

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 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 Paul Girvan 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

The meeting opened at 10.11am in public session.

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

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. **Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 06 November 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 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 Update

Members were provided with an update on the progress of the case-study research into businesses experiencing difficulties in accessing finance from local banks, which will be submitted to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee inquiry into banking in Northern Ireland. It was also noted that, as part of its inquiry, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee is planning to hold evidence sessions in Parliament Buildings on Tuesday 17 December.

4. **Public Service Pensions Bill – Consideration of Draft Amendments and Issues Outstanding**

Arising from its meeting on 6 November 2013, the Committee deliberated on a number of issues outstanding and on potential draft amendments in relation to clauses 9, 10, 13 and 24 of the Bill.

The Committee noted follow up correspondence from DFP and a further submission from ICTU (NIC). The session was recorded by Hansard.

The following DFP officials were in attendance and provided clarification to the Committee on issues identified with the draft amendments:

- Grace Nesbitt, Head of Pay and Pensions Division;
- Stephen Ball, Pay and Pensions Division.

The Committee considered the following wording of a draft amendment to clause 13, subsection (7), of the Bill:

Clause 13, Page 9, Line 20

After 'qualified' insert-

'and must not be-

(a) an employee of the responsible authority;

(b) the scheme manager;

(c) a scheme member; or

(d) an employee of the Department of Finance and Personnel.'

Agreed: that the amendment, as drafted, will be tabled at Consideration Stage and that this decision will be reflected in the Committee's formal clause-by-clause consideration and report on the Bill.

Agreed: to update the Environment Committee of developments arising from the deliberations on the clauses of the Bill which are relevant to the remit of the Department of the Environment.

The Committee deliberated on the wording of options for draft amendments to clause 24, subsection (1), paragraph (b) of the Bill.

Mr McLaughlin proposed the following amendment to clause 24(1)(b):

Clause 24, Page 13, Line 36

Leave out paragraph (b) and insert-

'(b) they are scheme regulations containing retrospective provision which may have any adverse effect-

(i) in relation to the pension payable to, or in respect of, any members of the scheme, or

(ii) in any other way in relation to members of the scheme (for example, in relation to injury or compensation benefits).'

Question put

The Committee divided: Ayes 4; Noes 5; Abstentions 0

AYES

Mr Bradley, Mrs Cochrane, Mr McKay and Mr McLaughlin

NOES

Mr Cree, Mr Girvan, Mr McCrea, Mr McQuillan and Mr Weir

Question accordingly negatived.

The Committee also considered the wording of a draft amendment to clause 9, subsection (1), paragraph (b) of the Bill.

Agreed: that the Committee is content with the clarification provided by DFP on this issue and will not pursue the potential amendment to clause 9(1)(b) of the Bill.

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 10.29am

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 10.32am

Judith Cochrane rejoined the meeting at 10.47am

Adrian McQuillan rejoined the meeting at 10.54am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 11.00am

Daithi McKay, Committee Chairperson, left the meeting at 11.04am and was replaced in the Chair by Dominic Bradley, Deputy Chairperson, for the remainder of the meeting.

5. Financial Provisions Bill – Evidence from DFP Officials

The Committee received evidence on the Financial Provisions Bill from the following DFP Officials.

- Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Division;
- Fiona Hamill, Treasury Officer of Accounts

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the Departmental officials will provide an urgent follow up submission to include: the wording of amendments to clauses 3 and 6 of the Bill; and further detail and wording of two additional amendments to the Bill in respect of rating legislation.

6. Non Domestic Revaluation 2015 – Briefing from DFP/LPS Officials

The Committee received evidence on the Non Domestic Revaluation 2015 from the following DFP Officials

- Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Division;
- Alan Bronte, Commissioner of Valuation, Land & Property Services (LPS).

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the DFP officials will provide regular briefings to the Committee on the progress of the non-domestic revaluation and that a separate briefing will be provided on the rating considerations arising from the Review of Public Administration.

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11.18am

Ian McCrea left the meeting at 11.20am

Adrian McQuillan rejoined the meeting at 11.24am

Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 11.30am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 12.00pm

7. Correspondence

Members noted the following pieces of correspondence

- DFP: Response to member of public regarding property management companies;
- Invest NI Stakeholder Survey
- Refine NI Introduction – Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Committee for Employment and Learning: Invite to Higher Education Showcase Event
- Invite from Daithí McKay MLA to the launch of his Private Members' Bill – Rates Relief for Amateur Sports Clubs

8. 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

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 10:00 am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.02pm

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