

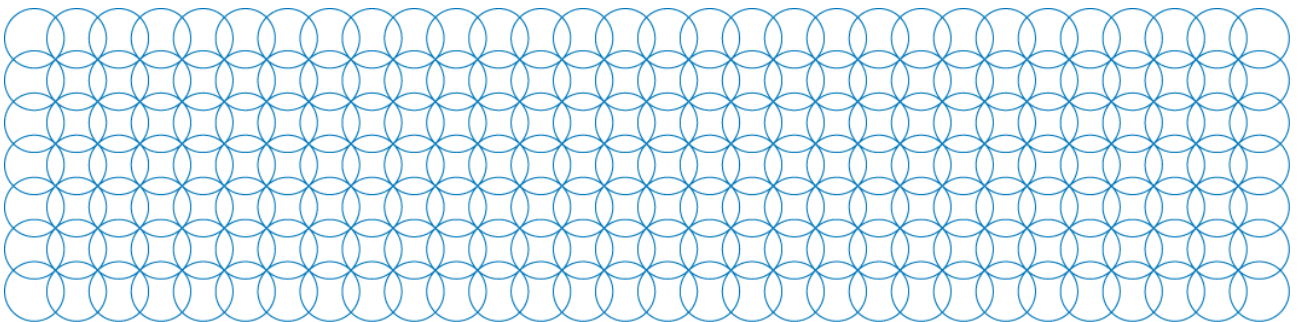


Ministry  
of Justice

# Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in Wales

This consultation begins on 16 July 2015

This consultation ends on 8 October 2015







Ministry  
of Justice

## **Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in Wales**

**A consultation produced by the Ministry of Justice. It is also available at  
<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/>**

## About this consultation

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

**Duration:** From 16/07/2015 to 08/10/2015

**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  
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)

**Additional ways to feed in your views:** For further information please use the “Enquiries” contact details 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	7
Questionnaire	37
About you	38
Contact details/How to respond	39
Impact Assessment	41
Consultation principles	42

---



## Foreword

HM Courts & 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 justice system. One such decision relates to the courts and tribunals estate.

I am responsible for managing the operations of HM Courts & Tribunals Service in Wales, 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 Wales. 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 rural Wales – in, for example, Dolgellau and Holyhead.

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. It is vital we understand the demand for alternative provision as we plan services for the future.

I am keen to hear peoples' 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.

**Luigi Strinati**

**Delivery Director  
HM Courts & Tribunals Service Wales**

## Introduction

This consultation for Wales 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 a car tax disc 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 transportation of prisoners for bail hearings, or the police to take full days off their priority work to sit in a courtroom.

---

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



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, Dolgellau and Holyhead. 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 HM Courts & Tribunals Service 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 HM Courts & Tribunals Service 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) Cymru.

### **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.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

## The proposals

Having considered the estate in Wales against the principles set out in the 'Introduction' section, we recommend the closure of ten buildings in Wales. In addition, we are proposing to close Prestatyn Magistrates' Court\* but not the actual building, with a view to using it as a Civil, Family and Tribunal hearing centre.

We also propose to close one civil and family court jurisdiction that is not linked to a court building; and to confirm the Crown Court will no longer sit at two centres but to retain the buildings for civil, family and tribunals and magistrates' work. There are currently 42 buildings forming the courts and tribunals estate in Wales.

This includes Abergavenny Magistrates' Court and Caerphilly Magistrates' Court which were subject to a separate public consultation in June 2014. Closure of Abergavenny Magistrates' Court and Caerphilly Magistrates' Court was announced on 9 July 2015.

Also included is Rhyl County Court. This closure was announced in 2010 as part of Court Estate Reform Programme. If the proposed closure of Prestatyn Magistrates' Court is taken forward, the work would be moved to Llandudno Magistrates' Court and the Prestatyn Magistrates' building would be retained as a civil, family, and tribunals centre enabling work to be transferred from Rhyl and the building closed.

This consultation proposes the closure of the following 11 courts<sup>2</sup> and tribunals:

- Brecon Law Courts
- Bridgend Law Courts
- Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre
- Carmarthen Law Courts (The Guildhall)
- Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court
- Holyhead Magistrates' Court
- Llangefni Civil and Family Court
- Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court
- Pontypridd Magistrates' Court
- Prestatyn Magistrates' Court\*
- Wrexham Tribunal and Hearing Centre (Rhyd Broughton)

---

<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.

In addition, there are two integrations set out below.

### **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 majority of 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 majority of 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 Wales, 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.

The proposals in this paper also include that the Crown Court will no longer sit at the following two sites, the buildings of which would be retained for civil, family, tribunals and magistrates work:

- The Crown Court at Haverfordwest
- The Crown Court at Welshpool

In addition, we plan the closure of the County Court jurisdiction of Conwy and Colwyn Civil and Family Court. This is an administrative measure as the County Court does not sit here and has not done so for a number of years. The jurisdiction is administered by Rhyl County Court with hearings taking place at Llandudno Magistrates' Court.

### **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 proposed closures in this consultation the following integrations will be taking place in Wales:

**Caernarfon Civil and Family Court to be integrated within Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre**

As a result of this integration Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre would become a large, modern, multi-jurisdictional court building. The proximity of the site to the Civil and Family Court and the number of courtrooms (four more will be constructed to accommodate the re-location) will make the Justice Centre a suitable venue for work moved from the Civil and Family court.

