

Item No. 10

**Berwickshire Area Forum**

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# **Briefing on Scottish Court Service (SCS) Proposals for Court Reform**

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# **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF DUNS SHERIFF AND JP COURTS**

## **Background to the Proposals:-**

- Best use of Government money
- New and imaginative ways to deliver service
- Opportunities for sharing facilities
- Access to Justice Principles
- Consultation closes on 21 December 2012

## **The SCS Proposals**

- Closure of the Sheriff and Justice of the Peace courts in Duns
- Business transferred to Jedburgh
- Haddington also set for closure
- Achieved during 2013/14
- Potential removal of Sheriff and Jury business from Border Courts
- 16 Sheriff Courts will routinely deal with such (none in the Borders)
- Creation of Summary Sheriffs
- Centres of Shrieval specialism
- Progressive introduction over ten years
- Low volume of business at Duns
- Duns:- There are no cells or interview facilities

## **SBC Key Concerns**

- Greater travel distances for all concerned:
  - Witnesses, Accused, Pursuers, Defenders, Solicitors, vulnerable persons, other agencies+
- Fair access to justice denied
- Access to justice more difficult
- Economic impact on affected towns
- SCS savings v. impact on the Borders
- SCS misrepresent true picture at Duns
- Exploration of alternatives
- Minimal SCS savings – Disproportionate impact

## **Sheriff Court Boundary Issues – suggested by SCS**

- East coast residents to Edinburgh instead of Jedburgh?