



Justice Committee

23 May 2024

To everyone who has contributed to the work of the Justice Committee

You will be aware by now that a General Election has been called for 4 July. This means that, as of tomorrow, Select Committees are required to cease work ahead of Parliament being dissolved next week, on Thursday 30 May.

The Justice Committee will therefore not be able to produce reports it had planned relating to its open inquiries: Prison operational workforce; Future prison population and estate capacity; Use of pre-recorded cross-examination under Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999; Work of the County Court; Probate and The Coroner Service – follow-up.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to these inquiries and to assure you that, in the process of doing so, you have played a valuable role in the scrutiny of justice policy, enabling us to ask the key questions of those in power. The evidence you provided will remain on the public record on the Parliament website and will therefore be available to inform the sector and other stakeholders. Where it has been possible, we have also written to the Ministry of Justice with our high-level views. Many of the issues will still need to be urgent priorities for the next government, and it is therefore quite likely that they will influence the agenda of the Justice Committee in the new Parliament.

I would also like to thank everyone who has contributed to our past inquiries. I firmly believe that, over the years, the cross-party Justice Committee has made a significant and visible contribution to the national debate on justice policy and been robust in holding the Ministry of Justice, its Ministers and its arm's length bodies to account. For example, the Committee's influential work on IPPs (Imprisonment for Public Protection sentences) as well its examination of the unsustainable risks around prison overcrowding and estate capacity has played an important role in shaping public debate on these issues. A functioning and properly resourced justice system underpins our democratic values and deserves a central place in Government policy making.

During my time as a Member of the Committee and then Chair, I have seen the Justice Committee increase its strength and reach, undertaking challenging and innovative work and engaging directly with people who have real experience of the issues in hand. This excellent work, of which I am very proud, will no doubt continue in the next Parliament and I strongly encourage you to continue to engage with the Committee's work.

It has been an immense privilege to Chair the Justice Committee since 2015 and I thank you again for your support.

Sir Robert Neill KC (Hon) MP
Chair, Justice Committee