



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Finance

## Minutes of Proceedings

9 March 2022

**Meeting Location:** Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mr Keith Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Pat Catney MLA  
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA  
Mr Maoliosa McHugh

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA  
Mr Jim Wells MLA

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

**In Attendance:** Mr Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced at 2:04pm in open session.*

*Keith Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson) chaired the Committee meeting.*

## **1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

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

Jemma Dolan indicated that, should she have to leave the meeting early, she would delegate her vote to Maolíosa McHugh, under Temporary Standing Order 115(6).

The Deputy Chairperson indicated that, should he have to leave the meeting early, he would delegate his vote to Jim Wells, 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 2022-25 Draft Budget Debate**

The acting chairperson thanked Members for their contributions to the debate on the Committee motion on the draft 2022-25 Budget.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson to attend, diaries permitting, an informal meeting with counterpart parliamentary finance committees in Scotland and Wales in order to discuss the 2022-25 Budget and related matters.

## **4. Draft Minutes**

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 March 2022.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising.

*The Committee adopted a revised order of agenda items*

**6. Subordinate Legislation: SR 2022/70 The Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/70 The Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 202/70 The Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the rule.

**7. Subordinate Legislation: SR 2022/71 The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/71 The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 2022/71 The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the rule.

**8. Subordinate Legislation: SR 2022/67: The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/67 The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 2022/67 The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the rule.

**9. Subordinate Legislation: SR 2022/76 The Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in Rural Areas) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/76 The Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in Rural Areas) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 2022/76 The Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in Rural Areas) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.

**10. Subordinate Legislation: SR 77/2022 The Rates (Temporary Rebate) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 77/2022 The Rates (Temporary Rebate) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Finance has considered SR 77/2022 The Rates (Temporary Rebate) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.

**11. Subordinate Legislation: SL1 The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SL1 The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the policy intention and for the Department to make the rule.

**12. Subordinate Legislation: SL1 The Superannuation (Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SL1 The Superannuation (Victims of Crime Commissioner Designate) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the policy intention and for the Department to make the rule.

### **13. Draft Committee Legacy Report 2017-22**

The Committee considered a draft of its Legacy Report 2017-22.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include in the 'Successor Committee' section, a recommendation that the successor Finance Committee undertake a programme of external meetings and outreach events.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to finalise the report at its last meeting of the mandate.

### **14. Correspondence**

14.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

14.2 The Committee noted a Departmental response on the Budget Bill and Vote on Account and a copy of the Minister's letter to the other Executive Ministers on the budget for 2021-22.

14.3 The Committee noted a response from the Fiscal Commission on the Aggregates Levy and the Apprenticeships Levy.

14.4 The Committee considered the monthly forecast and outturn data for January 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the monthly forecast and outturn data to Research and Information Service (RaISe).

14.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Finance and Minister of Education on the Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

14.6 The Committee noted a Ministerial response on the extension of Omicron support to hospitality supply chain and other businesses. The Minister advised that it is for the Department for the Economy to suggest such a scheme and that this would require Executive agreement.

14.7 The Committee noted the capital activity report for February 2022.

14.8 The Committee noted Ministerial correspondence providing information on a further £45m of resource DEL allocations for 2021-22 to the Department of Education, the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure.

14.9 The Committee considered a response from the Minister of Health on the continued temporary waiving of the requirement to notify the coroner where a death occurs and the deceased has not seen the doctor in the previous 28 days. The Minister advised that the Department of Health

has no information on the number of death certificates that have been issued under these circumstances. The Committee also considered Department of Finance correspondence advising that the General Register Office can also not provide the relevant information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, during the debate on the relevant subordinate legislation, the Chairperson should make reference to the correspondence and advise of the Committee's dissatisfaction and concerns.

14.10 The Committee noted Departmental correspondence confirming the new permanent secretaries for Communities and Finance are members of the NICS but that other appointments might be filled as secondments.

14.11 The Committee noted a Departmental response clarifying approx. £800k funding for the Department for the Economy for the Ulster Grand Prix and NW200 and the related conditions.

14.12 The Committee noted further correspondence from the Bill Sponsor on the Defamation Bill.

14.13 The Committee noted a response from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Technology and the Digital Economy on the On-line Safety Bill.

14.14 The Committee noted a copy of the Adhoc Committee report on enhancing witness diversity.

14.15 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy providing a copy of the Feminist Recovery Plan produced by the Women's Policy Group on the Employment (Zero Hours Workers and Banded Weekly Hours) Bill.

14.16 The Committee considered correspondence from a concerned individual on the application of Section 75 rules by the Department for the Economy in respect of university appointments.

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Committee for the Economy and the Public Accounts Committee have both received correspondence on related subjects. The Committee therefore agreed to note the correspondence.

#### 14.17 Composite Information Request

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

## **15. Land and Property Service (LPS) - Rates Debt Management Strategy**

Officials joined the meeting at 2.33pm.

- Ian Snowden, Chief Executive, LPS; and
- Judith Andrews, Director of Revenues Benefits, LPS.

The Committee noted a LPS brief and the LPS Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21.

The officials made their opening remarks to the Committee.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The acting chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to LPS seeking information on the levels of domestic and non-domestic rates debt across the different council areas and how this has varied over recent years.

*Jemma Dolan left the meeting at 3:09pm*

## **16. Land and Property Service (LPS) – Reval 2023**

Officials joined the meeting at 3.16pm.

- Ian Snowden, Chief Executive, LPS; and
- Angela McGrath, Commissioner of Valuation, LPS.

The Committee noted a LPS brief.

The officials made their opening remarks to the Committee.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

*Proceedings were suspended at 3:36pm*

*Philip McGuigan left the meeting at 3:36pm*

*Proceedings resumed in public session at 3:58pm*

The acting chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

## **17. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme, as drafted.

**18. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**19. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Finance will be at 2.00pm on Wednesday 16 March 2022 in the Senate and on Starleaf.

*The meeting was adjourned at 4.08pm*

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