Justice Committee

Scottish Court Service recommendations for a future court structure in Scotland

Written submission from Kathy Humphry

It is impossible to understand the financial reason for closing Haddington Sheriff Court.

It is an integral part of East Lothian welfare system with East Lothian Council, Police Dept, Procurator Fiscal and Citizens Advice Bureau all within 150 metres. This makes all sorts of "joined up" services possible. If the court moves to Edinburgh all of this will be lost. For example Citizens Advice in Edinburgh do not represent or support people in the court who do not live within the Edinburgh area. In addition people will find it harder possibly impossible to use witnesses who can't or won't travel to Edinburgh.

I believe the decision to close is based on the expense of keeping it open. However it would appear that it might be MORE expensive to close a facility that is near to where it is needed and at the moment can call on the local services (some of which takes the form of voluntary and free services).

The council have expressed an interest in helping financially to upkeep the premises whilst it is being used for the courts. If the court is closed then the buildings will still need up-keep and who would pay for that? It is possible to try and sell the buildings but not obvious that anyone would buy them.

I beg you to reconsider the decision in the light of all the consultation responses that you have received from East Lothian.

Please could you send me a summary (that I can understand) of the exact financial gains that are to be made if the closure were to go forward.

Kathy Humphry
13 May 2013