

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 15 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 Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Ian McCrea 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 Peter Weir MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:07am 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 08 October 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.

Scrutiny of DFP Business Areas

Following the briefing from DFP's Corporate Services Division (CSD) on 8 October 2014, the members considered follow up issues requiring written responses from the Department, including the financial information needed to support the Committee's rolling programme of scrutiny of performance by DFP business areas.

Agreed: to issue a letter to DFP seeking additional information on CSD's performance against business plan targets, together with a request for financial information on each DFP business area to inform the Committee's forthcoming scrutiny of the Department's draft budget for 2015-16.

Flexible Working Inquiry Report

Agreed: that the Committee motion on the Flexible Working Inquiry Report is submitted to the Business Committee for scheduling a plenary debate, preferably on Monday 10 November 2014.

Validation Study of Welfare Reform Costs

The Committee noted tabled correspondence from DFP on the terms of reference for the 'Validation Study of Welfare Reform Costs', which the Department has commissioned for the purpose of providing an independent assessment of the economic impact on Northern Ireland of not progressing the welfare reform agenda in line with Great Britain.

Agreed: to copy the correspondence to the Committee for Social Development due to the cross cutting nature of the issue.

Agreed: to write to DFP indicating that the Committee will consider the terms of reference at next week's meeting and may follow up with comments in this regard.

4. October Monitoring – Resource Allocation – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on the 'October Monitoring – Resource Allocation' from the following departmental officials:

- Joanne McBurney , Central Expenditure Division (CED), DFP; and
- Stephen Barrett, CED, DFP

The session was recorded by Hansard

Dominic Bradley joined the meeting at 10:28am

Agreed: that the Department will provide follow up information on funding provision for the Victims Service, together with advice on funding provision for roads maintenance and on any budget headings or core services which may have been underfunded in departmental baselines in Budget 2011-15 on the basis of being funded in future monitoring rounds.

5. Business Rating Issues – Briefing from Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA)

The Committee received a briefing on ‘Business Rating Issues’ from the following NIIRTA representative:

- Glyn Roberts: Chief Executive, NIIRTA

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 10:45am

Paul Girvan left the meeting at 10:55am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 11:08am

Paul Girvan rejoined the meeting at 11:12am

Agreed: to write to DFP to enquire what options exist for rating online retailing to ensure equity with other retail businesses.

The Committee agreed to consider the following agenda item next; Reform of Property Management Project.

6. Reform of Property Management Project – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on the ‘Reform of Property Management Project’ from the following departmental officials:

- Paul Wickens – Chief Executive, Enterprise Shared Services, DFP; and
- Jim McCreesh – Head of Office Estates, DFP.

Agreed: that the Department will provide the Committee with a copy of the work programme plan for the Reform of Property Management Project.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11:35am
John McCallister left the meeting at 11:44am

7. Renewable Energy in Public Sector Buildings – Briefing from Assembly Research

The Committee received a briefing on ‘Renewable Energy in Public Sector Buildings’ from Assembly Research.

Agreed: to seek a response from DFP to the research paper as well as to the issues raised by members during the session.

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 12:00pm

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following pieces of correspondence:

- DFP: Update on Progress of the administration of the leavers equal pay case;
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: Draft Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsperson (NIPSO) Bill; and
- Men’s Aid Association NI: Family Law Reform

Agreed: that, in the first instance, the Committee will seek a written response from DFP to the issues raised in the correspondence before considering whether to schedule oral briefings from Men’s Aid and DFP to examine any outstanding issues.

Agreed: to commission initial research on the issues raised in the correspondence, including the position in other jurisdictions.

9. Committee Work Programme

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.

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

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:05pm

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