



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

20 May 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Paul Frew MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Doug Beattie MLA

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

Ms Jemma Dolan MLA

Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Mr Gordon Dunne MLA

Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)

Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Clerk)

Mrs Allison Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Ms Sarah Preece (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2:01 p.m. in open session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the oral evidence sessions on the Protection from Stalking Bill should be reported by Hansard.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Clerk informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Gordon Dunne MLA had delegated authority to the Chairperson, Paul Givan MLA, to vote on his behalf and Emma Rogan had delegated authority to the Deputy Chairperson, Linda Dillon MLA, to vote on her behalf.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2021.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

4. Protection from Stalking Bill – Oral Evidence from Victim Support NI

The Committee noted an updated summary of the key issues and proposed changes raised in the written evidence received on the Protection from Stalking Bill.

The following representative from Victim Support NI joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2.04 p.m.

Louise Kennedy, Policy and Communications Manager, Victim Support NI

Ms Kennedy outlined a number of key issues in relation to the provisions of the Protection from Stalking Bill and highlighted a number of areas not currently covered in the Bill.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Kennedy for her attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification from the Department of Justice for the rationale for not including provision for special measures in the family and civil courts in the Bill.

5. Protection from Stalking Bill – Oral Evidence from the Multi-Agency Stalking Project

The following representatives from the Multi-Agency Stalking Project in Hampshire joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2.44 p.m.

Shonagh Dillon, Chief Executive Officer, Aurora New Dawn Ltd



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Dr Kirsty Butcher, Chartered Principal Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lead,
The Multi-Agency Stalking Project

Victoria Tunbridge, Chartered Principal Forensic Psychologist and Clinical
Lead, The Multi-Agency Stalking Project

Ms Dillon outlined a number of key issues in relation to the provisions of the Protection from Stalking Bill and highlighted a number of issues regarding implementation of the legislation.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The representatives agreed to provide further information on several issues discussed during the session.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

6. Protection from Stalking Bill – Oral Evidence from The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

The following representative from The Suzy Lamplugh Trust joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 3.16 p.m.

Emma Hildreth, Senior Policy Advisor, The Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Ms Hildreth outlined a number of key issues in relation to the provisions of the Protection from Stalking Bill and highlighted a number of issues regarding the implementation of the legislation.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Ms Hildreth agreed to provide further information on one issue discussed during the session.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Hildreth for her attendance.

7. Protection from Stalking Bill – Oral Evidence from Cara-Friend, HERe NI and The Rainbow Project

The following representatives joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 3.53 pm.

Aisling Twomey, Policy and Advocacy Officer, The Rainbow Project

Danielle Roberts, Policy Development Officer, HERe NI

Amanda McGurk, Domestic Violence Support Worker, Cara-Friend

The representatives outlined a range of issues in relation to the provisions of the Protection from Stalking Bill and highlighted a number of areas not currently covered in the Bill.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request information from the Department of Justice on treatment programmes currently available for perpetrators of stalking behaviour.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Northern Ireland Policing Board for an update in relation to the recording of data on Section 75 Groups by the Police



Northern Ireland Assembly

Service of Northern Ireland particularly in the context of this Bill and the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a summary of all the issues raised in the written and oral evidence on the Bill to the Department for a written response once the oral evidence sessions have been completed.

Agreed: Following receipt of the Department's written response, arrangements will be made for officials to attend to give oral evidence, answer Members' questions and discuss any issues.

8. Protection from Stalking Bill – Report of the Assembly Examiner of Statutory Rules on the Delegated Powers

The Committee considered the advice of the Assembly Examiner of Statutory Rules on the delegated powers in the Protection from Stalking Bill and her proposal in relation to Clause 17.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer the proposal to the Department of Justice and request its comments to assist further consideration of the matter.

