



NATIONAL BENCH
CHAIRMEN'S FORUM

NBCF RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

FOREWORD

The National Bench Chairmen's Forum is made up of a bench chairman from each of the 7 regions, all of which are elected from within their respective regions. The core purpose of the NBCF is to provide a framework at national and regional levels to support the elected chairmen of magistrates' benches in England and Wales and facilitate an independent voice so that the views of all magistrates can be taken into account.

The NBCF terms of reference (which can be found on the [Judicial Intranet](#)) highlight a number of key tasks, which include the following:

- 1 To provide national level advice and assistance to Bench Chairmen when required to enable them to respond effectively to critical or significant Bench management issues.**

The continued changes to court estates, our awareness of the HMCTS Reform programme and the government proposals to abolish Local Justice Areas, to which bench chairmen are intrinsically linked, amount to very significant bench management issues.

- 2 To establish and maintain the communication of Bench Chairmen's views and concerns with key stakeholders, including the Senior Judiciary, HMCTS, Ministry of Justice, the Magistrates' Association, Justices Clerks' Society and other organisations representing interests in the Criminal and Family Justice System.**

Given the critical implications of the changes noted above, we acted promptly to seek the views of all magistrates including bench chairmen, on the 3 very broad concepts proposed by the working group. We did this to establish your views and secure a mandate to take our proposals forward to the Senior Judiciary and other stakeholders.

The working group was made up solely of magistrates and the proposals put forward in the discussion document were decided upon only by magistrates including Jo King, NBCF Chairman, Joy Hamilton, North East regional chair, Mary-Liz Walker (Greater Manchester bench chair and North West regional representative), David McCall (West & Central Herts bench chair), Alwyn Ellis (Welsh regional chair) and Louise Bryant (Central Kent bench chair). The only involvement of HMCTS was to provide secretariat support for the production and circulation of the discussion document and the collation of responses.

It is acknowledged that the questions posed were very broad: this was however intentional, as the proposals themselves are only high-level concepts the detail of which will require much greater consideration if agreed. A number of those who responded were equivocal and registered their

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support on the understanding that certain conditions/safeguards were put in place. Where this was the case we have recorded them as unsure rather than supportive of any proposal.

A number of responses made suggestions about aspects of the magistracy that were outside the scope of this document: we are very grateful for all the well-reasoned suggestions and we will ensure that all these are taken into consideration as we continue to lead the magistracy through this period of change.

INTRODUCTION

The NBCF discussion paper on the leadership and organisation of the magistracy was issued to bench chairmen on 30th September 2016 and closed on Friday 11th November 2016. We would like to thank those who took the time to consider our proposals and provide their views. A total of 403 responses were received, some from individuals and others from groups of magistrates. Although responses to individual questions varied, one key theme was apparent throughout; that magistrates are passionate about the service they provide and want to maintain the voice of the magistracy, retain their identity as magistrates and protect the key features of the magistracy, including their judicial independence and integrity.

A number of responses were also received from individuals outside the magistracy: although we value the opinion of all those who responded, the purpose of the discussion document was to give *magistrates* an opportunity to consider our proposals. It was not and was never intended to be a formal consultation paper (to replace a formal consultation under s21 Courts Act 2003), as any final decision regarding the leadership and organisation of the magistracy is the responsibility of the Lord Chief Justice (LCJ).

BACKGROUND

The world in which we live is constantly changing and the judicial system is now starting to respond to these changes. The NBCF feels strongly that magistrates should seize the opportunity to be proactive and help to shape any decisions the LCJ may make, rather than waiting for change to simply happen. We have worked tirelessly to ensure that the magistracy is represented nationally at all key strategic meetings and we hope to use our influence to advocate any proposals you support.

Our proposals focused on three key principles:

- 1. A single national magistracy for England and Wales;**
- 2. A new leadership structure with accountability to the senior judiciary;**
- 3. Selection of leaders instead of election of leaders.**

To elicit your views on these proposals we posed 7 broad questions, and we have given careful consideration to every answer provided. Below is an overview of the responses received to each question. We have highlighted the support, or otherwise, for each of the three key principles and noted any reasonable alternative proposals suggested.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1. Do you agree with our general approach in trying to influence the changes which are going to happen?

There was very clear support for the approach taken by the NBCF in trying to influence the changes which are going to happen, with many commending the approach we have taken.

2. What are your thoughts regarding the idea of a single magistracy?

Approximately three quarters of those who responded to this question did not object to the concept of a single national magistracy, with over half clearly supporting this. A number of responses felt that with adequate safeguards and conditions (for example, to protect bench identity) they would support a single national magistracy with only one quarter of those who responded opposing this proposal.

3. How would you envisage organising magistrates, if there were no LJAs?

There was no consensus as to how magistrates should be managed in the absence of LJAs but a number of key themes were apparent, including a need for local leadership and a sense of belonging. We acknowledge that more work needs to be done on how magistrates would be organised in a single national magistracy and we recognise all practical challenges, such as travel times, rota and listings.

4. Would you be happy for magistrates to be more accountable to the senior judiciary?

There was no clear consensus as a number of responses were unsure as to what was meant by accountability, and one key concern that was raised related to the potential loss of identity if magistrates were subsumed within the leadership structures of the salaried judiciary. Accountability here means leadership magistrates working together with the salaried judiciary to organise and manage the performance of magistrates' court work. At present we are accountable, via Judicial Business Groups (JBGs) and the Judicial Oversight Group, to the Lord Chief Justice on matters relating to performance. With the introduction of new allocation guidelines we are already seeing more serious matters being retained in the magistrate's court and under HMCTS Reform proposals, Crown Court Judges will have the power to return cases to the magistrates' court. With a greater fluidity of cases between the Magistrates and Crown Courts a much more collaborative approach will be required.

5. How should magistrates in leadership positions be chosen? Please give as much detail as possible.

A majority of responses supported election, with just over a sixth in favour of selection and about a quarter unsure. Of those who did support election, there was a clear call for the election process to be improved and for the introduction of clear role descriptions for all levels of the magistracy, so that those applying for leadership positions fully understood the role and those electing could assess an individual's competence for that role based on specific criteria.

6. What, if any, other issues should we consider in suggesting changes to the leadership and organisation of the magistracy?

There were a great number of insightful suggestions made and we will ensure that these suggestions, whether within or outside the scope of these proposals, are used to inform the detail of these proposals as well as other pieces of work in the future.

7. Any other comments:

As with question 6, there were a large number of recommendations, concerns and issues raised. We will ensure that they are considered when looking at the detail of these proposals as well as to inform other future pieces of work.

RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with our general approach in trying to influence the changes which are going to happen?

A large majority of respondents agreed with the general approach of the NBCF in trying to influence the changes that are going to happen. A small number disagreed and a small number either did not answer the question, were unsure or the answer was unclear.

Those in support say that the status quo is not an option and the magistracy has to move forward, it is important that magistrates take an active part in the changes that are necessary to bring our courts up to date, but it is essential that magistrates' opinions are considered. The voice and experience of the magistracy was also considered to be a most important element in helping find solutions to a series of complex problems. A broader alliance of stakeholders was also suggested to be important. Change was felt to be inevitable and there is a danger that in resisting change the magistracy could cease to exist altogether. Much change feels as though it has been imposed from outside and has been poorly managed and it is considered vitally important that we grasp an opportunity to influence change. Some of what is suggested is already taking place and it feels as though we may already be lagging behind. A small number of responses commended the NBCF for taking the lead, being proactive in making positive proposals and were pleased to have been involved before change has occurred.

Supporters of the general approach did not necessarily agree with all of the proposals and many requested further details and information about implementation.

Some respondents, including Magistrates' Association branches, supported the general approach to a degree but suggested that a closer working relationship with the MA would assist in obtaining a broad representation of views.

A small number of those who objected to the NBCF approach expressed concerns about whether the NBCF has a mandate for this work and questioned why not all regions had been represented on the working group.

A minority of respondents felt that magistrates should have been consulted earlier in the process, that the proposals lacked transparency and the timescale for replying to the discussion paper was too short.

Some respondents questioned whether HMCTS had been instrumental in the design of the proposals or felt that the proposals represented a breakdown in the distinction between HMCTS and the judiciary, particularly the magistracy. Questions were also raised about whether change was really needed and that the current system should be improved instead.

A number of respondents did not answer the question but made general observations about the magistracy and change. A small number of respondents felt they needed more information in order to answer the question.

2. What are your thoughts regarding the idea of a single magistracy?

Just over half of respondents supported the concept of a single national magistracy, although in a significant number of cases this was conditional. A quarter expressly objected to this concept and just under a quarter of the respondents were either unsure, unclear, made observations but not directly in support or against, or did not answer this question.

