



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

## **COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER 2016  
Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)  
Ms Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Attwood MLA  
Ms Clare Bailey MLA  
Mr Doug Beattie MLA  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA  
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA  
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA  
Mr Declan Kearney MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darragh (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Marie Austin (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Pamela Carson (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer) (Items 1-5 only)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer) (Items 6-15 only)

*The meeting commenced at 2.04 p.m. in open session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

#### **2. Draft Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24 November 2016.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Justice Key Issues and Priorities – Evidence Session with the Minister of Justice**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.05 p.m.

Claire Sugden MLA, Minister of Justice  
Anthony Harbinson, Director, Safer Communities Directorate, Department of Justice  
David Lavery, Director, Access to Justice Directorate, Department of Justice  
Phil Wragg, Acting Director General, Northern Ireland Prison Service

*Mr Douglas declared an interest in relation to an invitation he had received to join the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Board by the Minister of Justice.*

The Minister provided the Committee with an update on justice issues and her key priorities.

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

*Ms Cameron joined the meeting at 3.32 p.m.*

*Mr Beggs left the meeting at 3.44 p.m.*

*Mrs Boyle left the meeting at 3.49 p.m.*

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

The oral evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and her officials for their attendance and she, Anthony Harbinson and David Lavery left the meeting.

*Mr Kearney left the meeting at 4.14 p.m.*

## **5. Prison Review Team Recommendation 13 – Improving Health within Criminal Justice – Results of the Consultation and Updated Draft Strategy and Action Plan**

Julie Anderson, Head of Interventions and Healthcare, Northern Ireland Prison Service, Department of Justice joined the meeting at 4.14p.m.

Mr Wragg outlined the results of the consultation and provided an update on the draft Strategy and Action Plan – Improving Health within Criminal Justice.

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

The oral evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance and they left the meeting.

The Committee noted the Improving Health Within Criminal Justice Draft Strategy and Action Plan.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request further information on the implementation plan and specific timescales for the Draft Strategy and Action Plan.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to review progress in relation to the Strategy and Action Plan in several months' time.

**6. SR 2016/396: The Civil Legal Services (Remuneration) (Amendment) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee considered SR 2016/396: The Civil Legal Services (Remuneration) (Amendment) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 which will make the necessary changes to legal aid legislation to provide for payment of fees in the Civil Courts in respect of Violent Offences Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2016/396: The Civil Legal Services (Remuneration) (Amendment) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and had no objection to the Rule.

*Ms Bailey left the meeting at 4.57 p.m.*

**7. SR 2016/397: The Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendment No.3) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee considered SR 2016/397: The Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendment No.3) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016 which will make the necessary changes to legal aid legislation to provide for payment of fees in the Crown Court in respect of Violent Offences Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2016/397: The Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendment No.3) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016 and had no objection to the Rule.

**8. SR 2016/398: The Magistrates' Courts and County Court Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee considered SR 2016/398: The Magistrates' Courts and County Court Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016 which will introduce provisions into the Magistrates' Court, and appeals to the County Court, to provide remuneration in cases where the circumstances of the case are so exceptional that the costs of presenting the case cannot be properly remunerated under the existing matrix of standard fees.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2016/398: The Magistrates' Courts and County Court Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016 and had no objection to the Rule.

**9. SR 2016/400: The Juries Regulations (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee considered SR 2016/400: The Juries Regulations (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 which will further amend the Juries Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 so that future changes to the divisional boundaries, under which the divisional jurors lists are created in accordance with Section 2 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, will be made administratively by the Department of Justice by way of a Direction and consequential amendment of the tables used to divide the jurors' lists into Parts by way of subordinate legislation will not be required.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2016/400: The Juries Regulations (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and had no objection to the Rule.

#### **10. SL1: Insolvent Companies (Disqualification of Unfit Directors) Proceedings (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department of Justice to make a Statutory Rule to amend the Insolvent Companies (Disqualification of Unfit Directors) Proceedings Rule (Northern Ireland) 2003, to set out the procedure for applications by the Department of the Economy for compensation orders under Article 19A of the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, and noted that the Committee for the Economy was content with the implications of the proposed subordinate legislation.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposed Statutory Rule.

#### **11. Draft Programme for Government 2016-21 and Department of Justice Draft Justice Delivery Plans**

*Ms Bailey rejoined the meeting at 5.03 p.m.*

The Committee considered further information provided by the Department of Justice on the draft Programme for Government and Department of Justice Draft Delivery Plans and the issues for inclusion in the Committee response.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the response to the Committee for the Executive Office on the draft Programme for Government and Department of Justice Draft Delivery Plans.

#### **12. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice providing further information on a number of issues following the oral evidence session on 27 October 2016 on Legal Aid Remuneration in Civil and Family Courts.
- ii. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Justice providing a progress report on the implementation of the 2011 Autism Act and details of the outcomes from the Multi Agency Steering Group that have been used to influence work in relation to implementation of the Act.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the response to Autism NI and the National Autistic Society and invite the views of both organisations on the contents of it.

- iii. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice providing further information on a number of issues following the oral evidence session on 20 October 2016 on the Review of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector Funding Model.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing a copy of a RaISe Research Paper: *International Human Rights Standards: Recommendations relating to Northern Ireland*.

- v. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Education to the Minister of Justice regarding its Inquiry into Educational Underachievement.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a copy of the Minister of Justice's response to the Committee for Education.

- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Probation Board for Northern Ireland advising the appointment of Cheryl Lamont as Chief Executive.
- vii. The Committee noted an invitation from the Minister of Justice to the launch of the Northern Ireland Executive Public Awareness Campaign 'I Am Your Money' on 5 December 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that Members should advise the Clerk if they wished to attend the event.

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice providing details of four public engagement events it intended to hold on the Justice Draft Programme for Government Delivery Plans.

*Mr Beggs rejoined the meeting at 5.07 p.m.*

### **13. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised the Committee of a useful meeting he had attended earlier with the Northern Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership on domestic violence and stalking during which had taken the opportunity to up-date them on the on-going work of the Committee in these areas.

### **14. Any Other Business**

The availability and publication of the Report of the Fatal Fetal Abnormality Working Group was raised.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health and request clarification regarding whether the Report of the Fatal Fetal Abnormality Working Group was intended for Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive only rather than to inform all Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to review the Hansard of the announcement that a Working Group to consider and report on the issue of Fatal Fetal Abnormality would be commissioned.

### **15. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 8 December 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.20 p.m.

**Mr Paul Frew MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Justice**