Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to the Convener

Court Closures – Video Links

At the evidence session about the Scottish Court Service’s (SCS) report “Shaping Scotland’s Court Services” on 4 June you requested details of where video links will be placed prior to any court closures.

The SCS has a well-established video technology infrastructure in place across courts and already operates a network of over twenty remote (non-court based) video link facilities throughout Scotland. Within the Scottish Government Making Justice Work Enabling Technologies Project the SCS is already working with Scottish Government and other agencies to make best use of video technology - the set-up of video link facilities in the vicinity of courts which are proposed for closure will build on those foundations.

SCS will work locally with Justice partners, Local Authorities and voluntary organisations making sure that video technology is in place prior to the closure of that court. The first phase of closures take place in November 2013 and this includes the Sheriff Courts in Dornoch, Kirkcudbright and Rothesay and implementation of video technologies in these areas will be prioritised if the Orders are passed by Parliament.

I hope that the Committee members find this information useful and SCS will be happy to provide an update to the Committee as implementation progresses.

Kenny MacAskill MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Justice
6 June 2013