1) LOCAL LAWS FOR LOCAL ISSUES
It is much more effective and popular producing devolved laws than it is producing them under Direct Rule. Direct rule ministers could make any decisions they liked regarding Northern Ireland. This is not the same under Devolution.

EXAMPLE: Sunbed Bill. This law was pushed through on the back of a major local health issue namely: the increase in skin cancer rates particularly in the north west of the country. This was linked to sunbed usage and particularly subbed use by the young. As a result sunbed use was restricted over 18s only, warnings had to be provided and time limits were encouraged. This is an example of a local response to a local issue.

2) LEGISLATION BASED ON CROSS COMMUNITY SUPPORT
There have been good examples of effective legislation that has the support of both communities in N.Ireland.

EXAMPLE: Taxi Bill. This effective bill aimed at regulating the taxi industry. It was very effective in involving all MLAs. This enabled it to be effectively scrutinised with 72 amendments proposed and accepted. It also allowed local pressure groups to add their advice and influence. Disability action for example were able to add their proposals showing the ability for local advice and tailoring bills to suit the circumstance.

3) EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION
The Plastic Bag Levy allowed the NI executive the chance to charge people for the usage of plastic bags. This was highly effective in cutting down the use of plastic bags in NI by 72%. It also allowed the government to collect tax revenue and meet its EU environmental targets for waste.

This law has proved highly difficult to introduce in England.

4) PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS
It is possible for MLAs to introduce their own private members legislation. This can allow MLAs the chance to make legislation based on the needs and wants of their local community.

EXAMPLE: Human Trafficking Bill. DUP; Lord Morrow. This law makes Northern Ireland the first country in the UK to make it illegal for people to pay for sex. The Historical Abuse Bill has also been introduced by the OFMDFM.

5) SOURCES OF LEGISLATION
It is possible to introduce legislation from a number of sources. The Executive could push forward Bills. MLAs can introduce their own Private Members Bills or Committees can have the power to initiate legislation. This committee power is the first of its type in the UK and gives the committee a great deal of power to create legislation related to their departments.

6) KEY EXECUTIVE BILLS AND PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT
The programme for government may agree to meet several legislative goals.

EXAMPLES: the Debt relief Bill emerged in 2010 from Arlene Foster’s Enterprise and trade department. The Historical Abuse Bill has also been introduced by the OFMDFM.

1) LIMITED NATURE OF LEGISLATIVE POWERS
The NI Assembly only has a limited amount of powers. Many matters are devolved but some remain exempt. Taxation for example remains controlled by Westminster which leaves them holding the purse strings and therefore the key levers of power.

EXAMPLE: Corporation tax. Many argue that Northern Ireland could compete a lot better by having a corporation rate to rival that in the Republic of Ireland. There was also the threat of a water tax being introduced.

2) GRIDLOCK
While there has been cooperation on some legislation. There is also the case that gridlock can easily paralyse the system in Northern Ireland when contentious issues leads to friction and fall out. The nature of Northern Ireland politics means that some of the most controversial (and necessary) issues like legislation for parking or flags and emblems tends to be pushed to the side as agreement is never reached. This ostrich approach fails then to deal with the major issues, relegate them to international mediators instead.

EXAMPLE: Key areas of fallout include the Irish language act and Welfare Reform.

3) LACK OF LEGISLATION
During the full assembly term 2007-2011 only 69 bills were passed. This compares to the House of Commons passing 50 bills in ONE YEAR!

The numbers have fallen even more for the assembly to only 11 bills between 2011 and 2013!

The previous Speaker William Hay warned party chiefs recently about the dearth of legislation.

4) POWER SHARING DISCOURAGES THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS
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The previous Speaker William Hay warned party chiefs recently about the dearth of legislation.

The need for much more.

5) DUP/ SF STRANGLEHOLD/ CARVE UP OF POWER
All legislation must be passed by the OFMDFM and this can lead to legislation getting killed before it is initiated. The virtual veto provided by the PETITION OF CONCERNS by both the DUP and SF has led to many of the executive bills being stalled by DUP/ SF mutual veto. This can be seen in the failure of the welfare act due to SF rejection at the last minute. The failure of the DEFAMATION BILL is another example.

6) LACK OF PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS OR COMMITTEE BILLS
There were only 3 Private members bills passed in the 2007-2011 session. PMBs when they are suggested tend to be controversial. Such as PAUL GIVAN (DUP) CONSCIENCE CLAUSE or JIM ALLISTER TVU SPADS (Special advisors bill)

One good one that was rejected was Dawn Purves’ DOUBLE JOBBING BILL which was rejected by the larger parties.

COMMITTEE BILLS have not materialised. Despite this significant power it has not been used. Many MLAs complain of little time to initiate legislation.