**Swansea Crown Court (Guildhall) to be integrated within Swansea Crown Court (St Helen's)**

It is proposed to cease sitting the Crown Court at The Guildhall and to move the hearings to the main Crown Court building at St Helen's Road, Swansea, which is located across the road from the Guildhall site and provides four large hearing rooms and a good range of facilities for users.

We also recognise that there is a need to find a longer term solution in Cardiff where there are five court and tribunal buildings in use. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will continue to review the estate to assess how we can best meet the needs of the public in this area.

Copies of the consultation paper will be sent to stakeholders in the affected locations, and will also be available on the justice website at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj).

## **Brecon Law Courts**

### **Proposal**

Brecon Law Courts is one of three combined magistrates' and civil and family courts in the county of Powys and provides magistrates' court services for the Brecknock and Radnorshire Local Justice Areas (LJAs). Llandrindod Wells Justice Centre also forms part of the Brecknock and Radnorshire LJA. The other combined court is Welshpool, which serves the Montgomeryshire LJA.

Brecon Law Courts operates as a satellite court, or hearing venue, for work processed at Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court. It deals with a full range of magistrates' court criminal work and, with the exception of final hearings for multi-track trials and uncontested divorce work, a full range of civil and family court business.

It is proposed that Brecon Law Courts is closed and the criminal hearings transferred to Llandrindod Wells Law Courts, Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court and, for users living in the Ystradgynlais area, Swansea Magistrates' Court. Civil, family and tribunal hearings will be transferred to Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court. No enabling works would be required to accommodate this move.

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**

The present Brecon Law Courts was opened in 1994, and was refurbished in 2004 to provide additional accommodation for magistrates' court hearings moved from the former Brecon Magistrates' Court building.

Generally the accommodation is of a good standard and provides two magistrates' courtrooms, one county court courtroom, six secure cells, secure docks (in Courts One and Two) and two video link rooms. There are seven public consultation rooms. The public waiting area is too small to allow for the correct separation of victims, the accused and witnesses. Essential maintenance works are required including improvement of the building ventilation system, the repair of electrical systems and the renewal of a flat roof.

Llandrindod Wells Justice Centre is a modern, purpose built, court and tribunals facility. The Justice Centre was opened in 2012 and forms part of a civic hub in Llandrindod Wells as it is located adjacent to the Police Station and Fire Station. It has one courtroom with a secure dock and consultation rooms.

Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court is a large but under-utilised multi-jurisdictional court building. It has eight courtrooms, five for criminal work and three for civil, family and tribunals work (one further non-custodial courtroom will be created to accommodate the relocation of Pontypridd Magistrates' Court). Swansea Magistrates' Court is a large, modern court building with seven courtrooms. The court has a good range of facilities for court users. The court has capacity to accept more hearings and moving work to this office will improve its utilisation (the amount of hearing time used against the capacity of its courtrooms).

### Workload

The county court function at Brecon Law Courts sits only one day per week, and magistrates' court hearings take place on a maximum of three days per week.

For the financial year 2014/15, the court was utilised at approximately 16% capacity.

### Location

Brecon is 29 miles from Llandrindod Wells, 19 miles away from Merthyr Tydfil and 25 miles from Ystradgynlais. Ystradgynlais is 15 miles from Swansea. There are no practical rail links between any of the courts referred to (Merthyr to Llandrindod by rail via Cardiff takes between four and five hours one way).

On weekdays there is a regular bus service between Brecon, Merthyr Tydfil and Llandrindod Wells (the Stagecoach T4 service) and also between Ystradgynlais and Swansea (the NAT X63/64 service).

A journey by bus from Brecon to Merthyr Tydfil takes 35 minutes and a return ticket costs £5.30. A journey by bus from Ystradgynlais to Swansea takes approximately one hour 20 minutes and costs £6.40. A journey by bus from Brecon to Llandrindod Wells takes approximately one hour and costs £7.50.

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

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	61%	By Car	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	39%		30-60min	91%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	20%	By Public Transport	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	29%		30-60min	25%
	60-120min	9%		60-120min	14%
	>120min	4%		>120min	15%
	no data	37%		no data	37%

Civil workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	43%	By Car	0-30min	29%
	30-60min	45%		30-60min	71%
	60-120min	12%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	12%	By Public Transport	0-30min	14%
	30-60min	20%		30-60min	19%
	60-120min	23%		60-120min	8%
	>120min	6%		>120min	20%
	no data	39%		no data	39%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	71%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	29%		30-60min	100%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	20%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	33%		30-60min	24%
	60-120min	7%		60-120min	14%
	>120min	4%		>120min	26%
	no data	36%		no data	36%

**Staff implications**

One member of staff is based at Brecon Law Courts.

**Other information**

Operating costs in the financial year of 2014/15 were approximately £164,000.

Brecon Law Courts is a freehold building.



## **Bridgend Law Courts**

### **Proposal**

Bridgend Law Courts is a combined civil, family, tribunal and magistrates' court located in the county borough of Bridgend. Bridgend Law Courts deal with a full range of magistrates' court criminal work. With the exception of final hearings in multi-track cases and uncontested divorce work, it deals with a full range of civil business and family work.

It is proposed Bridgend Law Courts is closed and the civil, family and tribunals' work is transferred to Port Talbot Justice Centre, and the criminal work to Cardiff and the Vale Magistrates' Court. These are larger, more modern buildings offering flexible accommodation and good facilities to users. No enabling works would be required to accommodate this move.

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**

The present Bridgend Law Courts building was opened in 1970 and was refurbished in 2014. The refurbishment provided new flooring, a new roof, a new car park barrier and a replacement boiler. This work was necessary to maintain the building in a safe state for staff and users and to address security issues. However, maintenance work will be required over the next five years should the court not close, including a structural review of the premises.

Generally, the accommodation is of a good standard and in addition to five courtrooms it provides eight secure cells, two secure docks and a video link room. There are 12 interview rooms.

Port Talbot Justice Centre was constructed in 2011 and is a modern courts and tribunals building offering good facilities for court users. The Justice Centre is compliant with the Equality Act of 2010. The flexibility of use offered by the five courtrooms at Port Talbot Justice Centre will make the Justice Centre a suitable venue for civil, family and tribunals work from Bridgend Law Courts.

Cardiff and the Vale Magistrates' Court is a large, modern court building. The flexibility offered by twelve courtrooms and the presence of modern facilities makes Cardiff and the Vale Magistrates' Court a suitable venue for criminal work from Bridgend Law Courts.

### **Workload**

For the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 50% capacity.

### **Location**

Bridgend is 16 miles away from Port Talbot and 20 miles away from Cardiff.

There is a regular and frequent train service from Bridgend to both Port Talbot and Cardiff. A journey by train from Bridgend to Port Talbot takes approximately 15 minutes and a return ticket costs £4.70. A journey by train from Bridgend to Cardiff takes approximately 25 minutes and a return ticket costs £6.90.

On weekdays there is also a regular bus service between Bridgend and Port Talbot (the First X1 service). A journey by bus from Bridgend to Port Talbot takes approximately one hour and a return ticket costs £6.90.

On weekdays there is a regular and frequent bus service between Bridgend and Cardiff (the First X2 service). A journey by bus from Bridgend to Cardiff takes approximately one hour 10 minutes and a return ticket costs £6.90.

There are good public transport links between major population centres in the geographical region served by Bridgend Law Courts.

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

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	98%	By Car	0-30min	81%
	30-60min	2%		30-60min	19%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	38%	By Public Transport	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	59%		30-60min	56%
	60-120min	2%		60-120min	34%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	1%

Civil workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	98%	By Car	0-30min	80%
	30-60min	2%		30-60min	20%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	41%	By Public Transport	0-30min	8%
	30-60min	56%		30-60min	59%
	60-120min	2%		60-120min	32%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	1%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	94%	By Car	0-30min	79%
	30-60min	6%		30-60min	21%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	37%	By Public Transport	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	58%		30-60min	55%
	60-120min	4%		60-120min	35%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	2%		no data	2%

### Staff implications

There are 28 members of staff based at Bridgend Law Courts.

### Other information

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £347,000.

Bridgend Law Courts is a freehold building.

## **Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre**

### **Proposal**

Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre (Hill House) is one of three courts in the county of Carmarthenshire. There are two court buildings in the town of Carmarthen – Hill House accommodates the civil and family court, tribunal and probate sub-registry and the Guildhall houses the Crown Court, magistrates' court and family court.

The hearing centre deals with a full range of civil, family, tribunals and probate business with the exception of uncontested divorce work and final hearings in multi-track cases.

It is proposed that Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre is closed and the work transferred to Llanelli Civil and Family Court and Haverfordwest Law Courts and Aberystwyth Justice Centre. No enabling works are necessary to accommodate the move of work.

### **Accommodation**

The Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre was constructed in 2012. The accommodation is in a good condition and provides one courtroom, consultation rooms and waiting areas and is compliant with the Equality Act of 2010.

Llanelli Civil and Family Court is situated in a medium-sized, recently refurbished, multi-jurisdictional court building with five courtrooms. The court building is currently underused; moving business to Llanelli from Carmarthen will enable that court to be better utilised and will therefore provide better value for money for the taxpayer.

The court at Haverfordwest is a modern civil, family, tribunals and magistrates' court with five courtrooms. It has the capacity to accommodate work from Carmarthen without any enabling work.

The Justice Centre at Aberystwyth is located in a new, multi-jurisdictional court centre with four courtrooms. The centre is underused at present and there is room to accommodate hearings and work from Carmarthen without any enabling work.

### **Workload**

For the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 51% capacity.

### **Location**

Carmarthen is 17 miles away from Llanelli.

There is a regular train service from Carmarthen to Llanelli. A journey by train from Carmarthen to Llanelli takes approximately 30 minutes and a return ticket costs £9.20.

On weekdays there is a regular bus service between Carmarthen and Llanelli (the First 197 service). A journey by bus from Carmarthen to Llanelli takes approximately 50 minutes and a return ticket costs £6.70.

Carmarthen is 30 miles from Haverfordwest.

There is a regular but infrequent train service from Carmarthen to Haverfordwest. A journey by train from Carmarthen to Haverfordwest takes approximately 40 minutes and a return ticket costs £16.60.

