

COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2017
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present:	Mrs Emma Little Pengelly MLA	(Chairperson)
	Mrs Claire Hanna MLA	(Deputy Chairperson)
	Mr Jim Allister MLA	
	Mr Paul Girvan MLA	
	Mr Philip Smith MLA	
	Mr Jim Wells MLA	
In Attendance:	Mr Jim McManus	(Assembly Clerk)
	Mr Phil Pateman	(Assistant Assembly Clerk)
	Mr Piotr Palys	(Clerical Supervisor)
	Miss Heather Graham	(Clerical Officer)
Apologies:	Mr Ross Hussey MLA	
	Mr Gerry Mullan MLA	

The meeting commenced at 2:05pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Draft Minutes of Proceedings of 7 December 2016

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

3. Matters Arising

North/South Ministerial Council – Sectoral Audits

The Committee noted that the Committee for the Executive Office has requested this information from the Executive Office which can be forwarded to this Committee once received.

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.

Budget 2017-2018

Members considered the implications for the Budget of the current political situation.

Agreed: to convene a meeting of the Committee on Monday 16 January 2017 to receive oral evidence from the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Finance on the implications of the current situation for the Budget 2017-2018.

Subordinate Legislation

Members considered the proposals for the following SL1's. Mr Brian McClure and Andrew, McAvoy, Rating Policy Division, Department of Finance provided clarification to questions raised by members.

4. SL1 Rates (Small Business Hereditament Relief) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

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

5. SL1 The Rates Relief (Persons of Working Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

6. SL1 The Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in rural Areas) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

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

8. SL1 The Rates (Temporary Rebate) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

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

9. SL1 The Rates (Regional Rates) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

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

10. SL1 The Official Statistics (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

Members considered the proposal for the following SL1. Dr David Marshall and Ms Arlene Connolly, NISRA provided clarification to questions raised by members.

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

11. Legislative Consent Motion: Digital Economy Bill “Better Use of Data in Government”

Members considered documents relating to the Westminster Digital Economy Bill and evidence from the following officials.

- Alison Caldwell – Head of Accountability and Financial Management Division, Department of Finance
- David Marshall, Director of Sources, NISRA
- John Morgan, Head of Information Management and Data Services, Department of Finance
- Michael Reid, Information Management and Data Services, Department of Finance

12. Budget - Executive Draft Budget 2017/18: Assembly Research Briefing on the Ministerial Statement

Members received a briefing from Assembly Research on the Executive Draft Budget 2017/18.

Agreed: to write to the Finance Minister to obtain the Department’s assessment of the impact on public services of not having an agreed Budget Act in place before the end of the current financial year; and what proposals he has to mitigate the impact.

13. Reforming the Rates System – Consultation document

Members considered papers in relation to Reforming the Rates System.

Agreed: to defer this agenda item to a later date.

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following correspondence:

- Department of Finance - Outcome of mapping OECD recommendations against PfG

Agreed: to forward the response to the Committee for TEO along with a copy of the OECD report.

- Public Accounts Committee - Inquiry into VES Schemes in NI Public Sector Bodies

Agreed: that the Clerk liaises with the PAC Clerk in order to ascertain an envisaged publication date of PAC's report when known.

- Parliamentary Engagement Co-ordinator - Visit by a Delegation from Kyrgyzstan which members noted has been cancelled.
- Department of Finance - The Minister confirms introduction of the Managing Agents Bill.

Agreed: to note and schedule an introductory briefing by the Department into the Committee's work programme.

- Department of Finance - Department's response re NAMA meeting query
- Department of Finance - Further information on researching What Works Centres
- Construction Employers Federation - CEF response to Northern Ireland Executive's PfG consultation.
- Department of Finance - Department's response re NICS Staff Survey, breakdown of absence and response to questions not covered during the session.
- Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - Copy of a request to the Department of Finance seeking information on budgetary guidance 2017-18 for Loughs Agency.

- Committee for the Executive Office - Committee report on the Draft PfG 2016-21.
- Department of Finance - Department's clarification on disposal of government property.
- Department of Finance - Department's response re PfG Digital Projects and uptake by the public
- Department of Finance - Department's response re Fresh Start Statement – Resource and Capital DEL budgets.
- Department of Finance - Department's response re decision to move LPS into Lanyon Plaza.
- Department of Finance - Summary of the Minister's meeting with Chief Secretary to Treasury re Corporation Tax.
- EU Affairs Manager - EU Matters – a publication focused on Brexit

15. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee noted the work programme which will be updated and published on the Committee's webpage.

16. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

17. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee for Finance will be held on Monday, 16 January at 9:30pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.01pm.

Mrs Emma Little Pengelly MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance
11 January 2017