the North West, we are and will continue to be flexible where people have trouble attending a court or tribunal for a particular time due to the availability of transport. By their nature, such requests would be considered through representations made on a case-by-case basis.

## Integrations

To provide users with an overview of all proposed change to the estate, the consultation also includes information on where we plan to integrate courts within the same town or city. Local stakeholders will be notified of these changes when they take place.

An integration is when HM Courts & Tribunals Service moves work to allow jurisdictions to operate from fewer locations in a local area. This allows the closure of a building or buildings while retaining local jurisdictions, with a limited impact on service provision. Integrations are managed by HM Courts & Tribunals Service operational leads as part of the normal running of the business. These have been identified using the principles set out in the 'Introduction.' The proposals for closures in the region should be considered in the context of these integrations.

In addition to the proposed closures in this consultation the following integrations will be taking place in the North West region:

### **Bolton Magistrates' Court to be integrated within Bolton Combined Court**

This integration is dependent on the closure of Bolton County Court to provide the space for this move. This location will establish a single crime centre for crown court and magistrates' court work in Bolton.

### **Lancaster County Court to be integrated within Lancaster Magistrates' Court**

Lancaster Magistrates' Court is a relatively modern building with good facilities. This integration will provide increased flexibility and efficiency and allow improved utilisation of the court and tribunal estate.

## **Warrington Magistrates' Court to be integrated within Warrington Combined Court**

This relocation will enable work to be administered in a single venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases. This integration is dependent on the closure of Warrington County Court to provide space for this move and is linked to the proposals for Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court.

## **Accrington County Court**

### **Proposal**

Accrington County Court is one of six county courts in Lancashire and deals with civil work.

It is proposed that Accrington County Court is closed and the workload is moved to Burnley Combined Court. Accrington County Court occupies accommodation in a 1960s office block. Facilities are generally in a poor state of repair and do not meet the minimum standards required by the Equality Act 2010. No enabling works would be required at Burnley Combined Court to accommodate the judiciary and staff from Accrington. A limited counter appointment service currently operates at Accrington on the days the court is open.

Accrington County Court is administered from Burnley Combined Court. It has very low courtroom utilisation and sits on average two days per month.

Should Accrington County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to a purpose built venue with good facilities for users and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Accrington County Court occupies accommodation in a three storey, 1960's office block with the county court currently occupying the whole of the first floor plus two rooms on the ground floor. The accommodation comprises of general offices, district judges' chambers, a small waiting area, conference rooms and public toilets.

This site has two judicial hearing rooms located on different floors which are both serviced by one waiting area located on the first floor. The courthouse does not meet the minimum standards required by the Equality Act 2010 and security at the court is problematic due to the layout of the accommodation. The building is generally in a poor condition and does not provide adequate accommodation for court users, staff and judiciary.

Burnley Combined Court offers an improved level of accommodation for court users, judiciary and staff in a relatively modern building which was purpose built for county court use.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Accrington County Court had very low courtroom utilisation (approximately 2 days a month).

## Location

Accrington County Court is situated approximately six miles from Burnley Combined Court. There are frequent train and bus services between Accrington and Burnley. The travel time by train takes approximately 20 minutes at a cost of £4.20 for a return ticket.

Travel by bus takes approximately 45 minutes and costs £4.40 for a day ticket. The journey time by a car is approximately 20 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	100%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	67%	By Public Transport	0-30min	10%
	30-60min	28%		30-60min	84%
	60-120min	5%		60-120min	6%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

## Staff implications

There are two members of staff based at Accrington County Court.

## Other information

Accrington County Court is a leasehold property.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs of Accrington County Court were approximately £123,000.

## **Accrington Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Accrington Magistrates' Court is one of ten magistrates' courts in Lancashire and is in a poor condition. The court deals with non police/private prosecution criminal business and has four courtrooms. The court sits one day a week and courtroom use is very low.

Accrington Magistrates' Court is one of two courts in the East Lancashire local justice area, the other being Blackburn Magistrates' Court which currently administers the workload of Accrington Magistrates' Court.

It is proposed that Accrington Magistrates' Court is closed and the workload transferred to Blackburn Magistrates' Court. No enabling works would be needed at Blackburn Magistrates' Court to accommodate this move.

Should Accrington Magistrates' Court close it will enable the work to be moved to a larger venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Accrington Magistrates' Court is small and comprises one main storey. Built in 1935 it carries a Grade II listed status. There are four courtrooms of which two are informal and suitable for family and youth hearings. There are five cells available to the magistrates' court however these are in poor condition. The building is in a poor state of repair with leaks to the roof causing damage to public and court areas.

The court is part of a building that is currently shared with the police authority (who are the owners of the property).

Blackburn Magistrates' Court is a Grade II listed building (circa 1912) and was, until recently, part of Blackburn Police Station until the police moved out. There are four courtrooms, two of which can be accessed by disabled users via a lift from the main public entrance.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Accrington Magistrates' Court was utilised at approximately 2% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Accrington Magistrates' Court is located approximately six miles from Blackburn Magistrates' Court. The administrative staff who support Accrington are based at Blackburn and travel to Accrington to support court hearings.

There are good direct public transport links connecting the area. The journey by train from Accrington to Blackburn takes approximately ten minutes and costs £3.50 for a return ticket. The journey by bus takes approximately 40 minutes and costs £4.20 for a return ticket. The journey time by car is approximately 25 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	88%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	69%	By Public Transport	0-30min	18%
	30-60min	28%		30-60min	65%
	60-120min	3%		60-120min	17%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are no staff based at Accrington Magistrates' Court.

**Other information**

Accrington Magistrates' Court is a leasehold property.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Accrington Magistrates' Court were approximately £80,000.



## **Bolton County Court and Family Court**

### **Proposal**

Bolton County Court and Family Court is located within Bolton Combined Court, and is one of eight county courts in Greater Manchester and deals with civil and some family work. It has four hearing rooms and courtroom use is low.

It is proposed that Bolton County Court and Family Court is closed and its workload transferred to Manchester County Court, which is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Enabling works would be required to provide additional hearing rooms and judicial and staff accommodation.

Greater Manchester is a compact conurbation with the majority of its civil and family courts being located within nine miles of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester benefits from an excellent public transport infrastructure comprising an extensive modern tram system (Metrolink), bus and rail services.

The proposed closure of Altrincham, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Warrington County Courts would enable the purpose built Manchester Civil Justice Centre to be fully used to the benefit of court users. In conjunction with the closure of magistrates' courts in Greater Manchester (Bury, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford) this will enable the release of under used court estate.

Manchester County Court is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre which is in the city centre. It is a modern and purpose built building with excellent facilities for court users.

Should Bolton County Court and Family Court close this will enable the work to be moved to a larger venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts and tribunals hearing rooms being used more efficiently.

The re-location of Bolton Magistrates' Court to Bolton Combined Court is dependent on this closure.

### **Accommodation**

Bolton County Court and Family Court is co-located with Bolton Crown Court in a purpose built building, constructed in the early 1970's. The building complies with the Equality Act 2010. The hearings take place in a civil court room and two district judges' hearing rooms.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is a modern, purpose built building with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

### **Workload**

Bolton County Court and Family Court is located within Bolton Combined Court. During the 2014/15 financial year, this venue was utilised for approximately 49% of its capacity.

**Location**

Bolton County Court and Family Court is located 12 miles from the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. There are good travel links between Bolton and Manchester city centre. There are frequent local bus and train services which have direct routes to Manchester. Travel by train takes approximately 20 minutes and costs £6.40 for an anytime return. Travel by bus takes approximately 50 minutes and costs £4.20 for a day ticket. The journey time by a car is approximately 35 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	88%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	69%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	28%		30-60min	88%
	60-120min	4%		60-120min	12%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are 21 members of staff based at Bolton County Court and Family Court.

**Other information**

Bolton County Court and Family Court is located within Bolton Combined Court. The 2014/2015 operating costs of this venue was approximately £666,000.

The building is a freehold property.

## **Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court**

### **Proposal**

Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court are located in one building at Bury Courthouse. They are one of eight magistrates' and eight county courts in Greater Manchester. The magistrates' court deals with criminal court business in adult and youth courts and the county court deals with civil work and some family work. The court has ten hearing rooms and courtroom use is low.

It is proposed that Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court are closed and that the workload of Bury Magistrates' Court be transferred to Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court, where enabling works will be required to extend accommodation for witnesses. Bury Magistrates' Court is the only court in the Bury and Rochdale local justice area. Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

It is proposed that the workload of Bury County Court be transferred to Manchester County Court, located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Enabling works will be required to provide additional hearing rooms and judicial and staff accommodation.

Bury County Court was proposed for closure in 2010 as part of the Court Estate Reform Programme. The decision to retain Bury County Court was made on the basis that the Bury Courthouse was remaining open and there was sufficient space to accommodate the county court at that time. The current proposal is to release under used court buildings and to close the courthouse in Bury.

Greater Manchester is a compact conurbation with the majority of its courts being located within nine miles of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester benefits from an excellent public transport infrastructure comprising an extensive modern tram system (Metrolink), bus and rail services.

The proposed closure of Altrincham, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Warrington County Courts would enable the Manchester Civil Justice Centre to be fully used. The closure of Bury, Stockport and Trafford Magistrates' Courts will enable the purpose built Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court to be fully used. This will enable the release of under used court buildings in Greater Manchester.

Manchester County Court and Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court are both located in the centre of the city. They are modern and purpose built buildings with excellent facilities.

Should Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to larger venues and allow the receiving courts to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court is located in one building. The building was constructed as a purpose built magistrates' court and complies with the Equality Act 2010. There are ten courtrooms, of which, eight are magistrates' courtrooms and two county court hearing rooms.

Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court and Manchester Civil Justice Centre are both centrally located and are modern, purpose built venues with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

**Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Bury Courthouse was utilised at approximately 51% of its capacity.

**Location**

Bury Courthouse is located nine miles from both Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court and Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Bury is well served by public transport. There is a frequent local bus service and the Metrolink has a direct route to Manchester city centre.

Travel by Metrolink takes approximately 25 minutes and costs £6.10 for a peak time return. Travel by bus takes approximately one hour and costs £4.20 for a day ticket. The journey time by car is approximately 35 minutes.

Travel time data for these courts pre and post closure are shown below:

Magistrates’ workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	98%	By Car	0-30min	63%
	30-60min	2%		30-60min	36%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	1%
By Public Transport	0-30min	54%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	38%		30-60min	39%
	60-120min	9%		60-120min	60%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	1%

Civil and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	98%	By Car	0-30min	64%
	30-60min	2%		30-60min	35%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	1%
By Public Transport	0-30min	55%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	38%		30-60min	39%
	60-120min	7%		60-120min	60%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	1%

**Staff implications**

There are 55 members of staff based at Bury Magistrates’ Court and County Court.

**Other information**

Bury Courthouse is a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of this venue was approximately £528,000.

Bury Courthouse is used one day per week to accommodate tribunal hearings. Should Bury Courthouse close arrangements will be made for this work to be heard elsewhere.

## **Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court**

### **Proposal**

Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court are located in one building. There are three other magistrates' courts and three other county courts in Cumbria. The courts deal with criminal court business in the adult and youth courts, civil work and some family work.

It is proposed that Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court are closed and the workload be transferred to Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates' Court and County Court. No enabling works will be required to accommodate the workload from Kendal.

Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court have very low utilisation. Kendal Magistrates' Court is administered from Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates' Court and sits between two and four courts per week. Kendal County Court is administered from Barrow-in-Furness and Carlisle County Courts and sits one day per week for three weeks and two days on the fourth week. The county court operates a counter service on those days when hearings take place. Staff travel from Barrow to support the hearings and provide a limited counter service.

Should Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court close it will enable better use of court facilities within Cumbria as well as delivering other savings such as the release of a building and reduction in operating costs. The work will move to a larger court centre and enable the court to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

We realise that these proposals could result in some users having significant journeys when travelling to the courts and tribunals, even though the need to is infrequent. We are aware that some members of rural communities will have views on the alternatives we can provide so that the public can still access the justice system. We are keen to understand the potential demand for these alternative methods, such as the use of civic or public buildings, to make sure that any provision established following the closure of a court or tribunal, would be in the right location and with suitable facilities. This type of alternative provision could be particularly useful in the case of these courts.

Due to the nature of the rural areas of the North West region, we are and will continue to be flexible where people have trouble attending a court or tribunal for a particular time due to the availability of transport. By their nature, such requests would be considered through representations made on a case-by-case basis.

### **Accommodation**

Kendal Courthouse is compliant with the Equality Act 2010. It is a split level building which offers a good standard of accommodation for users and is in a good state of repair. There are three courtrooms, two of which have secure docks and direct access from the secure cell area, and a hearing room. The court has a public area with two private consultation rooms. There is limited separation for civil and criminal clients who intermingle in the main waiting area.

The building serves as the designated disabled court in Cumbria, where defendants with mobility issues can be brought from secure cells into the secure dock. Whilst there has

been a very limited need for this facility, alternative provision for disabled defendants would be identified following a review of requirements.

Barrow-in-Furness Courthouse offers a good standard of accommodation and facilities. The waiting facilities for civil and family court users are separate from the criminal side of the business. There is a separate, self-contained victim and witness suite, secure docks in three court rooms with secure cell access, prison-to-court video links with updated installations to two victim and witness booths. A dedicated advocates’ room also has video conferencing facilities. Accommodation is provided for the Crown Prosecution Service, Probation and the Youth Offending Team on days they are attending court.

**Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Kendal Magistrates’ Court and County Court was utilised at approximately 13% of its capacity.

**Location**

Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates’ Court is situated 37 miles from Kendal. The journey by car takes approximately 55 minutes.

There is an hourly bus service from Kendal to Barrow which takes approximately one hour 40 minutes. A return ticket costs £10.80.

A train journey from Kendal to Barrow would require two changes and takes between 1.5 and 2.5 hours, at a cost of £25.90 for an anytime return.

Travel time data for these courts pre and post closure are shown below:

Magistrates’ workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	75%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	25%		30-60min	49%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	51%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	18%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	33%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	23%		60-120min	38%
	>120min	16%		>120min	47%
	no data	11%		no data	15%

Civil and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	75%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	25%		30-60min	49%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	51%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	18%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	33%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	23%		60-120min	38%
	>120min	16%		>120min	47%
	no data	11%		no data	15%

### Staff Implications

There are three members of staff based at Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court. The building also accommodates enforcement staff.

### Other information

Kendal Courthouse is a freehold property.

The 2014/15 operating costs of the building were approximately £241,000.

Employment Tribunal hearings estimated to take more than three days are listed at Kendal Courthouse. Should the closure take place alternative arrangements will be made for these hearings.



## **Macclesfield County Court**

### **Proposal**

Macclesfield County Court is one of four county courts in Cheshire and deals with civil and family work.

It is proposed that Macclesfield County Court is closed and its workload transferred to Manchester County Court, which is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. The current county court accommodation has limited facilities and courtroom use is low. Enabling works to provide additional hearing rooms and judicial and staff accommodation would be required.

Manchester County Court is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre which is in the city centre. It is a modern and purpose built building with excellent facilities for court users.

Should Macclesfield County Court close it will enable work to be moved to a larger venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Macclesfield County Court is located in a leasehold building, in the town centre, shared with private sector tenants. The county court accommodation is small and public areas have limited facilities. There are security issues due to the shared nature of the building.

There are two hearing rooms and a library which occasionally doubles as a hearing room when required. These are of a reasonable standard and there are no issues for disabled court users.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is a modern, purpose built building with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Macclesfield County Court was utilised at approximately 45% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Macclesfield County Court is situated 20 miles from the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. There are frequent train and bus services between Macclesfield and Manchester.

The travel time by train is approximately 35 minutes. By bus, travel time can take up to two hours at peak times. The approximate cost of a return train ticket is £14.90 and an all day saver bus ticket is £5.00. The journey time by car is approximately one hour.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	1%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	99%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	60%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	34%		30-60min	9%
	60-120min	1%		60-120min	82%
	>120min	0%		>120min	4%
	no data	5%		no data	5%

### Staff implications

There are ten members of staff based at Macclesfield County Court.

### Other information

Macclesfield County Court is a leasehold property.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Macclesfield County Court were approximately £275,000.

## **Macclesfield Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Macclesfield Magistrates' Court is one of five magistrates' courts in Cheshire. The court deals with criminal business in the adult and youth courts. It is one of two courts in the South and East Cheshire local justice area, the other being Crewe Magistrates' Court which currently administers the workload of Macclesfield Magistrates' Court.

Macclesfield Magistrates' Court has two courtrooms and courtroom use is low.

It is proposed that Macclesfield Magistrates' Court is closed and the workload moved to Crewe Magistrates' Court which is co-located with Crewe County Court. No enabling works would be required at Crewe Magistrates' Court to accommodate the staff and judiciary.

Should Macclesfield Magistrates' Court close it will enable the work to be moved to a larger venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Macclesfield Magistrates' Court is located on the edge of Macclesfield town centre. It is a small site with two courtrooms which hear criminal cases only. The two courtrooms are of a good standard; there are witness link video facilities, but no prison-to-court video link. The public areas are of a reasonable standard; however the judicial areas are poor. The building is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

The courthouse in Crewe has better disabled access than Macclesfield, although not fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Disabled defendants from Crewe and Macclesfield are currently transferred to West Cheshire Magistrates' Court in Chester when required.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Macclesfield Magistrates' Court was utilised at approximately 44% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Macclesfield is 21 miles from Crewe and is linked by a major road. There are public transport links available but these can be indirect and cross-country.

Crewe Magistrates' Court is located in a central position to the town and has public parking nearby. A car journey takes approximately 45 minutes.

There is no direct train between Macclesfield and Crewe, requiring a change at either Stockport or Kidsgrove. Journey times range from 44 minutes to one hour. The cost is up to £16.90 for a return journey.

A bus journey takes approximately one hour 15 minutes between Macclesfield and Crewe. The cost is £5.00 for a return journey.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	17%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	83%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	50%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	38%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	7%		60-120min	83%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	5%		no data	5%

**Staff implications**

There is one member of staff based at Macclesfield Magistrates’ Court. Other staff travel to Macclesfield from Crewe on a daily basis.

**Other information**

Macclesfield Magistrates’ Court is a freehold property.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Macclesfield Magistrates’ Court were approximately £120,000.

## **Oldham County Court**

### **Proposal**

Oldham County Court is one of eight county courts in Greater Manchester and deals with civil work and some family work. It has seven hearings rooms and courtroom use is very low.

It is proposed that Oldham County Court is closed and the workload transferred to Manchester County Court, which is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Enabling works to provide additional hearing rooms and judicial and staff accommodation will be required.

Greater Manchester is a compact conurbation with the majority of its civil and family courts being located within nine miles of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester benefits from an excellent public transport infrastructure comprising an extensive modern tram system (Metrolink), bus and rail services.

The proposed closure of Altrincham, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Warrington County Courts would enable the purpose built Manchester Civil Justice Centre to be fully used. In conjunction with the closure of magistrates' courts in Greater Manchester (Bury, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford) this will enable the release of under used court buildings.

Should Oldham County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to a larger venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts and tribunals hearing rooms being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Oldham County Court is located in a modern building and has seven hearing rooms. The building complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is a modern, purpose built building with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Oldham County Court was utilised at approximately 12% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Oldham County Court is located approximately eight miles from the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. There are good travel links between Oldham and Manchester city centre. There is a frequent local bus service and Metrolink which has a direct route to Manchester city centre.

The Metrolink takes approximately 25 minutes and costs £5.40 for a peak time return. Travel by bus takes approximately 40 minutes and costs £4.20 for a day ticket. The journey time by a car is approximately 35 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	55%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	45%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	51%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	48%		30-60min	60%
	60-120min	1%		60-120min	40%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are 31 members of staff based at Oldham County Court.

**Other information**

The Oldham County Court building is a leasehold property.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Oldham County Court were approximately £666,000.

## **Oldham Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Oldham Magistrates' Court is one of eight magistrates' courts in Greater Manchester and deals with criminal business in adult and youth courts. It has eight hearing rooms and courtroom use is very low.

It is proposed that Oldham Magistrates' Court is closed and its workload transferred to Tameside Magistrates' Court. This proposal is dependant on the closure of Tameside County Court taking place to create capacity for the incoming workload. No enabling works will be required to accommodate the workload from Oldham.

This is the only court in the Oldham local justice area. Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

The proposed closure of Oldham Magistrates' Court would enable the purpose built Tameside Magistrates' Court to be fully used and would enable the release of under used court buildings in Greater Manchester.

Should Oldham Magistrates' Court close it will allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Oldham Magistrates' Court was built in 1960 and has a total of eight courtrooms with the accommodation split over three floors.

There are currently large sections of the building unused and difficulties can arise due to the staff and courtrooms being located over three floors. In some areas of the building standards of accommodation are very good and in others, mainly the public areas, the standard is unsatisfactory.

Tameside Magistrates' Court is located in a modern purpose built building and has eight hearing rooms, two of which are presently used by the county court. The building complies with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year Oldham Magistrates' Court was utilised at approximately 28% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Oldham Magistrates' Court is located five miles from Tameside Magistrates' Court. Oldham is well served by public transport. There is a frequent bus service between Oldham and Ashton-under Lyne which takes approximately 20 minutes and costs £4.20 for a day ticket.

Both Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne benefit from the Metrolink service; however there is not a direct service between the two centres and a journey using this method would have to be made via Manchester city centre.

The journey time by a car is approximately 15 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	97%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	3%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	55%	By Public Transport	0-30min	2%
	30-60min	44%		30-60min	34%
	60-120min	1%		60-120min	64%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are 22 members of staff based at Oldham Magistrates’ Court.

**Other information**

Oldham Magistrates’ Court is a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Oldham Magistrates’ Court were approximately £418,000.



## **Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court**

### **Proposal**

Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court is one of ten magistrates' courts in Lancashire. The court deals with criminal court business and is one of seven family hearing centres in Lancashire. It has three hearing rooms and courtroom use is very low.

It is proposed that Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court is closed and the criminal workload moved to Preston Magistrates' Court and the family workload moved to Leyland Magistrates' Court. No enabling works would be needed at either Preston or Leyland to accommodate this move.

This is the only court in the Ormskirk local justice area. Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas. There is, however, a consultation on a bench merger already underway.

Should Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court close it will allow the receiving courts to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently. Court users and staff will also benefit from a better standard of accommodation.

### **Accommodation**

Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court provides a poor standard of accommodation for court users, staff and judiciary. It lacks proper interview facilities for court users. There are inadequate victim and witness facilities for family court users. There are security issues in terms of separation of judicial and public facilities. The building is in a poor state of repair and requires substantial expenditure to bring it up to standard. Ormskirk does not meet the minimum standards of the Equality Act 2010.

Preston Magistrates' Court is a purpose built magistrates' court (circa 1971). It has accommodation on three floors which offer good facilities for court users and staff. There are six courtrooms. Cells are located on the lower ground floor level. Users with a disability can access courtrooms on the upper floors via a lift.

Leyland Magistrates' Court is a purpose built magistrates' court (1970s) now used as a family hearing centre and is a freehold site situated in the town centre adjacent to the police station. The building offers a reasonable standard of accommodation over three floors. There are three courtrooms and although there is no lift customers with a disability can gain access to the ground floor courtroom.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court was utilised for approximately 29% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Ormskirk Magistrates’ Court and Family Court is located 18.5 miles from Preston Magistrates’ Court. The administrative support staff are based at Preston and staff travel to Ormskirk for court hearings.

The journey between Ormskirk and Preston can be made by public transport. The journey by train takes approximately 30 minutes and costs £7.90 for a day return ticket. By bus the journey takes approximately one hour 25 minutes and costs £4.40 for a day ticket. The journey time by car is approximately 40 minutes.

Ormskirk Magistrates’ Court and Family Court is located approximately 14 miles from Leyland Magistrates’ Court. Travel by train takes approximately 55 minutes, requiring a change at Preston, and costs £13.40 for an anytime return ticket. By bus the journey takes approximately one hour 15 minutes via Broadgate, at a cost of £9.80 for a return ticket. The journey time by car is approximately 32 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates’ workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	89%	By Car	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	11%		30-60min	80%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	1%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	10%
By Public Transport	0-30min	31%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	35%		30-60min	29%
	60-120min	33%		60-120min	59%
	>120min	0%		>120min	1%
	no data	1%		no data	11%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	90%	By Car	0-30min	8%
	30-60min	10%		30-60min	70%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	1%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	21%
By Public Transport	0-30min	27%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	34%		30-60min	24%
	60-120min	38%		60-120min	53%
	>120min	1%		>120min	1%
	no data	1%		no data	22%

## **Staff implications**

There are three members of staff permanently based at Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court.

## **Other information**

Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court is a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court were approximately £144,000.

## **Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court is one of five magistrates' courts in Cheshire and deals with criminal business in adult and youth courts. It has four hearing rooms and courtroom use is low.

Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court is one of two courts in the North Cheshire local justice area. Its workload is administered from Warrington Magistrates' Court.

It is proposed that Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court is closed and its workload transferred to Warrington Magistrates' Court. This proposal forms part of a plan to re-locate Warrington Magistrates' Court to the Warrington Combined Court. The magistrates' court will be located alongside the crown court in a single venue for criminal work, where court users and staff will benefit from a better standard of accommodation. This proposal is dependant on the closure of Warrington County Court to create capacity for the incoming workload. No enabling works would be required.

Should Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court close it will enable the work to be administered in a single venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### **Accommodation**

Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court is located within in a 1970's development. Facilities for witnesses are good. The public waiting area and other facilities are adequate but staff facilities are of a poor standard. There are four courtrooms and four cells. The building also houses the Cheshire and Merseyside Central Payment and Enforcement Unit.

Warrington Combined Court is within walking distance of Warrington town centre. The building is of a good standard with disabled access. There are no security issues. No enabling works will be required for this proposal.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court was utilised at approximately 66% of its capacity.

### **Location**

Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court is located ten miles from Warrington Combined Court.

There is a regular, indirect train service between Runcorn and Warrington requiring one change. The travelling time takes approximately 45 minutes and costs £12.40.

A regular bus service is available with a travelling time of up to an hour and costs £5.00 for a day ticket. The journey time by a car is approximately 25 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	90%	By Car	0-30min	81%
	30-60min	10%		30-60min	19%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	30%	By Public Transport	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	42%		30-60min	61%
	60-120min	24%		60-120min	26%
	>120min	3%		>120min	1%
	no data	2%		no data	2%

### Staff implications

There is one member of staff based at Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court. The Cheshire and Merseyside Central Payment and Enforcement Unit has 90 staff based at Runcorn.

### Other information

Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court is a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court were approximately £349,000.

Tribunal sittings take place at Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court on one day every two weeks. Should Runcorn close an alternative venue will be found for these hearings.

## **St Helens Magistrates' Court and County Court**

### **Proposal**

St Helens Magistrates' Court and County Court are located in one building. They are one of four magistrates' courts and three county courts in Merseyside. The magistrates court deals with criminal business in adult and youth courts and the county court with civil work and some family work.

It is proposed that St Helens Magistrates' Court and County Court are closed and that the workload of St Helens Magistrates' Court's is transferred to Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates' Court, where no enabling work will be required. It is proposed that the workload of St Helens County Court is transferred to Liverpool Civil and Family Court. Some enabling works to provide additional accommodation for judiciary and storage will be required.

The Merseyside area benefits from good public transport links to Liverpool city centre where Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates' Court and Liverpool Civil and Family Court are located.

Should St Helens Magistrates' Court and County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to larger venues and allow the receiving courts to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

St Helens Magistrates' Court is the only court in the St Helens local justice area. Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

### **Accommodation**

St Helens Courthouse building is in good condition with modern facilities and complies with the Equality Act 2010. There are five courtrooms and two hearing rooms shared between the county court and the magistrates' court.

Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates' Court is located with Liverpool Crown Court, in a single centre for crime, in the centre of the city. This venue is modern, with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a mobile hearing enhancement system, wireless internet access and refreshments are available.

Liverpool Civil and Family Court is located in the centre of the city. It is a modern venue with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, children's room, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, hearing enhancement facilities, a vulnerable witness waiting room and refreshments are available.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, St Helens Magistrates' Court and County Court was utilised at approximately 62% of its capacity.

**Location**

St Helens Magistrates’ Court is located 14.5 miles from Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates’ Court and St Helens County Court is located 14 miles from Liverpool Civil and Family Court.

St Helens is well served by public transport with a direct rail and bus service between St Helens and Liverpool. The cost of a peak time return ticket, by train, is £5.70. The travel time is approximately 35 minutes.

There is a frequent bus service between St Helens and Liverpool. A day ticket costs £5.00 and the travel time is approximately one hour. The journey time by a car is approximately 45 minutes.

Travel time data for these courts pre and post closure are shown below:

Magistrates’ workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	100%	<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	43%
	<b>30-60min</b>	0%		<b>30-60min</b>	57%
	<b>60-120min</b>	0%		<b>60 - 120min</b>	0%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%
	<b>no data</b>	0%		<b>no data</b>	0%
<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	65%	<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	0%
	<b>30-60min</b>	34%		<b>30-60min</b>	36%
	<b>60-120min</b>	1%		<b>60-120min</b>	64%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%
	<b>no data</b>	0%		<b>no data</b>	0%

Civil and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	43%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	57%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	45%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	33%		30-60min	45%
	60-120min	22%		60-120min	54%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

### Staff implications

There are 32 members of staff based at St Helens Courthouse.

### Other information

St Helens Courthouse is a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of the venue were approximately £281,000.

Tribunal hearings take place at St Helens one day per week. Should St Helens Courthouse close, alternative arrangements will be made for these hearings.



## **Stockport Magistrates' Court and County Court**

### **Proposal**

Stockport Magistrates' Court and County Court are located in one building and are one of eight magistrates' and eight county courts in Greater Manchester. The magistrates' court deals with criminal business in adult and youth courts and the county court with civil work and some family work.

It is proposed that Stockport Magistrates' Court and County Court are closed and the workload of Stockport Magistrates' Court is transferred to Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court, where enabling works would be required to extend accommodation for witnesses. It is proposed that the workload of Stockport County Court be transferred to Manchester County Court, located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Enabling works would be required to provide additional hearing rooms and judicial and staff accommodation.

Greater Manchester is a compact conurbation with the majority of its courts being located within nine miles of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester benefits from an excellent public transport infrastructure comprising an extensive modern tram system (Metrolink), bus and rail services.

The proposed closure of Altrincham, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Warrington County Courts would enable the Manchester Civil Justice Centre to be fully used. The closure of Bury, Stockport and Trafford Magistrates' Courts will enable the purpose built Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court to be fully used. This will enable the release of under used court buildings in Greater Manchester.

Manchester County Court, which is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre and Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court are both located in the centre of the city. They are modern and purpose built buildings with excellent facilities.

Should Stockport Magistrates' Court and County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to larger venues and allow the receiving courts to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

Stockport Magistrates' Court is the only court in the Stockport local justice area. Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

### **Accommodation**

Stockport Courthouse is a purpose built building opened in 1989, and comprises 11 court/hearing rooms, four of which are used by the county court. The building complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court and Manchester Civil Justice Centre are both centrally located and are modern, purpose built venues with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

**Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year Stockport Magistrates’ Court and County Court, was utilised at approximately 54% of its capacity.

**Location**

Stockport Magistrates’ Court and County Court is located eight miles from both Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court and Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Stockport is well served by public transport. There are frequent local bus and rail services.

Travel by train takes approximately 15 minutes and costs £5.90 for an anytime return. Travel by bus takes approximately 45 minutes and costs £4.10 for a day rider ticket. The journey time by a car is approximately 30 minutes.

Travel time data for these court pre and post closure are shown below:

Magistrates’ workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	76%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	24%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	55%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	44%		30-60min	63%
	60-120min	0%		60-120min	37%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

Civil and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	77%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	23%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	55%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	44%		30-60min	63%
	60-120min	0%		60-120min	37%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are 47 members of staff based at Stockport Courthouse.

**Other information**

Stockport Courthouse is a freehold building.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at this venue were approximately £879,000.

Tribunal hearings take place at Stockport Courthouse on three days per week. Should Stockport Courthouse close an alternative venue would be found for these hearings.

## **Tameside County Court**

### **Proposal**

Tameside County Court is co-located with Tameside Magistrates' Court in one building. The county court is one of eight county courts in Greater Manchester and deals with civil work and some family work. It has two hearing rooms and low courtroom use.

It is proposed that Tameside County Court is closed and its workload transferred to Manchester County Court, located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Enabling works will be required to provide additional hearing rooms and judicial and staff accommodation.

Greater Manchester is a compact conurbation with the majority of its civil and family courts being located within nine miles of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester benefits from an excellent public transport infrastructure comprising an extensive modern tram system (Metrolink), bus and rail services.

The proposed closure of Altrincham, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Warrington County Courts would enable the purpose built Manchester Civil Justice Centre to be fully used to the benefit of court users. In conjunction with the closure of magistrates' courts in Greater Manchester (Bury, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford) this will enable the release of under used court buildings.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is located in the city centre, which is within reasonable travelling distance. Manchester County Court is within this building which is modern and was purpose built, and provides excellent facilities.

Should Tameside County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to a larger venue and allow the receiving court to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts and tribunals being used more efficiently.

