

<b>Title:</b> Impact Assessment on Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service proposals on the proposed closure of North Liverpool Community Justice Centre (NLCJC) <b>IA No:</b> MoJ218  <b>Lead department or agency:</b> Ministry of Justice  <b>Other departments or agencies:</b>	<b>Impact Assessment (IA)</b>		
	<b>Date:</b> 06/09/2013		
	<b>Stage:</b> Final		
	<b>Source of intervention:</b> Domestic		
	<b>Type of measure:</b> Other		
<b>Contact for enquiries:</b>			

<b>Summary: Intervention and Options</b>	<b>RPC Opinion:</b> Not Applicable
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Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option			
Total Net Present Value	Business Net Present Value	Net cost to business per year (EANCB on 2009 prices)	In scope of One-In, Two-Out? Measure qualifies as
£0.4m			No   NA

**What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?**  
 NLCJC was established in 2005 as a court and community resource with criminal justice agencies fully co-located with other third sector services in a dedicated building. The Centre is expensive to run with an operating cost of £980k in 2012/13. There has been no evidence that it has or will deliver results on re-offending levels and it does not deliver value for money for the taxpayer. Therefore Government intervention is necessary on the grounds of efficiency. There is a lease break in April 2014. If the opportunity to exit the building is not taken there will be an ongoing cost until the next lease break in 2017. HMCTS is holding a consultation on behalf of MoJ on the proposed closure of NLCJC.

**What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?**  
 The objective is to reduce surplus capacity and deliver cost savings of £630k. The proposal will align with operational requirements. Customer service will improve by transferring work to Sefton Magistrates' Court which is geographically less than two miles north of the NLCJC site. Sefton Magistrates' Court has the capability to absorb the workload, is a modern building with very good facilities, and has in itself built a reputation for innovation – it was the first HMCS 'model court' and was subsequently a Lean 'beacon office'.

**What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base)**  
 Option 1: Do nothing - keep NLCJC operational.  
 Option 2: Close North Liverpool Community Justice Centre in order to meet the lease break opportunity in April 2014.  
  
 The selected option is Option 2 which aims to reduce surplus capacity, preserve the benefits of the problem solving approach and ethos developed at NLCJC, whilst ensuring HMCTS court estate is used more efficiently. Option 2 delivers a positive net present value to society. The projected financial saving between April 2014 and the next lease break in 2017 is over £2 million.

<b>Will the policy be reviewed?</b> It will not be reviewed. <b>If applicable, set review date:</b> Month/Year					
Does implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?				N/A	
Are any of these organisations in scope? If Micros not exempted set out reason in Evidence Base.		<b>Micro</b> Yes/No	<b>&lt; 20</b> Yes/No	<b>Small</b> Yes/No	<b>Medium</b> Yes/No
What is the CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent change in greenhouse gas emissions? (Million tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent)				<b>Traded:</b>	
				<b>Non-traded:</b>	

**I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that (a) it represents a fair and reasonable view of the expected costs, benefits and impact of the policy, and (b) that the benefits justify the costs.**

Signed by the responsible SELECT SIGNATORY: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Summary: Analysis & Evidence

# Policy Option 1

**Description:** Do nothing, NLCJC continues to run until the next lease break in 2017.

## FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year	PV Base Year 2013	Time Period Years 4	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low:	High:	Best Estimate: £0

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	-	-	-
High	-	-	-
Best Estimate	£0	£0	£0

### Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

HMCTS would continue to fund the ongoing cost of £930k until the next lease break in 2017 and other running costs such as staff costs, IT costs, utilities, property services and maintenance, and other office expenditure would continue.

### Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

N/A

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	-	-	-
High	-	-	-
Best Estimate	£0	£0	£0

### Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

### Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks	Discount rate (%)	3.5%
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## BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 1)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OITO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs:	Benefits:	Net:	Yes/No	IN/OUT/Zero net cost

# Summary: Analysis & Evidence

# Policy Option 2

**Description:** Close NLCJC at the lease break in April 2014 and move the work to Sefton Magistrates' Court.

## FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year	PV Base Year 2013	Time Period Years 4	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: Optional	High: Optional	Best Estimate: £360,000

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	-	-	-
High	-	-	-
Best Estimate	£230,000	£0	£230,000

### Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

HMCTS would incur some costs as a result of works required to close the site and prepare it for handover to the landlord. This costs include IT decommissioning (including a video link), transferring work (e.g. porterage costs) and some dilapidation costs.

### Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Some court users and staff, judiciary may experience slightly higher costs of having to travel further to the receiving court, Sefton Magistrates' Court.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	-	-	-
High	-	-	-
Best Estimate	£0	£210,000	£600,000

### Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

HMCTS will benefit from reduced future running costs in rent, staff costs, IT costs, utilities, property services and maintenance, and other office expenditure.

### Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

### Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks

There will be some operational savings. Workload and court user waiting times are not expected to change. Journey times are not expected to increase sufficiently to impact

Discount rate (%)

3.5%

## BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 2)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: 0	Benefits: 0	Net: 0	Yes/No	IN/OUT/Zero net cost

## Introduction

1. This Impact Assessment examines closure options for the HMCTS site at North Liverpool Community Justice Centre (NLCJC). The selected option is to close NLCJC and transfer the work to Sefton Magistrates' Court.

## Rationale

2. NLCJC was established in 2005 as a court and community resource with criminal justice agencies fully co-located with other third sector services in a dedicated building. An evaluation was published in 2012 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/north-liverpool-community-justice-centre-analysis-of-re-offending-rates-and-efficiency-of-court-processes>) which found NLCJC was no more successful than other courts in relation to reducing re-offending levels. It also found some positive and some negative results in terms of efficiency.
3. In 2011 it was agreed with Ministers that the NLCJC should remain open even though its particular 'problem solving' approach had not made the Centre any more successful than other courts in relation to reducing re-offending. This decision was taken on the basis that HMCTS officials would: look to secure additional funding for the Centre from other CJS agencies; develop its operational model to increase workload and thus reduce unit costs; and try to develop a more qualitative set of evaluation criteria, although following further work the latter has not been possible without potentially significant costs and with real doubts about what it would demonstrate. It was also agreed that given the fact that the lease on the NLCJC site has a 'break point' at 28 April 2014, its long term future should be reviewed again to take advantage of the break clause if appropriate.
4. Following this agreement, HMCTS, CJS agencies and third sector providers developed a revised operating model for 2012/13 to increase the workload of the centre and secure funding contributions from others e.g. Merseyside Probation Trust. This meant that the HMCTS budget for the financial year reduced from £1.25m in 2011/12 to £980K in 2012/13.
5. It is increasingly difficult to justify the ongoing operation of the Centre – its budget of just under £1m is over three times greater than a mainstream magistrates' court with a similar number of rooms and workload. The CJS agencies have reduced the number of people based there in line with the decrease in work and to meet their changing operational needs. For example, the CPS has reduced its presence significantly and is now supporting NLCJC cases in the same way as they would in a mainstream court as opposed to the dedicated prosecutors and premium service that it used to provide.
6. In recent years workload at the single courtroom Centre has fallen (by 41% between 2007 and November 2012) and to 55% utilisation in 2012/13. Since November 2012, this figure has risen (standing at 71% for the period April and July 2013) however this follows the transfer of cases involving mentally disordered offenders into the NLCJC from other local justice areas. Utilisation at the NLCJC remains below HMCTS' benchmark figure of 80% and the volume of crime cases it deals with remains relatively low at c. 168 per month.
7. In short, as a single court room NLCJC is expensive to run, there has been no clear evidence that it has or will deliver results in relation to re-offending levels, and it does not deliver value for money for the taxpayer. If the opportunity of the 2014 lease break is not taken there will be an ongoing annual cost until the next lease break in 2017.
8. The workload and problem solving approach can be transferred to Sefton Magistrates' Court, which is geographically less than two miles north of the NLCJC site. Sefton Magistrates' Court has the capability to absorb the workload, is a modern building with very good facilities, and has in itself built a reputation for innovation – it was the first HMCS 'model court' and was subsequently a Lean 'beacon office'.

## Utilisation Levels

9. This information has been measured against capacity i.e. number of court rooms rather than court schedules. There is 1 court room at the NLCJC and 5 court rooms at Sefton Magistrates' Court, of which up to 3 are used on a daily basis. There is capacity for all the work from the NLCJC to be transferred to a dedicated courtroom in Sefton Magistrates' Court for the use of NLCJC only work, and still provide flexibility for a further increase in its workload.

**Table 1: Actual Utilisation of Courtroom Capacity for Sefton Magistrates' Court and NLCJC (for 12 months to July 2013)**

Court	Total courtrooms available	Total hours available	Actual hours sat (12 months to July 2013)	Utilisation (actual hours sat as % of capacity)
Sefton Magistrates' Court	5	7,440	3,649	49%
NLCJC	1	1,488	909	61%

### Policy Objective and scope

10. The policy objectives is to improve efficiency and have due regard for value for money. The policy will also have due regard to the impact of possible closures on court and tribunal users, on access to justice, on journey times for users and on the challenges of rural access. Account will also be taken of any mitigating action where journeys are significantly increased.

### Economic rationale for intervention

11. The conventional economic approach to Government intervention is based on efficiency or equity arguments. Government intervenes if there is a perceived failure in the way a market operates ("market failures") or if it would like to correct existing institutional distortions ("government failures"). Government also intervenes for equity ("fairness") reasons. In this case, intervention would be justified primarily on efficiency grounds.
12. The proposal to close NLCJC addresses the issue of inefficiency (due to surplus capacity) at both the closing and receiving sites. By closing NLCJC, the utilisation at Sefton Magistrates' Court is estimated to increase from 50% to approximately 60%.

### Affected groups

- Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and arms length bodies, including:
  - National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
  - Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS)
  - Legal AID Agency (LAA)
  - Sentencing Council
- Parole Board
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Home Office
- HM Treasury
- Police Forces
- The Judiciary (including the Magistracy)
- Addaction
- Turnaround Women
- Merseyside Mental Health Team
- Potential victims of crime
- Witnesses of crimes
- Justices' Clerks' Society (JCS)
- Defence solicitors/ Chartered Institute of Legal Executives

- Local Authorities (LAs)
- Prisoner Escort Contract Services (PECS)
- Members of the public
- Offenders
- Citizens Advice Bureau

### **Principles underpinning cost benefit analysis**

13. This Impact Assessment identifies as far as possible both monetised and non-monetised impacts with the aim of understanding what the net impact on society might be from this change.
14. Cost benefit analysis in this Impact Assessment is interpreted broadly, to include both monetised and non-monetised costs and benefits, with due weight given to those that are non-monetised.
15. The geographical scope of this Impact Assessment is the North West Region.
16. There are a small number of areas for which there is not sufficient data to quantify the costs and benefits. In these cases we have identified what we believe the costs and benefits to be without producing a quantitative estimate.

### **Policy Option 1: Do nothing**

17. The “do nothing” option sets out the assumptions should HMCTS not take advantage of the lease ‘break point’ for the NLCJC site and the building remains operational;
  - There would be no costs associated with closing the site.
  - HMCTS would not be able to take advantage of the lease ‘break point’ and would continue to keep open surplus capacity until the next lease break in 2017.
  - Utilisation levels would continue to be low

### **Policy Option 2: Close North Liverpool Community Justice Centre (NLCJC)**

- There will be some costs associated with closing the site
- This addresses the lease ‘break point’ opportunity and saves HMCTS unnecessary ongoing rental and operational costs
- Utilisation levels at the receiving site will improve

## **Costs and benefits**

18. The following costs and benefits are incurred under Option 2;

### **Transitional costs (monetised)**

19. For HMCTS, transitional costs will be incurred due to:
  - Decant costs: This covers the costs associated with decanting work, staff and equipment (such as portage of documents) between sites. This is estimated at £30,000 (excluding optimism bias).
  - Dilapidations: This covers the cost of returning a leasehold site to its original condition, through repairs or refit. This is estimated at £150,000 (excluding optimism bias).
  - IT decommissioning. There are expected to be cost associated with decommissioning IT at NLCJC. This is estimated at £30,000 (excluding optimism bias).

- Project costs: There are expected to be negligible project costs (which not already captured above) as the closure is expected to be delivered as part of business as usual.

### **Transitional costs (un-monetised)**

20. For HMCTS, one-off un-monetised costs will be incurred due to:

- "Familiarisation and awareness" costs: There will be familiarisation and awareness costs for court users relating to where the nearest court is. Similarly, it may take some time for staff to settle in their new place of work, particularly as some work practices may differ slightly between courts. While this point is noted its impact is anticipated to be negligible.
- Enabling works. There may be a requirement for some enabling works to be carried out at Sefton Magistrates' Court for existing space to be used by the Mental Health team (the removal of free standing kitchen units and installing office and computer equipment). An estimate of the extent and cost of work is not yet available.

