



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011**  
**ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Danny Kinahan (Chairperson)  
Ms Anna Lo  
Mr Paul Maskey

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Hilary Bogle (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Christopher McNickle (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr David Hilditch (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Margaret Ritchie

*The meeting commenced at 1.30pm in open session.*

### **Chairperson's Introduction**

The Chairperson welcomed Committee Members to the first meeting of the Committee and outlined the remit of the Committee.

#### **1. Apologies**

As detailed above.

#### **2. Committee Membership**

Members noted details of the Committee's composition.

#### **3. Contact Details**

Members noted the contact details for committee office staff.

Members also noted that committee research papers are normally published on the Assembly website once the paper has been presented to the Committee.

#### **4. Declaration of Interests**

Members noted that all Assembly Members are required to register relevant interests in the Register of Members' Interests and that once Members have registered these interests each committee will be provided with the specific details of each of its own members.

The Chairperson reminded Members that under Standing Order 64 (4) that,

*“Before taking part in any debate or proceedings of the Assembly or its Committees, a Member shall declare any interest, financial or otherwise, which is relevant to that debate or proceedings, where such interest is held by the Member or an immediate relative.”*

Members noted that ‘proceeding’ of the Assembly includes meetings of the Committee and that as this is the first meeting of the Committee Members should declare any interests held by them which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

Mr Maskey declared an interest as Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee.

Members noted that the rules governing the registration and declaration of interests are contained in ‘The Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members’ and that further advice and guidance is available from the Clerk of Standards.

#### **5. Procedures**

Members noted the following guidance documents:

- Guide to the Powers and Operation of Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees for Chairpersons and Members
- Guide to the role of the Committee Chairperson
- Guide for Members on the Role and Functions of the Committee Office
- Providing an effective Research Service to Committees – Good Practice Guidelines.

The Chairperson also drew Members’ attention to guidance on privilege and matters of sub-judice.

#### **6. Organisational Chart**

Members noted the Clerking and Reporting Directorate’s Organisational chart.

*1.38pm Mr Maskey left the meeting.*

#### **7. Arrangements for Committee Meetings**

*Agreed:* Members noted the arrangements for Committee meetings and agreed that the Committee meet on a Tuesday at 1.30pm. Members also noted that the

Committee will normally meet three or four times each year but that there may be occasions when it might be necessary to meet more frequently.

## **8. Clerk's Briefing**

Members noted the Clerk's Briefing Note together with the Committee remit and powers; relevant Standing Order; and the End of Mandate Legacy Report.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the background to the role and functions of the Audit Committee.

## **9. Briefing on the Northern Ireland Audit Office**

*1.43pm*

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General; Ms Janet Sides, Assistant Auditor General; and Mr Joe Campbell, Audit Manager to the meeting. Mr Donnelly briefed the Committee on the work of the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

*2.02pm*

Following discussion the Chairperson thanked Mr Donnelly and his colleagues for attending the meeting.

## **10. Reappointment of the External Auditor for the NIAO**

Members noted a letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> June and paper received from the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the background to this issue.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted and endorsed the Department of Finance and Personnel's decision to enter into discussions with the current external auditor regarding their potential reappointment as the external auditor of the NIAO for the 2011-12 financial year.

## **11. Draft Forward Work Plan**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed future work to be undertaken, as outlined in the Draft Forward Work Plan.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it would welcome further briefing from the NIAO on how the NIAO might assist Members in their financial scrutiny role.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the meeting pack for future meetings should be issued one week in advance of the meeting.

## **12. Members' Contact Pro Forma**

The Chairperson requested that members complete the Members' Contact Pro Forma and return it to the committee office staff.

**13. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**14. Time, date and place of next meeting**

Members will be notified of the date of the next meeting which will be held in October in due course.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2.08pm.*

**Mr Danny Kinahan MLA  
Chairperson, Audit Committee**

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX