Proposed Merger of Mendip and South Somerset Local Justice Areas

Consultation Paper
CP 01/07
Date of publication: 8 January 2007
This consultation will end on 2 April 2007

A consultation produced by Her Majesty's Courts Service, part of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.
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Executive summary

There are 40 magistrates who sit in the Mendip courts. This bench of magistrates is too small, for all practical purposes, to satisfy minimum statutory and other requirements. The caseload does not justify expanding the numbers on the bench. The position is not sustainable.

If local justice is to be maintained in the area then it is necessary to merge with a neighbouring bench. South Somerset has been identified as the most appropriate area for a number of reasons. These include the similarity of both areas and the fact that many of the stakeholder agencies are coterminous. The move would consolidate the provision of justice for this part of Somerset. It is suggested that the new area is known as “South Somerset and Mendip”.

The proposal is for the local justice areas and benches to be merged. The administration for the new area would be located at Yeovil courthouse. If the proposal is to be implemented following this consultation then it is likely that the merger would take place in October 2007.
MAP
Introduction

This paper sets out for consultation the proposal that Mendip and South Somerset Local Justice Areas combine to form a single Local Justice Area served by one bench of magistrates. The administration for the courts in Mendip and South Somerset would be based at the courthouse in Yeovil and the new area would be known as “South Somerset and Mendip”.

The consultation is aimed at all those people who may be affected by the change including court users, stakeholders, public authorities, charities and businesses within the immediate areas concerned and also within the county of Somerset as a whole and the City of Bath.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Code of Practice on Consultation issued by the Cabinet Office and falls within the scope of the Code. The Consultation Criteria, which are set out on page 22 have been followed.

An initial Regulatory Impact Assessment does not indicate that any groups are likely to be particularly affected. The proposals are unlikely to lead to additional costs and savings for businesses, charities or the voluntary sector, or for the public sector. Consequently, this paper does not contain a Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment. If you disagree with this conclusion you are invited to send your reasons as part of your overall response to this paper.

It is possible that the Crown Prosecution Service may consider servicing Mendip courts from their Taunton office. Some Bath defence solicitors would have to travel further if they attend Yeovil for the few cases that Mendip courts will not be able to hear. Responses on this point, with estimates of additional time and costs would be helpful.

The rural proofing policymakers’ checklist has been completed. There will be no diminution of service to those living in rural areas, on the contrary the proposal should strengthen rural provision in both Mendip and South Somerset. The size of the new bench would be over 100 magistrates, which would then be similar in size to the other benches in Somerset, including the Bath & Wansdyke bench. This number will be sufficient magistrates to fill the many offices, committees and panels required. The new bench would be able to provide magistrates to sit at each of the courthouses in Mendip and South Somerset.
The increase in the number of staff positions at the Yeovil office would provide greater security for existing staff and may provide future job opportunities for people within the rural area surrounding Yeovil.

A diversity impact assessment is being conducted to consider the impact on court users and staff and others.

Copies of the consultation paper are being sent to:

Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Avon and Somerset Courts Board
Avon and Somerset Crown Prosecution Service
Avon and Somerset Justices Issues Group
Avon and Somerset Probation Service
Avonvale Witness Support
Bath and North East Somerset Council
CAFCASS secretaries for Somerset and Bath
Countryside Agency
Criminal Defence Service
Crown Court Bristol and Taunton
Department for Work and Pensions
Designated Family Judges for Bristol and Taunton
District Judges (Magistrates’ Courts) for Avon and Somerset
DVLA
Environment Agency
Health and Safety Executive
High Sheriff of Somerset
HMCS magistrates’ staff at Bath, Mendip and Yeovil
HM Prison Service
Inland Revenue
Justices’ Clerks for Avon and Somerset hmc
Justices’ Clerks Society for Avon and Somerset
Law Societies of Bath and Yeovil
Liaison and Resident Judges for Bristol and Taunton
Lord Chancellor’s Avon Advisory Committee
Lord Chancellor’s Somerset County Advisory Committee
Magistrates on the Bath, Mendip and South Somerset benches
Mendip District Council
MP for Bath, Mr Don Foster MP
MP for Somerton and Frome, Mr David Heath MP
MP for Wells, Mr David Heathcoat-Amory MP
MP for Wansdyke, Mr Dan Norris MP
MP for Yeovil, Mr David Laws MP
Police Authority for Avon and Somerset
Prosecuting Services
Relate
Reliance Custodial Services
RSPCA
Safety Camera Partnership
Securitas PLC
Somerset County Council
Somerset Race Equality Council
Somerset Victim and Witness Service
South Somerset District Council (including trading standards)
Trade Unions: PCS and PROSPECT

