Points of Clarification Arising from the Meeting of the Justice Committee on 21 May 2013

Thank you for your contribution to yesterday’s Justice Committee meeting.

The Committee had some further questions for the Scottish Court Service (SCS) that, due to time constraints, Members were unable to cover during your oral evidence or came to light during evidence heard later from other witnesses.

I would be grateful if you could respond to the questions below.


Please confirm whether account was taken of the variation in the number of vulnerable witness orders taken by Arbroath and Forfar sheriff courts in making these proposals?

What discussions have taken place with the police over shared accommodation in Stonehaven and elsewhere where a court earmarked for closure shares premises with the police?

Please provide any information you are able to share regarding feasibility studies on justice centres in the Borders and elsewhere, particularly whether the feasibility studies include plans for further court closures. Recommendation 2 of Shaping Scotland’s Court Services appears to suggest that other rural courts would still hold summary business. Please confirm whether this is the SCS’s position.

Please confirm whether the SCS has undertaken economic impact assessments of its proposals in the localities where courts are proposed to be closed.

Please confirm whether the SCS has obtained information on the impacts, including costs, on the police of officers attending court as witnesses and whether this will increase as a result of the SCS’s proposals? Please expand on the points, made in paragraph 1.20 of its report[1], on police officers attending court and on how the recommendations will facilitate police spending less time populating court waiting rooms.

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[1] Shaping Scotland’s Court Services, April 2013
To inform the Committee’s consideration of these proposals, I would welcome a reply by Wednesday 29 May.

Christine Grahame MSP
Convener, Justice Committee
22 May 2013