



LORD CHIEF JUSTICE
OF ENGLAND AND WALES

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD JUDGE

The Right Honourable Kenneth Clarke QC MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
The Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
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21 October 2010

Dear

The current financial climate means that every single opportunity to find savings must be considered. It is equally clear that a number of courts in different parts of England and Wales no longer serve any sufficiently valuable public service. Some courts are under used, others are situated very close to each other, and yet others are in a poor state of repair and, to coin a phrase, unfit for purpose.

My response is not intended to be an all encompassing “judicial” response. It simply reflects the analysis made of the responses to the consultation process which have been sent to me. As you will see, it is clear on the evidence that there are a number of cases where the case for closure is plain and clear, others where it is not, and yet others where the evidence on which the case for closure has been based has been called into question in a way which appears to be reasonable and which fairly calls the evidence in support of closure into question. This relates in particular to travel times. In yet other cases what is called into question is not so much the principle of closure, but whether a more satisfactory alternative may be available.

In the end, of course, I recognise that you are responsible for weighing up the public advantage in keeping any court open at a time of financial crisis. I merely add, as you well understand, that the value of the provision of any individual court to its local community cannot be measured in and is certainly not confined to the figures on a balance sheet.

The Rt Hon The Lord Judge
Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales