



HM Courts & Tribunals Service

**Justices' Clerk for
Cambridgeshire and Essex:**
**Local Justice Areas of
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02 January 2015

Dear Sir or Madam

Subject: Liaison between magistrates' court and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

I am writing to you on behalf of the magistrates' courts in Cambridgeshire. In 2014 we reviewed involvement with Partnerships in light of the direction of the Senior Presiding Judge, which prohibits magistrates from being members but encourages engagement (I have extracted the guidance overleaf).

As a result the Bench Chairman and I have had discussions with Cambridge City Partnership, who were particularly eager to retain contact, and as a result the Chairman and a Legal Team Manager attended a planning day with them recently which from their point of view at least, was interesting and successful. They gained a better understanding of community issues and felt they had given members a greater insight into the way offending translates into court. Making contact also means that simple questions (for example about how sentences operate) can be reliably answered by my office.

As a result the Bench Chairmen and I decided to make contact with the other Partnerships to enquire whether you would also be interested in engagement with the magistrates' court. If you are, I would be happy to have an initial discussion on the phone or face to face; please contact my office (details above).

Yours faithfully,

Sián E. Jones LL.B., Barrister
Justices' Clerk

Extract from the Lord Chancellor's Directions, 2014

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

2.32. It would not be appropriate, given the role of the various crime and disorder strategies, for magistrates to be directly or closely involved in their day-to-day management and operations. However, it is important that the views of courts are fed into the planning process. To achieve this, there need to be effective channels of communication between courts and the various bodies at a suitably strategic level. The extent to which magistrates become involved is a matter they should discuss with their bench chairman and justices' clerk.

2.33. It is recognised that magistrates who are county or district councillors, will probably have had some input into the planning of crime and disorder strategies. This is not considered a problem, provided they do not act as spokesperson on the subject for the local authority.

2.34. In the case of county or district council employees, concerns are unlikely to arise, unless the magistrate holds a prominent position or works specifically on crime and disorder issues.