



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Audit Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

9 April 2024

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Alan Chambers MLA (Chairperson)

Diane Forsythe MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

John Blair MLA

Ciara Ferguson MLA

Nick Mathison MLA

Apologies:

None.

In Attendance: Nick Mitford, Assembly Clerk

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Supervisor

Ciara Dorrian, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

The meeting commenced at 1.04 p.m. in closed session

1. Apologies

None.

2. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024.

4. Budget deliberations and agreement

Members considered the responses from the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (NIAC), the Northern Ireland Audit Office, (NIAO), the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO), the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Department of Finance (DoF) in respect of the budget allocations for 2024/25.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Finance Minister to request that she makes the following provisions:

- NIAO Resource DEL to be set at £10,486K and a Capital DEL budget of £40K, with Resource DEL at £10,211K non-ring fenced and £275K ring-fenced;
- NIPSO Resource DEL to be set at £4,665K and a Capital DEL budget of £30K, with Resource DEL at £4,428K non-ring fenced and £237K ringfenced;
- NIAC Resource DEL to be set at £58,453K and Capital DEL at £3,203K.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to copy the letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee; the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee; Dorinnia Carville, NIAO; Margaret Kelly, NIPSO; and Lesley Hogg, NIAC.

5. Correspondence

5.1 Members noted correspondence from the Committee on Procedures dated 29 February 2024 seeking views on potential priority areas of work to inform discussions at its strategic planning session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures to advise that it will consider any potential areas of work to be taken forward following discussion at its strategic planning meeting and will advise accordingly.

5.2 Members noted the correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC), which provides notice of a motion on the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO) complaints expressing concern at the time taken to process them.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence from NMDDC to NIPSO for comment.

5.3 Members noted the correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the NIPSO Report 2022-23.

5.4 Members noted the correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the Northern Ireland Audit Office Budget 2024/25.

6. Any other business

There was no other business

7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Audit Committee is to be confirmed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.15 p.m.

PP Nick Mathison

Alan Chambers MLA

Chairperson, Audit Committee

05 June 2024