



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 11 December 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Diane Forsythe, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Stephen Dunne, MLA

Tom Buchanan, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Apologies: Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

Jon Burrows, MLA

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

The meeting opened in public session at 2.07pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Daniel McCrossan, MLA and Jon Burrows, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 27 November 2025.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Stephen Dunne, MLA declared an interest as a member of the Infrastructure Committee and APS to the Communities Minister.

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

Colm Gildernew, MLA declared an interest as Chair of the Communities Committee, in respect of a private members bill on homelessness and as owner of a rental property.

4. Chairperson's Business

The Deputy Chairperson advised members that the video highlighting the role and work of PAC has now gone live across social media channels and thanked the Communications Team for their work in producing the video.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from a member of the public.

Agreed: Members agreed that this matter does not fall within the remit of the PAC and agreed a response to be issued to the member of the public.

Members noted correspondence from Ann Watt of Pivotal enclosing the latest report on a multi-year budget.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the report.

7. Inquiry into Road Openings by Utilities – Evidence Session

The following witnesses and officials joined the meeting at 2.10 pm.

Denis McMahon, Accounting Officer, Department for Infrastructure (DfI);

Colin Woods, Deputy Secretary, Transport and Road Asset Maintenance, DfI;

Colin Sykes, Director of Road Asset Maintenance, DfI;

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General; and

Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts, DoF

Members heard evidence on road openings by utilities.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the witnesses for attending and congratulated Denis McMahon on his upcoming retirement and thanked him for his service to the public.

Witnesses and officials left the meeting at 3.53 pm.

The meeting moved into closed session at 3.53 pm.

8. Inquiry into Road Openings by Utilities – Discussion of Evidence

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.53 pm.

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General; and

Patrick Barr, Director, NIAO;

Michael Heery, Audit Manager, NIAO;

Members considered the evidence heard.

Tom Buchanan, MLA left the meeting at 3.53 pm

Tom Buchanan, MLA rejoined the meeting at 3.55 pm

Colm Gildernew, MLA left the meeting at 4.01 pm

Colm Gildernew, MLA rejoined the meeting at 4.13 pm

The Deputy Chairperson thanked officials for attending.

Officials left the meeting at 4.20pm.

9. Inquiry on Homelessness in Northern Ireland – Issues Paper

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.21pm.

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General; and

Tomas Wilkinson, Director, NIAO;

Barry Mitchell, Audit Manager, NIAO

Members noted the NISRA Homelessness statistics released, including 58 deaths attributed to homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Members received a briefing on the issues identified during the evidence sessions on Homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Members noted a written submission of evidence from Housing Rights.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the submission to the NIAO for inclusion in the final report.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked officials for attending.

Officials left the meeting at 4.42 pm.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.42 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General; and

Seamus Wade, Director, NIAO

Members received a briefing on the themes identified in the NIAO reports, Review of Waste Management in Northern Ireland and Waste Crime in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed to hold an inquiry combining the reports into Review of Waste Management in Northern Ireland and Waste Crime in Northern Ireland as its eleventh inquiry.

Members considered whether they wished to retain PAC primacy over a number of outstanding NIAO reports.

Agreed: Members agreed to release the report into Performance of Restricted Procedures by Health Trusts from PAC primacy.

Colm Gildernew, MLA left the meeting at 5.02 pm.

Agreed: Members agreed the draft forward work programme.

11. Any Other Business

Members noted that the MOR on Maintenance of School Estates was published at 11.00 am on 11 December 2025, however due to the embargo on the report it had not been possible to include it in this meeting.

Agreed: Members agreed to consider the MOR upon the Committee's return from recess in January 2026.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 15 January 2026 at 2.00pm.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Members, staff and NIAO officials for their work throughout the year and wished them a Happy Christmas.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.08pm.

Diane Forsythe

Deputy Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

11 December 2025