

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2013
ROOM 29 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Ms Megan Fearon MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr David McIlveen MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA

The meeting opened at 10:17 am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

Agreed: that agenda items 5 & 6 are covered by Hansard and the Official Record published on the Assembly's website.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 19 June 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. Defamation Act 2013 – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the Defamation Act 2013.

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10:26 am.

5. Defamation Act 2013 – Evidence from Johnsons Law Firm

The Committee received evidence from Paul Tweed, Media Lawyer and Senior Partner in Johnsons Law Firm on the Defamation Act 2013. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10:44am and re-joined the meeting at 10:45am.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 11:01am and re-joined at 11:05am.

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 11:03am.

Mr McQuillan left the meeting 11:05am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11:28am and re-joined at 11:31am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11:34am and re-joined at 11:35am.

6. Private Members' Bill: Defamation – Evidence from Mike Nesbitt MLA

The Committee received evidence from Mike Nesbitt MLA and Brian Garrett, Solicitor on the proposed Private Members' Bill on Defamation. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Nesbitt declared an interest, stating that he knew Mr Paul Tweed in a personal and professional capacity.

Mrs Cochrane left the meeting and 11:37am and re-joined at 11:38am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 12:12 pm and re-joined at 12:19pm.

Mrs Cochrane left the meeting at 12:14pm.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 12:26 pm.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 12:26 pm.

Agreed: that the evidence received on the Defamation Act 2013 on 26 June and 3 July 2013 would be used to inform any further consideration of draft legislation on this matter in the future.

7. Public Service Pensions Bill – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee noted a briefing paper from Assembly Research entitled Public Service Pensions Bill.

Agreed: that the Delegated Powers Memorandum relating to the Bill, which had been received from DFP, is forwarded to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for scrutiny.

Agreed: that the signposting notice on the Committee Stage “call for evidence” is printed in the three main regional papers and that the detailed information on the “call for evidence” is published on the Committee’s website.

8. Public Service Pensions Bill – Consideration of options on “Macro-economic Appraisal”

The Committee gave further consideration to the options regarding the absence of a macroeconomic appraisal of the policy aims of the Public Service Pensions Bill.

Agreed: to write to Trade Union Side requesting that any work undertaken by it in respect of an appraisal is forwarded to the Committee at the earliest opportunity during the Committee Stage of the Bill for consideration.

9. Financial Forecasting Update – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research entitled Financial Forecasting Update.

Mr McCallister left the meeting at 12:34pm and re-joined at 12:39pm.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 12:37pm and re-joined at 12:38 pm.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 12:38pm.

Agreed: that the research paper is forwarded to DFP to respond to the issues raised and that the applicable extracts are forwarded to the other statutory committees for follow up with their departments.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 12:42 pm and re-joined at 12:45 pm.

10. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP: Financial Provisions Bill – Proposed Amendments;

Agreed: to schedule an oral briefing from DFP officials following the summer recess and to write to each of the applicable Assembly committees to seek a written submission on the provisions relevant to their remits.

- Committee for the Environment: Letter to DFP Minister regarding Environmental Crime Resources;
- Committee for Justice: Estimate of costs of hosting G8 Summit;
- DFP: Response regarding the Knowledge Economy Index Report;
- DFP: EU proposal to promote free movement of citizens;
- DFP: LCM Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill: Revised Equality Screening Form;
- Committee for Employment and Learning: Quarterly Labour Force Survey Updates.

Agreed: to forward to DFP to respond to the request contained in the correspondence.

- DFP: Response regarding necessary consents on the LCM on the Defamation Bill.

The following routine papers were noted:

- Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside – support for proposed enabling legislation for National Parks;
- Cover Note regarding documents available in Room 419;
- Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership – Ezine No.9.

11. Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

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

12. Any Other Business

Rollout of Tablet Devices

The Chairperson briefed members that the roll out of tablet devices had commenced and reminded members to contact the IS Office to arrange for the collection and configuration of the devices.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 3 July 2013 at 10:00 am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:52 pm.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
3 July 2013