



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Public Accounts Committee

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Thursday, 14 November 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Daniel McCrossan, MLA

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Diane Forsythe, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

**Apologies:**

Tom Buchanan, MLA

Colin Crawford, MLA

**In Attendance:** Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)

Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)

Laura Gourley (Clerical Supervisor)

Barbara Daly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.04 pm.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tom Buchanan, MLA and Colin Crawford, MLA

### **2. Draft minutes**

**Agreed:** The draft minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2024 were agreed.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

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

### **4. Matters Arising**

Members noted a letter dated 6 November 2024 from Neil Gibson, Accounting Officer, Department of Finance, in response to queries raised by the Committee on the implementation of the RHI Inquiry recommendations.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to write to Mr Gibson and HOCS to advise that RHI will be discussed at the upcoming evidence session on Major Capital Projects.

## **5. Chairperson's Business**

## **6. Correspondence**

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.21 pm.

## **7. Preparation session for 'Developing the Skills for Northern Ireland's Future' inquiry.**

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) joined the meeting at 2.21 pm.

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NIAO

Patrick Barr, Director, NIAO

Suzanne Murphy Audit Manager, NIAO

Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, NIAO

Members received a briefing in preparation for the evidence session for the inquiry into 'Developing the Skills for Northern Ireland's Future' on 21 November 2024.

Members were briefed by the Clerk on an amendment to the research paper, presented by the Assembly's Information and Research Service.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to note the amendment.

## **8. Final Consideration of Report: 'Public Procurement in Northern Ireland'**

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) joined the meeting at 3.07 pm.

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NIAO

Suzanne Jones, Director, NIAO

Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, NIAO

The Committee noted the draft report was classified as RESTRICTED for Members' attention and therefore should not be published more widely.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to order the report to be published.

The Committee discussed the draft press release for the report on Public Procurement in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the press release to be released.

## **9. Briefing from NIAO on the Draft Excess Votes – 2023-24**

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Audit Office joined the meeting at 3.27 pm:

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

Tomas Wilkinson, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Suzanne Jones, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, NIAO

Members received a briefing from the NIAO on the Draft Excess Votes Report 2023-24.

**Agreed:** Members agreed the draft Excess Report 2023-2024.

**Agreed:** That a copy of the Draft Excess Votes Report 2023-24 be forwarded to the Finance Committee and ToA.

**Agreed:** Members agreed that the Draft Excess Votes Report 2023-24 be laid in the Assembly Business Office. A statement of Excess can then be presented to the Assembly and voted into the Budget Act.

The Chairperson thanked officials for their attendance today.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the BiMR and CAPAC annual conference.

**Agreed:** Members agreed the draft Forward Work programme.

The Chairperson thanked officials for their attendance today.

NIAO officials left the meeting at 3.53 pm.

## **11. Any Other Business**

David Honeyford left the meeting at 3.53

## **12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The Chairperson thanked officials for their attendance and advised members that the next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 21 November 2024 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.55 pm.

**Daniel McCrossan MLA**

**Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee**

**14 November 2024**