



Northern Ireland
Assembly

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, 2ND JULY 2013
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

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

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Hilary Bogle (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: Mr Dominic Bradley

The meeting commenced at 3.10 pm in open session.

Chairperson's Introduction

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting.

1. Apologies

As detailed above.

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.

3. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2013

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13

Members noted the Clerk's Paper; the NIAO Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13; and the Audit Findings Report.

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 NIAO Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13.

Following discussion the Chairperson thanked Mr Donnelly and his colleagues and asked them to remain at the table for the following agenda item.

Agreed: Following discussion the Committee agreed that it was content to note the Audit Office's Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13.

6. June Monitoring Round

The Committee noted the Clerk's Paper and the NIAO Paper on the June Monitoring Round.

The Chairperson invited Kieran Donnelly to brief the Committee on the June Monitoring Round.

Following discussion the Chairperson thanked Mr Donnelly and his colleagues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to note the NIAO Paper on the June Monitoring Round.

7. Correspondence

NIAO Estimate 2013-14

Members noted correspondence dated 21st February 2013 from the Public Accounts Committee on the NIAO Estimate 2013-14.

Financial Provisions Bill 2013

Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel; and the briefing paper from the NIAO on the Financial Provisions Bill 2013.

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

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should write to the Committee on Finance and Personnel stating that Clause 5 of the Financial Provisions Bill has no resource implication for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and that the Committee has no objection to it.

4.08 pm: the meeting moved into closed session.

8. Appointment of an External Auditor for the NIAO

The Committee noted the Clerk's Paper on the Appointment of an External Auditor for the NIAO.

The Chairperson welcomed the Treasury Officer of Accounts, Ms Fiona Hamill, to brief the Committee on this issue.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Hamill for attending the meeting.

Agreed: Following discussion the Committee agreed that it did wish to be involved in the appointment of the external auditor.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should write to the Treasury Officer of Accounts to set out the Committee's view:

- (a) that the procurement exercise should allow for a range of tenders to be submitted, including tenders from outside of Northern Ireland;
- (b) that an official from the Assembly secretariat should sit on the evaluation panel; and
- (c) that the NIAO should be subject to a robust level of scrutiny, proportionate to the level to which departments and non-departmental public bodies are subject. The contract for the external auditors should therefore include provision for the carrying out of economy, efficiency and effectiveness examinations of the use of resources by the NIAO.

9. Any other business

Electronic Committee Pack – Roll out of Tablet Devices

Members noted the process for the distribution of Tablet Devices to Members and the arrangements in place for training on the use of the devices.

Committee visit to the Public Accounts Commission, Westminster

Agreed: The Committee agreed that during the next session it should seek to attend a meeting of the Public Accounts Commission.

Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13

Agreed: The Committee also agreed that the Clerk should write to the NIAO seeking clarification on further issues discussed by the Committee.

10. Time, date and place of next meeting

Members will be informed of the date of the next meeting by Committee staff in due course.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.25pm.

Danny Kinahan
Chairperson
Audit Committee
8th October 2013