

# **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL 2014  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Michaela Boyle (Chairperson)  
Mr John Dallat (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Trevor Clarke  
Mr Michael Copeland  
Mr Alex Easton  
Mr Ross Hussey  
Mr Daithí McKay  
Mr Seán Rogers

In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Trevor Allen (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)  
Miss Clare Rice (Bursary Student)

Apologies: Mr Chris Hazzard  
Mr Adrian McQuillan  
Mr Paul Girvan

*2.19pm The meeting opened in public session*

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are listed above.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting on 9 April 2014**

*Agreed: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.*

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **Correspondence from Margaret Ritchie MP**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from Margaret Ritchie MP on the recruitment of hospital doctors at all levels and agreed to defer consideration of the correspondence until it receives an update on the implementation of the recommendations contained in its report on the use of locum doctors by Northern Ireland hospitals. The Committee also agreed to write to Margaret Ritchie indicating its decision.

#### Correspondence from the Social Development Committee

The Committee noted an invitation from the Social Development Committee inviting the Comptroller and Auditor General to give to the Committee on its Inquiry into Allegations Regarding NIHE Contracts.

#### Correspondence in relation to a complaint raised by staff at the South West College

The Committee noted a reply from the Northern Ireland Audit Office in response to a complaint raised by staff at the South West College.

#### Committee Visit Report

*Agreed:* The Committee considered a draft report on its visit to Millburn Primary School as part of the 'Inquiry into Pupil Attendance – Follow-Up Report' and agreed that the report be published on the Committee's pages of the Assembly website.

#### **4. Inquiry into Department of Finance and Personnel – Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand – Consideration of Memorandum of Reply**

Members noted a Memorandum of Reply in relation to the Committee's report on 'Department of Finance and Personnel – Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand' and agreed to defer consideration to the meeting of 7 May 2014.

*2.26pm the meeting moved to closed session*

#### **5. Inquiry into Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud in Northern Ireland – briefing session**

*2.27pm Mr Clarke joined the meeting*

*2.33pm Mr McKay joined the meeting*

*2.43pm Mr Rogers joined the meeting*

*2.43pm Mr Copeland left the meeting*

*Messrs Clarke, Hussey and Rogers declared an interest in this inquiry as private landlords*

The Committee received briefing from the C&AG, Denver Lynn, Roger McCance and Richard Emerson on the Audit Office's report 'Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud in Northern Ireland'.

*3.05pm Mr Hussey left the meeting*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request updated information, from the Accounting Officer of the Department for Social Development, on the information contained in the Audit Office's report.

*3.09pm Mr Hussey re-joined the meeting*

#### **6. Any Other Business**

#### Meeting with the Minister for Finance and Personnel

Members received an update on a meeting of the Chairperson and Deputy

Chairperson with the Minister for Finance and Personnel on 29<sup>th</sup> April in relation to the handling of Memoranda of Reply.

*3.19pm Mr Hussey left the meeting*

*3.21pm Mr Rogers left the meeting*

*3.26pm Mr Rogers re-joined the meeting*

## **7. Matters Arising (Continued...)**

Correspondence from Peter May, Accounting Officer, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

*3.31pm Mr Easton left the meeting*

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Peter May, Accounting Officer for DCAL, in relation to the memorandum of reply to the Committee's report on 'DCAL: Management of Major Capital Project'. Members agreed to respond to Mr May in relation to the Committee's previous request for information.

Correspondence from Dr Andrew McCormick, Accounting Officer, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)

The Committee noted correspondence from Dr Andrew McCormick, Accounting Officer for DHSSPS, in relation to the memorandum of reply to the Committee's report on 'NIFRS: An Organisational Assessment and Review of Departmental Oversight and Report on Accounts 2011-2012'.

## **8. Any Other Business (Continued...)**

Draft Press Release on the Committee's Report on NI Water's Response to a Suspected Fraud and DRD: Review of an Investigation of a Whistleblower Complaint

The Committee considered and approved a draft press release on the above inquiry.

## **9. Inquiry into Improving Pupil Attendance: Follow-Up Report – Consideration of Draft Report**

Members noted correspondence from Mr Paul Sweeney, Accounting Officer for the Department of Education, clarifying issues raised during the meeting of 12 March 2014.

The Committee considered its draft report on the above inquiry.

Introduction Section

Paragraphs 1 to 4 read and agreed.

Progress Since 2004

Paragraphs 5 and 6 read and agreed.

Paragraph 7 read, amended and agreed.

Paragraph 8 read and agreed.

*4.03pm Mr Clarke left the meeting*

*4.07pm Mr Clarke left the meeting*

Recommendation 1 read, amended and agreed.  
Paragraph 9 read and agreed.  
Paragraph 10 read, amended and agreed.  
Paragraph 11 read and agreed.

Parental and Community Engagement

Paragraphs 12 read, amended and agreed.  
Paragraphs 13 and 14 read and agreed.  
Recommendation 2 read and agreed.

Good Practice

Paragraph 15 read and agreed.  
Paragraph 16 read, amended and agreed.  
Paragraph 17 read and agreed.  
Recommendations 3 and 4 read and agreed.

Education Welfare Service

Paragraphs 18 to 20 deferred for consideration at the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014.  
Paragraph 21 read and agreed.  
Paragraph 22 read, amended and agreed.  
Recommendation 5 deferred for consideration at the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

Joined Up Working

Paragraphs 23 to 26 read, amended and agreed.  
Recommendation 6 read and agreed.

Executive Summary

Paragraphs 1 to 4 read and agreed.  
Paragraph 5 read, amended and agreed.  
Paragraphs 6 to 15 read and agreed.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1 read, amended and agreed.  
Recommendations 2 to 4 read and agreed.  
Recommendation 5 deferred for consideration at the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014.  
Recommendation 6 read and agreed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the appendices to the report to the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

**10. Date, time and place of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 7 May 2014 at 2.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*4.25pm the meeting adjourned*

**Ms Michaela Boyle**  
**Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee**