

The Rt Hon the Lord Strathclyde CH
Chair of the Lords Constitution Committee

MoJ ref: 122716

28 March 2025

Dear Lord Strathclyde,

REFORM OF LOCAL JUSTICE AREAS CONSULTATION LAUNCH

I am pleased to announce that a joint consultation with the judiciary concerning Local Justice Area reform and the future organisation of the magistracy will be published on 31st March 2025. I have attached an embargoed copy of the consultation alongside this letter. Following publication, the consultation may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-local-justice-areas>

Section 45 of the Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 legislated for the abolition of Local Justice Areas, but this has not yet been commenced. The 75 Local Justice Areas (LJAs) across England and Wales currently structure many aspects of magistrates' court administration. However, they also create operational inefficiencies for court staff and users, and therefore we intend to abolish Local Justice Areas in their current form. Our aim is to create a new system that will make better use of court staff time and yield benefits for witnesses, defendants and other court users while preserving the important principle of local justice.

We are seeking views on this matter not only because of our statutory obligation to consult magistrates on legislative changes that affect them, but also because we are aware that LJAs link closely to the delivery of local justice and to magistrates' recruitment, deployment, leadership and training. Great care has been taken to bring forward a set of proposals for change with the principle of local justice at their heart.

We encourage you to share the news of this consultation after it is published with your committee, as well as anyone else who you think should be given the opportunity to express their views on this matter. The consultation will remain open until 23rd June, and officials aim to publish a response in Autumn 2025.

Yours sincerely,



SARAH SACKMAN KC MP
Minister Of State