



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 19 June 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Diane Forsythe, MLA

Tom Buchanan, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Apologies:

Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Colin Crawford, MLA

In Attendance: Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)
Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)
Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor - Remote)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.05 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Daniel McCrossan, MLA, Pádraig Delargy, MLA and Colin Crawford, MLA.

Tom Buchanan MLA joined the meeting at 2.06 pm.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 12 June 2025.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Cheryl Brownlee declared an interest as a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, a member of the Education Committee and a member of a 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 and Assembly Private Secretary to the Minister for Education.

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 Policing Board and a member of the Board of Governors of Clea Primary School, Keady.

4. Chairperson's Business

5. Matters Arising

6. Correspondence

Members noted a letter from a member of the public raising concerns relating to housing which were directed to the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Agreed: Members agreed to consider the correspondence in closed session due to concerns relating to GDPR.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.08 pm

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence and issue a response to the Member of the Public.

The meeting returned to open session at 2.10 pm.

7. Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland: Update to Memorandum of Reply

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.09 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

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

Members considered the most recent updates provided by Department of Health on 25 April 2025 and a further letter from Interim Accounting Officer Mike Farrar dated 4 June 2025.

Agreed: Members agreed to seek further clarification on a number of points to be provided in the next update due in August 2025.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.18 pm.

8. Managing the School's Estate: Issues Paper

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.18 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

Patrick Barr, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Peter O'Sullivan, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

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

Members received a briefing on the issues raised during the evidence session held on 12 June 2025.

Agreed: Members agreed to seek additional evidence from the non-controlled school sector and the Health and Safety Executive.

The Deputy Chair thanked officials for their work on the inquiry to date. Officials left the meeting at 3.23 pm:

9. Reducing Adult Reoffending: Formal Consideration

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.23 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

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

The Committee noted it had a first formal consideration of the 'Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland' report at its meeting of 5 June 2025.

The Committee noted this is the final consideration for the report 'Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland' report and agreed the title of the report is 'Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland'.

The Committee was presented with the agreed amendments as follows:

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword paragraph 39.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 3.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 4.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 6.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 7.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 8.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 9.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 10.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 11.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reword Recommendation 13.

Agreed: Members agreed to order the report to be published on 26 June 2025.

10.Reducing Adult Reoffending: Press Release

Agreed: Members agreed the draft press release.

The Deputy Chair thanked the Officials for attending. Witnesses left the meeting at 3.43 pm.

11. Forward Work Programme

- Agreed:** Members agreed the draft forward work programme.
- Agreed:** Members agreed to hold an informal meeting on 3 July 2025.
- Agreed:** Members agreed a communications plan for their return after recess in September.

12. Any Other Business

- Agreed:** It was agreed that Cheryl Brownlee, MLA will visit a GP Practice on behalf of the committee on 25 June 2025.

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

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 26 June 2025 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.53 pm.

Cheryl Brownlee

Deputy Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

26 June 2025