



COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL 2020

Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Dr Steve Aiken OBE MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Paul Frew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Maolíosa McHugh MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

Present by teleconference:
Mr Pat Catney MLA
Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA

Apologies: Mr Seán Lynch MLA

In Attendance: Mr Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Keith McBride (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 3.30pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As indicated above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a letter of condolence to Mr. Lynch on the death of his father.

3. Oral Evidence Session: Reported Joint Order for Personal Protective Equipment between the Department of Finance and the Government of the Republic of Ireland

The following joined the meeting at 3.35pm

- Mr Conor Murphy MLA, Minister for Finance
- Ms Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary, Department of Finance

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Minister and the Permanent Secretary provided an update on the reported joint order for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which was understood to have been placed by the Department of Finance (DoF) with the Government of the Republic of Ireland (RoI).

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Committee considered the timeline for the placement of the reported joint order and issues relating to securing the procurement of PPE in a competitive global market including the establishment of a multi-disciplinary Department of Finance-led team and opportunities for the stock-piling and/or sharing of PPE with other jurisdictions.

Mr McHugh asked that the minutes formally record that Mr Frew's questions in respect of the reported joint order had not previously been forwarded by the Committee to the Minister for a response.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting, as soon as possible, sight of the paper trail for the reported joint order including relevant emails between DoF/RoI officials.

Agreed: The Committee further agreed to write to the Minister seeking a written timeline for the reported joint order and details of the PPE which had been sought as well as responses to Mr Frew's questions, raised on 1 April 2020, in relation to the reported joint order.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to ask the Minister to provide information on all PPE sourcing endeavours by the Central Procurement Directorate for both the immediate and longer term and clarification in respect of arrangements for sharing/stock-piling of PPE across the United Kingdom and including with the RoI.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and the Permanent Secretary for their attendance.

The Minister and Permanent Secretary left the meeting at 4.58pm

4. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

5. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 22 April 2020 at 2.30pm in the Senate Chamber.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.59pm

Dr Steve Aiken, OBE MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance
22 April 2020