



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Mr Peter May
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19 March 2021

Dear Mr May

**Public Accounts Committee Evidence Session on the NIAO report on
'Speeding up justice: avoidable delay in the criminal justice system'**

At its meeting on 18 March 2021, the Committee considered your correspondence dated 15 March 2021 in which you requested whether the Committee would consider deferring the hearing until the autumn, given the COVID context.

After considering your request and acknowledging the pressures you are under due to COVID, the Committee was not reassured by your reasons to delay the hearing. The Committee concluded that the focus of the inquiry is on the delays in the criminal justice system prior to the current pandemic. It is for this reason that PAC prioritised this inquiry to commence as soon as possible.

To assist with your request, you indicated that you would provide a written a progress report on NIAO recommendations by the end of March. The Committee's last meeting before Easter Recess is **25 March**. In view of this, I would ask that you submit this update, as a matter of urgency, so that it can be considered at next week's meeting, along with a more detailed explanation on the need to defer this inquiry until the autumn.

Please respond by email using the address above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Humphrey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'H' and 'y'.

William Humphrey MBE MLA
Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee