

# **COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL**

## **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 27 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: Megan Fearon MLA

*The meeting commenced at 10.04am in public session.*

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 20 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.

### DFP: Pension Arrangements for Firefighters in Scotland

The Committee noted correspondence from DFP in response to information sought in respect of negotiations over flexibilities in pension age for firefighters in Scotland.

### Access to Finance case-study research

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the progress of the case-study research being undertaken by the Assembly Research and Information Service, which will be submitted to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's inquiry into banking in Northern Ireland. Members were reminded that the closing date for making returns for inclusion in the research was 29 November 2013.

## **4. Public Service Pensions Bill – Final consideration of the Draft Committee Report**

The Committee considered its draft report on the Public Service Pensions Bill as follows:

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 1 – 6 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 7 – 14 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 15 – 61 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 62 – 74 stand part of the Report;

*Peter Weir joined the meeting at 10.10am*

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 75 – 83 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that the subtitle before paragraph 84 is amended as agreed;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 84 – 101 stand part of the Report;

*Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 10.12am*

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 102 – 108 stand part of the Report

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 109 – 117 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 118 – 128 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 129 – 136 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 137 – 138 stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that the Appendices stand part of the Report;

*Agreed:* that the Executive Summary stands part of the Report.

*Agreed;* that the report (as amended) be the Ninth Report of the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Assembly for the mandate 2011/15.

*Agreed:* that the extract of the draft minutes of today's meeting relating to the report is marked 'unapproved' and checked by the Chairperson before inclusion in the report.

*Agreed:* that the report on the Public Service Pensions Bill (as amended) be printed.

## **5. Financial Provisions Bill – Consideration of Departmental Amendments**

The Committee considered departmental amendments to the Financial Provisions Bill.

*Agreed:* to seek clarification from DFP on whether the long title of the Bill will need to be amended to reflect the proposed amendments to the clauses of the Bill.

*Judith Cochrane joined the meeting at 10.16am*

## **6. Budget 2015-16: Pre-consultation briefing by DFP**

Members noted correspondence, received from DFP on 26 November, to inform the Committee that this scheduled briefing by departmental officials was being postponed.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will reschedule the briefing for its meeting on 11 December.

*Agreed:* that the Chairperson writes to the Minister to express the Committee's discontent with the late notification of the postponement.

## **7. Correspondence**

Members noted the following pieces of correspondence:

- Memo from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the Green Investment Bank;

*Agreed:* to forward to the correspondence to DFP for a response on the issues raised.

- Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (N.I.) - Consultation On Proposed Increases To Employee Contribution Rates 2014/15l.

*Agreed:* to schedule an oral briefing from DFP on this issue at a future meeting.

- Memo from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment; Letter to SEUPB;

*Agreed:* to forward this correspondence to DFP for a direct response.

- Fire Brigades Union Invite;
- DFP: Civil Service Compensation Scheme Briefing Paper;

*Agreed:* to schedule an oral briefing from DFP on this issue at a future meeting.

- DFP Performance against Programme for Government, 2013 – 2014 Business Plan Targets and Departmental Savings Delivery Plan for the period to 30 September 2013;
- Consultation Document on Draft Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill;

The Committee noted that stakeholder evidence sessions would be held on this issue at an external meeting at the Law Society headquarters early in 2014.

- Correspondence from the Prison Officers Association regarding the Public Service Pensions Bill.
- Correspondence received by Mr Leslie Cree highlighting concerns in respect of Civil Service Pensions future service delivery.

*Agreed:* to forward the correspondence to DFP for response to the issues raised.

## **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.

*John McCallister joined the meeting at 10.25am*

## **9. Any other business**

### Banking Issues

Mr McCallister highlighted concerns over recent press coverage regarding the findings from a report into the conduct of the Royal Bank of Scotland's (RBS) Global Restructuring Group (GRG) in terms of perceptions that viable businesses are being '*purposely distressed*' in order for them to be handled by GRG to increase its earnings.

Given that the Ulster Bank is part of RBS, it was proposed that the Committee seeks an assurance that businesses in Northern Ireland have not been exposed to such alleged practices.

*Agreed:* to write to Ulster Bank for its assurance and to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to highlight the Committee's concern on this issue.

*Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.29am*

## **10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 04 December 2013 at 10:00 am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 10.30am*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**04 December 2013**