Some respondents said that there is already a single national magistracy for England and Wales by virtue of magistrates' national jurisdiction.

Those in support of the concept feel that a single bench would represent a more modern way of working, would be simpler, more streamlined, clearer for the public to understand and would promote access to justice. The voice of the magistrate tier would be stronger and better represented to the full-time judiciary. All magistrates share common needs for support and training and a national framework would improve consistency and quality, whilst also making more flexible working with the Crown Court more achievable. Many respondents say that strong leadership would be essential and the final structure must provide good pastoral support to magistrates. Managing the transition to a single bench would be important and the role of justices' clerks would need to be considered in the light of the new structures¹. A single bench should empower magistrates to be able to sit at locations that were convenient for them and should not automatically lead to longer commuting times. Consideration would need to be given to balancing the workload needs with magistrates sitting preferences and the practicalities of rota arrangements. The flexibility of a single bench would help to remove any concerns about 'cliques' of magistrates sitting together. Strong leadership magistrates and the need to be organised into local groups were considered to be important, as was a sense of 'belonging' to a 'home' court and a balance between operational flexibility and local identity.

Respondents who were opposed to the concept felt that as work could already be moved between local justice areas (LJAs) a change was unnecessary and it would be better to fix issues with the current system rather than replace it. Concern was expressed about the effect a single bench would have on recruitment and training, with the possible loss of local knowledge. Some respondents felt a single bench would be less efficient and the collegiate ethos, local identity and commitment would dissipate without effective local leadership and structure. A significant proportion of respondents mentioned the loss of local justice, and some expressed concern about the possible break in links with local agencies. A few submissions felt that a single bench would result in magistrates having to travel further and this was not welcomed. Practical concerns were also cited, such as communication and managing the rota, along with the impact on magistrates such as being required to sit at more than one courthouse. Some respondents felt that abolition of local justice areas would adversely affect the pastoral support for magistrates. A significant number of respondents highlighted the voluntary role magistrates play and said that volunteers need to be treated differently from employees. A very small number of responses questioned whether Wales should be separate and a similar number felt that abolition of LJAs would affect rural areas more than urban areas.

A small number of respondents replied to this question with observations about the Single Justice Process.

3. How would you envisage organising magistrates, if there were no LJAs?

A small number of respondents could see no need to change the existing structure even if LJAs were to be abolished, but did not elaborate further, particularly with regard to addressing the large discrepancies in current bench sizes and any aspect of 'future proofing'.

¹ A consultation on the creation of a new senior leadership structure for lawyers working within HMCTS: Proposals to make changes to the role of the justices' clerk, 10th November 2016.

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This was a very open question and there was no consensus on how to organise the magistracy in the absence of LJAs. The most common themes were the need for a 'home' location with which magistrates could identify, strong local leadership for manageably-sized groups (150-300 were cited but to be flexible to reflect local needs), strong local pastoral and representative roles for leadership magistrates and for consistent and adequate administrative support from HMCTS as well as effective IT.

A move away from geographically determined local organisational structures was proposed by a number of respondents, with some suggesting that closer alignment with the Crown Court and salaried judiciary would support more flexible working and allocation between the magistrates' and Crown Courts. A number of responses felt that a clear link to geography should be retained. Some respondents preferred organising around groups of courts, rather than administrative boundaries, and the Family Court model was considered by a significant number of respondents to be one that could be replicated in crime. A 'bottom-up' model aligned to Crown Courts was proposed by a small number of respondents. Enabling magistrates to choose to sit at other courthouses currently in different LJAs was favoured by a number of respondents.

Regions, or circuits, were seen by many to be a logical first division for organisational purposes, with local, sub-regional, regional and national leadership needed for magistrates. The concept of 'hubs and spokes' was picked up by a small number of respondents, with flexibility being important especially in rural areas.

A small number of respondents felt that benches would become invisible and leadership magistrates would no longer be involved in local civic events; historic titles such as bench chairmen should also be retained.

Other suggestions included organising magistrates to fit with police force areas, county benches, clusters, reverting to the MCC model and retaining a 'confederation of self-governing regions and branches'. With regard to leadership, a number of different suggestions were made at the regional and national level, with a few favouring 'councils' rather than individuals at these levels, and a very small number suggested that lay magistrates should not be involved above the local level or that magistrates be led by District Judges (Magistrates Courts). Some questioned the need for 4 tiers as proposed in the discussion document, and reflecting the Crown Court structure was suggested by a small number of respondents.

