

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2016, THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA (Deputy 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

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

2.03 pm The meeting began in Closed Session.

1. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid

The Committee discussed its approach to the evidence session on the Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid.

2.17 pm The meeting moved into Open Session.

2. Apologies

None

3. Minutes of the meeting 22 June 2016

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 22 June 2016 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee considered emailed correspondence from Mr Nigel Wilson to the Education Minister and agreed to forward it to the Education Committee for a response and advise Mr Wilson accordingly.

6. Inquiry into the Governance of Land and Property in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Northern Ireland Audit Office in respect of issues raised by a whistle-blower on the Inquiry into the Governance of Land and Property in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

7. Inquiry into the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Trust of the year Ended March 2013 - Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence received from the PSNI in respect of the formation of the Fine Enforcement and Collection Service.

8. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid: Evidence Session

The following Department of Justice officials joined the meeting at 2.22 pm

Nick Perry, Accounting Officer
David Lavery, Head of Access to Justice
Paul Andrews, Chief Executive, Legal Services Agency NI
Mark McGuckin, Head of Legal Services Division

The Committee received oral evidence from the officials.

3.01 pm Mr Clarke left the meeting.

3.02 pm Mr Clarke rejoined the meeting.

3.04 pm Mr Lunn left the meeting.

3.05 pm Mr Lunn rejoined the meeting.

3.06 pm Mr Dunne left the meeting.

3.11 pm Mr Dunne rejoined the meeting.

3.12 pm Mr Easton left the meeting.

3.16 pm Ms Lockhart left the meeting.

3.20 pm Mr Easton rejoined the meeting.

3.25 pm Ms Lockhart rejoined the meeting.

3.27 pm Mr Butler left the meeting.

3.34 pm Mr Butler rejoined the meeting.

3.58 pm Mr Lunn left the meeting.

3.59 pm Mr Lunn rejoined the meeting.

3.59 pm Mr McCrossan left the meeting.

4.00 pm Mr Easton left the meeting.

4.17 pm Mr Lunn left the meeting.

4.32 pm Mr Kearney left the meeting.

4.33 pm Mr Kearney rejoined the meeting.
4.50 pm Mr Butler left the meeting.
5.09 pm Mr Dunne left the meeting.
5.13 pm Mr Dunne rejoined the meeting.
5.26 pm Mr McMullan left the meeting.
5.32 pm Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.
5.50 pm Ms Gildernew left the meeting.

The witnesses answered a number of questions put by the Committee and agreed to provide additional information in writing.

5.52 pm the Meeting moved into Closed Session

9. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid: Discussions with Northern Ireland Audit Office

The Committee discussed the evidence session with Northern Ireland Audit Office officials.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Taxing Master to an oral evidence session on the Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid.

10. Forward Work Programme September-December 2016

Agreed: The Committee discussed and agreed the Committee Forward Work Programme September-December 2016.

11. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson over the recess period to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information on any Freedom of Information requests it may receive during this time.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

A Strategic Planning meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 7 September 2016 at 12.00 p.m. in Room 115.

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Wednesday 14 September 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 6.06 p.m.

Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)
Public Accounts Committee