

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2016, THE SENATE CHAMBER,  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Robbie Butler MLA  
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA  
Mr Declan Kearney MLA  
Ms Carla Lockhart MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
- Apologies: Mr Gordon Dunne MLA  
Mr Alex Easton MLA  
Mrs Michelle Gildernew MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
- In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor  
Mr Darren Weir, Clerical Officer

*2.30 pm The meeting began in Open Session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Noted above.

#### **2. Chairperson's business**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to issue a reminder to the Executive Office to advise that a response is outstanding in respect of correspondence issued by the Committee to ask what the political rationale for approving the United Airlines grant assistance was.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the NIAO on Ministerial Directions.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2016**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2016 were agreed.

### **4. Matters arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 11 November 2016 from the Department for the Economy in respect of a Freedom of Information request made by Mr P Donnelly.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 3 November 2016 from Mr Tony O'Neill, Chair of the Agri-Food Strategy Board regarding the role of PAC.

### **5. Correspondence**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 November 2016 from the Department for Communities regarding the Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate.

### **6. NI Water's Response to a Suspected Fraud and DRD; Review of an Investigation of a Whistle-Blower Complaint**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Memorandum of Reply 12-month update dated 7 November 2016 which advises that all PAC recommendations are now fully implemented.

### **7. Inquiry into the Cross Border Broadband Initiative: The Bytel Project**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Memorandum of Reply 12-month update dated 11 November 2016 which advises that all PAC recommendations are now fully implemented.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session.

*2.40 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session.*

### **8. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid: Consideration of Draft Report**

The following NIAO officials joined the meeting:

Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General  
Kerry Harkin, Assembly Liaison Officer  
Neil Gray, Director  
Sean Beattie, Audit Manager

The Committee considered the amendments to the draft report on its Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid.

#### **Main body of the report**

Paragraph 1                      Read and agreed

Paragraph 6	Read and agreed
Paragraph 14	Read and agreed
Paragraph 17	Read and agreed
Paragraph 19	Read and agreed
Paragraph 20	Read and agreed
Paragraph 23	Read and agreed
Paragraph 24	Read and agreed

### **Executive Summary**

Paragraph 1	Read and agreed
Paragraph 4	Read and agreed
Paragraph 5	Read and agreed
Paragraph 6	Read and agreed
Paragraph 7	Read and agreed
Paragraph 8	Read and agreed

### **Summary of Recommendations**

Recommendation 1	Read and agreed
Recommendation 2	Read and agreed
Recommendation 3	Read and agreed
Recommendation 4	Read and agreed
Recommendation 5	Read and agreed

*2.47 p.m. Mr Clarke left the meeting*

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

*Agreed:* The Committee ordered that its Report on the Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid is published.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the report to be launched on Wednesday 11 January 2017 and a press release to be considered on 7 December 2016.

## **9. Inquiry into Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme: Preparation Session**

The following NIAO official joined the meeting:

Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General  
 Kerry Harkin, Assembly Liaison Officer  
 Tomas Wilkinson, Director  
 Brian O'Neill, Audit Manager

The Committee discussed its approach to the evidence session with Cambridge Consultants on 23 November 2016.

*2.55 p.m. Mr Clarke re-joined the meeting.*

## **10. Draft Strategic Plan**

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed and agreed its Draft Strategic Plan 2016/2017 and agreed to progress the actions as outlined.

## **11. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

## **12. Any Other Business**

None.

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

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Wednesday 23 November 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 3.23 p.m.*

**Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)**  
**Public Accounts Committee**