

## COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 03 JUNE 2015**  
**ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA  
M Michaela Boyle MLA  
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Jim Wells MLA
- In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA  
Mr John McCallister MLA  
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA

*The meeting commenced at 10:18am in public session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

#### **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 26 May 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.

#### Correspondence from Cerberus Capital Management

Members discussed correspondence received from Cerberus which advised that, due to an 'unforeseen internal diary conflict', it would have to postpone the briefing session which had been scheduled for today.

*Agreed:* that the Committee would request Cerberus to provide dates on which its representatives are available to provide the briefing before summer recess and to indicate that the Committee would be flexible in scheduling its meeting accordingly.

#### Edinburgh Visit

Members noted that a short report would be prepared on the key learning points from the discussions with senior officials from the Scottish Government and members of the Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee which took place during the Committee's recent visit to Edinburgh.

*Agreed:* that this report would provide a basis for the Committee to raise any issues of interest with DFP.

*In line with normal protocol for the consideration of legal advice, the Committee then moved to closed session at 10:22am.*

#### **4. Budgetary Issues – Legal Advice (Closed Session)**

Members received independent legal advice from Assembly Legal Services on the issue of whether departments would have the power to use accruing resources in the context of the Budget (No. 2) Bill 2015 not being enacted by the end of July 2015.

*Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 10:35am*

Members considered a draft letter to the Minister of Finance and Personnel which shared the conclusions from the legal advice while maintaining the legal privilege attaching to the substantive advice received.

*Agreed:* to issue the letter to the Minister of Finance and Personnel as drafted.

*The Committee returned to open session at 10:55am for the remainder of the meeting.*

#### **5. Budgetary Issues – Briefing from DFP**

Members considered correspondence from the Minister of Finance and Personnel regarding the postponement of the Department's oral briefing on considerations and scenarios regarding the Budget (No.2) Bill 2015, which had been scheduled for today's meeting.

## **6. June Monitoring Round – Briefing from DFP**

The Committee received a briefing on the DFP submission to the June Monitoring Round from the following departmental officials:

- Brigitte Worth, Head of Finance Division, DFP; and
- Preeti Miller, Finance Division, DFP.

*Ian McCrea left the meeting at 11:00am*

*Agreed:* that the departmental officials will provide follow-up information on the capital expenditure required for next year in order to deliver the level of savings as set out in the business case for the Asset Management Strategy.

## **7. OECD Review of Public Governance (Initiation of Case Studies) – Briefing from DFP**

The Committee received a briefing on the OECD Review of Public Governance (Initiation of Case Studies) from the following departmental officials:

- Dr Bernie Stewart, Head of the Public Sector Reform Division, DFP; and
- Dr Colin Sullivan, Director, Strategic Policy and Reform Division, DFP.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will receive a further update briefing on the OECD Review in the autumn.

## **8. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP – Performance against 2014-15 Departmental Business Plan targets;

*Agreed:* to seek reports from each departmental business area on their performance against Business Plan targets for quarter 1.

- Ministerial reply to Report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector;

*Agreed:* to schedule an oral evidence session with DFP officials on the departmental response to each of the applicable recommendations in the Committee's report.

- DFP – Air Connectivity: Response to Belfast International Airport Critique Report;

*Agreed:* to forward this response along with the related correspondence from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to Belfast International Airport for information.

- DFP – Northern Ireland Law Commission's consultation on defamation;

*Agreed:* to request that DFP keeps the Committee informed of developments on this issue.

- DFP – Report on the European Commission Vice President Visit;

*Agreed:* to copy the correspondence to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and to the Assembly European Affairs Manager for information.

- Committee for Employment and Learning (CEL) – People with disabilities and social clauses;

*Agreed:* to request that the DFP response to CEL is copied to this Committee when received and to raise this issue with DFP officials during the next scheduled evidence session on social clauses and public procurement.

- Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment – letter to Anglewise regarding the Mott MacDonald Report;

*Agreed:* to copy this correspondence to Belfast International Airport as indicated above.

- Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law – ‘A Constitutional Crossroads’ Report;

*Agreed:* to add the report to the evidence base for the Committee’s Review of the operation of the Barnett Formula.

- Assembly Research – Relative need and public expenditure data in the UK;

*Agreed:* to add the research note to the evidence base for the Committee’s Review of the operation of the Barnett Formula.

- Carnegie UK – Invitation to conference on 10 June 2015;

- EU Matters May 2015; and

- Inauguration Ceremony of the Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China

*Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 11:27am*

*Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11:29am*

## **9. Committee Work Programme**

Members noted communication from the Department on the ‘Validation Study of Welfare Reform Costs’, on which a DFP briefing has been sought for some months.

*Agreed:* to write to the Minister requesting an interim briefing providing an overview on conclusions reached in the study.

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

*Agreed:* that the Committee work programme will be updated to reflect decisions taken today and is 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, 10 June 2015 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:30am.*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**10 June 2015**