

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2016
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mrs Emma Little Pengelly (Chairperson)
Ms Claire Hanna (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Jonathan Bell MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr Gerry Mullan MLA
Mr John O'Dowd MLA
Ms Caitríona Ruane MLA
Mr Philip Smith MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

In Attendance: Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Mr Jonathan McMillen (Head of Legal Services)

Apologies: Mr Ross Hussey MLA

Agreed: to commence the meeting in closed session to enable consideration of legal advice under Agenda Item 1.

The meeting commenced at 2:04 pm in closed session.

1. Legal Guidance from the Directorate of Legal and Governance Services

Members noted advice from Legal Services arising from correspondence received from the National Crime Agency in relation to the Sale of the National Asset Management Agency assets in Northern Ireland.

Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 2:15 pm.

The meeting moved into public session at 2:20 pm for the remainder of the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Mr Ross Hussey.

3. Draft Minutes of Proceedings 21 September 2016

Agreed: that the minutes of proceedings of the Committee's meeting on 21 September 2016 are published on the Assembly's website.

4. Matters Arising

PSNI correspondence

Members noted correspondence from the PSNI in relation to its current investigation into recent coaching allegations highlighted in the media.

RaISe Briefing Papers

Members noted the paper from RaISe entitled 'NICS Human Resources: Shared Services'. This provides background information and was provided following the Strategic Planning session.

Summary of Requests to DoF

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

Sale of the National Asset Management Agency assets in Northern Ireland

Agreed: that the Clerk will prepare a paper setting out a draft Terms of Reference and available options to the Committee relating to the National Asset Management Agency assets in Northern Ireland.

The Clerk highlighted that any members wishing input should highlight this to Committee staff.

5. October Monitoring Round: Departmental Position – Evidence from the Department of Finance

The Committee received oral evidence on the October Monitoring Round from the following departmental officials:

- Brigitte Worth, Finance Director, Department of Finance
- Paul Gibson, Head of Business Partnering, Department of Finance

This session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: to write to the department with follow up questions arising from today's oral evidence session.

Jim Wells left the meeting at 3:06 pm.

6. Forthcoming Budgets: Evidence from the Department of Finance

The Committee received oral evidence on the forthcoming budgets from the following departmental officials:

- Joanne McBurney, Head of Central Expenditure Division, Department of Finance
- Jeff McGuinness, Central Expenditure Division, Department of Finance
- Kirsty McMillan, Central Expenditure Division, Department of Finance

This session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: to write to the department with follow up questions arising from the session.

Jim Wells returned to the meeting at 3:14 pm

Jim Wells left the meeting at 3:26 pm

Agreed: to consider the following Statutory Rules (Agenda Items 8 & 9) and Correspondence (Agenda Items 10)

7. Subordinate Legislation - SR 2016/339: The Superannuation (Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Members considered the DoF papers relating to this statutory rule.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered SR 2016/339: The Superannuation (Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the Examiner's report, has no objection to the rule.

8. Subordinate Legislation - SR 2016/340: The Public Service Pensions (Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Members considered the DoF papers relating to this statutory rule.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered SR 2016/340: The Public Service Pensions (Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the Examiner's report, has no objection to the rule.

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

- The Committee for the Executive Office Draft Programme for Government 2016-21.

Agreed: to schedule an early oral evidence session with NISRA as they will have a key role in providing baseline, monitoring and output information for the PfG.

- The Committee for the Economy Changes to the Government Gateway for Self-Assessment Online.
- The Committee for the Economy Tourism Statistics.
- The Committee for the Economy Correspondence from the Scottish and NI Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) regarding new pension liabilities as a consequence of changes in legislation.

Agreed: to consider following a response by the Minister of Finance to the Committee for the Economy.

- The Committee for the Executive Office: After the EU Referendum: Report from the Centre for Democracy & Peace Building - Establishing the Best Outcome for Northern Ireland

Agreed: to give future consideration to the issues highlighted in the report as part of the Committee's ongoing consideration of issues arising from Brexit.

- Department of Finance: Further information on the June Monitoring Round.
- EU matters: European Commission News.
- The Committee for Communities Contingency Planning for the possible reclassification of Housing Associations as Public Bodies.

Agreed: to consider the Hansard from the evidence session if available.

- Office of the Speaker: Petition on End the Veto on Marriage Equality.

- Charity Retail Association: Charity Retail Association's Social Value Toolkit.
- Audit Committee: Contract extension for the External Auditor for NIAO
- Audit Committee: Budget plans of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).
- Committee for Justice: Complaint against a Solicitor.

Caitriona Ruane left the meeting at 3:46 pm

10. Subordinate Legislation - SL1 The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificate and Inspections) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016

Members considered the proposal for above SL1. Mr John Neely and Mr John Burke, Enterprise Shared Services, Department of Finance provided clarification to questions raised by members'.

Agreed: that the Committee has considered the above proposal and is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

11. Forward Work Programme

Options Paper – Non Domestic Rates

Members considered an options paper from the Clerk relating to the Non-Domestic Rating System identified by the Committee as one of its strategic priorities.

Agreed: that it was content with the proposed approach and that the Clerk will identify prospective stakeholder groups to provide written or oral evidence.

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

Caitriona Ruane rejoined the meeting at 4:00 pm.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee for Finance will be held on Wednesday, 05 October 2016 at 2:00 pm, Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4:06 pm.

Mrs Emma Little Pengelly MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance
05 October 2016