

# COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 28 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 Kathy O'Hanlon (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)  
Mr Robert Barry (Senior Research Officer) (Agenda item 6 only)
- Apologies: Mrs Judith Cochrane  
Mr John McCallister

*The meeting opened at 10.05am in public session.*

*Agreed:* that Agenda items 4 and 5 are recorded by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly website.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 21 November 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: Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI)

The Committee noted a response from the Department on an assessment of the SBRI in relation to its remit.

*Agreed:* to copy the correspondence to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (ETI Committee) for information.

## **4. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Evidence from Sir Nigel Hamilton and Sir George Quigley**

The Committee took oral evidence from Sir Nigel Hamilton and Sir George Quigley on the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's (OFMDFM) guidance for employers on "Recruiting People with Conflict-related Convictions". The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.07am.*

*Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10.08am.*

*Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 10.15am.*

*Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.30am.*

*Ms Fearon left the meeting at 10.44am.*

*Ms Fearon returned to the meeting at 10.45am.*

*Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 10.56am.*

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.57am.*

*Mr Weir returned to the meeting at 11.00am.*

*Agreed:* to issue the draft letters to the Secretary of State and the Civil Service Commissioners requesting their views on matters relating to the Bill.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) in follow-up to the evidence session on 14 November.

*Agreed:* to forward the correspondence to DFP and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission for comment.

*Agreed:* that, at its meeting on 12 December, the Committee will review the issues arising from the evidence, and will identify and define any issues on which it wishes to seek legal advice from Assembly Legal Services. In advance of that meeting, members will also give consideration as to whether they think that the Committee should propose

any amendments to the Bill or if they are content with the provisions of the Bill as drafted.

## **5. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Evidence Session with Coiste na nIarchimí and Tar Isteach**

The Committee noted submissions from Coiste na nIarchimí and Tar Isteach which were provided in advance of the evidence session.

The Committee took oral evidence from the following witnesses: Michael Culbert, Director, Coiste na nIarchimí; and Thomas Quigley, Tar Isteach. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr McQuillan left the meeting at 12.01pm.*

*Mr McQuillan returned to the meeting at 12.05pm.*

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 12.06pm.*

*Mr Girvan left the meeting at 12.20pm.*

*The Chairperson left the meeting at 12.20pm.*

*The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair at 12.20pm.*

*Mr Weir returned to the meeting at 12.22pm.*

*Agreed:* that the Committee will invite representatives of loyalist ex-prisoner groups to give oral evidence on the Bill.

## **6. Equality Issues in Recruitment to the NICS – Assembly Research Briefing**

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on Equality Issues in Recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS).

*Mr McQuillan left the meeting at 12.26pm.*

*Mr McQuillan returned to the meeting at 12.32pm.*

*Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 12.32pm.*

*Mr Girvan returned to the meeting at 12.45pm.*

*Agreed:* that the Researcher will provide the Committee with additional information as requested during the briefing.

*Agreed:* to invite DFP to give an oral briefing on the issues raised in the Research paper.

## **7. Subordinate Legislation**

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 12.47pm.*

- The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2012

The Committee received a briefing on the proposed regulations to implement the Recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive from the following DFP officials: Seamus McCrystal, Head of Building Standards, Properties Division, Enterprise Shared Services

(ESS); Hilda Hagan, Building Regulations and Energy, Properties Division, ESS; and Sharon O'Neill, Energy Performance Unit, Properties Division, ESS.

*Ms Fearon left the meeting at 12.52pm.*

*Ms Fearon returned to the meeting at 12.55pm.*

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2012 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

- The Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in Rural Areas) Order (NI) 2013

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Finance and Personnel in response to its request for further information on the number of ATMs installed as a result of the scheme.

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in Rural Areas) Order (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

- The Rates (Temporary Rebate) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2013

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Rates (Temporary Rebate) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

- The Rates (Regional Rates) Order (NI) 2013

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Rates (Regional Rates) Order (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

The Committee noted The Civil Registration (2011 Act) (Commencement No. 2) Order (NI) 2012.

## **8. Correspondence**

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- ETI Committee: response regarding future joint meetings with senior representatives of the main banks;
- DFP: further information regarding shared services;
- DFP: Delivering a Prosperity Process: Opportunities in North/South Public Services;

- DFP: response regarding the number of staff who could potentially bring a claim against the NICS following the Supreme Court Judgement in the Birmingham City Council v Abdulla and others equal pay case;
- Letter from member of the public: equal pay for NI Water staff:  
*Agreed:* to forward the correspondence to the Department for Regional Development via the Committee for Regional Development;
- DFP: partial retirement in the NICS;
- Public Accounts Committee: Forward Work Programme;
- DFP: follow up information on Public Expenditure Adjustments;
- Minister for ETI: Financial Capability Strategy for NI:  
*Agreed:* Members will respond individually to the invitation to the launch of the stakeholder engagement on the Financial Capability Strategy;  
*Agreed:* to copy the correspondence to DFP for comment on how this issue relates to the Department's remit;
- ETI Committee: informal meeting on the impact of Patton administration on sub-contractors;  
*Agreed:* the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Mr Girvan will attend the informal meeting.

## **9. Committee Work Programme**

Members noted a copy of the Minister of Finance and Personnel's statement to the Assembly on Public Service Pensions Proposals.

*Agreed:* to request an early Departmental briefing on the policy proposals.

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

## **10. Any Other Business**

None.

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

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 5 December 2012 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.20pm.*

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