Increased use of information technology was feared by a few to lead to increased isolation that would have an adverse impact on groups of volunteers not tied to a role by remuneration.

Some practical challenges were raised, including rotas needing local input and the cost of travel for centralised meetings.

4. Would you be happy for magistrates to be more accountable to the senior judiciary?

There was no clear consensus on this question: One third of respondents agreed, one third disagreed and one third did not answer, were unsure, or their answer was unclear. A significant number of respondents said they did not understand what was meant by accountability and some did not understand what we meant by the term 'senior judiciary' and whether this was the Lord Chief Justice and Senior Presiding Judge, Resident Judges or District Judges (Magistrates' Court).

A significant proportion of respondents said that the magistracy is already accountable - either to the Lord Chancellor, or to the senior judiciary by virtue of the Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office (JCIO) and appeals being heard at the Crown Court. Some said that the magistracy should not be accountable to the senior judiciary in order to retain its independence. One respondent considered that the magistracy should be accountable to the local community. A small number of respondents

felt that the representative role of bench chairmen was incompatible with being accountable to the senior judiciary and that magistrates should be free to organise their affairs without interference.

A number of respondents questioned whether the senior judiciary would want the magistracy to be accountable to them, that not all judges understand the role of magistrates sufficiently or respect magistrates as they should and may not have the skills needed. Concern was expressed that the voice of the magistracy would be diminished and that magistrates could be marginalised.

A potential loss of identity was mentioned by a small but significant proportion of respondents, as was a risk that being professionally governed would create conflicts of interest and would lead to a paid magistracy and one respondent felt it would undermine the relationship magistrates have with justices' clerks and legal advisers.

Mutual accountability, working together, working in partnership and integrating more with the senior judiciary were suggested alternatives to increased accountability

Those who were in favour of being accountable to the senior judiciary mentioned positive benefits such as improved performance, efficiency and professionalism; promotion of good practice and reducing delay; and opportunities to be involved in more strategic decision making. The positive working relationships in the Family Court were given as an example of how magistrates and judges can work well together. Some respondents would welcome a greater understanding by the senior judiciary of the structure and responsibilities of the magistracy, and it was said that given the proportion of work undertaken by magistrates they should be considered an important part of a consolidated judiciary.

A very small number of respondents felt that the executive function at regional/national level should be undertaken by HMCTS or that legal advisers should play a large role. A small number of magistrates felt that being accountable to the senior judiciary would compromise their voluntary role.

5. How should magistrates in leadership positions be chosen? Please give as much detail as possible.

Over half of respondents said that magistrates in local leadership positions should be chosen by election, less than a fifth favoured selection and one quarter either did not answer the question, were unsure or unclear, or proposed a hybrid of election and selection.

This was the most controversial aspect of the discussion paper with strong arguments (sometimes the same argument) presented for both election and selection. A majority of respondents said that candidates should be expected to demonstrate that they had the skills required for the job and that all magistrates need a clearer understanding of the role of leadership magistrates, irrespective of whether they supported election or selection. Transparency was very important, again irrespective of the preferred method of choosing.

Those who supported election did so on the following grounds:

- more democratic
- magistrates are volunteers and not professionals
- strategy is not the responsibility of the magistracy
- if leaders were selected by HMCTS this would call their independence into question (*it is important to note here that the NBCF have never suggested that selection would be done by anyone other than the judiciary*)
- selection would mean that the role would only be of interest to certain groups of magistrates such as those who are retired
- selected leaders would have to overcome the suspicion and scepticism of bench members and would not be seen as impartial due to the manner in which they are appointed

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- selection was also seen as favouring those who were most 'political' or who were favoured by HMCTS
- a common perception of those who favour election is that magistrates must choose the bench chairman as they represent their views and position

Those in favour of selection did so on the following grounds:

- a more professional and consistent approach is needed
- the justice system is a business and it is important to match the right person with the skills to do the job
- selection would be more modern and would bring magistrates in line with the rest of the judiciary
- selection would avoid a 'popularity contest' and avoid the election of 'cronies'
- selection was felt by some to be better for larger benches, where not everyone knows one another and elections might be biased by previous bench allegiances.