A regular but infrequent bus service (the Silcox Coaches 322 service) links Carmarthen to Haverfordwest and costs £7.50 for a return ticket.

Carmarthen is 50 miles from Aberystwyth.

There is no practical rail link between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. Bus services link Carmarthen to Aberystwyth. Two bus journeys are necessary (using the T1 service) and the total journey time one way is approximately one hour and 30 minutes.

Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre serves a geographical area that is largely rural in character. Public transport links are good and regular local bus services link Carmarthen to local population centres. Carmarthen is linked to Llanelli and Swansea by the rail network.

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

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	52%	<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	5%
	<b>30-60min</b>	48%		<b>30-60min</b>	50%
	<b>60-120min</b>	0%		<b>60 - 120min</b>	45%
	<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>	19%	<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	0%
	<b>30-60min</b>	24%		<b>30-60min</b>	7%
	<b>60-120min</b>	16%		<b>60-120min</b>	43%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	13%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	17%
	<b>no data</b>	28%		<b>no data</b>	33%

### Staff implications

There are eight staff based at Carmarthen Civil, Family, Tribunal and Probate Hearing Centre.

### Other information

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £18,000.

The building is a leasehold building.

## **Carmarthen Law Courts (The Guildhall)**

### **Proposal**

Carmarthen Law Courts (The Guildhall) is one of three courts in the county of Carmarthenshire. There are two court buildings in the town of Carmarthen – The Guildhall houses the Crown Court and magistrates' court and family court, and the second site is at Hill House and accommodates the civil, family and tribunals and probate sub-registry.

The Law Courts deals with Crown and magistrates' court work. The court operates as a satellite, hearing venue of the Crown Court.

It is proposed that Carmarthen Law Courts is closed and Crown Court work be transferred to the Crown Court at Swansea. No enabling works would be required to accommodate this move. Carmarthen operates as a satellite hearing venue for magistrates' hearings from Llanelli and it is proposed these hearings would transfer to Llanelli.

### **Accommodation**

The Guildhall was built in 1777. Generally the accommodation is of a good standard and provides three courtrooms and one consultation room.

The building underwent a refurbishment in 2010/11. While the building is in good structural condition, it is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and the arrangement of the accommodation does not meet the needs of a modern business. There is inadequate separation of victims, witnesses and defendants, inadequate judicial and juror segregation, with poor facilities for witnesses and victims. Due to the absence at the site of a modern vehicle dock, prisoners are delivered to the building via the public pavement outside of the premises.

Maintenance work would be required should the court not close. Necessary work would include measures to stop water ingress into one courtroom and work to ensure compliance with the Equality Act of 2010.

It should be noted that, because the Guildhall is a Grade II listed building, listed buildings consent would be required before necessary structural work (required to modernise the building) could be undertaken.

Llanelli Law Courts is a medium-sized, recently refurbished, multi-jurisdictional court building. The court has five courtrooms and is currently underused; moving business to Llanelli from Carmarthen will enable that court to be more fully utilised.

Swansea Crown Court is a large Crown Court that provides four, multi-use courtrooms. Both courts are underused; moving Crown Court work into Swansea from Carmarthen will ensure that Swansea Crown Court is better utilised.

### **Workload**

For the financial year 2014/15 Carmarthen Law Courts (The Guildhall) was utilised at approximately 11% capacity.

## Location

Carmarthen is 27 miles from Swansea.

There is a regular train service from Carmarthen to Swansea. A journey by train from Carmarthen to Swansea takes 50 minutes and a return ticket costs £9.80.

On weekdays there is a regular bus service between Carmarthen and Swansea (the First X11 service from Llanelli to Swansea). A journey by bus from Carmarthen to Swansea takes one hour and 35 minutes and involves two bus journeys with a change of buses being made at Llanelli. A day ticket is the best value for such a journey and costs £7.00.

Carmarthen Law Courts serves a geographical area that is largely rural in character. Public transport links are good and regular local bus services link Carmarthen to local population centres. Carmarthen is linked to Swansea by the rail network.

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

Crown workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	27%	<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	39%
	<b>30-60min</b>	45%		<b>30-60min</b>	33%
	<b>60-120min</b>	28%		<b>60 - 120min</b>	20%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	8%
	<b>no data</b>	0%		<b>no data</b>	0%
<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	7%	<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	10%
	<b>30-60min</b>	18%		<b>30-60min</b>	21%
	<b>60-120min</b>	40%		<b>60-120min</b>	30%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	18%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	11%
	<b>no data</b>	17%		<b>no data</b>	27%

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	44%	<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	4%
	<b>30-60min</b>	53%		<b>30-60min</b>	53%
	<b>60-120min</b>	2%		<b>60 - 120min</b>	43%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%
	<b>no data</b>	0%		<b>no data</b>	0%

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Public Transport	0-30min	17%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	21%		30-60min	6%
	60-120min	25%		60-120min	40%
	>120min	13%		>120min	20%
	no data	25%		no data	34%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	24%	By Car	0-30min	40%
	30-60min	54%		30-60min	44%
	60-120min	22%		60 - 120min	16%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	9%	By Public Transport	0-30min	7%
	30-60min	17%		30-60min	25%
	60-120min	41%		60-120min	39%
	>120min	15%		>120min	9%
	no data	19%		no data	21%

### Staff implications

No staff are based at the Carmarthen Law Courts.

### Other information

The operating costs for the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £160,000.

The Guildhall is a freehold building.



## **Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court is one of three court buildings in the county of Gwynedd.

The magistrates' court deals with a full range of criminal court business. The court is a satellite, or hearing venue, of Caernarfon Magistrates' Court for magistrates' court work and of the Crown Court at Caernarfon for Crown Court business. Although the court is formally designated as a Crown Court, the Crown Court has not sat in Dolgellau since before 2007.

It is proposed that Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court is closed and hearings transferred to Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre. No enabling work will be required at Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre to accommodate this move. Future consideration will be given to relocating work originating from the south of the Dolgellau catchment area to Aberystwyth Justice Centre.

We understand these proposals could result in some users having longer journeys when travelling to the courts and tribunals. 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 this court.

Due to the nature of the rural areas of Wales, 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**

The present Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court building was built in 1825.

Generally the accommodation is of an unsatisfactory standard for a modern business and provides one courtroom, limited consultation rooms and a small waiting area. There is inadequate separation of victims, witnesses and defendants and because of the absence at the site of a modern vehicle dock, prisoners are delivered to the building via the public pavement outside of the premises.

Maintenance works will be required should the court not close which includes the replacement of toilets, provision of a new access control system, replacement of parts of the building fire alarm and panic alarm systems, upgrading of the court CCTV system and work to ensure compliance with the Equality Act of 2010.

It should be noted that, because the court building is a Grade II listed building, listed buildings consent would be required before necessary structural work (required to modernise the building) could be undertaken.

Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre will become a large, modern, multi-jurisdictional court building. The number of courtrooms (four more will be constructed to accommodate the relocation of Caernarfon Civil and Family Court) and available capacity will make the Justice Centre a suitable venue for work moved from the Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates’ Court.

Aberystwyth Justice Centre is a new court building that provides good facilities. A future plan to consider moving hearings here for those parties who live south of Dolgellau would also make sure this building was better utilised and reduce travel times for those users.

**Workload**

For the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 14% capacity.

**Location**

Dolgellau is 43 miles from Caernarfon. A regular bus service (the T2 service provided by Express Motors) links Dolgellau to Caernarfon but the service is infrequent. A bus travels the route at a frequency that varies from once every two hours to once every four hours and the journey takes approximately two hours. Depending on the time of day the journey is made, it is sometimes necessary to change buses to allow the journey to be completed. The cost of a return journey from Dolgellau to Caernarfon is £6.00. It is not possible to travel from Dolgellau to Caernarfon by rail.

Dolgellau is 34 miles from Aberystwyth, the journey by car takes one hour. Regular bus services (the Lloyds Coaches X28 or the Express Motors T2 service) link Dolgellau to Aberystwyth. The journey takes approximately one hour 15 minutes and cost around £6.00.

The train network local to Dolgellau can be accessed at Barmouth. However, trains are infrequent and a train journey from Barmouth to Aberystwyth takes three hours.

Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates’ Court serves a geographical area that is largely rural in character.

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

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	19%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	54%		30-60min	15%
	60-120min	27%		60 - 120min	39%
	>120min	0%		>120min	46%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	7%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	27%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	44%		60-120min	14%
	>120min	3%		>120min	19%
	no data	19%		no data	67%

**Staff implications**

No staff are based at Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court.

**Other information**

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £56,000.

Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates' Court is a freehold building.

## **Holyhead Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Holyhead Magistrates' Court is one of two courts located on Anglesey. The court provides a full range of magistrates' court services.

It is proposed that Holyhead Magistrates' Court is closed and the work transferred to Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre. Enabling works are not required at Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre to accommodate this move.

Generally the accommodation is of a poor standard and is not compliant with the Equality Act of 2010. The cost of work necessary to maintain the structure of the court building and improve facilities is likely to represent poor value for money for the taxpayer given the current limited use of the court.

We understand these proposals could result in some users having longer journeys when travelling to the courts and tribunals. 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 this court.

Due to the nature of the rural areas of Wales, 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.

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**

Holyhead Magistrates' Court has two courtrooms, a witness video link room and limited consultation rooms. However, the accommodation at the building is generally poor. There is inadequate separation of victims, witnesses and defendants. Maintenance is required to repair a leak in a flat roof surface, re-plaster all internal walls, replace all floor coverings, replace heat emitters and redecorate the public areas of the court.

It should be noted that Holyhead Town Council regards the court building as an important building within the Holyhead Conservation Area. Therefore, planning permission would be required for any works that markedly altered the appearance or structure of the court building.

Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre will become a large, modern, multi-jurisdictional court building. The number of courtrooms (four more will be constructed to accommodate the relocation of Caernarfon Civil and Family Court) and available capacity will make the Justice Centre a suitable venue for work moved from Holyhead Magistrates' Court.

### **Workload**

For the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 20% capacity.

## Location

Holyhead is located on the North West coast of Anglesey.

Holyhead is 29 miles away from Caernarfon and the journey takes approximately 35 minutes by car. Regular bus services (the Arriva 4/4A/X4 and 05/X5/5C/5S services) link Holyhead to Caernarfon via Bangor. The bus journey from Holyhead to Caernarfon takes approximately 2 hours 10 minutes including the change at Bangor. The cost of a return ticket from Holyhead to Caernarfon is £5.00.

An alternative means of getting from Holyhead to Caernarfon by public transport is to catch a train from Holyhead to Bangor and then to take the bus from Bangor to Caernarfon. A journey from Holyhead to Caernarfon by train and bus takes approximately one hour 33 minutes and costs £14.70.

Currently, exceptions to the ability to attend court at a particular time may be considered on representations made on a case-by-case basis and may be addressed through the listing processes.

Anglesey is of largely rural character although there is also an industrial aspect to the area. Holyhead is the largest population centre on Anglesey.

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

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	75%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	25%		30-60min	100%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	46%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	24%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	17%		60-120min	79%
	>120min	4%		>120min	11%
	no data	10%		no data	10%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	75%	By Car	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	25%		30-60min	100%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	46%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	24%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	17%		60-120min	79%
	>120min	4%		>120min	11%
	no data	10%		no data	10%

**Staff implications**

No staff are based at Holyhead Magistrates' Court.

**Other information**

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £84,000.

Holyhead Magistrates' Court is a freehold building.

## **Llangefni Civil and Family Court**

### **Proposal**

Llangefni Civil and Family Court is one of two courts located on Anglesey.

The court provides tribunal hearings and a full range of civil and family court services with the exception of uncontested divorce work. In addition, final hearings in multi-track cases take place at Wrexham Civil and Family Court.

The accommodation is in a poor state of repair, and the cost of work necessary to maintain the structure of the court building and improve facilities is likely to represent poor value for money for the taxpayer given the current limited use of the court.

It is proposed that Llangefni Civil and Family Court is closed and to move the work to Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre. Some enabling works will be required at Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre to accommodate this move.

Llangefni Magistrates' and County Courts were considered for closure in 2010. The proposal was to close Llangefni County Court and temporarily relocate to Llangefni Magistrates' Court until Holyhead Magistrates' Court could be refurbished to house all three courts. However, due to lack of funding, in both the short and medium term, it was proposed to retain Llangefni County Court and that was announced in the CERP 2010 response.

The court continues to be under utilised and despite now also housing tribunal hearings is not open every day. There are significant backlog maintenance issues, there are no staff based at the court and it operates as a satellite of Caernarfon Civil and Family Court. Retaining the site does not represent value for money to the taxpayer. Our proposal is to relocate Llangefni Civil Court to Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre which will provide improved, modern, Equality Act 2010 compliant facilities for our users.

### **Accommodation**

Llangefni Civil and Family Court is a Grade II listed building and was constructed in the 1860s. The building provides one courtroom, one judicial chamber and a limited number of consultation rooms.

There is a ramp for disabled access at the front entrance but in other respects the building is not compliant with the Equality Act of 2010. Maintenance work is needed over the next five years should the court not close. Necessary work includes repair of the roof to replace lead flashing, renewal of parts of the flat roof, replacement of guttering and rainwater pipes, re-plastering of the internal walls, replacing floor coverings damaged as a result of water ingress, replacement of suspended ceilings in parts of the building, the replacement of toilets and of a kitchen, improvements to air conditioning systems and the installation of CCTV systems to cover the outside of the building.

Caernarfon Criminal Justice Centre will become a large, modern, multi-jurisdictional court building. The number of courtrooms (four more will be constructed to accommodate the relocation of Caernarfon Civil and Family Court) and available capacity will make the Justice Centre a suitable venue for work relocated from Llangefni Civil and Family Court.

### Workload

For the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 31% capacity.

### Location

Llangefni is located in the central, eastern part of Anglesey. Llangefni is 16 miles away from Caernarfon and the journey by car takes approximately 20 minutes.

There is a regular bus service (the Arriva 4/4A/X4 and 05/X5/5C/5S services) from Llangefni to Caernarfon via Bangor. The journey from Llangefni to Caernarfon takes approximately one hour 15 minutes. The cost of a return ticket from Llangefni to Caernarfon via Bangor is £5.00.

The nearest train station to Llangefni is at Llanfairpwllgwyngyll. Trains run from Llanfairpwllgwyngyll to Bangor on a regular but infrequent basis and a bus service then links Bangor to Caernarfon. A journey from Llangefni to Caernarfon by bus and rail would take between approximately one hour 15 minutes and one hour 40 minutes and cost £8.10.

Anglesey is of largely rural character although there is also an industrial aspect to the area.

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

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	87%	By Car	0-30min	39%
	30-60min	13%		30-60min	61%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	15%	By Public Transport	0-30min	9%
	30-60min	43%		30-60min	21%
	60-120min	33%		60-120min	58%
	>120min	2%		>120min	5%
	no data	7%		no data	7%

### Staff implications

No staff are based at Llangefni Civil and Family Court.

### Other information

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £115,000.

Llangefni Civil and Family Court is a freehold building.



## **Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court**

### **Proposal**

Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court is at present the only civil and family court in the county of Neath Port Talbot, although Port Talbot Justice Centre is used as a satellite hearing venue located in the same county.

The court provides tribunal hearings and a full range of civil and family court services with the exception of adoption work. In addition, final hearings in multi-track cases take place at Swansea Civil Justice Centre. Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court is the centralised administrative divorce centre for West Wales.

Utilisation levels at the court are low and it is near to the Justice Centre in Port Talbot. It is therefore proposed that Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court is closed and the work transfers to Port Talbot Justice Centre. No enabling works would be required to accommodate this move.

### **Accommodation**

The Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court building was constructed in 1993. The accommodation is in an adequate condition and provides three courtrooms, seven interview rooms, baby-changing facilities and a children's room.

Essential maintenance work will be required over the next five years to maintain the good state of the building. This work includes the maintenance of external cladding, the overhaul of guttering and down pipes, and renewal of the site vehicle access barrier.

Port Talbot Justice Centre is a recently constructed, modern courts and tribunals building offering good facilities for court users. The Justice Centre is compliant with the Equality Act of 2010. There are five courtrooms at Port Talbot Justice Centre; sufficient to accommodate work moved from Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court.

### **Workload**

For the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 42% capacity.

### **Location**

The town of Neath is located northeast of the city of Swansea and north of the town of Port Talbot.

Neath is nine miles away from Port Talbot Justice Centre and the journey by car takes approximately 15 minutes.

There is a rail link between Neath and Port Talbot. Services are regular and frequent. The journey takes approximately five minutes and a return ticket costs £3.00.

There are regular and frequent bus services from Neath to Port Talbot (The First 226, 900 and X4 services). A journey to Port Talbot from Neath takes approximately 50 minutes and a return ticket costs £5.00 (using the Swansea Bay Day Ticket).

The county of Neath Port Talbot has both a rural and an industrial, urban aspect.

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

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	81%	<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	82%
	<b>30-60min</b>	19%		<b>30-60min</b>	18%
	<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>	43%	<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	22%
	<b>30-60min</b>	33%		<b>30-60min</b>	51%
	<b>60-120min</b>	21%		<b>60-120min</b>	21%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	1%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	5%
	<b>no data</b>	2%		<b>no data</b>	1%

### Staff implications

There are 10 staff based at Neath Port Talbot Civil and Family Court.

### Other information

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £276,000.

Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court is a freehold building.

## **Pontypridd Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Pontypridd Magistrates' Court is one of two courts located in Rhondda Cynon Taff and is the only magistrates' court in the county. The court provides a full range of magistrates' criminal court services.

It is proposed that Pontypridd Magistrates' Court is closed and work transferred to Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court. This is a larger, more modern building offering flexible accommodation and good facilities to users. Some enabling works will be required at Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court to accommodate this move.

### **Accommodation**

The Pontypridd Magistrates' Court building was constructed in 1977. The accommodation provides three courtrooms, eight consultation rooms, a dedicated witness centre with its own entrance, a modern cell complex, onsite parking and a parking compound for the use of staff and judiciary. The building is compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The cost of work necessary to maintain the building and the low utilisation represents poor value for money for the taxpayer.

Although the building has recently been refurbished to include the construction of a new roof, windows, air-handling system and toilets, essential maintenance works are still required over the next five years should the court not close. Necessary work includes replacement of floor-coverings throughout the building, work on the drainage system, replacement of the air-conditioning system in the first floor communications room, refurbishment of the lift, improvements to the cell area ventilation system and improvements to the basement air ventilation ducting.

Merthyr Tydfil Combined Court is a large but under-utilised multi-jurisdictional court building. It has eight courtrooms, five for criminal work and three for civil, family and tribunals work.

### **Workload**

In the financial year 2014/15 the court was utilised at approximately 43% capacity.

### **Location**

Pontypridd is located in the south eastern part of the county of Rhondda Cynon Taff. It is the main administrative centre of the county.

Pontypridd is 12 miles from Merthyr Tydfil and a journey takes approximately 20 minutes by car. Regular bus services link Pontypridd to Merthyr Tydfil (Stagecoach T4 and x78 services). A journey by bus from Pontypridd to Merthyr Tydfil takes approximately 30 minutes and the cost of a return ticket is £5.80.

There is a rail link between Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil. Trains travel between the towns every half an hour. The journey takes approximately 35 minutes and a return ticket costs £3.70.

Rhondda Cynon Taff has both a rural and an industrial aspect.

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	78%
	30-60min	11%		30-60min	22%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	24%	By Public Transport	0-30min	15%
	30-60min	55%		30-60min	41%
	60-120min	21%		60-120min	44%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	89%	By Car	0-30min	88%
	30-60min	11%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	16%	By Public Transport	0-30min	23%
	30-60min	55%		30-60min	57%
	60-120min	28%		60-120min	20%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

### Staff implications

There are 14 staff based at Pontypridd Magistrates' Court.

### Other information

Operating costs in the financial year 2014/15 were approximately £250,000.

Pontypridd Magistrates' Court is a freehold building.

## **Prestatyn Magistrates' Court**

### **Proposal**

Prestatyn Magistrates' Court is the only magistrates' court in the county of Denbighshire. The court provides a full range of magistrates' criminal and family court services and also hears tribunals cases.

It is proposed that Prestatyn Magistrates' Court is closed and enabling work is undertaken to adapt Prestatyn from a criminal venue to a civil, family and tribunals' venue. The enabling works would allow the transfer of civil, family and tribunals work from Rhyl Civil and Family Court to Prestatyn. Prestatyn Magistrates' Court work would move to Llandudno Magistrates' Court where no enabling work would be required.

