



COURT LEET PROCEDURE

The purpose of this Procedure Note is to provide guidance and advice upon the operation of Court Leet. However, the Sheriff ultimately has overall control as to the conduct of Court Leet and in doing so will apply the rules of natural justice at all times.

PART I

COURT PERSONNEL

1. **The Town Crier** formally opens the Court.
2. **The Sheriff** will introduce the Court and call the Steward to swear in the jury.
3. **The Jury**
 - a. The jury shall comprise not more than 16 and not less than 12 jurors made up of –
 - i. the Foreman of the Jury (who is the Sheriff);
 - ii. past City Councillors (including past Mayors and Sheriffs) and Honorary Aldermen;
 - iii. representatives of local organisations; and
 - iv. others considered by the Sheriff to be suitable and appropriate persons to serve on the Jury.
 - b. No current City Councillors may serve on the Jury.
 - c. The Sheriff shall invite the Group Leaders or their deputy to hear the Court's proceedings.
4. **The Steward**, the Solicitor to the Council, shall advise the Court and Sheriff on procedural issues.

PART II

NOTICE PROVISIONS

1. The Court Leet ceremony ('the Court') will be held at the Civic Centre once a year, on the first Tuesday after Michaelmas, or on such other date to be determined by the Sheriff, following the Beating of the Bounds.

2. Not less than 28 days before the Court, the Service Director, Legal and Governance shall publish a notice in a local newspaper and write to interested parties and previous attendees specifying -
 - (a) the date and time of the Court; and
 - (b) the name and address of the Officer designated to advise and/or receive written Presentments ('the Designated Officer');

Information will also be included in City Web. These procedures note shall be included with any letter and made available through the internet.

3. The Designated Officer shall provide advice and assistance in the preparation of Presentments to anyone reasonably requiring it.
4. The notice shall invite representatives from local organisations such as teachers, business persons, community leaders, etc who are interested as standing as jurors to apply. Applications shall be considered by the Sheriff and suitable candidates may be appointed by the Sheriff to stand as jurors. No fee will be payable.

PART III OPENING PROCEDURE

1. The Town Crier shall formally convene the Court.
2. The Sheriff shall welcome attendees, recount the history of the Court and call on the Steward to swear in the jury.
3. The Steward shall swear in the jury by reading the Charge and administering the Oath to the Jurors.

PART IV PRESENTMENTS

1. The Court is given jurisdiction by the Administration of Justice Act 1977 to take Presentments with respect to matters of local concern.
2. The Sheriff shall preside over the Court Leet, and shall apply the rules of natural justice at all times.
3. There is no limit on the number of Presentments that any one individual or organisation may make. The Sheriff may, however, decide to either consolidate linked Presentments or to rule that the content and/or number of Presentments are vexatious or excessive.
4. No jurors shall be entitled to make Presentments and Presentments may only be made by Aldermen or past Mayors if they decline jury service during the year in question.

5. The Steward shall call presenters to make their presentments and presenters are requested to keep their Presentments to the point. The Sheriff will rule if in his/her view the Presenter has exceeded a reasonable time or has departed unduly from the point of his/her Presentment.
6. The Jury shall vote on whether the Presentment should be accepted. This would be on the basis that it is duly made and relates to a matter of local concern. It is not for Court Leet to adjudicate upon the merits of any presentment. Each juror has one vote and the Foreman of the Jury has a casting vote in the event of a tie.
7. Should the Jury accept the Presentment, the Service Director, Legal and Governance will arrange for the Presentment to be forwarded to the relevant Policy Co-ordinator and Cabinet Member. All Presentments received by Court Leet will then be reported on block to a future meeting of the Council's Cabinet (Executive) approximately 4-6 weeks after Court Leet. Presenters (and those interested in the Presentment) will have an opportunity to attend in accordance with the normal procedures, subject to the discretion of the Leader / Cabinet Member chairing the meeting. Any Presentments not capable of being addressed at that meeting of the Cabinet will be referred back to a further meeting of the Cabinet.
8. The Presentment must be submitted in writing, along with the presenter's name and address to the Designated Officer. This may be either before Court Leet or at Court Leet, at the discretion of the presenter.
9. Following Court Leet, the Designated Officer will make available a summary of the Presentments to all interested parties.
10. A report will be prepared for each Court Leet setting out a summary of Presentments received and accepted by Court Leet and action taken by the Council or other relevant parties / bodies where appropriate.