There was some support for selection to be done by a panel elected by the magistracy in order to retain the confidence of magistrates and ensure transparency. Others favoured the involvement of lay people and/or the senior judiciary. The need for any selection panel to be separate from HMCTS was cited by many of those who favoured selection.

A significant number of replies indicated that they could not support selection without knowing who would do the selecting.

A very small number of respondents said that there should not be any leadership roles in the magistracy.

Some did not see bench chairmen as having a leadership role and so should be elected, as this was more representative, whilst leadership roles should be filled by selection. Some expressed concern that elections at regional or national level would be impractical, as the candidates would not be known by the voting magistrates.

6. What, if any, other issues should we consider in suggesting changes to the leadership and organisation of the magistracy?

Respondents raised a wide range of issues in response to this question, including questions about the legitimacy of the NBCF undertaking this work whilst others were fully supportive of the approach taken.

A number of themes were present in the responses.

The importance of the volunteer aspect of the magistracy was raised by a number of respondents. This was felt to be relevant because they do the role for a variety of reasons and if their needs are not met they will leave; the voluntary nature of the role also means that magistrates want to be able to comment on and influence change. Ways of engaging with magistrates and the need to reduce the feeling that things were being "done to" magistrates was raised by a significant number of respondents with suggestions including more seminars to facilitate the discussion and progress of change, particularly given the number of changes that are taking place and the lack of training for some of those changes. The importance of listening to magistrates' views was also raised.

A need for a clear direction of what is intended for the future of the Magistracy was raised by some respondents, with a significant number suggesting that magistrate morale had been affected by the way changes had been communicated and implemented causing confusion and ill-feeling. The need to retain some familiarity within the structure was suggested, as this would be comforting to a lot of established magistrates during a period of significant change, with local people better able to

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communicate and be positive advocates for change. The rate and scale of change was questioned by a significant number of respondents, with some suggesting there had been too many changes already.

The challenges of leadership roles needs significant investment in training and personal development at all levels and adequate funding would need to be provided. There is widespread concern about reductions to the amount of administrative support currently being given to benches by HMCTS and more support will be needed during periods of change and for leadership magistrates. If this is not provided it may make magistrates less willing to put themselves forward for leadership roles. There should be opportunities for career progression within the magistracy and better succession planning. A significant number of response express concern about the time commitment needed for regional and national leadership roles and the difficulty of finding suitable candidates who can make this commitment. Some respondents suggest that national or regional leadership positions should be paid in some way to widen the pool of candidates, however, other respondents were strongly opposed to any form of payment.

A small number of respondents mentioned the recently published Justice Select Committee report and would like to see their recommendations acted upon before further changes are made. A number of respondents make reference to changes proposed as part of the HMCTS Reform Programme and question whether these changes should be accepted.

Comments were made on projects outside the scope of the leadership document such as concerns about the safety aspects of alternative provision; the appraisal system; recruitment of magistrates and how to improve diversity, a clearer training structure and the lack of training provided so far for digital programmes.

A number of responses from London magistrates, benches and MA branches argue that London is different and different considerations should apply. Some responses from Welsh magistrates said that devolution and the Welsh language were important factors that need to be considered.

Some suggestions were less practical, for example giving the job of cluster manager to the District Judges.

A period of consolidation before further changes were implemented was also requested by a small number of respondents, along with a plea for no change for change's sake.

7. Any other comments:

A significant number of respondents did not reply to this question, or made reference to, or repeated, their responses elsewhere.

Some themes could be drawn from those who did respond.

Losing local identity will result in increased resignations: morale is already low. Magistrates are concerned at the number of changes in recent years, such as eJudiciary, single justice, online rota, and the speed of those changes, coupled with the lack of training, support and general disregard for the time and effort they already give to the courts. There is concern that local identity, knowledge and justice is being not just eroded, but completely abandoned, and that all sense of community is being lost.

A number of respondents raised concerns about local justice. They said that magistrates would not understand issues in neighbouring areas; the more cases are dealt with digitally away from court buildings, the less access the public and media have to make representations as a right to a fair hearing and to mark any disapproval and the impact on rural communities of the removal of local delivery appears to have been ignored.

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A few respondents raised a concern that NBCF have decided change is going to happen. Others said it is important to gain the support of grass-roots magistrates, many of whom are struggling with change and are unaware of the big picture. A number of respondents said that changes should not be made purely in order to cut costs.

