House of Commons
Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Formal Minutes of the Committee

Session 2014-15
Formal Minutes of the Committee

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton
Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long
Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley
David Simpson

1. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

2. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Mark Durkan MP, former Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and Dave Cox QPM, former Director of the Historical Enquiries Team.

[Adjourned till Monday 9 June at 10.30am]

MONDAY 9 JUNE 2014 – TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2014

The Chair, Mr Joe Benton, Oliver Colvile, Mr Stephen Hepburn, Lady Hermon, Kate Hoey, Naomi Long, Dr Alasdair McDonnell, Nigel Mills, Ian Paisley and David Simpson visited Belfast, Northern Ireland, in connection with the Committee’s inquiry into the Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’, in accordance with the Committee’s decision of 9 April 2014.

MONDAY 9 JUNE 2014

MORNING SESSION

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton
Naomi Long
1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the following written evidence relating to the Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet:

Letter from Gerry Kelly MLA to Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
Response from the Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to Gerry Kelly MLA
Written evidence from Sinn Fein

The Committee took public evidence from Nick Perry, Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice.

[Adjourned till Monday 9 June at 1.30pm]

MONDAY 9 JUNE 2014

AFTERNOON SESSION

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton
Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long

Nigel Mills
Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Ian Paisley
David Simpson

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from William Frazer, Barry Halliday, and Gordon Murdock, Families Acting for Innocent Relatives; John Beggs, Secretary to the Commission, Adrian McNamee, Head of Policy and Research, Commission for Victims and Survivors, Ann Travers, and David Scott, Victims and Survivors Forum.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 10 June at 9.00am]
TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2014

MORNING SESSION

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long

Nigel Mills
Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Ian Paisley
David Simpson

1. Police Service of Northern Ireland

Resolved, That the Committee visit Belfast, Northern Ireland, to observe PSNI operations.

2. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the following written evidence relating to the Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet:

   Barra McGrory QC, Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland
   Aileen Quinton
   Innocent Victims United
   Christopher Daly

The Committee took public evidence from David Ford MLA, Minister of Justice; Barra McGrory QC, Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland; and Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, First Minister of Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 10 June at 1.30pm]
1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Anne Connolly, Chair, Brian Rea CBE JP, Member, and Sam Pollock, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Policing Board; Kenny Donaldson, Phyllis Carrothers, Stephen Gault, and Shelley Gilfillan, Innocent Victims United; and John Larkin QC, Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 18 June at 2.00pm

WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey Naomi Long

Jack Lopresti Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley Andrew Percy

1. NI Human Rights Commission

The Committee considered this matter.

2. United Airlines service between Belfast and Newark

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Visit to observe the PSNI operation on 11-12 July

The Committee considered this matter.

4. British-Irish Association Conference, 5-7 September
The Committee considered this matter.

5. The Open Championship

The Committee considered this matter.

6. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and Christopher Daly, representing the Hyde Park families.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 25 June at 2.00pm

**WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2014**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

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<th>Oliver Colvile</th>
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1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon the Lord Reid of Cardowan, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 2 July at 12.45pm

**WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2014**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair
1. Implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the correspondence received from the Minister of State for Northern Ireland relating to the Implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

2. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

3. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith, former Attorney General, and Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP, Attorney General.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 8 July at 2.00pm]

TUESDAY 8 JULY 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton, Oliver Colvile, Mr Stephen Hepburn, Lady Hermon, Kate Hoey, Naomi Long, Nigel Mills, Ian Paisley

1. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.
2. **Next Committee visit to Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 9 July at 2.00pm]

**WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2014**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton    Jack Lopresti
Oliver Colvile   Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Stephen Hepburn  Nigel Mills
Lady Hermon      Ian Paisley
Kate Hoey        Andrew Percy
Naomi Long       David Simpson

1. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

*Ordered*, That the written evidence submitted by the Commission For Victims and Survivors relating to the administrative scheme for ‘on-the-runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

The Committee took public evidence from Cat Wilkinson and Michael Gallagher, Omagh Support and Self Help Group, and Brian Hambleton and Julie Hambleton, Justice4the21.

2. **Northern Ireland Questions in the House of Commons on 16th July 2014**

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 15 July at 2.00pm]

**SATURDAY 12 JULY 2014**

*Mr Stephen Hepburn, Kate Hoey, and Ian Paisley visited Belfast and Ballymena, Northern Ireland, to observe PSNI operations, in accordance with the Committee’s decision of 10 June 2014.*
TUESDAY 15 JULY 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton  Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Lady Hermon    Nigel Mills
Kate Hoey      Ian Paisley
Naomi Long     David Simpson
Jack Lopresti

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the written evidence submitted by Families Moving On relating to the administrative scheme for ‘on-the-runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till Thursday 17 July at 1.30pm

THURSDAY 17 JULY 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Lady Hermon  Ian Paisley
Dr Alasdair McDonnell  David Simpson
Nigel Mills

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Visits in a representative capacity

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 3 September at 2.00pm
THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Oliver Colvile       Nigel Mills
Lady Hermon          Ian Paisley
Kate Hoey            David Simpson
Naomi Long

1. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Documentary series “Inside the Commons”

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Future Programme

The Committee considered this matter.

Resolved, That the Committee visit Northern Ireland, with dates to be considered at a future meeting.

Resolved, That the Committee visit Dublin, with dates to be considered at a future meeting

4. Fuel laundering and smuggling

The Committee considered this matter.

5. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Jonathan Stephens KCB, Permanent Secretary, Northern Ireland Office.

[Adjourned till 8 September at 9.30am]
MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long

Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Nigel Mills
David Simpson

1. Liaison Committee

The Committee considered this matter.

2. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Jonathan Powell, former Chief of Staff, 10 Downing Street.

[Adjourned till 10 September at 2.00pm

WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long

Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Nigel Mills
David Simpson

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till 15 October at 9.30am
WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Dr Alasdair McDonnell

1. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Closure of JTI, Ballymena

The Committee considered this matter.

3. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Visit to Dublin

The Committee considered this matter.

Resolved, That the Committee visit Dublin in December, and that the Chair seek the approval of the Liaison Committee for expenditure in connection with the visit.

[Adjourned till 22 October at 2.00pm

WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Naomi Long
Oliver Colvile  Jack Lopresti
Lady Hermon  Nigel Mills
Mr Stephen Hepburn  Ian Paisley
1. **Visit to Belfast**

The Committee considered this matter.

2. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

*Ordered*, That the written evidence submitted by the Metropolitan Police Service relating to the administrative scheme for ‘on-the-runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

The Committee took public evidence from Mark Rowley, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations, and Duncan Ball, Commander of the Counter Terrorism Command, Metropolitan Police Service.

[Adjourned till 29 October at 2.00pm]

**WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2014**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson, Mr Stephen Hepburn, Lady Hermon, Naomi Long

Jack Lopresti, Ian Paisley, David Simpson

1. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 4 November at 9.30am]

**TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2014 (MORNING SESSION)**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson, Lady Hermon

Jack Lopresti, Dr Alasdair McDonnell
1. **The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered this matter.

2. **Closure of JTI, Ballymena**

The Committee considered this matter.

3. **Meeting with Age Sector Platform**

The Committee considered this matter.

4. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Lord Mandelson, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till 1.45pm]

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**TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2014 (AFTERNOON SESSION)**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Lady Hermon Nigel Mills
Kate Hoey Ian Paisley
Naomi Long David Simpson

1. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Drew Harris OBE, Deputy Chief Constable, Police Service of Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till 11 November at 1.30pm]
TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley

1. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Visit to Dublin

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Next visit to Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

4. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Peter Sheridan OBE, former Assistant Chief Constable, Royal Ulster Constabulary GC/Police Service of Northern Ireland; Dr Michael Maguire, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Adrian McAllister, Chief Executive, and Paula Cunningham, Deputy Senior Investigations Officer, Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

[Adjourned till 19 November at 2.15pm]

WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson
Oliver Colvile
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley
David Simpson
1. **Current issues facing the PSNI**

The Committee considered this matter.

2. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Sir Bill Jeffrey KCB, former Political Director, Northern Ireland Office, and Sir Jonathan Phillips KCB, former Permanent Secretary, Northern Ireland Office.

[Adjourned till 26 November at 2.00pm]

**WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2014**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson          Kate Hoey
Oliver Colvile                 Jack Lopresti
Mr Stephen Hepburn           Ian Paisley
Lady Hermon

1. **Current issues facing the PSNI**

The Committee considered this matter.

2. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

*Ordered*, That the written evidence submitted by Lord Goldsmith relating to the administrative scheme for ‘on-the-runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

3. **Next visit to Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered this matter.

*Resolved*, That the Committee hold a meeting in Belfast on 3 December in connection with the ongoing multi-party talks.

[Adjourned till 10 December at 2.00pm]
TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2014 – THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2014

The Chair, Mr David Anderson, Mr Stephen Hepburn, Kate Hoey, Dr Alasdair McDonnell and Nigel Mills, visited Belfast, Northern Ireland, from Tuesday 2 December 2014 to Wednesday 3 December 2014 in accordance with the Committee’s decision of 26 November 2014.

The Chair, Dave Anderson, Mr Stephen Hepburn and Nigel Mills, visited Dublin, Republic of Ireland, from Wednesday 3 December 2014 to Thursday 4 December 2014 in accordance with the Committee’s decision of 15 October 2014.

WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2014

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Oliver Colvile  
Lady Hermon  
Mr Stephen Hepburn  
Kate Hoey

Naomi Long  
Nigel Mills  
Ian Paisley  
David Simpson

1. Committee visit to Belfast and Dublin

The Committee considered this matter.

2. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That Rt Hon Tony Blair attend the Committee on Wednesday 14 January 2015 at 2.30pm at the House of Commons.

Ordered, That Mr Mark Sweeney and Dr Simon Case attend the Committee on Wednesday 7 January 2015, at 2.30pm and at 4.00pm respectively, at the House of Commons.

3. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 6 January at 2.00pm]
TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  
Oliver Colvile  
Lady Hermon  
Kate Hoey

Mr Nigel Mills  
Ian Paisley  
David Simpson

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Sir Jonathan Stephens KCB, Permanent Secretary, Northern Ireland Office.

[Adjourned till 7 January at 2.00pm]

WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  
Oliver Colvile  
Lady Hermon  
Kate Hoey

Naomi Long  
Nigel Mills  
Ian Paisley  
David Simpson

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the written evidence submitted by Mark Rowley, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations at the Metropolitan Police Service, relating to the administrative scheme for ‘on-the-runs’ be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

[Adjourned till 13 January at 1.30pm]
TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson
Oliver Colville
Mr Stephen Hepburn
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long

Jack Lopresti
Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley
David Simpson

1. Fuel Laundering and Smuggling

The Committee considered this matter.

2. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon Tony Blair.

[Adjourned till 19 January at 2.00pm

MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson
Oliver Colville
Mr Stephen Hepburn
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long

Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley
David Simpson

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

The Committee took public evidence from Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Jonathan Stephens KCB, Permanent Secretary, Mark Sweeney, former Head of Rights and International Relations Division, and Dr Simon Case, former Deputy Director, Security and Legacy Group, Northern Ireland Office.

[Adjourned till 21 January at 2.30pm
WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Lady Hermon  Kate Hoey
Naomi Long  Jack Lopresti  Nigel Mills

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 4 February at 2.00pm

WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Oliver Colvile  Mr Stephen Hepburn  Lady Hermon  Kate Hoey
Jack Lopresti  Dr Alasdair McDonnell  Nigel Mills  Ian Paisley

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

2. The Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 11 February at 2.00pm

WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Dr Alasdair McDonnell
1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 3 March at 10.00am]

WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Kate Hoey
Oliver Colvile  Nigel Mills
Mr Stephen Hepburn  Ian Paisley
Lady Hermon  David Simpson

1. The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the-Runs’

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 9 March at 2.30pm]
MONDAY 9 MARCH 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr Joe Benton  Oliver Colvile  Nigel Mills  David Simpson

1. Banking Structure in Northern Ireland

Draft Report (Northern Ireland: banking on recovery?), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 113 read and agreed to.

Summary, as amended, agreed to.

A paper was appended to the Report.

Resolved, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.


The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the written evidence submitted by Sir Jonathan Stephens, Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office, be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

[Adjourned till 17 March at 9.30 am]

TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2015

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  Nigel Mills
Oliver Colvile  Ian Paisley
Mr Stephen Hepburn  David Simpson
Kate Hoey
1. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the- Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till 18 March at 2.00pm]

**WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2015**

Members present:

Mr Laurence Robertson, in the Chair

Mr David Anderson  
Mr Joe Benton  
Oliver Colvile  
Mr Stephen Hepburn  
Lady Hermon  
Kate Hoey  
Naomi Long  
Nigel Mills  
Ian Paisley  
David Simpson

1. **The Administrative Scheme for ‘On-the- Runs’**

The Committee considered this matter.

Draft Report (*The administrative scheme for “on-the-runs”*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 130 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 131 read.

Amendment proposed, leave out paragraph 131 and insert:

“We believe that publishing the names would be entirely consistent with the principles of open justice in a system where the details of individuals arrested are made public, even if they are never charged. We therefore recommend that the names of those in receipt of letters should be published forthwith. However, we believe that it is of extreme importance that Operation Redfield is completed as soon as possible.”—(Nigel Mills.)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 3  
Kate Hoey  
Nigel Mills  
Ian Paisley  
Noes, 5  
Mr David Anderson  
Mr Joe Benton  
Oliver Colvile  
Mr Stephen Hepburn
Paragraphs 132 to 319 read and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Amendment proposed, leave out Summary and insert:

“There are a number of fundamentals concerning the administrative scheme which cannot be disputed: the scheme came about during the peace process, and was a way by which individuals living outside of the UK could find out if they would be arrested if they were to return; only those OTRs where there was insufficient evidence of criminal activity should have received a letter; errors such as the Downey case occurred because of flaws in the system, such as inadequate leadership, organisation and liaison, but decisions were taken independently of politicians, and that should not have not been allowed to occur; the scheme was not publicised but there was, however, significant information in the public sphere over the years of its operation; Dame Heather Hallett was appointed to review the scheme in light of the Downey error and concluded that the scheme was unprecedented, flawed, but not unlawful, and did not constitute an amnesty.

We share the real and genuine disappointment felt by victims, but conclude that that we are now in a far better place today as a result of the decisions taken around the peace process. People did take risks at that time, but those risks have paid off for the vast majority of people in the UK. Furthermore, we believe that everyone acted in good faith believing that they were securing peace in a very fragile environment.”  (Mr Stephen Hepburn.)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 1

Mr Stephen Hepburn

Noes, 7

Mr David Anderson
Mr Joe Benton
Oliver Colvile
Kate Hoey
Naomi Long
Nigel Mills
Ian Paisley

Several Papers were appended to the Report.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[The Committee adjourned]