



# Annual Report and Accounts

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

*“Achieving Excellence through People”*



The Local Government Staff Commission  
for Northern Ireland

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION  
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972 by the Local Government Staff Commission



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## CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

I have pleasure in introducing the Local Government Staff Commission's Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23.

Whilst we await the Minister's decision on the outcome of the consultation to ascertain if there are any reasons that the Executive decision to dissolve the Commission should be reconsidered, in November 2022 the Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities confirmed an extension to the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025.

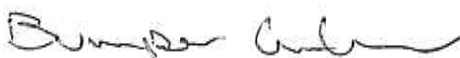
Throughout the year the Commission continued to deliver high quality services to local Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), supporting the recovery and renewal of services ensuring that our sector not only recovers from the pandemic but continues to improve and transform.

Since April 2017 the Commission has continued to reduce its core staff to one fixed term full time employee and one full time secondee and two part-time employees, one on a fixed term contract and one on a consultancy basis (previously 10 full time employees). The services provided to local government and the NI Housing Executive by the Commission continued at a high level despite the reduced staffing level and staff morale has been maintained during a period of continuing uncertainty and financial challenges.

The 2022/23 year was productive with support and assistance provided to Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, that included:

- Initiating a review of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection for adoption by Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
- Continuing to support Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with the recruitment of senior officers and the provision of best practice advice and training as required.
- Ongoing work with the sector and key stakeholders to develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum
- Development and adoption by SOLACE of a regional talent management strategy, providing a robust approach to succession planning talent acquisition, identification, and development.
- Support provided in the provision of advice and assistance in respect of the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.
- Continuing to support the work of the Equality and Diversity Strategic Working Group, with the completion of an Equality and Diversity Baseline and Impact Study to inform the new strategy and through the delivery of a programme of work to improve and maintain people's mental wellness through the delivery of the regional Mental Health Strategy.
- Delivering human resource and organisational development advice and assistance to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Commission Members and the Officer team who have continued to deliver significant progress towards the achievement of the Commission's mission to "*achieve excellence through people*". The Commission remains committed to delivering high quality services to the sector and we look forward to working with all our stakeholders and partners in the incoming year.



**Bumper Graham**  
Chairperson

## **DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES' / ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Throughout 2022/23 the Commission concentrated on delivering the objectives that were set out in the Management and Dissolution Plan 2022-23 (the Plan). This defined our overall objectives and key performance areas for the year as detailed below:

### **Key Area 1 – Essential Statutory Functions**

The delivery of the Commission's statutory functions during the management and dissolution period and the integration of designated functions within Councils, including:

- Advisory Appointments Panels
- Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- Code of Conduct for Local Government Officers
- Negotiating Machinery

### **Key Area 2 – Oversight of Statutory Functions Transferred to Councils on Dissolution**

To maintain oversight of the functions already transferred to Councils in line with the planned 31 March 2017 dissolution date and in addition continue to provide:

- Advisory and support services
- Monitoring of Fair Employment Practices

This oversight ensures the proper discharge of the Commission's functions during the pre-dissolution period.

### **Key Area 3 – Corporate Governance**

To ensure continuing good governance, accountability, and operational management of the Commission as a statutory body, including:

- Provision and maintenance of a sound system of control (audit, risk etc.)
- Finance and Administration
- Orderly Dissolution Arrangements

## **PERFORMANCE**

All staff take personal responsibility for ensuring that the objectives as detailed in the Plan are met in their day-to-day work and areas of responsibility are individually assessed. These objectives are challenging, and regular monitoring takes place to ensure compliance and detailed reports are presented regularly to the Commission and the Department for Communities.

## KEY AREAS OF WORK IN SUMMARY

This section highlights some of the activities the Commission has undertaken in 2022/23. All our strategic objectives were matched with outputs and related to initiatives to ensure increased effectiveness. To provide a full understanding of the work of the Commission this section should be read in conjunction with the Operating Review (page 5) which provides greater detail of the results achieved in relation to the objectives as set out in the Management and Dissolution Plan 2021-2023.

Due to the ongoing difficulties encountered by the NI Assembly, it has not been possible to have the necessary 'Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution) Order (Northern Ireland)' in place to wind up the Commission as planned.

Accordingly, the Department for Communities (DfC) reconstituted the Commission membership with effect from 01 April 2017 (up to the final dissolution date) and the Commission continues to develop a Management and Dissolution Plan to enable it to continue to implement its statutory duties.

The Management and Dissolution actions relate to main Key Performance Areas as follows:

- Assistance was provided to Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to implement the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, to include the delivery of the observer strategy for 37 recruitment panels for senior posts.
- The Commission administered Chief Executive exercises on behalf of Belfast City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and arc21.
- Commission has initiated an exercise to review and update the Code Procedures for Recruitment and Selection with a view that it will be issued for application from 01 Jan 2024
- There has been significant consultation with Councils, trade unions, NILGA, the Labour Relations Agency and other key stakeholders to develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum. Work will continue over the course of the next year to engage with the sector to design and develop a framework that adds value to all the stakeholders.
- Advisory services were provided to Councils and the NIHE in relation to employee relations problems and general HR practices.
- Commission officers continued to support and facilitate joint working groups, for example, the Equality and Diversity Group, the Talent Management Group, Health and Well-Being Group, the Statutory Duty Network and the Diversity Ambassadors' Network.
- The Commission provides secretariat support to PPMA.
- Working in partnership with Councils and the NIHE, the Commission continued to support the Equality and Diversity Strategic Working Group, to deliver the new strategy and through the delivery of a regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy to support employee well-being and attendance management.
- The Commission completed an Equality and Diversity Baseline and Impact Study for the local government sector.
- An employment law seminar was organised by the Commission for Councils and the NIHE in September 2022.
- A conference entitled 'Making a Difference' was held for Councils and the NIHE in April 2022.
- Drafted, consulted and issued a 'Conducting an Investigation Toolkit' for use in Councils and NIHE.

- Published four newsletters (LGSC News) providing updates from stakeholders and key areas of work of the Commission.

To support an integrated system of management controls, the Commission's Audit Committee met five times and reviewed Audit Reports and continue to implement sound systems of control to support the Commission's objectives in accordance with Government Accounting Northern Ireland.

The Commission retained its Cyber Essentials Plus (CE+) accreditation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Stewart', with a stylized flourish to the right.

**DIANA STEWART**  
**Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer**

## **OPERATING, FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT REVIEW** **for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Background Information**

The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC) and established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972: as amended by the Finance Act 2011. Its powers were further extended under the Housing Orders (NI) 1976 and 1981 and the (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1992.

The Commission's principal function is to:

'exercise general oversight of matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers of district Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and of making recommendations to district Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on such matters.'

Specific functions are:

- developing good practice in HR management (in conjunction with wider public sector partners);
- initiating HR policy development, evaluation and review;
- acting as a single point of entry to the local government sector for major consultation exercises on HR related issues;
- representing local government on HR related issues as necessary;
- providing and/or recommending independent expert consultancy support;
- hosting and planning events on HR related topics to inform policy developments and legislative change;
- providing access to expert employment-specific legal advice and providing employment law updates;
- facilitating capacity building initiatives and promoting co-operation in the Public Sector;
- constituting and facilitating local government-specific and cross-sectoral working groups;
- arranging conferences, seminars and other networking mechanisms.

The accounts of the Commission have been prepared under a direction given by the Department for Communities, with the approval of the Department of Finance, in accordance with paragraph 11 of schedule 3 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (as amended). Accordingly, the Commission's accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis.

### **Results for the Year**

The financial results of the Commission's operation in 2022/23 are set out in detail on page 24 of this Annual Report and Accounts. The surplus for the year for net expenditure after interest was £44k compared with a deficit of £420k for 2021/22.

### **Dissolution Costs**

As a result of the proposed dissolution of the Commission, as at 31 March 2023 there was an estimated liability of £1,747,473 due to exit costs from the NILGOSC pension scheme including redundancy costs (£4,373). Of this estimated liability, £1,740,727 was included in the provision and a £2,373 deficit was included in the pension liability (see Notes 12 and 13). These costs will be met by the Department for Communities. Redundancy payments were made in the financial year up to 31 March 2023 totalling £4,373.



## **Pension Liabilities**

The Commission participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) Scheme for its employees. Following the confirmation by the Permanent Secretary in November 2022 of an extension to the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025, this year the Commission only obtained IAS 19 actuarial valuations and consequently the resulting net liability and IAS 19 disclosures have been highlighted in these financial statements (see Note 13).

There has been a change to the financial assumptions over the period. The discount rate has increased by 1.9% points, the CPI inflation assumption has reduced by 0.40% and the salary increase assumption has reduced by 0.40% points. This has had a positive effect on the balance sheet position than if the financial assumptions at the start of the period had been used. The impact of this change is recognised in Other Comprehensive Income.

