



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 3 July 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Diane Forsythe, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Apologies:

Tom Buchanan, MLA

Colin Crawford, MLA

In Attendance: Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)
Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)
Marion Johnson (Clerical Supervisor)
Yannie Mahood (Clerical Officer)

The meeting opened in public session at 1.13 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from, Tom Buchanan MLA and Colin Crawford, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 26 June 2025.

3. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson reminded members of their requirement to register their interests under Standing Order 69(5).

Daniel McCrossan, MLA declared an interest as former Chair of the Audit Committee.

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of Sunnylands Primary School, Carrickfergus.

Diane Forsythe, MLA declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of Kilkeel Nursery School, Assembly Private Secretary to the Minister for Education and Member of the Audit Committee.

David Honeyford, MLA declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of Dromara Primary School and in respect of a relative employed by the Education Authority.

Cathal Boylan, MLA declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of Clea Primary School, Keady.

Pádraig Delargy, MLA declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of Holy Child Primary School, Creggan.

4. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson reiterated his concerns regarding the court ruling in respect of the A5 infrastructure project and requested that work be undertaken to identify any potential actions available to PAC.

Cathal Boylan, MLA left the meeting at 1.30 pm

Cathal Boylan, MLA re-joined the meeting at 1.32 pm

Agreed: Members will seek advice from the C&AG to scope any actions available.

Agreed: The Clerk will seek legal advice on behalf of Members regarding the legal implications of the ruling on other major capital projects.

Agreed: The Clerk will commission research from RAISE on PAC comparators in other jurisdictions.

5. Matters Arising

Members noted letters from Ronnie Armour, Interim Accounting Officer for the Department of Education responding to questions raised following the evidence session on Managing the Schools Estate.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence.

6. Correspondence

Members considered correspondence from the Audit Committee providing a Terms of Reference for the review of arrangements in relation to the C&AG salary.

Agreed: Members agreed to seek a timescale and completion date for this review and to request that it be completed swiftly.

Members considered correspondence from the Communities Committee enclosing a copy of a memo shared with its Members in relation to anti-poverty actions and strategies within local councils..

Agreed: Members agreed to note this correspondence.

7. Memorandum of Reply: Public Procurement in Northern Ireland and Major Capital Projects: Follow-Up Report:

Members noted an update to the MoR on Public Procurement in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: To seek clarification from the Department on when it is expected that ISNI will receive executive approval.

The Clerk corrected the record to advise that, as of 26 June, it had been 12 weeks since the PAC report was published. The Clerk also advised Members that the Treasury Officer of Accounts office had been in contact to update her on progress on the MoR and the reasons for the anticipated delays.

Members noted a response from the Department of Finance regarding the delay to the MoR on Major Capital Projects: Follow Up Report.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence and revisit the Memorandum of Reply in September 2025.

Agreed: Members agreed to discuss further, with the C&AG, the impact on the process for MoRs, specifically when addressing cross-cutting issues.
Forward Work Programme

Agreed: Members agreed the draft forward work programme.

8. Any Other Business

The Chairperson placed on record his thanks to the Committee staff, Members and the Northern Ireland Audit Office for their support in delivering PAC business.

9. Date, Time, and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 18 September 2025 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.50 pm.

Daniel McCrossan

Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

3 July 2025