



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**
COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2020

Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

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

Apologies: Mr Patsy McGlone MLA
Ms Emma Rogan MLA

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

The meeting commenced at 12.32 p.m. in open session.

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

1. Apologies

As above.

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

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 April 2020.

3. Matters Arising

Ministerial oral update on Covid-19 justice related issues

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Justice confirming her attendance at today's meeting to provide an update on Covid-19 and justice related issues.

Oral Briefing on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

The Committee noted the views of Mr McGlone MLA on the timing of the briefing on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery by departmental officials.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the oral briefing on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery should be scheduled when the research report from the Santa Marta Group is available.

Correspondence from the Minister of Justice to the Minister for Communities regarding domestic abuse victims and a range of housing issues

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Justice to the Minister for Communities regarding a range of housing issues relating to domestic abuse victims.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Justice to keep it updated on the issues.

Revised Guidance for Assembly Committees during the Public Health Crisis

The Committee noted revised guidance for Assembly Committees during the public health crisis issued on behalf of the Chairperson of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group.

Additional information following the oral evidence session with the Minister of Justice on 27 February 2020

The Committee noted a response providing further information on a range of issues following the oral evidence session with the Minister of Justice on 27 February 2020 on key justice issues, challenges and priorities.

4. Ministerial Briefing - Update on Covid-19 and Justice Related Issues

The Minister and a Department of Justice official joined the meeting at 12.37 p.m.:

Naomi Long MLA, Minister of Justice
Deborah Brown, Director, Justice Delivery Directorate, Department of Justice

Mr Frew joined the meeting at 12.40 p.m.

The Minister provided an update on Covid-19 and justice related issues.

The briefing was followed by a structured question and answer session covering a number of areas.

The Minister agreed to provide further information on a range of issues.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and official for their attendance.

The meeting was suspended at 3.06 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 3.14 p.m.

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

The Committee noted that a number of briefing papers and correspondence relating to the Covid-19 situation had been received over the past weeks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the briefing papers and correspondence on the Committee webpage to assist transparency and the provision of information.

5. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposals for Committee Stage

The Committee considered a provisional timetable for the Committee Stage of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and proposals to seek written evidence on the Bill including a draft media sign-posting notice, a draft letter seeking evidence on the Bill and a list of key stakeholders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a closing date of Friday 5 June 2020 for receipt of written evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposed timetable for the Committee Stage of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the media sign-posting notice, the list of key stakeholders and the letter to issue seeking written evidence on the Bill including the areas on which views would be particularly welcome.

6. Legislative Consent Motion - Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill – Draft Committee Report

The Committee considered a draft report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the provisions in the Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill to be

extended to Northern Ireland and the Legislative Consent Motion to be brought forward by the Minister of Justice.

The Deputy Chairperson, Ms Dillon, placed on record her continuing concerns regarding the regulation-making powers at Clause 2 of the Bill which allows the UK Government to implement international agreements on PIL in domestic law in future via secondary legislation and indicated that she was not content with the explanations provided in relation to this issue but would not object to the LCM proceeding.

Title Page and Table of Contents

The Committee considered the Title Page and Table of Contents as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Title Page and Table of Contents.

Background

The Committee considered the Background section of the report (paragraphs 1 to 7) 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 section of the report that outlined the purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion (paragraphs 8 to 10) 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 section of the report that detailed the Committee consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion (paragraphs 11 to 20) 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 21).

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 Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill Legislative Consent Motion to be published and issued to all MLAs.

7. Legislative Consent Motion - – Provisions Relating to Extra Territorial Jurisdiction in the UK Domestic Abuse Bill

The Committee considered information provided by the Department of Justice on a proposal for a Legislative Consent Motion to extend the provisions relating to extra-territorial jurisdiction in the UK Domestic Abuse Bill to Northern Ireland.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal to extend the provisions in the UK Domestic Abuse Bill relating to extra-territorial jurisdiction to Northern Ireland by way of a Legislative Consent Motion.

8. Legislative Consent Motion - Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill

The Committee considered the Legislative Consent Memorandum in respect of the Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill which the Department of Justice had laid in the Assembly on 27 April.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department of Justice's proposal to extend provisions in the Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill relating to the transfer of community orders, youth rehabilitation orders and suspended sentence orders imposed by the courts in England and Wales to Northern Ireland by way of a Legislative Consent Motion.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content to support the Minister of Justice in seeking the Assembly's endorsement of the Legislative Consent Motion:

“That this Assembly endorses the principle of the extension of the relevant provisions of the Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on 21 January 2020, relating to the transfer of community orders, youth rehabilitation orders and suspended sentence orders imposed by the courts in England and Wales to Northern Ireland so far as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Assembly.”

9. Department of Justice Budget 2020-21 - Consideration of Committee Position

The Committee considered further information and a draft response outlining the Committee's position in relation to the Department of Justice 2020-21 budget.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the response on the Department of Justice budget 2020-21 to be sent to the Committee for Finance, the Department of Justice and the Assembly Research Service.

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Justice, Peter May, to the Committee for Finance on the offences and penalties aspects of the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill and the response to the Permanent Secretary from the Bill Sponsor, Mr Jim Allister MLA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the Permanent Secretary's response to the points raised in Mr Allister's correspondence to assist consideration of this matter.

The Committee noted the following:

- ii. A response from the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office to the Committee's request for further information on the status of proscribed organisations in Northern Ireland.
- iii. A memo from the Committee for the Executive Office providing a document setting out, by subject matter, the references in the New Decade New Approach document which fall within the remit of the Executive.
- iv. A report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office on Reducing Costs in the PSNI.
- v. The Investment Strategy Northern Ireland – Department of Justice's Procurement Activity Report for April 2020.
- vi. A response from the Department of Justice to a letter from the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office to the Committee on funding of the separated regime in HM Prison Maghaberry and the current position regarding the independent review of the separated regime recommended by the Independent Panel.

11. Chairperson's Business

None.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in Parliament Buildings week commencing 11 May 2020 unless essential business requires an earlier meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.29 p.m.

Paul Givan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice