

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2016, THE SENATE CHAMBER,  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Robbie Butler MLA  
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA  
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA  
Mr Alex Easton MLA  
Ms Michelle Gildernew MLA  
Mr Declan Kearney MLA  
Ms Carla Lockhart MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA

Apologies: Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor  
Mr Darren Weir, Clerical Officer

*2.07 pm The meeting began in Open Session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Noted above.

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

The Chairperson reported on his and Mr Butler's attendance at the PAC Symposium in London and advised that the clerk will issue a report to this regard for Members' information.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting on 12 October 2016 were agreed.

#### **4. Matters arising**

None

#### **5. Correspondence**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 13 October 2016 from the Committee on Procedures in respect of e-petitions.

#### **6. Inquiry into the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service: An Organisational Assessment and Review of Departmental Oversight and Report on Accounts**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence dated 4 October 2016 from the Accounting Officer, which details the appointment of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer; the Committee further noted correspondence dated 18 October 2016 which rescinds the original letter and advises that an interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer is now in post. The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the permanent appointment of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

*2.14 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.*

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

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

#### **7. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid - correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 30 September 2016 from the Taxing Master; and agreed to include it in the Report on Managing Legal Aid.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 17 October 2016 from the Department of Justice in respect of statistical data; and agreed to include it in the Report on Managing Legal Aid.

*2.28 p.m. Mrs Gildernew left the meeting.*

*2.29 p.m. Mrs Gildernew rejoined the meeting*

*2.40 p.m. Mr Dunne joined the meeting.*

#### **8. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid – consideration of draft report**

The following NIAO officials joined the meeting:

Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General

Neil Gray, Director

Sean Beattie, Audit Manager

Kerry Harkin, Assembly Liaison Officer

The Committee considered the draft report on its inquiry into Managing Legal Aid.

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

Paragraph 1	Read and agreed
Paragraph 2	Read and agreed as amended
Paragraph 3	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
Paragraph 9	Read and agreed as amended
Paragraph 10	Read and agreed
Paragraph 11	Read and agreed
Paragraph 12	Read and agreed
Paragraph 13	Read and agreed
Paragraph 14	Read and agreed
Paragraph 15	Read and agreed
Paragraph 16	Read and agreed
Paragraph 18	Read and agreed
Paragraph 19	Read and agreed
Paragraph 21	Read and agreed as amended
Paragraph 22	Read and agreed
Paragraph 23	Read and agreed as amended.

Paragraphs 17 and 20 will be rewritten to reflect Committee discussions and presented for Committee consideration.

*2.45 p.m. Mr Easton joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* Members agreed to add a further paragraph into the body of the report in respect of the role of the Taxing Master.

### **Executive Summary**

Paragraph 1	Read and agreed as amended
Paragraph 2	Read and agreed
Paragraph 3	Read and agreed
Paragraph 5	Read and agreed
Paragraph 6	Read and agreed
Paragraph 8	Read and agreed

Paragraphs 4 and 7 will be rewritten to reflect Committee discussions and presented for Committee consideration.

*2.48 p.m. Mr Clarke joined the meeting.*

*2.51 p.m. Ms Lockhart left the meeting.*

*2.55 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*2.55 p.m. Ms Lockhart rejoined the meeting.*

*3.02 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting*

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

*3.10 p.m. Mr Clarke rejoined the meeting.*

*3.15 p.m. Mr Kearney left the meeting.*

### **Summary of Recommendations**

Recommendation 1	Read and agreed as amended.
Recommendation 5	Read and agreed.

Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 will be rewritten to reflect Committee discussions and presented for Committee consideration.

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

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

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the list of anonymised RHI Grant Applicants forwarded by the Department and agreed to request that the full list is forwarded to the Committee.

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a copy of the application form for the RHI Scheme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite Cambridge Consultants to give oral evidence to the Committee on 23 November 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to confirm with the Accounting Officer that he will be required to attend a further evidence session on 9 November 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite Mr David Sterling to give oral evidence to the Committee on 30 November 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the allocation of questions for the evidence session on 26 October 2016 with OFGEM.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to meet informally with a member of the public who is connected to the RHI Scheme.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer the Take Note Debate until January 2017.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer commencement of its Inquiry on the Voluntary Exit Scheme.

## **11. Any Other Business**

None.

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

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Wednesday 26 October 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 3.58 p.m.*

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