

## **Closure of Court Venues Consultation Process**

The consultation process to be used in respect of the proposed closure of each venue was considered by the Building Committee and the following proposals were agreed:

1. The priority in the existing consultation process when venues are being considered for closure is to consult with local court users who are the people most directly involved in, and affected by, any decision to close a venue. The first consultation is with the local Judge(s) and staff, followed by local legal practitioners, Gardaí, Irish Prison Service, Probation Service, etc.
2. Heretofore, before that process was completed, representations from other local groups, the relevant local authority, local public representatives would become aware of, and involved in, the discussions about the venue.
3. It is difficult to see any basis for deviating to any great degree from this process. Our first priority must be our court users and it would be entirely unacceptable for any of them, particularly members of the judiciary or our staff, to hear about a potential closure from any third party before they were officially consulted by the Courts Service.
4. The proposed consultation process, therefore, is as follows:
  - Local judiciary
  - Local staff
  - Local legal practitioners
  - Other court users e.g. Gardai, Prison Service, Probation Service, Legal Aid Board
  - Local authorities, including town councils
  - and any other interested parties.
5. Those being consulted about a venue would be supplied with the number of points the venue had achieved, the maximum number of points available and the methodology.

6. If the Building Committee intends to recommend the closure of a particular venue, those consulted in relation to it will be given a further opportunity to make submissions prior to the Board meeting at which any proposal for closure is to be discussed.
  
7. Each venue being considered for closure will be considered on an individual basis by the Board with a business case being prepared in respect of each proposed closure.