

# COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2012**  
**ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA  
Ms Megan Fearon MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan 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)  
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)  
Mr Gavin Moore (Bursary Student)  
Mr Gareth Brown (Bursary Student) (Agenda Item 4 only)  
Ms Eileen Regan (Senior Research Officer) (Agenda Item 4 only)

Apologies: Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA

*The meeting opened at 10.06am in public session.*

*Agreed:* that Agenda item 5 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 24 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.

## **4. Late Payment by Public Sector and Businesses – Assembly Research Briefing**

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the research paper, *Late Payment by Public Sector and Businesses*.

The Committee noted extracts from a recent Northern Ireland Audit Office Report relating to Prompt Payment of Invoices.

*Mr Girvan left the meeting at 10.10am*

*Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.14am*

*Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 10.35am*

*Mr McLaughlin joined the meeting at 10.39am*

*Agreed:* that Assembly Research will undertake follow up research on various issues discussed.

*Agreed:* to send the research paper to DFP for a written response to the issues raised in the paper.

*Agreed:* to ask DFP for details of any consultation response that it has made to the EU Directive 2011/7/EU, which includes provisions combating the late payment of invoices.

## **5. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Evidence Session with the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)**

The Committee noted a submission from NIACRO and Assembly Research papers provided in follow up to previous Committee requests.

The Committee received oral evidence from the following representatives of NIACRO: Mr Pat Conway, Director of Services and Ms Anne Reid, Senior Practitioner. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* that the representatives from NIACRO will provide further information to the Committee in relation to restrictions in the application of the Civil Service Code and vetting procedures compared to the proposed provisions within the Bill.

*Ms Fearon left the meeting at 11.00am*

*Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 11.05am*

*Mr McQuillan left the meeting at 11.07am*

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.14am*

*Mr Weir joined the meeting at 11.16am*

*Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 11.20am*

*Mr Bradley left the meeting at 11.39am*

The Committee noted the forthcoming scheduled evidence sessions with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and a panel of expert academic witnesses on human rights issues.

*Agreed:* to schedule briefings from Coiste na nIarchimí and Ann Travers who had previously requested/offered to give oral evidence on the Bill.

*Agreed:* to invite oral evidence from the Equality Commission on equality considerations arising from the Bill and from Sir George Quigley and Sir Nigel Hamilton who had been tasked by Government with convening a working group which led in 2007 to the OFMDFM guidance for employers on “Recruiting People with Conflict-Related Convictions”.

The Committee noted that the motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Bill would be debated on Monday 12 November 2012.

## **6. Equal Pay: Supreme Court Judgement and Retirees – DFP Briefing**

The Committee noted a press summary on the Birmingham City Council V Abdulla judgement from the Supreme Court and correspondence from the Civil Service Pensioners’ Alliance.

The following DFP officials briefed the Committee: Mr Derek Baker, Director of Personnel, Corporate Human Resources and Mr Mark Bailey, Head of Pay and Policy, Human Resources Policy, Pay and Pensions Division, Corporate Human Resources.

*Agreed:* that the DFP officials will provide figures on how many “leavers” could now potentially lodge a claim against the Northern Ireland Civil Service as a result of the Supreme Court Judgement.

## **7. Correspondence**

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP: Response in relation to the Department of Education – Savings Delivery Plans;
- DFP: Response in relation to the Consultation on the Law of Damages;
- Committee for Employment and Learning: Response regarding the Strategic Direction for the use of EU Funding;
- DFP: Response from the Minister regarding the Press Association;
- Correspondence from a member of the public regarding the handling of Will – Probate;

*Agreed:* to ask DFP for a response to this correspondence.

- DFP: Minister's response to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding questions on Census 2011;
- DFP: Response regarding the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Review of Health Inequalities;
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding Gender Neutral Insurance Benefits;

*Agreed:* to ask DFP for clarification on which Departments have responsibilities relating to this issue and DFP's position if applicable.

- Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Correspondence regarding a scoping study entitled "Delivery a Prosperity Process: Opportunities in North/South Public Services";

*Agreed:* to obtain a written response from DFP on all the recommendations from the Scoping Study relevant to the DFP remit.

- DFP: EU Funding Issues: Further information response;
- DFP: Correspondence regarding Rates exemption for stand-alone ATMS in designated rural wards.

*Agreed:* to write to the Minister indicating agreement with his proposal and to obtain clarification on the number of ATM's that have been installed as a result of this initiative.

## **8. Committee Work Programme**

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

The Committee noted that information had been received from the Department on Enterprise Shared Services, which was in follow up to a previous Committee request.

*Agreed:* to ask the Department for a detailed analysis of benefits realised and costs incurred to date against the original business cases for each shared service.

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

## **9. Any Other Business**

*Agreed:* to write to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to suggest that joint meetings could be held in the future for the purpose of receiving updates from senior representatives of the main banks in Northern Ireland.

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

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 14 November 2012 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.09pm.*

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