

## ITEM 2.6: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SENTENCING COMMISSIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### Purpose

1. To seek views on Council attendance at the US National Association of Sentencing Commissions 2016 Annual Conference.

### Background

2. The National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) is a non-profit organisation, comprising 23 sentencing commissions and councils, that was created to educate and facilitate knowledge and information on issues related to sentencing policies, guidelines and commissions.
3. The NASC holds a conference each year involving judges, legislators, prisons officials, policy makers, academics, researchers, and practitioners from around the US to consider experiences with sentencing laws and practices and to discuss emerging issues and innovations.
4. The 2016 Conference will be held on 7-9 August and will be hosted by the Utah Sentencing Commission in Salt Lake City. The theme is *Examining the Interactions between Policy and Sentencing*. The draft programme is provided at **Paper 2.6A**.

### Discussion

5. While the focus of the Conference will be on the US experience, it offers a unique opportunity to engage with a large number of sentencing bodies (some of which have been in existence for many years) in a short timeframe. The Secretariat considers that the conference is timeous, given the Council is in the early stages of its work, and that a number of the planned sessions will explore issues which are either of direct relevance to the Council's current work or are relevant to wider developments in sentencing policy and practice in Scotland, for example, the sessions titled:
  - Evidence-Based Short-Term Interventions for Lower Level Offenses.
  - Collaborative Approaches to Reversing the School-to-Prison Pipeline

- Public Attitudes Toward Criminal History Enhancements: What Do the People Think?
- How do sentencing commissions stay relevant?
- The Role of Guidelines in Delivering Procedural Justice
- How High Profile Cases Impact Sentencing Policy

#### *Cost*

6. While every effort would be made to minimise costs, we estimate that the cost of attendance, including travel and subsistence, accommodation and registration, will be significantly higher than other visits undertaken and would amount to up to £2,000 - £3,000 per person, for flights, accommodation and subsistence for the duration of the 3 day conference and travel time at either side. If the Council wishes to have a presence at the Conference we would suggest two members and one member of staff should attend. To compare, the total cost of the recent visits to Belfast and Dublin, which involved an overnight stay by 5 individuals for a single day's visit, was around £1,500.
7. It is recommended that 3 Council representatives attend, at a cost between £6,000 to £9,000, comprising: 1 judicial member, 1 lay member and 1 member of the Secretariat.
8. While the cost is significant it is within the Council's budget and we consider the costs of attendance justifiable in terms of the likely benefits. To maximise the value of attendance we would seek to identify opportunities for sharing learning with other organisations on return.

#### *Timing*

9. It should be noted that flights to Utah may take between 16-24 hours (including stopovers), so the time commitment for attendees will be significant. We would expect attendees would need to depart on 5 August at the latest for a return on 10 August at the earliest.

**Recommendation**

- 10. Members are invited to consider whether 3 Council representatives (1 judicial and 1 lay member along with 1 member of the Secretariat) should attend the NASC conference. If so, notes of interest in attendance are invited.**

**Scottish Sentencing Council Secretariat**

**June 2016**