

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL REVIEW
PANEL AT 10.00am ON THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2015
IN ROOM 241 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

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

In attendance: Mrs Cathy McGowan and Mrs Julie Devlin. Mr R Stewart was present for Items 4.3 & 5. Mr H Widdis was present for Item 4.3. Dr R Barry was present for Item 6. Mr J McMillen was present for Item 7.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS IFRP MEETINGS

The Panel agreed the minutes of meetings held on 10 March, 30 March & 2 April 2015 for publication. The Panel also reviewed its table of action points and considered responses received to any outstanding actions from the last meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Consultation on ‘Members’ Salaries and Office Holder Allowances – responses received to date

The Panel noted that a further response had been received in relation to the current consultation. The Chairperson advised the Panel that the closing date for the consultation is 27 May 2015.

4.2 Legal Advice Statutory relationships between the Panel and certain bodies

The Panel noted the legal advice provided from Mr McMillen outlining comparable statutory relationships between the Panel and other bodies.

Mr R Stewart and Mr H Widdis joined the meeting.

4.3 Implementation of Exceptional Determinations – Update

The Director of Corporate Services provided an update in relation to the implementation of the Exceptional Determinations and the Panel noted copies of correspondence and advice which had issued to all Members on the matter. The Panel considered and approved an explanatory note from Mr Widdis and agreed that it should issue to the Finance Office to assist with any queries raised during implementation.

Mr Widdis left the meeting.

5. PENSIONS UPDATE

The Panel noted a copy of the triennial Valuation Report of the Scheme for the period 1 April 2011- 31 March 2014 and agreed that further consideration was required to compare the information against the letter received from Mr Selby in January 2014. The Chairperson also suggested that it may be useful to meet with the Chairperson of the Pensions Trustees to discuss the matter further.

The Director of Corporate Services also advised the Panel on progress of the arrangements for the procurement of a pensions advisor.

Mr R Stewart left the meeting.

Dr R Barry joined the meeting.

6. CONSULTATION ON MEMBERS' OFFICE COST EXPENDITURE

The Panel considered the updated draft consultation document and requested further information in relation to several allowances. It was agreed that a further draft would be considered at the next meeting.

Dr R Barry left the meeting.

Mr J McMillen joined the meeting.

7. 2016 DETERMINATION UPDATE

The Chairperson informed Mr McMillen that the Panel intended to hold a workshop on Friday 8 May 2015 to determine those policy matters which they had reached conclusion on. It was agreed that Mr McMillen would be invited to the discussion to allow for him to advise the draftsman accordingly.

Mr McMillen left the meeting.

8. MODELS FOR SETTING AND ADMINISTERING SALARIES, PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES

The Panel considered a request from the Assembly Commission to provide a view in relation to future models for setting and administering salaries, pensions and allowances. Following discussion, it was agreed that a draft response should be prepared for clearance by correspondence and forwarded to the Assembly Commission for consideration.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

The Panel noted the correspondence received since their last meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Liaison Meeting: Agenda Items

The Panel noted that the next Liaison Meeting had been scheduled for Friday 15 May 2015.

10.2 *Extract from Official Report: Monday 13 April 15: FAPP Scheme*

The Panel noted a copy of the Hansard for Monday 13 April 2015 where the Assembly Commission had proposed changes to the Financial Assistance to Political Parties (FAPP) Scheme.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that IFRP would hold their next meeting on Wednesday 20 May 2015 at 10.00am in Room 241.

The meeting ended at 1.50pm