

MEETING OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

12 FEBRUARY 2021

MINUTES

Members present:

Tim Holroyde (Chairman)
Rosina Cottage
Rebecca Crane
Nick Ephgrave
Michael Fanning
Diana Fawcett
Adrian Fulford
Max Hill
Jo King
Juliet May
Maura McGowan
Alpa Parmar
Beverley Thompson

Apologies:

Rosa Dean

Representatives:

Hanna van den Berg for the Lord Chief Justice
(Legal and Policy Advisor to the Head of Criminal
Justice)
Phil Douglas for the Lord Chancellor (Head of
Custodial Sentencing Policy)

Members of Office in
attendance:

Steve Wade
Vicky Hunt
Ruth Pope

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 1.1 The minutes from the meeting of 29 January 2021 were agreed subject to amendments.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The Chairman reported that the oral evidence session before the Justice Committee of the House of Commons on the work of the Sentencing Council on 2 February had gone well
- 2.2 The Chairman noted two changes in the office of the Sentencing Council. He welcomed Beth Brewer, an intern who is working the analysis and research team for three months, and noted that this would be the last Council meeting for Elaine Wedlock, head of the social research team, who is leaving to take up a post with the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice.

3. DISCUSSION ON FIREARMS IMPORTATION – PRESENTED BY RUTH POPE, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

- 3.1 The Council discussed the scope and format of a guideline for firearms importation offences. It was agreed that the guideline should cover offences contrary to sections 50 and 170 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 and should relate to the importation of firearms and ammunition only. In order to reflect the wide range of offending and sentence outcomes for the offences, the guideline should first consider the type of weapon before considering other culpability and harm factors.
- 3.2 The Council agreed that two sentencing tables (one for offences subject to a seven year maximum and one for those with a maximum life sentence) could provide the required range of sentence outcomes.
- 3.3 The Council agreed to set up a working group to make recommendations to the full Council on the factors to be included and on the detail of the sentence levels.

4. DISCUSSION ON ROBBERY – PRESENTED BY VICKY HUNT, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

- 4.1 The Council discussed the findings of the cumulative impacts report, specifically in relation to the impact of the robbery guideline.
- 4.2 The Council concluded that it should continue to monitor the impact of the robbery guideline to see if sentencing severity changes over the next year or so. It was also agreed that, at this stage, no revision of the guideline is required. Whilst the guideline may have led to an increase in sentence severity, the guideline is working well and it is appropriate

that the most serious cases, involving firearms and knives, receive the highest sentences.

5. DISCUSSION ON GUIDELINE PRIORITY– PRESENTED BY STEVE WADE, OFFICE OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

- 5.1 The Council agreed that pending a fuller discussion of its priorities, the next guidelines to be developed should be:
- motoring offences causing death and serious injury and other motoring offences not yet covered by Sentencing Council guidelines; and
 - witness intimidation and perverting the course of justice.