The recent changes to the Family Court were raised by a number of respondents as a positive example of better integration. Work moves around well; magistrates are made to feel very welcome; there is a sharing of expertise and knowledge between the circuit judges, DJs, magistrates and legal advisers without compromising the jurisdiction of any part of the judiciary and it is respectful to all. Some respondents questioned the lack of any reference to the Family Court in the discussion document and said that the Family Court should be completely separated from the criminal jurisdiction.

A small number of respondents said that there is no need for a national or regional voice for magistrates and a very small number felt that the government/parliament and the judiciary do not want lay magistrates. A number of respondents queried the respective roles and relationship between the NBCF and Magistrates' Association.

A number of respondents questioned whether their views would be listened to. Others said that the discussion document is undoubtedly the most important and wide reaching proposal for change that today's magistracy has encountered. The NBCF were called on to provide a swift response to avoid a negative impact on an already anxious magistracy. A more detailed paper would be required once the feedback has been analysed. A small number welcomed the NBCF taking the initiative and some observed that magistrates have to be careful not to want to hang on to the status quo just because we are used to it, but embrace change if it really will help and that the NBCF proposals were made in the context of the Transforming our Justice System vision paper in September, 2016.

Resourcing of court administrative support was a concern for some respondents and it was suggested that if the magistracy is to agree to fundamental changes, then MoJ/HMCTS must invest enough resources (people and money) to support the changes.

A small number noted that the Justice system exists for defendants, witnesses, victims and not just judges and magistrates.

NBCF PROPOSALS

The NBCF executive met on the 29th November 2016 to discuss the proposals for the leadership and organisation of the magistracy in light of all responses received. As a result of those responses a number of key proposals were agreed, the rationale for which are reflected within this response document. A number of changes have been made to the original proposals, highlighting the importance of responding and providing your views.

A single national magistracy for England and Wales:

The NBCF propose the creation of a single national magistracy, as although magistrates are appointed to England and Wales their assignment to one or more local justice areas can significantly impact upon the administration of effective and efficient justice, with some court users having to travel further distances as a result of arbitrary administrative boundaries. The NBCF do recognise that magistrates need to be 'grouped' to retain a sense of belonging to facilitate Rota, listings, performance management and pastoral care. The NBCF has received a number of useful

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suggestions as to how magistrates could be organised nationally and will take those suggestions on board when looking at any more detailed structures.

A new leadership structure with accountability to the senior judiciary;

Reference to accountability here means a more collaborative approach to the way in which we organise and manage the business of the Magistrates' court. The NBCF propose the creation of a leadership structure that aligns the magistracy more closely with the senior judiciary, a structure that would allow the magistracy to retain their identity, whilst providing a voice at every level. Our proposal would ensure that leadership magistrates work with designated leadership judges on matters relating to the management and organisation of magistrates' court business, and as the movement of work between the magistrates' and the Crown Courts becomes more fluid it will support improved performance management.

The NBCF accept that a movement towards a regional management structure may be appropriate for HMCTS business and the salaried judiciary and our proposal for a regional leadership magistrate would support this, but we also feel strongly that the pastoral care of magistrates is best suited to more local management.

We are conscious that HMCTS estates have and will continue to change in the future and we want to ensure that any leadership structure, although taking into account geography, is not intrinsically linked and dependent upon the court estate. This would create a level of consistency and security for magistrates in a period of immense change.

Selection of leaders instead of election of leaders.

A large majority of magistrates did not support this proposal and as such the NBCF propose that leadership magistrates are elected.

Although supportive of election, a large number of those who responded argued that the current election process is inadequate and called for the following improvements:

1. the creation of 'role descriptions' for all levels of the magistracy from winger to national leadership magistrates
2. an improved process that would require candidates to provide evidence to support the key competencies required for each specific role
3. greater communication about leadership roles to the wider magistracy to educate the electorate.

The NBCF support this and would formally propose that the Justice of the Peace Rules 2016 election protocol is amended to reflect these 3 suggestions.

NEXT STEPS

As already noted above, responsibility for any decision regarding judicial leadership rests with the Lord Chief Justice. We intend to submit our proposals to the Lord Chief Justice on or before 15th December 2016 and we are optimistic that any such proposal would be given significant weight by the LCJ. We also intend to work closely with MOJ policy and HMCTS to ensure that any decisions made by them in relation to reform and future changes would support our proposals.

NBCF

1ST December 2016