

## **COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 04 MARCH 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: 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 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 Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)

*The meeting commenced at 10:05am in public session.*

*Agreed:* that agenda item 4 is covered by Hansard and the Official Reports published on the Assembly's website.

*Leslie Cree joined the meeting at 10:06am*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 25 February 2015**

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

## **3. Matters Arising**

### Corporation Tax

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Progressive Building Society, which highlighted concerns in relation to provisions in the Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Bill for exempting ‘back office activity’, in particular the possibility that the provisions, as currently proposed, could disadvantage local mutual societies and credit unions. Member also noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which reflected these concerns. Following consultation with members, the Chairperson had issued a similar letter to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Committee for Finance and Personnel.

*Agreed:* to forward a copy of the Committee for Finance and Personnel’s letter to the Secretary for State for Northern Ireland to the Progressive Building Society for information.

### 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. Reform of Defamation Law in Northern Ireland – Briefing from the Northern Ireland Law Commission**

The Committee received a briefing on the public consultation on the ‘Reform of Defamation Law in Northern Ireland’ from the following representatives:

- Ken Millar, Acting CEO, Northern Ireland Law Commission
- Dr Andrew Scott, Associate Professor at London School of Economics and Project Leader for Defamation

*The session was recorded by Hansard*

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 10:14am*

*Adrian McQuillan re-joined the meeting at 10:18am*

*Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 10:22am*

*Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:25am*

*Agreed:* that the Northern Ireland Law Commission will furnish the Committee with a copy of its analysis of the consultation responses once completed.

*Agreed:* that, following receipt of the Law Commission’s analysis, the Committee will seek written responses from both DFP and the Department of Justice on the next steps for the project.

*The Committee next considered agenda items 6 – The European Commission Work Programme:*

#### **4. The European Commission Work Programme 2015**

The Committee considered correspondence from DFP and the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the European Commission Work Programme 2015.

*Agreed:* to issue the Committee's response, as drafted, to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:42am*

#### **5. Non-Domestic Revaluation – Briefing from the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association**

The Committee received a briefing on 'Non-Domestic Revaluation' from the following delegation of local business representatives:

- Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA)
- Una Lilley, Managing Director, Lillies Centra, Enniskillen
- Raymond McBrien Managing Director, Supervalu, Irvinestown
- Kenny Bradley, Managing Director, SPAR, Magherafelt

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir re-joined the meeting at 10:50am*

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 10:50am*

*Michaela Boyle re-joined the meeting at 10:55am*

*Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 10:59am*

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 11:34am*

*Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 11:45am*

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:51am*

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir re-joined the meeting at 11:54am*

*Agreed:* that NIIRTA will provide a follow up written submission detailing the examples of the impacts of the non-domestic revaluation, as highlighted by the local businesses during the session.

*Agreed:* to write to the Department seeking a written response to the issues raised during the session and to notify it of the Committee's intention to explore these issue with officials from Land and Property Services on 18 March 2015.

## **6. SL1 The Rates (Small Business Hereditament Relief) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under Rates (Small Business Hereditament Relief) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage

## **7. SL1 The Superannuation (District Councils) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Amendment) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2015**

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Superannuation (District Councils) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

## **8. SL1 The Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 (Disclosure of Patient Registration Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 (Disclosure of Patient Registration Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:58am*

## **9. Correspondence**

- Minister for DFP – Report on Economic Impact Assessment of Air Passenger Duty;

*Agreed:* to schedule oral briefings on the report from DFP/Ulster University, the local airports and representatives of the tourism sector.

- Committee Chairperson: Submission to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Review Team;
- DFP: OECD Review – Mission Stage and Terms of Reference;
- DFP – Public Sector Reform;
- DFP – Commercial Window Displays – Consultation Report;
- DFP - Flexible Location Working Locations in Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- DFP – Savings Delivery Plan 2015-16;
- Chairperson, Committee for Education – 2015-16 Draft Budget Scrutiny;
- Member of Public – PSNI Pay;

*Agreed:* to forward to DFP for a direct response.

- Briefing note from Professor Paul Cairney on the Committee's Review of the Operation of the Barnett Formula

*Agreed:* to publish the submission on the Committee's webpage.

*The Committee moved into closed session at 12:01pm in line with normal convention for considering draft committee reports.*

## **10. Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector – Final Consideration of Draft Report**

The Committee considered a draft Committee report on ‘Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector’.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 1 - 7 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 8 - 23 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 24 - 27 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 28 - 54 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 55 - 57 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 58 - 86 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 87 - 88 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 89 - 105 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 106 - 108 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 109 - 110 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that paragraphs 111 - 112 stand part of the report.

*Agreed:* that the Executive Summary stands part of the report.

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

*Agreed:* That the report be the 13<sup>th</sup> report of the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Assembly 2011-16.

*Agreed:* That the Committee report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector be printed.

Members noted that the applicable extract of the draft minutes of today’s meeting will be included in the report.

*Agreed:* that, to enable the report to be prepared for printing, the Deputy Chairperson will approve the extract of the draft minutes before the next meeting.

Members noted that, in line with normal protocol, a typescript copy of the Report will be issued to DFP and that two typescript copies will be laid in the Business Office within 24 hours.

Members further noted that embargoed copies of the printed Report will be made available to all MLAs in advance of the plenary debate in the Assembly.

*The Committee returned to open session at 12.21pm*

## **11. Committee Work Programme**

### **Review of the Operation of the Barnett Formula: Fact-finding visit to Edinburgh**

*Agreed:* that, following confirmation of the availability of members, the Committee will finalise the date for the proposed visit at next week's meeting.

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.

## **12. Any other business**

There was no other business.

## **13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 11 March 2015 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:16 pm*

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