

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Gordon Lyons MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Gary Middleton 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 Nory Kaplan-Kelly (Legislative Studies Programme Student)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Oliver Bellew (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Mr Ian McCrea MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:26am in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft minutes of proceedings 25 November 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 matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Dominic Bradley joined the meeting at 10:31am

Gordon Lyons joined the meeting at 10:31am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:31am

Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 10:37am

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 10:37am

4. Rates (Amendments) Bill – Briefing from Sports Groups

Members received a briefing on the November Monitoring Round from the following officials:

- Mr Ciaran Kearney, Chairman, NI Sports Forum;
- Mr Ryan Feeney, Head of Community and Public Affairs, Ulster GAA;
- Mr David Johnston, Funding Manager, Ulster Rugby Football Union;
- Dr Shaun Ogle, Performance System Manager, Sports NI; and
- Mr Jim Shaw, President, Irish Football Association

Jim Wells joined the meeting at 10:38am

Gordon Lyons left the meeting at 11:35am

Agreed: to write to the Department of Environment for information on previous work, commissioned by the then Minister, Mr Edwin Poots MLA, on the cost of extending rate relief to amateur sports clubs.

Agreed: to enquire from DFP: what the additional cost would be of extending the enhanced rate relief, which is proposed for unlicensed Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) under the Rates (Amendment) Bill, to enable those CASCs with liquor licences to also avail of the 100% relief on their sports facilities (while continuing to pay 100% rates on the licenced part of their premises); and whether this can be achieved through the proposed Regulations.

Agreed: to commission research into the discretionary 20% rate relief provided to amateur sports clubs by local authorities in Great Britain and on whether legislative change would be required to apply similar provision in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to write to the umbrella organisations for both the membership-based and privately owned golf clubs in Northern Ireland to seek their views on the proposal for enhanced rate relief for CASCs under the Rates (Amendment) Bill.

5. Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill – Initial consideration of draft report

Gordon Lyons re-joined the meeting at 11:41am

The Committee considered an initial draft report on the Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill.

Agreed: that members will provide Committee staff with any suggested additions or amendments to the draft report by the end of the week, ahead of a final draft being considered for agreement on 9 December.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:49am

6. Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- DFP – response to issues raised regarding Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) on proposed cap on public sector exit payments.
Agreed: to send the DFP response to the Committee for Education and the Equality Commission for information ahead of the debate on the LCM, which is scheduled for Monday 7 December 2015;
- Committee for Education – forwarding the Education Authority’s response to the LCM on proposed cap on public sector exit payments.
Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP for an urgent response to the issues raised.
- UNISON – response to the LCM on proposed cap on public sector exit payments.
Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP for an urgent response to the issues raised.
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) – European Commission Work Programme 2016.
Agreed: to forward the correspondence to DFP for comment on the relevant areas of the Work Programme, including corporation tax and public procurement, in order to inform the Committee’s response to COFMDFM.
- Open Government Network for Northern Ireland (NIOGN) – requesting opportunity to brief the Committee.
Agreed: to seek a written briefing from NIOGN in the first instance and to also seek a written briefing from DFP in relation to the work it is undertaking in this area.

7. Committee Work Programme

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

8. Any Other Business

Members discussed the forthcoming plenary debate on the LCM on the proposed cap on public sector exit payments and noted that a number of issues and concerns were still outstanding, as highlighted in the Committee's report on the LCM and subsequent correspondence.

9. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be on Thursday 3 December 2015 at 1.45pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings

The meeting ended at 11:54am

Mr Daithí McKay MLA

Chairperson

Committee for Finance and Personnel

3 December 2015