



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Paul Givan MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie MLA
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA*
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA
Mr Paul Frew MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

* This Member attended the meeting via telephone conferencing

Apologies: Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Peter Madine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 1:01p.m. in open session.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Clerk informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Ms Rogan had delegated authority to the Deputy Chairperson, Ms Dillon, to vote on her behalf.

2. Transfer of a Statutory Function Relating to the Procedures of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

The Committee considered information from the Department of Justice on a proposal to transfer the power to make changes to the procedural regulations that govern the practice of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice by way of a Transfer of Functions

Order due to be taken forward by the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The proposed transfer addresses an oversight that occurred when the transfer of responsibility for this Tribunal to the Department of Justice took place in 2011.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal to transfer the statutory function to make changes to the procedural regulations relating to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice by way of a Transfer of Functions Order to be taken forward by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to inform the Committee for Education and the Committee for the Executive Office that it supports the proposed transfer.

3. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Proposals for Oral Evidence Sessions

The Committee noted the written submissions received on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and considered proposals for oral evidence sessions during June 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the written submissions should be placed on the Committee Bill webpage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, Victim Support NI, the NSPCC and Barnardos should be invited to give evidence on the Bill at the meeting on Thursday 18 June 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider proposals for additional oral evidence sessions at the meeting on 16 June.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a format for informal private meetings with individuals to inform its consideration of the Bill.

4. Stocktake of Police Oversight and Accountability Arrangements

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Justice outlining her intention to carry out a stocktake of policing oversight and accountability arrangements later this year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to participate in the pre-consultation engagement with officials in September before a wider public consultation takes place.

5. Digital Justice Strategy 2020-2025

The Committee considered the five-year Digital Justice Strategy recently approved by the Criminal Justice Board.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on a number of issues and regular updates from the Department of Justice on progress against the priorities in the Strategy.

6. EU Exit – Update on Justice Related Issues

The Committee considered a range of information on the UK's exit from the EU including a draft text on Agreement on Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session with Department of Justice officials on the UK's exit from the EU and developments in respect of justice-related issues before the summer.

7. Proposed Adult Restorative Justice Strategy for Northern Ireland – Public Consultation

The Committee considered information from the Department of Justice on a public consultation on a proposed Adult Restorative Justice Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to note the planned consultation and would consider the matter further when the results of the consultation and proposed way forward are available.

8. Restarting the Accreditation Process for Community Based Restorative Justice Organisations - Agency Agreement with the Secretary of State to exercise powers in Section 43 of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Justice advising that the Department was considering re-starting the accreditation process for Community Based Restorative Justice organisations.

The Committee noted that the Minister intended to enter into an Agency Agreement with the Secretary of State to exercise the powers set out in Section 43 of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 until a permanent way to transfer the statutory functions in relation to accreditation of Community Based Restorative Justice Schemes in Northern Ireland from the Secretary of State to the Minister can be agreed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Minister of Justice to keep it updated in relation to the proposed permanent fix.

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. A report on Covid-19 in Northern Ireland – Moving out of Lockdown from Pivotal Public Policy Forum.

10. Any Other Business

Concerns regarding the effectiveness of the teleconferencing system used during committee meetings were raised and the availability of the new Starleaf video conferencing system was discussed.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11 June 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.26 p.m.

Mr Paul Givan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice