

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MBE MLA
Ms Megan Fearon MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA
Mr David McIlveen MLA
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA
- In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)
Mr Gavin Moore (Bursary Student)
Mrs Patricia Casey (Bill Clerk) (Agenda Item 4 only)
- Apologies: None

In the absence of the Chairperson the Deputy Chairperson opened the meeting at 10.06am in public session.

Agreed: that Agenda item 5 on the Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme is recorded by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly website.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 30 January 2013

Agreed: that the minutes are published on the Assembly website.

3. Matters Arising

Table of Requests for Information from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

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

The Committee agreed to consider Agenda item 8: Correspondence next.

4. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP: Response to Henderson Decorators regarding Public Procurement Policies;
- DFP: Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Amendment) Scheme (NI) 2013;
- DFP: Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) – DFP response to Consultation on Proposed Increases to Employee Contribution Rates from April 2013;
- DFP: Response regarding European Commission Work Programme and Departmental EU priorities;
- DFP: Follow-up on Prompt Payment and Construction Contracts;
- DFP: Letter to Clerk of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding Budget Exchange Scheme; and
- Committee for Social Development: Fuel Poverty Action Group Update.

The Committee agreed to consider Agenda item 9: Committee Work Programme next.

5. Committee Work Programme

The Committee noted that next week's meeting would be held in Clare House, Airport Road West, Belfast. A number of members indicated that they would avail of a minibus for transport to and from the meeting venue.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.09am.

Mr McKay joined the meeting at 10.11am and took the Chair.

6. Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill – Initial Consideration of draft report.

The Committee considered a working draft Report on the Civil Service (Special Advisers) Bill.

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 10.16am

Agreed: Members will forward any comments they have in relation to the draft report to Committee staff by noon on Friday 8 February 2013, following which the final draft report will be issued for formal consideration and agreement on 13 February.

The Clerk informed members that agreement to clause 11 on the Short Title of the Bill had been omitted from the formal clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill at last week's meeting. The Chairperson accordingly put the question.

Clause 11 – Short Title of the Bill

Agreed: that the Committee is content with clause 11 on the Short Title of the Bill as drafted.

Mr McQuillan left the meeting at 10.20am

7. Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme – NI Audit Office Evidence Session

The Committee took oral evidence from the following NI Audit Office (NIAO) officials: Mr Eddie Bradley, Assistant Auditor General and Ms Jacqueline O'Brien Audit Manager.

Mr McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.21am

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.28am

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.29am

Mr McCallister left the meeting at 10.34am

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 10.39am

Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 10.47am

Mr McIlveen joined the meeting at 10.52am

Agreed: that further briefing from NIAO would be required as the Committee engages with DFP on this matter.

Agreed: to ask DFP for a full written response to the NIAO Review in the first instance, with a view to receiving an oral briefing from Departmental officials thereafter. It was also agreed to ask the Department, in particular, to provide information on what consideration was given to DFP exercising a challenge function in respect of delivery by departments of efficiency savings and for detail of the guidance issued to departments by DFP in relation to obtaining efficiencies.

Agreed: to liaise with the other applicable statutory committees on the NIAO Review findings following receipt of the DFP evidence.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 10.55am

8. Update on Fiscal Devolution and Devolved Funding – Assembly Research Briefing.

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the Research paper, *Update on Fiscal Devolution and Devolved Funding*.

Mr Bradley left the meeting at 11.26am

Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 11.28am

Mrs Cochrane joined the meeting at 11.29am

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 11.30am

Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 11.35am

Mr Bradley joined the meeting at 11.38am

Mr McLaughlin joined the meeting at 11.39am

Mr Bradley left the meeting at 11.45am

Agreed: to commission follow up research into why the Calman Commission did not make recommendations in respect of Scotland receiving revenue from North Sea oil.

Agreed: that the information from the Assembly Research briefing would be used to inform the draft Terms of Reference for the Committee Inquiry in the Barnett Formula.

9. European Commission Work Programme Pilot Project – Assembly Research Briefing

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research on the Research paper, *European Commission Work Programme 2013: proposals within the remit of the Committee for Finance and Personnel*. The Committee also considered correspondence from the Department in relation to this item of business, as noted under Agenda Item: Correspondence.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.50am

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 11.55am

Agreed: to request DFP to provide (i) clarification on its response of 30 January 2013 regarding Central Procurement Division not having an input in respect of E-invoicing in public procurement and (ii) comment on Guidelines for standards-based public procurement of ICT systems

Mr McLaughlin left the meeting at 12.05pm

Agreed: that the Committee secretariat will prepare a draft response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the European Commission Work Programme based on today's briefing and the DFP correspondence. Members will consider this draft response at a future meeting.

10. Committee Work Programme (continued)

Members considered a draft of the Committee work programme.

Agreed: that the Committee work programme is amended to reflect decisions made today, and that the revised programme is published on the Assembly website.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be held on Wednesday 13 February 2013 at 10.00am in Clare House, Airport Road West, Belfast.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.06pm.

Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
13 February 2013