



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 12 February 2026

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)
Diane Forsythe, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Stephen Dunne, MLA
Cathal Boylan, MLA
Pádraig Delargy, MLA
David Honeyford, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference: Tom Buchanan, MLA

Apologies: Jon Burrows, MLA
Colm Gildernew, MLA

In Attendance: Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)

Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)

Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)

Yannie Mahood (Clerical Officer)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.08pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Jon Burrows, MLA and Colm Gildernew, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 5 February 2026.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Stephen Dunne, MLA declared an interest as APS to the Communities Minister.

Diane Forsythe, MLA declared an interest as Chair of the All Party Group on the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Pádraig Delargy, MLA declared an interest in respect of family members who are GP's and a former BMA Representative.

4. Chairperson's Business

5. Matters Arising

Members noted correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure providing further information for the inquiry into Road Openings by Utilities.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence and forward for inclusion in the final report.

6. Correspondence

7. Memorandum of Reply: Child Poverty in Northern Ireland

Members considered an update to the Memorandum of Reply on Child Poverty in Northern Ireland.

Pádraig Delargy, MLA joined the meeting at 2.12 pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite witnesses and Officials back to the Committee to provide a further update.

Agreed: Members agreed to draft a press release on the delays in addressing the recommendations of the report.

Agreed: Members agreed to provide a written update to the Communities Committee

8. Memorandum of Reply: Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland

Members considered the MOR on Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland.

Cathal Boylan MLA left the meeting at 2.56pm.

Cathal Boylan, MLA rejoined the meeting at 2.58pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite Officials back to the Committee to provide further detail on the MOR.

Agreed: Members agreed to draft a press release on the lack of urgency expressed in the MOR.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Chair and Deputy Chair will meet with the Royal College of General Practitioners.

Agreed: Members agreed to provide a written update to the Health Committee.

The meeting moved into closed session at 3.06 pm.

9. Inquiry on Homelessness in Northern Ireland

The following witnesses and officials joined the meeting at 3.06 pm.

Rodney Allen, COO, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Barry Mitchell, Audit Manager, NIAO;

Claire Turner, Senior Auditor, NIAO

The Committee noted the draft report is classified as RESTRICTED for Members' attention and therefore should not be published more widely.

The Committee noted it had the initial consideration for the report 'Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland', at last week's meeting, 5 February 2026.

The Committee noted this is the formal consideration for the report 'Homelessness in Northern Ireland' and agreed the title of the report.

Section 'Membership and Powers' and 'List of Abbreviations': Pages 4 – 6

Membership and Powers: Read and Agreed

List of Abbreviations: Read and Agreed

Section: 'Introduction' page 16 of the report paragraphs 23 and 24

Paragraph 23: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 24: Read and Agreed

Section: 'Background' pages 16 and 17 of the report paragraphs 25 to 29

Paragraph 25: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 26: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 27: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 28: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 29: Read and Agreed

Section 'The True Cost Of Homelessness Is Misunderstood And Insufficiently Measured', paragraphs 30 to 32.

Paragraph 30: Read and Agreed to be amended

Paragraph 31: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 32: Read and Agreed

Recommendation 1: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Agreed: Section Title: 'Homelessness Prevention Has Not Been Sufficiently Prioritised', paragraphs 33 to 38.

Paragraph 33: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 34: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 35: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 36: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 37: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 38: Read and Agreed

Recommendation 2: To be reworded

Recommendation 3: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Agreed: Section Title: 'Homelessness Prevention Has Been Underfunded, Short-Term And Reactive In Nature', paragraphs 39 to 43

Paragraph 39: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 40: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 41: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 42: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 43: Read and Agreed

Recommendation 4: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 5: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Agreed: Section Title: 'Oversight And Governance Arrangements Are Cluttered And Hinder Outcomes Monitoring'. Paragraphs 44 to 47

Paragraph 44: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 45: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 46: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 47: Read and Agreed

Recommendation 6: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 7: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Agreed: Section Title: 'The Housing Executive Must Reduce Its Reliance On High-Cost Temporary Accommodation'. Paragraphs 48 – 53

Paragraph 48: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 49: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 50: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 51: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 52: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 53: Read and Agreed

Recommendation 8: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Agreed: Section Title: 'Inadequate Social Housing Supply Will Likely To Lead To Increased Homelessness In The Future', paragraphs 54 to 60.

Paragraph 54: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 55: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 56: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 57: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 58: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 59: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 60: Read and Agreed

Recommendation 9: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 10: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

The Committee then returned to the Executive Summary paragraphs 1 to 22 and agreed the following:

Paragraph 1: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 2: Read and Agreed

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

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 17: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 18: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 19: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 20: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 21: Read and Agreed

Paragraph 22: Read and Agreed

Recommendations 1 to 10:

Recommendation 1: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 2: To be reworded

Recommendation 3: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 4: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 5: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 6: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 7: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 8: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 9: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Recommendation 10: Read and Agreed subject to timescale amendments

Members considered the draft press release.

Agreed: Members agreed to amend the title of the press release and bring back for final consideration on 19 February 2026.

The Chair thanked officials for attending.

Witnesses left the meeting at 3.37pm.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

Agreed: Members agreed arrangements for the launch event for the report into 'Homelessness in Northern Ireland'.

Agreed: Members agreed to further review the Forward Work Programme on 19 February 2026.

Agreed: Members agreed to contact Assembly Engagement regarding hosting of the CAPAC Network event in the Autumn of 2026.

11. Any Other Business

Members considered a draft letter and press release in respect of the report into Leading and Resourcing the NICS.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to HoCS and issue a press release.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 19 February 2026 at 2.00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.03 pm.

Daniel McCrossan

Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

19 February 2026