



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**MONDAY 7 DECEMBER 2015,
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, BALLYMISCAW, STORMONT**

Present: Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (Chairperson)
Ms Anna Lo
Mr Dominic Bradley

In Attendance: Mr Keith McBride (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Pamela Carson (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 3.32pm in public session.

1. Apologies

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.

The Chairperson declared an interest in respect of agenda item 5 as a sister-in-law of the Assistant Auditor General.

3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 13 October 2015.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. NIAO Resources: 2016-17 Budget Briefing

The following witnesses joined the meeting:

- *Mr Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General, NIAO*
- *Ms Janet Sides, Assistant Auditor General, NIAO*
- *Mr Andrew Allen, Audit Manager, NIAO*
- *Mr Richard Emerson, Audit Manager, NIAO*

Members noted advice from the Committee for Finance and Personnel outlining the 2016/17 budget process for consideration by the Executive and that the recommended approach would be on the basis of a 1 year (rather than a multi-year) budget.

The Chairperson outlined that due to the very tight timeframe involved there would be very limited opportunity to consult on proposals and that responses from committees to their draft departmental budgets may be required before Christmas, subject to Executive agreement.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office officials outlined its 2016-17 Budget Proposals.

3.38pm *The meeting adjourned for a division.*

3.38pm *Ms Lo left the meeting.*

3.51pm *The meeting reconvened.*

3.51pm *Mr Bradley joined the meeting*

The Northern Ireland Audit Office officials continued to outline its 2016-17 Budget Proposals.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Minister for Finance and Personnel to outline the Committee's views on the Audit Office's 2016-17 Budget Proposals.

6. Correspondence

Members noted the correspondence, from the Department for Finance and Personnel and the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the agreement of a Framework and Memorandum of Understanding, between the Executive and the Assembly, regarding the budget process.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Minister for Finance and Personnel to seek a further update on the Memorandum of Understanding in January.

Members also noted the correspondence received from the Northern Ireland Ombudsman in relation to progress on the development of a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Public Services Ombudsman and the Audit Committee.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Ombudsman should brief the Committee when the draft Memorandum of Understanding is completed.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

Members were informed that the Committee staff would be in contact in due course with the time and date of the next meeting.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.18pm

**Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Chairperson
Audit Committee**

02/02/2016