



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 6 February 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

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Colin Crawford, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Apologies:

Daniel McCrossan, MLA

In Attendance:

Barbara Love (Committee Clerk)

Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)

Marion Johnson (Clerical Supervisor)

Barbara Daly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.05 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Daniel McCrossan, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 30 January 2025 were agreed.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Pádraig Delargy declared an interest in respect of the inquiry into Access to General Practice Services in Northern Ireland due to a number of family members working in General Practice.

4. Chairperson's Business

5. Matters Arising

Members noted correspondence from Mr Dermott Nesbitt in relation to planning matters in Crossgar.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the correspondence to the Infrastructure Committee for their consideration.

Members noted a further update from the Department of Finance dated 9 January 2025 in which responses were provided to questions raised following the evidence session held on 3 October 2024 in the inquiry into Major Capital Projects: Follow Up Report,

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the correspondence to the Northern Ireland Audit Office for inclusion in the final report.

Members noted correspondence dated 3 February 2025 from Neil Gibson, Accounting Officer, Department of Finance providing members with further information following the evidence session on Major Capital Projects: Follow-up Report on 30 January.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the update and forward to the Northern Ireland Audit Office for consideration and inclusion in the final report.

Members considered a draft letter to the Finance Minister following the evidence session of 30 January 2025 with Neil Gibson, Accounting Officer for the Department of Finance.

Agreed: Members agreed to issue the letter to the Minister.

Members noted correspondence from Ian Snowden, Accounting Officer for the Department for the Economy, providing further information requested by the Committee in the inquiry into Developing the Skills for Northern Ireland's Future.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the update and forward to the Northern Ireland Audit Office for consideration and inclusion in the final report.

6. Correspondence

Members considered a letter from Pivotal containing a link to a copy of their report 'Review of the first year of the restored Northern Ireland Executive'.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.10 pm.

7. Briefing on inquiry into Access to General Practice Services in Northern Ireland

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Audit Office joined the meeting at 2.10 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

Colette Kane, Director

Roger McCance, Audit Manager

Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer

Members were briefed on the forthcoming inquiry into Access to General Practice Services in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed to bring forward agenda item 9, due to the relevance of the briefing on Citizen Space to this inquiry.

9. Any Other Business

The following officials from the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission joined the meeting at 2.53 pm:

Caroline Moore, Participation and Outreach Manager

Kate McCullough, Assistant Assembly Clerk

Members received a briefing on the use of Citizen Space for engagement and gather of evidence in inquiries.

The Chair thanked Caroline and Kate for the presentation.

Colm Gildernew, MLA left the meeting at 3.15 pm.

Officials left the meeting at 3.17 pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to develop and launch a Citizen Space survey for the inquiry into Access to General Practice Services in Northern Ireland.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Clerk briefed members on the draft Forward Work programme.

Agreed: Members agreed the draft Forward Work programme.

9. Date, Time, and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 20 February 2025 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.31 pm.

Cheryl Brownlee MLA

Deputy Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

6 February 2024