



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Public Accounts Committee

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Thursday, 28 May 2026**

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

**Present:** Daniel McCrossan MLA (Chairperson)  
Tom Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Stephen Dunne MLA  
Gareth Wilson MLA  
David Honeyford MLA  
Colm Gildernew MLA  
Jon Burrows MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Jemma Dolan MLA

**Apologies:** Cathal Boylan MLA

**In Attendance:** Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)  
Angela McParland (Assistant Committee Clerk)  
Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.11pm.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Cathal Boylan MLA.

### **2. Draft minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 21 May 2026.

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

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

The Chairperson declared an interest in having engaged extensively with energy sector representatives over a long period of time as an MLA.

### **4. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's Business.

### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising.

### **6. Correspondence**

The following official joined the meeting at 2.14pm:

- Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG).

Jon Burrows MLA joined the meeting at 2.19pm.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Audit Committee sharing a letter sent to that Committee from the C&AG regarding an absence of an agreed Executive Budget and guidance issued by the Department of Finance (DoF) to Departmental Accounting Officers.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the DoF Accounting Officer on its concerns that the current situation creates significant financial management risks across the public sector and has immediate implications for the regularity of income and expenditure being incurred.

Further, that the Committee understands the current arrangements may have considerable implications for budgetary management by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and, therefore, encourages continued liaison between the DoF Accounting Officer and the C&AG on the matter.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to advise the Committee for Finance that the Chairperson had written to the Accounting Officer on the matter.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to thank the Audit Committee and advise of this Committee's concerns and that the Chairperson had written to the DoF Accounting Officer on the matter.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to further consider writing to HM Treasury where appropriate to the remit of this Committee.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to further consider a news release on the matter.

## **7. Inquiry on Northern Ireland Energy Strategy: Oral Evidence by the Department for the Economy**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.31pm:

- Ian Snowden, Accounting Officer, Department for the Economy (DfE);
- Richard Rodgers, Head of Energy Group, DfE; and
- Anne-Marie McConn, Head of Energy Strategy and Corporate Services, DfE.

The following officials were also in attendance:

- Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts, DoF; and
- Dorinnia Carville, C&AG, NIAO.

The Chairperson welcomed the officials to the Committee.

The Chairperson advised the DfE officials that the Department had not met the set standards in providing information to the Committee ahead of the evidence session in a thorough and timely manner and Members, therefore, did not have sufficient time to consider the information ahead of the session.

The Chairperson referred to DoF 'Guidance on Northern Ireland Public Audit Process including Public Accounts Committee scrutiny of public spending' and informed the officials that the Committee was postponing the evidence session. The Chairperson and Members advised the Department to reflect on the impact on effective use of resources of the Assembly, NIAO, and DoF, from the session not going ahead.

The officials left the meeting at 2.53pm.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to reschedule the evidence session and that the Department forward, to the Committee, the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2026 and any associated reports.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.53pm.

## **8. Inquiry on Northern Ireland Energy Strategy: Consideration of Oral Evidence**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.53pm:

- Dorinnia Carville, C&AG;
- Seamus Wade, Director, NIAO; and
- Gary Currie, Audit Manager, NIAO.

The Chairperson welcomed the officials.

The Committee discussed rescheduling the session.

The Chair thanked the officials for attending.

The officials left the meeting at 3.00pm.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to reschedule the session.

## **9. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The following official joined the meeting at 3.00pm:

- Dorinnia Carville, C&AG.

The C&AG provided a further briefing on the report 'The Use of Temporary Nursing Staff in Northern Ireland'.

The C&AG provided a briefing on the report 'Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud'.

The Clerk briefed Members on the Committee's forward work programme.

The Chairperson reminded Members that there would be no meeting the following week as the Committee would be attending a presentation on public audit governance and accountability by Brian Whalley at the NIAO headquarters.

**Agreed:** Members agreed the draft forward work programme.

### **10. Any Other Business**

The Chairperson reminded Members to complete a PAC Members Survey, and advised that the results will be published in the NIAO Annual Report at the end of June.

### **11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 11 June 2026 at 2.00pm in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.21pm.

**Daniel McCrossan**

**Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee**

**11 June 2026**