

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 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 Gerry Mullan MLA	
	Mr John O'Dowd 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:	Mr Ross Hussey MLA	
	Ms Caitríona Ruane MLA	

The meeting commenced at 2:02 pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 09 November 2016

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

3. Matters Arising

Minister's availability to attend the Committee

Members noted the departmental response in relation to the Minister's availability.

Agreed: to write to the Department to ascertain the Minister's intentions relating to any policy proposals, envisaged timeframe for these in respect of the Non-Domestic Rating System and to highlight the Committee's wish for early engagement in this regard

Agreed: to write to the Department asking if the Minister would be available to attend prior to Christmas recess to discuss his priorities and key issues.

Programme for Government

Members considered a briefing paper from the Clerk regarding Programme for Government.

Agreed: to receive a breakdown of PfG delivery plans from the Department where DoF is considered a key partner, its role and details of any engagement undertaken or currently planned with other relevant departments.

Agreed: to highlight to the Department that members wish to explore the draft Programme for Government with officials at its meeting on 7 December 2016.

External Committee Meetings in Relation to Non-Domestic Rates

Members considered a briefing paper from the Clerk in relation to external meetings regarding Non-Domestic Rates.

Agreed: that those members yet to respond on their preferred locations for the external meeting will do so by 16 November 2016.

Jonathan Bell joined the meeting at 2:15 pm

Agreed: to receive a written brief from the Department outlining, for each relief and exemption: the mechanisms and eligibility criteria; the intended purpose; the date of introduction; and the Department's assessment of how it has performed against its intended purpose.

Rates Hardship Fund

Members noted a response to a written question from Mr Jim Allister MLA in relation to the Rates Hardship Fund.

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.

4. Management of the NICS Estate: Reform of Property Management – Written Evidence from the Department of Finance

Members noted written evidence from the Department in relation to the ‘Management of the NICS Estate: Reform of Property Management’.

Agreed: to receive more detail from the Department on the associated costs and forecast of savings for each year of the programme.

5. Overview of the Work of the Department of Finance’s Supply Division – Oral Evidence from the Department of Finance

The Committee heard oral evidence from the following departmental officials on the Overview of the Work of Supply Division in the Department of Finance.

- Mike Brennan, Head of Public Spending Directorate (DoF)
- Emer Morelli, Head of Supply, Public Spending Directorate, DoF
- Barry Armstrong, Supply Officer, Public Spending Directorate, DoF

Agreed: to forward the Department’s paper to other Statutory Committees and Audit Committee for information.

6. Subordinate Legislation – SL1 – The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Members considered the proposal for above SL1. Mr John Neely and Mr John Burke, Enterprise Shared Services, Department of Finance provided clarification to questions raised by Members’.

Jonathan Bell left the meeting at 3:12 pm

Agreed: that the Committee has considered the above proposal and is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation at this stage.

Jonathan Bell returned to the meeting at 3:21 pm

7. Non-Domestic Rating System – Oral Evidence from Manufacturing NI

The Committee heard oral evidence from the following representative from Manufacturing NI on the Non-Domestic Rating System in Northern Ireland.

- Mr Stephen Kelly, Managing Director, Manufacturing NI

Claire Hanna left the meeting at 3:34 pm

Agreed: to write to Manufacturing NI seeking further detail of issues which arose during the session.

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following correspondence.

- Chief Officers 3rd Sector - Invitation to Chair to attend CO3 Awards Dinner, 23 February 2017

Agreed: that the Chairperson attends on the Committee's behalf.

- Committee for the Executive Office - Request for information on the implications for NICS departments due to the decision of the UK to withdraw from the EU.
- Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Draft Budget 2017-18

9. Forward Work Programme

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

10. Any Other Business

The Chairperson highlighted to members a recent meeting she had attended in respect of initiatives such as 'City Deals' and Enterprise Zones aimed at increasing accessibility to borrowing and scope for increasing powers to local government.

The Chairperson asked members to consider whether this might be an aspect of work that the Committee may wish to pursue.

11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee for finance will be held on Wednesday, 23 November 2016 at 2:00 pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4:10 pm.

Mrs Emma Little Pengelly MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance
23 November 2016