

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 17 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 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 Gavin Moore (Bursary Student)

Apologies: Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA.

The meeting opened at 10.06am in public session.

Agreed: to alter the running order of today's meeting to ensure that agenda items requiring a decision are considered whilst the Committee is in quorum.

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

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 10 April 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.

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item: Subordinate Legislation next.

4. Subordinate Legislation

The Committee considered the following proposal for a statutory rule:

The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (NI) 2013

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (NI) 2013, and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

SR 2013/60 Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2013

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had no issues to raise by way of technical scrutiny in relation to the Rule.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered The Building (Prescribed Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule.

SR 2013/80 The Rates (Unoccupied Hereditaments) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (NI) 2013

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had no issues to raise by way of technical scrutiny in relation to the Rule.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered The Rates (Unoccupied Hereditaments) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.09am.

SR 2013/90 Superannuation (Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation) Order Regulations (NI) 2013

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules raised some points by way of technical scrutiny in his thirteenth Report to the Assembly but these did not need to be pursued in this case.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered The Superannuation (Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation) Order Regulations (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule.

SR 2013/91 Pensions Increase (Review) Order (NI) 2013

The Committee noted The Pensions Increase (Review) Order (NI) 2013, which was not subject to Assembly resolution procedures.

The Committee considered the following proposals for statutory rules:

The Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 (Disclosure of Pupil Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013; and

The Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 (Disclosure of Higher Education Student Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.

Agreed: that, due to the cross departmental relevance of this legislation, the views of the relevant statutory committees are sought before reaching a position.

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item: Correspondence next.

5. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Amendment to Guidance Booklet B of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012;
- DFP: Multiannual Financial Framework – Provisional Settlement Implications; and
- Performance in relation to Committee requests.

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item: Committee Work Programme next.

6. Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Briefing from Employers for Childcare Charitable Group

The Committee noted that the scheduled briefing from the Employers for Childcare Charitable Group has been cancelled.

Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill

Agreed: to write to the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, in follow up to previous correspondence, to request up-to-date advice on the implications of the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill, as amended at Consideration Stage, on their existing role and functions.

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

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 10.15am

The Committee agreed to consider agenda item: Welfare Reform: Rate Replacement Arrangements – Key Stakeholder Evidence Session next.

7. Welfare Reform: Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements – Stakeholder Evidence Session

Agreed: to invite briefings from stakeholder groups not represented at today's session, including the age sector, to brief the Committee on Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements.

The Committee received an oral briefing from the following stakeholders: Seamus McAleavey, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action; Kevin Higgins, Advice NI; Rose Henderson, Citizens Advice Bureau; Les Allamby, Law Centre NI; and Karen Hall, Disability Action. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.20am.

Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.41am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.53am

Mrs Cochrane joined the meeting at 10.54am.

Mr McQuillan declared an interest arising from his wife's work with the Rural Community Network.

8. Outcome of the consultation on Welfare Reform: Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements – DFP Evidence Session

The Committee took evidence from Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Division, Central Finance Group, DFP and Andrew McAvoy, Rating Policy Division, DFP. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr McCallister left the meeting at 11.17am.

Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 11.20am.

Mr McKay left the meeting at 11.29am and Mr Bradley took the Chair.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 11.30am.

9. Review of Rates Liability for the Landlord Sector: Pre-Consultation Briefing – DFP Evidence Session

The Committee took evidence from Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Division, Central Finance Group, DFP and Andrew McAvoy, Rating Policy Division, DFP. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the Department will provide a paper outlining the considerations in respect of introducing statutory changes to place rates liability for rental properties solely on landlords/owners.

Mr Girvan declared an interest as a co-owner of a portfolio of residential properties, Co Antrim from which rental income is received.

Mr McKay joined the meeting at 11.49 and took the Chair.

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 24 April 2013 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.51am.

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