



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 30 January 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

- Daniel McCrossan, MLA
- Tom Buchanan, MLA
- Colin Crawford, MLA
- Diane Forsythe, MLA
- David Honeyford, MLA
- Colm Gildernew, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Apologies:

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Cathal Boylan, MLA

In Attendance: Peter Hall (Committee Clerk)
Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)
Marion Johnson (Clerical Supervisor)
Barbara Daly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.04 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cheryl Brownlee, MLA and Cathal Boylan, MLA.

2. Chairperson's Business

3. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 23 January 2025 were agreed.

4. Declaration of Interests

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

Colm Gildernew, MLA declared an interest as Chair of the Communities Committee and for previous work with the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly, and work with witness Bláthnaid Girvan on the issue of young carers.

5. Inquiry into Developing the Skills for NI's Future – Evidence Session

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.06 pm.

Ms Bláthnaid Girvan, Youth Assembly Member;

Mr Harrison Kerr, Youth Assembly Member;

Mr Rory Brown, Youth Assembly Member;

Ms Paige Brennan, Youth Assembly Member;

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Mr Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts, Department of Finance.

The Committee heard evidence from the witnesses.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Girvan, Mr Kerr, Mr Brown, Ms Brennan Ms Carville and Mr Stevenson for attending. The Chairperson also thanked Northern Ireland Youth Assembly staff for facilitating the evidence session.

Officials left the meeting at 2.57 pm.

The meeting was suspended at 2.57 pm.

The meeting resumed at 3.06 pm.

6. Inquiry into Major Capital Projects: Follow Up Report – Evidence Session

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.06 pm.

Ms Jayne Brady, Head of Civil Service;

Mr Neil Gibson, Accounting Officer, Department of Finance;

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Mr Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts, Department of Finance.

The Committee heard evidence from the witnesses.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Brady, Mr Gibson, Ms Carville and Mr Stevenson for attending.

Agreed: Officials agreed to share;

- a copy of the latest update report to the NICS Board.
- the date of submission of the Draft ISNI plan to the First and Deputy First Ministers.
- a copy of the Terms of Reference for the review of NICS Board effectiveness.
- an update on the ISNI enabling actions and milestone delivery dates.
- A copy of the Terms of Reference for the ISNI enabling actions
- Mapping of progress on all recommendations relating to the RHI report

Officials left the meeting at 4.56 pm.

The meeting moved into closed session at 4.56 pm

7. Inquiry into Major Capital Projects: Follow Up Report – Discussion following evidence Session

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.56 pm.

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Mr Patrick Barr, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Mr Seamus Wade, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Ms Suzanne Murphy, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Members discussed the evidence heard.

Colm Gildernew left the meeting at 4.45 pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Finance Minister regarding RHI Recommendations and access to information.

Agreed: Members agreed to bring the Forward Work Programme forward in the agenda.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that there will be no meeting of the Public Accounts Committee on 13 February 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

The meeting returned to public session at 5.30 pm.

9. Matters Arising

Agreed: Members agreed a draft letter to be issued to Statutory Committees regarding the Primacy convention following as discussed on 23 January 2025.

10. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from Save Our Acute Services.

11. Any Other Business

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 6 February 2025 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.40 pm.

Daniel McCrossan MLA

Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

6 February 2025