



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Audit Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

14 April 2021

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Alan Chambers MLA

Present: Mr Jim Allister MLA

Apologies: Ms Joanne Bunting MLA

Ms Emma Rogan MLA

In Attendance: Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)

Mr David McClure (Assistant Clerk)

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 12.45pm in open session.



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1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Declaration of Interest

No Interests were declared.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021.

4. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted a response from the Speaker providing a further breakdown of the non ring-fenced DEL for the Assembly Commission for the budget period 2021/2022.

5. Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman – Oral Evidence

Mr Peter Tyndall joined the meeting at 12.47pm.

Members received a briefing from:

Peter Tyndall, President of the International Ombudsman Institute.



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Mr Tyndall provided oral evidence as part of the Committee's Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Tyndall for his evidence.

Mr Tyndall left the meeting at 1.01pm.

6. Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman – Oral Evidence

Mr Brian Thompson joined the meeting at 1.01pm.

Members received a briefing from:

Brian Thompson, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Liverpool.

Mr Thompson provided oral evidence as part of the Committee's Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Thompson for his evidence.

Mr Thompson left the meeting at 1.19pm.



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7. Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman – Oral Evidence

Dr Chris Gill joined the meeting at 1.19pm.

Members received a briefing from:

Chris Gill, Lecturer, University of Glasgow.

Dr Gill provided oral evidence as part of the Committee's Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Gill for his evidence.

Dr Gill left the meeting at 1.36pm.

8. Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman – Oral Evidence

Dr Richard Kirkham joined the meeting at 1.36pm.

Members received a briefing from:

Richard Kirkham, Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield.

Dr Kirkham provided oral evidence as part of the Committee's Review of the governance and accountability arrangements for the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.



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The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Kirkham for his evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek written evidence from the Audit and Risk Committees in the UK jurisdictions and the Welsh Advisory Panel.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Chairpersons of the statutory Audit Boards in England, Scotland and Wales to give oral evidence.

9. Research paper – Public Audit Governance: The Role of the Accounting Officer

The Committee considered the RaISe briefing paper: Public Audit Governance: The Role of the Accounting Officer [Paper 43/2021].

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the research paper to the Minister of Finance for comment.

10. Scrutiny Schedule

Noted: The Committee noted the draft Scrutiny Schedule.

11. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker in relation to the Commencement of Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Northern Ireland) Act 2016.

Noted: The Committee noted correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding committee consideration of legislation.



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Noted: The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from an individual to the Public Accounts Committee.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Audit Committee meetings will take place on Wednesday 5 May 2021, 2 June 2021 and 7 July 2021.

Agreed: Members agreed to continue with hybrid meetings if restrictions permit.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.54pm.

**Daniel McCrossan MLA,
Chairperson, Audit Committee**

Wednesday 5 May 2021