



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Finance

Minutes of Proceedings

23 March 2022

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Dr Steve Aiken OBE MLA (Chairperson)
Matthew O'Toole MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Keith Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA
Mr Maolíosá McHugh

Apologies: Mr Pat Catney MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

In Attendance: Mr Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
Ms Rachel Keyes (Research Officer), Item 6
Ms Eileen Regan (Senior Research Officer). Item 6

The meeting commenced at 2:00pm in open session.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

Pat Catney delegated his vote to Matthew O'Toole, under Temporary Standing Order 115(6).

Jemma Dolan delegated her vote to Maoliosa McHugh in the event of her late attendance, under Temporary Standing Order 115(6).

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Northern Ireland Fiscal Commission

The Chairperson updated Members on his informal meeting with the Fiscal Commission for Northern Ireland on Tuesday 22 March 2022.

The Committee noted that discussions included the timing of the publication of the final report of the Commission in mid-May 2022 and considerations relating to the suggested devolution of income tax and other taxes including stamp duty, landfill tax etc. The timescale for the above was given as 6-8 years.

Jemma Dolan joined the meeting at 2:02pm

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2022.

Agreed: As this was the final meeting of the mandate, the Committee agreed that the Chairperson should approve the minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2022.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. RalSe briefings – 2022-25 Departmental Bids; Northern Ireland Water Governance; and Covid Funding

Assembly Research (RalSe) joined the meeting at 2.03pm.

- Eileen Regan, Senior Research Officer, RalSe; and
- Rachel Keyes, Research Officer, RalSe.

The Committee noted the relevant RalSe briefing papers

RalSe made its presentation to the Committee.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 2:13pm

The Chairperson thanked RalSe for the presentation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share the research paper 'Covid-19 Funding Allocations and Expenditure in Scotland and Wales – a Basic Overview' with its Scottish and Welsh counterpart committees, for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the research paper on 'Resource Funding 2022-25: Departmental Bids and Draft Budget Consultation Document' to the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council, for information.

7. SR 2022/105 The Superannuation (Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee considered SR 2022/105 The Superannuation (Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 2022/105 The Superannuation (Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and has no objection to the rule.

8. SR 2022/91 The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee noted SR 2022/91 The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

9. SR 2022/124: The Valuation for Rating (Decapitalisation Rate) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee considered SR 2022/124 The Valuation for Rating (Decapitalisation Rate) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 2022/124 The Valuation for Rating (Decapitalisation Rate) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the rule.

10. SR 2022/125: The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee considered 2022/125: The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered 2022/125: The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the rule.

11. SR 2022/126: The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee considered SR 2022/126: The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered 2022/126: The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the rule.

12. Committee Legacy Report

The Committee considered its 2017-22 Legacy Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the report and agreed to publish it on the Committee's web pages.

Members recorded their thanks to the Clerk and the Committee office team for producing the report.

13. Correspondence

- 13.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.
- 13.2 The Committee noted a Departmental response to Committee queries seeking confirmation as to whether the Minister / the Executive signed-off on the adapted the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme (RHI) disciplinary process.
- 13.3 The Committee noted a Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) quarterly update on Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) sickness absence for October 2021 to December 2021.
- 13.4 The Committee noted further clarification from the Department on the treatment of covid-related absence in sickness absence statistics for the NICS.
- 13.5 The Committee noted a breakdown of domestic and non-domestic rating debt by district council area.
- 13.6 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland Sub-Committee to a Treasury Minister regarding an EU VAT and excise duty explanatory memorandum.
- 13.7 Composite Information Request

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the composite request was an accurate and complete record of the Committee's outstanding information requests.

- 13.8 The Committee noted a response from the Minister to the Committee for the Executive Office commenting on the Community Renewal Fund and prospects for the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 13.9 The Committee noted a response from the Department advising that Nearly Zero Energy Building guidance is to be issued shortly and will take effect from June 2022.

14. Any Other Business

The Chairperson thanked Members for their diligence and consistently good attendance throughout this short mandate.

Members recorded their thanks to the Chairperson and the Clerk and Committee office staff.

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.54pm

**Dr Steve Aiken MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Finance
23 March 2022**