

# COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 26 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  
Ms Megan Fearon MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr William Humphrey MLA  
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA  
Mr Adrian McQuillan 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)

Apologies Mr David Hilditch MLA

*The meeting opened at 10.04am in public session.  
In the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.*

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

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

*Mr Beggs joined the meeting at 10.05am  
Mr McKay joined the meeting and took the Chair at 10.06am  
Mr Girvan left the meeting at 10.06am*

*Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.07am*

## **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 19 September 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.

*Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.09am.*

### Equal Pay

The Committee considered a note prepared by the Committee secretariat summarising the evidence received to date on the PSNI Equal Pay Claim.

*Agreed:* to write to the Minister of Finance and Personnel seeking advice on what steps will be taken to ensure that the £26m provision for PSNI claims can be carried over into the next financial year if required.

*Agreed:* to write to the Committee for Justice to advise it of the Committee's deliberations on this matter.

### Pay and Grading Review

The Committee considered a note prepared by the Committee secretariat on the NICS Comprehensive Pay & Grading Review.

*Agreed:* to write to DFP requesting clarification on the length of time it has taken to address this issue and an indication of when it expects the process to be completed.

*Mr Humphrey left the meeting at 10.21am*

*Mr Humphrey joined the meeting at 10.22am*

### Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill

The Committee noted correspondence from the Bill Sponsor, Mr Jim Allister QC MLA, regarding the exact dates of the consultation period for the Bill.

*Agreed:* to publish a call for written evidence on Monday 1 October and that members will advise the Clerk individually of any stakeholders they wish to have notified directly of this opportunity to provide written evidence on the Bill.

*Agreed:* to commission a background research paper on the Bill, which should include an examination of the human rights issues and identify potential expert witnesses on human rights; and that, following receipt of the evidence, the Committee will consider what issues require legal advice from Assembly Legal Services.

*Mr Girvan left the meeting at 10.28am*

#### **4. Superannuation Bill – Formal Consideration of Draft Committee Report**

Members considered the Committee's draft report on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis, as follows:

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 1-13 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 14-24 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 25-27 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 28-33 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 34 and 35 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 36-41 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 42-49 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 50-52 stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that the Executive Summary stands part of the report.

*Agreed:* that the appendices stand part of the Report.

*Agreed:* that the Report on the Superannuation Bill be the First Report of the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Assembly for session 2012/13.

*Agreed:* that the report on the Superannuation Bill be printed.

*Agreed:* that an extract of the draft minutes of today's proceedings relating to the report is titled "unapproved" and checked by the Chairperson before being included in the Committee report.

Members considered a draft press release on the publication of the Committee Report.

*Agreed:* that the press release will issue.

#### **5. Consultation on Law of Damages – DFP Evidence Session**

The Committee noted briefing papers from DFP.

The Committee took evidence from the following DFP officials: Mr Oswyn Paulin, Head of Legal Services and Mrs Laura McPolin, Departmental Solicitor's Office. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.45am*

*Mr McQuillan left the meeting at 11.11am*

*Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 11.12am*

*Mrs Cochrane left the meeting at 11.13am*

*Agreed:* that the DFP officials would provide further information as requested.

## **6. Common European Sales Law – DFP Briefing**

The Committee noted a briefing paper from DFP.

The Committee received a briefing from the following DFP officials: Mr Oswyn Paulin, Head of Legal Services and Ms Laura McPolin, Departmental Solicitor's Office.

*Mr McLaughlin joined the meeting at 11.25am*

*Mr Humphrey left the meeting at 11.26am*

*Agreed:* to share the departmental briefing papers with the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment in light of the relevance to business and consumer interests.

## **7. Legislative Proposals for the Office of the NI Ombudsman – Consideration of Draft Committee Response**

*Agreed:* to issue the Committee response to the Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister.

*The Committee moved into closed session at 11.31am*

## **8. End of Session Report 2011-12 – Initial Consideration of Draft Committee Report**

The Committee considered an initial draft End of Session Report 2011-12.

*Agreed:* that members would forward any comments to the Committee secretariat before noon on Friday 28 September 2012 and final consideration would take place at next week's Committee meeting.

*The meeting moved to open session at 11.33am.*

## **9. Correspondence**

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment – Public Procurement Brokerage Service
- DFP – Sickness Absence in the NICS – Progress Report
- DFP – Rating Debt and Bankruptcy Cases

*Agreed:* to defer further consideration of this matter until further clarification is received regarding preferential creditors.

- Census 2011: Population and Household Estimates for Local Government Districts in NI
- DFP – Consultation on Proposals for the Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2013

- DFP – Letter regarding Flood and Incident Line
- Committee for Social Development – Letter regarding Tackling Disadvantage

*Agreed:* to request DFP to provide a review of its strategies/policies/programmes relevant to addressing social deprivation and poverty and to provide the DFP response to the Committee for Social Development when available.

- Committee for the Environment – NI Place-Name Project.
- DFP – Letter regarding a business case for the move of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Headquarters.

*Agreed:* to write to DARD through the relevant Committee requesting a copy of the business case for the move of the DARD Headquarters.

## **10. Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

*Agreed:* to schedule an oral briefing from DFP on Shared Services on 10 October and to provide the Department with a copy of the related Assembly research paper on Shared Services in advance of this session.

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

## **11. Any Other Business**

None.

## **12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 October 2012 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.45am.*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**3 October 2012**