



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

- Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA
Mr Paul Frew MLA
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
- Apologies: Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Mr Doug Beattie MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA
- In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Peter Madine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Allison Mealey (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 3.31 p.m. in open session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the oral evidence session should be reported by Hansard.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27 February 2020.

3. Matters Arising

Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work programme for March 2020, which included oral evidence sessions on the proposals for Legislative Consent Motions for The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill and The Air Traffic Management of Unmanned Aircraft Bill on 19 March 2020.

The Committee considered a request from the Department of Justice to schedule the oral evidence session on the proposed Legislative Consent Motion for the Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill on 12 March to meet the Westminster timetable.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the oral evidence session on the proposed Legislative Consent Motion for the Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill should be scheduled for the meeting on 12 March 2020.

Mr P McGlone MLA joined the meeting at 3.33p.m

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for March 2020.

4. Overview Briefing on Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.34 p.m.

Jacqui Durkin, Chief Inspector, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

James Corrigan, Deputy Chief Inspector, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

The officials provided an overview briefing on the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland and key issues and priorities.

The oral evidence session was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

5. Draft Organised Crime Strategy for Northern Ireland – Proposed Consultation

The Committee considered proposals by the Department of Justice to undertake an eight-week public consultation on a draft Organised Crime Strategy for Northern Ireland for 2020-2023.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the consultation to take place and it would consider the draft Organised Crime Strategy further when the results of the consultation are available.

6. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a letter from the Committee for Finance asking it to explore, with the Department of Justice, issues regarding the low cost associated with writs relating to procurement contracts following amendments to the Public Contracts Regulations and possible remedies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Justice and ask it to reply directly to the Committee for Finance on the issues raised and provide the Committee with a copy of the response.

- ii. The Committee considered a response to its letter asking whether the Department of Justice intended to bring forward the legislative changes to Schedule 1A of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 proposed by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Justice and ask for a more definitive timescale within which it would consider this matter.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the response to BASC for information and advise them that the Committee has requested the timescale within which the Department will consider this matter.

- iii. The Committee considered a memo from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) advising that it will hold an inquiry into the NI Audit Office report on 'Mental Health in the Criminal Justice System' and asking if the Committee for Justice may wish to follow up on this work upon completion of the Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the PAC to keep it apprised of progress and the likely publication date of the PAC report.

- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Prison Officers' Association regarding a number of work related concerns in HM Prison Maghaberry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the correspondence to the Department of Justice and request a response to the issues raised.

The Committee noted the following:

- v. A response from the Department of Justice regarding the future of the RADAR Centre.
- vi. A letter from the Minister of Justice advising that the Department would be running a short advertising campaign relating to sexual consent from 9 March until the end of the month to complement existing initiatives from the PSNI and Nexus NI.
- vii. The Funds in Court in Northern Ireland Statement of Accounts for year ended 31 March 2019.

- viii. A memo from the Committee for Finance providing information on work being undertaken to support the scrutiny of the budget process by Statutory Committees.
- ix. The Prisoner Ombudsman's Report into the circumstances surrounding the death of a prisoner on 4 August 2017 in HM Prison Magilligan.

7. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee on an introductory meeting that he and the Deputy Chairperson had held with the Director of Public Prosecutions on 3 March 2020 during which the Director had offered to come to the Committee twice a year to discuss issues of mutual interest if that would be useful.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the first briefing session with the Director of Public Prosecutions would be scheduled before summer recess.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 12 March at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.36 p.m.

Linda Dillon MLA
Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Justice