The proposal to close Oldham Magistrates' Court and move its work to Tameside Magistrates' Court is dependant on the closure of Tameside County Court and its workload moving to Manchester County Court.

### **Accommodation**

Tameside County Court is co-located with Tameside Magistrates' Court in a modern purpose built building, and has eight hearing rooms, two of which are used by the county court. The building complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is a modern, purpose built building with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

**Workload**

Tameside County Court is co-located with Tameside Magistrates’ Court and during the 2014/15 financial year utilisation at this venue was approximately 44%.

**Location**

Tameside County Court is located seven miles from the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. There are good travel links between Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester city centre.

There is a frequent local bus service, a train service and the Metrolink which have direct routes to Manchester city centre. Travel by train takes approximately 20 minutes and costs £5.90 for an anytime return. The Metrolink takes approximately 30 minutes and costs £5.40 for a peak time return. Travel by bus takes approximately 45 minutes and costs £4.10 for a day ticket. The journey time by car is approximately 35 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	87%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	13%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	53%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	47%		30-60min	82%
	60-120min	1%		60-120min	18%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are 11 members of staff based at Tameside County Court.

**Other information**

Tameside County Court is co-located with Tameside Magistrates’ Court in a freehold property.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at the venue were approximately £566,000.

## Trafford Magistrates' Court and Altrincham County Court

### Proposal

Trafford Magistrates' Court and Altrincham County Court are located in one building. They are one of eight magistrates' courts and eight county courts in Greater Manchester. The magistrates' court deals with criminal business in adult and youth courts and the county court with civil work and some family work. Trafford Magistrates' Court has eight hearing rooms. Courtroom use is very low with the magistrates' court only sitting three courts on three days and two courts on two days per week. Altrincham County Court has three hearing rooms, also with very low courtroom utilisation.

It is proposed that Trafford Magistrates' Court and Altrincham County Court are closed and the workload of Trafford Magistrates' Court is transferred to Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court, where enabling work will be required to extend accommodation for witnesses. This is the only court in the Trafford local justice area. Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

It is proposed the workload of Altrincham County Court is transferred to Manchester County Court, which is located within the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Enabling work would be required to provide additional hearing rooms, judicial and staff accommodation.

Greater Manchester is a compact conurbation with the majority of its courts being located within nine miles of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester benefits from an excellent public transport infrastructure comprising an extensive modern tram system (Metrolink), bus and rail services.

The proposed closure of Altrincham, Bolton, Bury, Macclesfield, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Warrington County Courts would enable the Manchester Civil Justice Centre to be fully used. The closure of Bury, Stockport and Trafford Magistrates' Courts will enable the purpose built Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court to be fully used. This will enable the release of under used court buildings in Greater Manchester.

Manchester County Court and Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court are both located in the centre of the city. They are modern and purpose built buildings with excellent facilities.

Should Trafford Magistrates' Court and Altrincham County Court close this will enable the work to be moved to larger venues and allow the receiving courts to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

### Accommodation

Trafford Courthouse was built in 1985 and complies with the Equality Act 2010. It is a purpose built magistrates' court with 11 courtrooms.

Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court and Manchester Civil Justice Centre are both centrally located and are modern, purpose built venues with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

**Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year Trafford Courthouse was utilised at approximately 27% of its capacity.

**Location**

Trafford Magistrates’ Court and Altrincham County Court are located in Sale, approximately five miles from both Manchester and Salford Magistrates’ Court and the Manchester Civil Justice Centre. Sale is well served by public transport. The Metrolink has a direct service from Sale to Manchester City Centre. The cost of a peak time return ticket is £5.70. The travel time is approximately 15 minutes.

There is a frequent bus service between Sale and Manchester, a day ticket costs £4.20. The travel time is approximately 45 minutes. The journey time by car is approximately 25 minutes.

Travel time data for these courts pre and post closure are shown below:

Magistrates’ workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	99%	By Car	0-30min	92%
	30-60min	1%		30-60min	8%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	44%	By Public Transport	0-30min	8%
	30-60min	46%		30-60min	71%
	60-120min	10%		60-120min	20%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

Civil and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	99%	By Car	0-30min	92%
	30-60min	1%		30-60min	8%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	45%	By Public Transport	0-30min	8%
	30-60min	46%		30-60min	71%
	60-120min	9%		60-120min	21%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

**Staff implications**

There are 31 members of staff based at Trafford Courthouse.

**Other information**

Trafford Courthouse is a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of the venue were approximately £589,000.



## **Warrington County Court**

### **Proposal**

Warrington County Court is one of four county courts in Cheshire and deals with civil work and some family work.

It is proposed that Warrington County Court is closed and the workload is transferred between Liverpool Civil and Family Court and Manchester County Court. Some enabling works will be required to provide additional accommodation for judiciary and storage in Liverpool and additional hearing rooms, judicial and staff accommodation in Manchester.

Liverpool Civil and Family Court is located in the city centre and is a modern venue with excellent facilities for court users.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is a modern and purpose built building located in the centre of the city. Manchester County Court is within this building and provides excellent facilities.

Should Warrington County Court close it will enable the work to be moved to larger venues and allow the receiving courts to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service will be delivered with courts and tribunals hearing rooms being used more efficiently.

The proposed closure of Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court and re-location of Warrington Magistrates' Court to Warrington Combined Court is dependent on the closure of Warrington County Court.

### **Accommodation**

Warrington County Court is co-located with Warrington Crown Court to form the Warrington Combined Court. It has five hearing rooms. The accommodation is of a good standard with disabled access and meets the minimum requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Liverpool Civil and Family Court is located in the centre of the city. It is a modern venue with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, children's room, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, hearing enhancement facilities, a vulnerable witness waiting room and refreshments are available.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre is a modern, purpose built building with excellent facilities including interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilets, baby changing rooms, a quiet room for prayer and contemplation, video conferencing and prison video link equipment, a loop hearing system, wireless internet access and a coffee shop.

### **Workload**

Warrington County Court is located within Warrington Combined Court, and during the 2014/15 financial year, this venue was utilised at approximately 65% of its capacity.

## Location

Warrington County Court is located 17.5 miles from Liverpool Civil and Family Court and 18.5 miles from Manchester Civil Justice Centre. There are good transport links to both Liverpool and Manchester.

Travel by train from Warrington to Liverpool takes between 30 and 45 minutes at a cost of £8.30 for an anytime return ticket. The journey to Manchester takes approximately 40 minutes and costs £9.30 for an anytime return.

There is a regular bus service between Warrington and Liverpool costing £5.00 for a day ticket. The journey time is approximately one hour 30 minutes. An hourly bus service runs between Warrington and Manchester, a day ticket costs £4.20. The travel time is approximately two hours at peak times.

