



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Baroness Taylor of Bolton
Chair of the Constitution Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

22 January 2020

Dear Ann,

Thank you for your letter relating to the Ministry of Justice's legislative programme, and for your kind words on my appointment as Lord Chancellor. Following the Queen's Speech, my department is working at pace to prepare all of our legislative commitments for introduction and I will ensure that you are kept up to date on their progress. I am delighted to be bringing forward such a substantial package of measures which will advance both the Government's and my own priorities for the justice system.

Like you, I am aware of the need to sequence Bills on sentencing to preserve the essential work of the Law Commission in this area. We must ensure that we can maximise on the benefits of the consolidation Bills, and in light of this you will have seen that I introduced the Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill into the House of Lords yesterday. I hope to be able to bring forward the Sentencing Code in good time as well.

As you know, the PCA Bill paves the way for the Law Commission's Sentencing Code, which will consolidate the law on sentencing procedure in England and Wales. The aim of the Code is to assist judges and legal professionals in identifying and applying the law, reduce the risk of error, appeals and delay in the sentencing process, and enhance the transparency of the process for the general public. I thank you for your support for these Bills, and look forward to discussing our other legislation relating to sentencing with you once it is prepared for introduction.

I am aware of the interest of this Committee, as well as several members of the House of Lords, in the progress of the Courts and Tribunals Online Procedure Bill. I remain committed to this legislation, as well as to the court reform programme as a whole, and will look for any opportunities to bring these Bills forward if parliamentary time allows. Of course, you will be aware that my department does have a full legislative programme for this Session, so while I am keen to move forward with court reform legislation it is possible that Bills on this may not be introduced until later in this session, or until the next parliamentary session.

Should you require further information on any of my department's legislative commitments, my department will be happy to provide it. I look forward to working with you and the Constitution Committee on our Bills for this Session.

Yours ever,
Robert

RT HON ROBERT BUCKLAND QC MP