



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 3 April 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

- Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Diane Forsythe, MLA
- Tom Buchanan, MLA
- David Honeyford, MLA
- Colm Gildernew, MLA
- Cathal Boylan, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

- Pádraig Delargy, MLA
- Colin Crawford, MLA

Apologies:

- Daniel McCrossan, MLA

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

The meeting opened in public session at 2.06 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Daniel McCrossan, MLA

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 27 March 2025 were agreed.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Cheryl Brownlee MLA declared an interest as a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board in relation to Agenda Item 7.

Cathal Boylan MLA declared an interest as a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board in relation to Agenda Item 7.

Diane Forsythe MLA declared an interest as Chair of the All Party Group on Voluntary and Community Services in relation to Agenda Item 7.

Colm Gildernew MLA declared and interest as Chair of the Communities Committee in relation to Agenda Item 7.

4. Chairperson's Business

The Deputy Chair updated members on her attendance at the Café Conversations event alongside the Northern Ireland Audit Office on 2 April 2025.

5. Matters Arising

6. Correspondence

7. Inquiry into Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland: Evidence Session

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.12 pm:

Hugh Widdis, Accounting Officer, Department of Justice;

Beverley Wall, Director of Reducing Offending Division and Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Department of Justice;

Sean Holland, Director of Access to Justice, Department of Justice;

Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive, Probation Board for Northern Ireland;

Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts, Department of Finance;

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

Members heard evidence on reducing adult reoffending in Northern Ireland.

David Honeyford, MLA left the meeting at 3.09 pm.

The Chair thanked the witnesses and Officials for attending. Witnesses left the meeting at 4.05 pm

The meeting moved into closed session at 4.05 pm.

8. Inquiry into Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland: Discussion following Evidence Session

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.06 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

Conor McGeown, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Paul Turley, Senior Auditor, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

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

Members discussed the evidence heard.

Colm Gildernew, MLA left the meeting at 4.19 pm.

Colm Gildernew, MLA rejoined the meeting at 4.22 pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to request further detail from the Department of Justice in writing in respect of the evidence heard.

Witnesses left the meeting at 4.26 pm.

9. Disclaimed opinion on Department for the Economy accounts

Members reviewed a draft letter to the Department for the Economy.

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Agreed: Members agreed to issue the draft letter and provide a copy to the Economy Committee, Treasury Officer of Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General.

10. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: Members agreed the draft forward work programme.

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 10 April 2025 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.45 pm.

Colm Gildernew MLA

Temporary Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

10 April 2025