

## **COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithi McKay MLA (Chairperson)  
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA  
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA  
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan 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)  
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr John McCallister MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10:47am.*

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

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 05 March 2014**

*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.

## **4. Rate Rebate Replacement Scheme: progress update – Briefing from DFP**

The Committee received a briefing on both the Rate Rebate Replacement Scheme and on the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Small Business Rate Scheme from the following DFP officials:

- Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Division, DFP;
- Roisin McRory, Rating Policy Division, DFP; and
- John Richardson, Rating Policy Division, DFP.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:56am*

*Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 11:00am*

*Agreed:* that the Department will offer the Committee the opportunity to agree its position on both matters before the Executive decides on the way forward.

## **5. Strategic Review of Rate Collection and Recovery – Briefing from Land & Property Services**

The Committee received a briefing on the Strategic Review of Rate Collection and Recovery from the following Land & Property Services (LPS) officials:

- Patricia McAuley, Director of Revenues & Benefits – Reform, LPS; and
- Mervyn Adair, Director of Revenues & Benefits – Operations, LPS.

*Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11:10am*

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:13am*

*Adrian McQuillan re-joined the meeting at 11:36am*

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:37am*

*Mitchel McLaughlin joined the meeting at 11:41am*

*Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 11:46am*

The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* that the Department will provide the detail of the recommendations and a copy of the project plan arising from the review conducted by Ernst and Young.

## **6. Public Procurement – Briefing from Construction Employers Federation**

The Committee received a briefing on Public Procurement from the following Construction Employers Federation (CEF) representative:

- Mr Ciarán Fox, Federation Manager - Construction Employers Federation

*Agreed:* that CEF will provide follow up information discussed during the session, including: a regular critique of the quality of information contained on the Investment Strategy portal; a view on how best to apply social clauses in public sector procurement contracts; and an assessment of the number of sustainable homes required in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* to seek a written response to the CEF paper from DFP, including on the proposals for various reports to be provided to assist the Committee in monitoring performance in a number of areas relating to public procurement.

*Agreed:* to request the other relevant Assembly committees to seek assurance from their respective departments on the issue of maintaining up-to-date information on the Investment Strategy portal.

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12:07pm*

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 12:25pm*

## **7. Subordinate Legislation – Examiner of Statutory Rules Eleventh Report, 7 March 2014**

The Committee noted the above report and accepted the finding of the Examiner of Statutory Rules with regard to DFP's breach of the 21 day rule in relation to the following statutory rules:

- The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspection) (Amendments) Regulation (NI) 2014; and
- The Building (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014.

## **8. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following pieces of correspondence:

- DFP: Response to letter from Radox Laboratories;

*Agreed:* to seek further information from DFP on the framework used in this procurement; and, in the meantime, to copy the DFP response to Radox Laboratories and the Committee for Justice for information.

- Education Committee: Response to the Flexible Working Inquiry;

*Agreed:* to write to the Southern and Western Education and Library Boards to obtain information on the findings from their respective teleworking pilots.

- Go ON UK: Correspondence regarding digital skills training;

*Agreed:* to respond expressing the Committee's support for this initiative and to write to DFP seeking information on the extent of its involvement with the project in Northern Ireland.

- Member of Public: Correspondence regarding Ulster Bank;

*Agreed:* to write to Ulster Bank highlighting the issues raised in the correspondence and to reiterate the Committee's view on the importance of bank branches within rural areas.

*Agreed:* to forward a copy of the correspondence to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for information and to reply to the correspondent detailing the Committee's approach.

- RaISe: Publication Update February 2014; and

- Financial Ombudsman Service – Correspondence relating to complaint against Ulster Bank.

*Agreed:* that consideration will be given to scheduling an information briefing from the Financial Ombudsman Service on its role and function.

*Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 12:40pm*

## **9. 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**

There was no other business

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

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 19 March 2014 at 10:00 am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:42pm*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**19 March 2014**