

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2014
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Michaela Boyle (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs
Mr John Dallat (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan
Mr Paul Girvan
Mr Ross Hussey
Mr Adrian McQuillan
Mr Sean Rogers

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jack Peel (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Trevor Clarke
Mr Daithi McKay

2.10pm The meeting began in public session

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Mr McKay.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 3 December 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Correspondence

There was no new correspondence received.

4. Matters Arising

Correspondence received from DEL re Belfast Metropolitan College

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note correspondence from Tom Redmond.

Clerk's brief on Training Session on Effective Questioning

Agreed: Members agreed to the arrangement of the training session in lieu of a committee meeting on 14 January 2015. Members also agreed to complete and return the pre-course survey which was circulated by staff during the meeting.

Correspondence from Mr Stephen Farry, Minister, DEL – National Fraud Initiative

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write back to the Minister to express its disappointment that he is unable to consider changing the terms of grants to require Universities to contribute to the National Fraud Initiative. However the Committee also noted his plans to consult with the universities on contributing voluntarily to the National Fraud Initiative and asked to be kept informed of the outcome of this planned consultation.

Correspondence from Mr James McKeown re PMS

Mr Beggs declared an interest as his parents were savers with the Presbyterian Mutual Society.

Agreed: It was agreed by the C&AG that NIAO would write to Mr McKeown and meet with him if necessary to discuss his concerns. The Committee agreed to write to Mr McKeown to inform him of this.

2.17pm Mr Hussey left the meeting

Correspondence relating to DSD Advanced Land Purchases Inquiry

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Mr Will Haire and to Mr Arthur Canning to agree a date for an evidence session that was suitable for all parties.

2.32pm The meeting moved into closed session.

5. Inquiry into Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Trust Statement 2012-13 – Correspondence

Correspondence from Mr Nick Perry – Department of Justice

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence from Mr Nick Perry.

2.34pm Mr Hussey re-joined the meeting

2.39pm Mr Dallat joined the meeting

2.39pm The meeting was suspended.

2.42pm The meeting re-commenced

7. Inquiry into Primary Care Prescribing – Consideration of Issues Paper

The Committee received briefing on the issues paper from the C&AG, Sean McKay and Richard Emerson.

2.45pm *Mr Hussey left the meeting*

2.58pm *Mr Dallat left the meeting*

3.02pm *Mr Dallat re-joined the meeting*

3.09pm *Mr Girvan left the meeting*

3.13pm *Mr Flanagan left the meeting*

Agreed: The Committee agreed that NIAO to produce first draft of report based on issues paper.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Mr Hussey would meet Dr Brendan O'Hare at his surgery in Castlederg on 8th January 2015 to gather more information on this inquiry.

6. Inquiry into Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Trusts Statement 2012-13 – Consideration of Draft Report

Agreed: The Committee considered its draft report on the above inquiry.

Main Body of Report:

Paragraphs 1-8	Read and agreed
Recommendation 1	Read and agreed
Paragraphs 9 & 10	Read and agreed
Recommendation 2	Read and agreed
Paragraphs 11 & 12	Read and agreed
Recommendation 3	Read and agreed
Paragraphs 13 & 14	Read and agreed
Recommendation 4	Read and agreed
Paragraphs 15-17	Read and agreed
Recommendation 5	Read, amended and agreed
Paragraph 18	Read and agreed
Paragraph 19	Read, amended and agreed
Paragraph 20	Read, amended and agreed
Paragraph 21	Read, amended and agreed
Recommendation 6	Read, amended and agreed

Executive Summary:

Paragraphs 1-6 Read and Agreed

Summary of Recommendations:

Recommendations 1-4	Read and agreed
Recommendations 5&6	Read, amended and agreed

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes, minutes of evidence and correspondence to be included as appendices to the report.

Agreed: The Committee ordered the report to be printed

Agreed: The Committee agreed the report to be launched on Wednesday 21st January and for a press release to be brought before the Committee on Wednesday 14th January.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 21 January 2015 at 2.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings. On Wednesday 14 January, in lieu of a Committee meeting, there will be a training session with Politics Plus on Effective Questioning in Room 29 at 2.00pm. The Chair wished the Committee Members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ms Michaela Boyle
Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee