



Annual Report and Accounts

1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

“Achieving Excellence through People”



The Local Government Staff Commission
for Northern Ireland

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



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INTRODUCTION

I have pleasure in introducing the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/25.

Confirmation was received on 13 December 2023 that due to the increased role that the Commission is currently undertaking, the Department for Communities (DfC), Permanent Secretary felt that it would be prudent that the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission is extended to 31 March 2027.

Throughout the year the Commission has continued to discharge its statutory functions and provide advice and support to local Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), with a core staff of two officers (1 full time, 1 part time) plus part time administrative support engaged on a consultancy basis and a secondment appointment through the public sector Interchange Programme. Some of the non-statutory work of the Commission has been outsourced to third parties. The services provided to local government and the NIHE by the Commission continued at a high level despite the reduced staffing level and staff morale has been maintained during another year of continuing uncertainty.

2024/25 marks the first year of the new three-year Strategy. In preparation for a new Strategy we embarked on an extensive consultation process, engaging with and listening to colleagues in local government, the NIHE and our partner organisations to fully understand the challenges facing the sector, as well as the opportunities they present to develop and improve public services. Our new Strategic Plan reflects that understanding and provides the basis for our annual Management and Dissolution Plan, which details how we will deliver our strategic priorities.

The Strategy also shapes how we work with our many partners, ensuring that our joint work delivers real collaborative gain, which benefits local government and the NIHE. The key areas of activity undertaken during 2024/25 include:

- the implementation of the regional Talent Management Strategy,
- facilitating the Boost II Mentoring Programme,
- providing advisory and support services,
- providing support in the provision of advice and assistance in respect of the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees,
- continuing to support the Local Government Training Group; and
- implementing the Strategic Plan of the Equality and Diversity Group.

In focusing on these activities throughout the year, continuing to work with our strategic partners and responding to stakeholder needs, the Commission aimed to support and develop the HR and OD capacity in Councils and the NIHE, thereby assisting to improve organisational effectiveness across the sector.

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*". We welcomed the return of the NI Executive and Assembly, and the Commission reflected on any impact for the sector, the Commission and its staff, of the Programme for Government.



Bumper Graham
Chairperson

SECTION 1: PERFORMANCE REPORT

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this performance overview aims to provide an understanding of the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission), its purpose, the key risks to the achievement of its objectives and how it has performed during the year.

Statement from the Director

I am pleased to report another year of high performance and effectiveness on behalf of the 11 Councils and the NIHE. This Annual Report gives a flavour of the range of programmes, activities and services which have taken place during the year to support delivery against our key outcomes and corporate objectives.

The Commission's Strategic Plan has been developed to guide the Commission's work for the rolling three-year period 2024-27 and to illustrate the Management and Dissolution Plan for Year 1, 2024-25. It is based on key stakeholder requirements and takes account of the need to provide leadership within local government in relation to all human resource (HR) matters.

The Management and Dissolution Plan is based on the key requirements necessary to:

- Ensure delivery in the interim period of essential statutory functions, and
- Put in place arrangements to ensure a smooth handover at dissolution.

The Commission is also aware of its obligation to ensure that government policy is implemented at a local level as directed by the Department for Communities (DfC) and provide ongoing professional HR advice, assistance and support to the Local Government sector and the NIHE which during 2024/25 included:

- Making authoritative recommendations on all HR related matters within local government and across the wider public sector.
- Providing talent management and mentoring initiatives.
- Managing and leading the Stay Well Hub across Councils and the NIHE providing best practice guidance and advice on wellbeing and health matters.
- Constituting and facilitating local government-specific and cross-sectoral working groups.

The achievements during 2024/25 would not have been possible without the continued dedication, resilience, skills and support of the Commission Officer team whose hard work helped deliver the many achievements set out in this report. The team have an established pattern of hybrid working and whilst traditionally office based, the team has always been mobile. Meetings and events have been carried out face to face in our offices and virtually from different locations. This flexible hybrid approach continues to be effective.

In governance terms, we continue to operate to the highest standards of corporate governance and following on from the savings realised during 2023/24 the Commission has managed its budget to keep the 2024/25 contributions at the same level as last year which has meant more than a 20% decrease for each Council and the NIHE in the amount requested since 2023.

I am grateful to the Chairperson and the Commission Members for their continued interest in, and support for the development of human resource management and the promotion of excellence through people in the delivery of local government services in Northern Ireland over the past year.

Powers and Functions

The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (The Commission) is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body established under the Local Government Act (NI) 1972. The Commission's powers were later extended under the Housing Orders 1976 and 1981 and the Local Government (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 Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and of making recommendations to Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on such matters.'

The statutory functions of the Staff Commission include:

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]

Planned Dissolution of Local Government Staff Commission

In October 2013, following consultation on the future of the Commission, the then Environment Minister announced that the Commission would be wound up on 31 March 2017. This decision was subsequently agreed by the Executive Committee, at their meeting on 19 June 2014.

