

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
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)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mrs Judith Cochrane

The meeting opened at 10.07am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

Agreed: that agenda items 4, 5, 6 and 7 are covered by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly's website.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 09 October 2013

Agreed: that the minutes are published on the Assembly website.

Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 10.08am

3. Matters Arising

Table of Requests for Information from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

The Committee noted the summary table of requests for information from DFP which provided an update on any matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Access to Finance

The Committee noted that the “Access to Finance” pro forma had been issued to members on Thursday 10 October 2013 following the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment’s agreement to the proposed joint committee input to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Inquiry in the Banking Structure in Northern Ireland. The pro forma will be distributed to identified businesses that may have experienced difficulties accessing finance from local banks and returned to Assembly Research by 31 October 2013.

Legal Advice on Public Service Pensions Bill

The Committee discussed the possibility of Assembly Legal Services providing background advice on issues raised in relation to clause 23 of the Public Service Pensions Bill. Further discussion on the matter would take place later in the meeting.

4. Public Service Pensions Bill – Evidence from the Nevin Economic Research Institute

The Committee received evidence on the Public Service Pensions Bill from the following representative from the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI):

- Mr Paul MacFlynn – Researcher, NERI

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.12am

Peter Weir joined the meeting at 10.15am

Paul Girvan left the meeting at 10.18am and rejoined at 10.19am

5. Public Service Pensions Bill – Evidence from the British Medical Association

The Committee took evidence on the Public Service Pensions Bill from the following representatives from the British Medical Association (BMA):

- Dr Paul Darragh – Chairman of the NI Council, BMA;
- Mr Andy Blake – Head of Pensions Department, BMA

The session was recorded by Hansard.

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10.22am

6. Public Service Pensions Bill – Evidence from Northern Ireland Local Government Association

In advance of this session, Peter Weir declared an interest as a member of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA).

The Committee took evidence on the Public Service Pensions Bill from the following representatives from NILGA.

- Alderman Arnold Hatch, President of NILGA;
- Mr John Adams, Head of Workforce, NILGA.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Megan Fearon left the meeting at 10.55am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11.00am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 11.02am

7. Public Service Pensions Bill – Evidence from DFP

The Committee took evidence on the Public Service Pensions Bill from the following DFP officials:

- Ms Grace Nesbitt - Head of HR Policy, Pay & Pensions Division, Central Human Resources, DFP;
- Ms Blathnaid Smyth – HR Policy, Pay & Pensions Division, CHR, DFP;
- Ms Margaret Coyle – HR Policy, Pay & Pensions Division, CHR, DFP

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that, in order to inform the Committee's deliberations on the Bill at next week's meeting, DFP officials will respond to various issues identified during the session and to follow up queries highlighted by the Chairperson.

Agreed: to commission legal advice from Assembly Legal Services in relation to clause 23 of the Bill in advance of next week's meeting.

Megan Fearon rejoined the meeting at 11.05am

Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11.18am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11.22am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 11.32am

Megan Fearon left the meeting at 12.02pm

John McCallister left the meeting at 12.10pm

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP response to Committee for Education regarding Contingency Funds;
- DFP: June Monitoring Round Transfers and Technical Adjustments;
- DFP response regarding Legal Complaints and Overcharging;
- Committee for Justice: Management of Monies by the Courts Funds Office;
- European Parliament Event – 18 October 2013;
Agreed: that any member wishing to attend this event would contact the Committee office;
- Building Change Trust Invite – 5 November 2013;
Agreed: that any member wishing to attend this event would contact the Committee office;
Agreed: to seek written feedback on the outcome of this event.
- Rates for Equine Premises;
Agreed: to write to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development indicating an interest and requesting to be kept up to date on this issue;
- Construction Employers Federation (CEF) Invite;
Agreed: that the Clerk will establish the feasibility of holding a Committee meeting at CEF Headquarters, which could be scheduled after an upcoming plenary debate of relevance to the issues raised by CEF;
- Letter from Committee for Justice regarding Equal Pay;
- Barroso Task Force Desk Officer Progress Reports.

9. Committee Work Programme

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme

Agreed: that the work programme is updated to reflect any agreements made today and published on the Committee's website.

10. Any other business

Electronic Committee packs – implementation phase

Members noted that, with effect from 23 October 2013, the Committee would be implementing fully electronic packs. Members also noted that the Public Sector Pensions Bill folder was also accessible through the Assembly software.

11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 23 October 2013 at 10:00 am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.30pm

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
23 October 2013