

## **Motion Title: Re-instating of a Justice Centre in Sandwell**

**Proposer: Councillor Webb**

**Secunder: Councillor Tipper**

Council considers the justice system a fundamental pillar of democracy that works to protect and advance the principles of justice, and should work for everyone in Sandwell as well as for the wider Black Country.

Council notes the 2016 decision of Government to close the Justice Centre in Sandwell. Sandwell residents are disproportionately affected by this, not having direct public transport to each of the other Black Country authority's remaining justice centres. Other more direct forms of transport are made difficult through financial and social circumstances.

Council notes with concern that there are record number of cases being delayed in the West Midlands in the Criminal Courts but there are also cases are mounting up in the Family Courts. Wolverhampton Crown Court has 900 cases waiting to be heard including cases of murder and manslaughter.

Council further notes with concern that a range of other cases such as work-related death and causing death and injury through dangerous driving are not being scheduled to be heard until 2025. This means meaning that some families could have had to wait 8 years for their cases to be heard. This is too long, and families should have access to justice in a timely manner.

Council therefore calls on the Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice setting out the terms of this Motion and calling on the Secretary of State to take steps to re-open a justice centre within Sandwell at the earliest opportunity.