

# PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2014  
SENATE CHAMBER, 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 Adrian McQuillan  
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 Daithí McKay

*2.06pm The meeting opened in public session*

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are listed above.

*2.07pm Mr Girvan joined the meeting*

### **2. Minutes of the meeting on 11 December 2013**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

*2.09pm Mr Girvan left the meeting*

### **3. Matters Arising**

Committee residential, Tullylagan Hotel, Cookstown – 6 & 7 January 2014

The Chairperson discussed the Committee's residential event at the Tullylagan Hotel, Cookstown, on 6 and 7 January. Mr Copeland apologised for not having been able to attend the event.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to consider the outcomes of the residential as a substantive agenda item at the meeting of 29 January 2014.

Correspondence in relation to the recovery of Advance Land Purchase (ALP) by DSD to Trinity Housing Association

The Committee noted a synopsis of correspondence received from the Deputy Chairperson in relation to the recovery of Advance Land Purchase (ALP) by DSD to Trinity Housing Association.

*Agreed:* Having heard from the Deputy Chairperson and the C&AG, Members agreed that the C&AG should make inquiries on the issue and provides an update to the Committee at a future meeting.

*2.12pm Mr Easton joined the meeting*

Correspondence from DFP on the monitoring of post project evaluations (PPEs)

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from DFP on the evaluation of PPEs and agreed to consider future updates only by exception.

Correspondence from the Treasury Officer of Accounts – Memorandum of Reply on Invest NI: A Performance Review.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Treasury Officer of Accounts in relation to the MOR on the PAC Report on Invest NI: A Performance Review. The Committee discussed the relevance of the economic climate to aspects of this response and agreed to factors its observations into future follow-up work on INI.

Correspondence from Dr Andrew McCormick – The Safety of Services Provided by HSC Trusts: PAC Update

*Agreed:* Members noted correspondence from Dr Andrew McCormick, Accounting Officer, DHSSPS, requesting an extension to the deadline to respond to the Committee on the MOR on The Safety of Services Provided by HSC Trusts. The Committee agreed to extend the deadline as requested.

Professor David Heald

The Committee welcomed Professor David Heald of the University of Aberdeen to the meeting.

*2.20pm The meeting moved to closed session*

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item of business until the meeting of 29 January 2014.

*2.21pm Mr Hazzard left the meeting*

## **5. Matters Arising (Continued)**

### Draft Press Release – Report on DFP Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand

*Agreed:* The Committee considered a draft press release on the launch of the report on DFP Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand and agreed that the press release be issued, subject to one amendment.

*Agreed:* The Committee also agreed to request an update on the implementation of the recommendation contained in its report on the use of locum doctors by Northern Ireland hospitals.

### Draft correspondence to Chairperson of the Committee on Procedures – Revision of Standing Order 56

*Agreed:* The Committee approved the draft letter to the Committee on Procedures proposing an amendment to Standing Order 56 and agreed that it be issued.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

*2.32pm Mr Girvan re-joined the meeting*

*2.35pm Mr Clarke joined the meeting*

*3.01pm Mr Rogers joined the meeting*

*3.06pm Mr Hussey left the meeting*

*3.08pm Mr Copeland left the meeting*

*14.51pm Mr Easton declared an interest in a proposed inquiry as Assembly Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.*

*Agreed:* Members considered and agreed the draft Forward Work Programme for the Committee through to summer recess, subject to amendment. It was agreed to reconsider potential inquiries for the first slot after Easter at a later date.

*Agreed:* Members also agreed to table a motion for debate prior to Easter recess.

## **7. Legal Advice**

*3.13pm An Assembly Legal Advisor joined the meeting; NIAO officials left the meeting*

*3.15pm Mr Copeland re-joined the meeting*

The Committee received and discussed legal advice on its powers in relation to persons and papers as requested at the meeting of 4 December 2013.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to again write to Mr Sid McDowell, Vice-Chairman of the Lyric Theatre Board, requesting his attendance before the Committee at the meeting of 5 February 2014.

*3.50pm Mr Rogers left the meeting*

*3.53pm Mr Copeland left the meeting*

*3.55pm Mr Rogers re-joined the meeting*  
*3.55pm Mr Easton left the meeting*  
*3.57pm the Assembly Legal Advisor left the meeting*  
*3.59pm the meeting suspended*  
*4.09 pm the meeting resumed with the following Members present:*

Ms Michaela Boyle (Chairperson)  
Mr Dallat (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Clarke  
Mr Alex Easton  
Mr Paul Girvan  
Mr McQuillan  
Mr Rogers

*Audit Office officials re-joined the meeting.*

#### **8. Account NI: Review of Public Sector Financial Shared Service Centre – Briefing Session & Preparation Session**

*4.13pm Mr Clarke left the meeting*  
*4.15pm Mr Mcquillan left the meeting*  
*4.15pm Mr Clarke re-joined the meeting*  
*4.16pm Mr McQuillan re-joined the meeting*  
*4.25pm Mr Clarke left the meeting*  
*4.28pm Mr Clarke re-joined the meeting*

The Committee received briefing from the C&AG, Jacqueline O'Brien, Karen Armstrong and Richard Emerson on the Audit Office's report 'Account NI: Review of Public Sector Financial Shared Service Centre'.

The Committee identified and developed core issues arising from the report in preparation for its forthcoming evidence session on 22 January 2014.

#### **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 22 January 2014 at 2.00 pm in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings and that a pre-meeting will commence at 1.00 pm.

*4.52pm the meeting was adjourned*

**Ms Michaela Boyle**  
**Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee**