



Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 5 February 2026

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Diane Forsythe, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Stephen Dunne, MLA

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

Jon Burrows, MLA

Apologies: Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Tom Buchanan, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

In Attendance: Peter Hall (Committee Clerk)

Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)

Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)

Yannie Mahood (Clerical Officer)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.06pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Pádraig Delargy, MLA and Tom Buchanan, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 29 January 2026.

3. Declaration of Interests

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

Colm Gildernew, MLA declared an interest as Chair of the Communities Committee and in respect of a Private Members Bill .

Stephen Dunne, MLA declared an interest as APS to the Communities Minister.

4. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson congratulated Jon Burrows, MLA on his appointment as Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party.

5. Matters Arising

Members noted correspondence from the Department for Education enclosing a copy of the Careers Action Plan in respect of the inquiry into Developing the Skills for Northern Ireland's Future.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the correspondence.

Members noted correspondence from the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) regarding the open consultation on waste management.

Agreed: Members agreed to note this correspondence, and defer the proposed inquiry into waste management until strategy development is more advanced.

6. Correspondence

Members noted the latest Pivotal report, 2 Years of the Northern Ireland Executive.

Agreed: Members agreed to note this correspondence

11. Ministerial Direction – Financial Support Scheme for Bluetongue Pre-Movement Testing

Agreed: Members agreed to bring this item forward to enable consideration in open session.

The following witness joined the meeting remotely at 2.10 pm.

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

The Committee considered a Ministerial Direction issued by DAERA in relation to a Financial Support Scheme for Bluetongue Pre-Movement Testing.

Agreed: Members agreed to note the Ministerial Direction.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.26 pm.

7. Inquiry on Homelessness in Northern Ireland

The following witnesses and officials joined the meeting at 2.26 pm.

Dorinnia Carville, C&AG (Remote);

Tomas Wilkinson, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO);

Barry Mitchell, Audit Manager, NIAO;

Claire Turner, Senior Auditor, NIAO

Members noted a draft report on Homelessness from the Committee for Communities.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the report for inclusion in the appendices of the final report on Homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Members considered the first draft of the report into Homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed to revise the headings within the report and return for further consideration on 12 February 2026.

Witnesses left the meeting at 2.46pm.

8. Draft Forward Work Programme

The following witness joined the meeting remotely at 2.10 pm.

Dorinnia Carville, C&AG (Remote);

Agreed: Members agreed to conduct an inquiry into Major IT Projects.

Agreed: Members agreed to issue an invitation to Departmental witnesses.

Agreed: Members agreed to release the report into Leading and Resourcing in the Civil Service from primacy.

The Assistant Clerk briefed Members on plans for the launch of the report on Homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Members received a briefing on the planned launch of the report into Homelessness in Northern Ireland

Colm Gildernew, MLA left the meeting at 2.40 pm.

Colm Gildernew, MLA rejoined the meeting at 2.42 pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to hold the launch at NICVA due to lack of availability at the Skainos Centre.

Agreed: Members agreed to consider the draft forward work programme following further review.

9. Any Other Business

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 12 February 2026 at 2.00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.26 pm.

Daniel McCrossan

Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

12 February 2026