



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Lord Chief Justice Office
Sir Declan Morgan

LCJOffice@judiciaryni.uk

Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Tel: (028) 9052 1208

Fax: (028) 9052 0366

Email:

Committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk

1 June 2021

Dear Lord Chief Justice

PAC Report ‘Speeding up the Justice System’

The Public Accounts Committee recently took oral evidence regarding its inquiry into NIAO report, ‘**Avoidable delay in the criminal justice system: Speeding Up the Justice System.**’

The Chief witnesses were:

- Mr Peter May, Accounting Officer, Department of Justice;
- Mr Simon Byrne, Chief Constable for PSNI; and
- Mr Stephen Herron, Director of PPS.

The Committee heard that despite a number of reform initiatives, which have been taken forward by the witnesses, the overall timeliness of Crown Court cases has not been improving. The Committee also heard that the number of adjournments in court remains a concern. Witnesses quoted an average of nine adjournments for each case.

In subsequent discussions, the Committee agreed that it would be most beneficial to seek your views on the delays in the Crown Court System. Whilst respecting the independence of the Judiciary, it was felt, nonetheless, that your insight, as Lord Chief Justice, would greatly inform the Committee’s inquiry.

With this in mind, the Committee would kindly like to seek your views on the issues outlined above.

A copy of the report, can be found here:

<https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/speeding-justice-avoidable-delay>.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William J. Humphrey'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'H' at the end.

William Humphrey MBE MLA
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee