

Assembly Section

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Mr Shane McAteer
Clerk
Committee for Finance and Personnel
Room 419
Parliament Buildings
Stormont

Our Ref –CFP251/11-15

18 June 2013

Dear Shane,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June in relation to the Financial Provisions Bill.

You may be aware that since your letter the Office of Legislative Counsel (OLC) has written to the Clerk of Bills on 7 June to outline the fact that the Minister of Finance and Personnel intends to bring forward two amendments to the Bill at Consideration Stage. Both relate to rating legislation.

The first amendment is a technical provision requested by Land and Property Services which would enable DFP to establish and maintain more accurate records for the purposes of rates collection. It will see current provision clarified in relation to LPS' ability to request effective dates for occupation.

The second amendment would seek to extend the current discount allowed for early payment of rates in relation to occupied dwellings to unoccupied dwellings. This is forecasted to effect only a small number of ratepayers, with the likely maximum cost of estimated by LPS approximately £240,000 (exclusive of IT implementation costs).

The Department instructed OLC on provisions in autumn last year, but the provisions have not yet been drafted. The Committee will wish to note OLC's advice to the clerk of Bills that any amendment dealing with a routine financial

matter which has no impact on the overall expenditure of Northern Ireland departments would be within the scope of the Bill.

Once the amendment provisions have been developed, and the Minister is content that they reflect the changes required the Department will provide further details on the provisions to the Committee at the earliest opportunity. This is likely to be immediately following summer recess.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith Finlay".

JUDITH FINLAY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer