

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2014
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 Adrian McQuillan
Mr Seán Rogers

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Trevor Allen (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)
Miss Clare Rice (Bursary Student)

Apologies: None

2.06pm The meeting opened in public session

The Chairperson thanked Mr Rogers for chairing the previous meeting of the Committee.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 12 February 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Correspondence from Mr Richard Pengelly, Accounting Officer, Department for Regional Development

Members noted correspondence from Mr Richard Pengelly regarding the PAC report on “Measuring the Performance of NI Water and Procurement Governance in NI Water”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Regional Development and to request updates on the proposed primary legislation to be brought forward.

Canine Breeders Ireland Ltd.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Audit Office in response to an issue raised by Canine Breeders Ireland Ltd. on the care of seized animals.

2.12pm Mr McQuillan joined the meeting

2.21pm Mr Copeland left the meeting

2.22pm Mr Copeland re-joined the meeting

2.23pm The meeting moved to closed session

2.26pm Mr McKay left the meeting

2.28pm Mr Hussey declared an interest in this item of business as Chairperson of the PSNI Audit & Risk Management Committee

2.36pm Ms Boyle declared an interest in this item of business

2.37pm Mr McKay re-joined the meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer further consideration of this issue to the meeting of 26 February and, in the interim, to seek clarification on a number of issues raised.

2.44pm Mr Hussey left the meeting

National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) and Community Sector Funding Fraud

Members noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Audit Office in response to an issue referred to it by the Committee on 26 June 2013 in relation to NMNI and Community Sector funding fraud.

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

The Committee continued its consideration of its report on the PSNI: Use of Agency Staff.

Executive Summary

Paragraph 4 read and agreed

3.01pm Mr Copeland left the meeting

Paragraph 5 read and agreed
Paragraph 6 to 8 read, amended and agreed

3.08pm Mr Copeland re-joined the meeting

3.13pm Mr Dallat left the meeting

3.23pm Mr Dallat re-joined the meeting

Paragraphs 9 and 10 read and agreed.

3.26pm Mr McQuillan left the meeting

3.29pm Mr McQuillan re-joined the meeting

Summary of Recommendations

Summary of recommendation read, amended and agreed

Agreed: Member agreed to consider the final draft of the Committee's report at the meeting of 26 February 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the correspondence to be appended to the report, subject to a number of agreed redactions of personal information. It was also agreed to consider a further request for redaction at the meeting of 26 February.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed that any attachments to correspondence, considered by the Committee, and which are freely available online, would be listed as hyperlinks, rather than republishing them in full.

5. Improving Pupil Attendance: Follow-Up Report – Briefing Session

4.00pm Mr Clarke, Mr Copeland and Mr McQuillan left the meeting

4.07pm Mr Easton left the meeting

4.08pm Mr McKay left the meeting

4.16pm Mr McKay re-joined the meeting

4.21pm Mr Easton re-joined the meeting

4.33pm Mr Hazzard left the meeting

The Committee received briefing from the C&AG, Eddie Bradley, Suzanne Walsh and Richard Emerson on the Audit Office's report 'Improving Pupil Attendance: Follow-Up Report'.

6. Any other business

The Deputy Chairperson raised concerns in relation to potential conflicts of interest in the appointment of an individual to the Board of a local company; the Comptroller and Auditor General undertook to consider the issue in more detail and report his findings to the Committee.

4.40pm Mr McKay left the meeting

7. Matters Arising (continued)

Agreed: The Committee noted a request from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure requesting information in relation to the PAC report on DCAL: Management of Major Capital Projects and agreed to forward the information when received.

4.42pm The meeting moved to public session

8. Any other business (continued)

The Committee noted that training will be made available to Members on the use of OneNote software, if required.

Agreed: Members received briefing on proposals to revise the protective markings applied to documents before the Committee and agreed to the proposed changes. The Committee also agreed to a revision of the process for handling confidential documentation.

Members noted arrangements for the Committee's visit to Millburn Primary School on 5 March 2014.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 26 February 2014 at 2.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

4.52pm the meeting adjourned

Mr John Dallat
Deputy Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee