



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

DRAFT

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2016, ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS,
BALLYMISCAW, STORMONT**

- Present: John O'Dowd MLA, Chairperson
Claire Hanna MLA
- In Attendance: Shane McAteer, Assembly Clerk
Keith McBride, Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk
Clairita Frazer, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Jim Nulty, Clerical Supervisor
Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer
- Apologies: Kellie Armstrong MLA, Deputy Chairperson
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
David Hilditch MLA

The meeting commenced at 10.04am in open session.

Members noted that they are required to declare any relevant financial or other interests before and during each Committee meeting.

1. Apologies.

As detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business.

None.

3. Draft Minutes of meeting held on 15 June 2016.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2016 were agreed.

4. Matters Arising.

None.

5. Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) – Annual Report and Accounts.

The Committee considered the NIAO Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 March 2016, the associated External Audit Findings and a paper from the NIAO in relation to the June Monitoring Round.

The Chairperson welcomed the following officials to the meeting to brief the Committee on the above documents:

- Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG);
- Andrew Allen, Audit Manager;
- Janet Sides, Assistant Auditor General; and
- Kerry Harkin, Assembly Liaison Officer.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: that the Committee would note the NIAO Annual Report and Accounts as part of the scrutiny to inform its consideration of the NIAO Estimate of the use of resources.

6. Potential Topics for Forward Work Programme

Members noted the Clerk's briefing paper, which outlined potential topics for the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: that scoping work is undertaken on each potential topic to further inform members' consideration at a strategic planning meeting early in the next session.

Agreed: that, in order to facilitate this scoping work, papers from the Audit Committee in the previous mandate will be formally accessed in this regard.

7. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- 7.1 Correspondence dated 16 June 2016 from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) in follow up to the introductory briefing and outcome of the June Monitoring Round;

Agreed: that the Committee will wish to scrutinise the basis for the NIPSO bid for additional resources in the June Monitoring Round, which had been unsuccessful. It was further *agreed* that, to inform this scrutiny, the Committee will write to the Department of Finance seeking further information on the consideration given to the

NIPSO bid and clarification on whether there will be an opportunity for NIPSO to resubmit the bid in the next Monitoring Round.

- 7.2 Correspondence dated 16 June 2016 from the Public Accounts Committee regarding anonymous whistleblowing correspondence; and
- 7.3 Correspondence dated 23 June 2016 from the Committee for Finance regarding the proposed Memorandum of Understanding on the Budget process.
Agreed: to write to the Committee for Finance asking it to keep the Audit Committee informed of any developments in this regard.

The Committee also noted a number of NIAO reports which were available from the Committee office.

Freedom of Information (FoI) requests during recess

Agreed: that the Committee was content to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, during summer recess, to submit views on the releasing or handling of any non-routine or contentious FoI requests received and that the Committee would be informed of such requests, views expressed and the response issued at the first available meeting following the recess period.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The date, time and place of the next meeting of the Committee will be notified to Members in due course.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 10.47am.

Mr John O'Dowd MLA
Chairperson
Audit Committee
TBC September 2016