



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

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

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Peter Madine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Allison Mealey (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02 p.m. in open session.

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

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 February 2020.

3. Matters Arising

Terrorist Offenders Bill

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Justice which indicated that the Ministry of Justice was engaging with the Department of Justice and officials were examining the potential impact, legal and practical implications of draft Bill proposals which set out the scope and potential application of various provisions within Northern Ireland.

Overview Briefing on the Reducing Offending Directorate

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice advising that incorrect information had been provided during the overview briefing on the Reducing Offending Directorate at the meeting on 6 February 2020 and re-offending rates for the Enhanced Combination Order Pilot were available and indicated a re-offending rate of 44.1%.

Executive Sub-Committee on EU Exit

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference for the Executive Sub-Committee on EU Exit which outlined that the Assembly Committee for the Executive Office would scrutinise the work of the Sub-Committee.

Draft Letter to the House of Lords EU Committee

The Committee considered a draft letter to the House of Lords European Union Committee on the negotiations for the UK-EU Partnership outlining key justice issues discussed at the meeting on 20 February.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the draft letter to issue to the House of Lords European Union Committee.

4. Evidence Session with the Minister of Justice on Justice Key Issues, Priorities and Legislative Programme

The Minister of Justice and the Permanent Secretary joined the meeting at 2.07 p.m.

Naomi Long MLA, Minister of Justice

Peter May, Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice

The Minister of Justice outlined her key justice issues, priorities and proposed legislative programme.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

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

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and the Permanent Secretary for their attendance.

The meeting was suspended at 5.18 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 5.27 p.m.

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

5. SL1: The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Prescribed Police Stations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department of Justice to make a Statutory Rule to update the list of police stations across Northern Ireland where convicted sex offenders can attend to notify the police of their personal details.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request sight of the current list of prescribed police stations and further information on the reasons for not including some operational police stations on the list.

6. Review of Personal Injury Discount Rate

The Committee considered information provided by the Department of Justice regarding the intention of the Minister of Justice to review the Personal Injury Discount Rate and the statutory consultation to be undertaken by officials on a proposal to change the rate to -1.75%.

The Committee noted the proposed Review of the Personal Injury Discount Rate and the intention of the Department of Justice to engage with it further when the consultation is completed.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft Forward Work Programme for March 2020 and noted that the overview briefing on the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) was scheduled for the meeting on 5 March 2020 but it had not been possible to schedule the overview briefing on the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. The Committee also noted that the Department may ask for additional briefings to be accommodated within the Work Programme at short notice if it has to move more quickly on some issues than is currently planned.

The Chairperson informed Members that an informal Committee strategic planning session would take place between 1.00 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. on 5 March 2020 and would provide an opportunity for initial discussions on priorities for the coming months.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Justice indicating her intention, subject to the views of the Committee, to bring forward Legislative Consent Motions relating to The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill and the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill, both of which contain provisions that extend to Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agree to schedule oral evidence sessions on the Legislative Consent Motions for The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill and the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for March 2020.

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. A response from the Department of Justice providing an update on the historical child sexual abuse cases in Fermanagh and the current position regarding the Review of the Law on Child Sexual Exploitation following the oral evidence session with the Permanent Secretary on 23 January 2020.
- ii. A response from the Department of Justice providing further information on the NI Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2009 - Same Household provision amendment following the overview briefing on the Justice Delivery Directorate on 23 January 2020.
- iii. A response from the Department of Justice providing the further information requested by the Committee in relation to SR 2017/36: The Police Service of Northern Ireland and Police Service of Northern Ireland Reserve (Injury Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.
- iv. A response from the Department of Justice providing further information on a range of issues raised during the overview briefing on the Access to Justice Directorate on 30 January 2020 including an update on implementation of the Gillen Review, progress to deliver the action plan to tackle paramilitarism, organised crime and criminality, the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016, the cost of legal aid, the length of time for cases to be disposed of in the courts and possible legislative changes to provide online protection for children.
- v. The Investment Strategy Northern Ireland – Department of Justice’s Procurement Activity Report for February 2020.

Mr McGlone rejoined the meeting at 5.33 p.m.

9. Chairperson’s Business

Invitation from the All Party Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Chairperson informed Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had received an invitation from the Chairperson of the All Party Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence

to attend a meeting on Tuesday 10 March 2020 to which the Minister of Justice had also been invited. He advised Members that unfortunately he was unable to attend.

Request for an Introductory Meeting by the Director of Public Prosecutions

The Chairperson informed Members that the Director of Public Prosecutions had requested an introductory meeting with him and the Deputy Chairperson and arrangements would be made for this to take place.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 5 March at 3.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.34 p.m.

Paul Givan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice