



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Finance

Minutes of Proceedings

10 September 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Matthew O'Toole MLA (Chairperson)
Diane Forsythe MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Steve Aiken MLA
Phillip Brett MLA
Gerry Carroll MLA
Jemma Dolan MLA
Paul Frew MLA

Apologies: Eoin Tennyson MLA

Virtual: Deirdre Hargey MLA

In Attendance: Peter Hall Committee Clerk
Fiona Rooney Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk
Clairita Frazer Assistant Assembly Clerk

Tom Armstrong Assistant Assembly Clerk

Stephen Magee Clerical Supervisor

Heather Graham Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 1:04pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1. Annual Report and Accounts

The Committee noted details of which Departments and Arm's Length Bodies had submitted their Annual Reports and Accounts prior to the summer recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to obtain a further update on this issue from the Assembly Business Office.

3.2. Committee for the Economy – Insolvency Bill Call for Evidence

The Committee considered the Economy Committee's Call for Evidence on the Insolvency Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to submit a NIL return to the Call for Evidence.

3.3. Committee for Agriculture – Dilapidation Bill Call for Evidence

The Committee considered the Economy Committee's Call for Evidence on the Insolvency Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Finance if Land and Property Service has any locus in relation to the Bill provisions.

3.4 Department of Finance – Cyber Security & Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Finance regarding a forthcoming UK Bill which aims to strengthen cyber defences and build the resilience of essential services, infrastructure and digital services. The Clerk indicated to Members that there had been a delay progressing this Bill at Westminster.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with the necessary preparation in advance of anticipated scrutiny of the Bill and potential Legislative Consent Motion.

3.5. Performance Review for the Head of the NI Civil Service (HOCS)

The Committee discussed current and past appraisal arrangements for HOCS.

Steve Aiken declared an interest as he recently submitted Assembly Questions submitted in respect of this matter.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to both the First Minister and deputy First Minister and Minister of Finance to seek clarity on appraisal and performance review arrangements for HOCS and if there has been any change to these over time.

3.6. Correspondence to Secretary of State and Chancellor

The Committee discussed the forthcoming UK Budget process and recent comments by the Chancellor.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to both the Secretary of State and the new Chief Secretary to the Treasury regarding the forthcoming UK Budget process and opportunities for the Committee to scrutinise its implications for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department of Finance asking if it is aware of any other Departments making reserve claims.

4. Draft Minutes of Proceedings

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Minutes of Proceedings from the meeting of the 2 July 2025.

5. Matters Arising

5.1. DALO Readout Extract – Meeting of 18th June 2025

The Committee noted an extract from the DALO Readout issued following the Committee meeting on 18th June 2025.

5.2. DALO Readout Response – Legal Services Oversight Commissioner

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Finance on a number of issues raised during consideration of the secondary legislation to commence the powers of the Legal Services Oversight Commissioner.

5.3. DALO Readout Response – Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill

The Committee considered a number of comments on issues raised during the Call for Evidence on the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note these comments pending further consideration during Clause-by-Clause scrutiny of the Bill.

5.4. DALO Readout Response – Issues following Spending Review

The Committee considered correspondence from the Finance Minister to the Communities Minister regarding Casement Park, information on the Growth Mission Fund and an assessment of statistics in the Spending Review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to copy the correspondence regarding Casement Park to the Communities Committee.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Secretary of State to seek more information in the Growth Mission Fund.

5.5. DALO Readout Extract – Meeting of 25th June 2025

The Committee noted an extract from the DALO Readout issued following the Committee meeting on 25th June 2025.

5.6. DALO Readout Response – A5 High Court Judgement

The Committee considered an update from the Department of Finance regarding the recent A5 High Court Judgement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update from the Department of Finance in respect of the capability of spending the remaining funding allocated for the A5 in the current financial year.

5.7 DALO Readout Response – Rating Policy Update

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Finance regarding the Strategic Asset Management Unit in Land and Property Service and the Strategic Review of Rating supports.

5.8 DALO Readout Response – Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill

The Committee considered information from the Department of Finance regarding the handling and retention of sensitive data collected as a result of the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this information pending further consideration during Clause-by-Clause scrutiny of the Bill and to copy the response to the Justice Committee.

5.9 DALO Readout Response – Incorrect conversion of civil partnership

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Finance regarding support offered to couples whose civil partnerships had been incorrectly converted to marriages.

Gerry Carroll joined the meeting at 1:23pm.

5.10 DALO Readout Response – June Monitoring Round

The Committee noted information from the Department of Finance regarding the timing of the June Monitoring Round and discussed the October Monitoring Round.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification from the Department of Finance on the timing of the October Monitoring Round and to request copies of the commissioning note for same.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 1:26pm.

5.11. DALO Readout extract of request made following meeting on 2nd July

The Committee noted an extract from the DALO Readout issued following the Committee meeting on 2nd July 2025.

5.12. DALO Readout Response – Public Sector Transformation Board

The Committee considered a response from the Department of Finance regarding the Public Sector Transformation Board.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification from the Department of Finance on how much of the Chief Scientific Officer's time is spent on work associated with the Public Sector Transformation Board.

Phillip Brett rejoined the meeting at 1:28pm.

5.13. DALO Readout Response – Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

The Committee considered information from the Department of Finance on its locus within provisions of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Executive Office Committee.

5.14. DALO Readout Response – 24/25 Provisional Outturn & June Monitoring Round

The Committee information provided by the Department Finance on June Monitoring Bids and allocations and information relating to the Department of Infrastructure. Members voiced their approval for the helpful manner in which the information was presented to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to indicate to the Department of Finance that this would be the preferred way to presenting this information for Monitoring Round Statements going forward. Members also agreed to copy the information provided to the Infrastructure Committee and Communities Committee.

5.15. DALO Readout Response – Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill

The Committee considered a response from the Department of Finance regarding the rationale for including a charging provision with the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this response pending further consideration during Clause-by-Clause scrutiny of the Bill.

5.16. DALO Readout Response – Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill

The Committee considered a response from the Department of Finance regarding terminology related to a provision with the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill and points raised during the Call for Evidence on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this response pending further consideration during Clause-by-Clause scrutiny of the Bill.

Paul Frew left the meeting at 1:35pm.

5.17. DALO Readout Response – Budget 2026-2029/30 Information Gathering

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Finance regarding an oral briefing on Budget 2026-2029/30 on 24 September 2025 and a request to move this briefing to 1st October 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule the briefing accordingly.

5.18. DALO Readout Response – Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered an update provided in relation to items of business and a schedule of secondary legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would continue to seek an update in relation to a schedule of secondary legislation.

5.19. DALO Readout Response – Department of Finance Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25

The Committee considered an update in relation to the Department of Finance's Internal Audit Reports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with Department of Finance Internal Audit.

5.20. DALO Readout Response – Administration and Financial Provisions Bill and NI Fiscal Council Bill - Delegated Powers Memoranda

5.21. DALO Readout Response – NI Fiscal Council Bill – Delegated Powers Memorandum

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Finance regarding the Delegated Powers Memoranda for the Administration and Financial Provisions Bill and NI Fiscal Council Bill. Members noted that the Delegated Powers Memorandum for the NI Fiscal Council Bill had been forwarded to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for advice but that the Delegated Powers Memorandum for the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill had not yet been received. Finally, the

Committee noted that Departmental officials would provide a briefing on the principals of both Bills at the meeting on 24th September.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Examiner of Statutory Rules at an appropriate time.

5.22. Department of Finance – City & Growth Deals Quarterly Progress Report

The Committee considered the latest update on the City & Growth Deals.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update from the Department of Finance on what will happen to the funding earmarked for the Mournes gondola project in the Newry Mourne and Down District.

5.23. Department of Finance - Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (SPCA), and the Iraq Political Cooperation Agreement (PCA)

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Finance regarding the two agreements referred to above.

Paul Frew rejoined the meeting at 1:41pm.

5.24. June (R3) Outturn and Forecast Outturn

The Committee considered data provided by the Department of Finance on June Outturn and Forecast Outturn. Members noted that an oral briefing on June, July and August data would take place on 1st October 2025.

5.25. Economy Committee – Unite Campaign Hospitality Workers

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department for the Economy to the Economy Committee regarding the Unite Work Safe Home Safe Campaign.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to Hospitality Ulster and to Unite.

5.26. Northern Ireland Fiscal Council – NI Public Expenditure Databank

The Committee noted the NI Public Expenditure Databank from the NI Fiscal Council.

5.27. Sir Chris Bryant – Response re Legislative Consent

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of State at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology regarding legislative consent and the NI Assembly. The Clerk indicated that he would keep the Committee updated in relation to any developments in this regard.

