

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL REVIEW PANEL

**MONDAY 11 JULY 2011 AT 10.30AM
ROOM 28 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

APPROVED

Present: Pat McCartan, Chairman
Alan McQuillan
Dr Etta Campbell

In attendance: Georgie Campbell, Secretary

Trevor Reaney (Agenda item 3)
Clerk/DG
NI Assembly

1 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed the members to the first meeting of the Independent Financial Review Panel and outlined the responsibilities of the Panel as described in the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 No interests were declared in relation to the issues on the agenda for discussion.
- 2.2 It was agreed that the Panel would maintain a formal Register of Interests and that, at the beginning of future meetings, members would be given the opportunity to update this in addition to declaring any interests in relation to the issues scheduled for discussion at that meeting.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the Secretary would develop a proforma to be used by members to list their interests.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT INCLUDING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 Trevor Reaney described the background to the establishment of the Panel. He gave the Panel an overview of Members' salaries and allowances as well as their pension arrangements and also described the arrangements for MLAs who are also Members of Parliament. He said the Panel might wish to meet with the Secretariat officials responsible for the administration of Members' salaries and allowances and pension arrangements who would be able to give them more detailed information. Members asked the Secretary to arrange meetings with officials as soon as possible.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

- 3.2 It was agreed that Trevor Reaney would prepare a draft Memorandum of Understanding between himself as Accounting Officer and the IFRP for agreement by the two parties. This will set out the relationship between the Assembly Secretariat and the Panel and will cover such issues as:

- Financial resources/budget
- Secretarial support
- FOI support
- Media support
- Website support
- Research services
- Audit services
- IS support

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO ARRANGE WITH TREVOR REANEY

4 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 4.1 A draft Code of Conduct was considered and amendments were agreed. The Secretary undertook to circulate a revised draft for comments. It was agreed that once approved, the Code of Conduct would be posted on the website.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

5 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Members selected an amended letterhead from samples provided. The Secretary undertook to circulate a revised draft.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

- 5.2 Panel members agreed to the development of a website with the domain name being www.ifrp.org.uk. The Secretary agreed to proceed with this and to have the website in place as soon as possible.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

6 IFRP MEMBERS' AVAILABILITY

- 6.1 Panel members informed the Secretary of their availability for meetings in the coming months.

7 RULES OF PROCEDURE

- 7.1 Draft Rules of Procedure were considered and amendments were agreed. The Secretary undertook to circulate a revised draft for comments. It was agreed that once approved, the Rules of Procedure would be posted on the website.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

8 KEY PRIORITIES FOR IFRP

- 8.1 Draft Key Priorities were discussed and additional priorities were agreed. The Secretary undertook to circulate a revised draft for comments. It was agreed that once approved, the Key Priorities would be posted on the website.

9 IFRP FORWARD WORK PLAN

- 9.1 The Panel agreed that they would aim to have their first Report and Determination completed by March 2012.
- 9.2 It was agreed that, at their next meeting, members would consider the issues on which they wanted to seek the views of stakeholders and decide on the methodology and timescale for this.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO INCLUDE ON THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- 9.3 It was agreed that the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Commission and Corporate Support Unit, the Head of Research and the Head of Accounts should attend the next meeting, annual leave permitting, to provide relevant background briefing for the Panel.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO ARRANGE

- 9.4 The Panel requested comparisons between the salaries and allowances of members of the Assembly and the National Assembly of Wales, the House of Commons, the Scottish Parliament and Dail Eireann. The Secretary undertook to ask the Assembly's Research staff if they could undertake this work.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 There was no further business.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place at 10am on Tuesday 2 August 2011 in Room 28 Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 1.25pm.