

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
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August 2014

I write to you in reference to the proposed closure of the Magistrates' Court in Bury St Edmunds.

You will be aware of the strong opposition that many of my constituents have voiced to this proposal. I have urged constituents, local authorities and all interested parties to respond to the consultation and ensure their views are heard.

My priority is that access to justice remains local. It is not appropriate or feasible that my constituents should have to travel, in some instances, 30 miles to access the justice services they pay for.

In working with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, it is apparent that the Public Service Village (PSV) at Western Way in Bury St Edmunds could provide the Court with improved accommodation that could be shared with other services when not in use. This is an excellent opportunity to deliver more cost efficient services across the board, while ensuring court services remain in Bury.

Such a move will also locate the Court adjacent to NHS and Social Services who will, it is anticipated, also take up residence in the PSV. Consequently, vulnerable constituents will have all the support they need when using the Court.

The design of the next phase of development for the PSV is still being formulated and any specific requirements a court service might have (for example, cells and van-docks) could be incorporated. Furthermore, this suggestion is completely in congruence with the Cabinet Office's "One Public Estate Program".

I urge you to look on any such submission to the consultation favourably and would appreciate your preliminary thoughts on this proposal.

With kind regards,

Jo Churchill MP