



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

Minutes of Proceedings

14 October 2021

Meeting Location: The Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Robin Newton MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Doug Beattie MLA
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Ms Rachel Woods MLA

Apologies: Ms Emma Rogan MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Christine Darrah (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Stephen Corr (Clerical Supervisor)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Senior Assistant Clerk)

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

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

1. Apologies

As above.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that, under Standing Order 115(6), Peter Weir MLA had delegated authority to the Chairperson to vote on his behalf and 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 7 October 2021.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme

The Committee considered a note of an informal meeting that took place, in conjunction with Members of the Committee for the Executive Office, with the President and Secretary of the Victims' Payment Board on Wednesday 6 October 2021 to discuss the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment (TPDP) Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the President of the Board regarding the roll-out of the TPDP Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send copies of the Official Reports of the oral evidence sessions with Capita representatives and with departmental officials on 7 October on the TPDP Scheme to the Committee for the Executive Office for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on an issue raised by the President of the Victims' Payment Board.

4. Protection from Stalking Bill – Consideration of Key Issues raised in the written and oral evidence – oral evidence session with departmental officials

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice setting out the position regarding the provision of the text of the proposed amendment to the Protection from Stalking Bill to implement the proposal by the Examiner of Statutory Rules to lay the guidance in respect of the Chief Constable's functions in relation to Stalking Protection Orders before the Assembly and confirming that, at this stage, it had no plans to bring forward any other amendments.

The following officials joined the meeting at 2:06 p.m.:

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



Northern Ireland Assembly

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

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

The officials provided evidence on the issues raised in the written and oral evidence received by the Committee on the clauses of the Protection from Stalking Bill and answered Members' questions.

Robin Newton MLA joined the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Jemma Dolan MLA joined the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the informal deliberations on the provisions of the Bill would take place at the meeting on Thursday 4 November 2021.

5. Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill – Delegated Powers Memorandum

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Justice providing the Delegated Powers Memorandum relating to the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer the Delegated Powers Memorandum to the Assembly Examiner of Statutory Rules for her views/comments.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

6. Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill – Department of Justice proposed amendment

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Justice providing the text of a proposed amendment to the Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill to ensure that the legal aid certificate can be applied for at any point after a case is directly committed to the Crown Court.

7. Proposed Transfer of Functions Order - Transfer of the Appeals Service and Rent Assessment Panel to the Department of Justice from the Department for Communities

The Committee considered additional information provided by the Department of Justice on issues relating to the Transfer of the Appeals Service and Rent Assessment Panel to the Department of Justice from the Department for Communities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal to transfer the Appeals Service and Rent Assessment Panel from the Department for Communities 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.

8. Budget 2022-25 Information Gathering Process - Department of Justice Capital Bids

The Committee considered information on the Department of Justice Capital DEL bids submitted to the Department of Finance on 7 October 2021 as part of the information gathering exercise for the 2022-25 Budget process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request details of the criteria used to classify the Capital DEL requirements and further information on the projects.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

9. Tackling Delay in the Justice System – Processing Times for Criminal Cases

The Committee considered information provided by the Department of Justice on the time taken for criminal cases at each stage of the criminal justice process and the programme of work being taken forward to tackle delays in the justice system.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the issue further once the Public Accounts Committee had completed its Inquiry on “Speeding Up the Justice System”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the two most recent suites of performance dashboards provided to the Criminal Justice Board.

10. Committee Forward Work Programme – November 2021

The Committee considered a list of items of business that the Department of Justice wished it to consider during November 2021.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule its informal deliberations on the Protection from Stalking Bill for the meeting on 4 November 2021.

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Justice on the likely impacts of the Climate Change (No.2) Bill on the Department, its Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Department’s response to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- ii. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Justice on the Review of Arm's Length Bodies relating to Justice Bodies apart from the Probation Board.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Justice to keep it updated on any progress with the Review and any conclusions reached with regard to Justice Bodies.

- iii. The Committee considered the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority Report of a Review of Services for Vulnerable Persons Detained in Northern Ireland Prisons commissioned jointly by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Justice for its response to the findings and a copy of any plan to implement the recommendations including timescales following which it would give consideration to holding an oral evidence session on the matter.

- iv. The Committee considered a request for a meeting from Birth Mothers for Justice following the publication of the Truth Recovery Recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an informal meeting with Birth Mothers for Justice.

The Committee noted the following:

- v. A response from the Department of Justice on the views expressed by the Chief Inspector on the Action Plan to implement the recommendations in the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland Report on Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland.
- vi. A response from the Department of Justice outlining the position regarding two recommendations in the Independent Reviewer of Criminal Record Information 2020-21 Annual Report.



Northern Ireland Assembly

- vii. A response from the Department of Justice providing further information on its consultation on the need for legislation to require court approval for all legal cases involving an award of damages to minors.
- viii. Notification from the Department of Justice of the publication of the annual Youth Justice Agency Workload Statistics on 7 October 2021.
- ix. A copy of a response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to a Public Petition laid in the Assembly on 28 June by Dolores Kelly MLA calling for the development of an-island animal cruelty register provided by the Clerk to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.
- x. A copy of correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding a process for engagement between Departments and Assembly Committees on proposals for new or amended EU Laws.
- xi. A response from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People regarding the Department of Justice's position on her assessment of the Youth Justice Agency response to the NI Audit Office Report on Managing Children who Offend and the issues and concerns raised in relation to youth justice generally and the development of a Secure Care and Justice Campus for Children specifically.

12. Chairperson's Business

None.

13. Any Other Business

None.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

14. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 21 October 2021 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Robin Newton MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Justice

21 October 2021