

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 15 APRIL 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 John McCallister MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

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

Apologies: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:15am 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 25 March 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. DFP Dormant Accounts – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on Dormant Accounts from the following departmental officials:

- Emer Morelli, Head of Supply, Public Spending Directorate, DFP; and
- Maryann Smith, Supply Division, DFP

This session was recorded by Hansard.

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:21am.

Peter Weir left the meeting at 10:22am.

Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 10:24am.

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 10:26am.

Agreed: that the DFP officials will give consideration to what scope exists to streamline the transfer of dormant accounts monies from banks and building societies to projects on the ground, bearing in mind the associated legislative requirements.

Agreed: to consider the following agenda items next: Correspondence, Committee Work Programme and Any other business.

5. Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- Secretary of State – Corporation Tax (NI) Bill;

Agreed: to copy the response to the Progressive Building Society for information;

- DFP – PSNI and NIO Equal Pay issue;
- DFP – Direction on Accruing Resources;
- DFP – Employer and Employee Contributions in Public Service Pension Schemes;

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to the applicable statutory committees for information;

Agreed: to write to DFP seeking clarification on the comparatively high employer contribution rates in respect of the pension scheme for Judicial Offices;

- DFP – NI Housing Executive Pay Increment;

Agreed: To forward the response to the original correspondent and to the Committee for Social Development for information;

- DFP – Voluntary Exit Scheme Response;

Agreed: to write to the Head of the Civil Service requesting an oral briefing from the Public Sector Workforce Restructuring Steering Group on the wider Voluntary Exit Schemes;

- DFP – Land and Property Services District Rate Convergence Factsheet;
- Member of Public – PSNI and NIO Equal Pay issue;

Agreed: to forward this correspondence to DFP for a direct response;

- The Chartered Institute for Public Finance & Accountancy – Invitation to Annual Luncheon on 15 May at Belfast Castle; and
- Assembly Research – The Path to Greater Regional Devolution.

6. Committee Work Programme

The Committee noted the work programme which will be published on the Committee's website.

7. Any other business

Members considered a draft press release in relation to the Committee's Report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector and were reminded that the plenary debate will take place on Tuesday, 21 April 2015.

Agreed: that the agreed press release is issued and published online in line with normal convention.

The meeting was suspended at 10:43am.

The meeting resumed at 10:45am.

Peter Weir re-joined the meeting at 10:45am.

8. Rating of Commercial Window Displays – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on the Rating of Commercial Window Displays from the following departmental official:

- Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy Central Finance Group, DFP

Agreed: that the Committee is broadly content with the policy proposal at this stage, subject to any refinements to be considered by the Department.

9. Rate Rebate Replacement Scheme – Briefing from DFP

The Committee received a briefing on the Rate Rebate Replacement Scheme from the following departmental officials:

- Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy, Central Finance Group, DFP; and
- Phillip Conlon, Rating Policy Division, Central Finance Group, DFP

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 11:10am.

Peter Weir left the meeting at 11:12am.

Agreed: that the Committee will defer a decision on the proposed way forward on this issue until ongoing negotiations between the political parties on Welfare Reform have been concluded.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 22 April 2015 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:20am.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA

Chairperson

Committee for Finance and Personnel

22 April 2015