



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Public Accounts Committee

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Thursday, 3 October 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Diane Forsythe, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

John Stewart, MLA

Tom Buchanan, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

**Apologies:**

Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

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

Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk - Remote)

Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)

Barbara Daly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in closed session.

The 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 2.07 pm.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Daniel McCrossan, MLA.

**2. Draft minutes**

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 26 September 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 correspondence from Neil Gibson, Accounting Officer for the Department of Finance, informing the Committee of a change to witnesses in the inquiry into Major Capital Projects – Follow Up Report. Mr Brett Hannam, Chief Executive of the Strategic Investment Board will replace Scott Wilson, Head of Investment Strategy Strategic Investment Board.

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

#### **6. Correspondence**

#### **7. Major Capital Projects: Follow Up Report – Evidence Session**

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 2.10 pm;

Ms Jayne Brady, Head of NICS

Patrick Magee, Non-Executive Member, NICS Board

Mr Neil Gibson, Accounting Officer, Department of Finance

Ms Sharon Smyth, Chief Executive, Construction and Procurement Delivery, Department of Finance

Mr Brett Hannam, Chief Executive, Strategic Investment Board

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NI

Mr Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts.

The Committee heard evidence from the witnesses.

Colm Gildernew, MLA, joined the meeting at 2.12 pm.

Colm Gildernew MLA, left the meeting at 3.45 pm.

Colm Gildernew, MLA, re-joined the meeting at 3.49 pm.

David Honeyford, MLA, left the meeting at 4.03 pm.

David Honeyford, MLA, re-joined the meeting at 4.05 pm.

John Stewart, MLA, left the meeting at 4.06pm.

John Stewart, MLA, re-joined the meeting at 4.11 pm.

Tom Buchanan, MLA, left the meeting at 4.28 pm.

Tom Buchanan, MLA, re-joined the meeting at 4.43 pm.

Pádraig Delargy, MLA, left the meeting at 5.06 pm.

**Agreed:** Department of Finance officials will send a copy of ISNI Recommendations to the Committee.

**Agreed:** A copy of the Root Cause Analysis paper produced by the Strategic Investment Board will be provided to the Committee.

**Agreed:** Head of NICS will provide further advice to the Committee on the Royal Victoria Hospital Maternity Unit in consultation with the Department of Health.

The Chairperson thanked officials for attending.

Officials left the meeting at 5.14 pm.

The meeting moved into closed session at 5.16 pm.

## **8. Inquiry on Child Poverty in Northern Ireland – Discussion**

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 5.16 pm

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NI

Mr Patrick Barr, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office

Mrs Suzanne Murphy, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Liaison Officer, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Members discussed the evidence heard.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to follow up in writing on matters raised during the evidence session requiring further clarification.

The Chairperson thanked officials for attending.

Officials left the meeting at 5.35 pm.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was briefed on the draft Forward Work programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed its forward work programme.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to write to the Department for the Economy to formally request witness attendance for the inquiry into Developing the Skills for Northern Ireland's Future.

## **10. Any Other Business**

The Clerk reminded members that an event is planned in Parliament Buildings on 7 November 2024 to launch the report into 'Child Poverty in Northern Ireland'.

**Agreed:** Members agreed submit suggestions for invitees to the launch event to Committee Staff by 6 October 2024.

## **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 10 October 2024 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.38 pm.

**Cheryl Brownlee MLA**

**Deputy Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee**

**3 October 2024**