## **Fixed Assets**

Details of the movement of fixed assets are set out in Note 7 to these accounts.

## **Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

- **Capacity to Handle Risk**

Procedures are implemented to identify risks associated with the implementation of the Commission's key objectives and a control strategy is put in place for each significant risk and ownership allocated to appropriate staff.

- **The Risk and Control Framework**

The risk management strategy is fully embedded into the work and future planning work of the Commission and all staff are trained in the management of risk and have an input into the regular ongoing reviews of the risk management process.

Risk management has been incorporated into the Commission's policy and decision-making process and risk procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with experience and best practice.

## **Charitable Donations**

There were no charitable donations made during 2022/23.

## **Payment to Suppliers**

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of suppliers for goods and services within 10 working days on receipt of invoice, in accordance with the Better Payment Practice Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days from the receipt of the goods or services by the Commission, or on presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand to the Commission, whichever is later. During the year, the Commission paid 388 invoices, all of which were paid within 30 days and 384 of which were paid within the 10-day target (see Note 17).

## **Research and Development**

The Commission is committed to an ongoing programme of research to develop and improve service provision. During the year, the Commission carried out research into talent management and an equality and diversity baseline and impact study.

## **Business Review**

The Commission prepares strategic and business plans for each area of responsibility and monitors performance against key performance targets. A full review of the Commission's activities is provided on pages 9 to 13 of this Annual Report.

## **Important Events Occurring After the Year End**

There have been no significant events since the year-end 31 March 2023, which would affect these accounts.

## **Members**

Membership of the Commission is set out in Appendix 2 of the 2022/23 Annual Report. A Register of Members' Interests is held in Commission offices.

## **Equality Scheme**

In pursuance of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission has prepared an equality scheme, which has been approved by the Equality Commission. This scheme details the Commission's commitment to, and proposals for, fulfilling the statutory obligations to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

## **Employee Involvement**

The Commission was committed to the involvement of employees in the decision-making process and to their development to ensure the highest standards in the delivery of all services. Learning and development opportunities were provided to all employees and a supportive culture of employee engagement exists.

## **Environmental, Social and Community Issues**

The Commission operates in a political environment and was required to be adaptable to the changing central and local government structures. In developing policies and procedures special attention was paid to legislative changes in employment matters and the need to conform to the obligations placed on public bodies by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.


## **Disclosure of Audit Information**

There is no relevant audit information of which the Commission's auditors are unaware.

The Accounting Officer has taken all reasonable steps to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Commission's auditors are aware of the information.

No fees have been raised, either this year or last year, in respect of non-audit work.

Signed:



**DIANA STEWART**  
Director of Corporate Services  
and Accounting Officer  
Date: 28 September 2023



**BUMPER GRAHAM**  
Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission

**KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1  
ESSENTIAL STATUTORY  
FUNCTIONS**

**1. ADVISORY & APPOINTMENT PANELS and CODE OF PROCEDURES ON RECRUITMENT & SELECTION**

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>We will assist Councils to implement the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and provide advice on best practice in recruitment and selection as required.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide assistance with recruitment exercises for senior posts in Councils and the NIHE, as required in line with agreed procedures.</li> <li>2. Provide advice on best practice recruitment and selection training on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>3. Attend meetings of the recruitment working group when appropriate and provide assistance, as required.</li> <li>4. Advise Councils and the NIHE on the use of assessment centres and situational judgement tests, as required.</li> <li>5. Implement the Observer Strategy for the recruitment of senior posts.</li> <li>6. Review of the Code of Practice for Recruitment &amp; Selection, to include assessment testing and assist Councils to implement new techniques.</li> <li>7. Review the regional competency framework.</li> <li>8. Issue a new Code of Procedures to Councils to coincide with the Dissolution Order and provide training to Councils on the provisions of the new Code.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of senior recruitment exercises the Commission has provided assistance with.</li> <li>• Revised Code of Procedures in place.</li> <li>• Revised Competency Framework in place.</li> <li>• Agreed arrangements in place post-dissolution.</li> </ul>

**2. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES**

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>We will provide advice and assistance in respect of the Code of Conduct for local government officers.</b></p>	<p>We will work in partnership with local Councils to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide professional advice and assistance regarding HR and OD matters including complaints, grievance, and disciplinary matters.</li> <li>2. Develop e-learning materials to support the Code of Conduct.</li> <li>3. Assist with the smooth transition in accordance with the dissolution order for new arrangements post-dissolution.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of employee relations cases supported.</li> <li>• Have arrangements in place post-dissolution.</li> <li>• Develop e-learning materials to support Councils.</li> </ul>

### 3. NEGOTIATING MACHINERY

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>We will develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum.</b></p>	<p>We will progress a programme of work to ensure that the regional machinery will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have robust operating and governance arrangements in place.</li> <li>2. Facilitate maximum engagement between and be representative of and owned by the main stakeholders i.e., the 11 Councils and the main recognised trade unions.</li> <li>3. Engage with stakeholders to create an agenda that is pro-active, performance driven, productive and effective, and produce agreements that are relevant to the needs of the sector.</li> <li>4. Give leadership on relevant people and organisational development matters.</li> <li>5. Ensure employers side representatives are nominated directly by the 11 Councils.</li> <li>6. Provide advice, assistance, and independent secretariat facilities as required.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum within the agreed timeframe.</li> </ul>

The Commission is satisfied that these actions in the Management Plan either have been fully implemented or are on track for completion by the due date.

## KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2 OVERSIGHT OF STATUTORY FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO COUNCILS ON DISSOLUTION

### 4. ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>We will support Councils and NIHE in the provision of HR and OD advice and assistance.</b></p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide advice and assistance as required.</li> <li>2. Promote best practice through 'LGSC News' and other mediums.</li> <li>3. Attendance at regional networking meetings and engage with all relevant stakeholders to understand their needs e.g. PPMA</li> <li>4. Assist with investigations and independent consultancy support as required.</li> <li>5. Develop a Formal Investigation Toolkit and roll out a programme of training to provide guidance and support to managers who undertake the role of Investigating Officer as part of formal Disciplinary, Capability and other related policies and procedures.</li> </ol> <p>This toolkit will provide advice and guidance in respect of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Importance of Robust Workplace Investigations</li> <li>• The Investigation Process</li> <li>• Step 1 - Investigators Appointed/Terms of Reference Agreed</li> <li>• Step 2 - Devise a Plan/Investigation Interviews</li> <li>• Step 3 - Collate and Analyse Information</li> <li>• Step 4 - Create Report</li> <li>• Step 5 - Forward Report to Employee Relations</li> </ul>

	<p>6. Provide support to the Local Government Training Board with the Transition Strategy and the development and implementation of a project plan. Provide update reports from LGTG Board to the Commission to allow the Commission to exercise its oversight role.</p> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of editions of 'LGSC News' published.</li> <li>• Provision of expert consultancy support.</li> <li>• Number of sectoral working groups LGSC contribute to.</li> <li>• Evidence of advice/support.</li> <li>• Delivery of employment law update seminars as required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>We will deliver an equality and diversity programme to support Councils and NIHE to ensure fair and equitable workplaces.</b></p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design and support the delivery of an Equality and Diversity Strategy 2021-2023.</li> <li>2. Establish robust arrangements to include governance and training for the role of Diversity Champions (Ambassadors) to encourage networking, disseminating best practice. (Elected Members and Officers).</li> <li>3. Provide advice and assistance in relation to best practice arrangements for high level governance, education and training and reporting arrangements to ensure commitment and buy-in.</li> <li>4. Provide advice and assistance in relation to queries on equality and diversity.</li> <li>5. Facilitate regular meetings of the Statutory Duty Network to address common issues and collaborate on sector wide initiatives and support Councils and the NIHE to implement their Section 75 duties and Disability Action Plans.</li> <li>6. Provide best practice events on issues such as absence management and health and wellbeing.</li> <li>7. Assist with the smooth transition of the work of the Equality and Diversity Group in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution) Order (NI) 2017 (currently in draft form) for new arrangements post dissolution.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and delivery of an Equality and Diversity Strategy.</li> <li>• Review of the role of Diversity Ambassadors and roll out off training.</li> <li>• The number of Equality and Diversity events supported.</li> <li>• Robust arrangements in place post-Dissolution.</li> </ul>
<p><b>We will support Councils and NIHE to improve and maintain people's mental wellness through the delivery of the regional Mental Health Strategy.</b></p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <p>Implement the regional Mental Health Strategy to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delivery of a Health and Well-being Conference (half-day best practice Health and Well-Being event to launch the mental health toolkit, video and feature a best practice speaker).</li> <li>2. The creation of a case study document to celebrate the innovative work that has been taking place across all 11 Councils and NIHE. This will be an example of the sector's commitment to the Health and Well-Being of staff and of shared learning across the sector.</li> <li>3. Development of a Mental Health Toolkit (in partnership with Business in the Community).</li> <li>4. Commission formal research to establish a baseline position for the sector and use this as a benchmark to determine the impact and outcomes of the Mental Health Strategy.</li> <li>5. Lead on the roll out of the 'Wellbeing Hub' across the local Councils and NIHE.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the Regional Mental Health Strategy across the local government sector</li> <li>• The number of Health and Well-being events.</li> <li>• % customer satisfaction with the 'Wellbeing Hub'</li> </ul>
<p><b>To develop a talent management strategy for the sector which provides a robust approach to succession planning, talent acquisition, identification, and development.</b></p>	<p>We will work in partnership with local Councils to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish and lead a regional Talent Management Working Group, reporting to SOLACE.</li> <li>2. Scope the understanding of talent management within the sector.</li> <li>3. Develop a concise definition of talent management and a model of best practice.</li> <li>4. Develop a talent management strategy for the sector which provides a robust approach to succession planning, talent acquisition, identification, and development.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Talent Management Strategy for the sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Commission is satisfied that these actions in the Management Plan either have been fully implemented or are on track for completion by the due date.</b></p>	

**KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3  
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**6. SOUND SYSTEM OF CONTROL**

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>To continue to implement a sound system of control to support the Commission's objectives in accordance with Government Accounting Northern Ireland.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparation and publication of Annual Report and Accounts.</li> <li>2. Ensure sound systems of control and good governance are in place for all Commission business.</li> <li>3. Arrange Audit Committee meetings as required.</li> <li>4. Facilitate NIAO as required.</li> <li>5. Review and update the Commission's Risk Register.</li> <li>6. Provision of a secretariat service to all Commission meetings.</li> <li>7. Compliance with equality reporting arrangements.</li> <li>8. Update policies as per DOF and DfC instruction.</li> <li>9. Prepare responses for FOI and Data Protection meetings.</li> <li>10. Annual review of systems to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation.</li> <li>11. Ongoing liaison with Public Records Office NI to ensure special circumstances are agreed to enable PRONI to take delivery of files less than 20 years old.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Reports and Accounts published.</li> <li>• Unqualified audit opinion.</li> <li>• Compliance with all necessary regulation and policy.</li> </ul>

## 7. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>To ensure the efficient and effective day to day management of the Commission's Financial Affairs in accordance with Government Accounting Practice and Accounts Direction issued by DfC / NIAO.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparation of financial schemes and ongoing budgetary management practices.</li> <li>2. Budget reports presented at Commission and Audit Committee meetings on a bi-annual basis.</li> <li>3. Preparation of budgetary performance reports on a monthly basis for scrutiny by the Director of Corporate Services.</li> <li>4. Preparation and publication of Annual Report and Accounts</li> <li>5. Processing of salaries, allowances receipts and payments in line with agreed timelines.</li> <li>6. Monthly bank reconciliation prepared and monitored by the Director of Corporate Services.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report and Accounts published in accordance with the timeline defined by DfC.</li> <li>• Unqualified audit opinion with financial statement.</li> <li>• Financial Scheme in place.</li> <li>• Payment of salaries and allowances on agreed date.</li> <li>• Meet statutory prompt payment targets.</li> <li>• Delivery of services within budget.</li> </ul>

## 8. DISSOLUTION ARRANGEMENTS

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p><b>Progress necessary governance and resource actions to ensure the efficient and orderly dissolution of the Commission</b></p>	<p>Actions Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review assets and update asset Register, as necessary.</li> <li>2. Implement all governance arrangements relating to the Commission's dissolution as agreed by the DfC-LGSC Dissolution Project Board.</li> <li>3. Prepare for handover to DfC Dissolution Group and Public Records Office.</li> <li>4. Dispose of remaining assets.</li> <li>5. Review of accommodation provision.</li> <li>6. Draft final accounts and handover of server, etc., to the Department for Communities.</li> </ol> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orderly dissolution of the Commission.</li> </ul>

**The Commission is satisfied that these actions in the Management Plan either have been fully implemented or are on track for completion by the due date.**

## **REMUNERATION REPORT**

### **Director of Corporate Services and Senior Officers' Remuneration**

The Commission operates pay and conditions for Officers in accordance with the provisions adopted by the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services. The NIJC is the negotiating body for all staff in Councils in Northern Ireland (except Chief Executives). The pay and conditions of service for the Director of Corporate Services is determined in line with NJC pay scales rather than decisions of the negotiating body for Chief Executives in Local Government in Northern Ireland. There are no benefits in kind included in the emoluments figures.

### **Service Contracts**

All appointments are made in line with the Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection which requires appointments to be made on merit and based on fair and open competition. Given the impending dissolution of the Commission, Diana Stewart, was appointed to act as Director of Corporate Services in September 2022 and carry out duties which would have been within the remit of the former Chief Executive, as well as 'Winding Up Officer' until the Commission is dissolved.

### **Pensions**

The Staff Commission participates in the NILGOSC scheme for all of its employees. This is a fully funded defined benefit scheme and is a statutory scheme that provides benefits on a "final salary" basis for service to 31 March 2015 and on a "career average revalued earnings (CARE)" basis for service from 1 April 2015. Benefits accrue at a rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service up to 31 March 2009; at a rate of 1/60th of pensionable pay from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2015; and at a rate of 1/49th of total pay each year thereafter. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to 3/80ths of pensionable salary for each year of service up to 31 March 2009 is payable on retirement. Members pay contributions of between 5.5% to 10.5% of pensionable earnings. Pension payments increase in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

On death, pensions are payable to the surviving spouse, nominated co-habiting partner or civil partner. On death in service, the scheme pays a lump sum benefit of three times pensionable pay and also provides a service enhancement on computing the spouse's pension. The enhancement depends on length of service and cannot exceed 10 years. Medical retirement is possible in the event of serious ill-health. In this case pensions are brought into payment immediately without actuarial reduction and with service enhanced as for widow(er) pensions.

The Chairperson is not a contributing member of the NILGOSC pension scheme.

### **Chairperson and Commission Members**

The Chairperson and Commission Members' allowances, travel and subsistence are set by the Department for Communities as per the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland). The Chairperson's annual remuneration is £14,398 and Commission Members may claim expenses of £126 per day for attending Commission meetings and events.

### **Service Contracts for Chairperson and Commission Members**

The appointments of the Chairperson and Commission Members are made by the Minister for Communities. All appointments are made in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments for the Northern Ireland Code of Practice. The current Commission was appointed in December 2014 until 31 March 2017 and reconstituted from 1 April 2017 until the final dissolution date, due to ongoing difficulties encountered in the NI Assembly. Bumper Graham was appointed as the Chairperson with effect from 5 October 2020.





## Senior Officers' Emoluments

The Commission is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid officer and the median remuneration of the Commission's Workforce.

The banded full-time equivalent (FTE) remuneration of the highest-paid officer in the financial year 2022/23 was £70k - £75k and in the financial year 2021/22 was £65k - £70k. This was 1.79 times the median remuneration of the workforce in 2022/23, an increase from 2021/22 (1.6).

Total remuneration includes annual salary (the Commission does not pay any benefits in kind or operate a staff bonus scheme). The calculation does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions or cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

## Staff Costs

	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2022/23 Total No's	2021/22 Total No's
(a) The average weekly number of employees (full time equivalent) was:	2.4	0.5	2.9	3.6
<hr/>				
	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2022/23 Total No's	2020/21 Total No's
(b) The costs incurred in respect of these employees were:				
Salaries and Wages	115	38	153	132
Social Security Costs	11	5	16	26
Pension Costs – NILGOSC	39	7	46	34
	165	50	215	192
Current/Past Service Costs	52		52	24
	4		4	
Superannuation - re: charge to provision	(38)		(38)	(18)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>198</b>

All of the above figures were subject to audit.

Under IAS 19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense once the employee earns the benefits, irrespective of whether they have been paid. This includes the cost of any untaken leave at the year end. The cost of untaken leave is determined using the Commission's annual leave records.

There is one member of senior staff on pay scales as laid out in page 15. The overall breakdown of staff employed by the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2023 was 5 female staff.

The average number of sick days for 2022/23 was 16.7 days per staff member (2021/22: 3.6 days) due to long term sickness absence by one employee.

Expenditure on seconded staff in 2022/23 was £50,006 (2021/22 - £122,071). Expenditure on agency staff in 2022/23 was £nil (2021/22 - £3,191.82, FTE: 0.08). Expenditure on consultancy in 2022/23 was £19,830 (2021/22 - £17,570). This relates to administration services.

