

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2015
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 Adrian McQuillan MLA
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Alison Ferguson (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA

The meeting commenced at 9:48am in public session.

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 04 February 2015

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. Review into the Operation of the Barnett Formula – Briefing from Expert Witness: Professor David Heald

The Committee received a briefing on the operation of the Barnett formula from the following expert witness:

- Professor David Heald – Professor of Accountancy, University of Aberdeen Business School.

Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 9:50am

Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 9:55am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:17am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:20am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:21am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 10:24am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 10:32am

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 10:36am

Adrian McQuillan rejoined the meeting at 10:40am

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 10:50am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:50am

Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 10:55am

Adrian McQuillan rejoined the meeting at 11:03am

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 11:05am

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11:10am

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 11:11am

Michaela Boyle rejoined the meeting at 11:13am

Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11:15am

5. DFP Budget and Savings Delivery Plan 2015-16 – DFP Briefing

The Committee received a briefing on the DFP Budget and Savings Delivery Plan 2015-16 from the following departmental officials:

- Brigitte Worth – Finance Director, DFP; and
- Preeti Miller – Finance Division, DFP.

John McCallister left the meeting at 11:16am
Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:19am
Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:24am
Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 11:25am
Paul Girvan left the meeting at 11:25am

Agreed: that the departmental officials will provide follow up information on the level of savings that the Department could achieve by maximising office accommodation space utilisation, including through greater use of mobile or flexible working methods.

Agreed: that the departmental officials will provide a follow up response on savings realised from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Shared Services to date and also on the potential risk that steps by DFP to maximise revenue from Shared Services will transfer costs to other parts of the public sector.

6. DFP Finance Division's Performance Against Business Plan Objectives:– Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on DFP Finance Division's Performance Against Business Plan Objectives from the following departmental officials:

- Brigitte Worth – Finance Director, DFP; and
- Preeti Miller – Finance Division, DF

Judith Cochrane rejoined the meeting at 11:31am
Paul Girvan rejoined the meeting at 11:31am
Paul Girvan left the meeting at 11:35am
Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:36am
Peter Weir rejoined the meeting at 11:40am
Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 11:43am

The Committee *agreed* that, due to anticipated plenary business, agenda item 7 - Assembly Research Briefing 'Family Law Reform: contact with children following separation or divorce' would be postponed to a future meeting.

7. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following pieces of correspondence:

- DFP – Final Outturn Report;
- DFP – Invest to Save Initiatives;
- DFP – Omagh Enterprise Company Ltd – Flexible Location Working;

Agreed: to forward the Department's correspondence to Omagh Enterprise Company Ltd for information. It was further *agreed* to seek detail on DFP's plans to explore further opportunities for introducing more remote working facilities for civil servants across the NICS Estate

- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister – European Priorities 2015; and
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister – NIO/PSNI ‘Equal Pay’ issue.

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP for an update on the Minister of Finance and Personnel’s proposal to the Executive for resolving this issue.

John McCallister rejoined the meeting at 11:45am

Paul Girvan rejoined the meeting at 11:45am

8. Committee Work Programme

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Agreed: that the Committee will commission Assembly Research to prepare a paper on the main provisions of the Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Bill and key issues considered during the passage of the legislation in Westminster.

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

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 18 February 2015 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
18 February 2015