



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Room 144
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3XX
Tel No: 028 9052 1843

E-mail: committee.financepersonnel@niassembly.gov.uk

Gearóid Cassidy
DFP Assembly Section
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

23 July 2015

Dear Gearóid,

Sale of NAMA Assets in Northern Ireland

At the meeting of 23 July 2015, the Committee for Finance and Personnel was briefed by officials from the Department of Finance and Personnel in respect of the sale of the NAMA assets in Northern Ireland.

In noting your correspondence of 22 July 2015 which provided a partial to response to the Committee's request for all papers, members noted your request that these should be treated in confidence. In this regard, officials undertook to provide written clarification on the specific content attracting this marking within the papers provided and grounds for such a classification. During the session, it was highlighted by officials that all redactions contained within these papers were not relevant to NAMA; in order to be fully transparent I would be grateful if you could confirm if this correct.

During the session, the Committee asked officials to provide further detail on the following issues arising from the session:

1. Clarification on how the names of the appointees to NAMA's Northern Ireland Advisory Committee (NIAC) were arrived at including:
 - What process, if any, was undertaken within DFP;
 - What advice was provided to Ministers by officials;
 - What records the Department holds in respect of any nominees suggested by officials and the reasons for the Minister's subsequent selection of the particular nominees;
 - What records of any discussions between the Minister and NAMA in relation to appointments to the NIAC;
 - What discussions, if any, took place in relation to the reappointment process to the NIAC;
 - What process, if any, was undertaken within DFP with regard to the reappointment process and any related reports/documentation.
2. If held, a copy of the terms of reference setting out the role and responsibilities for NIAC members.
3. Clarification of who made the nomination for Mr Brian Rowntree to the NIAC.
4. The background and rationale setting out why the lead taken by the Finance Minister in respect of nominees transferred to another Executive Minister?
5. Confirmation of whether the former Finance Minister, Mr Sammy Wilson MP MLA, provided a further nominee in place of Mr Richard Pengelly when doubts arose as to his eligibility, and if so, who was nominated?
6. In terms of concerns expressed in respect of a fire-sale of assets located in Northern Ireland did these originate from officials or with the Minister, and what records, if any, are held?
7. Clarification of what knowledge DFP had in relation to any fees relating to Project Eagle sale.
8. A background briefing on the Millmount development and a timeline of meetings regarding the development and copies of any records pertaining to any meetings; and where applicable to ensure that the relevant Departmental officials will be made available to brief the Committee.

9. Details of what knowledge and advice was provided by DFP officials in supporting meetings reportedly conducted between the former Finance Minister Mr Simon Hamilton MLA, the First Minister and Mr Dan Quayle, and your assessment of whether, by facilitating such meetings, DFP breached any responsibilities to observe the joint role of the Office of the First and deputy First Minister.
10. Clarification of when discussions began with Brown Rudnick including details of which officials were involved and the actions taken, and by whom, upon receipt of correspondence from Brown Rudnick and in preparing the subsequent letter from the former Minister, Mr Wilson, to Minister Noonan.
11. Clarification of what records are held by the Department in respect of meetings conducted between the NI Finance Ministers and any potential purchasers.
12. Copies of any further documents identified by the Department upon completion of the review exercise.

As indicated during the session, the DFP Permanent Secretary confirmed he will make himself available to attend a further oral hearing at the next meeting of the Committee. As indicated by the Chairperson, the purpose of this will be to pursue the issues that were not addressed yesterday. The official report of that session will be made available on the Committee's website [here](#) in due course

I would be grateful if you can both confirm the details of all the DFP officials who will be attending and indicate their availability in the first instance during the week commencing 3 August 2015.

The officials also agreed to separately provide the Committee secretariat with the names of those officials who may have had involvement with issues relating to NAMA, but who have since left DFP.

In line with the Chairperson's request for a timely receipt of written response in order inform members consideration of the issues I would appreciate your response by no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 30 July 2015.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy O'Hanlon

Kathy O'Hanlon
Committee Clerk