### **Reporting of Review of Public Administration compensation scheme – exit packages**

Exit packages cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
		£'000	£'000
< £10,000	- (-)	- (1)	- (1)
£10,000 - £25,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£25,000 - £50,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£50,000 - £100,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£150,000 - £200,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£250,000 - £300,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
Total number of exit packages	- (-)	- (1)	- (1)
Total cost	£Nil (£Nil)	(£4)	(£4)

One member of staff received redundancy in the 2022/23 year as a result of a review of staffing requirements. Redundancy costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Review of Public Administration Staff Severance Scheme and The Local Government Reorganisation (Compensation for Loss of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Exit costs have been accounted for in full in the year that the departure was agreed.

There were no early retirements or ill-health retirements agreed during 2022/23.

### Pension Entitlement of Director of Corporate Services

	Real Increase in Pension and related lump sum at age 65	Total Accrued Pension at age 65 and related lump sum	CETV at 31/03/2022	CETV at 31/03/2023	Real Increase in CETV after adjustment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Helen Hall Director of Corporate Services	0.0 – 2.5 Plus lump sum 0.0–0.0	0 – 5 Plus lump sum 0-0	17	7	-
Diana Stewart Director of Corporate Services	0.0 – 2.5 Plus lump sum 0.0–0.0	0 – 5 Plus lump sum 0-0	--	15	-

All of the above figures were subject to audit.

### Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV)

A CETV is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by members at a particular point in time. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures include any other pension details which an individual has transferred from another pension scheme and any additional benefit which has resulted from the purchasing of additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

### Real Increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Signed:



**DIANA STEWART**  
**Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer**  
**DATE: 28 September 2023**

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

In November 2022 the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities confirmed an extension to the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025.

Accordingly, the Department for Communities (DfC) reconstituted the Commission membership with effect from 01 April 2017 (up to the final dissolution date). The Commission has developed a Management Plan 2022 – 2023 to enable it to continue to determine its statutory and non-statutory work until it is gradually passed to Councils.

To reflect the Ministers' decision to carry out a follow-up consultation and to ensure good governance the Commission's workplan was updated. The Management Plan reflects stakeholder requirements and takes account of the changing needs of Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

The Management and Dissolution Actions relate to three main Key Performance Areas as follows:

### **KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1 – ESSENTIAL STATUTORY FUNCTIONS**

The delivery of the Commission's statutory functions during the management and dissolution period and the integration of designated functions within Councils, including:

- Advisory Appointments Panels
- Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection
- Code of Conduct for Local Government Officers
- Negotiating Machinery

### **KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2 – OVERSIGHT OF STATUTORY FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO COUNCILS ON DISSOLUTION**

To maintain oversight of the functions already transferred to Councils in line with the planned dissolution date, including:

- Advisory and support services
- Monitoring of Fair Employment Practices

This oversight ensures the proper discharge of the Commission's functions.

### **KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

To ensure continuing good governance, accountability, and operational management of the Commission as a statutory body, including:

- Sound System of Control (audit, risk etc.)
- Finance and Administration
- Orderly Dissolution Arrangements

## **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Over recent years the Commission has adopted a more focused approach to business planning and implementation and has amended its policy statement to reflect this. The work of the Commission has become more output focused and the Commission's commitment to continuous improvement and raising standards in local government and the wider public service is demonstrated by its statement of purpose – "Achieving Excellence through People".

The Commission recognises that it is part of a wider public service community and has formed partnering arrangements with the following organisations:

- Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)
- Labour Relations Agency (LRA)
- Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)
- Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)
- Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services (NIJC)
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
- Local Government Management Association (LGMA – Southern Ireland)
- Public Appointments Service (PAS – Southern Ireland)
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Public Sector People Managers' Association (PPMA)
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)
- Health and Safety Executive NI (HSE)
- Chief Executives Forum
- Ulster University
- Trade Unions

This partnership working has brought economies of scale to the development of new initiatives and provided for benchmarking arrangements.

To integrate an improvement culture in all aspects of the Commission's work overarching themes of Communication, Marketing Services and Measuring Success were developed and have underpinned the work of the Commission. These informed the operational areas of the Commission's work and ensured that key objectives were implemented in a consistent manner.

Plans were developed and reviewed regularly to increase service delivery.

The Commission has an Audit Committee which meet regularly and approved the Commission's accounting procedures, risk management strategy, policy and risk register and received significant input from both the Commission's internal and external auditors.



**DIANA STEWART**  
**Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

To be the strategic organisation for the development of human resource management and the promotion of excellence through people in the delivery of local government services in Northern Ireland.

**STRATEGIC AREAS AND MANDATES**

These mandates are derived from Local Government legislation and are quoted in full where appropriate.

**Equality of Opportunity**

"establishing a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to Councils and to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers, and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

Monitoring "the fair employment practices of Councils and their compliance with statutory requirements in relation to fair employment."

[Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1992]

**Training and Development**

"promoting or assisting the development of, or providing, facilities for the training of officers."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972]

**Employee Relations**

"promoting or assisting the establishment of, or establishing procedures for the negotiation between Councils and officers of Councils, or the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, or associations representing either of them of standard rates of remuneration, or other terms and conditions of employment, for officers of Councils, and recommending the adoption by Councils of rates, terms and conditions so negotiated."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

**Advisory and Support Services**

"assessing the probable future requirements of Councils and of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for the recruitment of officers."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

**Promoting Co-Operation**

"promoting co-operation between Councils, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, public bodies, government departments and educational institutions in matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers, and promoting the temporary transfer of officers (with their consent) in pursuance of arrangements made between Councils or between Councils and any such bodies, departments or institutions."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]





**COMMISSION OFFICERS**

The functions of the Staff Commission are managed by staff as follows:

**DIANA STEWART**

Director of Corporate Services

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Commission's Management Plan and the Management of Resources

**VIVIEN DAVIDSON**

Accounting & Dissolution Officer

Responsible for financial services and dissolution activities

**\*THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

## **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Statement of Commission's and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities**

#### **The Commission's Responsibility**

Under Regulation 10 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Commission is required to approve the accounts.

#### **The Accounting Officer's Responsibilities**

Under Section 40 and Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Finance Act 2011, the Department for Communities has directed the Local Government Staff Commission to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Commission and of its income and expenditure, recognised gains and losses, and cash flows for the financial year.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Northern Ireland Audit Office auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department for Communities, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of the Department for Communities has designated Mrs Diana Stewart as Accounting Officer of the Local Government Staff Commission. The responsibilities of the Accounting Officer, including responsibility for:

- the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable,
- keeping proper records, and
- safeguarding the Staff Commission's assets

are set out in the Accounting Officer's Memorandum published by the Department of Finance.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**

**Certificate of the Accounting Officer and Commission Approval of the Statement of Accounts**

**Certificate of the Accounting Officer**

I certify that:-

- (a) the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and under the accounting policies set out in Note 1.
- (b) in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DIANA STEWART**

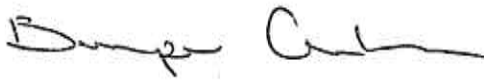
**Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer**

**Date: 28 September 2023**

**Commission Approval of Statement of Accounts**

These accounts were approved by the Commission on 28 September 2023

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

**BUMPER GRAHAM**

**Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**

### **Governance Statement for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2023**

#### **Scope of Responsibility**

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for ensuring that the Commission's business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, whilst safeguarding the public funds and the Commission's assets, for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money.

The Commission has Internal and External Auditors as well as regular and robust reporting arrangements to both the Commission itself and the Audit Committee. There are sound and thorough accountability arrangements surrounding my role of Accounting Officer.

The Commission has agreed with its sponsoring Department, the Department for Communities, a Management Plan which sets out objectives and actions up to dissolution of the Commission. Results against targets and performance measures are considered monthly by officers and reported to the Commission on a bi-annual basis.

The Dossier of Controls, Managing Public Money NI and relevant Dear Accounting Officer Letters set out the controls to be exercised over the different areas of activity, either by the Department directly or by the Commission.

The Accounting Officer must ensure that the Commission adheres to the conditions attached to the public funds provided to it.

#### **The Governance Statement Review**

The Commission's Audit Committee met on 12 April, 21 June, 20 September 2022, 24 January and 21 March 2023. Through Audit Reports from the Local Government Auditor and the Commission's Internal Auditor, the Committee were able to satisfy themselves that the Commission was working within the Commission's Governance Framework.

#### **The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

The Governance Framework comprises the systems, processes, culture, and values by which the Commission is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its stakeholders. It enables the Commission to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control in the Commission is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage and reduce risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

The Governance Framework has been in place at the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts and accords with Department of Finance guidance.

## **The Governance Framework**

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Commission's governance arrangements include:

### **Identifying and Communicating the Commission's Vision of its Purpose and Intended Outcomes**

The Management Plan has been developed to guide the Commission's work for the year 2022-2023. It is based on key stakeholder requirements and the Commission's statutory functions arising from the reduction in the level of staffing and the uncertainty surrounding the dissolution of the Commission.

The objectives, targets and performance measures set out in the Management Plan are approved by the Department for Communities. The Departmental Accounting Officer designates the Director of Corporate Services of the Local Government Staff Commission as the Staff Commission's Accounting Officer.

An engagement exercise with Chief Executives of the 11 Councils and NIHE was undertaken by the Director of Corporate Services from December 2022 to January 2023 to obtain feedback on the Commission's work (Performance Measures) and future requirements.

### **The Commission's Board including Structure and Performance**

The Commission's Board includes a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and eight Members who have been appointed by the Department for Communities. The Chairperson was appointed on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The Members meet at least four times each year as detailed in the Commission's Standing Orders May 2021 by which the Members are bound.

Members of the Commission have a corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Commission complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds as detailed within the 'Code of Best Practice' June 2014 - *"Commission Members must comply at all times with this Code of Conduct (or any agreed modification of it) and with rules relating to the use of public funds and must act in good faith and in the best interests of the Commission. They should not use information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests."*

The Commission has operated an Audit Committee since February 2004. The terms of reference were revised in March 2011 to ensure they were consistent with best practice; however, given the annual expenditure and level of operation of the Commission it was agreed that the Audit Committee would have a minimum of two meetings per annum.

The Audit Committee provides an independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework and associated control environment within the Commission. It provides an independent scrutiny of the Commission's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it exposes it to risk and weakens the control environment. During the year, the Audit Committee reviewed the effectiveness of internal audit, audit plans and external audit annual audit letter and findings.

The Commission has fully complied with the Corporate Governance Code with no unexplained departures during the year.

**Commission Member Attendance from 01 April 2022 – 31 March 2023**

	<b>Commission Meetings Attended – (9 held)</b>	<b>Audit Committee Meetings Attended – (5 held)</b>
Bumper Graham	8	4
Monica Burns	8	N/A
Paul Corrigan	6	N/A
William Francey	8	5
Lindsay Boal	5	N/A
Robert Hutchinson	8	5
Bernie Kelly	7	N/A
Charlie Mack	7	N/A
Roisin McDonough	5	N/A
Hilary Singleton	9	5

**Measuring the Quality of Services for Users, for ensuring they are delivered in accordance with the Commission’s objectives and for ensuring that they represent the best use of resources**

The Commission has three key performance areas: Carrying Out Essential Statutory Functions, Oversight of Statutory Functions Transferred to Councils on Dissolution and Corporate Governance.

Progress on meeting the actions detailed within the Key Performance Areas (KPAs) is addressed monthly by the Management Team and reported on an ongoing basis to Commission Members by the officers with responsibility for development and implementation of each KPA.

The Annual Report is produced and includes information on the performance of the Commission in relation to the Management Plan.

The Commission is provided with detailed papers for every meeting, which include all relevant background information necessary to fully inform Commission Members on each agenda item. Some examples of the types of information provided to the Committee on a routine basis include:

- Financial Accounts
- Updates from Working Groups
- Audit Committee Minutes
- Management Plan progress reports

All Commission Members are provided with key corporate documents and have a working knowledge of these. Commission Members have secure electronic access to meeting papers and confirmed their satisfaction with this approach.

**Risk Assessment**

The Commission reviewed its Risk Management Strategy and Policy in October 2020 which sets out the organisation’s attitude to risk, defines the structure for the management and ownership of risk and for the management of situations should control failure lead to the realisation of risk.

The Commission’s Risk Management Strategy and Policy specifies the way in which risk issues are to be considered at each management level of business planning; details how new activities will be assessed for risk; and defines the way in which the risk register, and risk evaluation criteria will be regularly reviewed.

## **The Risk and Control Framework**

The Commission's strategic and business planning system provides the framework for the consideration of risks and risk appetite. Annual reviews of objectives and assessment of risks are undertaken as part of that process. Risk is evaluated taking account of the likelihood of realisation of the risk and the impact of realisation of the risk. Risk priorities during 2022/2023 included the dissolution of the Commission following the RPA decision, resources to fulfil objectives and dissolution activities, and ensuring good governance arrangements are in place.

## **Internal Controls**

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts and accords with Treasury guidance.

## **Internal Audit**

The Commission has an outsourced Internal Audit function with Cavanagh Kelly. The Internal Audit Plan has been developed, in line with the Government Internal Audit Standards, to ensure that Internal Audit can efficiently and effectively provide the Commission with an objective evaluation of, and opinion on, the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance. Overall Internal Audit provided a satisfactory level of assurance for the system of internal controls within the Commission for 2022/23.

## **External Audit**

\*The Northern Ireland Audit Office has provided audit findings through the provision of the annual external audit, the Annual Audit Letter and the Independent Auditor's Report (pending).

## **Significant Governance Issues**

Following consultation, the decision of the Minister on 23 October 2013 to wind up the Commission in March 2017 was subsequently endorsed by the Executive Committee in June 2014 representing a significant governance risk. Consequently, a project plan was put in place by the Department for Communities to ensure a timely and orderly wind up. Related risks were identified, and a sub-group established to oversee the wind down in line with the risk register. In January 2017, the NI Assembly was dissolved and the LGSC Dissolution legislation was not passed therefore the Commission was extended beyond 31 March 2018 for an as yet undefined period of time. In addition, the Department for Communities reconstituted Commission membership with effect from 01 April 2017 to dissolution and a Management Plan has been put in place for ongoing operations. In November 2021, the Minister for Communities, invited views from key stakeholders on "*whether there are any reasons that the Executive decision in 2014 to dissolve the Commission should be reconsidered*". This consultation was completed, and we await the Minister's decision. In November 2022 the Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities, confirmed an extension to the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025.



Signed: 

**DIANA STEWART**  
Director of Corporate Services & Accounting Officer



**BUMPER GRAHAM**  
Chairperson, Local Government Staff  
Commission

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I have audited the financial statements of The Local Government Staff Commission for the year ended 31 March 2023 under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. The financial statements comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and the related notes including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom supported by UK adopted international accounting standards.

I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23, of the financial position of The Local Government Staff Commission as at 31 March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities' directions issued thereunder.

### **Basis for opinion**

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of The Local Government Staff Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that The Local Government Staff Commission's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Local Government Staff Commission's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## **Other Information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements, the parts of the Remuneration Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information included in the Annual Report and Accounts. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

## **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities' directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 is consistent with the financial statements.

## **Matters on which I report by exception**

In light of the knowledge and understanding of The Local Government Staff Commission and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Annual Report and Accounts.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if:

- in my opinion:
  - the Annual Governance Statement:
    - does not reflect compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23;
    - does not comply with proper practices specified by the Department for Communities;
    - is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit; or
  - adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
  - the Annual Report and Accounts and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
  - I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.
- I issue a report in the public interest under Article 9 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005; or
- I designate under Article 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 any recommendation made to the Commission; or
- I exercise the other special powers of the auditor under Article 19 to 21 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

## **Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Commission's and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the Local Government Staff Commissions' ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

## **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Commission through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on The Local Government Staff Commission's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Commission's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud;

- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
  - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
  - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
  - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
  - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my certificate.

This report is made solely to the Members of The Local Government Staff Commission in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and for no other purpose, as specified in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Local Government Auditor and Local Government Bodies.

## **Certificate**

I certify that I have completed the audit of accounts of The Local Government Staff Commission in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

*Colette Kane*

**Colette Kane**  
 Local Government Auditor  
 Northern Ireland Audit Office  
 106 University Street  
 Belfast  
 BT7 1EU  
 29th September 2023

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION  
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE  
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

	Notes	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Income from district Councils and N.I. Housing Executive		476	419
Statutory income to defray provision	3	3	(284)
Other operating income	4	25	3
Net Return on Assets	13	1	(12)
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b>505</b>	<b>126</b>
Staff costs	5	233	48
Purchase of goods and services	6	253	237
Depreciation and impairment charges	7	3	4
Provision expense	12	(28)	257
Other operating expenditure			
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>		<b>461</b>	<b>546</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure/ (income)</b>		<b>(44)</b>	<b>420</b>
Finance income		-	-
Finance expenses		-	-
<b>Net expenditure/ (income) for the year ended 31 March 2023</b>		<b>(44)</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Other comprehensive net expenditure</b>			
Items which will not be reclassified to the operating costs:			
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	7		-
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets		-	-
- Actuarial (gain)/loss on pension scheme liabilities	13(h)	13	(409)
Items which may be reclassified to net operating costs:			
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of investments		-	-
<b>Comprehensive net expenditure/ (income) for the year</b>		<b>(31)</b>	<b>11</b>

The amounts set out above arise wholly from continuing operations.  
The notes on pages 41 to 58 form part of these accounts.


