

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Leslie Cree MBE 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 Kathy O'Hanlon (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

The meeting opened at 10.04am in public session.

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

1. Apologies

There was one apology as detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 6 March 2013

Agreed: that the minutes are published on the Assembly website.

Mr McLaughlin joined the meeting at 10:05am.

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. Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector – Evidence Session with Nigel Oseland

The Committee took oral evidence from Nigel Oseland, Workplace Unlimited and co-author of “Flexible Working Benefits: Collated Evidence and Case Studies”. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.12am.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.24am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.30am.

Mr Weir returned to the meeting at 10.35am.

Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.35am.

Agreed: that the written evidence relating to the Inquiry, as well as the oral evidence, is placed on the Assembly webpages once it is considered by the Committee as this will help to inform any further witnesses providing evidence to the Inquiry.

5. Review of Law on Apartments – Briefing from NI Law Commission

The Committee received an oral briefing from Rebecca Ellis, Law Commission Lawyer and Sarah Witchel, Law Commission Lawyer.

Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 10.55am.

Mr McCallister left the meeting at 11.10am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.15am.

Mr Weir returned to the meeting at 11.19am.

Agreed: to copy the briefing paper provided by the Law Commission to Kieran McCarthy MLA given the Member’s interest in this area.

Agreed: that a follow up oral briefing will be held with the Law Commission when policy proposals on this matter are finalised.

6. Subordinate Legislation

The Committee considered the following proposals for Subordinate legislation:

SL1 – Superannuation (Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation) Order (NI) 2013

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP’s proposal for subordinate legislation under The Superannuation (Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation) Order (NI) 2013 has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

SL1 – The Rates (Unoccupied Hereditaments) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (NI) 2013

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP’s proposal for subordinate legislation under The Rates (Unoccupied Hereditaments) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

7. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP: Public Pensions and Government Actuary’s Department assumptions;
- Letter from Member of the Public regarding regulation of Solicitors;
- Letter from individual regarding the Flexible Working Inquiry;
- DFP: Flexible Working Inquiry;
- Letter from Member of the Public regarding Equal Pay;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland: DFP Investing Activity Report;
- DFP: Response on Equality Issues in Northern Ireland Civil Service Recruitment
- Summary Judgement: Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) Equal Pay cases;

Agreed: to write to the Department to seek background information and clarification on the lump sum payment offers made by DFP to some of the plaintiffs whose claims were dismissed in the recent County Court judgement; including the timing of these offers, the rationale for the Department making the offers, and the basis on which the offers were rejected. Also, to request information on what will happen to the £26m ring-fenced for the Equal Pay settlement and on the options open to those people whose claims have been dismissed.

Agreed: to write to NIPSA to seek background information and clarification on the lump sum payment offers made by DFP to some of the plaintiffs whose claims were dismissed in the recent County Court judgement; including on any advice NIPSA provided to those staff regarding the lump sum payments, and on whether the offers were rejected on the basis of that advice. Also, to request information on the options open to those people whose claims have been dismissed.

8. Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

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

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 20 March 2013 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.48am.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
20 March 2013