

Item No. 9

Tweeddale Area Forum

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

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Background to the Proposals:-

- Best use of Government money
- New and imaginative ways to deliver service
- Opportunities for sharing facilities
- Principles for provision of Access to Justice
- Consultation closes on 21 December 2012
- Selkirk Sheriff Court has been saved from closure

The Proposals

- High Court sitting changes
- Potential removal of Sheriff and Jury business from Border Courts
- 16 Sheriff Courts will routinely deal with such
- Creation of Summary Sheriffs
- Centres of Shrieval specialism
- Progressive introduction over ten years
- Closure of the Sheriff and Justice of the Peace courts in Peebles and Duns
- Business transferred to Edinburgh and Jedburgh
- Archived during 2013/14
- Haddington also set for closure
- Low volume of business at Peebles and Duns
- Duns:- There are no cells or interview facilities
- Peebles: - Custodies and witness provision is poor;
- *'Blueprint for Scotland'* – former Deputy First Minister

The Issues

- Greater travel distances for all concerned:
- Witnesses, Accused, Pursuers, Defenders, Solicitors, other agencies+
- Fair access to justice
- Access to justice more difficult
- Economic impact on affected towns
- SCS savings v. impact on the Borders
- Exploration of alternatives

Sheriff Court Boundary Issues

- East coast residents to Edinburgh instead of Jedburgh? SCS comment.
- Selkirk instead of Edinburgh – an alternative if Peebles cannot be saved.