### **Ongoing costs (monetised)**

#### *HMCTS*

21. Sefton Magistrates' Court may see a slight increase in costs as a result of increased use of utilities, higher maintenance costs and higher variable costs (such as printing, postage and telephony). However, this is likely to be negligible.

### **Ongoing benefits (monetised)**

22. For HMCTS, ongoing economic benefits total £233,000 per year (excluding optimism bias). This is made up of:

- Savings from lower operating facilities costs. This includes utilities, cleaning, waste disposal, security and maintenance. The total savings are estimated at £180,000 per year (excluding optimism bias).
- Savings from rent. There will be a saving of £23,000 per year associated with rent.
- Savings from other operating costs. There will be additional savings estimated at £30,000 per year (excluding optimism bias), primarily associated with equipment hire.
- We assume there are no staff savings associated with the closure of NLCJC and that affected staff move to Sefton Magistrates' Court or other courts in the North West. There may be some impact on these members of staff (changes to travel arrangements) though HMCTS will seek to minimise this impact.

23. The remainder of the NLCJC 2012/13 operating cost of £980k is made up of £422k for secondees from other justice partners who will return to their own organisation (see below), £287k on staff and £53k on other office expenses. The budget spent on secondees would be financial savings for HMCTS under option 2. However, for the economic appraisal we assume that these secondees are usefully redeployed into other roles and therefore there is no net economic impact. It has been assumed that the budget spent on staff and other office expenses would be transferred to Sefton Magistrates' Court under option 2 so would not be either financial or economic savings.

### **Other un-monetised impacts**

#### *Impact on Judiciary / Magistrates*

- 24. There will also be a transfer of judicial costs (including the magistracy) from NLCJC to Sefton Magistrates' Court, so there is no net impact.
- 25. There may be a positive impact on magistrates as they will not be required to travel to NLCJC for occasional hearings.

## *Other impacted groups*

### *PECS (Prison Escort Custody Service)*

26. We expect there to be a positive impact on PECS. The movement of defendants in custody being transported from prison establishments to the NLCJC is not ideal. Currently, they are taken to Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates' Court and then transported to the NLCJC. The recent HMIP inspection commented adversely on the process on the grounds that it was inefficient and resulted in a longer process for detainees (the GeoAmey contract does not cover the NLCJC). Moving to Sefton Magistrates' Court would resolve this as detainees would be taken directly to and from Sefton Magistrates' Court and would not have to be processed twice.

### *Probation*

27. We expect the impact on Probation to be minimal and it is likely to be positive. The Senior Probation officer based at the NLCJC has recently retired and he has not been replaced. The closure of the centre and moving the work to Sefton Magistrates' Court would enable probation to pool their administrative support and they would have one less court site to provide resources for. The role of the remaining Probation Service officer is to support the problem solving review process. At the moment this Probation Service officer is funded by both HMCTS and Probation. Probation's commitment to the continued funding of this resource without HMCTS support is unknown. It is possible that it will also be influenced by their own current re-structuring process.

### *Secondments from other agencies*

28. Around 12 full time equivalent staff are seconded to NLCJC from other agencies. These agencies range from CJS partners (police, CPS, probation and YOS) to non-CJS agencies (Citizens Advice Bureau and Witness Service). Upon closures of NLCJC these secondment arrangements would end and the staff would return to their original organisations. For the purposes of this economic appraisal we assume the staff are usefully redeployed into other roles and therefore there is no net positive or negative economic impact. There will, however, be financial savings for HMCTS as a result of these arrangements ending.

### *Police*

29. The potential impact on the police is positive. The impact of the increase in mental health work means that the cell capacity at the NLCJC is not adequate to deal with the increase in this type of work (there are only 2 cells). Concern has been expressed by police based on site that NLCJC is not equipped to deal with more volatile types of offenders and has asked for a risk assessment to be completed following the reporting of recent incidents; in particular there is no secure dock in the NLCJC.

### *Addaction*

30. We expect the overall impact on this stakeholder group to be neutral. They are not resident on site at NLCJC. There is an ad hoc arrangement and this would continue at Sefton Magistrates' Court. They are now only supporting the NLCJC once a week at the youth court (reduced from twice a week) and moving to Sefton Magistrates' Court could be beneficial as they will have one less site to cover.

