ALTERATION OF CORONER AREAS UNDER SCHEDULE 2 OF THE CORONERS AND JUSTICE ACT 2009[1]
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE BUSINESS CASE TEMPLATE FOR MERGERS

NAMES OF CORONER AREAS THAT ARE PROPOSING TO MERGE

- **Portsmouth & South East Hampshire**
- **Isle of Wight**

PROPOSED NAME OF NEW AREA

- **Portsmouth & IOW**

INFORMATION ON AREAS THAT PROPOSE TO MERGE

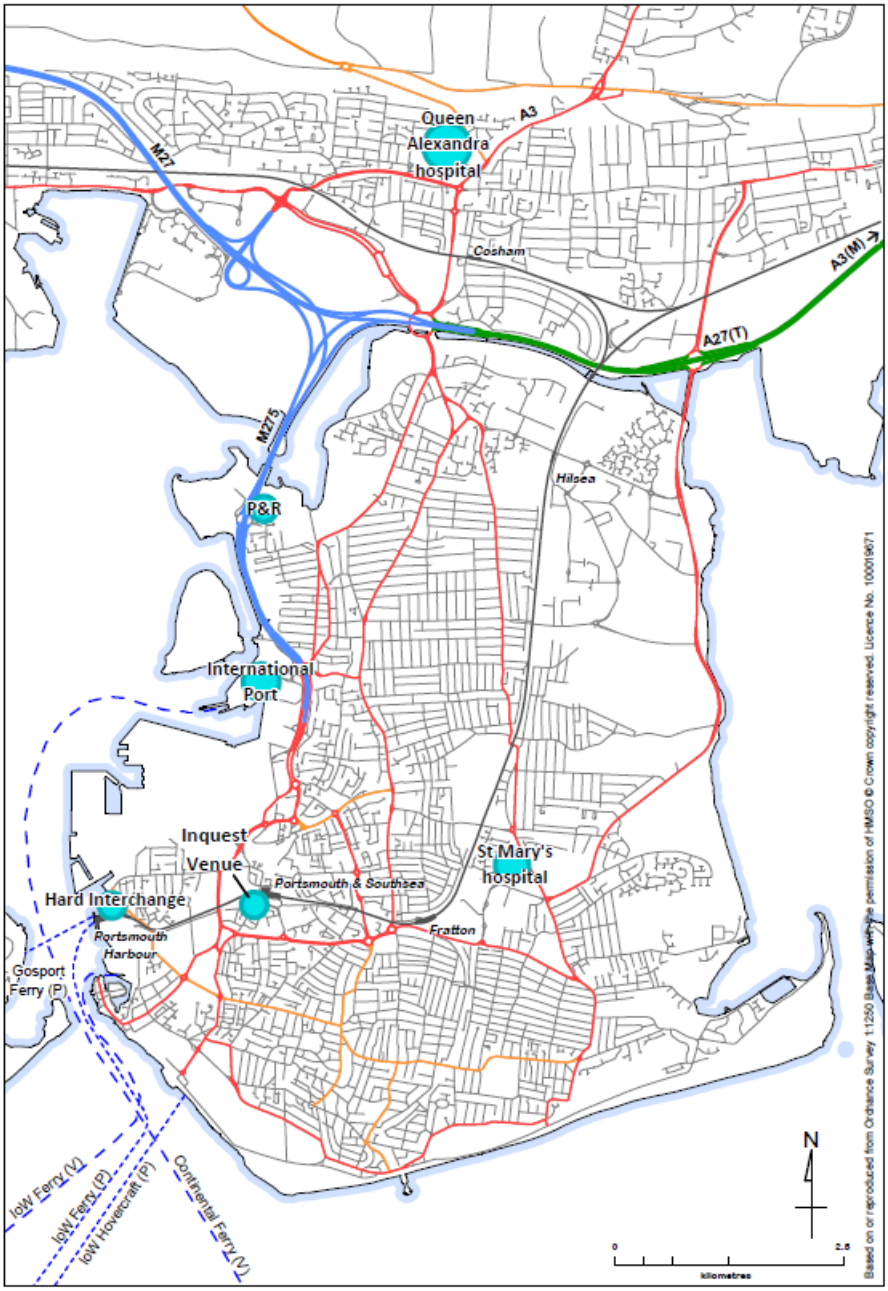
Coroner area	**Portsmouth & South East Hampshire**	**Isle of Wight**	**Portsmouth and Isle of Wight**
Geographical area covered	Portsmouth, Havant, Fareham, Gosport, Petersfield	Isle of Wight	Portsmouth City and the Isle of Wight
Local authority/ authorities that fund(s) coroner area and %	Hampshire County Council 39% / Portsmouth City Council 61% (17/18)	Isle of Wight Council	Portsmouth City Council and Isle of Wight
Relevant authority (formerly lead authority)	Portsmouth City Council	Isle of Wight	Portsmouth City Council
Police Force(s)	Hampshire Police	Hampshire Police	Hampshire Police
Transport links	A27, A3,A3(M), M275 Portsmouth and numerous local stations Ports for international cruise and freight and ferry services	The Solent - cross Solent ferries/cross channel ferries/cruise liners/freight vessels	ALL
Major hospitals	1 (Queen Alexandra Hospital)	1 (St Mary's Hospital - acute)	ALL
Prisons in area	none	HMP Isle of Wight HMP Albany	ALL
Other state detention facilities	none	none	none
Courtrooms/ inquest venues	1 (Portsmouth)	1 (Isle of Wight)	ALL
Office/staff accommodation – location and capacity	Civic Offices, Guildhall Square Portsmouth. Office suite for 6, court and jury room	Seaclose Offices. 1 general office for 2 officers, inquest room for 1 officer, office for HMC and as interview room.	ALL
Employer of coroner's officers'	Portsmouth City Council	Isle of Wight Council	Portsmouth City Council
Name of senior coroner	David Horsley	Caroline Sumeray	

[1] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/25/schedule/2

Coroner area	Portsmouth & South East Hampshire	Isle of Wight	Portsmouth and Isle of Wight
Number of area coroners	0	0	1 (part-time)
Number of assistant coroners	4	1	2
Number of coroner's officers	4.5 (4.04 FTE)	2.5	6.5
Number of administrative support staff	1.5 (1.5 FTE)	2	3.5
Number of deaths reported in 2018/19	2,643	835	3,478
Inquests held in 2018/19	289	120	409
Post mortem rate as % of reported deaths in the previous calendar year	40%	53%	40%

- IOW to provide map of the area showing the current position and the position in the event of a merger. Both maps should show details of for instance inquest venues, hospitals, prisons and transport links.

- PCC Map of existing and the proposed position (no changes)



SENIOR CORONER APPOINTMENT

- Why are you seeking a merger now (ie which area's senior coroner is stepping down, when and why)?

  - This merger is proposed to follow national policy established by the Chief Coroner to merge smaller coronial areas and to replace part time and acting Coroners with full time equivalents with a much larger case load.
  - Senior Coroner David Horsley has announced his intention to retire at the end of October 2019. At present his coroner's jurisdiction comprises of Portsmouth and South East Hampshire. Portsmouth City Council are the lead local authority for this area, with Hampshire County Council providing funding

for the number of deaths which occur within the South East Hampshire boundaries.
- The proposal is to merge the Portsmouth area with the Isle of Wight.
- The proposed merger provides an opportunity to create a larger district comprising of one local authority lead coroner's jurisdiction and to reduce the number of Senior Coroners.

- How do you propose to appoint the senior coroner for the new merged area – (i.e. does the relevant authority propose to appoint one of the senior coroners from the affected areas or to hold an open competition)?
- The recommendation is for the existing two coroner areas to be merged into a single area. The merged area will require one full time Senior Coroner who will be supported by one part-time area coroner and assistant coroners as required. Appointment will be made in line with Guidance 14 - Merger of Coroner Areas.

- Are all affected senior coroners aware of and content with this approach?
- IOW HMC is aware of the changes pending in Portsmouth and will need to be provided with the details of any proposals - as part of the consultation process
- PCC HMC is aware and content with the proposals.

