Dear Bob,

TAILORED REVIEW OF THE SENTENCING COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter of 18 July setting out the Justice Committee’s response to my department’s Tailored Review of the Sentencing Council. I am sorry that, inadvertently, the review’s Terms of Reference did not refer to the Committee as a stakeholder, particularly given its role as a statutory consultee.

I have noted the Committee’s comments regarding the limited questions on governance and independence. The Tailored Review of the Sentencing Council was intended to be “light-touch”, being shorter, and more proportionate to the size and budget of the Council than a full review. The review’s focus, as set out in its Terms of Reference, was on the functions, efficiency, effectiveness and governance of the Council, however, stakeholder interviews were not limited to these high-level areas and interviewees were able to draw to the review team’s attention any matters that they considered to be important to the work of the Council.

I acknowledge the point raised by the Committee, that the review does not consider the Council’s future functions, wider sentencing policy and the prison population. As outlined above, the scope of this review was to address current functions. I do acknowledge the Committee’s interest in these topics, however.

The contributions of parliamentarians to Tailored Reviews are vital and help to ensure that a wide and diverse range of opinions are considered providing balance and authority to the review. The Committee’s comments, along with those from the other participants in the review, will be taken fully into account in the report’s final recommendations.

My department will continue to engage and consult with the Justice Committee on future Tailored Reviews. I will ensure my officials share the final report with the Committee once it is published in the autumn.

RT HON DAVID GAUKE MP

8 August 2018