

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 09 MARCH 2016
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Claire Hanna MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs 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 Gary Middleton MLA
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA
- In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Nory Kaplan-Kelly (Legislative Studies Programme Student)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: None.

The meeting commenced at 10:09am in public session.

Agreed: to consider agenda item *Correspondence* in advance of the evidence sessions on Rating issues; and to consider the draft Progress Report on the Review of the Sale of National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) Assets in Northern Ireland immediately thereafter.

Agreed: that agenda items 5 and 6 are covered by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly's website.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 02 March 2016

Agreed: that the minutes will be published on the Assembly website.

3. Matters Arising

Table of requests for information from Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

The Committee noted the summary table of requests for information from DFP which provided an update on other matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP – Rate Rebate Policy Changes;
- DFP – Update on Preventative Spending;
- DFP – Monthly Forecast Outrun Data;
- DFP – OECD Public Governance Review;
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister – European Union Reform;
- Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister – ONIEB Brussels Report;
- Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure – Letter to Minister of Finance and Personnel regarding support for Libraries NI;
- N McKinney, Community Foundation NI – Invitation to Building Change Trust event on 21 March 2016;
Agreed: that members wishing to attend the event will contact organisers directly; and
- EU Matters 2016-02.

The Committee also noted routine correspondence which had been sent to members on 7 March 2016.

5. Rating Issues – Briefing from representatives of privately-owned golf clubs

Members received a briefing on Rating Issues from the following representatives from privately-owned golf clubs:

- Kenneth Logan, Director, Edenmore Golf and Country Club;
- Robert Gallagher, Owner, Foyle International Golf Centre;
- Gary Henry, Director, Galgorm Castle Golf Club; and
- Lynn McCool, Director of Golf and Head PGA Professional, Lough Erne Resort.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the representatives of the privately-owned golf clubs will provide follow up information on issues discussed during the briefing.

Gordon Lyons joined the meeting at 10:10am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:11am

Jim Wells joined the meeting at 10:13am

Judith Cochrane joined the meeting at 10:15am

Claire Hanna left the meeting at 10:20am

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 10:25am

Claire Hanna rejoined the meeting at 10:30am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 10:30am

John McCallister joined the meeting at 10:43am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:50am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 10:58am

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 10:59am

Michaela Boyle rejoined the meeting at 11:00am

6. Rating Issues – Briefing from DFP

Members received a briefing on various rating matters – including issues raised during the previous session, derelict land tax and charity shops – from the following DFP official:

- Brian McClure – Head of Rating Policy Division, Central Finance Group, DFP.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the departmental official will provide follow up information on issues discussed during the session.

Ian McCrea left the meeting at 11:03am

Ian McCrea rejoined the meeting at 11:06am

Claire Hanna left the meeting at 11:06am

Judith Cochrane left the meeting at 11:07am

Claire Hanna rejoined the meeting at 11:14am

John McCallister left the meeting at 11:35am

Gary Middleton left the meeting at 11:35am

The Committee then moved into closed session at 11:40am in line with normal protocol for the consideration of draft reports.

7. Review of the Sale of NAMA Assets in Northern Ireland - Consideration of draft Progress Report

Members considered the draft Report on progress of the Review of the Sale of the NAMA property loan portfolio in Northern Ireland as follows:

Agreed: that paragraphs 1 - 9 stand part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraphs 10 - 17 stand part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraphs 18-21 stand part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraph 22, as amended, stands part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraphs 23 - 26 stand part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraph 27, as amended, stands part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraph 28, as amended, stands part of the Report;

Gary Middleton rejoined the meeting at 11:50am

Agreed: that paragraph 29 stands part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraphs 30-31 stand part of the Report;

Jim Wells left the meeting at 12:00pm

Agreed: that paragraph 32, as amended, stands part of the Report;

Jim Wells rejoined the meeting at 12:01pm

Agreed: that paragraph 33 stands part of the Report;

Agreed: that paragraph 34, as amended, stands part of the Report;

As members could not agree a position in respect of paragraph 35, on 'Next Steps', the Committee divided:

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir proposed the following amended wording for the second sentence of paragraph 35:

‘As there is insufficient time in the current Assembly mandate to gather the evidence outstanding, the Committee recommends that the successor Committee makes a decision on concluding the review early in the next mandate. Notwithstanding this decision, the Committee also recommends that the incoming Executive, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, considers establishing an independent commission of inquiry with the cross-jurisdictional remit and powers necessary to ensure a co-ordinated and complete investigation of the Project Eagle controversy.’

The question was put on Mr Ó Muilleoir’s proposal.

The Committee divided:

Ayes	Noes	Abstained
Daithí McKay	Leslie Cree	None
Michaela Boyle	Gordon Lyons	
Claire Hanna	Ian McCrea	
Máirtín Ó Muilleoir	Gary Middleton	
	Jim Wells	

The proposal fell.

Leslie Cree proposed the following wording for the second sentence of paragraph 35:

‘As there is insufficient time in the current Assembly mandate to gather the evidence outstanding, the Committee recommends that the successor Committee makes a decision on concluding the review early in the next mandate’

Agreed: that paragraph 35, as proposed by Mr Cree, stands part of the Report.

Agreed: that the Report on progress of the Review of the sale of the NAMA property loan portfolio in Northern Ireland, as amended, be the 17th report of the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Assembly 2011-16.

Agreed: that Report on progress of the Review of the sale of the NAMA property loan portfolio in Northern Ireland, as amended, is published on-line on Thursday 10 March 2016.

Members noted that the finalised report would be laid in the Business Office and circulated to all MLA’s, DFP and to the media with an embargo until publication on Thursday 10 March 2016.

Members also noted a procedural briefing note on the extent and limitations of Assembly privilege in relation to the law of defamation.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 12:14pm

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12:14pm

The Committee returned to public session at 12:15pm for the remainder of the meeting.

8. English Votes for English Laws: Understanding Recent Procedural Changes in the House of Commons and Key Funding Considerations for Northern Ireland - Briefing by Assembly Research

Members received a briefing from Assembly Research on Understanding Recent Procedural Changes in the House of Commons and Key Funding Considerations for Northern Ireland in relation to 'English Votes for English Laws'.

John McCallister rejoined the meeting at 12:17pm

John McCallister left the meeting at 12:35pm

Agreed: that the research paper will be copied to the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee for information and sent to DFP for comment on issues raised.

9. Legacy Report: Initial consideration of draft report

Members noted an initial working draft of the Committee's Legacy Report on the 2011-16 Assembly mandate. Members were asked to provide any additional comments on the draft report before 12 noon on Friday 11 March.

10. Committee Work Programme

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

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be on Wednesday 16 March 2016 at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:38pm.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
16 March 2016