

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Michaela Boyle (Chairperson)  
Mr Roy Beggs  
Mr Trevor Clarke  
Mr Phil Flanagan  
Mr Paul Girvan  
Mr Jim Wells

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

Apologies: Mr John Dallat (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Conor Murphy

*2.08pm The meeting began in open session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Dallat and Mr Murphy.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2015**

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

#### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no new matters arising.

#### **4. Correspondence**

##### Correspondence from NIAO in regards to DE counselling services

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence received from NIAO with regards to correspondence received on DE counselling services. NIAO advised further correspondence has been received on this matter which is being investigated and will report back to the Committee on this in due course.

##### Correspondence from the Beverley Residents Association and Dermot Nesbitt in regards to report on DSD: Advanced Land Purchases

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the thank you correspondence received from the Beverley Residents Association and Dermot Nesbitt regarding the PAC report on DSD: Advanced Land Purchases.

#### **5. Inquiry into NI Water's Response to a Suspected Fraud and DRD: Review of an Investigation of a Whistleblower Complaint– Memorandum of Reply update**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the update on the Memorandum of Reply on the report into NI Water's Response to a Suspected Fraud and DRD: Review of an Investigation of a Whistleblower Complaint and to write to the Department to request a further update in 12 months' time.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted that an update will be provided regarding the progress on the establishment of the Group Fraud Investigation Service within the Annual Theft and Fraud report due to be issued in December 2015.

#### **6. The Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill – Call for Evidence**

The Committee noted correspondence relating to the call for evidence on the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill from the Assembly Executive Review Committee (AERC).

Mr Beggs proposed that the Committee should be supportive of Clause 9 of the Bill. Mr Beggs proposal was not seconded.

#### **7. Inquiry into DE: Sustainability of Schools – Introduction to Briefing**

The Committee received an introduction to the briefing on the Sustainability of Schools from the C&AG and his team

*Mr Beggs, declared an interest a member of the Board of Governors of Glynn Primary School.*

*Mr Clarke, declared an interest a member of the Board of Governors of Creavery Primary School, Groggan Primary School and Randalstown Primary School.*

*Mr Girvan, declared an interest a member of the Board of Governors Ballyclare Secondary School.*

*2.37pm The Committee moved into Closed Session*

*2.48pm Mr Girvan left the meeting*

*2.51pm Mr Clarke left the meeting. The Committee lost decision making quorum. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings continued in line with Standing Order 49(5).*

2.54pm *Mr Girvan re-joined the meeting. The Committee gained decision making quorum.*

2.55pm *Mr Clarke re-joined the meeting*

The Committee received a full briefing from the NIAO team on the Sustainability of Schools.

**8. Inquiry into DE: Sustainability of Schools – Preparation Session**

The Committee agreed the sections of the inquiry that they each wished to focus on during the evidence session.

**9. Inquiry into Northern Ireland Events Company – Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the request from the AO, DCAL to extend the deadline to their response to the follow-up reply on the Northern Ireland Events Company.

**11. Forward Work Programme September to December 2015**

*Agreed:* It was agreed to postpone the NIHE: Land Disposals inquiry until January 2016. The Committee agreed to consider the updated Forward Work Programme at the meeting on 25 November 2015.

**12. Any Other Business**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Take Note Debate should be put back to Monday 30 November 2015, subject to Business Committee approval.

3.35pm *Mr Clarke left the meeting. The Committee lost decision making quorum. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings continued in line with Standing Order 49(5).*

**10. Inquiry into Northern Ireland Events Company – Issues Paper**

The Committee received briefing on the contents of the issues paper from the C&AG and his team. Committee discussed issuing a follow-up letter to the PSNI. Clerk to draft letter and will be considered at next week's meeting.

**13. Date, time and place of next meeting**

Members were informed that the next meeting of the Committee would be at 2.00pm on Wednesday 11 November in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

3.43pm *The meeting adjourned.*

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