

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2013
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
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: None.

The meeting opened at 10.06am 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

None.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 20 March 2013

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.

Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements – Updated Stakeholder List

The Committee noted that a panel of stakeholders will give evidence on this subject at next week's meeting.

Minister's letter regarding "closed" session on Titanic Signature Project

The Committee considered a letter from the Minister of Finance and Personnel on the "closed" session briefing on issues relating to the Titanic Signature Project, which took place on 20 March 2013.

Agreed: to issue a response to the Minister and that the correspondence is copied to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for information.

DFP: Consultative Partnership Group on EU Funding

The Committee noted correspondence from DFP on the Consultative Partnership Group on EU Funding.

Agreed: to copy the response from the Department to the relevant statutory committees and the Assembly Secretariat's European Project Manager for information.

DFP: Institute of Fiscal Studies Report

The Committee noted a commentary on the recent Institute of Fiscal Studies' report, entitled "Universal Credit in NI: what will its impact be, and what are the challenges", which had been provided by the Department.

4. Equal Pay – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received an oral briefing from Mark Bailey, Head of Pay and Policy, Corporate HR, DFP, on issues related to the NICS equal pay settlement. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.10am.

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10.12am.
Mrs Cochrane joined the meeting at 10.16am.
Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.35am.
Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10.37am.
Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.49am.

Agreed: to seek clarification through the Committee for Justice regarding the submission of a business case to DFP in relation to implementation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) pay scales, which was referred to in recent correspondence received by the Committee.

Agreed: that the DFP briefing paper is copied to the Committee for Justice, given the cross-cutting relevance of the issues discussed, and published on the Committee's webpages in line with the approach taken previously with papers on this subject.

Agreed: Committee responses in respect of PSNI/Northern Ireland Office and NI Water equal pay queries, for issuing to future correspondence received as appropriate.

5. Flexible Working Inquiry – Evidence from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation

The Committee took evidence from Tom Hadley, Director of Policy and Professional Services, Recruitment & Employment Confederation and Ben Farber, Senior Policy Advisor, Recruitment & Employment Confederation via conference call. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the conference call facility would not be used as a method for taking further evidence in relation to the Inquiry.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.59am.
Mr Cree left the meeting at 11.00am.
Ms Fearon left the meeting at 11.02am.
Mr McQuillan and Mr Girvan left the meeting at 11.05am.
Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 11.05am.

6. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP: Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill response;

Agreed: to forward the Departmental response to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission for comment on the issues raised in the correspondence.

- DFP: Enforcement of Type Approved Dwellings;
- DFP: Publication of 2011 Census Day Population Estimates for the UK;
- Committee for Employment and Learning: Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme;

Agreed: to schedule evidence sessions with officials from the Department for Employment and Learning and the other applicable departments on this issue. Further preparatory briefing would also be requested from the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 11.13am

- DFP: Relocation of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Headquarters;
- DFP: February Forecast Outturn Tables;
- DFP: Response to the DARD Committee regarding Tree Procurement Process;
- DFP: Public Expenditure Terminology;
- DFP: Air Connectivity Study timescale;

Agreed: to request a written briefing from the Department on the outcome of the Stage 1 of the study before summer recess.

- DFP: Chancellor's Budget 2013 – NI Impact;
- DFP: House Buying – Transfer of Property;
- DFP: Public Service Pensions Reform Bill response;

Agreed: to copy the Departmental response to the Trade Union delegation in advance of their scheduled briefing on 24 April.

- Email from member of the public sent by David McNarry MLA;

The Committee noted that the Committee for Employment and Learning would be dealing with this issue in the first instance and would report to the other relevant committees in due course.

- DFP: Memorandum on the Eleventh Report from the Public Accounts Committee, Mandate 2011-15;
- Investment Strategy for NI: DFP Investing Activity Report.

7. Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Rates liability in the landlord sector

The Committee noted that it will receive an oral briefing on this issue at next week's meeting.

Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill

Agreed: to request an update from the Department on the position of the Bill, and also on any other primary legislation that the Department plans to bring forward.

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

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 17 April 2013 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.17am.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
17 April 2013