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Glynis McKeand
Secretary to the Sheriff Court Rules Council
Scottish Executive Justices Department
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
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EH1 3DG

Dear Miss McKeand

Sheriff Court Rules Council Consultation Paper

On behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council I would wish to convey a broad welcome to the proposals detailed in the above, which would, if implemented, bring the Sheriff Court system into line with the advances being made by other Government Organisations and Institutions in the use of information technology.

The proposals, if implemented should certainly lead to a much more streamlined and efficient system particularly in relation to undefended cases where at every stage in the procedure, matters could be dealt with electronically, even up to and including the Court's judgement in the matter.

However, there are a few points which I would like to highlight as attached in my response to the individual recommendations detailed in the paper.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Huntingford'.

Mr T. Huntingford
Chief Executive

West Dunbartonshire ~ from the banks of Loch Lomond to the shores of the Clyde

1st Recommendation	Agreed.
2nd Recommendation	Agreed.
3rd Recommendation	Agreed.
4th Recommendation	Agreed.
5th Recommendation	Agreed. I have, however, concerns that some Solicitors/Firms of Solicitors, may be unable to adjust to, and properly utilise, the proposed new system within a period of as short as two years.
6th Recommendation	Agreed. I have, however, some concerns as to how this would work in practice. Although a system of secure electronic signatures is proposed great care would have to be utilised that this system was being properly operated. Sheriffs frequently make the comment to Solicitors to the effect that it is <i>their</i> signature that counts and has particular significance in relation to Writs, Defences, etc. My concern is that the substituting of an electronic signature for an actual signature could let some Solicitors avoid responsibility for their actions.
7th Recommendation	Agreed.
8th Recommendation	Agreed.
9th Recommendation	Agreed.
10th Recommendation	Agreed