

## **COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 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 Gordon Lyons MLA  
Mr John McCallister MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA  
Ms Emma Pengelly 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 Nory Kaplan-Kelly (Legislative Studies Programme Student)  
Mr Oliver Bellew (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)

*The meeting commenced at 10:03am in public session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 30 September 2015**

*Agreed:* that the minutes will be 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. Civil Service (Special Advisers) (Amendment) Bill – Briefing from Mr Jim Allister, QC, MLA**

Members received an oral briefing from the Bill Sponsor on the Civil Service (Special Advisers) (Amendment) Bill.

- Mr Jim Allister, QC, MLA

*This session was recorded by Hansard*

*Agreed:* that, subject to the Bill passing its Second Stage and being referred to the Committee, written and oral evidence is sought from key stakeholders, including DFP, the Trade Unions, the Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

*Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 10:12am*

*John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:35am*

*Judith Cochrane joined the meeting at 10:43am*

*Ian McCrea left the meeting at 10:52am*

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:52am*

*Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 10:55am*

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 11:06am*

## **5. Reform of Property Management Programme – Departmental briefing**

Members received a briefing on the Reform of Property Management Programme by the following departmental officials:

- Mr Paul Wickens – Chief Executive, Enterprise Shared Services; DFP
- Mr Jim McCreesh – Property Division; DFP
- Mr Desi McDonnell – Director of Properties Division; DFP

*Gordon Lyons left the meeting at 11:31am*

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:44am*

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 11:46am*

## **6. Review of the sale of National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) assets in Northern Ireland – Correspondence and next steps**

*Emma Pengelly declared an interest in relation to the Review, stating that her husband, Mr Richard Pengelly, was a senior official in DFP prior to NAMA's formation and until his departure from the Department in December 2012 and is referenced in papers provided by the Department of Finance in the Republic of Ireland (RoI).*

*Agreed:* that, as proposed by Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, the Committee will invite Mr Richard Pengelly to provide oral evidence in relation to the Review, in the context of his former role as DFP's Public Spending Director.

*Agreed:* that the company records of directorships and shareholdings of Mr Frank Cushnahan relating to the SP Graham companies will be included in committee papers for next week's meeting, in advance of the related Assembly Research paper being provided.

### Correspondence from Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA (First Minister)

Members noted correspondence from the Rt Peter Robinson MLA (First Minister) confirming his attendance to give oral evidence to the Committee at its meeting on 14 October 2015.

### Correspondence from Michael Noonan TD, Minister of Finance, Department of Finance (RoI)

The Committee noted papers provided by the Minister of Finance, Mr Michael Noonan TD relating to the review. This documentation had also been published on the Department of Finance (RoI) website.

*Agreed:* to publish the papers provided by Minister Noonan on the Committee's webpage.

### Correspondence from Cerberus

Members noted correspondence from Cerberus received on 6 October 2015, which responded to initial questions raised by the Committee.

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

Members were reminded to provide any follow up questions for Cerberus to Committee staff by no later than Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

### Updated table of responses pending to the Committee's requests

Members noted an updated table of responses pending to Committee requests for information and briefings in relation to the Review.

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

Members discussed the issues arising from the use of electronic tabled papers during Committee proceedings.

*Agreed:* that the Clerk will enquire as to the feasibility for improvements to the Electronic Committee Pack system in order to allow such papers to be reviewed by members more easily.

## **7. Correspondence**

Members noted the following correspondence;

- Departmental responses advising of performance against business plan targets

*Agreed:* that oral briefings on the respective DFP business areas are scheduled into the work programme as opportunities arise. Land and Property Service will be asked to provide its full performance report in line with those provided by the other business areas

- DFP providing a general update on the Rating Policy;
- DFP monthly forecast outturn data for May to June 2015;
- DFP providing an update on the NI Investment Fund and Financial Transactions Capital;
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to the UN Convention on the rights of the child;
- Department of Justice on the Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill;
- Ad hoc committee on the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill;
- Solace NI in relation to representation from Local Government;
- Member of the public regarding the Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill;

*Agreed:* to forward the correspondence to DFP to respond directly to the issues raised.

- Miscellaneous correspondence from a member of the public.

*Agreed:* to respond to the correspondent to advise that, as the issues highlighted fall outside the Committee's remit, he contacts the relevant authority to address the matters raised.

## **8. Committee Work Programme**

Members were reminded that the Committee will have a role in relation to leading and co-ordinating the scrutiny of the Draft Executive's Budget 2016-17 and that, in order to inform this work, relevant briefings will need to be scheduled into the work programme. Other key issues will require scheduling over the remainder of the mandate.

*Agreed:* to schedule a briefing from DFP on the upcoming budget process, including in terms of how the planned change in departmental structures will be factored into the budget process and on how the change will impact on other aspect of DFP's work.

*Agreed:* that, in scheduling future business into the work programme, priority is given to Committee Stages of Bills and budgetary issues for which fixed deadlines apply.

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

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday, 14 October 2015 at 10:00am, Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:14pm.*

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance and Personnel**  
**14 October 2015**