The closure of Rhyl Civil and Family Court was agreed under the 2010 Court Estate Reform Programme. As a result, civil, family and tribunals' court business will be moved to the building presently occupied by Prestatyn Magistrates' Court.

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**

Prestatyn Magistrates' Court provides three criminal courtrooms and one hearing room, interview rooms, video link facilities and free onsite parking. The building is partially compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Although the entrance and foyer area was refurbished in 2012 maintenance works are required over the next five years. Necessary work includes general upkeep of the external fabric of the court, the repair of internal walls damaged by water ingress, the phased replacement of floor coverings, the replacement of internal doors throughout the building, the phased re-decoration of the interior of the court, the phased replacement of sanitary ware and the renewal of electrical distribution boards.

Llandudno Magistrates' Court is a modern court building providing three courtrooms, interview rooms, and a good range of facilities for court users. The building is compliant with the Equality Act of 2010.

### **Workload**

In the financial year 2014/15 Prestatyn Magistrates' Court was utilised at approximately 30% capacity.

### **Location**

Prestatyn is located 24 miles away from Llandudno. The journey by car from Prestatyn to Llandudno takes approximately 40 minutes.

Prestatyn is on the North Wales Coast railway line and links to Llandudno via Llandudno Junction. The journey by train from Prestatyn to Llandudno takes approximately 35 minutes and the cost of a return ticket is £9.40.

A bus service (the Arriva number 13 service) links Prestatyn to Llandudno. A journey from Prestatyn to Llandudno takes approximately one hour 30 minutes and a return ticket costs £5.00 (Wales Day Adult).

Denbighshire is rural in character and the local economy is based mainly on agriculture and tourism.

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

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	87%	<b>By Car</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	24%
	<b>30-60min</b>	13%		<b>30-60min</b>	76%
	<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>	32%	<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	0%
	<b>30-60min</b>	47%		<b>30-60min</b>	33%
	<b>60-120min</b>	19%		<b>60-120min</b>	63%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	3%
	<b>no data</b>	2%		<b>no data</b>	2%

### Staff implications

No staff are based at Prestatyn Magistrates' Court.

### Other information

As this building will be retained, it is likely that annual operating costs will remain similar to present levels of approximately £168,000.

Prestatyn Magistrates' Court is a freehold building.

## **Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton)**

### **Proposal**

Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton) accommodates Social Security and Child Support tribunal appeal hearings.

The accommodation at Rhyd Broughton is unsatisfactory for a building that is part of a modern courts and tribunals estate. Investing in the necessary improvement and repair work would represent poor value of money for the taxpayer, particularly in view of the reduced utilisation of the site.

It is proposed that the venue at Rhyd Broughton is closed and the work transferred to Wrexham Law Courts and to Mold Law Courts. No enabling work would be required to accommodate this move.

### **Accommodation**

The Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton) building is owned by the Department of Work and Pensions and leased to HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

The tribunal consists of three hearing rooms, one medical room and one judicial retiring room, the waiting areas for which are small. Although the accommodation is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, the facilities available within the building are poor. There are no video link facilities for users.

There is a need to improve security arrangements at the tribunal. Staff and judiciary cannot access the court other than via public areas and the entrances to some courtrooms cannot be observed by staff or security guards.

Wrexham Law Courts is a modern court building, providing a good level of facilities to court and tribunals' users. The court has six courtrooms and the capacity to accommodate work moved from Wrexham (Rhyd Broughton) and is located in the centre of the town.

Mold Law Courts has seven courtrooms and is a modern, multi-jurisdictional court building providing a good level of facilities for users.

### **Workload**

During the 2014/15 financial year, Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton) was utilised at approximately 12% capacity.

### **Location**

Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton) is two miles from Wrexham Law Courts building at Bodhyfryd, Wrexham. The court at Bodhyfryd is more centrally located than the Rhyd Broughton site.

Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton) is 11 miles from Mold Law Courts and a journey by car takes approximately 25 minutes.

There is no rail link between Wrexham and Mold.

A regular bus service (the Townlynx 28 service) links Wrexham to Mold. Buses run between 08:00 and 17:22 (from Wrexham to Mold) and the journey takes approximately 45 minutes. For most of the day, the service is hourly though there are periods when a user would have to wait longer than one hour for a bus. The cost of a return ticket from Wrexham to Mold is £3.70.

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

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	22%	By Car	0-30min	22%
	30-60min	33%		30-60min	33%
	60-120min	40%		60 - 120min	40%
	>120min	4%		>120min	4%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	7%	By Public Transport	0-30min	7%
	30-60min	14%		30-60min	14%
	60-120min	27%		60-120min	27%
	>120min	39%		>120min	39%
	no data	13%		no data	13%

### Staff implications

No staff are based at Rhyd Broughton.

### Other information

The operating costs of the tribunal during the 2014/15 financial year were approximately £195,000.

Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton) is a leasehold building.



## 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**

**Tel: 0161 240 5021**

**Fax: 0870 761 7768**

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>



© Crown copyright 2015  
Produced by the Ministry of Justice

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

**Alternative format version of this report are available on  
request [estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)**