

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 08 OCTOBER 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Raymond McCartney 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 Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:12 am in public session.

Agreed: that agenda items 5 and 6 are covered by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly's website.

The Chairperson welcomed a new member to the Committee: Mr Raymond McCartney and his declaration of interests were noted.

The Committee put on record its thanks to Mitchel McLaughlin for his contribution to the work of the Committee, both in his role as Chairperson from May 2007 to September 2009 and, subsequently, as a member.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 01 October 2014

Agreed: that the minutes are published on the Assembly website.

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:13 am

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 10:13 am

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.

Members were advised that, in line with normal procedure, the Committee would now go into closed session for the Final Consideration of the Draft Committee Report on the Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland.

The Committee went into closed session at 10:14 am

4. Flexible Working Inquiry – Final Consideration of Draft Committee Report

The Committee considered the draft Committee Report on the Flexible Working Inquiry.

Agreed: that paragraphs 1-11 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 12-18 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 19-52 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 53-55 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 56-67 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 68-83 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 84-86 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 87-109 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 110-123 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 124-140 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 141-152 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 153-165 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 166-170 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that paragraphs 171-179 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: that the Executive Summary, as amended, stands part of the Report.

Agreed: that the Appendices 1 to 6 stand part of the Report.

Agreed: That the report be the first Report of the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Assembly 2014-15.

Agreed: That the Committee Report on the Inquiry into Flexible Working be printed.

Members noted that a draft plenary motion for a debate on the report will be considered at next week's meeting.

Members further noted that, following proofing and formatting, the printed report would be issued to all MLAs in advance of the Assembly debate, but will be embargoed until the start of the debate in plenary.

The Committee returned to open session for the remainder of the meeting at 10:25 am

The Committee agreed to consider the following agenda item next; Correspondence.

5. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence

- DFP: Adverse Impact on Northern Ireland Civil Service recruitment for First Line Managers;

Agreed: to receive a briefing from DFP as per the timescale indicated in the correspondence.

- DFP: Response to Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) Inquiry into Building a United Community;

Agreed: To forward DFP's response to COFMDFM and indicate that, on the basis of this, the Committee will not be making a submission to the Inquiry.

- DFP: Response to Corrigan and Co. complaint against Law Society;
- DFP: Indicative Timescale for DFP Primary Legislation;
- DFP: Monthly Forecast Outturn Data June 2014;

- DFP: Public Procurement - Implementation of Social Clauses;
Agreed: that the Committee will schedule an oral briefing from Central Procurement Directorate focusing on progress in implementing social clauses.
- DFP: Interim update on the Review of eHR Programme costs v business case;
- NI Assembly Research: Publications Update June - September 2014; and
- DFP: Timeline on Non-Domestic Revaluation.

6. Managing Convergence of District Rates – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on Managing Convergence of District Rates from the following departmental official:

- Brian McClure – Head of Rating Policy Division, DFP

Agreed: to schedule a further briefing on the Minister's policy decision arising from the consultation ahead of considering the related subordinate legislation.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:40 am

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 10:44 am

7. Cross Departmental Performance Against Savings Delivery Plans – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on the Cross Departmental Performance against Savings Delivery Plans from the following departmental officials:

- Joanne McBurney, Head of Supply, Central Expenditure Division (CED), DFP
- Agnes Lennon – CED, DFP
- Preeta Miller – Finance Division, Corporate Services Group (CSG), DFP
- Janis Marynowski – Head of Financial Management, DFP

Agreed: that DFP officials will provide follow up information on the breakdown of the shortfall in savings by the Department of Justice.

Agreed: to forward the DFP briefing paper and Hansard of the session to the other statutory committees for scrutiny at a departmental level as applicable.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 10:53 am

Ian McCrea left the meeting at 10:54 am

8. Performance against Business Plan Targets – DFP Corporate Services Division – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on Corporate Service Division's Performance against Business Plan Targets from the following departmental officials:

- Anne Breen – Director of Human Resources, DFP
- Brendan Fitzpatrick – Lead Business Partner, Departmental HR, DFP
- Linda Kirkwood – Head of Corporate Improvement Centre, DFP

Agreed: that the DFP officials will provide follow up information on the Department's performance in responding to Freedom of Information requests.

Agreed: that the DFP officials will respond to any follow up issues raised by the Committee in writing.

Michaela Boyle re-joined the meeting at 11:00 am

Raymond McCartney left the meeting at 11:00 am

Ian McCrea re-joined the meeting at 11:06 am

Paul Girvan left the meeting at 11:08 am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:22 am

Paul Girvan re-joined the meeting at 11:24 am

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 11:27 am

Raymond McCartney re-joined the meeting at 11:30 am

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 11:35 am

9. Review of the operation of the Barnett Formula – Consideration of draft Terms of Reference.

The Committee considered a draft Terms of Reference for a review into the operation and administration of the Barnett formula. This was agreed subject to a minor amendment.

Agreed: that a copy of the Terms of Reference, as amended, will be sent to DFP and the other relevant Assembly committees for information.

Agreed: to commission an Assembly research paper providing an up-to-date literature review on the issues relating to the Barnett formula and a list of suggested expert witnesses to provide oral evidence.

Agreed: to schedule update briefings from the three expert witnesses (Gerard Holtham, Professor Iain McLean and Professor Alan Trench) who previously provided evidence on this issue.

10. Committee Work Programme

Independent analysis of the impact of Welfare Reform

Members noted the Minister's recent announcement that, following discussion with the Committee, he would commission independent analysis of the impact of Welfare Reform.

Agreed: to write to the Department seeking a copy of the terms of reference and the indicative timeframe for this work; and that the Committee will liaise with the Social Development Committee on the matter, given the joint interest in this issue.

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.

11. 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, 15 October 2014 at 10:00 am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am

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