

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

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Our Ref: COR-1715-2024

Joanne Bunting MLA  
220 Knock Road  
Belfast  
BT5 6QD

29 October 2024

Dear Joanne,

### **JUSTICE BILL: FURTHER REQUEST FOR KEELING SCHEDULE**

Thank you for your letter of 18 October 2024 to provide me with four examples of Keeling Schedules that you understand have been produced and provided to the Assembly over the last ten years, including one for a Department of Justice Assembly Bill – the Legal Aid and Coroners' Courts Bill – in 2014.

The Legal Aid and Coroners' Courts Bill obviously predates my time in office and the officials that managed the Bill have since left the Department so there was no corporate memory or knowledge among existing staff that Keeling material had been produced for that Bill.

As you are aware, I corrected the record in the Chamber and am grateful to you for bringing this to my attention.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

In light of this, you ask if I am willing to reconsider your request for a Schedule to be produced to assist the Committee with its scrutiny of the Justice Bill.

The 2014 Bill was a very small, very technical Bill and it appears that the Keeling material that was produced for that Bill coincided with a Cabinet Office pilot exercise that encouraged civil servants to consider the production of such material, where possible.

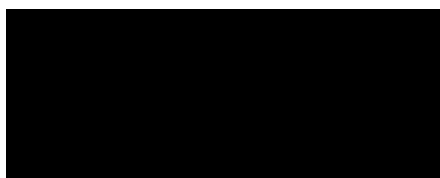
The Justice Bill is a larger Bill and if a Schedule were to be produced, it would have to be prepared manually by officials (there is no software to provide them at the touch of a button, nor are they automatically produced within the Office of Legislative Counsel alongside the Bill).

My officials do not have the resource capacity to take on this additional work, nor am I persuaded that it would be a productive use of their time.

The fact that only four Schedules appear to have been produced since 2014 suggests that the material is not of such value as to make the preparation of Keeling material a requirement to accompany any legislation in any jurisdiction of the UK.

If the Committee considers that a Keeling Schedule is necessary for their scrutiny of the Bill, it may wish to commission one by other means.

Yours sincerely



**NAOMI LONG MLA**  
**Minister of Justice**

*Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.*