

## MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH SENTENCING COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Monday 3 September, Parliament House, Edinburgh

### Minutes

- Members present:** Sheriff Norman McFadyen (Chair)  
John Scott QC  
Sue Moody  
Summary Sheriff Jillian Martin-Brown
- Secretariat:** Graham Ackerman (Secretary)  
Stuart Ritchie (Communications Officer)
- Apologies:** None

### 1) PROCEEDINGS

#### *Item 1.1: Draft minutes of last meeting*

1. Subject to the correction of a small error, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

#### *Item 1.2: Progress of actions*

2. An update was provided on the action points from the previous meeting, as follows:
  - **AP1 - Communications Officer to research the approach taken to accessibility by justice partners**

An Accessibility Report has been circulated and members asked to provide comments by correspondence

- **AP2 – Communications Officer to provide website report on a regular basis**

A report has been provided to members and will be covered at item 2.2.

- **AP3 – Communications Officer to update speaker and delegate lists for sexual offences conference**

The Chair noted the success of the conference, which took place at the end of June, and thanked everyone involved.

- **AP4 – Communications Officer to continue ongoing website development**

The Chair reported that the Communications Officer is undertaking a review of the website and that a report will be submitted to next meeting of Communications Committee.

## 2) COMMUNICATION PLANNING

### *Item 2.1: Launch of Business Plan 2018-2021 and Principles and Purposes*

#### *Guideline*

3. The Communications Officer reported that the 2018-2021 Business Plan must be submitted to the Scottish Ministers by 19 October 2018. The plan is expected to be discussed and finalised by Council members at their September meeting. The Principles and Purposes of Sentencing guideline is also likely to be submitted to High Court of Justiciary for approval within the next few weeks.
4. Members discussed **Paper 2.1**, which set out a number of proposals to help in communicating the launch of both the Business Plan and Principles and Purposes of Sentencing guideline. The Committee welcomed the plan and asked the secretariat to proceed, providing regular updates to members as appropriate.

5. Members also agreed to discuss further the possibility of holding some public events across Scotland during the 2018-21 period to highlight the work of the Council and seek views on particular pieces of work (for example, during the public consultation period for future draft guidelines).

#### **ACTION POINTS**

**AP1:** *Secretariat to take forward the communications plan in relation to the launch of the 2018-21 business plan and principles and purposes of sentencing guideline.*

**AP2:** *Committee to hold further discussions in due course about potential public events during the 2018-21 period.*

#### *Item 2.2: General update*

6. Members discussed a report circulated by the Communications Officer highlighting relevant media coverage and statistics from the Council's website.

#### **ACTION POINTS**

**AP3:** *Secretariat to provide a general update to the Committee on a quarterly basis.*

### **3) ENGAGEMENT**

#### *Item 3.1: Meetings with MSPs*

7. The Council previously asked the Communications Committee to arrange introductory meetings with justice spokespeople within the Scottish Parliament as part of its engagement programme. It was noted that a meeting is to take place on 10 September 2018 with the Labour spokesperson. The Conservative, Liberal Democrat, and Green spokespersons have also indicated they would like to meet.

*Item 3.2 : Letter from Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland*

8. The Committee considered a letter from the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland, raising some concerns about the possibility of confusion should both organisations use the abbreviation SSC.
9. Members agreed it would be reasonable to avoid using SSC in circumstances where this would be likely to cause confusion but, given the Council's statutory title, there will inevitably be occasions (particularly on social media) where its use is unavoidable.
10. Members agreed that the secretariat should respond to the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland on that basis.

**ACTION POINTS**

**AP4:      *Secretariat to respond to the correspondence from the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland.***

**4) MEDIA ENQUIRES**

*Item 4.1: Latest media enquiries*

11. The Communications Officer provided an update on media enquires received since the previous committee meeting. These mainly focussed on sexual offences and the principles and purposes of sentencing guideline.
12. The Committee discussed the recent campaign from Dundee Evening Telegraph calling for custodial sentences for anyone committed of sexual offences involving children, and the possibility of engaging with the Telegraph to discuss this in due course.