**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	31 Mar 23 £000s	31 Mar 22 £000s Restated
<b>Non-current assets:</b>			
Property, plant & equipment	7	9	17
Intangible assets		-	-
Trade & other receivables	9	-	-
Financial assets		-	-
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Assets classified as held for sale	8	-	-
Inventories		-	-
Trade & other receivables	9	1,775	1,752
Other current assets		-	-
Financial assets		-	-
Cash & cash equivalents	10	767	903
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2,542</b>	<b>2,655</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>2,551</b>	<b>2,672</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	11	(85)	(235)
Provisions	12	(1,745)	(1,773)
Other liabilities		-	-
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(1,830)</b>	<b>(2,008)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>721</b>	<b>664</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions	12	-	-
Other payables	11	-	-
Financial liabilities	13	-	26
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<b>721</b>	<b>690</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity and other reserves</b>			
General Fund		721	690
Revaluation Reserve		-	-
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>721</b>	<b>690</b>

The financial statements were approved by the Commission on 28 September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



**DIANA STEWART**  
Director of Corporate Services  
and Accounting Officer



**BUMPER GRAHAM**  
Chairperson, Local Government Staff  
Commission

The notes on pages 41 to 58 form part of these accounts.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**  
**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net operating cost		44	(420)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	7	3	4
Interest Payables			
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	9	(22)	283
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	11	(146)	(161)
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	12	(28)	257
Return on Net Assets in Pension Fund	13	(1)	12
Current/Past Service Cost/Settlement Cost	13	52	24
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(98)</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	7	-	(8)
Employer's Superannuation	13	(38)	(168)
Interest			
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant and equipment			
Proceeds of disposal of intangibles			
<b>Net cash outflows from investing activities</b>		<b>(38)</b>	<b>(176)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Grants from sponsoring department		-	-
Net financing from the National Insurance Fund		-	-
Net financing from the Contingencies Fund & National Loans Fund		-	-
Capital elements of payments in respect of finance leases and on balance sheet (SoFP) PFI Contracts		-	-
<b>Net financing</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>		<b>(136)</b>	<b>(177)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period</b>		<b>903</b>	<b>1080</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	10	<b>767</b>	<b>903</b>

The notes on pages 41 to 58 form part of these accounts.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY**  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	General Fund	Revaluation Reserve	Total Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>	701	-	701
Retained surplus/(deficit)	(420)	-	(420)
Revaluation of non-current assets (see Note 7)	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension (see Note 13h)	409	-	409
Transfer between reserves	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>690</b>
Retained surplus/(deficit)	44	-	43
Revaluation of non-current assets (see Note 7)	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension (see Note 13h)	(13)	-	(13)
Transfer between reserves	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>720</b>

The notes on pages 41 to 58 form part of these accounts.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**

## **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

### **Note 1: Statement of Accounting Policies**

#### **ACCOUNTING CONVENTION**

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention, modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets, and with paragraph 11 of Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Finance Act 2011.

Without limiting the information given, the financial statements comply with the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and the requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FrM) which is in force for the financial year for which the accounts are being prepared, insofar as those requirements are appropriate. The accounting policies contained in the FrM apply International Financial Reporting Standards as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

#### **DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION**

Following the decision of the Minister to wind the Commission up in March 2017 a project plan was put in place by the Department for Communities to ensure a timely and mannerly wind up. The Department for Communities has agreed to acquire the assets of the Commission and assume responsibility for all liabilities on dissolution. Draft legislation was prepared in this respect. It was not possible to have the necessary Dissolution Order in place to wind up the Commission on 31 March 2017 as planned. As a result, the Department for Communities (DfC) decided to reconstitute the Commission membership with effect from 1 April 2017 (up to the final dissolution date). On this basis, the Commission has developed a Management Plan to enable it to continue to implement statutory duties until it is dissolved.

The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis.

#### **INCOME**

Contributions from district Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive are credited to income in the year to which they relate.

Income from activities represents the amount receivable for goods and services supplied to external customers during the year.

#### **PAYMENTS TO SUPPLIERS**

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of suppliers for goods and services within 10 working days on receipt of invoice, in accordance with the Better Payment Practice Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days from the receipt of goods or services by The Commission, or on presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand to The Commission, whichever is later.

## **Note 1: Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)**

### **PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

The Commission's property, plant and equipment comprise, computer equipment and fixtures and fittings. The threshold for capitalisation of an individual or grouped item of property, plant and equipment is £500. This will enable the Commission to capitalise replacement computer equipment which can be purchased at a lower cost.

Depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis in order to write off the valuation, less any residual value, over the estimated useful lives. Assets held for sale are not depreciated. The estimated useful lives, which are reviewed regularly, are:

Computer Equipment	3-5 years
Fixtures and Fittings	5-10 years

### **NON-CURRENT ASSETS HELD FOR SALE**

Non-current assets are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. Non-current assets held for sale are measured at the lower of their previous carrying amount and fair value less costs to sell. Fair value is open market value including alternative uses.

The profit or loss arising on disposal of an asset is the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying amount and is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. On disposal, the balance for the asset in the revaluation reserve is transferred to the General Fund.

Plant and equipment that is to be scrapped or demolished does not qualify for recognition as held for sale. Instead, it is retained as an operational asset and its economic life is adjusted. The asset is de-recognised when it is scrapped or demolished.

### **INVENTORY**

Inventories consist only of consumable items and are, therefore, expensed in the year of purchase.

### **OPERATING LEASES**

The total cost of the operating lease is expensed in equal instalments over the life of the lease. The Commission did not hold any operating leases at 31 March 2023.

### **CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise of cash in hand and bank deposits.

### **PENSION**

The Commission participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Superannuation Committee Scheme (NILGOSC) for most of its employees. This is a fully funded defined benefit scheme and is a statutory scheme that provides benefits on a "final salary" basis for service to 31 March 2015 and on a "career average revalued earnings (CARE)" basis for service from 1 April 2015.

## Note 1: Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

Prior to 1 April 2009 benefits accrued at the rate of 1/80<sup>th</sup> of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to 3/80<sup>ths</sup> of pensionable salary for each year of service is payable on retirement. From 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2015 benefits accrued at the rate of 1/60<sup>th</sup> of pensionable salary for each year of service. From 1 April 2015 benefits accrue at the rate of 1/49<sup>th</sup> of total salary for each year of service. The scheme's professionally qualified actuaries recommend the rate of contributions to be paid in a range from 5.5% to 10.5% for staff (depending on salary) and 24.8% plus an annual charge of £26,000 by the Commission. The employer contribution for 2022/23 has been set at 37.6% and no annual charge.

The total amounts paid into the scheme this financial year were: employees £7,322 and employer £38,733

The Commission, in accordance with IAS 19, accounted for employer pension contributions as a defined benefit scheme. Under IAS 19 the Commission is required to account for their share of assets and liabilities in the scheme. Added years' discretionary benefits awarded to former employees who retire early are also accounted for as a defined benefit scheme, as in accordance with IAS 19.

An actuarial valuation was carried out on 31 March 2023 in accordance with IAS 19 and Financial Reporting Manual (FrM) and the results of the valuation are detailed in Note 13.

The Charge (Credit) to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure consists of the Current Service Cost and Past Service Cost, if applicable (a) (included within staff costs) and interest credit on net return (b) (shown on the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure). Actuarial gains and losses (e) are taken to reserves and shown under Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The liabilities under the Scheme have been valued using the standard actuarial technique known as the Projected Unit Method.

The principal financial assumptions for valuing the liabilities were:

	31 March 2023 % per annum	31 March 2022 % per annum
Discount Rate	4.7	2.8
Pension Increases	2.7	3.1
Pension Accounts Revaluation Rate	2.7	3.1
Salary Increases	4.2	4.6

The total net pension asset as at 31 March 2023 is £2,373 representing the sum of the net assets as at that date.

**(a) i) Current Service Cost:** is the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.

**(a) ii) Past Service Cost:** (where applicable) is the change in the present value of the defined benefit obligation for employee service in prior periods, resulting from a plan amendment (the introduction or withdrawal of, or changes to, a defined benefit plan) or a curtailment (a significant reduction in the number of employees covered by the plan).

**(b) Interest Credit on Net Return:** the difference between expected return on employer assets and interest on pension scheme liabilities.

## **Note 1: Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)**

**(c) Expected Rate of Return on Assets:** the average rate of return expected over the remaining life of the related obligation on the actual assets held by the Scheme.

