

The Right Honourable
Lord Justice May

Chief Executive's Department
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Dear Lord Justice

Leeds – a prime location for the Administrative Court

I understand that you are visiting Leeds to consider how High Court Judges should be deployed outside London and, more specifically, whether the Administrative Court should operate from Leeds.

On behalf of Leeds City Council I would like to take this opportunity to offer my wholehearted support for this proposal. I believe that Leeds would be a most cost effective and efficient location for the Administrative Court. Local issues should be heard by local courts, where the context is better understood. Also, the burden on the taxpayer would be reduced if hearings were held locally, rather than in London.

An Administrative Court in Leeds would be ideally placed to serve the Yorkshire and Humber region and the North East region, and the major cities within those regions, including Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, York, Hull, Sunderland and Newcastle. Leeds' position at the crossroads of the M1/A1M (north-south) and the M62 (east-west) gives swift and easy access to these cities and regions, and there are also frequent and direct rail services to those locations.

The appearance of the Administrative Court in Leeds would serve to enhance the status and standing of Leeds as the leading financial and legal services centre in the north of England.

The importance of Leeds as a legal centre is acknowledged by the industry. On 14 September 2006, *The Law Gazette* stated: "Leeds is host to the largest and arguably the most competitive UK legal market outside London". *Legal Week* endorsed this on 28th September 2006 when it described Leeds as "probably the most mature of England's major regional markets".

This expertise and competitiveness is not confined to the private sector and I can testify to the knowledge, skills and dedication of the legal staff employed by the City Council and by other public sector bodies in Leeds.

Leeds already has a modern courts infrastructure, including the Magistrates Court, the Combined Courts Centre and the Commercial Court. Sittings of the Administrative Court could, I understand, be comfortably accommodated within those buildings. Alternatively, there is a wealth of new and refurbished buildings available in the legal and financial quarter of the city, should it be appropriate for the Administrative Court to have a permanent presence in Leeds.

Finally, I understand that the Administrative Court deals with certain immigration appeals. The Yorkshire and Humber Region, and the North East Region, are large gateways for immigration and have large ethnic minority populations. The Immigration Court at Bradford is often overrun with work, and the presence of the Administration Court in Leeds would allow work to be reallocated without prejudicing local applicants.

These are just some of the advantages to be had by operating the Administrative Court in Leeds. The enclosed document contains further evidence on the benefits of a Leeds location and the strength of the Legal Sector in Leeds, and I would urge you to take this evidence into account when making your decision.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Rogerson
Chief Executive