

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL REVIEW  
PANEL AT 10AM ON WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2015  
IN ROOM 241 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**Present:** Mr Pat McCartan, Chairperson  
Mr Alan McQuillan  
Dr Etta Campbell

**In attendance:** Mrs Cathy McGowan, Ms Marion Johnson, Mr Hugh Widdis and Mr Jonathon McMillen were present for Items 5 - 7.

**1. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were noted for the meeting.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No interests were declared

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS IFRP MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2015 were agreed without amendment.

**Action:**

- *Minutes to be forwarded for publication on IFRP Website.*

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

**4.1 Consultation on the Employment of Assembly Members' Staff**

The Panel noted that a further response had been received in relation to the consultation on the employment of Assembly Members' staff.

**4.2 Members' Salaries – Research update and draft consultation document**

The Panel considered the updated information provided by Dr Barry and agreed that Mr McQuillan with the assistance of Mrs McGowan would integrate information into the draft consultation document for consideration at an early meeting.

**4.3 Issues arising from the BBC Spotlight Programme**

The Panel noted some concerns in relation to information provided by the Finance Office as outlined within the transcripts provided of the BBC Spotlight Programme. The Chairperson suggested that the Panel could raise this matter for discussion at the next scheduled Liaison meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive.

**4.4 FAPP Scheme**

The Panel agreed to defer their discussion on this matter until their next meeting.

#### **4.5 SP15+ Project**

The Chairperson suggested that the Panel could raise this matter for discussion at the next scheduled Liaison meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive

**Actions:**

- *Items for discussion to be forwarded to the Clerk/Chief Executive in advance of the Liaison meeting on 26 February 2015;*
- *Draft consultation document to be updated to include statistical information provided by Dr Barry;*
- *Draft consultation document to be forwarded to Mr McQuillan for his consideration; and*
- *Updated consultation document to be discussed at a separate meeting on Thursday 26 February 2015.*

#### **5. EXCEPTIONAL DETERMINATION 2015**

*Mr Widdis and Mr McMillen joined the meeting at 10.45am*

Mr McMillen drew the Panels attention to his legal advice in relation to the drafting of an exceptional Determination and sought the Panel's instructions in relation to several policy queries to assist him in finalising an Exceptional Determination. The Panel considered each of Mr McMillens' queries and agreed that a further and final draft of the Determination, as per their instructions, would be made available for consideration at their next meeting on 5 March 2015.

The Panel agreed that following final amendments to the Exceptional Determination that a short consultation exercise would be instigated with Members of the Assembly and relevant Committees.

**Actions:**

- *Determination to be updated as instructed and considered by IFRP at their next meeting on 18 February 2015; and*
- *Preparations to be made for a consultation exercise on the draft Exceptional Determination.*

#### **6. PREPARATION FOR 2016 DETERMINATION**

The Panel considered a Commission business case under which access to external drafting services could be sought to assist in the preparation of a 2016 Determination. It was agreed that Mr Widdis would now proceed with the business case as outlined.

Mr Widdis further encouraged the Panel to consider any policy direction for the 2016 Determination and it was agreed that Mr Widdis would attend the meeting on the 26 February 2015 to note any drafting instructions which could be usefully taken forward within the current financial year.

**Action:**

- *Mr Widdis to proceed with Commission business case for access to an external drafting service; and*
- *Mr Widdis to be invited to meeting on 26 February 2015 to discuss policy direction for the 2016 Determination.*

**7. STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**

The Panel considered the arrangements for providing evidence to the Committee on Standards and Privileges at their meeting on 18 February 2015.

The Panel suggested that communication mechanisms between themselves and the Committee be considered to ensure closer co-operation.

*Mr Widdis and Mr McMillan left the meeting at 12.31pm*

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Panel noted correspondence received and issued from its last meeting on 6 February 2015.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**9.1 Liaison Meeting**

The Panel noted that the next Liaison meeting would take place at 10am in Room 25, Parliament Buildings.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that IFRP would hold their next meeting on Thursday 5 March 2015 at 10.00am in Room 241.

*The meeting ended at 12.34pm*