



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 10TH DECEMBER 2020, THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER,
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr William Humphrey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA
Mr Harry Harvey MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA
Mr Andrew Muir MLA
Mr Maolíosá McHugh MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk
Ms Gillian Barker, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Darren Weir, Clerical Officer

The meeting began in Open Session at 2.08 pm

Mr Kieran Donnelly, C&AG, Mr Rodney Allen, Director and Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer NIAO joined the meeting.

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of the meeting 3rd December 2020

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 3rd December 2020 were agreed.

3. Declaration of Interests

There was no additional declaration of interests that hadn't been declared by Members in previous meetings.

Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA joined the meeting at 2.17 pm

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted correspondence dated 1st December 2020 from Sara Long, Chief Executive, EA, in response to the Committee's letter of 24 November 2020 regarding the current HR investigation and if the Programme Board's programme of work had been slowed down by the on-going HR investigation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Ms Long for further clarification on this matter.

The Committee noted correspondence, dated 4 December 2020, from John Walsh, City Solicitor, Belfast City Council in response to the Committee's letter of 27 November 2020 regarding 'Blue Light Regulations' for the new design of the Casement Park Stadium.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of Mr Walsh's letter of 4th December 2020 to the department and request its views on Mr Walsh's comments; and to ask the department for details of the 'traffic management plan' as referred to in Mr Walsh's letter.

5. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence dated 25, 26 November and 5 December 2020 from Edward Cooke regarding his two complaints: the first was in relation to the lack of Section 75 screening in relation to the University funding and the second was in with regard to the Universities' handling of Covid-19 regulations.

Agreed: The Committee noted Mr Cooke's correspondence and agreed to write to Mr Cooke to explain that his complaints, after due consideration, are not within the remit of PAC to address.

The Committee noted correspondence, dated 25th November 2020 and 4th December 2020, from Ms Sue Gray AO DoF, in relation to the inquiry on the 'Landweb Project and Digital Transformation' and issues around publishing commercially sensitive information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider both pieces of correspondence at at Agenda Item 8: Consideration of the draft Report on LandWeb Project and Digital Transformation.

The Committee noted correspondence dated 4 December 2020 from Mike Brennan, AO, DfE regarding the department's input into the recruitment and appointments process of the Ulster University Council.

The Committee noted the Department has no role into the appointment of University Council members.

The meeting remained in Open Session at 2.26 pm

6. Ministerial Direction – Funding for City of Derry Airport

Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG joined the meeting.

Mr Donnelly briefed the Committee on the Ministerial Direction for the funding City of Derry Airport.

The Committee discussed the circumstances of the Ministerial Direction and the economic impact COVID19 has had on the airports' operation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Ms Katrina Godfrey DfI for clarity on issues raised during these discussions.

The meeting went into Closed Session at 2.46 pm

7. Inquiry into 'Capacity and Capability in the NICS' – Issues Paper

Mr Rodney Allen, Director; Mrs Christine Burns Audit Manager and Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer joined the meeting.

The Committee discussed the evidence session on 3rd December 2020 which was attended by Ms Sue Gray, AO DoF; Ms Jill Minne, Head of NICSHR; Ms Michele Woods, Director NICSHR and Ms Anne Breen, Learning & Development Lead NICSHR.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Ms Sue Gray, AO, DoF to attend a further evidence session in closed session; and to invite the NI Civil Service Commissioners and UK Civil Service Commissioners to attend an evidence session in the New Year.

Agreed: Committee agreed NIAO's Issues Paper would form the main part of the inquiry report into 'Capacity and Capability in the NICS'.

The meeting remained in Closed Session at 3.00 pm

8. Inquiry into the 'LandWeb Project and Digital Transformation' – Consideration of Draft Report.

Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, C&AG; Mr Rodney Allen, Director; Mrs Christine Burns Audit Manager and Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer joined the meeting.

*Mr David Hilditch MLA left the meeting at 3.03 pm
Mr David Hilditch MLA re-joined the meeting at 3.13 pm*

The Committee noted correspondence dated 25th November and 4th December 2020 from Ms Sue Gray, AO DoF in relation to the inquiry on the 'Landweb

Project and Digital Transformation’ regarding publishing commercially sensitive information, with particular reference to one particular annexe.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Ms Gray to ask her to approach BT to seek consent that the Committee can publish this commercially sensitive information in their forthcoming report,

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Committee considered the draft report on its inquiry into ‘LandWeb Project and Digital Transformation’.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the title of the report as follows:

‘Management of the NI Direct Strategic Partner Project – helping to deliver Digital Transformation and The LandWed Project: An Update’.

The Committee began by considering the report from paragraph 21 through to paragraph 72 and concluded their consideration with the Executive Summary and Summary of Recommendations, paragraphs 1 – 20.

‘Management of the NI Direct Strategic Partner Project – helping to deliver Digital Transformation’.

Background and Introduction

Paragraph 21	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 22	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 23	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 24	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 25	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 26	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 27	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 28	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 29	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 30	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 31	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 32	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 33	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 34	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 35	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 36	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 37	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 38	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 39	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 40	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 41	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 42	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 43	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 44	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 45	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 46	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 47	Read and Agreed

Paragraph 48	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 49	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 50	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 51	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 52	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 53	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 54	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 55	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 56	Read and Agreed as amended

‘The LandWed Project: An Update’

Background and Introduction

Paragraph 57	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 58	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 59	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 60	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 61	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 62	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 63	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 64	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 65	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 66	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 67	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 68	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 69	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 70	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 71	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 72	Read and Agreed

Executive Summary

Paragraph 1	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 2	Read and Agreed as amended
Paragraph 3	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 4	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 5	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 6	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 7	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 8	Read and Agreed
Paragraph 9	Read and Agreed

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1	
Paragraph 10	Read and Agreed

Recommendation 2 Paragraph 11	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 3 Paragraph 12	Read and Agreed as amended
Recommendation 4 Paragraph 13	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 5 Paragraph 14	Read and Agreed as amended
Recommendation 6 Paragraph 15	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 7 Paragraph 16	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 8 Paragraph 17	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 9 Paragraph 18	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 10 Paragraph 19	Read and Agreed
Recommendation 11 Paragraph 20	Read and Agreed as amended

PAC Membership and Powers at page 3 of the draft Report was read and agreed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the report with amendments at next week's meeting, 17 December 2020. The Committee agreed that the appendices of the report will contain extracts of minutes; Hansard; and correspondence.

Mr Cathal Boylan MLA left the meeting at 3.48 pm

Mr Cathal Boylan MLA re-joined the meeting at 3.58 pm

Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA left the meeting at 4.01 pm

Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA left the meeting at 4.06 pm

Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA re-joined the meeting at 4.08 pm

Mr Andrew Muir MLA left the meeting at 4.18 pm

Mr Andre Muir MLA re-joined the meeting at 4.22 pm

9. Forward Work Programme – September - March 2021

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme to the end of March 2021.

10. Any Other Business

None

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Thursday 17th December 2020 at 2.00 p.m. in The Senate, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 4.29 pm.

**Mr William Humphrey
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee**

10th December 2020

Signed