IMPACT OF PROPOSED MERGER ON SERVICE DELIVERY

- What will be the impact of the proposed merger on service delivery?
- The merger will have a positive impact on service delivery.
- There will be better resilience and allow the coronial service to better deal with fluctuations in demand.
- Use of the WPC (caseload management system) will be more consistent and best utilised.
- Staffing continuity across service area will benefit from greater resilience, sickness/caseload managed via WPC from elsewhere within the area.
- Local justice will be retained
- There will be an improved responsiveness to future demand
- Improved outcomes, including improved inquest timeliness and performance.
- An increase in available support should mass fatality occur, more staff in the area to cope, more resources already shared (hospitals/pathologists etc)
- A more consistent and better use of technology at inquests
- The harmonisation of working practices and policies which should generate efficiency savings and bring economies of scale.

- Will additional coronial or administrative support be provided in the new area? (eg. will additional coroners need to be recruited or will workloads be increased/redistributed etc? How will additional caseloads be managed?)
- The merged area will deal with approximately 2,500 deaths per annum.
- In order to provide resilience and support to the Senior Coroner, it is intended to hold an open competition to appoint a part time Area Coroner.
- It is expected that the existing officers and administration staff provided by IOW will TUPE to be employed by PCC following a consultation process.

- What will be the impact of the merger on associated services – such as post-mortem examinations, and mortuary provision?
- In the first instance there will be a positive impact in that a standard consistent approach will emerge leading to greater efficiency, economy and outcomes

- It is envisaged that secondary benefits will as also be gained by obtaining efficiencies from aggregating the various supply chains into one.
- Body storage and post mortem facilities are currently based at two NHS hospitals across the proposed merger area in Queen Alexandra Hospital (Portsmouth) and St Mary's Hospital (Isle of Wight). There will be no change in the location of these post mortem examinations or mortuary provision.

- How will the relevant local authority administer the new coroner area?
- Portsmouth City Council proposes to be the relevant local authority for the new coroner area. They will provide financial and HR support for the new coroner area.

- How will administrative governance be achieved between the relevant local authority and other funding local authorities?
- The Isle of Wight Council and Portsmouth City Council already have an established working relationship and on approval of the merger, both authorities will enter into legally binding agreements that clearly set out the provision of the service, accountability, responsibilities, monitoring arrangements and financial arrangements.

- How will the affected local authorities manage budgets?
- Budgets will be managed on a full open book accounting basis, where costs are split between the member authorities based on the existing formula based on case load.
- Regular recharges of proportionate costs to be levied (quarterly as a maximum).
- Any existing contractual arrangements currently in place with Isle of Wight Council will be managed by Portsmouth City Council upon merger and when these come to an end, it is hoped that new procurement of services will achieve economies of scale and create financial savings which will benefit both authorities.

IMPACT OF MERGER ON THOSE WORKING IN / WITH THE SERVICE

- What will be the impact of the merger on:
  Coroners (eg. will the workloads of the Senior Coroner, Area Coroner (if applicable) and assistant coroners be effected? Will all existing assistant coroners transfer to the new area? Are the current assistant coroners all currently working and being trained? Do they or will they all have the Chief Coroner's recommended 15 days a year of work?)
  - The Senior Coroner in the merged area will manage a moderate workload, equivalent to the existing Portsmouth and SE Hants area, albeit over an increased geographical area. It is proposed that a part time Area Coroner will be appointed to provide valuable support and local knowledge to the Senior Coroner.
  - Reduced out of hours disruption (shared between Senior and part-time Area Coroner)
  - Increased resilience as the IOW assistant Coroner is due to retire in 2019.

  Coroners' officers

- Coroner officers in Portsmouth are employed by PCC with some on police terms and conditions. Coroner officers in IOW will TUPE to be employed by Portsmouth City Council. Staff will remain in their current locations.
- Increased support and resilience. As the service continues to improve digitally, working across different locations will be straightforward and acceptable, resulting in an equality of workload distribution across both areas. Use of IT will support the Coroner's Officers and aid closer working and communication with colleagues.

Other staff in the coroner's offices

- Team leader is employed with PCC terms and conditions
- Back office support of the PCC coroner service - finance, HR, Payroll, payments and income - unaffected. HCC support service will increase.
- Needs IOW addition
- Court hearings would remain at Portsmouth and IOW, any existing court support staff will continue to support the Senior Coroner in these locations when the court is sitting

Pathologists

- Post mortems would continue to take place in Portsmouth and IOW hospitals so there will be no impact on pathologists. The merged area will provide further resilience in the IOW.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF MERGER

- What will be the impact of the merger on resources in terms of:
  Costs of delivering the service – existing costs and predicted costs for amalgamated area (see tables in Annex A which may assist with this)
  - Increased buying power may produce better value contracts in areas including toxicology and funeral directors (removals);
  - A potential opportunity to retain pathologist services.
  - The consistent approach from a single Senior Coroner directive will potentially make savings in contracts such as histology.
  - A single unified service will increase resilience, and streamline processes and procedures.

  Accommodation for staff - none.

  Inquest accommodation
  - Each area already contains a court/inquest venue which will be retained. There will be increased flexibility in availability and a choice of location for inquests.

  IT
  - Both Portsmouth City Council and the Isle of Wight currently use WPC. Discussions will be held with this provider to unify the contracts and for the systems to merge, allowing all staff and Coroners to see cases for the entire merged area. Potential to reduce licence costs

  Post mortem examination costs (including transport and storage) for each area.
  - Deceased persons will continue to be removed to mortuaries in Portsmouth and IOW so the transport and storage arrangements are not expected to change, other than any contracts being transferred to the lead Authority

- Post mortem examinations will continue to be held within the hospital trusts using hospital pathologists.
- Better technology will reduce the expert and witness expenses
- Improved methods of working and streamlining of processes will improve timeliness, reduce costs and result in efficiency savings across the service.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- Are you aware of any legal issues that need to be resolved before a merger can go ahead (in addition to the Lord Chancellor making an order under Schedule 2 of the 2009 Act)? If so please give details.

No

VIEWS OF THOSE AFFECTED BY MERGER

- Do all affected local authorities support the merger? Please provide details.

- Have the local authority councillors / cabinets approved the merger? Please provide details.
  - Initially this paper will drive approval at PCC.
  - IOW would seek LA approval after consultation has taken place.

- What is the view of affected coroners and their staff?
  - Views will be collected as part of the consultation process and this element will be updated at that point.

- How will bereaved people be affected by the merger – eg travelling to inquests, being able to contact coroners' offices?
  - There will be a positive impact on the families of the deceased with increased accessibility to the service and the courts.

- Have you sought the views of other affected stakeholders - such as police authority and constabulary, hospitals, prisons, GPs, faith groups and funeral directors? Please provide details.
  - Views will be collected as part of the consultation process and this element will be updated at that point

- What are the views of other stakeholders?
  - Views will be collected as part of the consultation process and this element will be updated at that point

- What impact will the merger have in terms of disability, gender and racial equality? None

RISKS AND MITIGATING ACTIONS

- Please provide details of any risks identified and mitigating action (to be) taken.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

- Please describe other options considered, in addition to the proposed merger, and the advantages and disadvantages for each option.

Alternative Option - Portsmouth City Council merges with Hampshire County Council

Advantages include a positive impact on service delivery, standardisation of processes, increased service resilience and harmonisation of working practices from a service led by one Senior Coroner, efficiency savings and economies of scale.

CONTACT WITH THE CHIEF CORONER'S OFFICE / MINISTRY OF JUSTICE / CONSULTEES

- Have you had previous discussions with the Chief Coroner on the proposed merger? (This is a requirement before MoJ can formally consult on the merger.) Please provide details of the discussion.

- Have you had previous contact with MoJ on the proposed merger? Please provide details.
  - PCC received a letter from MoJ in December 2018 proposing a merger of the 4 existing Hampshire County Coroner areas. A meeting was held on 7th February 2019 at the Royal Courts of Justice between the Chief Coroner, Ministry of Justice, Senior Coroners and representatives from both Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council. The Chief Coroner, along with representatives from MoJ expressed their support for a merger of the four existing coronial areas.

- Are you happy for this business case in its entirety to be sent to all consultees? If not please provide details.