TV Licensing

Witness Care Unit at Bristol and Taunton

Youth Offending Teams; Bath and North East Somerset, and Somerset

However, this list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in or views on the subject covered by this paper.
The proposals

- To combine Mendip and South Somerset local justice areas into a single local justice area served by one bench of magistrates.
- To base the administration for the courts in Mendip and South Somerset in Yeovil.
- To name the new area “South Somerset and Mendip”.

The Need For Change

It is necessary to take steps to secure the provision of local justice in Mendip, given that a separate Mendip Bench is no longer viable.

Benches of magistrates take great pride in their independence and service to their local communities. When a bench itself concludes that its continued existence is no longer viable then this must be a very significant factor when considering the need for change. On 19 July 2005 the Mendip Magistrates at a meeting of the Bench proposed a number of resolutions including that:

‘The Mendip Bench should seek an amalgamation with South Somerset Bench, with the administration of the combined Bench being sited in Yeovil’

A secret ballot was held in August 2005 and by a majority of 2:1 the resolution to seek merger with South Somerset was carried. This resolution was in turn supported by a unanimous vote of those magistrates present at the South Somerset Bench Annual General Meeting in Yeovil on 6 October 2005.

The benches have since that time been looking for certainty regarding their position.

If the situation is investigated further then it is readily apparent why the magistrates have reached this conclusion. The size of the Mendip bench had declined from 47 magistrates in 2004 to 40 in April 2006, and will be down to 36 by the end of December 2006. The underlying workload does not in any event justify a larger bench. The existing magistrates are struggling to meet the level of sittings required to maintain the necessary competencies.

It is also impractical with such a small bench to fill the various positions, committees and panels. These include:
The Youth Panel serves as an illustration. It has 10 members. This represents 25% of the bench. It has not been possible to recruit sufficient additional members to ensure a gender balance as required by statutory provisions. The situation is exacerbated by a number of impending retirements. The Youth Panel had already resolved to combine with South Somerset Youth Panel. The Youth Panels have been holding meetings together since October 2005. Unless the benches are merged however it will still be necessary for there to be separate offices and elections. Consultations with the Crown Prosecution Service and police undertaken between October 2005 and April 2006 revealed that it would not be practical for Mendip and South Somerset Youth Courts to be administered from Yeovil, whilst the rest of Mendip work continued to be administered from Bath.

There has to be a rotation of members on some of the groups which the magistrates are required to form, such as the Advisory Sub Committee and the Bench Training and Development Committee. Restrictions apply which in some cases prevent magistrates from being a member of more than one committee or panel at the same time. An illustration of this is that a magistrate cannot be an appraiser if he or she is a mentor or a member of the Advisory Sub Committee. Another example is that a magistrate should not be a member of both the Family Panel and the Youth Panel.

There are important central government targets as to timeliness. Magistrates’ courts have a responsibility to ensure that, where found guilty, persistent young offenders are sentenced within 60 days of arrest. Mendip consistently under performs in this area. Mendip Youth Courts are held fortnightly at Frome. If there was a combined bench and therefore one Youth Panel, it would be easier to promote the use of shorter adjournments of persistent young offender cases. The young person would be appearing before the same Youth Panel and be assessed
or supervised by the same Youth Offending Team whether he or she attended the court in Mendip or Yeovil. This would ensure that such cases would be dealt with consistently and efficiently. If necessary to minimise delay a Mendip persistent young offender case could be adjourned to the weekly youth court in Yeovil rather than to the fortnightly youth court in Mendip. Mendip currently only deals with 2 or 3 persistent young offenders per month on average.

