

A Better Way to a Better Ireland

SDLP PRESS STATEMENT

Immediate release - Immediate Release - Immediate Release

SDLP TO MEET WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTOR ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The SDLP is to hold a second meeting in the last five weeks with Kit Chivers, Criminal Justice Inspector (CJI), on the NIO protocol on restorative justice. Speaking in advance of the meeting on Monday (9th January, 2.30pm) SDLP Policing Spokesperson Alex Attwood MLA stated:

“The NIO protocol on restorative justice puts the CJI centre stage. The protocol falls apart if the CJI withdraws its cooperation. This is where the CJI should go. The SDLP will urge Kit Chivers to go there. The authority of the CJI will be deeply compromised if the CJI is a party to the protocol.

- The CJI will be giving validation to restorative justice schemes even when the protocol does not cover 95% of restorative justice work.
- The protocol does not create independent complaints schemes.
- The requirements around training and human rights are inadequate.
- The commitment of restorative justice schemes to assist the police is vague and evasive.

The CJI has a critical role in investigating Criminal Justice institutions in the North. That is the role given to it following the Good Friday Agreement. It would be going into dangerous waters if it assumes a role in monitoring and accrediting

restorative justice schemes, when the schemes are established on such weak and shoddy principles. It should not go there.

The SDLP will not give up on getting restorative justice right. Community justice schemes have too important a role to be damaged by a weak protocol and wrong politics around policing. The SDLP will meet all the agencies involved in the protocol in the next six weeks, to urge dissent from the governments plans”.

ENDS

06-01-06

Further information: Alex Attwood 0780 188 2458

SDLP Press Office: 028 9052 1364