5.28. Economy Minister – Credit Union Consultation

The Committee noted correspondence from the Economy Minister regarding her Department's consultation on Credit Union (Modernisation and Reform).

5.29. Youth Assembly – Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill

The Committee noted a NIL response to its Call for Evidence from the Youth Assembly. .

5.30. Justice Committee – Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill

The Committee noted a NIL response to its Call for Evidence from the Justice Committee.

5.31. NI Commissioner for Children and Young People – Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill

The Committee considered a response to its Call for Evidence from the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Department of Finance for comment and to copy the correspondence to the Executive Office Committee and Education Committee for appropriate scrutiny.

5.32. Examiner of Statutory Rules – 43rd Report

The Committee considered the 43rd Report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules which referenced SR 104 2025 and SR 109 2025. Members noted comments in relation to the breach of the 21-day Rule for SR 109 2025.

6. Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill – Formal Clause by Clause Consideration

The Committee considered the Clause by Clause table which detailed all the comments and evidence received as part of its Call for Evidence on the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill.

The Committee noted a response from Mid-Ulster Council which was received subsequent to the Committee's last meeting. Members also noted a Hansard transcript of the oral evidence session with the National Association of Funeral Directors at the meeting on 2 July 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that departmental officials join the meeting for the informal deliberations to answer any questions that Members may have.

The following officials joined the meeting at 1:59pm:

Dr Phillip Wales Registrar General, NISRA, Department of Finance (DoF); and

Aoife Rooney Deputy Registrar General, NISRA, DoF.

Liz Marsh, Bill Clerk also joined the meeting at 1:59pm to address any queries during the informal deliberations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session to undertake informal deliberations on the Bill.

The Committee moved into closed session at 2:00pm.

Members discussed each Clause within the Bill, the Schedule, issues and comments received during the Call for Evidence. Officials provided clarification and information as required.

Deirdre Hargey left the meeting at 2:22pm.

The Committee moved back into open session at 2:50pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to undertake the formal Cause by Clause consideration of the Bill. Members also agreed to postpone consideration of the Draft Bill Report until next week to incorporate some amendments discussed during informal deliberations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clause-by-Clause Consideration should be reported by Hansard.

The Committee commenced its formal Clause-by-Clause consideration of the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill.

Clause 1 – Introduction

The Committee considered Clause 1 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 1 as drafted.

Clause 2 – Power to approve electronic means

The Committee considered Clause 2 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 2 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to group Clauses 3-5 which cover direct transmission of certificates, for the purpose of putting the question.

Clause 3 - Giving Certificate of still-birth directly

Clause 4 - Giving Certificate of cause of death directly

Clause 5 - Giving certificate of registration, or written notice of death, directly

The Committee considered Clauses 3-5 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reflect the need for guidance to be issued with reference to Clause 3.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clauses 3-5 as drafted.

Clause 6 - Registration of particulars of still-birth

The Committee considered Clause 6 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 6 as drafted.

Clause 7 - Manner in which particulars of death are required to be given

The Committee considered Clause 7 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 7 as drafted.

Clause 8 – Minor amendments relating to births and still-births

The Committee considered Clause 8 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 8 as drafted.

Clause 9 – No restriction on power to amend Regulations

The Committee considered Clause 9 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 9 as drafted.

Clause 10 – Repeal of temporary provisions

The Committee considered Clause 10 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 10.

Clause 11 – Certificates of Baby Loss

The Committee considered Clause 11 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that there should not be a charge for a Baby Loss Certificates, however Members noted the Department of Finance's rationale for including the provision for charging within the Bill. Members further noted the Department of Finance's caveat that any future charge would need to be enacted by way of a Draft Affirmative Statutory Rule which could be amended and if necessary voted down by the NI Assembly.

Gerry Carroll recorded his dissent regarding agreement of the clause as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 11 with the above caveat recorded.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to group Clauses 12-13 for the purpose of putting the question.

Clause 12 - Commencement

The Committee considered Clause 12.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 12.

Clause 13 – Short title

The Committee considered Clause 13 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 13 as drafted.

Schedule 1

The Committee considered the Schedule.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Schedule as drafted.

Long Title

The Committee considered the Long Title of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Long Title of the Bill.

The Chairperson advised Members that the formal Clause by Clause scrutiny of the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill had concluded.

Members noted that the draft Report on the Bill would be considered at next week's meeting.

