



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 25 June 2026

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Tom Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jon Burrows MLA
Stephen Dunne MLA
Colm Gildernew MLA
David Honeyford MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Jemma Dolan MLA

Apologies: Daniel McCrossan MLA (Chairperson)
Cathal Boylan MLA
Gareth Wilson MLA

In Attendance: Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)
Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)
Yannie Mahood (Clerical Officer)

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

The meeting opened in public session at 2.14pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 18th June 2026.

3. Declaration of Interests

Stephen Dunne MLA declared an interest as Assembly Private Secretary (APS) to the Minister for Communities and as a Member of the Committee for Infrastructure.

Colm Gildernew MLA declared an interest as Chair of the Committee for Communities and in respect of his Private Members Bill on Homelessness Prevention.

David Honeyford MLA declared an interest as a Member of the Committee for the Economy.

4. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a response from the Department of Finance Accounting Officer regarding implications for budgetary management by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) in the absence of an agreed budget by the Executive. The Committee had sought assurance that the Accounting Officer will continue to liaise with the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG).

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Accounting Officer has stated he will regularly engage with the C&AG and the Committee for Finance, and agreed to forward the response to the Audit Committee and the Committee for Finance, for information.

The Committee noted a response from the Department for Communities Accounting Officer providing further information on the circulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation addresses on social media.

6. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from Save Our Acute Services South West Acute Hospital (SOAS SWAH) regarding the Department of Health Elective Care Framework. The Committee noted that the Committee for Health is currently scrutinising the Framework as a work programme priority and that the C&AG brings no audit implications on the matter forward to the Committee.

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council 'Sustainability Report 2026'.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Strategic Investment Board in regards to providing a presentation to the Committee on capital infrastructure projects and noted the Clerk had responded to advise on the process to request to present to the Committee.

7. Inquiry on Major IT Projects in Northern Ireland: Formal and Final Consideration of the Draft Report

The following official joined the meeting at 2.19pm:

- Dorinnia Carville, C&AG, NIAO.

The Committee formally considered its draft report on its Inquiry on Major IT Projects in Northern Ireland.

The Committee noted the draft report is classified as restricted for Members' attention and therefore should not be published more widely until the embargoed date of Tuesday 7th July 2026.

The Committee noted it had carried out its first consideration of the draft report at last week's meeting, Thursday 18th June 2026, and had agreed amendments to be incorporated into the draft report before formal and final consideration at today's meeting.

Title Page

Title Page: Read and Agreed.

Committee Powers and Membership

Committee Powers and Membership: Read and Agreed.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms: Read and Agreed as amended.

Executive Summary

Introduction: Read and Agreed as amended.

Background: Read and Agreed as amended.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Read and Agreed.

Recommendation 2: Read and Agreed.

Recommendation 3: Read and Agreed as amended.

Recommendation 4: Read and Agreed as amended.

Recommendation 5: Read and Agreed.

Recommendation 6: Read and Agreed.

Recommendation 7: Read and Agreed as amended.

Recommendation 8: Read and Agreed.

Recommendation 9: Read and Agreed as amended.

Recommendation 10: Read and Agreed.

Recommendation 11 Read and Agreed as amended.

Introduction

Paragraph 21: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 22: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 23: Read and Agreed to be amended.

Background

Paragraph 24: Read and Agreed as amended.

Paragraph 25: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 26: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 27: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 28: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 29: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 30: Read and Agreed.

Section titled ‘A more strategic approach is needed to enable the reform and transformation of public services through the delivery of major IT and digitalisation projects’

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title.

Paragraph 31: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 32: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 33: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 34: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 35: Read and Agreed as amended.

Paragraph 36: Read and Agreed.

Section titled ‘NICS must harness the potential opportunities and manage the risks of Artificial Intelligence to deliver efficiencies’

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title as amended.

Paragraph 37: Read and Agreed as amended.

Paragraph 38: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 39: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 40: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 41: Read and Agreed.

Section titled 'The Committee was shocked to hear that the full extent of reliance on legacy IT systems and the associated risks is not known'

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title.

Paragraph 42: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 43: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 44: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 45: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 46: Read and Agreed.

Section titled 'Extensive reliance on multiple contract extensions for legacy systems represents poor value for money'

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title.

Paragraph 47: Read and Agreed as amended.

Paragraph 48: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 49: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 50: Read and Agreed.

Section titled 'Despite previous recommendations capacity and capability issues continue to impact on the design and delivery of all major projects'

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title.

Paragraph 51: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 52: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 53: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 54: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 55: Read and Agreed.

Section titled 'There must be greater clarity across major IT and digitalisation projects on the anticipated benefits, and continued monitoring to ensure benefits are achieved'

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title.

Paragraph 56: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 57: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 58: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 59: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 60: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 61: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 62: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 63: Read and Agreed as amended.

Section titled 'Issues with the quality and completeness of encompass data must be resolved immediately'

The Committee Read and Agreed the above title.

Paragraph 64: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 65: Read and Agreed.

Paragraph 66: Read and Agreed.

List of Appendices

The Committee considered the List of Appendices.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the List of Appendices include:

- Minutes of Proceedings;
- Minutes of Evidence;
- Correspondence;
- Other Documents; and
- List of Witnesses.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the report as amended and was content that the report be laid in the Business Office.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report would be published on 7th July 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report be issued to all Assembly Committees.

The Committee considered a draft press release.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the press release.

The Chairperson thanked the C&AG for attending the Committee's consideration of the report.

8. Draft Forward Work Programme

The following official joined the meeting at 2.29pm:

- Dorinnia Carville, C&AG, NIAO.

The Committee considered its call for witnesses for its Inquiry on 'A Strategic Review of the Planning Appeals Commission'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold a joint oral evidence session with the Department of Justice Accounting Officer and representatives from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and the Planning Appeals Commission.

The Committee considered a draft programme for the conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region of the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (BIMR CAPAC Networking Conference) which the Committee will host in Parliament Buildings on Thursday 24th September 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Chairperson approve any further detail for the programme with the Clerk over summer recess and that the Committee is updated at its first meeting back following recess

The Committee considered a NIAO media release and the Northern Regional College (NRC) Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2024 which were laid in the Assembly on Tuesday 23 June 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to receive an oral briefing from the Department for the Economy Accounting Officer and the NRC Accounting Officer following summer recess.

The C&AG briefed the Committee on forthcoming NIAO reports.

The Committee considered the NIAO reports for which it retains primacy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to release its primacy over the NIAO report 'Flood Risk Management in Northern Ireland, published 16th June 2026.

The Committee considered a draft forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft forward work programme.

9. Any Other Business

The Chairperson advised Members that during periods of recess it is normal practice for committees to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson regarding the releasing or withholding of information for Freedom of Information (Fol) requests received. The Committee is then updated on any requests at the first meeting following recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information in any non-routine or contentious Fol requests received by the Committee during the upcoming recess period.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Clerk will email Members if there is any urgent correspondence to be brought to their attention during recess, all other correspondence will be considered by the Committee at the first meeting following recess.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 17th September 2026 at 2.00pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.00pm.

Tom Buchanan

Deputy Chairperson

Public Accounts Committee

17 September 2026