

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 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
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Ian McCrea 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: Ms Megan Fearon MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA

The meeting opened at 10.08am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

Agreed: that agenda items 4, 7 and 8 are recorded by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly's website.

Agreed: that the Table of Issues in respect of the Public Service Pensions Bill is provided to the DFP officials for information in advance of the forthcoming evidence session on the Bill.

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 10.09am

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 16 October 2013

Agreed: that the minutes, as amended, 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 summary 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: that correspondence from the Fire Brigades Union would be sent to DFP for urgent response.

Access to Finance: draft interview questions for use in case studies

The Committee considered draft questions that would be used by Assembly Researchers when conducting interviews with local businesses which have agreed to participate in the 'Access to Finance' case-study research.

Agreed: that, whilst members are generally content with the questions, a specific question should be added to cover 'interest rate swap arrangements'.

Agreed: that members would forward any further comments on the draft questions before close of play on Thursday 24 October 2013.

The Chairperson reminded members that the pro forma should be issued urgently to any applicable businesses that have been identified to date and that this should be completed and returned to Assembly Research by 31 October 2013.

4. Outcome of the October Monitoring Round: – Evidence from DFP Officials

The Committee took evidence on the Outcome of the October Monitoring Round from the following DFP officials:

- Mr Mike Brennan, Budget Director, DFP;
- Mr Peter Jakobsen, Central Expenditure Division, DFP;
- Ms Brigitte Worth, Finance Director, Corporate Services Group, DFP.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10.25am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 10.35am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10.37am

5. Public Service Pensions Bill – Follow up Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a follow up briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service on the Research paper, *Public Service Pensions Act – Consideration of Westminster Legislative Process*.

Agreed: that the Researcher will provide a follow up response to issues discussed during the briefing.

Agreed: to forward correspondence from the Independent Financial Review Panel for the Northern Ireland Assembly to DFP for response.

The Committee moved into closed session at 11.02am in line with normal convention.

6. Public Service Pensions Bill – Legal and Procedural Advice

Members received a briefing from Kiera McDonald, Assembly Legal Adviser, and Patricia Casey, Bill Clerk, on clause 23 of the Public Service Pensions Bill.

Agreed: to seek a written response from DFP on suggested options for improving the legal certainty in respect of clause 23 of the Bill.

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11.13am

Adrian McQuillan rejoined the meeting at 11.14am

Judith Cochrane joined the meeting at 11.39am

The Committee returned to open session at 11.39am

7. Public Service Pensions Bill – Evidence from DFP Officials

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

- Ms Margaret Coyle – HR Policy, Pay & Pensions Division, Central Human Resources (CHR), DFP
- Mr Stephen Ball, Pay and Pensions Division, CHR, DFP

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11.47am

John McCallister left the meeting at 11.50am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 11.50am

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11.56am

Judith Cochrane rejoined the meeting at 11.57am

Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11.59am

Ian McCrea left the meeting at 12.30pm

Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 12.42pm

Agreed: that the DFP officials will provide urgent responses to issues raised during the evidence session as well as a written response to issues identified during the evidence session of 16 October and issues sent in follow up.

8. Public Service Pensions Bill – Consideration of Issues from the Evidence

Agreed: that due to the number of issues for which written responses from DFP are still outstanding, this session would be postponed until the next meeting of the Committee.

9. Financial Provisions Bill – Written Briefing from DFP

Agreed: that the briefing paper provided by DFP is forwarded to the Justice Committee for consideration and response as appropriate

10. Correspondence

- DFP: Outturn and Forecast Outturn tables for August 2013;
- Letter from member of public regarding the Ulster Bank;
Agreed: to write to the member of the public to explain the Committee's work on banking issues and to suggest that they consider taking part in the on-going 'Access to Finance' case-study research.
- Consumer Council press release regarding the cancellation of Air Passenger Duty in the Republic of Ireland

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 12.44pm

11. Committee Work Programme

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

12. Any other business

None

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 6 November 2013 at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.47pm

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
06 November 2013