



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Committee for Finance

### Minutes of Proceedings

**28 February 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 21 Parliament Buildings Belfast

**Present:**

- Matthew O'Toole MLA (Chairperson)
- Diane Forsythe MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Eóin Tennyson MLA
- Phillip Brett MLA
- Paul Frew MLA
- Gerry Carroll MLA
- Nicola Brogan MLA
- Deirdre Hargey MLA
- Steve Aiken MLA

**Apologies:** None.

**In Attendance:**

- Peter Hall Committee Clerk
- Clairita Frazer Assistant Committee Clerk

Stephen Magee Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 2:03pm in public session

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

#### **3.1 Invitation to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members should contact the NIHRC directly if they wish to attend the event.

#### **3.2 Written Ministerial Statement on Funding of A4 Enniskillen Bypass**

Members noted a copy of the Written Ministerial Statement on Funding of A4 Enniskillen Bypass.

#### **3.3 The Executive Restoration Package Settlement**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Finance regarding her recent meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a copy of any recent correspondence to the Minister of Finance from the Chief Secretary of the Treasury regarding the Executive Restoration Package Settlement.

### **3.4 Budget Process**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Finance seeking her view on the approach, process and timeline for bringing forward the Budget for 2024-25 and how any consultation may be managed; as well as clarity of how this will map to the UKG's current fiscal framework and accompanying CSR cycle timescales.

### **3.5 Procurement Act 2023 and CPTPP Bill – Subsequent Actions**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek a briefing on the Procurement Regulations Statutory Instrument flowing from the Procurement Act and the expected LCM with respect to the Procurement element of CPTPP Bill.

## **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the Minutes of Proceedings from the meetings of 19 February and 21 February 2024.

## **5. Matters Arising**

### **Northern Ireland Audit Office Report - Major Capital Projects**

Members noted the Northern Ireland Audit Office follow-up report on Major Capital Projects.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to keep a watching brief on this report given the potential impact on the forthcoming Budget.

## **6. Subordinate Legislation**

### **6.1 SR 2023/54 - The Public Service Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2023**

The Committee considered SR 2023/54 The Public Service Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2023 which would set the revaluation rate for various public sector pensions.

Members noted clarification from the Department of Finance on the revaluation rate used for Firefighters Pension Schemes. Members also noted the Examiner of Statutory Rules' comments in respect of the rule.

**Agreed** The Committee for Finance has considered SR 54/2023 The Public Service Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2023 and has no objection to the Rule.

## **6.2 SR 58/2023 The Pensions Increase (Review) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023**

The Committee noted the above Order.

## **6.3 SR 2023/1 The Rates (Making and Levying of Different Rates) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023**

Members noted an explanation from the Department of Finance regarding the rationale for deriving the optional conversion factors contained within the above Rule.

## **7. Land and Property Services – Oral Briefing from the Department of Finance**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2:20pm.

Sharon Magee, Acting Chief Executive of Land and Property Services; and

Andrew McAvoy, Director, Rating Policy.

The officials briefed the Committee on current issues and priorities for Land and Property Services (LPS).

The meeting was suspended at 2:48pm and resumed at 2:52pm in public session with the Chairperson in the chair.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Steve Aiken left the meeting at 3:48pm.

Paul Frew left the meeting at 4:09pm.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek further information on a number of issues discussed, including credit card fees applied by LPS; any data-handling role for Fujitsu should it be awarded the contract for the replacement of 'Landweb'; details on the recipients of Industrial de-rating; and detail of commercial activities undertaken and the potential to generate additional revenue.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to ask the Minister of Finance to share the initial briefing paper on the outcome of the Rating Consultation re revenue raising, with the Committee in due course.

Paul Frew rejoined the meeting at 4:12pm.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The officials left the meeting at 4:13pm.

## **8. Brexit Papers – Update from Department of Finance**

Members noted an update from the Department of Finance on the Trade Specialised Committee on Public Procurement and the Finance: Inter-ministerial Standing Committee (F: ISC) meeting in January 2024.

## **9. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee considered an introductory letter from the Director of Pivotal.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting with Pivotal in due course.

**Agreed:** The Committee directed the Clerk to compile a list of other policy stakeholders to consider the potential merit of holding further informal meetings.

The Committee noted the following:

- ii. Correspondence from an individual regarding regulation of the Northern Ireland University Sector.

## **10. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted that briefings on the Spring Supplementary Estimates and with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) have been confirmed.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Forward Work Programme should be published on the Committee webpages.

## **11. Any Other Business.**

The Chairperson reminded Members that he would be attending the next meeting of the Interparliamentary Forum hosted by the House of Lords on Thursday 29th February. A report on the meeting would be copied to Members in due course.

## **12. Date and Time of next meeting**

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 at 2pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.

**Matthew O'Toole MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Finance**

**6 March 2024**