

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 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

*2.02 pm The meeting began in Open Session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Noted above.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2016**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting on 28 September 2016 were agreed.

#### **3. Matters arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 28 September 2016 from the Accounting Officer for the Department for Communities which provides the names of the staff in the dedicated sponsor team which supports the NI Housing Executive in the delivery of its Executive and Ministerial objectives.

#### **4. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 19 September 2016 from Mr P Donnelly in which he advises that there has been a misuse of public funds within the former Department of Employment and Learning. The Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy to ask why there has been a delay in replying to the Freedom of Information request Mr Donnelly has requested.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Mr Donnelly to request that he forwards further information to enable the Committee to fully consider his request.

*2.05 p.m. Ms Lockhart joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 September 2016 from the Audit Committee in respect of the 2017/18 – 2019/20 NI Audit Office budget position. The Committee agreed to write to the Audit Committee to advise that whilst it is content with the budget position as outlined, it has reservations in respect of the potential for a spike in the workload for the NIAO and how this will be managed via the budget position.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted and agreed the draft protocol on NI Audit Office Budget Process and agreed to advise the Audit Committee accordingly.

#### **5. Inquiry into Managing and Protecting Fund Held in Court – 12 month MOR Update**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the 12 month MOR Update from the Department of Justice in respect of the report on Managing and Protecting Funds Held in Court; and agreed to monitor the progress of outstanding recommendations and seek a further update in 12 months.

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

*2.13 p.m. The meeting move into Closed Session.*

#### **6. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the draft report on Managing Legal Aid and the correspondence from the Taxing Master until 19 October 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider agenda item 8 next.

#### **7. Inquiry into Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme Preparation Session**

The Committee discussed the approach to the evidence sessions and the requirement for further witnesses.

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

*2.38 p.m. Mr Kearney joined the meeting.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*3.20 p.m. Mr Dunne left the meeting.*

*3.21 p.m. Mr Dunne rejoined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite OFGEM to give oral evidence to the Committee on 26 October 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Accounting Officer, Department for the Economy to request further information prior to the evidence session on 12 October 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a further evidence session with the Accounting Officer, Department for the Economy for 9 November 2016.

## **8. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold an informal meeting on Tuesday 11 October 2016 at 12.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber.

## **9. Any Other Business**

None.

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

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 3.27 p.m.*

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