



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2020, THE SENATE CHAMBER,  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr William Humphrey MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Mr David Hilditch MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA  
Mr Maolíosa McHugh MLA

Apologies: John Dallat MLA

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk  
Ms Gillian Barker, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor  
Mr Sean O’Rawe, Clerical Officer

*The meeting commenced at 2.04 pm in closed session.*

Committee discussed questions and the allocation of questions for the departmental evidence session - Inquiry into Major Capital Projects.

*Mr Hilditch left the meeting at 2.12 pm*

*Mr Hilditch rejoined the meeting at 2.15 pm*

*The meeting moved into open session 2.14 pm*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apology noted from Mr John Dallat MLA.

## **2. Minutes of meeting on 27 February 2020**

The draft minutes of 27 February 2020 were agreed.

## **3. Matters Arising**

*Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, Comptroller and Auditor General and Mr Tomas Wilkinson, Director, joined the meeting.*

The Committee noted the response from RaISe highlighting information from a recent CPD report ‘Collaborative Procurement Annual Update’ dated October 2018 - *The 69 contracts awarded through CPD [between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2018] have achieved total cumulative savings of approximately £20.6m.*

*Agreed:* The Committee noted this response and that these savings were on mostly small service contracts.

The Committee noted the response from the Comptroller and Auditor General, Kieran Donnelly CB in respect of the total overspend of the 11 Major Projects as reported in the NIAO Major Capital Works report, up to 19 December 2019.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the overspend figure of £692 million.

## **4. Declaration of Members’ Interests**

There was no declaration of members’ interests declared at the commencement of the meeting.

## **5. Correspondence**

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Chris Murphy dated 4 March 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Audit Office for a breakdown of £11 million in legal costs incurred by DfI in a legal challenge regarding the A6 Randalstown-Castledawson Dualling Scheme (A6 R-C) and the timeline of this figure. The Committee also agreed to write to Mr Murphy requesting that he forward the evidence he refers too in his email.

*The meeting moved into open session at 2.32 pm*

## **6. Evidence on NIAO Report on Major Capital Projects**

*Mr David Sterling, Head of NI Civil Service; Ms Sue Gray, Accounting Officer Department of Finance; Mr Des Armstrong, Chief Executive of the Construction & Procurement Delivery [CPD]; and Mr Brett Hannam, Chief Executive of the Strategic Investment Board [SIB] joined the meeting.*

The departmental officials briefed the Committee followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Finance on a range of issues which arose from the evidence session.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.29 pm*

*The meeting resumed and moved into closed session at 4.39 pm*

## **7. Inquiry into Major Capital Projects**

*Mr Kieran Donnelly CB, Comptroller and Auditor General; and Mr Tomas Wilkinson, Director, joined the meeting.*

The Committee discussed the evidence it had taken from the departmental officials with the NIAO.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Finance to request further Information.

*The meeting moved into Closed Session at 4.48 pm*

## **8. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the current draft forward work programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft forward work programme and to publish it on the website.

## **9. Any Other Business**

Mr McHugh gave apologies, in advance, for next week's PACs meeting.

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

The next committee meeting will be held, on Thursday 12 March 2020 at 2.00 pm in the Senate Chamber.

*The meeting was adjourned at 4.52 pm*

**Mr William Humphrey**

**Chairperson**

**Public Accounts Committee**

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2020**