



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2020

Room 29, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie MLA*
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA*
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA*
Mr Paul Frew MLA*
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

* These Members attended the meeting via telephone conferencing

Apologies: Mr Gordon Dunne MLA
Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darragh (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10.16 a.m. in open session.

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

1. Apologies

As above.

The Clerk informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Mr Dunne had delegated authority to the Chairperson, Mr Givan and Ms Rogan had delegated authority to the Deputy Chairperson, Ms Dillon, to vote on their behalf.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4 June 2020.

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted an up-dated Forward Work Programme for June 2020.

Item 2 - Correspondence from the Minister of Justice relating to the NI Prison Service

The Committee deferred consideration of this item to later in the meeting.

4. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Evidence Session - Women’s Aid Federation NI

Ms Sonya McMullan, Regional Services Manager, Women’s Aid Federation NI joined the meeting at 10.19 a.m.

Ms McMullan outlined a number of issues in relation to the provisions of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and highlighted other relevant areas not currently covered in the Bill.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Ms McMullan for her attendance and she left the meeting.

5. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Evidence Session - Men’s Advisory Project

Ms Rhonda Lusty, Coordinator, Men’s Advisory Project NI, joined the meeting at 11.35 a.m. via telephone conferencing.

Ms Lusty outlined a number of issues in relation to the provisions of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and highlighted other relevant areas not currently covered in the Bill.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Lusty for her attendance and she left the meeting.

6. Legislative Consent Motion – Domestic Abuse Bill – Draft Committee Report

The Committee considered a draft report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the provisions in the Domestic Abuse Bill to be extended to Northern Ireland and the Legislative Consent Motion to be brought forward by the Minister of Justice.

Title Page, Contents Page and Committee Membership and Powers Page

The Committee considered the Title Page, Contents Page and Committee Membership and Powers Page as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Title Page, Contents Page and Committee Membership and Powers Page.

Background

The Committee considered the Background section of the report (paragraphs 1 to 4) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Background section of the report.

Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion

The Committee considered the Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report (paragraphs 5 to 7) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.

Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion

The Committee considered the Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report (paragraphs 8 to 11) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.

Conclusion

The Committee considered the Conclusion Section of the report as drafted (paragraph 12).

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Conclusion Section of the report.

Appendices

The Committee considered the Appendices section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Appendices be included in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairman to approve the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting for inclusion in the report. They would then be replaced by the final version of the Minutes of Proceedings once agreed by the Committee at the next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Report on the Domestic Abuse Bill Legislative Consent Motion to be published and issued to all MLAs.

7. Matters Arising (cont'd)

Item 2 - Correspondence from the Minister of Justice relating to the NI Prison Service

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Justice advising of her intention to undertake a short, focused review of the support mechanisms and procedures for staff in place in the Northern Ireland Prison Service following the debate on a Private Members' Motion on Tuesday 9 June regarding the stress experienced by staff in the Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on the proposed review including the nature of the independence of it, who will head the review, what criteria will be used to assess what is a suitably qualified individual to undertake the review and how it will link with the review referred to by the Minister of Finance into the wording of inefficiency letters.

The Committee noted the recent positive Criminal Justice Inspection Reports on Hydebank Wood Secure College and Ash House Women's Prison and commended the work and leadership of prison staff.

8. Any Other Business

The briefing by departmental officials on the UK's exit from the EU and justice related issues to be scheduled was raised.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a research paper from RaISE on the current position in relation to EU Exit plans and justice related issues.

9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 1.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.47 p.m.

Mr Paul Givan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice