

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2016, THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Robbie Butler MLA
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA
Ms Michelle Gildernew MLA
Mr Declan Kearney MLA
Ms Carla Lockhart MLA
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
- Apologies: Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Darren Weir, Clerical Officer

2.02 pm The meeting began in open session

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

2. Minutes of the meeting 8 June 2016

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 8 June 2016 were agreed.

2.04 p.m. Ms Gildernew joined the meeting.

2.12 p.m. Ms Lockhart joined the meeting.

2.14 p.m. Mr Dunne joined the meeting.

2.15 p.m. Ms Gildernew left the meeting.

3. Matters arising

There were no Matters Arising.

4. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

5. Inquiry into Department of Education: Sustainability of Schools – Memorandum of Reply

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education to request clarification around the review of the approved enrolment figures and the expected timescale for completion; the Committee agreed to request clarification around the process the Department will use to encourage “buy-in” to develop Area Plans.

Agreed: The Committee noted the Memorandum of Reply in respect of the Inquiry into the Department of Education: Sustainability of Schools and agreed to request a 12 month update.

6. Inquiry into Invest to Save Funding in Northern Ireland: Memorandum of Reply

Agreed: The Committee noted the Memorandum of Reply in respect of the Inquiry into Invest to Save Funding in Northern Ireland and agreed to request a 12 month update.

2.24 p.m. Ms Gildernew rejoined the meeting.

7. Inquiry into the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Trust Statement for the year ended 31 March 2013: Memorandum of Reply

Noted: The Committee noted the Memorandum of Reply Update on the Inquiry into the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Trust Statement for the year ended 31 March 2013.

8. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid: Introduction to Briefing Session

The following Northern Ireland Audit Office officials joined the meeting at 2.35 p.m.

Kieran Donnelly
Neil Gray
Sean Beattie
Kerry Harkin

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

2.39 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session.

9. Inquiry into Managing Legal Aid: Briefing Session

The Northern Ireland Audit Office briefed the Committee on its report into Managing Legal Aid. This was followed by a question and answer session.

2.43 p.m. Mr Dunne left the meeting.

2.47 p.m. Mr Dunne rejoined the meeting.

3.22 p.m. Ms Gildernew left the meeting.

3.23 p.m. Ms Gildernew rejoined the meeting.

3.33 p.m. Mr Butler left the meeting.

3.39 p.m. Mr Butler rejoined the meeting.

3.39 p.m. Mr Kearney left the meeting.

3.39 p.m. Mr Dunne left the meeting.

3.42 p.m. Mr Dunne rejoined the meeting.

3.43 p.m. Mr Kearney rejoined the meeting.

10. Inquiry into the Governance of Land and Property in the NI Housing Executive: Correspondence received from an anonymous whistle blower

The clerk briefed the Committee on correspondence received from an anonymous whistle blower in respect of the Inquiry into the Governance of Land and Property in the NI Housing Executive.

3.45 p.m. Ms Lockhart left the meeting.

3.46 p.m. Ms Lockhart rejoined the meeting.

3.46 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

3.47 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

3.52 p.m. Ms Lockhart left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Audit Committee for its consideration.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information from the Northern Ireland Audit Office on issues raised within the whistleblowing correspondence in connection with the Houses for Land Report 2004 and subsequent Governance of Land and Property in NI Housing Executive Report.

11. Any Other Business

There was no further business to discuss.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Wednesday 22 June 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

4.04 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)
Public Accounts Committee