

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin 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: Mr Dominic Bradley (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Adrian McQuillan (MLA)
Mr Ian McCrea (MLA)

The meeting commenced at 10.04am in public session.

Agreed: that agenda items 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 04 December 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.

Banking Issues

Members noted correspondence from Ulster Bank responding to the Committee's request for a briefing on the recent technical problems with the bank's IT systems.

Agreed: a draft response for issuing to Ulster Bank and copying to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for information.

Members also considered a draft paper by Assembly Research on Access to Finance Case Studies, which had been commissioned previously.

Agreed: that, subject to the approval of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (CETI), the research paper will be submitted to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) inquiry into banking in Northern Ireland. This would be in advance of the chairpersons of both Assembly committees providing oral evidence to NIAC on the matter.

Steps to Success

The Chairperson highlighted concerns that had been brought to his attention in respect of the prequalification questionnaire (PQQ) relating to the 'Steps to Success' procurement exercise currently being carried out by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in conjunction with DFP's Central Procurement Directorate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to DFP for an urgent response by 20 December 2013 to highlight the concerns in the context of DFP's central procurement role and to copy the correspondence to the Committee for Employment and Learning for information.

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 10.09am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10.10am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10.10am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 10.11am

4. Financial Provisions Bill – Final Consideration of Committee Report

Judith Cochrane rejoined the meeting at 10.13am

The Committee considered its draft report on the Financial Provisions Bill as follows:

Agreed: that paragraphs 1 – 14 stand part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraphs 15 – 42 stand part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraphs 43 – 44 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 be the tenth 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 Financial Provisions Bill be printed.

Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 10.16am

5. Budget 2015-16: Pre-Consultation briefing by DFP

The Committee received evidence on the forthcoming process for Budget 2015-16 from the following departmental officials:

- Mike Brennan (Budget Director, DFP);
- Peter Jakobsen (Acting Head of Central Expenditure Division); and
- Jeff McGuinness (Central Expenditure Division)

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that DFP officials will provide the Committee with regular updates on the roll out of the financial transactions capital facility.

Agreed: to forward the applicable DFP briefing papers to the other statutory committees for information at this stage.

Paul Girvan left the meeting at 10.29am

Paul Girvan rejoined the meeting at 10.30am

6. January 2014 Monitoring Round: Departmental Position – DFP Evidence

The Committee received evidence on the DFP return for the January 2014 Monitoring Round from the following departmental officials:

- Brigitte Worth (Head of Finance Division);
- Kathryn Hill (Finance Division); and
- Patricia McAuley (Director of Revenues & Benefits, Land & Property Services).

The session was recorded by Hansard.

7. Correspondence

- Belfast International Airport - Growing Air Routes;
- DFP: Titanic Replacement Expenditure in the EU Competitiveness Programme;
- DFP: Outstanding Post Project Evaluations (PPEs) as of 30 September 2013;
Agreed: To copy the DFP correspondence to the other statutory committees and the Public Accounts Committee for follow up scrutiny as applicable.
- Assembly Speaker: Northern Ireland Affairs Committee use of Senate Chamber;
- DFP: General Register Office (Fees) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014;
Agreed: to seek additional information from DFP in respect of the General Register Office fees and turnaround times in Northern Ireland as compared to England and Wales.
- CETI: Renewable energy in public buildings

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

Committee input on Freedom of Information (FoI) matters during Christmas recess

Agreed: to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson during the forthcoming period of recess to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information in any non-routine or contentious FoI requests received.

Christmas Cards

Agreed: that the e-card is issued to all stakeholders who have provided evidence to the Committee this year.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.00am

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
15 January 2014