



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

4 November 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Robin Newton MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Doug Beattie MLA

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

Ms Jemma Dolan MLA

Mr Peter Weir MLA

Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)

Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Clerk)

Mr Stephen Corr (Clerical Supervisor)



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In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 2:02 p.m. in open session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Informal Deliberations on the Protection from Stalking Bill should be reported by Hansard.

1. Apologies

As above.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson expressed condolences to Peter Weir MLA on the recent death of his mother.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Emma Rogan MLA had delegated authority to the Deputy Chairperson, Sinéad Ennis MLA, to vote on her behalf.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021.

Robin Newton MLA left the meeting at 2:05 p.m.



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3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Response from Capita on the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme

The Committee noted correspondence from the Managing Director and Client Partner for Capita Health and Welfare providing further information following the oral evidence session on the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme on 7 October 2021.

Item 2 – “Tracing the Review” Research Report

The Committee noted a response from the authors of the “Tracing the Review” Research Report to the comments from the Department of Justice regarding factual inaccuracies and the final report which charts the implementation of the Youth Justice Review recommendations with a specific focus from 2015 onwards and is due to be launched on 23 November 2021.

Rachel Woods MLA joined the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

4. Protection from Stalking Bill - Committee Informal Deliberations

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice providing the text of a proposed amendment to Clause 17 of the Protection from Stalking Bill.

The Committee considered the Clauses and Schedule of the Protection from Stalking Bill and a number of other issues raised in the evidence received that are not currently covered in the Bill.

Robin Newton MLA re-joined the meeting at 2:23 p.m.



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The following officials were available via Starleaf and provided clarification of a number of issues during the discussions:

Brian Grzymek, Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation Division, Department of Justice

Andrew Laverty, Head of Criminal Law Branch, Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation Division, Department of Justice

Barbara Compston, Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation, Department of Justice

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request additional information/clarification from the Department of Justice in relation to Clauses 2 and 17.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is minded to bring forward amendments to the Bill in relation to data collection, mandatory training and to place a requirement on the Department to report on the operation of the offence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Minister of Justice whether she is willing to bring forward the proposed amendments.

5. Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill – Correspondence from the Committee for Health

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Health inviting its views and comments on the Abortion (Safe Access Zones) Bill and noted correspondence from the Health Committee to the Department of Justice and the PSNI on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Justice for a copy of its response to the Committee for Health on the Bill and information on the proposed new offences and penalties to assist its consideration of the justice related issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the PSNI for a copy of its response to the Committee for Health on the Bill and comments on the powers provided to the police



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to enforce safe access zones and any potential resource of financial implications to assist its consideration of the justice related issues.

6. Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill – Legislative Consent Motion– Draft Committee Report

The Committee considered the draft report on its consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion on the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Title Page, Table of Contents Page, Committee Membership and Powers Page, and List of Abbreviations Page

The Committee considered the Title Page, the Committee Membership and Powers Page, the Table of Contents Page and the Abbreviations Page as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Title Page, Committee Membership and Powers Page, Table of Contents Page and List of Abbreviations Page.

Background Section

The Committee considered the Background section of the report (paragraphs 1 to 4) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Background section of the report.

Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion Section

The Committee considered the Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report (paragraphs 5 to 13) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.



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Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion Section

The Committee considered the Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report (paragraphs 14 to 45) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.

Conclusion Section

The Committee considered the Conclusion section of the report (paragraph 46) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Conclusion section of the report.

Appendices

The Committee considered the Appendices section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Appendices be included in the report

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to clear the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting for inclusion in Appendix 1 of the report. They will then be replaced by the final version of the Minutes of Proceedings once agreed by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for its Report on the Legislative Consent Motion on the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to be published and issued to all MLAs and the Minister of Justice.



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7. Implementation of the Recommendations of the Gillen Review into Serious Sexual Offences in Northern Ireland – Further Information

The Committee noted additional information provided by the Department of Justice on progress to implement the recommendations of the Gillen Review into Serious Sexual Offences in Northern Ireland.

8. Review of Financial Process in 2022 – 2023 – Update on Preparations

The Committee noted information provided by the Department of Justice outlining progress with the preparations for the introduction of the Review of Financial Process in 2022-23.

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. A response from the Department of Justice providing further information on the position in relation to the recommendations of the Deaths Abroad: Final Report on the Commencement of Section 49(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.
- ii. Correspondence from the Department of Justice regarding the circulation of the Deaths Abroad: Final Report on the Commencement of Section 49(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.
- iii. A response from the Department of Justice providing further information on the new Domestic Abuse Offence training and awareness raising materials.
- iv. A response from the Department of Justice regarding the scrutiny of appeals in the Personal Independence Payment Second Independent Review of the Assessment Process Report 2020.



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- v. A response from the Department of Justice providing additional clarification regarding the Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate position.
- vi. A response from the Department of Justice providing details of the bids submitted for the New Decade New Approach Unique Circumstances funding.
- vii. Correspondence from the Department of Justice providing an update on the position regarding the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill and associated Legislative Consent Motion.
- viii. A response from the Committee on Procedures on its Inquiry into Legislative Consent Motions.
- ix. The Investment Strategy Northern Ireland – Department of Justice Procurement Activity Report for October 2021.

10. Chairperson's Business

Item 1 - Correspondence from the Assembly Speaker to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group

The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Speaker to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding the legislative pressures on Assembly time until the end of the Assembly mandate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request details from the Minister of Justice regarding what engagement, if any, she has had with the Assembly Speaker in relation to the scheduling of the Justice Bills to ensure completion before the end of the mandate.

Item 2 - Assembly Research and Library Service Digital Strategy

The Committee noted a copy of the Assembly Research and Library Service Digital Strategy provided by the Chairpersons' Liaison Group.



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11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11 November 2021 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

Mervyn Storey MLA Chairperson, Committee for Justice 11 November 2021