



AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY, 4TH DECEMBER 2012
ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Danny Kinahan (Chairperson)
Mr David Hilditch (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle
Mr Dominic Bradley
Ms Anna Lo

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

The meeting commenced at 3.01pm in open session

Chairperson's Introduction

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting should commence in open session and move into closed session from Agenda item 7.

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting. The Chairperson also welcomed Ms Michaela Boyle to her first meeting of the Committee.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation to declare any relevant financial or other interests before and during each Committee meeting.

Ms Michaela Boyle declared an interest as Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee.

3. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2012

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2012 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Consideration of the draft Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Corporate Plan 2013-2014 to 2015-2016

Members noted the Clerk's paper; the draft NIAO Corporate Plan 2013-2014 to 2015-2016; advice from the Public Accounts Committee; and advice from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General; Ms Janet Sides, Assistant Auditor General; and Mr Joe Campbell, Audit Manager. The Chairperson invited Mr Donnelly to brief the Committee on the draft NIAO Corporate Plan.

3.18pm Mr Hilditch joined the meeting

Following a question and answer session the Chairperson thanked Mr Donnelly and his colleagues and invited them to remain at the table for the next item of business.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to approve the draft Corporate Plan for 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

6. January Monitoring Round

Members noted the Clerk's paper and the NIAO paper. The Clerk briefed the Committee on the background to this issue.

4.00pm Mr Bradley left the meeting.

4.01pm David Hilditch left the meeting.

Ms Janet Sides, Assistant Auditor General briefed the Committee on the January Monitoring Round.

Following a question and answer session the Chairperson thanked Ms Sides and invited Mr Donnelly and his colleagues to remain at the table for the next item of business.

4.05pm The meeting moved into closed session

7. Budget Realignment 2013-14 and 2014-15

Members noted the Clerk's Paper; correspondence from the Department of Finance and Personnel to the NIAO; and correspondence from the NIAO to the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on this issue.

The Chairperson invited Mr Donnelly to provide background to the Committee on this issue.

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

4.08pm Mr Hilditch returned to the meeting

The Committee discussed its position on the issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Finance Minister setting out its position.

8. Review of the Financial Process – Memorandum of Understanding

Members noted the Clerk's Paper and the Committee for Finance and Personnel's Discussion Paper.

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

Agreed: Following discussion the Committee agreed to agree principles to inform references to the NIAO in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the Executive and the Assembly on the budget process.

9. Potential Areas of Future Work for the Audit Committee

Members noted the Assembly Research Paper.

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

The Chairperson invited Colin Pidgeon, Assembly Research Officer, to brief the Committee on his Research Paper.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it should seek to organise a visit to the Public Accounts Commission to inform its consideration of future work that could be undertaken.

4.30pm Ms Lo left the meeting.

10. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence received from Cllr Thomas Buchanan MLA.

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

Agreed: Following discussion the Committee agreed that the Chairperson should seek some further background on the matter before issuing a response.

11. Any other business

Members noted that DFP have now re-appointed the external auditor for the NIAO.

Agreed: Members agreed to issue Christmas cards to those named in the distribution list in Members' Committee meeting packs.

4.38pm Ms Boyle left the meeting

12. Time, date and place of next meeting

Committee Office staff will inform Members of the date of the next Committee meeting which shall take place in February 2013.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.39pm.

Danny Kinahan
Chairperson
Audit Committee

Dated: 19th February 2013