

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, 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 Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:20am in public session.

Agreed: that agenda items 5 & 6 are covered by Hansard (subject to available resources) and the Official Reports published on the Assembly's website.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 18 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. Family Law Reform: contact with children following separation or divorce – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing on ‘Family Law Reform: contact with children following separation or divorce,’ from Assembly research.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:37am

5. Family Law Reform: Parental responsibility for unmarried fathers with children post separation – Departmental Briefing

The Committee received a briefing on the DFP consultation on ‘Parental responsibility for unmarried fathers with children post separation’, from the following departmental officials:

- Oswyn Paulin, Head of Legal Services, DFP; and
- Laura McPolin, Departmental Solicitors Office, Civil Law Reform, DFP.

Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10:45am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir re-joined the meeting at 10:47am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:11am

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 11:15am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:20am

Agreed: that the Committee will endeavour to raise awareness of future consultations led by the Department and any further policy development on this issue through the use of social media.

6. NICS Workforce Restructuring – Voluntary Exit Scheme – Departmental Briefing

The Committee received a briefing on the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Voluntary Exit Scheme from the following departmental officials:

- Colin Lewis, Director of Corporate HR; and
- Mark Goodfellow, Head of Resourcing Division; and
- Debbie Sherlock, Project Manager of NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir re-joined the meeting at 11:27am

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11:53am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:53am

Peter Weir left the meeting at 12:05pm

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 12:10pm

This session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the departmental officials will provide a follow up response to issues arising during the session.

Agreed: to write to DFP seeking further information on a range of issues not covered during the session.

Agreed: to schedule oral evidence from the ‘Oversight Board’ responsible for co-ordinating the voluntary exit schemes across the public sector and to schedule a further session on the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme to monitor progress at a later date.

7. Subordinate Legislation

SR 2015/75 – The Rates (Regional Rates) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

Agreed: that the Committee has considered SR 2015/75 – The Rates (Regional Rates) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

- Minister of Finance and Personnel – Corporation Tax
- DFP – Northern Ireland Water Pension Dispute

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Regional Development for information.

- DFP – Departmental Monthly Forecast Outturn Data
- DFP – Central Procurement Directorate Balanced Scorecard 3rd Quarter Progress Update
- DFP – Public Procurement Follow-up Issues

Agreed: to forward the relevant extract of the correspondence relating to the Investment Strategy NI delivery portal to the Construction Employers Federation upon receipt of an associated response from the Strategic Investment Board.

- Committee for Justice – PSNI Civilian Staff Equal Pay Claim
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister – European Commission Work Programme 2015
- Strategic Investment Board – Review of Social Clauses
- Northern Ireland Assembly – EU Matters: Issue 02/15
- Carnegie UK – Invitation to the Chairperson to the launch of the Roundtable report

9. Committee Work Programme

Review of the Operation of the Barnett Formula: Visit to Edinburgh

Members were reminded of the two proposed dates for the visit to Edinburgh on 20/21 May or 27/28 May, and were asked to advise Committee staff of their preference.

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.

The Committee moved into closed session at 12:16pm in line with normal convention for considering draft committee reports.

10. Sickness Absence in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland – Consideration of draft report

The Committee considered a working draft Committee Report on 'Sickness Absence in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland'.

Agreed: that members will provide any comments on the draft report to the Clerk by noon on Friday, 27 February 2015 for reflecting in the final report in advance of the Committee's formal consideration at its meeting on 4 March 2015.

The Committee returned to open session at 12.21pm

11. Any other business

Twitter Account

That Chairperson informed members that the Committee's twitter account is now operational and that it will be administered by Committee staff to promote its work.

Progressive Building Society – Corporation Tax issue

The Chairperson and Mr Weir highlighted an issue raised by the Progressive Building Society in relation to the Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Bill which is currently progressing through the legislative stages at Westminster.

Agreed: that the Committee will liaise with the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment on the issue raised and, if necessary, will seek to schedule an urgent meeting of the two committees.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 04 March 2015 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:25pm

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
4 March 2015