

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 29 MAY 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 David McIlveen 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 Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
Mr Gavin Moore (Bursary Student)

Apologies: None

The meeting opened at 10.05am in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

Agreed: that agenda items 4, 7 and 9 are covered by Hansard and the Official Record published on the Assembly's website.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 22 May 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.

4. Flexible Working – Evidence from Workplace Design

The Committee took evidence from Brian Thompson, Property Lead, Babcock International Group on the Flexible Working Inquiry. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10.12am.

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 10.18am.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 10.24am and rejoined at 10.29am.

Mr McCallister joined the meeting at 10.40am.

5. Legislative Consent Motion: Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe) on the proposed Legislative Consent Motion on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.55am.

Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 10.59am and joined at 11.01am.

Mrs Cochrane and Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 11am.

Agreed: to forward the research paper to DFP for written response to the issues raised.

6. Legislative Consent Motion: Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill – Evidence from DFP

The Committee took evidence on the proposed Legislative Consent Motion on the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill from Oswyn Paulin, Departmental Solicitor, Departmental Solicitors Office (DSO) and Laura McPolin, Policy Advisor, DSO. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Bradley left the meeting at 11.25am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.33am.

Mr Bradley joined the meeting at 11.35am.

Agreed: that the Departmental officials would provide members with a copy of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill and Explanatory Memorandum and clarification on the status of the Equality screening as well as information on whether a full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for the Legislative Consent Motion.

Agreed: to request a written submission from the Equality Commission on the provisions in the Bill which it is proposed will be covered under the Legislative Consent Motion.

7. June Monitoring Round: Departmental Position – DFP briefing

The Committee noted the paper setting out the Departmental June monitoring position.

The Committee received a briefing from the following DFP officials: Brigitte Worth, Finance Director Central Services Group, Finance Division; and Preeta Miller, Finance Division. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 11.48am.

Mrs Cochrane and Mr Girvan left the meeting at 11.53am.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 11.53am.

Agreed: that the DFP officials will provide further information on the provision for an increased liability for the Department as a result of the Abdullah Judgement.

8. Main Estimates and Budget (No. 2) Bill (NI) 2013

The Committee took evidence on the Main Estimates and the Budget (No. 2) Bill (NI) 2013 from the following DFP officials: Mike Brennan, Head of Central Expenditure Division, Central Finance Group (CFG); John McKibbin, Supply, CFG; and Jeff McGuinness, Central Expenditure Division, CFG. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 11.57am.

Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 12.01pm.

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 12.03pm

Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 12.15pm.

Mr McKay left the meeting at 12.16pm and Mr Bradley took the Chair.

Agreed: that the Committee is satisfied that there has been appropriate consultation with it on the public expenditure proposals contained in the Budget (No.2) Bill (NI) 2013 and is content to grant accelerated passage to the Bill in accordance with Standing Order 42 (2).

Agreed: that a letter would be sent to the Speaker reflecting the above decision.

Agreed: that the Department will be requested to: provide follow up information on the changes in departmental allocations for 2013-14 between the Budget 2011-15 and the Main Estimates 2013-14; consider how, in future, the Committee could be provided with fuller information on prior-year outturn when considering Main Estimates and making its decision on granting accelerated passage to related budget bills; and provided an update on any developments in relation to Review of the Financial Process.

Mr McKay joined the meeting at 12.25pm and took the Chair.

9. Prompt Payment – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from RaISe on the Research paper, *Prompt Payments: Developments and Best Practice*.

Agreed: to forward the research paper to DFP for a written response to issues raised in the paper and during the briefing.

Agreed: that RaISe will undertake follow up research on issues identified during the briefing.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 12.35pm.

Mr Bradley left the meeting at 12.38pm.

10. Sub-economic Tendering – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from RaISe on the Research paper, *Sub-economic Tendering: Developments and Best Practice*.

Agreed: to forward the research paper to DFP for a written response to issues raised in the paper.

11. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP: Access to benefits;
- Chartered Accountants Ireland Ulster Society: Invitation for Chairperson to address the Public Sector Group in 2014;
- DFP: Senior Civil Service Pay and Bonuses;
Agreed: to seek clarification from DFP on: the full costs of the reforms; why Whitehall has not implemented the reforms; and whether Executive approval to implement the reforms was received.
- DFP: Publication of Census 2011 key statistics for NI and Local Government Districts; and
- NI Law Commission: Apartments Report.

Members noted that the following items of routine correspondence were emailed to members on 20 May 2013:

- DFP News Release – Cancellation of Flybe flights Belfast-Gatwick
- A list of documents available in Room 419

12. Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Review of Landlord Liability

Agreed: to forward relevant papers on the Review of Rates Liability for Landlords to the Housing Rights Service as requested.

Equal Pay

The Committee noted that the witness who had been scheduled to brief the Committee on equal pay issues on 5 June 2013 is no longer able to attend the meeting.

Narrow Water Bridge Project

The Committee noted email correspondence from the Warrenpoint Chamber of Commerce indicating that its scheduled briefing on the Narrow Water Bridge Project was no longer required.

Agreed: to cancel the briefing sessions on the Narrow Water Bridge project scheduled for 19 June 2013.

Agreed: that the draft Committee Work Programme is amended to reflect any decisions made today and published on the Committee's website.

13. Any Other Business

None

14. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 5 June 2013 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.59pm.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
5 June 2013