

## **COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2016**  
**ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**Present:** Mrs Emma Little Pengelly MLA (Chairperson)  
Mrs Claire Hanna MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Mr Jonathan Bell MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr Ross Hussey MLA  
Mr Gerry Mullan MLA  
Mr John O'Dowd MLA  
Ms Caitríona Ruane MLA  
Mr Philip Smith MLA  
Mr Jim Wells MLA

**In Attendance:** Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** There were no apologies

*2:07 pm The meeting commenced in closed session.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commence the meeting in closed session to consider an unsolicited item of correspondence from the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Correspondence from the Police Service of Northern Ireland

The Committee noted correspondence from the Police Service of Northern Ireland requesting that the Committee gives due consideration to its ongoing investigation relating to the coaching allegations when questioning any individual.

*The meeting was suspended at 2:17 pm.*

*The Committee reconvened into public session at 3:00 pm with the following members in attendance:*

*Mrs Emma Little Pengelly      (Chairperson)*  
*Mrs Claire Hanna                (Deputy Chairperson)*  
*Mr Jim Allister*  
*Mr Jonathan Bell*  
*Mr Ross Hussey*  
*Mr Gerry Mullan*  
*Mr John O'Dowd*  
*Ms Caitríona Ruane*  
*Mr Philip Smith*  
*Mr Jim Wells*

*Agreed:* that agenda items 1 & 5 is covered by Hansard and the Official Report published on the Assembly's website.

## **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

*Paul Girvan joined the meeting at 3:04pm*

## **1. NAMA Coaching Allegations – Evidence from the Minister of Finance**

*This session was recorded by Hansard.*

Members received oral evidence from the Minister of Finance on the recent allegations relating to the coaching of a witness by the former Chairperson of the Committee for Finance and Personnel.

*The meeting was suspended at 5:35 pm.*

*The Committee reconvened at 5:40 pm in public session with the following members in attendance:*

*Mrs Emma Little Pengelly      (Chairperson)*  
*Mrs Claire Hanna                (Deputy Chairperson)*

*Mr Jim Allister*  
*Mr Jonathan Bell*  
*Mr Paul Girvan*  
*Mr Ross Hussey*  
*Mr John O'Dowd*  
*Ms Caitríona Ruane*  
*Mr Philip Smith*  
*Mr Jim Wells*

*Gerry Mullan returned to the meeting at 5:44 pm.*

*Agreed:* to reschedule the oral evidence session at **Agenda Item 5**, 'Department and Committee Priorities for the Current Mandate: Oral Evidence from the Department of Finance', due to time constraints.

*Agreed:* to recirculate previous procedural advice to Members.

### **3. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 28 September 2016**

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

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### Committee for the Communities

Members had asked for a copy of the Hansard of the Committee for Communities evidence session on Contingency Planning for the possible reclassification of Housing Associations as Public Bodies. Members were informed that there was no Hansard for that session, but that a link to the meeting had been distributed to members.

#### Summary of Requests to DoF

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

#### DoF Response – Progress Report on the 'Review into the Sale of the NAMA Loan Portfolio in Northern Ireland

*Agreed:* to write to the Department for a more detailed response to the recommendations and conclusions contained within the former Committee's report.

#### Non-Domestic Rating System

The Committee considered a list of identified stakeholders to provide written evidence in response to the Committee's strategic priority on the Non-Domestic Rating System.

*Agreed:* to write to stakeholders as amended.

*Agreed:* to provide members with copies of previous Research on the Rating of Online Businesses.

## **5. Strategic Priorities: Department of Finance and Committee Priorities for the Current Mandate**

*Agreed:* to identify with the Department the availability of the Minister to reschedule this item of business.

## **6. Subordinate Legislation**

### **SR 2016/359: The Rates (Increased Reduction for Recreational Hereditaments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Members considered the correspondence from the Department of Finance and the draft rule as laid in the Assembly.

*Agreed:* that the Committee has considered SR 2016/359: The Rates (Increased Reduction for Recreational Hereditaments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and recommends that, subject to the Examiner's report, it be affirmed by the Assembly.

## **7. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

- Mr Neil Adair: Response to Department of Finance's letter regarding Mr Adair's nomination to NAMA's Northern Ireland Advisory Committee.

*Agreed:* to consider a draft response to Mr Adair at next week's meeting.

- Department of Finance: Response from Minister - Departmental response to Mr Neil Adair relating to his nomination to NAMA's Northern Ireland Advisory Committee
- Department of Finance: Departmental response to a Committee request for the minutes of the meeting between the former Finance Minister, Mr Sammy Wilson and Mr Neil Adair on 12 November 2009.

- Department of Finance: Response to the Committee request re The Management of the NICS Estate

*Agreed:* to write to the Department for a written briefing on the Reform of Property Management Programme and the Strategy for rationalisation of the NICS Estate.

- Department of Finance: Response to Committee request re Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Building Regulations (NI) 2012
- Department of Finance: The effect of “Brexit” on UK public procurement legislation
- Committee for the Economy: Pension issues raised by SNIPEF
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (Northern Ireland): Civil Service Sickness Absence

*Agreed:* to request a report from the Department on progress in implementing the recommendations from the 2011 Committee’s report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector, published in 2015.

## **8. Committee Work Programme**

The Committee noted the work programme which will be published on the Committee’s webpage.

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 2:00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The Committee moved into closed session at 6.25pm for the following agenda item.*

## **11. Options for Committee scrutiny of the sale of the NI NAMA loans portfolio**

Members considered potential options on the way forward in relation to further scrutiny of the sale of the NAMA loan portfolio in Northern Ireland

*The Committee returned to public session at 7:06 pm for the remainder of the meeting.*

*Agreed:* to conduct, further inquiries into the issues associated with the sale of the NAMA's Northern Ireland property portfolio given that such issues are no longer currently a matter of sub judice.

*Agreed:* that the Clerk will prepare a draft Terms of Reference on the basis of the areas identified which should be circulated for consideration by members.

*Agreed:* that the draft Terms of Reference, once considered by members will be forwarded to Assembly Legal Services.

The Clerk highlighted to members that the timeframe for responses to requests for legal advice is 10 working days and therefore encouraged urgent responses from members on the draft Terms of Reference.

*Agreed:* to request and informal and private update from the National Crime Agency in respect of its ongoing investigation.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.*

**Mrs Emma Little Pengelly MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Finance**  
**12 October 2016**