



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 2 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Diane Forsyth, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

Tom Buchanan, MLA

Apologies:

Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

John Stewart, MLA

In Attendance: Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)
Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)
Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)
Barbara Daly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.01 pm in closed session

The Deputy Chairperson advised members of the requirement to declare interests in any items of business on the agenda, and discussed the substantive items of business to be considered.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.03 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Daniel McCrossan, MLA, Pádraig Delargy, MLA and John Stewart, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 25 April 2024 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

A letter dated 15 April 2024 was received from a member of the public regarding an NIAO audit of the Northern Ireland university sector.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence dated 29 April 2024 from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding the Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on 'Funding Water Infrastructure in Northern Ireland'

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence and bring forward for further discussion on 9 May 2024.

4. Chairperson's Business

No Chairperson's business was raised.

5. Declaration of Interests

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

Cathal Boylan declared an interest as a member of the Infrastructure Committee.

6. Correspondence

No correspondence was raised.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.06 pm.

7. Inquiry on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland: Issues Paper

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Audit Office joined the meeting at 2.07 pm

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NI

Ms Collette Kane, Director, NIAO

Mr Roger McCance, Audit Manager, NIAO

Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, NIAO

Ms Claire Turner, Senior Auditor, NIAO (Public Gallery)

Mr Damien Prenter, Senior Auditor, NIAO (Public Gallery)

Ms Nikita White, Auditor, NIAO (Public Gallery)

The Committee received a briefing on the issues identified following its evidence session on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland, on 25th April 2024.

Agreed: Members agreed the issues to be included in the published report.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner to request written evidence.

Diane Forsythe left the meeting at 2.45 pm.

8. Inquiry on Public Sector Procurement in Northern Ireland: Briefing

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Audit Office joined the meeting at 2.46 pm;

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NI

Ms Suzanne Jones, Director, NIAO

Mr Michael Heery, Audit Manager, NIAO

Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, NIAO

Mr Geoff Murphy, Senior Auditor, NIAO (Public Gallery)

Ms Claire Turner, Senior Auditor (Public Gallery)

Mr Corey Parr, Auditor, NIAO (Public Gallery)

Members were reminded that the Committee's second inquiry, 'Public Sector Procurement in Northern Ireland' would hear its first evidence session on 16th May 2024.

The Committee received a briefing in preparation for its first evidence session on Public Sector Procurement in Northern Ireland, scheduled for 16th May 2024.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked NIAO Officials for their attendance.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was briefed on the draft Forward Work programme.

Agreed: The Committee noted changes and agreed its forward work programme.

10. Any Other Business

Members were advised of an invitation to a roundtable discussion on mental health taking place on 15 May hosted by Órlaithí Flynn MLA.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The Chairperson thanked officials for their attendance and advised members that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 9th May, at 2.00 pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.40 pm.

Cheryl Brownlee MLA

Deputy Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

2 May 2024