**(d) Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities:** the expected increase during the period in the present value of the scheme liabilities because the benefits are one year closer to settlement.

**(e) Actuarial Gains and Losses:** changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses) or changes in actuarial assumptions.

### **PROVISIONS**

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Commission a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year that the Commission becomes aware of the obligation and measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

### **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

#### **Short-term benefits**

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within twelve months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave for current employees and are recognised as an expense in the year in which employees render service to the Commission. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements earned by employees but not taken before year-end and which employees can carry forward into the next financial year.

#### **Termination benefits**

Termination benefits are amounts payable because of a decision by the Commission to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date and are charged on an accruals basis to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure at the earlier of: a) when the offer cannot be withdrawn or b) when the related restructuring costs are incurred.

### **CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Commission a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Commission. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances

### Note 1: Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required, or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Statement of Financial Position but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

### TAXATION

The Commission is not registered for VAT purposes. Consequently, all amounts in these accounts are inclusive of VAT.

### Note 2: Segmental Reporting

As part of the internal reporting arrangement the Commission receives reports on financial operations on a single segment basis, i.e., Commission's financial performance is reviewed as a whole in line with the annual business plan. The annual financial scheme and any subsequent schemes are presented at Commission meetings for approval.

### Note 3: Statutory Income to defray provision

	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Statutory income to defray provision	3	(284)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>(284)</b>

The amount due from the Department for Communities to defray the dissolution costs, which include exit costs from the NILGOSC pension scheme and redundancy costs, has increased by £3k in the financial year 2022/23 (see Note 1 - Dissolution of the Commission).

### Note 4: Other Operating Income

	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Income from the Local Government Training Group	-	-
Income from the Local Government Staff Commission Conference	-	-
Income from the recharged services to Local Government	25	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>

## Note 5: Staff Costs

	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2022/23 Total No's	2021/22 Total No's
(a) The average weekly number of employees (full time equivalent) was:	2.4	0.5	2.9	3.6
	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2022/23 Total £000s	2021/22 Total £000's
(b) The costs incurred in respect of these employees were:				
Salaries and Wages	115	38	153	132
Social Security Costs	11	5	16	26
Pension Costs – NILGOSC	39	7	46	34
	165	50	215	192
Current/Past Service Costs and Settlement Costs	52	-	52	24
	4		4	
Superannuation - re: charge to provision	(38)	-	(38)	(18)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>198</b>

Under IAS 19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense once the employee earns the benefits, irrespective of whether they have been paid. This includes the cost of any untaken leave at the year end. The cost of untaken leave is determined using the Commission's annual leave records.

No new exit packages were agreed in year but there were increases in redundancy costs; these are detailed on Note 12.

One member of staff was subject to exit in 2022/23 as a result of a review of staffing requirements. (Note 12).



**Note 6: Other Operating Costs**

	<b>2022/23 £000s</b>	<b>2021/22 £000's</b>
These comprise:		
Commission Chairperson and Members' Allowances	25	27
Research, Marketing and Development	6	6
Conferences, Courses and Training	2	5
Rent	55	55
Rates	19	20
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	-
Other General Administration Expenses	37	38
Professional Fees	49	21
IT Services	27	25
Agency & Consultancy	20	29
External Auditor's Remuneration	9	8
Travel and Subsistence – Staff	1	1
Travel and Subsistence – Commission Members	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>237</b>

## Note 7: Plant and Equipment

<b>Current Year:</b>	<b>Land and Buildings £000s</b>	<b>Computer Equipment £000s</b>	<b>Fixtures and Fittings £000s</b>	<b>Total £000s</b>
<b>COST OR VALUATION</b>				
At 1 April 2022	-	42	52	94
Additions (including accruals)	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(52)	(52)
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	-	42	0	42
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>				
At 1 April 2022	-	30	47	77
Opening Balance Adjustment	-	-	5	5
Charge for the year	-	3	-	3
Disposals	-	-	(52)	(52)
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	-	33	0	33
<b>CARRYING VALUE</b>				
At 31 March 2022	-	12	5	17
At 31 March 2023	-	9	-	9

<b>Asset Financing:</b>	<b>Land and Buildings £000s</b>	<b>Computer Equipment £000s</b>	<b>Fixtures and Fittings £000s</b>	<b>Total £000s</b>
Owned	-	9	-	9
Finance Leased	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-	-
Carrying Value at 31 March 2023	-	9	-	9

## Note 7: Plant and Equipment

<b>Current Year:</b>	<b>Land and Buildings £000s</b>	<b>Computer Equipment £000s</b>	<b>Fixtures and Fittings £000s</b>	<b>Total £000s</b>
<b>COST OR VALUATION</b>				
At 1 April 2022	-	42	52	94
Additions (including accruals)	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(52)	(52)
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	-	42	0	42
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>				
At 1 April 2022	-	30	51	81
Charge for the year	-	3	1	4
Disposals	-	-	(52)	(52)
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	-	33	0	33
<b>CARRYING VALUE</b>				
At 31 March 2022	-	12	5	17
At 31 March 2023	-	9	-	9

<b>Asset Financing:</b>	<b>Land and Buildings £000s</b>	<b>Computer Equipment £000s</b>	<b>Fixtures and Fittings £000s</b>	<b>Total £000s</b>
Owned	-	9	-	9
Finance Leased	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-	-
Carrying Value at 31 March 2023	-	9	-	9

## Note 7: Plant and Equipment

Comparative Year:	Land and Buildings £000s	Computer Equipment £000s	Fixtures and Fittings £000s	Total £000s
<b>COST OR VALUATION</b>				
At 1 April 2021	-	38	48	86
Additions (including accruals)	-	4	4	8
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	42	52	94
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>				
At 1 April 2021	-	27	46	73
Charge for the year	-	3	1	4
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	30	47	77
<b>CARRYING VALUE</b>				
At 31 March 2021	-	11	1	12
At 31 March 2022	-	12	5	17

Asset Financing:	Land and Buildings £000s	Computer Equipment £000s	Fixtures and Fittings £000s	Total £000s
Owned	-	12	5	17
Finance Leased	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-	-
Carrying Value at 31 March 2022	-	12	5	17

## Note 8: Assets Classified as Held for Sale

	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Land and Buildings	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## Note 9: Trade Receivables and Other Current Assets

Amounts falling due within one year:	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Trade receivables	-	-
Deposits and advances	-	-
Other Receivables*	1,747	1,747
Prepayments and accrued income	28	6
Current part of PFI (and other service concession arrangements) prepayment	-	-
Current part of NLF loan	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>1,753</b>

Amounts falling due after more than one year:	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Other Receivables*	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

\*Under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, Section 40 Schedule 3 and the Housing Orders (NI) 1976 and 1981, the District Councils, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department for Communities have responsibility for meeting the expenditure of the Commission together with any contingencies.

As a result of the proposed dissolution of the Commission, as at 31 March 2023 there was an estimated liability of £1,747,473 due to exit costs from the NILGOSC pension scheme. Of this estimated liability, £1,740,727 was included in the provision and a £2,373 deficit was included in the pension liability (see Notes 12 and 13). These costs will be met by the Department for Communities. There was one redundancy payment made in the financial year up to 31 March 2023.

## Note 9.1: Intra-Governments Balances

	Amounts falling due within one year £000s		Amounts falling due after more than One year £000s	
	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22
Balances with central government	1,747	1,747	-	-
Balances with local authorities	2	5	-	-
Balances with NHS	-	-	-	-

bodies				
Sub-total: intra government balances	1,749	1,752	-	-
Balances with bodies external to Government	26	3	-	-
Trade Receivables at 31 March	<b>1,775</b>	<b>1,755</b>	-	-

#### Note 10: Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Balance at 1 April	903	360
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(136)	543
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>903</b>
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	<b>767</b>	<b>903</b>

#### Note 11: Trade Payables and Other Current Liabilities

Amounts falling due within one year:	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
VAT	-	-
Other taxation and social security	(2)	-
Trade payables	-	-
Accruals	70	60
Accrued and deferred income	17	175
Current part of finance leases	-	-
Current part of imputed finance lease element of on balance sheet (SoFP) PFI contracts	-	-
Current instalments due on loans	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>235</b>

Amounts falling due after more than one year:	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

### Note 11.1 Intra-Government Balances

	Amounts falling due within one year £000s		Amounts falling due after more than one year £000s	
	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22
Balances with central government	-	-	-	-
Balances with government bodies	9	10	-	-
Balances with local authorities	25	207	-	-
Balances with NHS bodies	-	-	-	-
Sub-total: intra-government balances	34	217	-	-
-Balances with bodies external to government	51	18	-	-
Trade payables at 31 March	<b>85</b>	<b>235</b>	-	-

### Note 12: Provision for Liabilities and Charges

Current Year:	Departure Costs	Other	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2022	1,773	-	1,773
Provided in the year	(28)	-	(28)
Provisions utilised in the year	-	-	-
Provisions not required written back	-	-	-
Unwinding of discount	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2023	1,745	-	1,745

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

<b>Current Year:</b>	<b>Departure Costs</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Not later than one year	-	-	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,745	-	1,745
Later than five years	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2023	1,745	-	1,745

<b>Comparative Year:</b>	<b>Departure Costs</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Balance at 1 April 2021	1,516	-	1,516
Provided in the year	257	-	257
Provisions utilised in the year	-	-	-
Provisions not required written back	-	-	-
Unwinding of discount	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2022	1,773	-	1,773

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

<b>Comparative Year:</b>	<b>Departure Costs</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Not later than one year	1,773	-	1,773
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-	-
Later than five years	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2022	1,773	-	1,773

The Commission Dissolution was planned for 31 March 2017 (see Note 1 - Dissolution of the Commission). However, it has not been possible to have the necessary Dissolution Order in place. In November 2022 the Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities confirmed an extension to the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025.



