



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)  
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Doug Beattie MLA  
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA  
Mr Paul Frew MLA  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA  
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Mr Patsy McGlone MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darragh (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Peter Madine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mrs Allison Mealey (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. in open session.*

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

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30 January 2020.

### **3. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice setting out the anticipated timescale for the Domestic Abuse Bill.

The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson were due to meet the Minister of Justice early next week and would raise the concerns expressed by the Committee about the proposed timescale for the Bill.

### **4. Overview Briefing on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.02 p.m.:

Peter Luney, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service  
Elaine Topping, Head of Court Operations, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service  
Gillian McClearn, Head of Tribunals and Enforcement, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service  
Sharon Hetherington, Head of Modernisation Programme, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service

The officials provided an overview briefing on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide further information on a number of issues.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

### **5. Overview Briefing on the Reducing Offending Directorate/ Youth Justice Agency**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.38 p.m.:

Ronnie Armour, Director, Reducing Offending Directorate, Department of Justice  
Paul Doran, Director of Rehabilitation, Reducing Offending Division, Department of Justice  
Declan McGeown, Chief Executive, Youth Justice Agency  
Dr Geraldine O'Hare, Director of Rehabilitation, Probation Board

The officials provided an overview briefing on the work being undertaken to achieve a long-term reduction in offending behaviour.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

## **6. Overview Briefing on the Department of Justice Budget**

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.42 p.m.:

Deborah Brown, Director, Justice Delivery Directorate, Department of Justice  
Lisa Rocks, Head of Financial Services Division, Department of Justice  
Louise Blair, Financial Services Division, Department of Justice

The officials provided an overview briefing on the Department of Justice Budget.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide further information on a number of issues.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

## **7. Statutory Instrument - The Carriage Of Dangerous Goods And Use Of Transportable Pressure Equipment (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020**

The Committee considered a UK-wide Statutory Instrument, to be made at Westminster, which would amend the Carriage of Explosives Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 to ensure a continuation of the regulatory framework following the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note SI The Carriage Of Dangerous Goods And Use Of Transportable Pressure Equipment (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020.

## **8. Examiner of Statutory Rules – First Report of Session 2019-2020**

The Committee considered the Examiner of Statutory Rules' First Report of Session 2019-2020 that covered thirty five negative resolution Statutory Rules considered by the Committee at the meetings on 23 January 2020, 28 January 2020 and 30 January 2020 and one Statutory Rule subject to the draft affirmative procedure that had not been considered by the Committee as the Department intended to bring forward a replacement Statutory Rule.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had no issues to raise with the technical elements of the following Statutory Rules:

- SR 2017/19: The County Court (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2017
- SR 2017/26: The Police Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017
- SR 2017/27: The Costs Protection (Aarhus Convention) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017
- SR 2017/36: The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Reserve (Injury Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations 2017

- SR 2019/28: The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/40: The International Joint Investigation Teams (International Agreements) (EU Exit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2018/100: The Enforcement of Fines and Other Penalties (Revocations) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2018/102: The Enforcement of Fines and Other Penalties Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2018/103: The Magistrates' Courts (Amendment No. 2) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2018/129: The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (Relevant Official Records) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2019/131: The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Reviews of Sentencing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/214: The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2017/213: The Rules of the Court of Judicature (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) 2017
- SR 2019/80: The Damages for Bereavement (Variation of Sum) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/233: The Crown Court (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/234: The County Court (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/235: The Family Proceedings (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/237: The Rules of the Court of Judicature (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) 2019
- SR 2019/238: The Magistrates' Courts (Miscellaneous Amendments) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2018/44: The Valuation Tribunal (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2019/26: The Judicial Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/165: The Review Tribunal (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/202: The Review Tribunal (Amendment No. 2) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019

- SR 2019/13: The Civil Legal Services (General) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/14: The Civil Legal Services (Financial) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/122: The Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/123: The Magistrates' Courts and County Court Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/203: The Civil Legal Services (Financial) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2018/108: The Attorney General's Human Rights Guidance (Domestic Abuse and Stalking) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2018/110: The Attorney General's Human Rights Guidance (The Application of Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 to Rape Victims and Those to Whom They Make Disclosures in Connection With a Claim for Social Security, Child Tax Credit or Anonymous Registration on the Electoral Roll) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018
- SR 2019/138: The Attorney General's Human Rights Guidance (The Use of the Irish Language) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 An tOrdú um an Treoir ón Phríomh-Atúrnae ar Chearta an Duine (Úsáid na Gaeilge) (Tuaisceart Éireann) 2019

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules was content with the explanation from the Department of Justice regarding a breach of the 21-day rule in relation to the following Statutory Rules and had no other issues to raise with the technical elements:

- SR 2019/54: The Police Pension Schemes (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/119: The Civil Legal Services (Remuneration) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2019/191: The Review Tribunal(Revocation) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019
- SR 2020/09: The Police Pensions (Additional Voluntary Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee noted the intention of the Department of Justice to bring forward a redrafted Statutory Rule, subject to the draft affirmative procedure, to replace draft SR The Witness Charter (Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017 laid on 9 January 2017 to bring the Witness Charter into operation.

The Committee noted the summary, provided by the Examiner of Statutory Rules, of the Department of Justice's submission in relation to the making of Statutory Rules in the absence of Ministers.

## **9. Draft Committee Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme for February 2020.

*Agreed:* Committee Members would submit any key issues they wished to raise with the Chief Constable at the evidence session on 13 February to the Committee Clerk to enable the session to be structured around the main themes.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme for February 2020.

## **10. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee considered correspondence from Pivotal providing a link to its first report "Moving Forward – Putting Northern Ireland on Track for the Future" and requesting an opportunity to discuss its work with the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should make contact with the organisation regarding any future justice-related work.

The Committee noted the following:

- ii. A copy of Command Paper 207 - the Police Service of Northern Ireland Service Medal – provided by the Department of Justice which had been laid in Westminster on 20 January 2020.
- iii. A notice from the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission regarding the appointment of one temporary High Court Judge in Northern Ireland.

## **11. Chairperson's Business**

### Invitation to attend a POA Area Committee Meeting

The Chairperson informed Members that he had accepted an invitation from the Prison Officers Association NI to attend a meeting of its Area Committee in April 2020.

### Request from the Children's Law Centre for an Introductory Meeting

The Chairperson informed Members that he had received a request from the Director of the Children's Law Centre for an introductory meeting and arrangements will be made for this to take place.

Request from the Chair and Chief Executive of the Probation Board for an Introductory Meeting

The Chairperson informed Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had received a request from the Chair and Chief Executive of the Probation Board for an introductory meeting and arrangements will be made for this to take place.

**12. Any Other Business**

None.

**13. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 13 February at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.19 p.m.

**Paul Givan MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Justice**