

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2012
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA
- In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
Mrs Patricia Casey (Bill Clerk) (Agenda items 4-7 only)
Mrs Kiera McDonald (Legal Adviser) (Agenda item 4 only)
Mr Colin Pidgeon (Assembly Research and Information Service)
(Agenda item 6 only)
- Apologies: Mr William Humphrey MLA

The meeting opened at 10.06am in public session.

1. Apologies.

Apologies are detailed above.

Agreed: that Agenda item 5 is recorded by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly website.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 4 July 2012.

Agreed: that the minutes are published on the Assembly website.

3. Matters Arising.

Table of Requests for Information from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

The Committee noted the table of requests for information from DFP which provided an update on any matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

DFP: Building Regulations and Planning Permission

The Committee noted correspondence from DFP relating to Building Regulations and Planning Permission.

Mr Bradley joined the meeting at 10.10am

Ulster Bank Systems Failure

The Committee noted correspondence from DFP relating to the Ulster Banks Systems Failure. A press article from the Financial Times was also noted to be circulated to all members.

Members noted the proposed concurrent meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee on 11 October 2012, which would be confirmed shortly.

Agreed: to write to the Consumer Council to seek information on alternative models of redress for determining compensation to Ulster Bank customers.

Disruption to power supplies in Stormont Estate

The Committee considered correspondence from DFP in relation to the recent power disruption in Stormont Estate and the service provided by the Flood and Incident Line (FIL).

Agreed: to write to DFP to request clarification on what the defined service levels for the Flood & Incident Line will be, to determine why a weather warning was not provided to FIL before 8pm on 27 June and what steps can be taken to improve communication with the Met Office.

Agreed: to copy the correspondence in relation to FIL to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and Regional Development Committee given the cross cutting interest in this subject.

DFP: Rating Debit and Bankruptcy Cases

Members considered correspondence from DFP on Rating Debit and Bankruptcy Cases.

Agreed: to write to the Department to seek further clarification on issues arising from the correspondence.

Agreed: to move into closed session for the next item of business in line with normal protocol.

The Committee moved into closed session at 10.20am.

4. Superannuation Bill – Legal and Procedural Advice.

Members received a briefing from Kiera McDonald, Assembly Legal Adviser, and Patricia Casey, Bill Clerk, on legal and procedural issues relating to potential amendments to the Bill which were under consideration.

Agreed: to forward draft amendments (a) – (c) to DFP for comment in advance of next week’s meeting and that no further consideration would be given to draft amendment (d).

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 11.14am.

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 11.24am.

The Committee moved into open session at 11.26am.

5. Superannuation Bill – Follow-up Evidence Session with DFP Officials.

The Committee held an evidence session with the following DFP officials: Grace Nesbitt, Head of Civil Service Pensions; Margaret Miskelly, Head of Policy, Civil Service Pensions; and Margaret Coyle, Central Human Resources. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Members questioned the DFP officials on the provisions of the Bill and the officials undertook to provide the Committee with comments on the draft amendments as requested.

6. Superannuation Bill – Assembly Research: Further Evidence Briefing.

The Committee received a briefing from the Assembly Researcher on the Further Evidence Research Paper.

7. Superannuation Bill – Initial Consideration of draft Committee Amendments

Agreed: to make final decisions on the potential amendments at next week’s meeting.

8. Response to OFMDFM Committee: Legislative Proposals for the Office of the Assembly Ombudsman for NI and the NI Commissioner for Complaints.

The Committee noted correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee on the Legislative Proposals for the Office of the Assembly Ombudsman for NI and the NI Commissioner for Complaints.

Agreed: that a draft response to this correspondence is prepared incorporating members’ comments for agreement at a future meeting and to question DFP officials on this subject at next week’s briefing on public procurement.

9. Subordinate Legislation.

The Committee considered the following statutory rule:

SR 2012/285 – The Superannuation (Charity Commission for NI) Order (NI) 2012

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had no issues to raise by way of technical scrutiny in relation to the Rule.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered The Superannuation (Charity Commission for NI) Order (NI) 2012 and has no objection to the Rule.

10. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning on the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance - Inquiry;
- DFP: Publication of the Census 2011 Population and Household Estimates for NI Report;
- Correspondence from the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the Budget Discussion Paper;
- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on European Issues and draft response;
- *Agreed:* to issue the draft response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.
- Correspondence from the NI Law Commission on the Consultation: Unfitness to Plead and related Equality Impact Assessment;
- DFP: Consultation Document: Proposed Regulations to Implement the Recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive;
- Press Article: Sammy Wilson accuses Patterson of block grant “Smash and Grab”
- DFP: Monthly Forecast Outturn Committee Report – June and August 2012 positions;
- Department of Education: Response to the Review of Financial Process;
- DFP: Monitoring of Post Project Evaluations (PPEs) quarter ending 30 June 2012;

Agreed: to seek clarification on the columns and figures in the correspondence before circulating to all statutory committees and the Public Accounts Committee.

- Bryson House: Invitation to Annual Conference;
- DFP: Minute on the direction of accruing resources;
- Northern Ireland Place-Name Project: Request for sponsorship for launch of new database;

Agreed: that the Committee was, in principle, content to be involved in hosting the launch of the new version of the project database at Parliament Buildings,

subject to the views of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee and the Environment Committee and to further information on the likely costs involved.

- DFP: Update on the outcome of the “Reflections Exercise”;

Agreed: to request oral briefings from SEUPB and DFP on the consultation on post 2013 Cross Border PEACE and INTERREG Programmes, both during the current consultation exercise and after submissions have been analysed.

- DFP: Transposing the European Commission (EC) proposals for three new EU Procurement Directives – the Northern Ireland Approach;

Agreed: to consider this issue during next week’s DFP briefing on Public Procurement.

- Lord Morrow: Consultation on the proposed changes in the law to tackle human trafficking;
- DFP: Update on developments with requests for information;
- Email from member of the public: EO2 Comprehensive Pay & Grading Review 2009;

Agreed: that the secretariat will examine previous responses from DFP regarding this issue and advise the Committee accordingly.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 12.18pm.

- Correspondence from Clerk Assistant: Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill;

Agreed: to schedule evidence sessions from the sponsor of the Private Members’ Bill, Mr Jim Allister QC MLA, DFP officials and the Attorney General at the Committee’s meeting on 19 September 2012, for the purpose of informing members’ contributions to the Second Stage debate on the Bill.

11. Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Members noted proposals to make presentations to the Committee from the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly and the Law Society for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to schedule briefings from the aforementioned organisations when required.

Agreed: that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will meet with the Chief Executive of the Law Society and report back to the Committee on the outcome of discussions about the forthcoming Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill.

Agreed: that the Committee work programme is amended to reflect decisions made today, and that the revised programme is published on the Assembly website.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 September 2012 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.25pm.

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
12 September 2012**