

## COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 09 SEPTEMBER 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 Leslie Cree MBE, MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr John McCallister MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA  
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA  
Mr Jim Wells MLA

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

Apologies: None

*The meeting commenced at 10:16am in public session.*

*Agreed:* that agenda items 5 and 6 are 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 27 August and 03 September 2015**

*Agreed:* that the minutes of 27 August 2015, as drafted, and the minutes of 3 September 2015, as amended, will be published on the Assembly website.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### Scheduled Ministerial briefing

Members noted correspondence from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) advising that the Minister of Finance and Personnel would not be available to provide the oral briefing on Ministerial Strategic Priorities, which had been previously scheduled for today's meeting.

*Agreed:* to write to the Minister seeking alternative dates when she will be available to brief the Committee in this regard.

### Table of requests for information from 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 of the Sale of National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) assets in Northern Ireland – Correspondence and Next Steps**

Members considered correspondence from NAMA, including its response to written questions from the Committee, and correspondence from a member of the public in relation to the Review.

*Agreed:* that, in line with the approach taken by the Committee to date, Assembly Research will be commissioned to prepare follow up questions and that members will also have the opportunity to submit further questions arising from the NAMA response, which will be considered by Assembly Legal Services, as a safeguard in ensuring that the Committee remains within its Terms of Reference, before being agreed by the Committee for issuing to NAMA.

*Agreed:* to publish the email correspondence, dated 4 September 2015, from NAMA's Head of Relationship Management on the Assembly website.

*Agreed:* that, in light of the papers provided by NAMA, the Chairperson will write to the former Minister of Finance and Personnel, Simon Hamilton MLA, via the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, reiterating the Committee's request for him to attend an oral hearing in relation to the Review.

*Agreed:* that, in light of the papers provided by NAMA, the Chairperson will write to the Deputy First Minister requesting that he attend an oral hearing to provide clarification on the issue of whether he had been briefed in relation to the unsolicited bid by PIMCO for NAMA's Northern Ireland debtor portfolio.

*Agreed:* that the Committee staff will prepare an options paper to further inform members on how the Committee might proceed with holding further oral evidence sessions in relation to the Review.

*Agreed:* to write to Cerberus seeking confirmation of its attendance for an oral hearing on 23 September 2015, as previously scheduled.

*Agreed:* to write to Mr Gareth Graham asking him to provide any papers in his possession which are relevant to the Committee's Review Terms of Reference.

*Agreed:* that the Chairperson will write to DFP seeking clarification on the reasons for the gaps and redactions in the records of meetings and communications between the Department and NAMA, which it provided to the Committee in July 2015, as compared to the papers published by NAMA on 4 September 2015.

*Agreed:* that the Committee staff will establish the identity of the Special Adviser/s to the Minister of Finance and Personnel during the time period covered by the Committee's Review.

*Agreed:* that the Chairperson will write to the former DFP Permanent Secretary, Mr Stephen Peover, requesting that he attends an oral hearing in relation to the Committee's Review.

*Agreed:* to write again to Mr Brian Rowntree seeking a response regarding his availability to attend an oral hearing in relation to the Committee's Review.

*Agreed:* that the proposed visit to the Oireachtas for an informal meeting with the Dáil Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will be scheduled for Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October, which will also enable members to observe the next PAC evidence session with NAMA on the Project Eagle sale.

*Agreed:* that the informal meeting with the National Crime Agency (NCA) will be scheduled for Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September. Members undertook to advise the Committee staff who would represent each party at the meeting, as agreed previously.

## **5. Rates (Amendment) Bill – Briefing from DFP**

*In accordance with advice received previously in relation to Private Members' Bills (PMBs), Daithi McKay declared an interest as the Bill Sponsor for the Rates (Relief for Community Amateur Sports Clubs) Bill and stood aside from chairing the meeting for this agenda item, given the relevance of certain provisions in DFP's proposed Rates (Amendment) Bill to his PMB. The Deputy Chairperson therefore took the Chair for this agenda item.*

Members received a briefing on the Rates (Amendment) Bill from the following departmental official:

- Brian McClure, Head of Rating Policy, DFP.

*This session was recorded by Hansard.*

*Agreed:* that the departmental official will provide a follow up response to issues discussed during the briefing session.

*Ian McCrea left the meeting at 11:15am*

*Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 11:30am*

*Maírtín O Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:40am*

*Daithi McKay resumed the Chair for the next agenda item.*

## **6. DFP Performance against Business Plan Targets – Briefing from DFP**

Members received a briefing on DFP's performance against its Business Plan targets in 2014-15 and on its Business Plan for 2015-16 from the following departmental officials:

- David Sterling, Permanent Secretary, DFP;
- Brigitte Worth, Finance Director, DFP; and
- Kathryn Hill, Head of Business Planning & Corporate Governance Branch, DFP.

*This session was recorded by Hansard*

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

*Maírtín O Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 11:44am*

*Dominic Bradley left the meeting at 11:45am*

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:45am*

*Jim Wells left the meeting at 11:47am*

*Jim Wells rejoined the meeting at 11:50am*

*Maírtín O Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:50am*

*Maírtín O Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 11:51am*

*Paul Girvan left the meeting at 11:5 am*

*Dominic Bradley rejoined the meeting at 12:01pm*

*Daithi McKay left the meeting at 12:05pm*

*Dominic Bradley took the Chair at 12:05 pm for the remainder of the meeting*

*Adrian McQuillan rejoined the meeting at 12:14 pm*

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12:16pm*

## **7. Subordinate Legislation**

### **SL1 - The Unfunded Public Service Defined Benefits Schemes (Transfers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under The Unfunded Public Service Defined Benefits Schemes (Transfers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

## 8. Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- DFP – Chancellor’s Budget July 2015;
- DFP – Accreditation of NI Net Fiscal Balance Report;
- DFP – Departmental Monthly Forecast, April 2015;
- DFP – Final Annual Report – Special Advisers;
- DFP – People Strategy Update;
- Head of Civil Service – Public Sector Workforce Restructuring Steering Group;
- Committee for the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) – Office of the NI Executive in Brussels;
- COFMDFM – Inquiry into Building a United Community;
- Committee for Justice – End Year Flexibility and Desertcreat;
- Committee for Justice – PSNI Equal Pay;
- Department for Regional Development – Rail Fares and Salary Sacrifice Scheme;
- National Assembly for Wales – Review into Operation of the Barnett Formula;
- Phil Flanagan – Sports and Recreation Rate Relief;
- Mr Jim Allister MLA – Civil Service (Special Advisers) Amendment Bill;

*Agreed:* to contact the Bill Sponsor, Mr Jim Allister MLA, asking him to provide an oral briefing on the Bill in advance of the Second Stage debate, in line with good practice.

- Ulster Bank – Further IT Problem;
- Member of Public – Equal Pay;
- Press Release – DFP Spending Review;
- Law Society of Northern Ireland – Council Dinner invitation;
- Invite from Manufacturing NI, 18 September 2015;

- Consumer Council – New Chief Executive introductory meetings;
- Construction Excellence Awards – 8/10/15; and
- Agenda NI – Annual NI Economic Conference.

## **9. Committee Work Programme**

### Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill

*Agreed:* that, given the cross-cutting nature of the Bill, submissions will be sought from the Department of Justice and the Committee for Justice, regarding the provisions of the Bill.

### Written progress updates from DFP

*Agreed:* that, in light of the Committee's busy work programme and priorities up to December 2015, written updates from the Department will be sought on issues listed in the work programme, with a view to scheduling oral evidence at a later date.

*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, 16 September 2015 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:36pm.*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**16 September 2015**