



Michael McMahon MSP
Convener,
Public Petitions Committee
C/O:
Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP

Judicial Office for Scotland
Parliament House
Edinburgh
EH1 1RQ

By email: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

06 January 2016

Dear Convener,

**PETITION PE1565 – WHOLE OF LIFE SENTENCES FOR VIOLENT RE-OFFENDERS
PETITION PE1572 – OCCUPATIONAL DISCLOSURE IN TRIALS AND SENTENCING**

I write on behalf of the Scottish Sentencing Council following its inaugural meeting on 14 December, at which consideration was given to the Committee's correspondence on Petitions PE1565 and PE1572.

Under the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, the Council is required to prepare a 3 year business plan. At its meeting of 14 December 2015, the Council gave consideration to various matters for inclusion in its business plan, a draft of which will be tabled for discussion at the next Council meeting of 7 March 2016.

To assist with the development of its business plan, the Council has agreed, among other things, to consider how best to gather views on appropriate matters for guidelines and what criteria should be taken into consideration when selecting and prioritising matters for guidelines. The Council agreed to consider whether the issues raised in Petitions PE1565 and PE1572 should form part of its work programme as part of the wider work on the development of its business plan over the coming months. The Committee may find it helpful to note that in preparing the plan, the Council is required (under section 12 of the 2010 Act) to consult the Scottish Ministers, the Lord Advocate, the Lord Justice General, and any other persons it considers appropriate. A final decision as to the Council's final work programme for the period 2015-2018 will be made once this statutory consultation is complete.

I note that Petition PE1565 on 'whole life sentences for violent reoffenders' was closed by the Committee on 8 December 2015. I would be happy to update the Committee as to the Council's final decision on these matters in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Ondine Tennant

Secretary to the Scottish Sentencing Council

sentencingcouncil@scotcourts.gov.uk