



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

Room 29, 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 Emma Rogan MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

* This Member attended the meeting via video conferencing.

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Peter Madine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10.03 a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 September 2020.

Ms Dillon joined the meeting at 10.05 a.m.

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill – Written evidence from individuals

The Committee noted written submissions and additional correspondence from three individuals in relation to the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill.

Item 2 – Updated Forward Work Programme - September 2020

The Committee noted an updated Forward Work Programme for September 2020, which included an additional Committee meeting on Tuesday 29 September 2020 to accommodate the oral evidence session with departmental officials on the Victims' Pension Scheme.

4. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill - Research Paper on Domestic Abuse Commissioners

The Committee noted a research paper on the position adopted in other jurisdictions and evidence of good practice in relation to a Domestic Abuse Commissioner or Champion or alternative approaches.

5. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill - Further Informal Deliberations on the Bill clauses and possible amendments

The Committee considered further information and clarification from the Department of Justice on clauses 1, 5, 9, 11, 13, 17, 22, 25 and 26.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of Clauses 9, 11, 17, 22, and 26 until the text of proposed departmental amendments is available.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request additional information in relation to Clause 5 from the Department of Justice.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that there would be an opportunity to discuss potential committee amendments in relation to clauses 9 and 25 with the Assembly Bill Clerk later in the meeting.

6. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill - Consideration of other issues not currently included in the Bill

The Committee considered the range of issues raised in the evidence received on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill that are not currently covered in the Bill and the information provided by the Department of Justice on its position in relation to each.

The Committee identified a range of issues that it wished to discuss with the Assembly Bill Clerk.

The Committee agreed that the meeting would move into closed session to receive advice from the Assembly Bill Clerk on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill in accordance with normal protocol

The meeting was suspended at 12.04 p.m.

The meeting recommenced at 12.22 p.m. in closed session.

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

* This Member attended the meeting via video conferencing.

Ms Stephanie Mallon, Assembly Bill Clerk, attended the meeting to provide advice on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill and potential amendments.

Ms Mallon outlined possible amendments to clauses 9 and 25 as requested by the Committee at the meeting on 10 September.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to provide the wording of its potential amendment to clause 9 to the Department for its views on it.

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Minister has agreed to table the amendment requested by the Committee to clause 25 and agreed to provide its preferred wording of the amendment to the Department.

Ms Mallon discussed other potential amendments with the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Bill Clerk should provide draft amendments covering a number of issues for its consideration.

The Chairperson advised Members that the committee room had to be vacated by 1.30 p.m. to facilitate the next committee using the room.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer Agenda items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 until the meeting on Thursday 24 September 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an additional meeting on Monday 21 or Tuesday 22 September to complete the initial discussions with the Bill Clerk on potential amendments.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Mallon for her advice.

7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 21 or Tuesday 22 September 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.35 p.m.

Mr Paul Givan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Justice