



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

THURSDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020, THE SENATE,  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr William Humphrey MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Mr David Hilditch MLA  
Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA

Remotely: Mr Andrew Muir MLA  
Mr Maolíosa McHugh MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk  
Ms Gillian Barker, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor  
Mr Darren Weir, Clerical Officer

Prior to the meeting opening in public session, the Committee discussed with Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG, Agenda Items 6 & 7 regarding the follow up evidence sessions on NIAO report on Special Educational Needs.

***The meeting began in Open Session at 2.23 pm***

*Mr Kieran Donnelly, C&AG and Mr Kyle Donnelly, Assembly Support Officer NIAO joined the meeting.*

#### **1. Apologies**

As above.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2020 were agreed.

### **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Declaration of Member's Interest**

- Mr Roy Beggs MLA declared he was a Governor of Roddensvale School, Larne;
- Mr Cathal Boylan MLA declared he was a Governor of Clea Primary School, Keady and Vice Chair of the NIA All Party Autistic Group;
- Mr William Humphrey MLA, declared he was a Governor of Edenbrooke Primary School and Governor of Belfast Model School for Girls;
- Mr Andrew Muir MLA declared he was a Governor of Priory Integrated College, Holywood;
- Mr Maolíosa McHugh MLA declared he was Chairman of pre-school Naíscoil na Deirg;

*The meeting moved into Open Session at 2.23 pm*

### **5. Correspondence**

The Committee noted correspondence dated 11 November 2020 from RenewableNI regarding PAC's inquiry on 'Generating Electricity from Renewable Energy'

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Mr Agnew, Head of RenewableNI, and inform him PAC has written to NIAO regarding the issues he has raised.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted NIAO will respond to the Committee on the issues Mr Agnew has raised.

The Committee considered correspondence dated 11 November 2020 from Sue Gray, AO, DoF in response to Committee's follow up letter of 2 November 2020, requesting further information from the evidence session on 22 October 2020. The Committee noted her response included confirmation that neither LandWeb or NI Direct contracts were not referenced in Ms Gray's first day's brief.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write back to Ms Gray AO DoF for clarity on the 'commercially sensitive' information within the letter, for the purpose of publishing PAC's report.

The Committee noted correspondence to the Economy Committee from the Department for Economy dated 4 November 2020 regarding the due diligence FTC carried out on UU.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted and agreed to forward to NIAO.

The Committee considered correspondence dated 18 November 2020 from Mr Aidan Thatcher, Director of Planning and Building Control, BCC in response to the Committee's follow up letter of 16 November 2020, regarding further information on the Casement Park evidence session on 12 November 2020.

Mr Thatcher stated the Casement Park planning application was "called in by DfI who are progressing the application as the determining authority; and that DfI will be required to serve a Notice of Opinion on Belfast City Council, prior to BCC making any planning decisions". Upon receipt of this, BCC will be in contact with the Committee regarding their letter of 16 November 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Mr Thatcher's response and agreed the Clerk reviews the Hansard on the evidence session regarding any reference to 'Blue Light Regulations'.

*Agreed:* The Committee will then return to the correspondence at next week's meeting.

***The meeting moved into Open Session at 2.33 pm***

## **6. Evidence on NIAO report on Special Educational Needs Session 1**

*Mr Gavin Boyd, retired Chief Executive of the Education Authority joined the meeting remotely.*

*In attendance Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG; and Mr Stuart Stevenson TOA joined the meeting remotely.*

The Committee heard evidence from Mr Boyd, Chief Executive of the Education Authority from April 2015 to March 2019. There then followed a question and answer session.

The Committee thanked Mr Boyd for attending the meeting and giving evidence.

***Mr Boyd left the meeting at 4.03 pm***

The Committee briefly discussed the evidence session with Mr Kieran Donnelly C&AG and Mr Stuart Stevenson, TOA

***The Meeting was adjourned at 4.06 pm.***

***The Meeting resumed in Open Session at 4.20 pm***

## **7. Evidence on NIAO report on Special Educational Needs Session 2**

*Ms Sharon O'Connor, Chair of the Education Authority and Dr Andy McMorran, current EA Board Member & CYPS committee member, both joined the meeting remotely.*

*In attendance Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG; Mr Stuart Stevenson TOA joined the meeting remotely.*

The Committee heard evidence from Ms Sharon O'Connor, Chair of Education Authority and Dr Andy McMorran, Board Member of the Education Authority and CYOS committee member, regarding NIAO 2017 and 2020 SEN reports. There then followed a question and answer session.

*Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA left the meeting at 4.45 pm  
The meeting was adjourned at 4.47 pm due to technical reasons.  
Mr Roy Beggs, MLA left the meeting at 4.48 pm.  
The meeting resumed in Open Session at 5.03 pm  
Mr Matthew O'Toole left the meeting at 5.26 pm*

*The meeting moved in to Closed Session at 5.31 pm*

There followed a further question and answer session in closed with Ms O'Connor and Mr McMorran.

The Committee thanked Ms O'Connor and Mr McMorran for attending the meeting and giving evidence.

*Ms O'Connor, Mr McMorran and Mr Stuart Stevenson TOA left the meeting at 5.38 pm.*

*The meeting remained in Closed Session at 5.38 pm*

## **8. Discussion with NIAO following the evidence**

*Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG, Mrs Collette Kane, Director; Mrs Suzanne Murphy, Audit Manager and Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Office joined the meeting.*

*Mrs Karen Armstrong, Senior Auditor joined the meeting remotely.*

The Committee discussed the evidence session with Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG and the Audit team.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Chief Executive of the Education Authority requesting further information.

*The meeting remained in Closed Session at 6.15 pm*

## **9. Forward Work Programme – September-December 2020**

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme covering September to the end of December 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme to the end of December 2020 and to publish.

**10. Any Other Business**

There was no further business to discuss.

**11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Thursday 26 November 2020 at 2.00p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 6.16 p.m.*

**Mr William Humphrey**  
**Chairperson**  
**Public Accounts Committee**

**19 November 2020**

**Signed .....**