

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2012
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin 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)
Mrs Patricia Casey (Bill Clerk) (Agenda Items 4-6 only)
- Apologies: Mr David McIlveen MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA

The meeting opened at 10.30am in public session.

Agreed: that Agenda items 5, 6 & 7 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 5 December 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.

Chancellor's Autumn Statement

The Committee noted a copy of the Minister's press statement on the implications of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to request clarification on the figures provided in the Minister's press statement.

4. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Consideration of issues arising from evidence

The Committee noted responses from the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) and the Commission for Victims and Survivors in follow up to previous evidence sessions.

The Committee considered a table summarising the key themes and issues arising from the evidence received to date on the Bill.

Agreed: to seek advice from Assembly Legal Services on a range of issues highlighted in the table.

Agreed: to provide the Bill sponsor with a copy of the table of issues in advance of the forthcoming evidence session.

5. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Evidence from DFP

The Committee took oral evidence from Derek Baker, Director of Personnel for the NICS, Corporate HR, DFP. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.40am.

Mrs Cochrane joined the meeting at 10.54am.

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.55am.

Agreed: that the DFP official will provide additional information as requested during the evidence session.

6. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Final Evidence Session with the Bill Sponsor

The Committee took oral evidence from the Bill sponsor, Mr Jim Allister QC MLA, on the issues arising from the evidence on the Bill. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr McCallister left the meeting at 11.20am.

Mrs Cochrane left the meeting at 11.45am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.57am.
Mrs Cochrane joined the meeting at 12noon.
Mr Weir joined the meeting at 12.05pm.
Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 12.06pm.
Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 12.12pm.

Agreed: that Mr Allister will provide a written response to the points raised by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

7. January 2013 Monitoring Round: Departmental Position – DFP Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from Brigitte Worth, Finance Director, Corporate Services Group and Preeta Miller, Finance Division, DFP. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Committee noted correspondence from DFP provided in advance of today's session.

Mr Bradley left the meeting at 12.20pm.

8. Subordinate Legislation

- SR 2012/408 The Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012

The Committee noted the Seventh Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, which had no issues to raise by way of technical scrutiny of the Regulations.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered The Civil Registration Regulations (NI) 2012 and has no objection to the rule.

- SL1 – Superannuation (Victims and Survivors Service Limited)

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Superannuation (Victims and Survivors Service Limited) Order 2013, and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at stage.

9. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- Further correspondence from Member of Public regarding Regulation of Solicitors;

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to the Law Society for attention.

- DFP: Consultation on proposed increases to member contribution rates for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme;

- DFP: Response to Member of Public regarding the Equal Pay Settlement;

Agreed: to ask DFP to provide information on how these claims can be taken forward to any future correspondents.

- COFMDFM: PEACE Programmes – Independent Evaluations;

Agreed: to forward to the Special EU Programmes Body via DFP;

- DFP: Improving access to Government Services – NI Direct Strategic Partner Contract;
- DFP: Net Fiscal Balance Reports and Corporation Tax Estimates;
- DFP: Consultation on Law of Damages;
- Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements, Welfare Reform Bill: HM Treasury Green Book Guidelines;
Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP to respond directly to the Ad Hoc Committee.
- CETI: Prompt payments to the Construction Sector;
- CETI: Briefing from the Institution of Engineering and Technology on “Fostering high-tech growth through public procurement”;
- Belfast Solicitors’ Association (BSA): invitation to meet with the BSA regarding the Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill;
Agreed: that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will meet with BSA in the first instance.
- DFP: Key Statistics from NI Census.

10. Committee Work Programme

Launch of the NI Place-Names database

The Committee considered a draft invitation, draft agenda and proposed list of attendees for the launch of the new version of the NI Place Names database. The event will be hosted by the Committee in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, on Monday 21 January 2013.

Agreed: to invite the Minister of Finance and Personnel to attend and address the event.

Agreed: Members will notify Committee staff of any additional invitees by Monday 17 December 2013, in advance of the invitations and agenda being issued.

Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) – Review of the Efficiencies Delivery Programme

The Committee noted the Executive Summary of the NIAO Report, “*Review of the Efficiencies Delivery Programme*”. Members also noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee advising that the NIAO Report would be referred to the Finance and Personnel Committee for follow-up.

Agreed: to invite the NIAO to give oral evidence on the Report in the first instance. The Committee will subsequently take evidence from DFP.

11. Any Other Business

Mr McQuillan MLA

The Committee extended its condolences to Mr McQuillan on the death of his mother.

Meeting Packs

Members were advised that agenda and substantive papers for the meeting on 9 January 2013 will be provided by email on Friday 4 January. Meeting packs will be delivered to members' offices on 7 January 2013.

Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

The Committee noted that Mr Norman Irwin, the DFP Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer, will be retiring at the end of the year. Mr Irwin has held the post for a number of years and worked closely with Committee staff to help ensure an effective working relationship between the Department and the Committee. Members thanked Mr Irwin for his service to the Committee and wished him a happy retirement.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 9 January 2013 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.30pm.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
9 January 2013