



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Finance

Minutes of Proceedings

24 June 2026

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Matthew O'Toole MLA (Chairperson)

Diane Forsythe MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Jemma Dolan MLA

Deirdre Hargey MLA

Harry Harvey MLA

Brian Kingston MLA

Eoin Tennyson MLA

Apologies: None

Virtual: Dr Steve Aiken MBE MLA

Gerry Carroll 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 1:09pm in public session.

1. Apologies.

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests.

None.

3. Chairperson's Business.

3.1 Minister of Finance - 2025-26 Provisional Outturn and 2026-27 available funding

The Committee considered an urgent written statement laid by the Minister of Finance on 23rd June 2026 relating to the 2025-26 Provisional Outturn and 2026-27 available funding.

Steve Aiken declared an interest in relation to related Assembly Questions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarity on a number of related issues, from the Department of Finance. Members also agreed to seek an update on the current position of Budget agreement discussions.

Gerry Carroll joined the meeting at 1:21pm.

Deirdre Hargey joined the meeting at 1:24pm.

3.2 Minister of Finance – Notification of Intention to make an oral Ministerial Statement

The Committee noted that the Minister of Finance intends to make an oral Ministerial Statement on 29th June 2026 relating to various Rating matters.

3.3 Minister of Finance – Notification of Intention to make an oral Ministerial Statement

The Committee noted that the Minister of Finance intends to make an oral Ministerial Statement on 29th June 2026 relating to the 25th meeting of the North South Ministerial Council in Special EU Programmes sectoral format which took place on 10th June 2026.

3.4. Launch of the Baby Loss Certificate Scheme

The Chairperson reflected on the launch of the Baby Loss Certificate Scheme which took place on Monday 22nd June 2026 and high number of applications received in the opening days of the Scheme.

4. Draft Minutes of Proceedings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Minutes of Proceedings from the meeting of the 17th June 2026.

5. Matters Arising

5.1. Department of Finance – Tranche 2 Allocations from Transformation Fund

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Finance regarding the Pathways to Work proposal which was supported in the 2nd tranche of the Transformation Fund.

5.2. Committee for the Executive Office – Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Executive Office Committee to the Finance Minister regarding bids submitted by Departments since the launch of the EVAWG Strategic Framework.

5.3. Committee for Communities – Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) and Equality Impact Assessments

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Communities Committee to the Head of the Civil Service and Departmental Permanent Secretaries regarding the completion of CRIAs and use of the information collated through the assessment process.

5.4. Committee for the Executive Office – Access to Records

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Executive Office Committee to the Finance Minister regarding access to records for victims and survivors.

5.5. Correspondence from an individual

The Committee noted further correspondence from an individual regarding governance of the Independent Remuneration Board and Assembly Commission. The Clerk would again reply to the individual suggesting that they may wish to pursue aspects of their correspondence with the Assembly Audit Committee.

5.6. DALO Readout Response – 17th June – Legal Oversight Complaints Commissioner

The Committee considered a response from the Department of Finance regarding a scheduled briefing with the Legal Oversight Complaints Commissioner.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing in due course.

5.7. Department of Finance – Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) - Use of the Vote on Account (VOA)

The Committee noted further information from the Department of Finance regarding the NIAUR's use of the Vote on Account.

6. SR 2026/108 The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee considered a statutory rule laid by the Department of Finance: SR 2026/108 The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026, which will designate bodies, for the financial year ended 31 March 2026, enabling the Department of Finance to require public bodies to provide it with financial information. Members noted that the rule was subject to negative resolution procedure, that it would come into operation on 30th June 2026 and that the end of the statutory period was 14th September 2026.

Members also noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has indicated, in her 69th Report, that the Rule is not required to be drawn to the special attention of the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee for Finance has considered SR2026/108 The Whole of Government Accounts (Designation of Bodies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 and has no objection to the rule.

7. The Legal Complaints and Regulation (2016 Act) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee noted the Legal Complaints and Regulation (2016 Act) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026.

8. Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM): Cyber Security & Resilience (Network Information Systems) Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Hansard would provide a transcript of the agenda item.

The Committee noted a Hansard transcript of last week's session on the LCM which would be added to the appendices of the Committee report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to support the Minister of Finance in seeking the Assembly's endorsement of the Legislative Consent Motion:

"That this Assembly endorses the principle of the extension to Northern Ireland of the provisions of the Cyber Security and Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill."

The Committee considered a draft report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum for the provisions in the Cyber Security and Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill to be extended to Northern Ireland. Members also considered the Legislative Consent Motion to be brought forward by the Minister of Finance. There were no amendments proposed to the draft report, therefore the Committee's consideration was as follows:

Title Page, Contents Page and Committee Membership and Powers Page

The Committee considered the Title Page, Contents Page and Committee Membership and Powers Page as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Title Page, Contents Page and Committee Membership and Powers Page.

Background

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Background section of the report.

Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion

The Committee considered the Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Purpose of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.

Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion

The Committee considered the Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee Consideration of the Legislative Consent Motion section of the report.

Conclusion

The Committee considered the Conclusion section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Conclusion section of the report.

Appendices

The Committee considered the Appendices section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Appendices be included in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the *Report on the LCM on the Cyber Security and Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill* be the 12th Report of the Committee for Finance and that it would be published and issued to all Members in advance of the debate on the LCM.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider **agenda items 12 and 13 – Correspondence and Forward Work Programme**, in advance of the scheduled oral briefings.

12. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report: “Disability and Poverty in Northern Ireland”
- ii. The Committee noted the Pivotal Report “Improving the institutions: suggested reforms to the Northern Ireland Assembly & Executive”

iii. The Committee noted a Hansard transcript of the Department of Finance oral briefing on Level of Need which took place at last week's meeting.

13. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme and a number of upcoming briefings.

Members noted that an update briefing from the Department of Finance on Shared Property would be expected later in the new session. Members also noted that the Legislative Consent Motion associated with the Public Office (Accountability) Bill was not expected until after the summer recess.

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

The Committee suspended at 1:42pm

Gerry Carroll left the meeting at 1:42pm.

Diane Forsythe joined the meeting at 1:47pm.

The Committee resumed in public session at 1:51pm.

9. NICICTU – Oral Briefing – Performance and Culture of the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Hansard would provide a transcript of the oral evidence session.

The Committee considered relevant papers for this session, including a Clerk's Memo.

The Committee also noted a copy of the Fabian Society Report "*Adopt, Innovate, Transform*".

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the report to the evidence base of the Inquiry.

Gerry Carroll rejoined the meeting at 1:52pm.

The following witness joined the meeting at 1:52pm;

Gerry Murphy Assistant General Secretary, NICICTU

The witness briefed the Committee on a number of issues pertinent to the NICS Inquiry.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session and a number of issues were discussed including; the management of vacancies in the NICS, the impact of the Voluntary Exit Scheme, Transformational Change, the Good Jobs Bill, staff morale, resource limitations, Artificial Intelligence, Integr8 and the use of agency workers in the NICS.

The Chairperson, Matthew O'Toole left the meeting at 2:29pm, Diane Forsythe assumed the Chair.

Matthew O'Toole rejoined the meeting at 2:33pm and resumed the Chair.

Eoin Tennyson left the meeting at 2:37pm.

The Chairperson thanked the witness for their attendance, and the witness left the meeting at 2:40pm.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure, Public Services Reform and Digitalisation, and Taoiseach which included a copy of the Public Service Performance Report and associate process in the budgetary cycle.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share the Public Service Performance Report with other Statutory Committees and the Assembly Audit Committee.

The Committee noted that the Hansard transcript of last week's oral evidence session with the FDA would be added to the evidence base of the Inquiry.

10. Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill – Oral Briefing – Examiner of Statutory Rules

Agreed: The Committee moved into closed session at 2:41pm to receive legal advice from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

The Committee considered the Examiner's advice in relation to the Delegated Powers within the provisions of the Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill.

The following officials joined the meeting at 2:41pm;

Angela Kelly	Examiner of Statutory Rules (ESR); and
Roisin Mallon	Legal Adviser, Office of the ESR

The ESR briefed the Committee on the Delegated Powers within provisions of the Bill.

Deirdre Hargey left the meeting at 2:43pm.

Eoin Tennyson rejoined the meeting at 2:52pm.

Gerry Carroll left the meeting at 2:55pm.

Jemma Dolan left the meeting at 2:56pm.

Deirdre Hargey and Jemma Dolan returned to the meeting at 3:02pm.

The Chairperson thanked the ESR and Legal Advisor for their attendance, and the witnesses left the meeting at 3:10pm.

The Committee returned to public session at 3:10pm.

The Committee noted that some issues had been highlighted as a result of the oral briefing, in relation to the powers within Clause 1 and 2 of the Bill and that an oral briefing with Departmental officials would be scheduled early in the next session.

The Committee considered 2 responses from the Department of Finance regarding a written submission from the NI Humanists on the Bill and Research paper on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add both responses to the evidence base of the Committee Stage of the Bill.

Steve Aiken declared an interest in relation to a recent meeting with the NI Humanists.

The Committee noted a Hansard transcript of the oral evidence session with the Youth Assembly which took place at last week's meeting, which would be added to the Committee Stage evidence for the Bill.

Steve Aiken referenced an Assembly Question which would be circulated in next week's meeting pack.

11. Fiscal Council Sustainability Report 2026 – Oral Briefing from the Fiscal Council

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Hansard would provide a retrospective transcript of the oral evidence session.

The Committee considered relevant papers for this session, including a Clerk's Memo. The Chairperson also noted the Fiscal Council Sustainability Report for 2026 which had been published and circulated to Members.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 3:15pm, via Zoom;

Sir Robert Chote	Chair, NI Fiscal Council
Professor Alan Barrett	Member, NI Fiscal Council
Maureen O'Reilly	Member, NI Fiscal Council
Colin Pidgeon	Senior Technical Analyst, NI Fiscal Council

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the Fiscal Council Sustainability Report for 2026.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session and a number of issues were discussed including; budget agreement, Level of Need calculations, population changes, revenue raising and Fiscal Framework.

Steve Aiken left the meeting at 3:43pm.

Diane Forsthye declared an interest as the Assembly Private Secretary to the Education Minister.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance, and the witnesses left the meeting at 4:21pm.

14. Any Other Business

The Committee noted that an invitation had been received to attend an informal meeting with the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, and Taoiseach.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the agenda for this informal meeting at next week's Committee meeting.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that he and the deputy Chairperson had been invited to participate in forthcoming public evidence sessions with the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on the NI Executive Finances and ongoing budgetary situation, as question-asking "guests".

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and deputy Chairperson would accept this invitation, diaries permitting.

15. Date and Time of next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 1st July 2026 at 2pm in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24pm.

Matthew O'Toole

Chairperson, Committee for Finance

1st July 2026