

From the Office of the  
Minister for Finance & Personnel



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**COMMITTEE FOR**

**DFP Private Office  
Craigantlet Buildings  
Stoney Road  
Belfast BT4 3SX**

1 APR 2010

**F & P**

Ms Jennifer McCann MLA  
Chairperson  
Committee for Finance and Personnel  
Room 419  
Parliament Buildings  
Stormont

Telephone: 028 90529140

Email: private.office@dfpni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: SUB 152/10

7 April 2010

I have now had the opportunity to consider in more detail the report arising from the Committee's Inquiry into Public Procurement Policy and Practice in Northern Ireland which was published on 23 February 2010. This confirms my initial view that the report will have a major part to play in further developing public procurement policy and ensuring that public procurement expenditure can be used to maximise the outcomes for the people and the economy in Northern Ireland.

Therefore, I intend to treat the report with the same degree of importance as the report that followed the Executive's review of Public Procurement Policy in 2002.

Officials are now considering each of the recommendations in detail and will produce an action plan setting out the work to be done and the timescales involved to address the recommendations. This is necessary because an analysis of the relevant legal and cost issues will be required before we are able to take a more definitive position on the way forward.

I am also conscious of the potential demands that a programme to meet the report's recommendations will make on limited resources; it is important therefore that the work is prioritised in order to maximise impacts. However, out of the 52 recommendations which have been identified there are 30 which I believe can be accepted at this initial stage. These include a number of 'quick wins' such as the setting up of a new Business Forum which can be implemented relatively quickly.

It is intended that an Action Plan to address each recommendation will be presented to the Procurement Board for approval at its next meeting in June and that the Board will then monitor delivery of the plan at each meeting. I will of course be happy to provide the Committee with a copy of the plan following approval by the Procurement Board and to keep the Committee apprised of progress in its implementation.

Yours sincerely

**SAMMY WILSON MP MLA**