

# COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 1 MAY 2013**  
**ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)  
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA  
Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA  
Ms Megan Fearon MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr John McCallister 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)  
Mr David McIlveen MLA

*The meeting opened at 10.11am 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**

As above.

**2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 24 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.

Public Service Pensions Bill

*Agreed:* to issue the letter to the Minister of Finance and Personnel recommending steps to establish a more accurate assessment of the implications of the proposed pension reforms for Northern Ireland.

Corporation Tax

*Agreed:* to write to the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his views on how the case for the devolution of corporation tax can be furthered developed while awaiting the UK Government's decision in the autumn of 2014 and on what progress can be made on the other complementary economic drivers during this period.

**4. Welfare Reform – Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements – Briefing from Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing.**

*Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.23am.*

The Committee took evidence from Cameron Watt, NI Federation of Housing Associations and Dr Jennifer Donald, Chartered Institute of Housing. The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10.39am.*

*Agreed:* that follow up information will be provided by the witnesses on issues discussed during the session.

**5. Welfare Reform – Rate Rebate Replacement Arrangements – Briefing from the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland**

The Committee took evidence from Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People. The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 10.44am.*  
*Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.50am.*  
*Mr Weir returned to the meeting at 10.55am.*  
*Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.59am.*  
*Mr McQuillan left the meeting at 11.08am.*  
*Mr McQuillan returned to the meeting at 11.12am.*

*Agreed:* that follow up information will be provided by the witness on issues discussed during the session.

*Agreed:* that the Committee would aim to reach a position on the options for replacing the rate rebate arrangements at next week's meeting.

*Agreed:* to write to DFP to seek an update on the A2B work and advice on the potential for an integrated/standardised system for assessing benefit entitlement, which is tailored to local needs, including in terms of assessing rate rebate entitlement.

## **6. Flexible Working Inquiry – Assembly Research Briefing**

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the research paper, *Flexible Working: Further Evidence*.

*Mr Weir returned to the meeting at 11.16am.*  
*Mr McCallister left the meeting at 11.25am.*  
*Mr McCallister returned to the meeting at 11.35am.*  
*Mrs Cochrane joined the meeting at 11.40am.*

*Agreed:* that the researcher would provide additional information as requested during the briefing.

*Agreed:* that the research paper would be copied to DFP for response to each of the issues and areas for consideration highlighted in the paper.

*Agreed:* that further evidence sessions would be scheduled to conclude the Inquiry.

## **7. Subordinate Legislation**

### SR 2013/109 The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (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 Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (NI) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule.

## **8. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Assembly Research Briefing: Gazumping and Gazundering in NI.
- Letter from the Civil Service Commissioners for NI regarding the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill.

- Email from John O’Farrell (Irish Congress of Trade Unions) with link to the Nevin Economic Research Institute Report on the Cost of Youth Unemployment;
- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC): Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill and related correspondence; copy of correspondence to NIHRC from Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women and Equalities;

*Agreed:* to write to DFP for clarification on the differences between the rights/benefits/entitlements of people in civil partnerships as compared to same sex marriages; for advice on how these could be impacted in cases where same sex married couples move to NI from GB; and for information on whether DFP has sought any legal advice on these issues.

- Assembly Research paper on “Public Sector Renewable Generation Uptake”;  
*Agreed:* to forward to DFP for information.
- Invitation to Ulster Business Festival.

The following items of routine correspondence were emailed to members on Monday 29 April 2013:

- Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership ENewsletter;
- Equality Commission ENewsletter;
- “Evidence: What works in NI” – Alliance for Useful Evidence;
- DFP: Report on the delivery of Department’s Capital Projects; and
- List of other documents received and available in Committee Secretariat Room 419.

## **9. Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

### Emails from Members of the Public regarding Equal Pay Settlement

Members considered a request by a plaintiff in the recent PSNI/NIO County Court case to brief the Committee.

*Agreed:* to receive the briefing as requested.

### DFP: Forthcoming Primary Legislation

*Agreed:* to request early briefings from DFP on the potential provisions of the Financial Provisions Bill and Land Law Reform Bill.

*Agreed:* that the Committee Work Programme is updated to reflect any agreements made today and published on the Committee’s 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 8 May 2013 at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.56am.*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA  
Chairperson  
Committee for Finance and Personnel  
8 May 2013**