The journey time by car to Liverpool is approximately 45 minutes and to Manchester approximately 35 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	92%	By Car	0-30min	31%
	30-60min	8%		30-60min	69%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	43%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	41%		30-60min	25%
	60-120min	15%		60-120min	73%
	>120min	0%		>120min	1%
	no data	1%		no data	1%

## Staff implications

There are 28 members of staff based at Warrington County Court.

## Other information

Warrington County Court is located within Warrington Combined Court in a freehold property.

Operating costs at the venue during the 2014/15 financial year were approximately £494,000.

Tribunal hearings take place on one day per week and would continue to sit at Warrington Combined Court.

## **West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court**

### **Proposal**

West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court are located in one building. They are one of four magistrates' courts and four county courts in Cumbria. The magistrates' court deals with criminal business in adult and youth courts and the county court with civil work and some family work. It has two courtrooms and two hearing rooms and courtroom use is low.

It is proposed that West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court are closed and the workload of West Cumbria Magistrates' Court is transferred to Carlisle Magistrates' Court, with a limited amount of work transferring to Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates' Court. Some enabling works would be required at Carlisle Magistrates' Court to accommodate the workload.

It is proposed the workload of West Cumbria County Court is transferred to Carlisle Combined Court where no enabling works are required.

Should West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court close and its business move it would enable better use of court facilities within Cumbria, as well as delivering other savings such as the release of a building and a reduction in operating costs. The work will be moved to larger court centres and enable the courts to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases, meeting user and workflow demands more effectively. An improved service would then be delivered with courts being used more efficiently.

We realise that these proposals could result in some users having significant journeys when travelling to the courts and tribunals, even though the need to is infrequent. We are aware that some members of rural communities will have views on the alternatives we can provide so that the public can still access the justice system. We are keen to understand the potential demand for these alternative methods, such as the use of civic or public buildings, to make sure that any provision established following the closure of a court or tribunal, would be in the right location and with suitable facilities. This type of alternative provision could be particularly useful in the case of these courts.

Due to the nature of the rural areas of the North West region, we are and will continue to be flexible where people have trouble attending a court or tribunal for a particular time due to the availability of transport. By their nature, such requests would be considered through representations made on a case-by-case basis.

### **Accommodation**

West Cumbria Courthouse, located in Workington, is a purpose built building providing a good level of facilities for court users. There are two courtrooms and two hearing rooms.

Carlisle Magistrates' Court offers a good standard of facilities for court users and staff, having benefited from improvement works in recent years. Facilities include baby changing, disabled access and toilets, consultation rooms, hearing enhancement, video conferencing and prison video link equipment and refreshments. The building complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Barrow-in-Furness Magistrates' Court offers a good standard of accommodation and facilities. The waiting facilities for civil and family court users are separate from the criminal. There is a separate, self-contained victim and witness suite, secure docks in three court rooms with secure cell access and prison-to-court video links with updated installations to two victim and witness booths. A dedicated advocates' room also has video conferencing facilities. Accommodation is provided for the Crown Prosecution Service, Probation and the Youth Offending Team on days they are attending court.

Carlisle Combined Court is a modern, purpose built building with excellent facilities including disabled access and toilets, hearing enhancement system, video conferencing and prison video link facilities, wireless internet and refreshments on site. It is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

## **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court was utilised at approximately 42% of its capacity.

## **Location**

West Cumbria Magistrates' Court and County Court is situated 32 miles from Carlisle. The journey by car takes approximately 50 minutes.

There is a regular train and bus service between Workington and Carlisle. The train journey takes approximately 55 minutes at a cost of £10.10 return. The bus journey takes approximately one hour 25 minutes. A return ticket costs £10.80.

A small proportion of West Cumbria's criminal work will move to Barrow. Mostly this work is anticipated to originate to the south of Whitehaven where population centres are small. This would require bench boundaries to be changed. The distance from Seascale to Barrow is 36 miles and the journey by car takes approximately one hour ten minutes. There is a regular train service between the two centres and the journey by train takes approximately one hour and costs £9.90 for a return. There is no direct bus service between Seascale and Barrow.

Travel time data for these court pre and post closure are shown below:

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	83%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	17%		30-60min	42%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	58%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	18%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	26%		30-60min	1%
	60-120min	44%		60-120min	48%
	>120min	7%		>120min	43%
	no data	5%		no data	8%

Civil and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	83%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	17%		30-60min	42%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	58%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	18%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	26%		30-60min	1%
	60-120min	44%		60-120min	48%
	>120min	7%		>120min	43%
	no data	5%		no data	8%

### Staff implications

There are 18 members of staff based at West Cumbria Courthouse.

### Other information

West Cumbria Courthouse is in a freehold building.

The 2014/15 operating costs of the venue were approximately £239,000.

Tribunal hearings take place on one day per week. Should West Cumbria Courthouse close alternative arrangements will be made for these hearings.

## Questionnaire

We would welcome responses to the following questions.

**Question 1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals?**

**Question 2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.**

**Question 3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts & Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.**

**Question 4. Our assessment of the likely impacts and supporting analysis is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying this consultation. Do you have any comments on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.**

**Question 5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.**

**Question 6. Please provide any additional comments that you have.**

**Thank you for participating in this consultation exercise.**

## About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

<b>Full name</b>	
<b>Job title</b> or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (e.g. member of the public etc.)	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Company name/organisation</b> (if applicable):	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	
If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick box)
Address to which the acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above	

**If you are a representative of a group**, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

## Contact details/How to respond

Please send your response by 8 October 2015 to:

**HMCTS Consultation  
Ministry of Justice  
Post point 1.13  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ**

**Fax: 0870 761 7768**

**Email: [estatesconsultation@hmcts.gov.uk](mailto:estatesconsultation@hmcts.gov.uk)**

### Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Ministry of Justice at the above address.

### Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available on-line at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj).

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from the Ministry of Justice [please see details above].

### Publication of response

A response to this consultation exercise will be available on-line at [www.justice.gov/moj](http://www.justice.gov/moj).

### Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

### Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality



disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Ministry.

The Ministry will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

## Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment for proposals likely to affect businesses, charities, voluntary sector or the public sector – see guidance on: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-assessment-template-for-government-policies>)

## Consultation principles

The principles that Government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Consultation-Principles.pdf>



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Alternative format versions of this report are available on request from the Ministry of Justice [please see above for contact details].

**Appendix 2**

Halton Borough Council does not agree with the proposals for the reasons set out below:

The impact of increased travel on Halton residents.

- It is understood that the proposal is for all public law work to transfer to the Liverpool Civil Justice Centre. Often, parents/single parent families are facing the prospect of having their children removed from them and placed into care or put up for Fostering/Adoption.
- They are also likely to be on benefits, struggling to make ends meet and reliant on public transport.
- Court Orders require family members to be present at Court by 9.30 a.m. for pre-Hearing discussions, and travelling to and from Liverpool may well involve journeys between home and the bus/train station to the Court. At a time of great stress, the proposals would subject them to additional expense and prolonged travelling times for Hearings. Every effort should be made to afford parents the opportunity to engage fully with the Court proceedings in their own locality rather than burden them with additional transport problems. The current provision within the Warrington Combined Courts is conveniently situated for access by bus and train services.
- There are concerns for individual Halton residents and/or their solicitors. There are already significant issues around the Legal Aid system, and many persons concerned will be the poorest in what is already a deprived area.

Impact on Court Business

- It is understood that the statistics show that North Cheshire is the busiest in the county and more people choose to lodge private law cases there than anywhere else in Cheshire. It is further understood that Liverpool is the busiest Family Court outside of London, and therefore the already busy workload would be significantly added to.
- Warrington Combined Court appears to be underused and the Court House could readily accommodate both the Family Court and Magistrates Court..
- Any current underuse in the County Court would appear to be due in part to a reduction in Legal Aid. If that were to change it would be anticipated the Court usage would increase. Furthermore, on the other hand, should the likely further reduction in solicitors undertaking Criminal Legal Aid occur, then this could result in an increased number of unrepresented defendants which would in turn cause longer hearings and thereby reduce any current spare capacity.

- There is already concern about the capacity of receiving Courts to cope with the increased workload. It is felt that Warrington Combined Court is not big enough to handle the workload if the closures are agreed and the proposed transfer takes place. Also, there is the issue that the closures may impact on the work of the Probation Service, making it difficult for them to deal with and assist their clients
- Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates Court operates at 66% of its capacity which is the highest rate of capacity use amongst all those North West Courts now proposed for closure, and it cannot be accepted that it should be included within the proposals. The proposals significantly impact upon Cheshire, reducing the potential to deal in the county with criminal business in adults and youth Courts. As Runcorn has four Hearing rooms and a Court room usage at a much higher level compared to the other Courts listed, it is argued that the Court has capacity to absorb a greater workload from Warrington and other places. It should be noted that eight Courts in the region are utilised less than 45% of capacity with usage as low as 12% recorded.
- Social Workers, CAFCASS Officers, Solicitors and other professionals would have to spend more time travelling out of the Borough and using valuable resources in this way would reduce the amount of time professionals are available to work with families, and other areas of their professional duties.
- It is not clear that the scale of savings anticipated can be achieved, given, for example, the necessity of funding an alternative venue for Tribunal sittings which currently take place at Runcorn. Members have also raised concerns about potential job losses caused by the proposals.
- There would be longer travelling times for both Council staff and residents.
- A reduction in the amount of Court time results in available slots being used up very quickly – the Court diary in Warrington for private prosecutions is already full except for 30 December 2015.
- Liverpool Court is already extremely busy for family matters, with long waiting times to get into the building, into Court, limited consultations rooms, no refreshments and a feeling that more cases will only make things worse.
- Halton has 26% of residents living in the top 10% deprived areas nationally compared with 9% of Warrington residents. This includes low levels of income and higher crime rates.
- 27% of households in Halton do not have cars or vans compared to just 19% of households in Warrington.
- Car travel time estimates contained in the document are correct. However, this does not account for traffic delays which can make journey times significantly longer than 25 minutes which could be exacerbated yet further by



the major infrastructure project.

- Car parking in Warrington costs around £5 for 4 hours plus, whereas it is free in Halton.
- Travel via public transport in Halton costs £3.80 daily. To travel from Halton to Warrington using bus only is £5.20. To travel from Halton to Warrington using train/bus is approximately £9.00.
- Return travel from Warrington to Halton is an issue in the evening with the last bus services returning between 1800 to 1820. Buses run throughout the evening, however, there are no bus services connecting to Runcorn East Train Station after 1800 hours and a limited bus service connecting near to Widnes Train Station throughout the evening.

### County Court Proposals

- Halton residents can access Civil Consumer Advice to help them enforce their legal consumer rights through the Consumer Advice Helpline operated by the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Most consumers will receive sufficient advice to resolve the issue themselves. However, clients with complex problems or consumers who are unable to resolve the matter themselves will be referred to the Trading Standards Service to receive enhanced advice. This Service is mainly provided to elderly and vulnerable consumers and may include helping clients to prepare cases for Court and providing assistance at court hearings. Examples of Civil cases include: Breach of Contract, Securing Remedy from Rogue Traders, Refunds for Costs of Repairs or Defective Goods or Substandard Service. There is concern about the impact of the closure of Warrington Court and the transfer of Civil cases to Manchester or Liverpool. Consumers have had waiting times of approximately 3 months before Hearing dates, even with Warrington County Court being utilised to 66% capacity last year. A reduction in the number of Courts is therefore likely to cause further delays. Warrington County Court offers excellent facilities to the residents of Halton who wish to pursue a Civil claim in the County Court and it is felt the additional travelling time and cost associated with hearings taking place in Liverpool or Manchester Courts will cause vulnerable adults a considerable amount of inconvenience and could potentially put them off taking an action at all, thereby by reducing their access to legal redress. In addition, the amount of time and resource cost of Officers travelling to Liverpool or Manchester to support or represent vulnerable adults would cost more money in travelling expenses, and cost time in terms of Officers being out of the office for at least half a day on each occasion.

### Magistrates Courts Proposals

- In respect of scheduled Court appearances, the impact of the proposed closure is likely to be minimal as some criminal cases are already heard at Warrington Magistrates Court. However, there are concerns that Hearings

may be delayed if the changes result in a reduction of available court time. There will also inevitably be increased time and travel costs where Officers are attending Hearings.

The main concern, however, is access to Magistrates for urgent/emergency applications e.g. warrants to enter premises for RIPA surveillance. Examples of these emergency applications will also include Food Hygiene, Emergency Prohibition Orders, Condemnation of Food Orders, Part 2A Orders – Public Health Control of Diseases Act (most commonly for illegal tattooists), Warrants to attend premises under the Environmental Protection Act, etc. Such applications are usually made before or after the main Court session. Halton is currently the only local authority using Runcorn Magistrates Court for this purpose. The proposals do not seem to adequately address provision for emergency applications. There is concern that the reduced number of Court sessions and the increased competition from neighbouring authorities and other agencies using the single regional Court facility will mean emergency/urgent access to Magistrates is significantly reduced. The convenience of the Court to Runcorn facilitates access to Magistrates. However, even with the Court in such a convenient location it can be a challenge to secure an audience before a Magistrate at short notice. It is felt that there is already limited Court time and that the Court is not served by adequate administration resource to service the frontline Court activities and facilitate emergency hearings. In most cases, to facilitate urgent Hearings, Officers will lodge papers by hand at the Court for the attention of the Clerk hearing the case a few hours in advance of the Hearing. The transfer of cases to Warrington will delay applications and will significantly increase the time it takes to make such an application, particularly in relation to travelling time.

Halton Borough Council therefore does not agree with the proposals, and urges reconsideration.