

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2016
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mrs Michaela Boyle MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mr Gordon Lyons MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr Ian McCrea 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)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Gary Middleton MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:14am in public session.

The Clerk informed members that both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would not be present at today's meeting and invited nominations for a temporary Chairperson.

It was proposed by Máirtín Ó Muilleoir and seconded by Gordon Lyons that Leslie Cree should be elected as temporary Chairperson. No further nominations were proposed; therefore Leslie Cree assumed the role of Chairperson for the duration of the meeting.

1. Apologies

As detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 13 January 2016

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.

National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) related correspondence

Members were reminded of the Committee's decision to obtain clarification on correspondence which was presumed to have originated from Mr Cormac Butler in relation to the review of the sale of NAMA assets. The Chairperson informed members that Mr Butler had indicated that he was not the originator of the correspondence.

Members noted that the Committee staff will endeavour to establish the originator of the letter and update the Committee in due course.

John McCallister joined the meeting 10:15am

Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill

Members considered a minor amendment to this Bill, which DFP will table for debate at Further Consideration Stage. The amendment would make a technical improvement to the Committee's amendment which made provision for an independent review of implementation and which was agreed at Consideration Stage.

Members also noted a revised Explanatory and Financial Memorandum provided by DFP containing more detail, which had been requested by the Committee.

Agreed: that the Committee is content with DFP's proposed amendment, which will be debated at Further Consideration Stage, and with the revised Explanatory and Financial Memorandum.

Rates (Amendment) Bill

The Committee noted a proposed amendment to the Rates (Amendment) Bill, which will be tabled for debate at Consideration Stage by Daithí McKay, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir and Michaela Boyle.

4. Progress Update on Public Sector Voluntary Exit Schemes - Briefing from Public Sector Workforce Restructuring Steering Group & DFP

Members received an update briefing on the Public Sector Voluntary Exit Schemes from the following officials:

- Dr Malcolm McKibbin, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service & Chair of the Public Sector Restructuring Group;
- Colin Lewis, Director, Corporate HR, DFP; and
- Colin Sullivan, Director, Strategic Policy and Reform, DFP.

Agreed: that, given the cross-cutting interest in this matter, the briefing papers for this session will be copied to the other Assembly statutory committees for information.

*Jim Wells joined the meeting*10:20am

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting*10:46am

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir re-joined the meeting*10:48am

5. Northern Ireland Investment Fund & Financial Transactions Capital – Briefing from DFP

Members received a briefing on the Northern Ireland Investment Fund & Financial Transactions Capital from the following departmental officials:

- Peter Jakobsen - Public Spending Directorate DFP; and
- Stephen Barrett - Public Spending Directorate DFP.

Agreed: that, given the cross-cutting interest in this matter, the briefing papers for the session will be copied to the Committee for Social Development, the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (COFMDFM).

6. European Commission Work Programme 2016

Members considered papers and correspondence in relation to the forthcoming COFMDFM report on Assembly Committee European Priorities.

Agreed: to issue the draft response to COFMDFM for inclusion in the annual report on Assembly Committee European Priorities.

7. Subordinate Legislation

• SL1 The Rates (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under SL1 The Rates (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

- **SL1 The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under SL1 The Rates (Social Sector Value) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

- **SL1 The Rates (Small Business Hereditament Relief) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under SL1 The Rates (Small Business Hereditament Relief) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

- **SL1 The Rates (Unoccupied Hereditaments) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland 2016)**

Agreed: that the Committee has considered DFP's proposal for subordinate legislation under SL1 The Rates (Unoccupied Hereditaments) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

8. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- Lagan Construction Group – NAMA and Millmount Site;
- Richard Bullick – response regarding attendees present at meeting with PIMCO;
- DFP – postponement of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Review evidence session;
Agreed: to write to DFP to enquire what implications may arise as a result of the delay in finalising the OECD Review report.
- Assembly Research paper on Discretionary Rates Relief;
- NI Open Government Network – Written Briefing; and
- Letter from Sammy Wilson MP to the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting 11:31am

The Committee also noted routine correspondence which had been sent to members on 18 January 2016.

9. Committee Work Programme

DFP Performance against Business Plan

Agreed: that the Committee will schedule a briefing from the DFP Permanent Secretary on this matter, which will inform the Committee's End of Mandate and Legacy reports.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Budget Process

Agreed: to write to the new Minister of Finance and Personnel to formally ask that the work in relation to the draft MoU between the Assembly and the Executive is prioritised with a view to having it in place before the next budget process.

Committee Work Programme

Members noted the updated work programme which will be 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 on Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings

The temporary Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:34am.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
27 January 2016