

Olympics Briefing

This briefing provides an overview of the multi-agency Olympic Working Group's planning for the Games in response to an enquiry from the Law Society.

1. Planning

Two main Multi-Agency Criminal Justice groups, one jointly chaired by HHJ Radford and the SPJ Lord Goldring, have been leading on developing effective joint contingency arrangements to ensure that the Criminal Justice System continues to function effectively during the Games period and that any additional Games-related workload is dealt with speedily. Membership of both groups include solicitors Paul Harris (past president of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association) and Malcolm Duxbury (immediate past president of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association) as well as a member of the Legal Services Commission.

2. Definition of Olympic Offence

For the purposes of Ministerial counting of Olympic offences, the Metropolitan Police definition of an Olympic offence is to be used. Cases that fall within this definition will be flagged up on charge sheets and recorded by HMCTs on its LIBRA system. The MPS definition is:

- *'Any crime that has or may have an impact upon the effective delivery or image of the Games'.*

For the purposes of listing arrangements and the fast tracking of cases where necessary, a more narrower definition has been developed by the CJS Olympics Working Group:

- "Any offence which is:
 - a) committed and charged in the period 1 May to 30 September 2012
 - b) stated by any court to be directly connected to the 2012 Olympic or Paralympics Games

where 'directly related' means

- 1) it is committed on any Olympic Site or venue, or any training facility or
- 2) the complainant or defendant is connected with the Games as a spectator, competitor, official, an employee/worked at an Olympic site, a member of a national Olympic team in any capacity, or is attending the Games as an accredited representative of a media organisation

3. Magistrates and Crown Court Sittings

There will be a reduced number of court sittings in both the Magistrates and Crown courts (see attached sittings profile, **Annex A**).

4. Olympic Offences in the Crown Court

All Olympic offences which fit the CJS Olympics offence definition and are committed or sent to the Crown Court from 1st July to 14th October 2012 will be listed as follows:

- **Snaresbrook Crown Court** – cases arising in the east, north, north east, south and south east London areas for sentence will be listed within 28 days at Snaresbrook Crown Court for sentence from 1st July to 14th October 2012. All Olympic offences arising from these areas which are committed to the Crown Court for trial from 1st July to 14th October 2012, will be listed at Snaresbrook CC within 8 days for a preliminary hearing so as to determine the need for fast tracking of cases through the system.
- **Kingston Crown Court** - All Olympic offences arising from Central London, north west, west and south west London areas and committed to the Crown Court for sentence will be listed within 28 days at Kingston Crown Court for sentence from 1st July to 14th October 2012. All Olympic offences arising from these areas which are committed to the Crown Court for trial from 1st July to 14th October 2012, will be listed at Kingston CC within 8 days for a preliminary hearing so as to determine the need for fast tracking of cases through the system.
- Where cases cannot be fast tracked or disposed off expeditiously at Snaresbrook or Kingston, if appropriate, another court will be nominated for trial on the South East Circuit or if necessary, any court on any other circuit. Careful account and consideration will be given to the interests of justice as a whole including the interests of the victims and witnesses.
- The agreed expectation is that all parties will be prepared and in a position at the preliminary hearing to expedite the case robustly so as to avoid a legacy of Olympic cases long after the games have concluded.

5. Virtual Courts and Videolinks

Maximising the use of 'live links' is a key priority and is to be used to reduce the movement of prisoners across the capital with a view to optimising the use of prisoner video links and virtual courts.

- Court sitting times for the Virtual Court at Camberwell MC will be adjusted during the period to commence daily at 9.30am
- Cases for sentence will remain at Camberwell until completed, however trials will return to Westminster
- Overflow arrangements: a max 22 cases will be dealt with via the Camberwell Green virtual court link each day, if necessary a further 22 will be dealt with via Bromley virtual court link. If there are more than 44 cases, hearing arrangements will revert to production in person at Westminster.
- A virtual court will be run at Camberwell MC on 3 Saturdays from 28th July 2012 (28 Jul, 4 Aug and 11 Aug). West End Central cases will either be

dealt with by video link at Camberwell Green, with unsuitable cases and any overflow dealt with as appearances at Hammersmith. Westminster will sit at Hammersmith including dealing with any International Jurisdiction issues.