- Please list consultees for the consultation on the proposed merger – the organisation's name and the most appropriate email address - at **Annex B**. MoJ will remove email addresses from **Annex B** before sending the business case to consultees.

- Further information on the merger process is available in the form of Chief Coroner guidance at: http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/guidance-14-mergers-of-coroner-areas.pdf.

Annex A

Resource implications of the merger

Table A: Details of current Senior Coroners and Area Coroner/s (if applicable) in ***each existing coroner area***

Position ***(eg Senior Coroner, Area Coroner)***	**First name**	**Surname**	**Current salary** *(including National Insurance and pension contributions)*	**Long Inquest Payments** ***(if applicable)*** **or other additional payments**	**Proposed salary in amalgamated area** ***(if applicable*****)** *(including National Insurance and pension contributions)*
Senior Coroner - Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	David	Horsley	2018/19: £157,400	2018/19 - none	New Senior Coroner and part time Area Coroner salary to be agreed by the LA
			2017/18: £144,870	2017/18: - none	
Senior Coroner - Isle of Wight	Caroline	Sumeray	2018/19: £35,800	2018/19: £74,000	
			2017/18: £35,500	2017/18: £80,605	

Table B: Office costs

Category	**Portsmouth & South East Hampshire**	**Isle of Wight**	
Fees for Assistant Coroner(s)	£41,000	£1,100	The appointment of an Area Coroners will reduce the use of Assistant Coroners
Salary costs of Coroner's officer(s) *(including National Insurance and pension contributions)*	£162,500	£76,200	£238,700
Salary costs of administrative staff *(including National Insurance and pension contributions)*	£41,400	£2,500	£43,900
Staff and Inquest accommodation	£45,000	£19,000	£64,000
IT costs	£17,100	£16,000	£33,100
Post mortem/Pathologist costs etc	£770,300	£387,100	£1,157,400
Other costs?	£21,400	£30,800	£52,200

Annex B

List of consultees

[Please include:

- *All effected Senior Coroners, Area Coroners and Assistant Coroners in the areas in question;*
- *relevant local authority contacts from all neighbouring coroner areas (MoJ can assist with this if necessary);*
- *all MP's with constituencies within the effected coroner areas;*
- *pathologist contacts;*
- *representatives of local funeral directors within the effected coroner areas;*
- *representatives from hospitals and/or prisons within the area;*
- *the Chief Coroner (MoJ will have the relevant contact details)*
- *local police contacts(MoJ can assist with this if necessary and will include a national ACPO contact as standard))*

Organisation	**Email address** *(please note these will be removed when business case is sent to consultees)*
David Horsley (Senior Coroner)	David.horsley@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Robert Stone (Deputy Coroner)	Robert.stone@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Samantha Marsh (Assistant Coroner)	Samantha.marsh@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Lincoln Brookes (Assistant Coroner)	Lincoln.brookes@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Steven Lewsley (Team Leader)	Steven.lewsley@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
David Gregory (Coroners Officer)	David.gregory@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Karen Hamilton (Coroners Officer)	Karen.hamilton@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Karen Hyde (Coroners Officer)	Karen.hyde@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Sophie Simpson (Coroners Officer/Admin Assistant)	Sophie.simpson@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Lisa John (Coroners Officer)	Lisa.john@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Lorraine Porter (Superintendent Registrar)	Lorraine.porter@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Portsmouth City Councillors	fullcouncil@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
PCC Pathologists	
Hampshire Constabulary	
Hampshire Fire Service	
South Central Ambulance Service	
Stephen Morgan MP Portsmouth South	stephen.morgan.mp@parliament.uk
Penny Mordaunt MP Portsmouth North	penny.mordaunt.mp@parliament.u
David Williams PCC Chief Executive	David.williams@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Stephen Baily Director of Culture and Regulatory Services (PCC)	Stephen.baily@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Association of Chief of Police Officers (ACPO)	
Community Safety Team PCC	CommunitySafety@Portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Portsmouth NHS Trust, Queen Alexandra Hospital (QAH)	
Bereavement Services Manager (QAH)	
Dignity Funeral Services	
Barrells Funeral Services	

Faith and Equality Groups	
West Sussex Coroner Service	hm.coroner@westsussex.gov.uk