Justice Committee

Scottish Court Service recommendations for a future court structure in Scotland

Written submission from East Lothian Council

Haddington Sheriff Court

We attach a copy of a letter we have today sent to Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, to urge him to reconsider his acceptance of the Scottish Court Service’s recommendation to close Haddington Sheriff Court.

For the reasons given in the letter, we hope East Lothian Council can count on your support in this matter.

We understand that the Scottish Ministers will put Scottish Government decisions on this matter into effect through an Order to be laid in Parliament under negative procedure. If the Scottish Government does not reject the recommendation to close Haddington Sheriff Court, we hope we can rely on you to oppose the Order in the Scottish Parliament.

Councillor Ludovic Broun-Lindsay
Provost

Councillor Jim Gillies
Depute Provost

24 April 2013

Letter to Kenny MacAskill MSP

We write as Provost and Depute Provost of East Lothian Council and as concerned East Lothian-born residents, about the Scottish Court Service recommendation to close Haddington Sheriff Court. As you know, the Council is opposed to the closure.

We support the letter which the Leader of the council sent to you and while we understand that you have made your decision in principle, there are a number of points that we would add to those raised in his letter and they are:

- Inconvenience for the public to travel into Edinburgh
- The cost of travel
- The likelihood that cases would not be heard and the public having to return to the court thereby incurring further costs

There has been a vast protect on this issue and we thing that democracy has been overlooked in this instance. Further, given that more people are living and moving into East Lothian, we are convinced that there is a need for a justice system to be in Haddington.

We hope you can acknowledge and respond to these concerns. We would urge you not to progress with the recommendation to close Haddington Sheriff Court.
We are copying this letter to:

- Constituency members Iain Gray MSP and Colin Beattie MSP;
- Minister for Local Government and Planning Derek Mackay MSP;
- South of Scotland list MSPs;
- Members of the Scottish Parliament’s Justice Committee; and
- Members of the Scottish Parliament Subordinate Legislation Committee.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Councillor Ludovic Broun-Lindsay  Councillor Jim Gillies
Provost Depute Provost

24 April 2013