



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

8 July 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Peter Weir MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Jemma Dolan MLA

Mr Robin Newton MLA

Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Mr Doug Beattie MLA

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)

Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Clerk)



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In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Allison Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Sarah Preece (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2:02 p.m. in open session.

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

1. Apologies

As above.

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

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021.

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office on the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office raising concerns regarding the awarding of the contract for the delivery of the



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Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment (TPDP) Scheme to Capita given the findings of the recent report by the Public Services Ombudsman into Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for which Capita also has the contract.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the correspondence further once the response from the Minister of Justice to the Committee's request for further information regarding the appointment of Capita to deliver the TPDP Scheme and details of the procurement process was received.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that an informal meeting with the Victims Representatives Groups on the TPDP Scheme took place on Wednesday 7 July and referred Members to a summary of issues and concerns raised during the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a response from the Department of Justice on the issues and concerns raised by the Victims Representatives Groups during the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the attendance of Department of Justice officials at a committee meeting at the beginning of October to discuss the TPDP Scheme following the opening of the application process at the end of August.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the attendance of Capita representatives at a committee meeting at the beginning of October following the opening of the TPDP Scheme application process at the end of August.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that work should be undertaken to scope out the process and options to engage an expert to provide advice and assistance to the Committee on how the process is operating once the application process has commenced.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a press release outlining its position and direction of travel in relation to the TPDP Scheme.

Item 2 – Committee Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for September 2021.



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Item 3 – Informal Meeting with Children’s Organisations

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that an informal meeting with a range of children’s organisations on the proposals for a Secure Justice and Care Campus and relevant youth justice issues took place on Monday 5 July 2021 and referred Members to a summary of issues and concerns raised during the meeting.

The Committee noted a research paper entitled “Tracing the Review”, commissioned by Include Youth, the Children’s Law Centre, NIACRO and VOYPIC from academics at the University of Nottingham and Queen’s University Belfast to chart the implementation of the Youth Justice Review recommendations with a specific focus from 2015 onwards.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a response from the Department of Justice, in conjunction with the Department of Health where necessary, to the issues and concerns raised by the children’s organisations during the meeting and to provide a copy of the letter to the Committee for Health for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the Department of Justice’s response to the findings of the research report “Tracing the Review”.

4. Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland – Report Findings and Recommendations

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

His Honour Judge Desmond Marrinan, Report Author, Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland

Noel Marsden, Senior Review Manager, Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland



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Judge Marrinan outlined the key findings and recommendations of his Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland and commented on the Department of Justice's initial response.

Peter Weir MLA joined the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Judge Marrinan and Mr Marsden for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information from the Department of Justice on a number of issues raised during the oral evidence session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with officials from the newly established Department of Justice Hate Crime Unit on the implementation of the Review findings and recommendations.

5. Proposals for the Development of a Joint Secure Care and Justice Campus for Children on the Woodlands-Lakewood Site, the DoJ Response to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Report on Managing Children Who Offend and other justice issues relevant to Children and Young People

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.41 p.m.

Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Fiona Cole, Policy and Research Officer, Commissioner for Children and Young People

Ms Yiasouma outlined a number of issues relating to youth justice including the Department of Justice's response to the NI Audit Office Report on Managing Children who Offend and the Proposals for the Secure Care and Justice Campus.



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This was followed by a question and answer session.

Peter Weir MLA left the meeting at 3.56 p.m.

Robin Newton MLA left the meeting at 4.21 p.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Yiasouma and Ms McCafferty for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information from the Department of Justice on a number of issues raised during the oral evidence session.

6. Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill - Proposals for Committee Stage

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice providing further information on the provisions that were removed from the original version of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill and the amendments currently being developed by the Minister of Justice.

The Committee noted that the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill had been introduced to the Assembly on 5 July 2021 and considered proposals to call for written evidence on the Bill at this stage given the limited time available for the Bill to complete its passage through the Assembly before the end of the current mandate including a draft media sign-posting notice, a draft letter seeking evidence on the Bill and a list of key stakeholders to which the letter would issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that written evidence on the Bill should be requested before the Committee Stage commences and the media sign-posting notice and the letters to key stakeholders should issue during week commencing 19 July 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a closing date of Friday 24 September 2021 for receipt of written evidence.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that views should also be sought on the Minister's proposed amendments when seeking evidence on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft media sign-posting notice and the draft letter to issue seeking written evidence on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the list of key stakeholders to which the letter would issue with a number of additions.

7. AccessNI Annual Performance and Activity Report – 2020- 21 and Publication of Updated Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers of Police

The Committee noted AccessNI's performance and activity report for 2020/21 which had been provided by the Department of Justice and the updated statutory guidance for chief officers of police issued by AccessNI.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a written update provided by the Minister of Justice to an Assembly oral question on Operation Encompass on 21 June 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification of the reasons for the delay in launching the Operation Encompass pilot project and the criteria used to identify the area selected.

- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Economy seeking evidence on the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the views and comments of the Department of Justice on the clauses in the Bill relevant to its responsibilities and any likely implications and that the response should be forwarded to the



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Committee for Economy as soon as it is received given the deadline of 16 August 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update from the Department for the Economy on the work being undertaken in relation to the provision of paid leave for victims of domestic violence and abuse.

The Committee noted the following:

- iii. A further response from the Department of Justice to the conclusions and recommendations of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report on Cross Border Cooperation on policing, security and criminal justice after Brexit.
- iv. A response from the Department of Justice providing an update on the timescale for the provision of further information on the final agreed criteria to classify individuals as terrorist risk offenders in relation to the arrangements for the supervision of offenders on licence.
- v. Notification from the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission of the appointment of a new County Court Judge in Northern Ireland on 5 July 2021.
- vi. The Probation Board for Northern Ireland 'Probation Works Sentencer' Newsletter, Issue 9, July 2021.
- vii. A response from the Department of Justice providing further information on the partially achieved actions from its 2020-21 Business Plan.
- viii. Notification from the Department of Justice that the Minister of Justice had issued an authorisation under the Agency Arrangements agreed with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under section 29 and section 32 of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007 to enable the police to possess land at Springfield Road, Belfast for an effective policing operation on 12 July 2021.



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- ix. Notification from the Department of Justice of the publication of an Official Statistics Bulletin on 'First Time entrants to the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland 2019/20.'

9. Chairperson's Business

The Committee considered arrangements for dealing with Freedom of Information requests during the summer recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit, during the recess period, views on the releasing or withholding of the information in any non-routine/contentious Freedom of Information requests received by the Committee.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9 September 2021 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.



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Mervyn Storey MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Justice

9 September 2021