A merger would achieve significant savings in time and expense. 35 meetings would no longer need to be serviced by a court legal adviser or attended by a separate bench chairman. The currently separate meetings for the Mendip bench and for the South Somerset bench would be replaced by one set of meetings if the proposal was implemented.

The present frequency of Mendip related meetings is set out below:

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<th>MEETING</th>
<th>number attending</th>
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<td>Advisory Sub Committee</td>
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<td>Area Judicial Forum</td>
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<td>Appraisal and Mentor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bench</td>
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<td>Court User Group</td>
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<td>Bench Executive Committee</td>
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<td>Family Panel</td>
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<td>Justices Issue Group</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing Appeals/Betting and Gaming</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magistrates’ Area Training Committee</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Panel</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Youth Court Chairmen</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Court User Group</td>
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Where the relevant stakeholders all cover the same area, this simplifies communication and liaison between them. This can promote greater understanding and more effective working relationships. The current position where Bath is the centre for the administration of Mendip involves liaison with two sets of stakeholders, for example: Bath Youth Offending Team and Somerset Youth Offending Team; Bath City Council and Somerset County Council; Bath Probation Office and Yeovil and Wells Probation Offices; Bath Police District and Somerset East District; Somerset County Advisory Committee and Avon Advisory Committee.

The Current Position

The proposal is based on the premise that the Mendip bench is too small and in any event the underlying workload does not justify an increase in the size of that bench. The following sections set out such basic data as is available regarding magistrates and caseloads both at Mendip and South Somerset. The number of court staff connected with each bench is also given in relation to each bench. The position regarding possible staff movements is considered later, at page 17.

A breakdown of the type of cases dealt with is not provided because each court hears a similar range of criminal and family cases. It is principally the volume which varies between the different benches.

Mendip Local Justice Area

Magistrates

There are 40 magistrates (there will be only 36 by the end of December 2006)

Court sittings are held at Frome on most weekdays. There are on average 7 courts held each week.

In 2004 the total number of magistrates’ sittings was 1210.

The average sittings per magistrate were 27 (the target is 35-45 sittings).

In 2005 the total number of magistrates’ sittings was 1436.

The average sittings per magistrate were 36 (the target is 35-45 sittings).
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Workload – Sitting Hours

In 2004 the total number of court sitting hours was 1120.

The courts completed 2480 cases.

In 2005 the total number of court sitting hours was 1347.

The courts completed 2390 cases.

Magistrates’ Court Staff

Mendip is part of the HMCS area of Avon and Somerset.

The courts are administered from Bath & Wansdyke Magistrates’ Court in the City of Bath where the majority of the staff are based.

There are 2 ushers. Both are based in Mendip.

There is no separate Mendip team for criminal or family work. There is a member of staff assigned to deal with the Mendip Licensing / Appeals cases.

Bath & Wansdyke Local Justice Area

Magistrates

There are 86 magistrates.

Court sittings are held daily at the Bath & Wansdyke Magistrates’ Court in the city of Bath. There are on average 13 courts held each week.

In 2004 the total number of magistrates’ sittings was 3530.

The average sittings per magistrate were 42 (the target is 35-45 sittings).

In 2005 the total number of magistrates’ sittings was 3551.

The average sittings per magistrate were 41 (the target is 35-45 sittings).

Workload – Sitting Hours

In 2004 the total number of court sittings hours was 3308.

The courts completed 10247 cases.
In 2005 the total number of court sitting hours was 3275.
The courts completed 8274 cases.

Magistrates’ Court Staff

The staffing establishment in full time equivalents is: 1 legal team secretary, 11 administrative staff (10 in post), 7 legal advisers (6.59 in post), 5.89 ushers (1.81 allocated to Mendip), 4 fine enforcement officers and 3 civilian enforcement officers. These staff serve both Bath & Wansdyke and Mendip Courts.

South Somerset Local Justice Area

Magistrates

There are 66 magistrates.

Courts are held daily in Yeovil.

There are about 13 courts held each week.

In 2004 the total number of magistrates’ sittings was 2639.
The average sittings per magistrate were 38 (the target is 35-45 sittings).

In 2005 the total number of magistrates’ sittings was 2636.
The average sittings per magistrate were 40 (the target is 35-45 sittings).

Workload – Sitting Hours

In 2004 the total number of court sitting hours was 2559.
The courts completed 4870 cases.

In 2005 the total number of court sitting hours was 2598.
The courts completed 4900 cases.

Magistrates’ Court Staff

South Somerset is part of the HMCS Area of Avon and Somerset. The courts and office are based at the same site at Yeovil. The staffing establishment in full time equivalents is: 1 legal team secretary, 7 administrative staff (6.5 in post), 5 legal
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advisers (3.8 in post), 3.18 ushers (2.84 in post), 3 fine enforcement officers and 1 civilian enforcement officer.

The Position Following Merger

Magistrates

In the South Somerset and Mendip Bench there would be just over 100 magistrates. Courts would be held daily in Yeovil and probably on alternate days in Mendip. The number of courts held in Mendip would be equal to the number currently held. Average sittings per magistrate should be kept within the 35-45 range per year. The Bath & Wansdyke bench would remain its current size, 86 magistrates.

Workload

After the merger the combined workload of South Somerset and Mendip will be broadly equal to that of Bath & Wansdyke.

Magistrates’ Court Staff

Bath & Wansdyke Magistrates’ Court would have a staffing establishment (in full time equivalents) of: no fewer than 8 administrative staff, 5 legal advisers, 4 ushers, 3 fine enforcement officers and 2 civilian enforcement officers. The exact number of staff will be determined following discussions and negotiations with the trade unions and staff representatives.

The merged bench of South Somerset and Mendip would be served by a staffing establishment (in full time equivalents) of: 1 legal team secretary; up to 10 full-time equivalent administrative staff; 7 legal advisers ; 4.99 ushers; 4 fine enforcement officers and 2 civilian enforcement officers. The exact number of staff will be determined following discussions and negotiations with the trade unions and staff representatives.

The benefits of a local justice area merger in Mendip and South Somerset

The provision of Local Justice would be secured in the longer term. The courts would be served by magistrates who live in the rural communities of Mendip and South Somerset and who understand local issues. The two neighbouring districts share similar characteristics. They cover large areas of countryside, which are dotted with a series of small but significant towns. A shared identity could be the foundation for a lasting solution.
Mendip and South Somerset Magistrates’ Courts are covered by the same organisations, sometimes from the same office or headquarters. For example:

Avon and Somerset HMCS Area

East Somerset Division of Reliance Custodial Services

Police East District Team

Probation East Team

Somerset County Advisory Committee to the Lord Chancellor

Somerset County Council

Somerset Youth Offending Team

This should make it easier for the courts and those organisations to liaise. It would simplify any joint planning and management because all the parties would be responsible for the same geographical area.

The cost to the taxpayer of transporting prisoners should be reduced for those prisoner cases which will be heard at Yeovil rather than Bath (i.e. where a court in Mendip is not available). This is because most Mendip suspects who are arrested, charged and kept in police custody (rather than given police bail) are held at Yeovil Custody Centre at Yeovil Police Station. They then have to be transported to the appropriate court by the prisoner escort contractor, Reliance Custodial Services, at public expense. The distance from the police station to the court in Yeovil is less than a mile. It is 40 miles from Yeovil to Bath.

Transport costs will be reduced for public authorities (e.g. Somerset County Council, Somerset Youth Offending Team) covering the family and youth courts where Mendip cases are heard in Yeovil rather than Bath.

The reduction in the number of meetings attended by magistrates and court staff (see page 11) would release much needed resources and assist Her Majesty’s Courts Service to keep within its budget.

The effect on stakeholders

Court Staff in the Magistrates’ Courts

Staff and trade unions have been informed in advance of the proposed merger. Steps are being taken to minimise the impact of the merger on existing staff. Up to a maximum of seven legal and administrative staff positions would have to be
transferred from Bath to Yeovil. One of these posts has not been filled pending the outcome of this consultation.

**County Court**

It is thought that the transfer of family cases to the county court would not be affected by the proposed merger.

**Court Users**

There are likely to be some occasions where individual court users, in particular Mendip witnesses and defendants, may be required to attend South Somerset Magistrates’ Court in Yeovil. This is most likely to affect those where the defendant is in custody and the case cannot be heard in Mendip either because there is not a suitable court sitting or there is insufficient capacity. This rarely involves more than one prisoner a week. At present such prisoners are taken to Bath & Wansdyke Magistrates’ Court.

Saturday prisoners would be dealt with at Taunton rather than Bristol. Avon and Somerset Magistrates’ Courts have two video link centres for prisoners. Mendip prisoners would be remanded to Dorchester prison for production on the video link at Taunton Deane & West Somerset Magistrates’ Court. This would be a change from the existing arrangement where Mendip prisoners are remanded to Bristol prison and appear on the video link at Bristol Magistrates’ Court.

Witnesses for Mendip courts are served by Avonvale Witness Support and the Bristol based witness care unit. Victim and Witness Support Somerset in Ilminster cover the courts in South Somerset. The Witness Care Unit for South Somerset is at Taunton.

There is a witness video link in Yeovil for vulnerable and other witnesses in need of special protection. This facility would be available to Mendip witnesses if the merger goes ahead.

A specialist domestic violence court is to be established at Yeovil in 2007. This should have capacity to take domestic violence cases from the Mendip area.

The public transport links from within the Mendip region to Bath or Yeovil are similar in terms of cost and time. The links from the west of Mendip are generally better to Yeovil than to Bath. Frome has excellent rail links with either centre.

**Crown Court**

It may be appropriate for Mendip cases to be committed to Taunton rather than Bristol Crown Court, particularly if the CPS office in Taunton takes on responsibility for Mendip cases.
Defence

Courts will continue to be held in Mendip. There are likely to be some Mendip cases which are currently dealt with at Bath which would in future be heard at Yeovil. This would apply to people who are brought to court in custody after being charged with an offence. If Mendip courts are unable to accept such prisoners they are currently taken to Bath & Wansdyke Magistrates’ Court. Under the proposal they would be taken to Yeovil courthouse instead. This could mean increased travel time and costs for the Bath defence solicitors. The criminal defence service has been asked to provide further information to assess the additional costs. The number of such prisoner cases may indicate that this is not an overwhelming issue; however the views of such lawyers would be welcome.

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)

Bath has its own Youth Offending Team. Somerset Youth Offending Team services Mendip and South Somerset youth courts. The proposal would, therefore, fit in with the structure of the Youth Offending Teams.

Magistrates

It is intended that the merger would not make it more difficult for existing magistrates to sit. The provision of local justice in Mendip and South Somerset depends on members of both benches continuing to volunteer their time and skills to the service of the courts. Arrangements will be made to ensure that the magistrates can sit at the courthouse closest to where they live or work. They will not be required to travel any greater distance to attend court. There will, however, be opportunities to sit at other courthouses should they so wish.

The Mendip bench has a recent history of being administered from outside the Mendip area.

The Chairmen of the two benches are working together to ensure that the pastoral needs of all the magistrates will be looked after following merger. The merged bench should not be too large to cause any difficulty with the provision of pastoral care to its members. There are already a number of similar sized benches within Avon and Somerset, which operate extremely effectively. The South Somerset bench has a recent history of amalgamation having been formed by the merger of many smaller benches, which had been based in the various towns of the area. The new bench would be able to meet as a whole at the courthouse in Yeovil. Committees and panels would be able to hold meetings at any of the courthouses in South Somerset and Mendip.
The legal team numbers at Yeovil would be increased to ensure that the new bench receives the advice and support it would need. It is hoped that there will be some continuity of personnel so that Mendip resident magistrates will continue to receive advice from legal advisers with whom they already have an excellent working relationship.

