

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 02 JULY 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Daithí McKay (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister 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 Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:07 in public session with Dominic Bradley, Deputy Chairperson in the Chair.

Agreed: that agenda item 4 is 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 25 June 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. Consultation on regulations for the New Civil Service Pension Scheme and on Public Service Pensions – Briefing by DFP

The Committee received a briefing on consultations on Regulations for the New Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2015 and on draft directions and regulations on Valuations and Employer Cost Cap changes in respect of Public Service Pensions from the following departmental officials:

- Mrs Grace Nesbitt, Head of Pensions Division, Corporate Human Resources (CHR), DFP;
- Mr Peter Philip, Civil Service Pensions (CSP), DFP;
- Ms Margaret Coyle, Policy & Legislation, CSP, CHR, DFP;
- Mrs Blathnaid Smyth, Policy and Legislation, CSP, CHR, DFP; and
- Mr Stephen Ball, Policy and Legislation, CSP, CHR, DFP.

Agreed: to schedule a briefing on the outcome of the DFP-led consultations and on progress by other departments in consulting on the other new public service pension schemes following the summer recess.

The session was recorded by Hansard

Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 10:12

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:21

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:45

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 10:38

Adrian McQuillan re-joined the meeting at 10:47

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 10:51

5. Private Members' Bill – A Bill to Make Amateur Sports Clubs Exempt from Rates – Follow up briefing by Assembly Research

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the above Private Members' Bill.

John McCallister left the meeting at 10:58

6. Year-end Surges in Northern Ireland Departmental Expenditure – Briefing by Assembly Research

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on Year-end Surges in Northern Ireland Departmental Expenditure.

Paul Girvan left the meeting at 11:06

Paul Girvan re-joined the meeting at 11:20

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:40

Daithí McKay joined the meeting at 11:40 and took the Chair.

Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11:40

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:43

Adrian McQuillan re-joined the meeting at 11:44

Agreed: to forward the Assembly research paper to DFP for a written response to the issues raised.

Agreed: to forward the Assembly research paper to the other statutory committees for scrutiny at a departmental level, as applicable; and to also copy the paper to the Northern Ireland Audit Office for information.

In line with normal practice, the Committee went into closed session for agenda items 7 and 8, which included initial consideration of draft reports.

7. Flexible Working Inquiry – Consideration of issues from the evidence (Closed Session)

The Committee considered a working draft report on the Flexible Working Inquiry, which set out the issues arising from the evidence.

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 11:52

Dominic Bradley re-joined the meeting at 11:56

Peter Weir left the meeting at 12:18

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 12:19

Agreed: that a further draft of the report will be prepared for members to consider after summer recess.

8. Sickness Absence in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland – Consideration of issues from the evidence (Closed Session)

The Committee considered a working draft report of the review of sickness absence in the public sector in Northern Ireland, which set out the issues arising from the evidence.

Agreed: that a further draft of the report will be prepared for members to consider after summer recess.

The Committee moved into public session for the remainder of the meeting at 12:32.

9. Correspondence

- DFP - Status of Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) & Northern Ireland Office (NIO) equal pay issue.

Agreed: to forward a copy of the response to two previous correspondents for information.

- DFP - Renewable Energy Paper: late paper.
- Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (CETI) - Conveying information to the Committee on Barroso Desk Officers.
- Consumer Council – IT problems in financial institutions and impact on consumers.

Agreed: to schedule an oral briefing from the Consumer Council following the summer recess.

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 12:40

10. Committee Work Programme

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Agreed: to add a number of additional topics to be scheduled into the Committee's work programme for the next session.

Agreed: that the Committee writes to DFP seeking a copy of the business plan for each business area, together with a summary of performances against objectives.

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

11. Any other business

Committee input on Freedom of Information matters during summer recess

The Committee noted that the normal practice for Assembly committees was to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson during periods of recess to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information in any non-routine/contentious Freedom of Information requests received.

Agreed: that this practice is applied during the forthcoming summer recess.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

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

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:45

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
10 September 2014