

ITEM 4.2 – 2018/19 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Purpose

1. To recommend priority areas for research in the 2018/19 financial year to the Council.

Background

2. On 05 March 2018, the Council was updated on topic areas and major research projects under consideration by the Research Committee. The Committee met on 28 March 2018 to finalise its recommendations to the Council on priority areas and agree a project plan to support the Council's work in 2018/19.
3. This paper proposes priority areas based upon the Council's current work plan. These areas have been recommended by the Research Committee. These are, in priority order for 2018/19:
 - young people;
 - sentencing process;
 - sexual offences;
 - death by driving offences; and
 - environmental and wildlife offences.
4. Priority areas for research in the 2018/19 financial year require Council approval.

Priority research areas

5. The proposed priority areas reflect the guidelines currently in development or research already underway, as well as the Council's agreed business plan for the 2015-18 period. A short summary of work under each is set out below; further detail on individual research projects is provided in **paper 4.3**.

Young people

6. A first draft of the Young People guideline is expected to be developed during 2018. An extension to the work on public perceptions was undertaken in March and the additional data is currently being analysed. The literature review was re-tendered in April and the successful bidder has begun work. Some additional work may be required to support the creation of this guideline; while no specific projects have been identified by the young people committee to date, the committee intends to give further consideration to this following its recent discussion with various subject matter experts (in May 2018). It is likely, however, that this guideline will not require any significant additional research projects during 2018/19 beyond the literature review.

Sentencing Process

7. Although no significant research need is expected from the Sentencing Process guideline, it should be noted that both the judicial and public consultations for this guideline are expected to fall in the 2018/19 financial year.

Sexual Offences

8. The Council committed in its 2015-18 business plan to begin early work on sexual offences during the 2017/18 financial year. This will consist of initial scoping and exploratory work to inform future Council decisions in this area. The current timetable proposes primary sexual offences research to begin in Q4 2018, with desk based scoping work having already begun with work being undertaken by the current Ph.D. intern.

Death by Driving

9. Development of the death by driving guideline is expected to begin in 2018. Work on judicial engagement and sentencing patterns will be undertaken shortly by the secretariat, supported by a temporary research officer. Some additional work is also expected to take place during the 2018/19 financial year.

Environmental and Wildlife

10. Work has recently been completed on a legislative scoping exercise via the SGSSS Ph.D. internship scheme. An externally commissioned literature review is currently underway. Development of the environmental and wildlife offences guideline is expected to be relatively low priority in 2018/19, with higher priority in 2019/20. Limited additional research to support this process is expected in 2018/19 as a result.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to:

- a. **comment on the proposed research priority areas; and**
- b. **agree the research priority areas, subject to any amendments suggested.**