

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2012
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Ms Megan Fearon MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr David McIlveen MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
Mr Peter Weir 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)
Mr Gavin Moore (Bursary Student)
Dr Robert Barry (Senior Statistician) (Agenda Item 5 only)

Apologies: Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA

The meeting opened at 10.02am in public session.

Agreed: that Agenda item 4 is recorded by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly website.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 17 October 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.

Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill

The Committee noted written submissions and correspondence and considered timetable options and a draft motion for extending Committee Stage.

Agreed: to consider scheduling additional oral evidence at the meeting on 7 November and in light of having received any further written submissions.

Mr McIlveen joined the meeting at 10.05am.

Agreed: that the motion will be laid in the Business Office seeking Assembly approval to extend the Committee Stage of the Bill until 15 February 2013, while the Committee will endeavour to conclude its report on the Bill in advance of this date.

Equal Pay County Court Cases

Members noted an email from a member of the public regarding the Equal Pay cases which are currently under adjudication in the County Court.

Enterprise Shared Services

Agreed: to forward the Departmental briefing paper considered at the Committee meeting on 10 October 2012 to the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance as requested.

It was agreed to consider agenda item 6 on Subordinate Legislation next.

4. Subordinate Legislation

The Committee considered the following statutory rule:

SR 375/2012 The Building (Amendment) Regulations (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 Building (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2012 and has no objection to the rule.

The Committee considered the following proposals for subordinate legislation:

SL1 – Superannuation (Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland) Order (NI) 2012

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP’s proposal for subordinate legislation under The Superannuation (Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland) Order (NI) 2012, and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

SL1 – General Register Office (Fees) Order (NI) 2012

The Committee considered a written response from DFP on how the proposed increase in fees has been calculated in terms of cost recovery.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP’s proposal for subordinate legislation under The General Register Office (Fees) Order (NI) 2012, and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item 7 on Correspondence next

5. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- Committee for Agriculture & Rural Development: DARD Headquarters Relocation;
- DFP: Response regarding Air Passenger Duty Rate applying to Private Jets;

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.10am

- DFP: Response in relation to Poverty and Social Deprivation
Agreed: to forward the Department’s response to the Committee for Social Development.
- Committee for the Environment: Letter regarding Waste Infrastructure Procurement;
Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP as requested.
- Committee for Health, Social Services & Public Safety – Letter to DFP regarding Health Inequalities;
Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP as requested.
- Email from member of the public regarding Building Regulation concern;
Agreed: to forward the email to the Department for response in the first instance.
- DFP: Departmental October Monitoring Position – Work undertaken by Land and Property Services;

- Committee for Employment and Learning – Improving Accuracy of Departmental Financial Forecasting.

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP as requested.

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item 8 on Committee Work Programme next

6. Committee Work Programme

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

The Committee noted that the scheduled briefings due to take place today on Departmental Savings Delivery Plans, Departmental PfG Delivery Plans and Performance to date against 2012-13 DFP Business Plan targets have been rescheduled to 14 November 2012.

The Committee noted an amended version of the Superannuation Bill and that the Further Consideration Stage of the Bill is scheduled for Tuesday 6 November 2012.

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

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item 4 on Review of Small Business Rate Relief and Rates Element of Housing Benefit & Welfare Reform next

7. Review of Small Business Rate Relief Scheme and Rates Element of Housing Benefit & Welfare Reform – DFP Briefing Session

The Committee received a briefing from the following DFP official: Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Division, Central Finance Group. The session was recorded by Hansard.

The Committee noted briefing papers provided by DFP in advance of today's session and correspondence from the Minister of Finance and Personnel regarding Non-Domestic Revaluation.

Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.19am.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.23am.

The Deputy Chair took the Chair at 11.00am.

Mr McKay left the meeting at 11.00am.

Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 11.01am.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 11.09am.

Agreed: that the DFP official will provide follow up information as requested during the session.

Agreed: that the Committee welcomed the consideration being given to extending the threshold for the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme and supported the extension of the Empty Properties Rates Concession for a further period.

Agreed: that the Committee reaffirmed its wish to see the Non-Domestic Revaluation take effect from April 2015.

8. Tax Incentives for Enterprise Zones: Assembly Research Paper

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the Research paper, *Tax Incentives for Enterprise Zones*.

9. Any Other Business

Members noted that a judgement had been made by the Supreme Court in relation to the Equal Pay case involving Birmingham City Council and some of its former employees.

Agreed: that DFP officials would be invited to brief the Committee on the potential implications of this ruling for the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 7 November 2012 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.33am.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
7 November 2012