- Cases dealt with via video link will remain at Camberwell Green / Bromley for sentence but will return to Westminster for trial.

6. Contingency Plans

An unspecified increase in crime cases is anticipated by the Police. Such increase in offences are likely to be at a low-level e.g. theft, pick-pocketing, public order offences. There is, however, the potential for an increase in more serious offences to occur during the period. As such, contingency sittings plans have been developed to provide 'overspill' arrangements in the event of (a) a significant increase in the number of Olympic offences being charged (b) mass civil unrest.

Significant Increase:

- East London: An additional court will sit during normal hours at Stratford and Thames
- Central London: An additional court will sit during normal hours at Hammersmith with City of London and Camberwell assisting with any additional work from Westminster
- North London: an additional court will sit during normal hours at Hendon

Mass Civil Unrest:

- In the event of mass unrest on the scale of last summer's riots, local Court remand centres will deal with cases using extended hours courts (8:00 to 13:30 and 14:00 to 19:30) and extended hours video links. District Judges or Deputy District Judges alongside benches of magistrates will adjudicate in these courts. A similar protocol to that used for the summer Riots will designate specific crown court centres for PCMHs to deal with civil unrest cases.
- Night courts will be a matter of last resort and will only be triggered if there is a serious increase in the number of cases which cannot be dealt with during extended hours sittings.

The anticipated displacement of trials during the period in question and the need for business recovery in respect of Magistrates Courts cases in the most affected area of London, east London, will be dealt with during the period 13/9/12 – 21/10/12 with a daily additional Magistrates trial Court for Olympic/legacy cases. Due to light summer listing in the Crown Court, it is anticipated that a return to the current average of 61 cases per courtroom will be achieved by the end of the year without any additional Crown Court sitting days.

Annex A

1. Court Sitting Arrangements - Olympic Games Period

Magistrates Courts

East London:

- **Stratford MC** will operate a single court daily dealing with Olympic Overnight charges, Newham borough arrests (which will include Newham BTP arrests) Newham adult and youth overnight charges
- Youth Remands - An additional single Court (Youth Court) will operate at Stratford on two Wednesdays during the Games period (ie. 1/8/12 and 8/8/12) dealing with Youth Olympic offences.
- **Thames MC** will operate two courts daily dealing with (a) overnights for Tower hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest boroughs (b) Bailed from Tower hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Newham boroughs where this is unavoidable (ie. police will aim to bail suspects outside the games period in the first instance)
- A Saturday court will run at Thames MC on 21/7/12

Central London:

- **Highbury MC** will deal with East London Custody priority trials in a single additional court room at Highbury. BTP cases from Westminster will also be dealt with at Highbury.
- **Westminster MC** will operate fewer courtrooms and will focus on dealing with overnight charges.
- **City of London MC** will operate fewer courtrooms and will focus on dealing with overnight charges.
- **Hammersmith MC** will deal with Westminster's bail cases as well as out-of-hours PACE applications. Hammersmith will also sit on 3 Saturdays during the period instead of Westminster

South East London:

- **Greenwich MC** will close given its close proximity to an Olympic Route Network
- **Bromley MC** will deal with Greenwich work (via video link)
- **Bexley MC** will deal with Greenwich work (in person)
- Gateway traffic trials will not be listed during the Games period at **City of London, Waltham Forest and Bromley**

- All other magistrates' courts will operate at normal levels for the summer season and pragmatic decisions will be taken at the time should there be a further need for any adjustment to sittings.

Crown Courts

- **Snaresbrook CC** will sit 6 courts in week one and 5 thereafter
- **Southwark CC** will sit 5 courts
- **Central CC** will sit 9 courts
- **Isleworth CC** will sit 8 courts
- **Inner London CC** will sit 6 courts
- **Blackfriars CC** will sit 5 -6 courts
- **Kingston CC** will sit 8-9 courts save for 1/8/12 due to for the cycle time trial event
- **Harrow CC** will sit 6 courts
- **Wood Green CC** will sit 6 courts
- **Woolwich CC** will sit 6 courts
- **Croydon CC** will sit 8 courts