



Northern Ireland Assembly

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON A BILL OF RIGHTS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 12 November 2020
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

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| Present, Room 29: | Emma Sheerin MLA (Chairperson) Mike Nesbitt MLA (Deputy Chairperson) Paula Bradshaw MLA Michelle McIlveen MLA Christopher Stalford MLA |
| Present, via StarLeaf: | Mark Durkan MLA John O'Dowd MLA (deputising for Carál Ní Chuilín MLA) |
| In Attendance: | Caroline Perry (Assembly Clerk) Gareth Cross (Clerical Officer) |

The meeting commenced in open session at 2.02 p.m.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Briefing by Dominic Grieve QC on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and a possible Northern Ireland Bill of Rights

Dominic Grieve QC, former Attorney General for England and Wales, joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2.03 p.m.

He provided evidence on a possible Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, on the significance of the rights in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the consequences for them as a result of the UK leaving the EU. The briefing also reflected on how the position of the Charter is affected by the creation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol in the Withdrawal Agreement.

John O'Dowd joined the meeting at 2:09pm

Michelle McIlveen joined the meeting at 2:16pm.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 2:18pm.

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

The Chairperson thanked Dominic for his evidence.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chair told the Committee that she had hosted the virtual launch of its Bill of Rights consultation on Thursday 5 November. She said that some stakeholders had asked for an extension to the consultation period, given the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. She also referred to a letter sent to the Committee from the Women's Policy Group NI requesting the same.

Agreed: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to extend the consultation period to 12 weeks, until 29 January 2021.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5 November 2020.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from Dermot Nesbitt, former Minister of the Environment and a negotiator for the UUP during the multi-party talks leading to the Belfast Agreement, who gave evidence to the Committee on 15 October 2020.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson referred Members to the draft Forward Work Programme.

Members noted the Forward Work Programme.

8. Any other business

Paula Bradshaw suggested the Committee write to the Executive Office to request an update on the progress made in recruiting the Expert Panel.

Agreed: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to request an update on the progress made in recruiting the Expert Panel from the Executive Office.

9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 19 November 2020 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 3.38 p.m.

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Chairperson, Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights