



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 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 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 Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Declan Kearney MLA

The meeting commenced at 2.05 p.m. in open session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 October 2016.

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Review of Sentencing Policy Issues

The Committee further considered the list of bodies the Department of Justice intends to draw on for both the policy development stages and, in due course, the full consultation on the Review of Sentencing Policy issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the list of organisations.

Item 2 – Committee Forward Work Programme

The Chairman advised the Committee of two items that would be rescheduled from the meeting on 27 October to the meeting on 10 November.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for October 2016.

Item 3 – Fresh Start Funding

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice indicating that £1.123 million of Fresh Start Funding has been allocated in 2016/17 to the PSNI for a dedicated investigative capacity aimed at tackling organised crime and criminality linked to paramilitary groups.

4. Review of the Department of Justice Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Funding Sector Model – Results of the Consultation and Proposed Way Forward

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.11 p.m.

Brian Grzymek, Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation Division,
Department of Justice
Gary Wardrop, Legacy Unit, Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation Division,
Department of Justice

Mr Sheehan joined the meeting 2.12 p.m.

The officials outlined the results of the consultation on a new funding model for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector and the proposed way forward.

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

Mr Douglas joined the meeting at 2.34 p.m.

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

The oral evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the Department of Justice that it wished to have an opportunity to consider and submit views on the final proposed funding model, any measures proposed to mitigate or minimise potential

disadvantages to smaller Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations and any findings from revisiting equality considerations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a detailed analysis of the results of the consultation, the issues raised by respondents and the response of the Department to each of them.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of each of the responses the Department received to the consultation on a new Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector Funding Model.

5. Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime – Implementation of the Executive Action Plan

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.18 p.m.

Anthony Harbinson, Director, Safer Communities Directorate, Department of Justice
Karen Pearson, Deputy Director, Protection and Organised Crime Division,
Department of Justice
Katie Taylor, Protection and Organised Crime Division, Department of Justice

The officials outlined the key issues in relation to the Executive Action Plan on '*Tackling Parliamentary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime*' which sets out how the recommendations in the report of the independent Three Person Panel will be taken forward and implemented.

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

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

The oral evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Harbinson, Ms Pearson and Ms Taylor remained for the next oral evidence session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request regular reports setting out progress on each of the action points in the Action Plan including the timeline for future actions and the finance allocated for each section/action.

6. Arrangements for Managing and Allocation of Funding Under the Fresh Start Agreement

Mr Harbinson outlined the arrangements for managing bids and allocating funding under the Fresh Start Agreement.

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

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

The oral evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee Agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with the Organised Crime Task Force.

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

7. Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime – Implementation of the Executive Action Plan – Committee Discussion

The Committee discussed the issues covered in the oral evidence sessions on the Executive Action Plan on *'Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime'* and the arrangements for managing and allocating funding under the Fresh Start Agreement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule oral evidence sessions on the implementation of the Executive Action Plan on *'Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime'* approximately every two months with the next briefing to be scheduled before Christmas Recess.

8. SL1: Attorney General for Northern Ireland's Guidance for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Public Prosecution Service and Forensic Science Northern Ireland on Human Rights Standards Relevant to Co-operation and Operational Independence

The Committee considered information provided by the Attorney General for NI on a proposed Statutory Rule to bring into operation his Human Rights Guidance for the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) in relation to co-operation and operational independence.

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

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing information on two briefings it had received on an Outcomes-based Accountability approach to scrutinising the draft Programme for Government 2016-21.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education advising of its intention to visit the Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Centre operated by the Education Authority in the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre on 26 October 2016.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee on Procedures regarding e-petitions.
- iv. The Committee considered an invitation to a meeting of the Business Crime Forum, in conjunction with Lisburn and Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership, to discuss the prevention and protection strand of the Business Crime Action Plan 2016/17 on 27 October 2016.

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

- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Probation Board for Northern Ireland regarding its new app *'Changing Lives'* that has been developed to help offenders desist from crime and become rehabilitated.

- vi. The Committee considered an invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to its Annual Statement Launch on 8 December 2016 in Parliament Buildings.

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

- vii. The Committee noted the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Annual Report for 2015-16.

- viii. The Committee considered further correspondence from a Mr McMaster regarding his individual complaint of maladministration against the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that all appropriate action had now been taken in relation to this matter and Mr McMaster should be informed that, as previously advised, he should take any new evidence relating to this case directly to the Minister of Justice and ask her to consider the matter afresh, given the Department of Justice has responsibility for considering complaints of maladministration against the Police Ombudsman's Office and the Committee did not intend to respond further on this matter.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding an application to visit the Maze/Long Kesh site as part of the Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages (TRACES) Horizon 2020 project.

- x. The Committee considered an invitation from the Law Centre (NI) to the 2016 Social Justice Lecture by Baroness Hale, Deputy President of the Supreme Court on Social Justice and Human Rights on 21 October 2016.

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

10. Chairperson's Business

Item 1 – Informal Meeting on Family Mediation

The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had met earlier with representatives from the NSPCC, Family Mediation NI and NICVA to discuss a proposal to place family mediation in private family law cases on a statutory footing. The proposal raises some interesting issues and sits within the Committee's key priority area of Problem Solving Courts and Justice Structures and Systems.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with the NSPCC, Family Mediation NI and NICVA on the proposal.

Item 2 – Informal Meeting with Autism NI and the National Autistic Society

The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had met earlier with representatives from Autism NI and the National Autistic Society NI to discuss the 'Broken Promises Report' on the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan resulting from the 2011 Autism Act.

Ms Cameron declared an interest as the Chairperson of the All Party Group on Autism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update from the Department of Justice on the actions it has taken and the progress made to implement the 2011 Autism Act.

Item 3 – Informal Meeting with Alicia Perry

The Chairperson advised Members that arrangements had been made for the informal meeting with Alicia Perry on Domestic Violence, Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control from a survivor's perspective to take place on 25 October 2016 at 12.45 p.m. in Parliament Buildings and asked Members to advise the Clerk if they were available to attend the meeting.

Other Informal Meetings

The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had held very useful introductory meetings with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland and the Chair and Vice Chair of the NI Policing Board earlier in the week.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 27 October 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.38 p.m.

Mr Paul Frew MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice