



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2017

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Marie Austin (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Pamela Carson (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 3.24 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 12 January 2017.

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Research Paper on Legislative Position on Stalking and Relevant Statistics in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

The Committee noted a research paper, it had commissioned to inform its Review of the Need for Stalking Legislation in Northern Ireland, on the legislative position on Stalking in England and Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland and supporting statistics.

Item 2 – Paper on the Family Drugs and Alcohol Courts in England

The Committee noted the written paper provided by Mr Luke Bloomer on Family Drugs and Alcohol Courts in England for his informal meeting with members of the Committee on 12 January 2017.

Item 3 – Public Petition Presented by Mr Jim Wells MLA

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Minister of Justice had responded to Mr Jim Wells MLA regarding the content of the public petition he had presented to the Assembly and had sent a copy of her letter to the Speaker.

4. Justice Key Issues and Implications arising from the decision to withdraw from the European Union – Evidence session with Department of Justice and PSNI officials

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.27 p.m.

David Lavery, Director of Access to Justice, Department of Justice
Laurene McAlpine, Deputy Director, Civil Justice Policy Division, Department of Justice
Karen Pearson, Deputy Director, Protection and Organised Crime Division, Department of Justice
Hugh Hume, Detective Chief Superintendent, PSNI

The officials provided an update on the key justice issues arising from the decision to withdraw from the European Union and developments since September 2016.

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.

5. Draft Statutory Rule: The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (Single Jurisdiction) (Consequential Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

The Committee considered Draft Statutory Rule: The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (Single Jurisdiction) (Consequential Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017 which will make a technical and consequential amendment to the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 and the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, necessary in light of the provisions introduced by Part 1 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 which will create a single jurisdiction for the County Courts and the Magistrates' Courts, to remove references to the term "petty sessions districts".

Agreed: The Committee considered Draft Statutory Rule: The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (Single Jurisdiction) (Consequential Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017 and recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Minister of Justice to consider bringing the Draft Statutory Rule forward before dissolution of the Assembly.

6. SL1: The Police Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department of Justice to make a Statutory Rule to make a number of minor technical amendments to the Police Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Royal Ulster Constabulary Pensions (Additional Voluntary Contributions) Regulations 1993. The amendments will make a minor word change to remove any ambiguity, clarify a legislative reference and address a minor drafting error identified by the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

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

7. Review of Statutory Discount Rate – Information Paper

The Committee noted information provided by the Department of Justice on the current position regarding the Review of the Statutory Discount Rate for personal injury awards.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Justice providing a copy of her response to the Committee for the Executive Office regarding complaints of maladministration against the Office of the Police Ombudsman.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice providing the second Composite Progress Report on Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland produced by the Department of Health.
- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing a copy of a briefing paper by the Commissioner for Public Appointments on the representation of women and minorities on the boards of public bodies and asking Statutory Committees to request information on the steps being taken by their respective Departments and Arms-Lengths Bodies to encourage diversity on boards.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the information from the Department of Justice.

- iv. The Committee noted the Consumer Council Annual Enquiry and Complaints Report for 2015-16.
- v. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice to its request for information on the development of detailed implementation plans and specific timescales in relation to the 'Improving Health Within Criminal Justice' draft Strategy and Action Plan and the membership of the Review Team.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice providing a copy of its response to the Committee for Education Inquiry into Educational Underachievement.

9. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The Chairperson advised Members that the meeting of the Committee on Thursday 26 January would not take place given the dissolution of the Assembly and this was therefore the last scheduled meeting of the Committee.

The next meeting will be held after dissolution of the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson should approve the minutes of today's meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a standard letter should issue in response to any correspondence received after this meeting advising that the Committee has no further meetings prior to the dissolution of the Assembly.

The Chairperson thanked Members for their contribution to the work of the Justice Committee.

The Chairperson placed on record his thanks to the Committee team for supporting the work of the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.48 p.m.

Mr Paul Frew MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice