



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

27 January 2022

Meeting Location: The Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Robin Newton MLA

Mr Peter Weir MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Doug Beattie MLA

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

Ms Jemma Dolan MLA

Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)

Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Mr Stephen Corr (Clerical Supervisor)



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In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 2:14 p.m. in public session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the two oral evidence sessions with officials from the Youth Justice Agency on the draft 2022 - 2025 Budget and departmental officials on the Final Report on the Commencement of Section 49(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 should be reported by Hansard.

Peter Weir MLA joined the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

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, Sinéad Ennis MLA, to vote on her behalf.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022.



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3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Assembly Bill Office – Guidance for Members on Amendments to Bills (Rules on Tabling, Admissibility etc.)

The Committee noted a copy of the Guidance for Members on Amendments to Bills which sets out admissibility criteria.

Item 2 – Letter from the Department of Justice - January Monitoring Round Outcome

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice outlining the outcome of the January Monitoring Round.

Item 3 - Northern Ireland Fiscal Council Report - The NI Executive's 2022-25 Draft Budget: An Assessment - January 2022

The Committee considered the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council Report - The NI Executive's 2022-25 Draft Budget: An Assessment - January 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a range of further information from the Department of Justice relating to the draft 2022-25 Budget.

Sinéad Ennis MLA joined the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Item 4 – Letter from the Department of Justice - PSNI Recruitment

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice advising of the decision of the Chief Constable to, on a precautionary basis, defer the March 2022 PSNI recruitment intake.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Department of Justice on a number of issues relating to the draft 2022-25 Budget.

Sinéad Ennis MLA left the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Item 5 – Correspondence from the Law Society of Northern Ireland – Draft Department of Justice Budget 2022-25 and Implications for Access to Justice

The Committee considered correspondence from the Law Society outlining its concerns regarding the potential impact of the draft 2022 – 25 Budget on access to justice in Northern Ireland and requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee on the issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with representatives of the Law Society of Northern Ireland and the Bar of Northern Ireland on the Department of Justice draft 2022-25 budget and potential implications.

Sinéad Ennis MLA re-joined the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Item 6 - Executive Office Guidance - Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme - Roles and Responsibilities

The Committee noted guidance provided by the Executive Office setting out the roles and responsibilities of various Departments in relation to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a copy of the guidance to the Victims' Representative Groups.

Sinéad Ennis MLA left the meeting at 2:34 p.m.



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4. Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill - Consideration of Draft Report

The Committee considered the draft report on the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill.

The Committee noted that one amendment to the draft report had been proposed by Rachel Woods MLA.

Title Page, Committee Membership and Powers Page, Table of Contents Page and List of Abbreviations Page

The Committee considered the Title Page, the Committee Membership and Powers Page, the Table of Contents Page and the List of Abbreviations Page as drafted.

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

Introduction Section

The Committee considered the Introduction section of the report (paragraphs 1 to 22) as drafted.

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

Sinéad Ennis MLA re-joined the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

Consideration of the Bill Provisions Section

The Committee considered the Consideration of the Bill Provisions section of the report (paragraphs 23 to 313) as drafted.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Consideration of the Bill Provisions section of the report.

Department of Justice Amendments Section

The Committee considered the Department of Justice Amendments Section of the report (paragraphs 314 to 390) as drafted.

The Committee considered a proposed amendment to paragraph 370 of the Department of Justice Amendments Section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposed amendment to paragraph 370.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department of Justice Amendments Section of the report, as amended.

Other Issues Considered by the Committee Section

The Committee considered the Other Issues Section of the report (paragraphs 392 to 421) as drafted.

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

Clause by Clause Consideration of the Bill Section

The Committee considered the Clause by Clause Consideration of the Bill section of the report (paragraphs 422 to 461) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Clause by Clause Consideration of the Bill Section of the report.



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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.

Executive Summary

The Committee considered the Executive Summary of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Executive Summary, subject to the amendment already agreed by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Report on the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill to be published on the Committee webpage and issued to all MLAs and the Minister of Justice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to clear the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting for inclusion in Appendix 1 of the report. They would then be replaced by the final version of the Minutes of Proceedings once agreed by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that an electronic copy of the Bill report should be sent to all organisations and individuals who provided evidence to the Committee on the Bill.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson thanked the Committee team, Bill Clerk, Hansard and other Assembly staff as well as the Department of Justice officials who assisted the Committee during its scrutiny of the Bill.



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Draft Department of Justice 2022 - 2025 Budget – Oral evidence session with the Youth Justice Agency

The following officials joined the meeting at 2:41 p.m.

Stephen Martin, Chief Executive, Youth Justice Agency

Claire Taylor, Finance Business Partner, Youth Justice Agency

Paul Gibson, Corporate Services Director, Youth Justice Agency

Stephen Martin outlined the key issues in relation to the Youth Justice Agency's draft 2022-25 Budget.

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

The officials agreed to provide additional information on a number of issues discussed during the session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further information from both the Department of Justice and the Executive Office on the requirements of the Children Services Co-operation Act in relation to budgets for children's services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an up-date on the Musgrave Street Police Station Custody Suite multi-agency project from the PSNI prior to their attendance to discuss the draft budget on 10 February 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a Press Statement expressing its concerns regarding the potential implications that had been outlined in relation to the Youth Justice Agency's draft budget allocations.



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5. Deaths Abroad - Final Report on the Commencement of Section 49(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 – Oral evidence session with Departmental Officials

The Chairperson, Mervyn Storey MLA, declared an interest as the Chair of the All-Party Group on Funerals and Bereavement.

The following officials joined the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

Laurene McAlpine, Deputy Director, Civil Justice Policy Division, Department of Justice

Andrew Robinson, Civil Justice Policy Division, Department of Justice

Laurene McAlpine outlined the key findings of the final report on the practical implications of commencing section 49(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in respect of Investigating Deaths Abroad and the next steps.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Finance to ascertain why a central register for deaths abroad is not kept.

6. SR 2021/339: The Magistrates' Courts (Licensing) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021/339 The Magistrates' Courts (Licensing) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2021 which will amend the Magistrates' Courts (Licensing) Rules (Northern Ireland 1997 which prescribes the forms to be used and information to be provided with an application to a Magistrates' Court under the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 to reflect changes introduced by the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.



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The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had raised no issues with regard to the technical aspects of the Rule.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021/339 The Magistrates' Courts (Licensing) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2021 and had no objection to the Rule.

7. SL1: The Insolvency (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department of Justice for a Statutory Rule, which is subject to the negative resolution procedure, that will amend the Insolvency Rules (Northern Ireland) 1991 to provide permanent procedural rules for the company moratorium procedure and ensure that procedural rules for all corporate insolvency procedures are contained in one instrument.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views and comments of the Committee for the Economy on the proposal for the Statutory Rule given that the Department for the Economy is responsible for insolvency policy.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a response from the Minister of Health to issues raised by the Eating Disorder Forum NI regarding death certification.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the response to the Eating Disorder Forum NI for information.

The Committee noted the following:

- ii. A copy of correspondence from the Committee for Health to the Department of Justice in relation to the Adoption and Children Bill.



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9. Chairperson's Business

None.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 3 February 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Mervyn Storey MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Justice

3 February 2022