

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT
FINANCIAL REVIEW PANEL WHICH TOOK PLACE AT 9.45AM
ON TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2014 IN ROOM 30 PARLIAMENT
BUILDINGS**

APPROVED

- Present:** Pat McCartan, Chairman
Alan McQuillan
- Apologies:** Dr Etta Campbell
- In attendance:** Paula McClintock, Head of Finance (Agenda item 4)
Georgie Campbell, Secretary

1 APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received before the meeting from Dr Campbell.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 No interests were declared with the exception of the issue of the decision by the Assembly Commission in relation to constituency office rents (see para 4.4). Mr McQuillan declared that at the time of the Commission's consideration of this issue and prior to his appointment to IFRP on 1 July 2011, he had acted as an ad hoc adviser to the Commission in his capacity as Chair of the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 11 FEBRUARY 2014

- 3.1 These minutes were approved without amendment.

The Head of Finance joined the meeting at 10.30am

4 INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE PANEL

- 4.1 **Payments made, and to whom, under contracts for services**
Panel members noted that some MLAs were purchasing services from individuals on several occasions. They queried whether these people

should be treated as employees of the MLA. The Panel also asked whether, where a service had been purchased, the procurement process had been followed. The Head of Finance undertook to investigate this.

ACTION: HEAD OF FINANCE

4.2 Constituency offices in East Belfast

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

4.3 Assembly Members who changed their pension contribution rates following the Panel's 2012 Determination

The Panel noted that only five Assembly Members had changed their pension contribution rates.

4.4 Commission's decision of September 2011 re constituency office rents

The Panel noted the legal advice in relation to the Commission's decision.

4.5 Travel and subsistence for non- executive appointees

The Panel noted that as Parliament Buildings was considered by HMRC as their place of work, their travel costs would be paid through payroll and would be subject to tax and NIC.

4.6 Claim forms for expenses

The Panel noted that when Assembly Members are claiming expenses including rent, they are required to sign a declaration to confirm that the payee is not a connected person and that the payment does not represent a donation to a charitable organisation or a payment to a political party.

5 REGISTER OF INTERESTS

- 5.1 Mr McQuillan gave the Secretary some amendments to be made in relation to his entry in the Register of Interests. Mr McCartan undertook to forward his amendments to the Secretary. The Secretary said that she would contact Dr Campbell to ask if she wished to make any amendments to her entry.

ACTION: SECRETARY

6 CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

- 6.1 The Panel agreed that they would aim to launch a consultation exercise in relation to constituency office rents at the end of April 2014.

- 6.2 Following a discussion on the structure of the Consultation Document, the Secretary undertook to produce a draft framework document for the Panel's comments.

ACTION: SECRETARY

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Invoice from the Government Actuary's Department (GAD)

The Panel authorised payment of the invoice from GAD.

7.2 Outstanding claims for fees

The Secretary gave Panel members a list of meetings for which they had yet to claim expenses and asked if claims could be made before the end of the financial year.

ACTION: PANEL MEMBERS

7.3 Public Service Pension Scheme

The Panel noted that work is progressing on secondary legislation required to reform the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) with the aim of introducing the reformed scheme with effect from 1 April 2015.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Panel will be as follows:

10am on Friday 11 April 2014 in Room 30 Parliament Buildings