

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 02 MARCH 2016 ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Daithí McKay MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Claire Hanna MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Leslie Cree MBE, MLA
Mr Gordon Lyons MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Gary Middleton MLA
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Clairita Frazer (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mrs Michaela Boyle MLA
Mrs Judith Cochrane MLA
Mr John McCallister MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:10am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 24 February 2016

Agreed: that the minutes will be published on the Assembly website.

3. Matters Arising

Sale of National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) assets in Northern Ireland

A revised draft of the Committee's progress report on its review of the sale of NAMA assets in Northern Ireland had been issued to members following their discussion of proposed additions to the previous draft report at last week's meeting.

Members discussed recent developments, particularly in light of the BBC (NI) Spotlight programme broadcast on Monday 29 February 2016.

Agreed: that members will forward any further suggested additions or amendments to the Committee's draft progress report to the Clerk by the end of this week, in order for an updated draft report to be prepared for formal consideration on 9 March 2016.

Agreed: to write to Mr Frank Cushnahan, Mr David Gray, Mr Ronnie Hanna, and Mr Gareth Robinson inviting them to respond to the issues arising from the BBC (NI) Spotlight programme, by attending an oral evidence session with the Committee either on 9 or 16 March 2016.

Agreed: to write to Mr John Miskelly offering him the opportunity to respond to issues arising from the BBC (NI) Spotlight programme by way of providing a written submission to the Committee, given that he has been unable to attend an oral hearing due to medical treatment.

Gordon Lyons joined the meeting at 10:15am

Members noted that the former Minister of Finance and Personnel, Mr Simon Hamilton MLA, had previously agreed to attend an oral hearing on 18 November 2015 but that this was postponed due to additional plenary business being scheduled in the Assembly on that date.

Agreed: to write to former Minister of Finance and Personnel, Mr Simon Hamilton MLA, offering him the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee before the end of the mandate.

Table of requests for information from Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

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

Daithí McKay left the meeting at 10.22am

Claire Hanna, Deputy Chairperson, took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

4. DFP Innovation Laboratories – Update briefing from DFP

Members received an update briefing on DFP Innovation Laboratories from the following departmental officials:

- Malcolm Beattie, Head of Innovation Branch, Public Service Reform Division (PSRD), DFP; and
- Christopher Farrington, PSRD, DFP.

Agreed: that the departmental officials will provide follow up information on issues discussed during the session, including detail on the projects which are both ongoing and under consideration, the specific benefits arising from the Laboratories to date as well as a breakdown of the costs incurred for each Laboratory.

Jim Wells joined the meeting at 10:28am

Ian McCrea joined the meeting at 10:35am

Gordon Lyons left the meeting at 11:00am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 11:00am

5. Dormant Accounts – Briefing from Community Foundation NI

Claire Hanna, Deputy Chairperson, declared an interest as a community shareholder in Northern Ireland Community Energy Limited.

Members received a briefing on the work of the Building Change Trust with regard to social investment from the following representatives:

- Nigel McKinney, Director of Operations, Community Foundation NI;
- Patrick Minne, Northern Ireland Manager, Charity Bank; and
- Tiziana O Hara, Director, Cooperative Alternatives.

Agreed: to write to DFP for clarification on whether it is intended that Dormant Accounts monies, under the Northern Ireland Community Finance Fund, are to be distributed as grants or loans or by a hybrid model.

Agreed: that the representatives of the Building Change Trust will provide follow up information on issues discussed during the briefing, including detail on a local authority initiative in England and a profile of investors.

Gordon Lyons rejoined the meeting at 11:05am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir rejoined the meeting at 11:09am

Gary Middleton left the meeting at 11:28am

Ian McCrea left the meeting at 11:35am

Gary Middleton rejoined the meeting at 11:36am

6. Subordinate Legislation

The Committee considered the following three Statutory Rules:

S.R. The Public Services Pensions Revaluation (Prices) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Agreed: that the Committee has considered Statutory Rule: The Public Services Pensions Revaluation (Prices) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.

S.R. 2016/50 – The Public Service Pensions Revaluation (Earnings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Agreed: that the Committee has considered S.R. 2016/50 – The Public Service Pensions Revaluation (Earnings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the rule.

S.R. 2016/69 The Rates (Automatic Telling Machines) (Designation of Rural Areas) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Agreed: that the Committee has considered S.R. 2016/69 The Rates (Automatic Telling Machines) (Designation of Rural Areas) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the rule.

7. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- DFP – information received from HM Treasury underpinning Barnett consequentialia received by the Executive;
- DFP – response on provisions within the Legislative Consent Motion: Northern Ireland (Stormont Agreement and Implementation) Bill; and
- Assembly Research – Publications update Nov 2015 to Jan 2016.

8. Committee Work Programme

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

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee will be on Wednesday 09 March 2016 at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:56pm.

**Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance and Personnel
09 March 2016**