

Press release – 12th April 2017

Rt Hon Andrew Tyrie MP has written to the Secretary of State for Justice regarding the closure of Chichester's Combined Court.

Andrew Tyrie wrote:

“Your Department has given repeated assurances – including in the House of Commons – that Chichester's Combined Crown and County Court would only close once suitable alternative local provision had been put in place.

Facing the threat of judicial review, your Department agreed in December to consider a proposal to keep some local capacity by rehousing the Combined Court in the former Magistrates Court building. The decision is still pending.

However, evidence has come to light to suggest that the closure of the Crown Court may already be underway. Documents recently released by your Department, in response to a Freedom of Information request, state that hearings would not be listed in the Crown Court beyond 17th March, though the building would “remain capable of being used”. My office has been informed by Court Serve, one of the websites that provide court listings, that the Crown Court was “no longer providing court lists” as of 17th March. In addition, local media have reported that staff are stripping the Crown Court building of its contents.

I'd be very grateful for an explanation.”