CONSULTATION
Did you take part in the consultation exercise which preceded the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?
1. Aberdeenshire Council did not submit a response to the formal consultation exercise but some of the solicitors from the Council's Legal & Governance Service attended a stakeholder event on the Bill in May 2013 in Aberdeen to discuss the proposed changes with the Scottish Government's Bill Team.

Do you believe your comments on the financial assumption have been accurately reflected in the FM?
2. N/A

Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise.
3. Yes

COSTS
If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.
4. Paragraph 16 of the Financial Memorandum provides that it is not expected that local authorities will incur any additional costs, suggesting instead they might make some savings as a result of the Bill. Taking this into account, it is not anticipated by the Legal & Governance Service that the Bill will have any financial implications on Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire Council already utilises video conferencing technology for court hearings at Banff and Peterhead Sheriff Courts which saves our solicitors time and ultimately saves the Council money rather than solicitors having to travel to and from court for court appearances. Aberdeenshire Council note that the Bill is intended to increase the use of information technology and this would be welcomed by the Council to increase savings. However our Social Work colleagues advise that initially the Criminal Justice Social Work Services will require to cover summary criminal courts and the initial stages of solemn cases which may lead to an additional demand on the service, however, as the new structure becomes established, competing demands with existing court duty commitments should become more balanced.

Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?
5. The estimated costs appear to be reasonable and accurate.
If relevant, are you content that your organisation can meet the financial costs associated with the Bill which it will incur? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?
6. The Financial Memorandum states that it is not expected that local authorities will incur any additional costs. Our Social Work colleagues advise that the initial ‘cost’ will relate to competing and increased demands on the CJSW Court Duty Service, however, as the structures are established, these demands should balance out.

Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the estimates and the timescales over which such costs would be expected to arise?
7. The FM appears to accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the estimates and the timescales over which such costs would be expected to arise.

WIDER ISSUES
Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures costs associated with the Bill?
If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?
8. The FM appears to reasonably capture the costs associated with the Bill.

Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?
9. There may be future costs associated with the Bill through subordinate legislation but it is difficult for Aberdeenshire Council to quantify these costs. Our Social Work colleagues advise that it may be that given the lower fees which agents may claim with regard to ongoing court work, cases are concluded sooner and people sentenced within a more reasonable and effective timescale between offence and disposal. This should contribute to a reduction in criminal court business which has additional savings, both financial and in terms of time.