

Chorley Magistrates Closures Objection

We have today received notification from HM Courts and Tribunals Services that the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, David Gauke MP is closing Chorley Magistrates Court together with six other courts in England. This follows public consultation about the future on HM Courts and Tribunal Services estate, to which we responded to object to in March 2018.

For Chorley this means a reallocation of a local service to Preston courts.

The council's response to the consultation in March was clear, we did not support the proposal to close Chorley Magistrates Court, we did not support the move the work to Preston courts and we do not believe that this proposal is in the interests of the users of the court or the local economy. It should be noted that this proposal requires incurring costs to support enabling works to Preston Magistrates court will need to be undertaken to accommodate the additional work load.

This change will adversely impact on Chorley residents in terms of the distance, time and cost to travel to Preston and that the consultation document and analysis carried out by HM Courts and Tribunals services only considered the impact of residents in the north of the borough and therefore nearer to Preston.

The consultation also did not consider the impact of closing the Magistrates Court on the local economy of Chorley. Removing the court will directly reduce the number of people working in the town centre and will almost certainly impact on the significant number of solicitors practices close by as well as other businesses who rely on the presence of workers and service sector businesses.

Chorley council fundamentally objects to the closure and undertakes to write back to the Secretary of State for Justice to ask him to urgently reconsider the decision to close Chorley Magistrates Court.

Proposed by Cllr Alistair Bradley
Seconded by Cllr Peter Wilson