



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

THURSDAY 20 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  
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Mr Pat Sheehan

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

*The Committee agreed to commence the meeting in closed session for the briefing on EU Exit and Justice Related Issues and remain in closed session for the briefing on the UK-wide Draft Coronavirus Bill.*

*The meeting commenced at 2.03 p.m. in closed session.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Overview Briefing on the Safer Communities Directorate should be reported by Hansard.

**1. EU Exit and Justice Relates Issues**

The Chairperson welcomed the following official to the meeting:

Shauna Mageean, EU Affairs Manager, Northern Ireland Assembly

Ms Mageean provided a briefing on the process relating to the United Kingdom's Exit from the EU, the implications for the Northern Ireland Assembly and Committees and related justice issues.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Mageean for her attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Justice to request information on a range of issues relating to the Future Security Partnership, the Common Frameworks relating to justice issues, and the mechanisms to enable the Committee to undertake its scrutiny function.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with Department of Justice officials on the UK's Exit from the EU and justice related issues as soon as possible.

## **2. UK-Wide Draft Coronavirus Bill**

The Chairperson welcomed the following officials to the meeting:

Julie Wilson, Acting Head of Protection and Organised Crime Division,  
Department of Justice  
Doreen McClintock, Head of Operations and Resilience Planning, Department  
of Justice  
Alan Smyth, Deputy Director, Policy, Legislation and Estates, Northern  
Ireland Prison Service  
Clare Irvine, Head of Judiciary and Mental Capacity Branch, Civil Justice  
Division, Department of Justice

The officials outlined the current position regarding a draft UK-wide Coronavirus Bill and justice related provisions.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide further information on one issue.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The Members noted the approach being taken by the Department of Justice in relation to the proposed legislation.

*The meeting moved into public session at 3.44 p.m.*

## **3. Apologies**

As above

## **4. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 February 2020, subject to one amendment.

## 5. Matters Arising

### House of Lords European Union Committee – Request for Views on Negotiations for the UK-EU Partnership

The Committee considered the invitation from the House of Lords European Union Committee to submit views on the EU Commission’s Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations for a new partnership with the UK and the UK Government’s written ministerial statement on UK/EU relations and key justice issues for inclusion in a response.

*Agreed:* A draft response outlining the key justice issues discussed should be prepared for consideration at the meeting on 27 February.

### Follow-up from the Oral Evidence Sessions with the Chief Constable and the Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Chairperson highlighted several issues arising from the oral evidence sessions with the Chief Constable and the Northern Ireland Prison Service officials at the meeting on 13 February and informed Members that the Minister had just issued a press release indicating that the 2019/20 pay award for PSNI officers had been agreed by the Department of Justice and approved by the Department of Finance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Chief Constable to request clarification in relation to the gap he had referred to in legislative protection for police officers in Northern Ireland compared with the emergency services legislation in England and Wales.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission a research paper on the legislative protection provided to police officers in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland compared to the position in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Justice to request an update on the position regarding the pay award for police staff.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland requesting that the cost of providing the separated regime in Maghaberry Prison should be funded by the Northern Ireland Office rather than the Department of Justice.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to request information on the process by which conclusions on the existence/status of all prescribed organisations is reached and who provides the advice/information on which conclusions are based.

### The House of Lords European Union Committee Visit on Tuesday 25 February

The Committee noted the agenda for the House of Lords European Union Committee visit to Parliament Buildings on Tuesday 25 February 2020.

## Response from the Minister of Justice on the Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Bill

The Committee considered a response from the Minister of Justice to its request for information on what discussions took place on the application of the Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Bill to Northern Ireland and noted the position in relation to the Counter Terrorist (Sentencing and Release) Bill.

Mr Frew proposed that the Committee should write to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice indicating that it supported the position of the Minister of Justice and wished to see the same protections that was provided to the rest of the United Kingdom extended to Northern Ireland.

The question was put on the proposal:

The Committee divided: Ayes 4; Noes 2; Abstain 2

<b>AYES</b>	<b>NOES</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
Mr Doug Beattie	Ms Martina Anderson	Mr Patsy McGlone
Mr Gordon Dunne	Ms Linda Dillon	Ms Rachel Woods
Mr Paul Frew		
Mr Paul Givan		

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the write to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice indicating that it supported the position of the Minister of Justice and wished to see the same protections that was provided to the rest of the United Kingdom extended to Northern Ireland.

*Ms Anderson left the meeting at 4.05p.m.*

### **6. Overview Briefing on the Safer Communities Directorate**

The Chairperson welcomed the following officials to the meeting:

Julie Harrison, Director, Safer Communities Directorate, Department of Justice  
Maura Campbell, Deputy Director, Policing Policy and Strategy Division, Department of Justice  
Julie Wilson, Acting Head of Protection and Organised Crime Division, Department of Justice  
Katie Taylor, Deputy Director, Community Safety Division, Department of Justice

The officials provided an overview briefing on the Safer Communities Directorate.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials and they left the meeting.

## **7. Department of Justice 2020-21 Budget Resource Requirements and Priorities**

The Committee considered information provided by the Department of Justice in relation to the 2020-21 Budget and resource requirements and pressures.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Justice regarding the implications of the Bear Scotland v Fulton and others case for the PSNI and whether she is considering legislation to limit the impact of retrospection similar to that applied in England and Wales.

The Committee noted that further consideration would be given to a RaISe paper on Assembly Committee engagement on 2020-21 departmental budget planning at a future meeting.

## **8. Legislative Consent Motion – Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill**

The Committee considered a letter from the Minister of Justice regarding a Legislative Consent Motion in relation to the Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill due to be introduced in Westminster which would clarify the domestic implementation of three Hague Private International Law Conventions on Child Protection in cross-border disputes, Choice of Court in cross-border contracts and Maintenance in relation to rules for the international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance.

The Committee noted that the Minister was prepared to support, in principle, a Legislative Consent Motion on the extension of the Bill to Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that an oral evidence session on the Bill should be scheduled as soon as it is available to provide as much time as possible to undertake appropriate scrutiny.

## **9. CJINI Report: A Thematic Inspection of Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland – Update on Implementation of Action Plan**

The Committee noted an update on progress to deliver the action plan to address the four strategic recommendations and two operational recommendations in the Criminal Justice Inspection Report of the Public Protection Arrangements in Northern Ireland that was published in October 2019.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request further information from the Department of Justice on a number of issues.

## **10. Correspondence**

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure requesting clarification from the Department for Justice on issues relating to drivers continuing to drive having accumulated 12 or more penalty points on their driving licences.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Justice and request that it replies directly to the Committee for Infrastructure on the issues raised and provides a copy of the response.

### **11. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed the Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had accepted an invitation to hear about the work of the Police Ombudsman's Office..

The Chairperson updated the Committee on his informal meeting with the Bar Council on 20 February 2020.

### **12. Any Other Business**

None.

### **13. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 27 February at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30. Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 5.25 p.m.*

**Paul Givan MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Justice**