### *Turnaround Women*

31. We expect the overall impact on this stakeholder group to be negative. They would no longer be able to operate an out reach service from the NLCJC site. They have already located their office accommodation to Kirkdale probation centre and are using the NLCJC as an out reach centre. It would not be possible to offer them alternative accommodation at Sefton Magistrates' Court. They have funding until March 2014, operating their services as a one stop shop, after this time their position is unclear.

### *Merseyside Mental Health Team*

32. The impact on this group is neutral if accommodation can be offered at Sefton Magistrates' Court. If they cannot be accommodated at Sefton Magistrates' Court with the mental health work the impact will be negative. Their co-location at Sefton Magistrates' Court is dependant on money being available for enabling works. The group have recently moved into NLCJC following the movement of



mental health cases into the NLCJC over recent months. They have maintained an office at Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates' Court at a cost of £20k per annum to ensure they have a city centre base. Their wish would be for accommodation at the court where mental health work is to be based (although they would still need to cover Crown Court work in the city centre). If the NLCJC were to re-locate to Sefton Magistrates' Court, then it would be desirable for some enabling works to be carried out on existing space to be used by the team. At this stage there is no estimate of cost, but the work would involve the removal of free standing kitchen units and installing office and computer equipment. This is important if the court is to continue to develop its specialism as a mental health court.

#### *Citizens Advice Bureau*

33. We expect the overall impact on this stakeholder group to be negative. They would no longer be able to operate an out reach service from the NLCJC site. Both staff members at NLCJC would have to be made redundant if the current MoJ funding for one staff member was not renewed. The decision to renew funding or not has not yet been made but is independent of the future of NLCJC.

#### *All Court Users*

34. The change in travel time for court users is expected to be negligible as the receiving court is located two miles from the closing site and travel costs are similar (see Travel Time impacts below).

### **Summary of impacts**

35. The economic appraisal is conducted over a 4 year appraisal horizon to coincide lease end date in 2017. In present value terms, policy option 2 has economic costs of £230,000, economic benefits of £600,000 for an overall net present value of £360,000.

**Table 2 – Summary of monetised impacts (£000s) of Option 2 – including optimism bias**

Figures in £000s	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<i>Costs</i>				
Decant costs	33	-	-	-
Dilapidations	165	-	-	-
IT decommissioning	36	-	-	-
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
NPV costs (4yrs)	230			
<i>Benefits</i>				
Facilities	-	(163)	(163)	(163)
Other operating costs	-	(27)	(27)	(27)
Rent	-	(23)	(23)	(23)
<b>Total benefit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(213)</b>	<b>(213)</b>	<b>(213)</b>
NPV benefits (4yrs)	(600)			
<b>Net benefit</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>(213)</b>	<b>(213)</b>	<b>(213)</b>
NPV (4yrs)	(360)			

### **Risks and Assumptions**

36. It is assumed that there is no change in the volume of court cases, no change in court fees and no change in court user waiting times while at court.
37. We assume there is no impact on service delivery.
38. Judicial costs are assumed to remain unchanged.
39. There is assumed to be no impact on the ability to hear cases magistrates' courts.

40. A number of the costs and benefits are uncertain. To account for the demonstrated and systematic tendency of project appraisers to be optimistic, we have applied the optimism bias figures shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Optimism bias**

<b>Cost/benefit</b>	<b>Assumed optimism bias</b>
Savings from facilities (security, cleaning, maintenance)	10%
Savings from other operating costs	10%
Savings from rent	0%
Cost of decant	10%
Cost of dilapidations	10%
Cost of IT decommissioning	20%

### Scenarios and sensitivities

#### *Increase in workload*

41. If workload increases, we expect that Sefton Magistrates' Court will still be able to handle the increased workload. If overall workload was to increase by 20%, utilisation at Sefton Magistrates' Court would be expected to reach 74%. This level of utilisation would not be expected to negatively impact service delivery.

	Estimated workload (hours) – based on 12 months to July 2013	Utilisation
Sefton Magistrates' Court (including NLCJC work)	4,600	61%
Sefton Magistrates' Court (including NLCJC work) + <i>10% additional workload</i>	5,000	67%
Sefton Magistrates' Court (including NLCJC work) + <i>20% additional workload</i>	5,500	74%

## Wider impacts

### Travel time impacts

42. The receiving court, Sefton Magistrates' Court is geographically less than two miles north of the NLCJC site. We expect the impact on travel time for court users to be negligible.
43. There are various travel options for customers who need to travel between NLCJC and Sefton Magistrates' Court. The distance between the two buildings is 1.8 miles, and is serviced by reliable public transport including a train line which runs services every 15 minutes and also regular buses that have various routes out of Liverpool City Centre that pass along Stanley Road to Sefton

Magistrates' Court, passing the same route as the NLCJC. Any customers travelling from North Sefton would find getting to Sefton Magistrates' Court. as apposed to NLCJC both easier and cheaper with it being closer. This is particularly applicable to mental health cases the come from all areas of Merseyside.

### **Trains**

44. The nearest station to NLCJC is Sandhills Station and that then involves a 10 minute walk (0.5miles) to the NLCJC.
45. The nearest station to Sefton Magistrates' Court is Bootle Oriel Road (which is an addition 2 stops from Sandhills on the same line), which takes an extra 4 minutes and then it is an 8 minute walk to the court (0.4miles).
46. The cost to travel from Liverpool City Centre to Sandhills is £1.70 anytime return, compared with £3.20 to Bootle Oriel Road, making a difference of £1.50 on a return train fare.

### **By Car**

47. The distance between the NLCJC and Sefton Magistrates' Court is 1.8miles, taking an extra 7 minutes at a cost of £0.49 in fuel. There is free on street parking available on the side roads near the court.

### **Walking**

48. The distance of 1.8 miles between NLCJC and Sefton Magistrates' Court would take approximately 35 minutes to walk.

### **Buses**

49. There are numerous buses that operate bus routes along Stanley Road, Bootle, and passing Merton Road, where Sefton Magistrates' Court is situated; making is easily accessible for customers travelling by bus. Bus fares may vary.

## **Equality impacts**

50. As per our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 we have considered, on the basis of the available evidence, the likely impacts of these proposals on individuals with protected characteristics.
51. The due to be closed NLCJC is fully accessible and located all on one level. However, concern has been expressed by some of the agencies recently about whether the facilities are appropriate given the more volatile nature of some of the defendants with mental health needs. There are only two cells available which is not always sufficient given the increasing demand. The courtroom also does not have a secure dock which increases potential risk.
52. Sefton Magistrates Court is considered to have the capacity to absorb the work from NLCJC and it also has plenty of cell capacity which will help meet the increasing demand from defendants with mental health needs. Travel time increases are considered to be negligible and there are reliable transport links to Sefton from NLCJC.
53. There is, however, a potential accessibility issue for Sefton since the cells and the courtrooms are on different levels. If this accessibility issue did arise then prisoners would be transferred to a suitable hearing room at the Liverpool Youth or Crown Court which sits in the city centre.
54. As mentioned above, due to the short distance to the receiving court (Sefton) from the closing court (NLCJC) of 1.8 miles and the continuing availability and accessibility of travel services in the area we consider there are suitable mitigations in place to ensure reasonable adjustments are undertaken suitably for court users with disabilities.

## **Specific Impact Tests**

55. The following screening tests have been conducted on the preferred option.

### *Competition assessment*

56. We do not anticipate a material impact on competition as a result of the closure of NLCJC. Specifically, we do not expect the closures to limit:

- The number of legal services providers
- The ability of suppliers to compete
- Suppliers' incentives to compete vigorously

57. There may be a slight increase in costs associated with certain court users as a result of having to travel further to the receiving court.

### *Wider Environmental Impact Test*

58. There are not expected to be adverse impacts on air quality, water quality and quantity, flood risk, biodiversity, landscape or noise.

59. *Will the policy option be vulnerable to the predicted effects of climate change?* No.

60. *Will the policy option lead to a change in the financial costs or the environmental and health impacts of waste management?* No.

61. *Will the policy option impact significantly on air quality?* Any impacts on air quality will be negligible.

62. *Will the policy option involve any material change to the appearance of the landscape or townscape?* No.

63. *Will the proposal change 1) the degree of water pollution 2) levels of abstraction of water or 3) exposure to flood risk?* 1) No. 2) No. 3) No.

64. *Will the policy option change 1) the amount or variety of living species 2) the amount, variety or quality of ecosystems?* 1) No. 2) No

65. *Will the policy option affect the number of people exposed to noise or the levels to which they are exposed?* No.

### *Greenhouse Gas Impact Test*

66. Any impacts on carbon emissions will be negligible:

67. Any impacts on greenhouse gas emissions will be negligible.

### *Health Impact Assessment*

68. There are not expected to be adverse impacts from the proposed court closures.

### *Human Rights Impact Assessment*

69. The initial screening of this impact test indicates there would be no significant, adverse impacts from this proposal. We have particularly considered the potential for an impact under Article 6 – right to a fair trial but do not consider that these proposals will prevent access to an independent and fair system of justice.

### *Justice Impact Test*

70. No significant impacts are expected under this indicator

### *Rural Proofing Impact Test*

71. No significant impacts are expected under this indicator.

72. *Service provision and availability:* The closure will transfer court services to Sefton Magistrates' Court with similar functions.

73. *Delivery costs:* No significant impacts are expected under this indicator.

74. *Accessibility and infrastructure:* It is expected that there will be little or no impact on travel duration.

75. *Communications:* No significant impacts are expected under this indicator.

76. *Economies*: No significant impacts are expected under this indicator

77. *Disadvantage*: No significant impacts are expected under this indicator.

*Small Firms Impact Test*

78. For small businesses (including solicitors), we expect the impact to neutral or marginally positive as workload will be consolidated at a single location.

*Sustainable Development Impact Test*

**Stage 1**

**1. Environmental Standards**

1a. Are there any significant environmental impacts of your policy proposal (see Wider Environment Specific Impact Test)?

No

If the answer is 'yes' make a brief note of the impacts below:

--

1b. If you answered 'yes' to 1a., are the significant environmental impacts relevant to any of the legal and regulatory standards identified?

N/A

If the answer is 'yes' make a brief note of the relevant standards below:

N/A

If you answered 'yes' to 1b, have you:

1c. Notified the Government Department which has legal responsibility for the threshold and confirmed with them how to include the impacts appropriately in the analysis of costs and benefits?

N/A

1d. Informed ministers where necessary?

N/A

1e. Agreed mitigating or compensatory actions where appropriate?

N/A

**2. Intergenerational impacts**

2a. Have you assessed the distribution over time of the key monetised and non-monetised costs and benefits of your proposal? This assessment can be included in your Evidence Base or put in an annex.

No

N/A

2b. Have you identified any significant impacts which may disproportionately fall on future generations? If so, describe them briefly.

No

If you answered 'yes' to 2b. , have you:

2c. Informed ministers where necessary? If so, provide details.

N/A

2d. Agreed mitigating or compensatory actions where appropriate? Provide details.

N/A

**Stage 2**

**3. The purpose of the second stage is to bring together the results from the impact assessment with those from the first stage of the SD test. The following questions are intended to reflect the uncertainties in the cost benefit analysis and help you consider how to proceed in the light of further evidence from the first stage of the SD test.**

3a. Indicate in the appropriate box whether the balance of monetised costs and benefits is:

Strongly positive	Moderately positive	Roughly neutral / finely balanced	Moderately negative	Strongly negative
	<b>x</b>			

3b. Indicate in the appropriate box whether the balance of non-monetised costs and benefits is likely to be:

Strongly positive	Moderately positive	Roughly neutral / finely balanced	Moderately negative	Strongly negative
	<b>x</b>			

3c. Indicate in the appropriate box whether the results of the SD questions 1-3 are, on balance, likely to be:

Strongly positive	Moderately positive	Roughly neutral / finely balanced	Moderately negative	Strongly negative
		<b>x</b>		

3d. Indicate in the appropriate box whether, overall, the balance of the monetised and non-monetised costs and benefits and the sustainability issues is considered to be:

Strongly positive	Moderately positive	Roughly neutral / finely balanced	Moderately negative	Strongly negative
	<b>x</b>			

3e. Provide an explanation of the final result from 3d, explaining, for example, how you have compared monetised and non-monetised costs and benefits and how you have resolved any conflicts between the cost-benefit results and the SD results.

The only significant SD impact of the policy is the resulting reduction in carbon emissions, which has been calculated in terms of monetised and non-monetised costs as part of the Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment. There will be a smaller, yet positive, impact on water consumption and waste production. On balance, it seems appropriate to record a 'moderately positive' SD impact. The impact will be reviewed again after the consultation period has closed.