**Prisons and prisoner escort services**

Bath and Mendip adult male prisoners are held at Bristol prison. South Somerset adult male prisoners are kept at Dorchester prison. Consideration will have to be given to where Mendip prisoners should be sent following the proposed merger. The alternatives most likely to be considered are sending them to either Bristol or Dorchester prison. The Home Office determines where courts send prisoners. HM Prison Service is able to transfer prisoners between their establishments where this is necessary. Female prisoners from Bath, Mendip and South Somerset are held at Eastwood Park in Gloucestershire.

There is one local resource for male youth prisoners, Ashfield Young Offender Institution. The Youth Justice Board are responsible for deciding where youths are placed once committed to custody by the courts. On Saturdays men remanded in custody would go to Exeter prison. Prison video link cases would be heard in Taunton Deane & West Somerset Magistrates’ Court rather than Bristol Magistrates’ Court.

Reliance Custodial services currently hold the contract for the transport of all prisoners between the police stations, courts and prisons for Avon and Somerset.

**Probation**

The Probation Somerset East team covers both South Somerset and Mendip. The main office is in Yeovil. The merger of South Somerset and Mendip may make liaison easier between the local probation office and the court.

**Prosecution**

The Crown Prosecution Service is geographically coterminous with the HMCS area of Avon and Somerset.

Mendip is currently covered by the criminal justice unit and CPS legal team based in Bristol. Cases committed or sent to the Crown Court are directed to Bristol Crown Court.

If the proposal is accepted then it may be appropriate for the Taunton Criminal Justice Unit and Legal Team to take over responsibility for Mendip. Taunton Crown Court may then be the appropriate venue for committed or sent cases.
Staff have been informed of the proposed changes.

The Taunton Crown Prosecution Service Team did provide lawyers for Mendip Courts for a number of years in the 1990s when the Mendip courts were administered from Bridgwater.

Currently the police in Shepton Mallet input the Mendip cases by direct link with Bath magistrates' court. Shepton Mallet is a sub station of Yeovil so it should be easy for them to transfer cases to the magistrates' court in Yeovil instead.

Yeovil custody centre already holds Mendip suspects and prisoners where there is insufficient accommodation at the police stations within the Mendip area.
Questionnaire

We would welcome responses to the following questions:

Question 1: What comments would you like to make on the proposal to merge Mendip and South Somerset into one Local Justice Area to be known as “South Somerset and Mendip”?

Question 2: Please describe any particular impacts that should be taken into account, and why.

Thank you for participating in this consultation exercise.
About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

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<th>Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (eg. member of the public etc.)</th>
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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.

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How to respond

Please send your response by 2nd April 2007 to:

Rod White
Area Director

PO Box 484
Queensway House
Weston – Super - Mare
North Somerset BS23 9BJ

Tel: 01934 528500
Fax: 01934 528520
Email: ronny.kedge@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk

Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available on-line at http://www.dca.gov.uk/index.htm. Magistrates' copies will also be available from the courthouses in Bath, Frome, Wells and Yeovil.

Publication of response

A paper summarising the responses to this consultation will be published on or about 30th April 2007. The response paper will be available on-line at http://www.dca.gov.uk/index.htm

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 Department.

The Department 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.
The Consultation Criteria

The six consultation criteria are as follows:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.

2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the time scale for responses.

3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.

4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.

5. Monitor your department’s effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.

6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

These criteria must be reproduced within all consultation documents.
Consultation Co-ordinator contact details

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process rather than about the topic covered by this paper, you should contact the Department for Constitutional Affairs Consultation Co-ordinator, Laurence Fiddler, on 020 7210 2622, or email him at: consultation@dca.gsi.gov.uk

Alternatively, you may wish to write to the address below:

Laurence Fiddler
Consultation Co-ordinator
Department for Constitutional Affairs
5th Floor Selborne House
54-60 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QW

If your complaints or comments refer to the topic covered by this paper rather than the consultation process, please direct them to the contact given under the How to respond section of this paper at page 23.