

## **Justice Committee**

### **Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill**

#### **Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to the Convener**

As you know, Lord Bonomy has been leading the Post-corroboration Safeguards Review since February 2014. Lord Bonomy and his Reference Group have now completed their review, and published the full report with recommendations on the review's website: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00475400.pdf>

This is a substantial piece of work, with significant commitment not just from Lord Bonomy, but also from his 18-strong Reference Group, which is made up of respected figures from across the justice system. You will be aware that there has been public consultation and a detailed academic study undertaken as part of the review.

This afternoon I made a statement to Parliament in light of the review's publication, and I wanted to ensure that the Justice Committee is aware of impact on the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill.

Lord Bonomy's recommendations are substantial and complex, and I want to take the time to consider them fully. I also recognise that we have not achieved a consensus on whether the corroboration requirement is the best way to improve access to justice for victims, and I have considered the Justice Committee's comments in the Stage 1 report on this.

I intend to look at Lord Bonomy's detailed recommendations as a package, alongside the corroboration requirement itself, and form a view on the best way forward. I do not believe there is sufficient time to complete this work before the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill resumes its Parliamentary passage. Therefore the Government is now proposing, subject to Stage 2 consideration, that Bill should therefore proceed without the provisions abolishing the corroboration requirement, and without the related increase in the jury majority required for conviction.

I will consider whether any of the Review's recommendations could be taken forward this Parliamentary session, as I am aware that some of the recommendations are relevant to Part 1 of the Bill. If we are intending to take forward any changes in the Bill, I will ensure we give the Committee as much notice as possible of any amendments. However, I believe that the majority of Lord Bonomy's recommendations will require longer consideration.

Michael Matheson  
Cabinet Secretary for Justice  
21 April 2015