Jemma Dolan left the meeting at 2:59pm.

The Chairperson thanked the Departmental officials and Bill Clerk for their assistance during the session and they left the meeting at 2:59pm.

7. NI Fiscal Council Bill – Assembly Research & Information Services Oral Briefing (RalSe)

Agreed: Members agreed that the oral briefing should be reported by Hansard and that the research paper would be added to the Bill's evidence base, Committee webpages and Committee report in due course.

Gerry Carroll left the meeting at 3:00pm.

The following official joined the meeting at 3:00pm:

Nathan Mulholland Research Officer, RaISe

The official provided the Committee with a brief overview of the RaISe paper and its conclusions. The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. Members discussed best practice, independence of the Fiscal Council and Budgetary matters.

Deirdre Hargey rejoined the meeting at 3:12pm.

Steven Aiken left the meeting at 3:13pm.

The Chairperson thanked the official for their attendance and the official left the meeting at 3:24pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to follow-up on some matters discussed during the session.

The Committee noted that the Delegated Powers Memorandum for the Bill had already been sent to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for advice and that an oral briefing would be scheduled in due course.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Finance Minister to Paul Frew MLA following the 2nd Stage debate on the Bill. Paul Frew indicated that he was content with the comments provided by the Minister.

Members also noted NIL returns to the Committee's Call for Evidence on the Bill from the Justice, Infrastructure and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committees and from the Office of Budget Responsibility.

8. Banking and Financial Services Landscape Inquiry – Agreement of Committee Report

The Committee noted written comments from Social Enterprise NI on the Inquiry and further comments from AIB concerning autonomy in lending decisions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session for consideration of the Committee Report.

The meeting moved into closed session at 3:26pm.

Steve Aiken rejoined the meeting at 3:27pm.

The Committee considered a draft of the Committee's Report on its Inquiry into Banking and Financial Services Landscape.

Title Page, Contents Page, Committee Powers, Membership and List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

The Committee considered the Title page, Contents Page, Committee Powers, Membership and List of Abbreviations and Acronyms as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Title page, Contents Page, Committee Powers, Membership and List of Abbreviations and Acronyms pages stand part of the Report

Executive Summary

The Committee considered the Executive Summary section (paragraphs 1 to 20) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the introduction section at paragraphs 1 to 20 part of the Report, subject to amendments paragraphs 19 and 20, as discussed.

Summary of Recommendations and Agreements

The Committee considered the Summary of Recommendations and Agreements section (paragraphs 21 to 35) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Summary of Recommendations and Agreements section at paragraphs 21 to 35 stand part of the Report.

Introduction

The Committee considered the Introduction section (paragraphs 36 to 48) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Introduction section of the report at paragraphs 36 to 48 stand part of the Report.

Committee Approach

The Committee considered the Committee Approach section (paragraphs 49 to 50) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Committee Approach Section of the report at paragraphs 49 to 50 stand part of the Report.

Formal Evidence Sessions

The Committee considered the Formal Evidence Sessions Section (paragraphs 51 to 80) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content that the Formal Evidence Sessions Section at paragraphs 51 to 80 stand part of the Report.

Committee Survey

The Committee considered the Committee Survey Section (paragraphs 81 to 92) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Committee Survey Section at paragraphs 81 to 92 stand part of the Report.

Summary of Themes

The Committee considered the Summary of Themes Section (paragraphs 93-201) of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Summary of Themes Section at paragraphs 93-201 stand part of the Report.

Appendices

The Committee considered the Appendices section of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Appendices stand part of the Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report would be laid in the Business Office and published on the Committee's webpage when it is formally launched on 23rd September 2025.

Gerry Carroll rejoined the meeting at 3:44pm.

The Committee returned to public session at 3:47pm.

The Chairperson reflected on the agreements reached and that the 5th report of the Finance Committee had been agreed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a motion on the report in due course.

The Committee noted correspondence from HM Treasury regarding its Inquiry and the context that it provides for the UK Financial Inclusion Strategy.

The Committee also noted an Association of British Insurers Press Release on motor insurance premiums and notification from the Financial Conduct Authority of reports published in relation to motor and home insurance.

The Chairperson thanked the Members for their engagement with the Inquiry and thanked the Committee Staff for their work assisting the Committee with its evidence gathering and the production of the report, in addition to a heavy legislative workload.

9. SL1 – The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee noted a proposal by the Department for a statutory rule to enable the Department of Finance to extend the expiry date of the temporary provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in relation to death and still-birth registration.

Members also noted that the proposed rule will be subject to confirmatory resolution procedure before the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee for Finance agreed that it was content with the proposed Statutory Rule to extend the expiry date of the temporary provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in relation to death and still-birth registration.

Paul Frew acknowledged the work of the Department of Finance in bringing forward the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill.

10. SR 2025/143 The Legal Complaints and Regulation (2016 Act) (Commencement No.1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee noted a Commencement Order which brought into operation the Legal Complaints and Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, other than sections 9, 19(2)(c), 38(2)(c) and paragraph 2(4) of Schedule 4 to that Act, on 1st September 2025.

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Finance regarding the removal of the mandatory requirement to advertise all external recruitment opportunities in the three daily newspapers.

Matthew O'Toole declared an interest as the Chairperson of an All-party Group on Press Freedom and Media Sustainability which was not reestablished in the current Assembly session.

Some Members indicated their concerns regarding the impact of this decision particularly for vulnerable, disabled and elderly people as well as the impact on the general public's awareness of changes within the civil service and potential lack of transparency and openness.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to voice its concerns to the Department of Finance and to seek clarity on the 'flexible approach' to recruitment advertising in the Civil Service which had been agreed by the Executive. Members also agreed to copy the Minister's correspondence to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group.

- ii. The Committee considered an update from the Department of Finance on the NICS Hybrid Working Policy.

Gerry Carroll declared an interest as a Member of the Unite the Union.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek information from the Department of Finance on how the revised policy would be monitored in respect of people, grades and departments and on the general rationale for the revision. Members would also

request clarity on what evidence or data had been collected or would be collected centrally in relation to hybrid working in the NICS.

Members also discussed how this issue could be incorporated in a future Committee Inquiry.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 4:10pm.

iii. The Committee noted the Department of Finance's Special Adviser Annual Reports 2023/24 and 2024/25.

iv. The Committee noted the following Annual Report and Accounts:

- a) NI Audit Office 2024-25 Annual Report and Accounts;
- b) Superannuation and Other Allowances Pension Schemes Statement;
- c) UK Statistics Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25; and
- d) Financial Reporting Advisory Board Annual Report 2024-25.

v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Finance regarding appointments to the Board of the Utility Regulator.

vi. The Committee noted a copy of the NI Audit Office Report on Major IT Projects in NI.

Diane Forsythe declared an interest as a Member of the NI Assembly Audit Committee.

Phillip Brett rejoined the meeting at 4:17pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to Integr8.

vii. The Committee considered a number of related items of correspondence from the Justice Committee and from individuals regarding departmental statutory and policy responsibilities regarding private and public family law proceedings, gender equality, social inclusion and support for children and protective parents affected by domestic abuse. Members noted that the Justice Committee has asked the Department of Finance for clarification of whether any reviews of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 have been conducted (or if there are plans to do so). Members also noted correspondence to the Speaker regarding domestic abuse.

Agreed: Given the Committee's agreed approach to correspondence not linked to strategic priorities or statutory duties, Members agreed to advise the correspondents that relevant departments are best placed to respond to their concerns.

viii. The Committee noted a reminder from the Assembly Executive Review Committee about its Review of Cross-cutting Executive Strategies and that a response would be agreed in the coming weeks.

Matthew O'Toole declared an interest as a member of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee.

ix. The Committee noted publication of the Financial Conduct Authority's 2nd Annual Report on the Secondary International Competitiveness and Growth Objective, its 2024/25 Annual Report and Accounts and Strategy for 2025-2030.

x. The Committee noted Pivotal Tracker Report on 18 months of the NI Executive.

xi. The Committee noted the Hansard Transcript of the Department of Finance Oral Briefing on the Service Delivery Brochure – Procurement – 2nd July 2025.

xii. The Committee noted the Financial conduct Authority Statement on Workplace Savings Scheme.

12. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore the potential for an oral briefing from the Minister of Finance before Christmas recess.

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

13. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update from the Department of Finance on the Minister of Finance's discussions with the Chancellor in respect of funding for Casement Park.

14. Date and Time of next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 17 September 2025 at 2.00pm in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, with an informal meeting with NICS Finance Directors taking place from 1pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:28pm.

Matthew O'Toole

Chairperson, Committee for Finance

17 September 2025