9. Damages (Return on Investment) Bill – Updated Proposals for Oral Evidence

The Committee considered updated proposals for oral evidence sessions on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the organisations to be invited to give oral evidence on the Damages (Return on Investment) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to remind organisations giving evidence that they should focus on the proposed framework in the Bill for the Personal Injury Discount Rate rather than on the actual rate which is not the responsibility of the Committee.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

10. S.R. 2021/115 The Damages (Personal Injury) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee had considered SR 2021/115 The Damages (Personal Injury) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 at its meeting on 13 May 2021 and agreed that it had no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' Report.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had raised no issues in relation to the technical aspects of the Statutory Rule.

11. Making of the Justice Act (NI) 2016 (Relevant Benefits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 - Update

The Committee noted an update from the Department of Justice setting out the reason for the delay in laying a Statutory Rule to add Universal Credit to the list of benefits from which deductions may be made for the payment of fines and other financial penalties under Part 1 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Ms Bradley noted the criteria used to evidence hardship and the legislative safeguards in place regarding the level of deductions that can be made.

Agreed: The Committee noted the reason for the delay and agreed to formally consider the Statutory Rule when the report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules is available.

12. Department of Justice Budget 2021-22 – Main Estimates and Update

The Committee considered an update from the Department of Justice on its 2021-22 Main Estimates, a variance explanation relating to the February Forecast Outturn and information on its response to the 2021-22 Public Expenditure: COVID-19 Exercise commissioned by the Department of Finance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information from the Department on the areas included in the COVID-19 cross-justice recovery bid.



Northern Ireland Assembly

The Committee considered information provided by the Committee for Finance regarding the Department of Justice accruing resources for 2020-21.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request more detailed information from the Department on its accruing resources for 2020-21.

13. Draft Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy 2021-22

The Committee noted further information and an updated 2021-22 Draft Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy showing the changes made as a result of the consultation responses provided by the Department of Justice.

14. Private Family Law Early Resolution Action Plan

The Committee noted further information provided by the Department of Justice in relation to the Private Family Law Early Resolution Action Plan.

The Committee noted that the Department would engage further with it as work on substantive actions such as the pilot information sessions and mediation pilot progress.

15. Committee Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a list of work items that the Department of Justice wished it to consider before summer recess, a list of work items that it had agreed to schedule in the same time period and correspondence from Mike Nesbitt MLA regarding correspondence from the Director of Public Prosecutions to the Chief Constable in relation to the Bobby Storey funeral decisions.

The Committee noted that the Justice Bill 2021 was unlikely to be introduced into the Assembly before the end of May.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule the oral evidence session with the Director of Public Prosecutions for the meeting on Thursday 17 June 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee meetings on 27 May, 10 June and 24 June should commence at 11.00 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule the work items requested by the Department on the dates indicated.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with Judge Marrinan on his Review of Hate Crime Legislation following receipt of the Department's written response to the Report findings and recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the proposed meeting with the Oireachtas Justice Committee should take place in the autumn.

16. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a response from the Department for Justice providing information on the planned actions to implement the outstanding recommendations highlighted in the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) Report of the Follow-Up Review on the Implementation of the Recommendations in the Thematic Inspection of the Handling of Sexual Violence and Abuse Cases by the Criminal Justice System.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update on progress to implement the report recommendations in six-months' time.

- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs seeking views and comments on the Climate Change Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request information and comments on any relevant provisions in the Bill and the likely implications for the Department



Northern Ireland
Assembly

and/or justice agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies from the Department of Justice.

The Committee noted the following:

- iii. Correspondence from the Department of Justice advising that the Minister of Justice had recently signed The Crime and Security Act 2010 (Commencement No.1) (Northern Ireland) Order 2021 which brings Article 53A of the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (as inserted by section 13 of the Crime and Security Act 2010) into operation on 1 June 2021.

17. Chairperson's Business

None.

18. Any Other Business

None.

19. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 27 May 2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.19 p.m.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Paul Givan MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Justice

27 May 2021