

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2013
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Ms Michaela Boyle (Chairperson)
Mr John Dallat (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke
Mr Michael Copeland
Mr Alex Easton
Mr Paul Girvan
Mr Chris Hazzard
Mr Ross Hussey
Mr Daithí McKay
Mr Seán Rogers
- In Attendance: Miss Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Lucia Wilson (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Trevor Allen (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)
Miss Clare Rice (Bursary Student)
- Apologies: Mr Adrian McQuillan

1.46pm The meeting opened in public session

1. Inquiry into the PSNI: Use of Agency Staff – Consideration of Draft Report

Mr Hussey declared an interest as Chairperson of the Audit Committee of the Policing Board and abstained from consideration of this item of business.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item of business until the meeting on 15 January 2014.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson and members thanked Mr Oliver Bellew for his commitment to the Committee during his time as Assistant Assembly Clerk. The Chairperson and Members also welcomed Mr Trevor Allen, the incoming Assistant Assembly Clerk.

1.50pm Mr Hazzard left the meeting

3. Apologies

Apologies are listed above.

1.51pm The meeting moved to closed session

4. Forward Work Programme

A number of members declared an interest specific to a number of the NIAO's reports considered by the Committee.

The Committee received briefing from the C&AG, Susanne Walsh, Clare Dornan, Sean Beattie, Neil Gray and Richard Emerson on the reports that the NIAO has produced, and will produce in the near future, into which the Committee may consider conducting inquiries.

2.00pm Mr McKay joined the meeting

2.01pm Mr McKay left the meeting

2.05pm Mr Hazzard re-joined the meeting

2.06pm Mr McKay re-joined the meeting

2.09pm Mr Girvan joined the meeting

2.21pm Mr Girvan left the meeting

2.23pm Mr Girvan re-joined the meeting

2.29pm Mr McKay left the meeting

2.39pm Mr Copeland left the meeting

2.41pm Mr Clarke joined the meeting

2.44pm Mr Copeland re-joined the meeting

2.47pm Mr Clarke and Mr Hazzard left the meeting

2.49pm Mr Clarke and Mr Hazzard re-joined the meeting

3.02pm Mr Copeland left the meeting

3.29pm Mr Hazzard left the meeting

3.30pm Mr Hazzard re-joined the meeting

3.32pm Mr Girvan left the meeting

3.33pm Mr Girvan re-joined the meeting

3.54pm Mr Girvan left the meeting

3.55pm Mr Clarke left the meeting

3.57pm Mr Hussey left the meeting

4.02pm Mr McKay re-joined the meeting

4.04pm Mr Easton left the meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed three topics for inquiry in its forthcoming forward work programme; and to consider a schedule for these at its next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to refer consideration of the NIAO report on "Sport NI's Management and Oversight of the St. Colman's Project" to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure and the report on "Sickness Absence in the Public Sector" to the Committee for Finance and Personnel.

5. Inquiry into Department of Finance and Personnel: Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand: Consideration of correspondence and draft report

The Committee noted a number of items of correspondence received in relation to the inquiry.

Agreed: Members agreed that the correspondence did not impact on the content of the draft report and therefore agreed to sideline the correspondence from the report.

4.20pm Mr McKay left the meeting

4.21pm Mr Girvan re-joined the meeting

The Committee continued its consideration of the draft report.

Paragraph 31 read and agreed

Paragraph 32 removed

Recommendation 10 read and agreed

Consideration of the Executive Summary

The Executive Summary was agreed as per the main report.

Agreed: The Committee ordered the report to be printed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report be launched on 22 January 2014.

4.25pm Mr Clarke re-joined the meeting

6. Inquiry into the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI): Consideration of Issues Paper

The Committee received briefing from the C&AG, Alan Orme, Paul Turley and Richard Emerson on the inquiry's issues paper.

Agreed: The Committee noted the issues paper and agreed that the report on the inquiry be drafted on this basis.

4.33pm The meeting moved to public session

7. Minutes of the meeting on 4 December 2013

Agreed: The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

8. Matters Arising

Correspondence from the Minister for Finance

The Committee noted correspondence from the Finance Minister in relation to scheduling a meeting requested by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. Members also noted that an update would be provided to the Committee following that meeting.

Freedom of Information Request

Agreed: Members noted a request for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and agreed to issue the documents as requested.

Committee Workshop

Members discussed progress on effective scrutiny work; and Committee plans for strategic review informed by the content of the London symposium attended in October. Members noted a proposal to conduct a workshop addressing both these strands of work.

Agreed: Members agreed that the workshop should be held on 6 and 7 January 2014 at the Tullylagan Country House Hotel, Cookstown.

Correspondence from the Vice-Chairman of the Lyric Theatre Board

Agreed: The Committee noted correspondence received from Mr Sid McDowell, Vice-Chairman of the Lyric Theatre Board, and agreed to consider the matter further at its next meeting.

9. Any other business

No other items of business were raised.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 2.00 pm in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

4.45pm the meeting was adjourned

Ms Michaela Boyle
Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee