

## **COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL**

### **DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 09 APRIL 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay (Chairperson)  
Mr Dominic Bradley (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA  
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA  
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA  
Mr Peter Weir MLA
- In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Ms Michaela Boyle MLA

*The meeting commenced at 10:15 in public session.*

*Agreed:* that agenda items 4, 5 and 6 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 02 April 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. Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on Sickness Absence in the Public Sector – Briefing from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

The Committee received a briefing on the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Report on Sickness Absence in the Public Sector, from the following officials from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS):

- Patricia Corbett - Director of Human Resources, DHSSPS;
- Marie Mallon – Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Human Resources, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and
- Tom Hamilton – Deputy Director of Personnel and Corporate Services, DHSSPS.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will write to DHSSPS in follow up to request benchmarking information comparing sick absence rates in the health and social care sector here with comparable sectors in other jurisdictions.

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 10:25*

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:46*

*Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 10:53*

*Adrian McQuillan re-joined the meeting at 11:02*

*Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 11:10*

*Judith Cochrane joined the meeting at 11:13*

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:15*

## **5. Air Connectivity Study: Phase II – Briefing from Department of Finance and Personnel and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

The Committee received a briefing on the Air Connectivity Study: Phase II from the following DFP and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) officials:

- Tony Simpson – Strategic Policy Division, Central Finance Group (CFG), DFP;
- David Thompson – Deputy Secretary, DETI; and
- John Simms – Principal Officer, DETI

The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* that the DFP officials will provide the Committee with the stage 1 literature review and will give consideration to undertaking a parallel exercise to cost the devolution of short-haul rates of air passenger duty.

*Paul Girvan left the meeting at 11:47*

## **6. Legislative Consent Motion on Changes in Air Passenger Duty Bands in UK Finance Bill 2014**

Following the Committee's consideration of correspondence from DFP highlighting a proposed Legislative Consent Motion (LCM), the following DFP official briefed the Committee on the requirement for the LCM:

- Tony Simpson - Strategic Policy Division, CFG, DFP

The session was recorded by Hansard.

*Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 12:00*

## **7. Review of Fiscal Powers - Briefing from DFP**

The Committee received a briefing on the Review of Fiscal Powers from the following DFP officials:

- Colin Sullivan – Director of Strategic Policy and Reform Directorate, DFP; and
- Paul Montgomery – Strategic Policy Division, CFG, DFP.

*Paul Girvan re-joined the meeting at 12:05*

*Adrian McQuillan left our meeting at 12:06*

*Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 12:25*

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 12:25*

## **8. Review of Aggregates Levy – Briefing from DFP**

The Committee received a briefing on the European Commission review of the Aggregates Levy from the following DFP official:

- Tony Simpson - Strategic Policy Division, CFG, DFP

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

## **9. Subordinate Legislation**

SL1 - The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014, and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage

## 10. Correspondence

- Southern Education and Library Board: Home Based Pilot Scheme;
- Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (CETI): Proposed Plenary Debate on Renewable Energy in Public Buildings;

*Agreed:* that the Committee will liaise with the other relevant committees on the timing of any plenary debate on this matter.

*Agreed:* that a briefing from DFP on its responsibilities in this area is scheduled at a future meeting and in advance of any plenary debate on the matter.

- Department for Regional Development (DRD): Response to NIAO Report on Sickness Absence in the NI Public Sector;
- DETI: Response to NIAO Report on Sickness Absence in the NI Public Sector;
- Department for Employment and Learning (DEL): Response to NIAO Report on Sickness Absence in the NI Public Sector;
- Department of Education (DE): Response to NIAO Report on Sickness Absence in the NI Public Sector;

*Agreed:* to forward the departmental responses to DFP for information and a response as applicable.

- DFP: Interim response regarding Status of Strategic Review of Rate Collection;

*Agreed:* to write to DFP seeking the recommendations of the review undertaken by Ernst & Young, as originally requested.

- Civil Service Pensioners Alliance: Equal Pay settlement for Northern Ireland Civil Service Pensioners.

*Agreed:* to seek a DFP response to the issues highlighted in the correspondence.

- DFP: response to Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) report on Human Rights and Public Procurement

*Agreed:* to copy the DFP response to NIHRC for information and to invite representatives from the Commission to give oral evidence on this matter at a future meeting.

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:43*

*Peter Weir re-joined the meeting 11:45*

## **11. Committee Work Programme**

### Ulster Bank evidence session

The Chairperson reminded members that CETI will be taking evidence from Ulster Bank officials at its meeting on 10 April 2014 and members were asked to indicate whether they would be taking up the CETI invite to attend this session.

### Monitoring Rounds

Members noted that the Department had provided an indicative timetable for the monitoring rounds dates for 2014-15.

*Agreed:* that the Chairperson will write to each of the other statutory committees with the dates of the monitoring rounds once finalised.

### Budget 2015-16

Members noted that the Committee's coordinated scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2015/2016 would require to be scheduled into the work programme shortly.

*Agreed:* that, in order to inform this cross-departmental scrutiny, the Committee will commission research on the monitoring, forecasting and spending performance of departments.

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

*Agreed:* that the Committee work programme will be updated to reflect decisions taken today and published on the Committee's website

### Freedom of Information (FoI) arrangements during Easter 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.

### Any other business

There was no other business.

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

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

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:55pm*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**09 April 2014**