The liability for dissolution costs, as at 31 March 2023, includes exit costs from the NILGOSC pension scheme, which were provided by Aon Hewitt, NILGOSC Scheme's actuary on 27 June 2022, and redundancy costs. These costs are currently estimated to be a maximum of £1,743,100. £1,740,727 was included in the provision and £2,373 deficit was included in the pension liability (see Notes 12 and 13).

Total salary costs include redundancy costs for staff whose redundancy had already been agreed.

See also Note 9.

### Note 13: Pensions Relating to Officers

	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Scheme Liability at Beginning of the Year	26	(515)
Current Service Cost	(52)	(24)
Past Service (Cost)/Gain	-	-
Settlement Cost		
Employer Contributions	38	168
Net Return on Assets	1	(12)
Actuarial Gains/(Losses)	(13)	409
Scheme Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 March	0	26

Note 13(a): The fair value of the assets held by the pension scheme attributable to the Commission are analysed as follows:

	Expected Long Term Return at 31 March 2023 % p.a.	Assets at 31 March 2023 £000s	Expected Long Term Return at 31 March 2022 % p.a.	Assets at 31 March 2022 £000s
Equities	4.7	1,881	2.8	2,202
Bonds	4.7	1,110	2.8	1,380
Property	4.7	527	2.8	513
Cash	4.7	306	2.8	205
Other	4.7	879	2.8	831
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,703</b>		<b>5,131</b>

### Note 13(b): Net Pension Asset

	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s
<b>Estimated Employer Assets (A)</b>	<b>4,703</b>	<b>5,131</b>
Present Value of Scheme Liabilities	(4,106)	(5,025)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	-	-
<b>Total Value of Liabilities (B)</b>	<b>(4,106)</b>	<b>(5,025)</b>
<b>Net Pension Asset (A-B)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>26</b>

**Note 13(c): Reconciliation of Defined Benefit Obligation**

	Year to 31 March 2023 £000s	Year to 31 March 2022 £000s
<b>Opening Defined Benefit Obligation</b>	<b>5,025</b>	<b>5,437</b>
Current Service Cost	52	23
Interest Cost	138	113
Contributions by Members	7	3
Actuarial Losses/(Gains)	(897)	(317)
Past Service Costs/(Gains)	0	0
Losses/(Gains) on Curtailments	-	-
Liabilities Extinguished on Settlements	-	-
Liabilities Assumed in a Business Combination	-	-
Exchange Differences	-	-
Estimated Unfunded Benefits Paid	-	-
Estimated Benefits Paid	(219)	(234)
Settlements	-	-
<b>Closing Defined Benefit Obligation</b>	<b>£4,106</b>	<b>£5,025</b>

**Note 13(d): Reconciliation of Fair Value of Employer Assets:**

	Year to 31 March 2023 £000s	Year to 31 March 2022 £000s
<b>Opening Fair Value of Employer Assets</b>	<b>5,131</b>	<b>4,922</b>
Interest Income on Assets	141	100
Contributions by Members	7	3
Contributions by the Employer	38	168
Contributions in Respect of Unfunded Benefits	-	-
Remeasurement Gains/(Losses) on Assets	(395)	172
Assets Distributed on Settlements	-	-
Assets Acquired in a Business Combination	-	-
Exchange Differences	-	-
Unfunded Benefits Paid	-	-
Benefits Paid	(219)	(234)
<b>Closing Fair Value of Employer Assets</b>	<b>4,703</b>	<b>5,131</b>

**Note 13(e): Net Return on Assets:**

	Year to 31 March 2023 £000s	Year to 31 March 2022 £000s
Interest Income on Assets	141	100
Remeasurement Gains/(Losses) on Assets	(395)	172
<b>Net Return</b>	<b>(254)</b>	<b>272</b>

### Note 13(f): Actuarial Analysis

	Year to 31 March 2023 %	Year to 31 March 2022 %
Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	2.7	3.4
Salary Increase Rate	4.2	4.6
Expected Return on Assets	2.8	5.6
Discount Rate	4.7	2.8

### Note 13(g): Mortality Assumptions

Actuarial Assumptions for average future life expectancy at age 65	Males	Females
Current Pensioners	22.2 years	25 years
Future Pensioners (aged 45 at accounting date)	23.2 years	26 years

The mortality assumptions affect the length of time the benefits would be expected to be paid for. The mortality assumptions are based on actual mortality experience of members within the Fund based on analysis carried out as part of the 2022 Actuarial Valuation and allow for expected future mortality improvements.

### Note 13(h): Summary of Experience Gains/ (Losses)

Actuarial gains and losses represent the extent to which actual outcomes have differed from the assumptions which were used in calculating IAS 19 figures. These actuarial gains and losses are shown in the table below as Experience Gains and Losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised as Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure (OCNE) and taken to reserves.

	Year to 31 Mar 2023 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2022 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2021 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2020 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2019 £000s
Fair Value of Employer Assets	4,703	5,131	4,922	4,143	4,768
Present Value of Defined Benefit Obligation	(4,106)	(5,025)	(5,437)	(4,645)	(5,344)
Surplus/(Deficit)	<b>597</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>(515)</b>	<b>(502)</b>	<b>(576)</b>
Remeasurement Gains/(Losses) on Assets	(395)	172	894	(567)	205
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) on Obligation	897	317	(711)	658	(63)
Paragraph 64 Adjustment	(515)	(80)			
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) recognised in OCNE	<b>(13)</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>142</b>

#### Note 14: Commitments under Leases

	2022/23 £000s	2021/22 £000s
Not later than one year	55	55
Later than one year and not later than five years	19	55
	<b>74</b>	<b>110</b>

The lease for rental of Commission House in place with Belfast City Council was terminated on 31 March 2023.

#### Note 15: Related Party Transactions

The Local Government Staff Commission is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Communities. The Department for Communities is regarded as a related party. During the year, the Commission has had various material transactions with the Department and other entities for which the Department for Communities is regarded as having a general oversight role, viz, district Councils.

In addition, the Commission has had various material and other transactions with district Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

None of the Commission Members are members of the key management staff or other related parties which have undertaken any material transactions with the Commission during the year.

#### Note 16: Financial Instruments

The Commission has no material risk exposure to Financial Instruments.

(a) **Credit Risk:** arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Commission's customers.

Trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, can be analysed by age as follows:

	2022/23 £	2021/22 £
Less than three months	£27,893	£3,154
Three to six months	-	-
Six months to one year	-	-
More than one year	-	-

There is no historical experience of default in relation to deposits with banks, other financial institutions and debtors. Therefore, there is no estimated exposure to risk of default.

(b) **Liquidity Risk:** All trade and other payables are due for payment within one year.

(c) **Market Risk:**

**Interest Rate Risk** – The Commission has no borrowings or investments and thus has no material exposure to loss arising from movements in interest rates.

**Foreign Exchange Risk** – The Commission has no financial assets or liabilities dominated in foreign currencies and thus has no material exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

**Note 17: Target for Paying Invoices**

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of suppliers for goods and services within 10 working days on receipt of invoice, in accordance with the Better Payment Practice Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days from the receipt of goods or services by The Commission, or on presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand to The Commission, whichever is later.

During the year, the Commission paid 388 invoices totalling £491,433.68

The Commission paid 384 (99%) invoices within the 10-day target.

**Note 18: Assembly Accountability Disclosures**

No losses, special payments or remote contingent liabilities were identified by the Commission in 2022/23.

**Note 19: Events after the Reporting Period**

There were no events occurring after 31 March 2023, which require adjustment to the Commission's financial statements or additional disclosures.

**Date of Authorisation for Issue**

The Chief Financial Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on **29 September 2023**.