To date the necessary Dissolution Order to wind up the Commission as planned has not been put in place. In December 2023 the Permanent Secretary, DfC confirmed an extension to the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2027.

Corporate Goals

The Commission aims 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’*.

The Commission agreed and submitted a Management and Dissolution Plan for 2024/25 in March 2024. Progress made against the plan is set out in detail within the performance analysis on page 8.

Throughout 2024/25 the Commission concentrated on delivering the objectives that were set out in the Management and Dissolution Plan. The Key Performance Areas of the Commission’s Management and Dissolution Plan are supported by corporate and operational arrangements designed to ensure that the Commission provides its services to the highest public sector standards and demonstrates corporate accountability within a continuous improvement culture.

Our overall objectives and key performance areas for the 2024/25 year are detailed below:

Key Performance Area 1 Talent and Development

Strategic Objective: ‘To ensure that local government sustains flexible, ‘fit for purpose’ organisations, which can respond to change and meet customer needs in an atmosphere of continuous improvement.’

Key Performance Area 2 Recruitment and Diversity

Strategic Objective: ‘To ensure that Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) have effective recruitment practices which treat all applicants fairly and equitably.’

Key Performance Area 3 People Strategies

Strategic Objective: ‘To develop and implement a people and OD initiatives for local government which will deliver on the workforce issues necessary to address the workforce priorities of the sector.’

Key Performance Area 4 Corporate Governance

Strategic Objective: ‘To provide the highest level of public service standards in all areas of the Commission’s operation.’

The Commission is also aware of its obligation to ensure that government policy is implemented at a local level as directed by the DfC and provide ongoing professional HR advice, assistance and support to the Local Government sector and the NIHE as follows:

Recommending Good Practice

- Making authoritative recommendations on all HR related matters within local government and across the wider public sector.
- Ensuring that meaningful negotiation takes place between management and staff on all staffing matters.
- Providing and/or recommending independent expert consultancy support.
- Initiating HR/OD 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 development issues within the wider public sector.

Communication

- Planning and hosting events on HR/OD topics to inform policy developments and legislative change including conferences, seminars and other networking mechanisms.
- Disseminating expert employment-specific legal advice and employment law updates.
- Providing talent management and mentoring initiatives.

Local Government Collaboration

- Facilitating collaboration in recruitment across Councils through the online recruitment website, 'Local Government Jobs NI', the shared recruitment advertising project.
- Managing and leading the Stay Well Hub across Councils and the NIHE providing best practice guidance and advice on wellbeing and health matters.
- Procuring, quality assuring and managing strategic frameworks and other specialist independent consultants, investigators etc. for use in Councils.

Wider Public Sector Cooperation

- Promoting co-operation in the Public Sector and working, where appropriate, with key strategic partners including the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), the Public Sector People Managers' Association (PPMA) and the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), in developing and implementing local government transformation.
- Constituting and facilitating local government-specific and cross-sectoral working groups.
- Liaising with government departments and other stakeholders.

Key Issues and Risks

The ongoing uncertainty around the dissolution of the Commission and continuing operations created significant additional risk and pressures for the Commission in discharging its statutory functions. Plans had already commenced to wind up the Commission and a number of functions had previously transferred, by agreement, to Councils. Therefore, the Commission focussed during 2024/25 on:

- Ensuring delivery of essential statutory functions,
- Ensuring contingency arrangements are in place for a smooth handover at dissolution.

Maintaining adequate resources to be able to deliver the Commission's essential statutory functions had the potential for risk including the scope and quality of service delivery and the Commission's ability to meet the statutory requirement to deliver an efficient service. During 2024/25 the Commission continued to monitor the level of resources required and, where appropriate, engaged independent third parties to undertake specific assignments.

The Commission continues to engage with DfC to support arrangements for dissolution. The level of uncertainty about the dissolution of the Commission represents risks that are likely to continue to impact in 2025/26 and will be monitored and, where possible, actions taken to manage and mitigate them.

Going Concern

The Commission is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by DfC, having been established by statute under the Local Government Act (NI) 1972. The Commission estimated its total financial requirement to be £427,924 for the 2024/25 year. This amount was reduced by a projected surplus of funds of £40,000, leaving an amount of £387,924 to be raised from District Councils and the NIHE. The financial results of the Commission's operation 2024/25 are set out in detail from page 29 of this Annual Report and Accounts. The surplus for the year for net expenditure, after interest was £5k (2023/24 - £2K).

Whilst the financial environment remained challenging, due to ongoing budgetary efficiencies achieved by the Commission, the result was no change in the total Council contribution amount required for 2024/25, on this basis the Commission is of the opinion that the going concern basis for preparation of its Annual report and Accounts is appropriate.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY ANALYSIS

This part of the Performance Report provides an analysis and summary of the Commission's performance against key targets and performance indicators.

Measuring Performance

The Commission, as an Arm's Length Body of DfC, operates within a framework of its enabling legislation consisting of:

- A Management Framework Document and Financial Memorandum agreed with DfC.
- An annual Management and Dissolution Plan which sets out the areas of operation, timeline and actions required by the Commission, which is approved by the Minister for Communities. The Minister is accountable to the Assembly for the activities and performance of the Commission.

Key Performance Indicators which are used to report quarterly to the Commission and DfC on progress.

Commission Officers take personal responsibility for ensuring that the objectives detailed in the Management and Dissolution 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 twice yearly to the Commission and DfC.

Key activities the Commission undertook during 2024/25 included:

- Assistance provided to Councils and the NIHE to implement the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, including the delivery of the observer strategy for recruitment panels for senior posts. The Commission administered one Chief Executive recruitment exercise on behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council.
- The Commission completed a review of the Chief Executive Performance Appraisal Scheme, as requested by DfC.
- Commission Officers continued to support and facilitate regional working groups, for example the Talent Management Group, Health and Wellbeing Group, Statutory Duty Network and the Diversity Ambassadors Network.
- Advisory and support services were provided to Councils and the NIHE in relation to code of conduct matters.
- Working in partnership with Councils and NIHE, the Commission continued to support the regional Equality and Diversity Group to deliver the strategy and through the delivery of events to support Diversity Ambassadors.
- The Commission launched and facilitated the fully funded BOOST Mentoring Programme for officers across Councils and the NIHE.
- The Commission supported five talent management pilot programmes across local government.
- Four newsletters were issued providing updates from stakeholders and key areas of work of the Commission.
- An engagement exercise with the 11 Councils and NIHE and stakeholder groups was undertaken by Commission Officers from February 2024 to April 2024 to obtain feedback on the Commission's work (Performance Measures) and future requirements up to the provisional date of dissolution.

The following provides an overview of activities delivered by the Commission in 2024/25:

Key Performance Area – Talent and Development

Strategic Objective: 'To ensure that local government sustains flexible, 'fit for purpose' organisations, which can respond to change and meet customer needs in an atmosphere of continuous improvement.'

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Implement the regional Talent Management Strategy and, in particular, facilitate the Strategic Themes on Workforce Planning, Succession Planning and Leadership Development to meet its implementation plan	<p><i>Ongoing work on talent management research with the University of Sunderland and the Local Government Association, with the final documentation to be distributed to Councils/NIHE by December 2025.</i></p> <p><i>BOOST Mentoring Programme concluded in November 2024. Since then, the Commission has been approached by several Councils seeking additional mentoring support, resulting in the facilitation of four further partnerships.</i></p> <p><i>BOOST II Mentoring programme was launched in November 2024, creating 20 partnerships. The LGTG has agreed to provide funding for one Director per Council.</i></p> <p><i>A Talent Management Pilot Programme focused on Mental Toughness for Senior Management Teams was offered to Councils/NIHE. Six Councils applied and have been selected to participate, each receiving funding to support the delivery of the programme, which will run for up to 12 months. The LGTG has agreed to contribute £500 to each participating Council.</i></p> <p><i>Through the Talent Management Group, a webinar was facilitated by British Transport Police on Build a Modern and Inclusive Force.</i></p>
Assist Councils with the staffing implications of organisation design, development and change, particularly in the context of transformation and the pressures of the current economic climate.	<p><i>Advice and assistance has been given on an ongoing basis to Councils/NIHE and NILGA and since January 2025, ARC21.</i></p> <p><i>An organisation review has been completed in one Council lead by the Commission and assistance is being provided to two Councils with restructuring of the senior teams.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission undertook an organisational Health check for one Council and has been asked by another Council to undertake a Health check during 2025 – 2026.</i></p>

Key Performance Area – Recruitment and Diversity

Strategic Objective: 'To ensure that Councils/NIHE have effective recruitment practices which treat all applicants fairly and equitably.'

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Advise Councils and the NIHE in relation to the implementation of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, and on best practice in recruitment and selection	<i>Commission Officers continue to provide advice and support to individual Councils. Over 75 queries were responded to between 01 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.</i>
Assist Councils to recruit Chief Executives and other senior officers, as detailed in the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection	<i>One Chief Executive exercise was undertaken during 2024 – 2025. The Commission has received a number of requests from Councils to source Professional Assessors for senior recruitment exercises.</i>
Provide Observers to attend selection panels for senior posts in Councils and the NIHE	<i>From 01 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 Commission Officers acted as Observers at 31 recruitment panels.</i>
Advise on best practice in the use of Assessment Centres and how recruitment exercises can be made more objective and transparent	<i>Following a shared session with Hays on 17 October 2024 work is ongoing to review data on the use of Assessment Centres and Situational Judgement Tests. Commission Officers have been reviewing the application of competency-based assessments.</i>
Advise and assist Councils and the NIHE to implement their Section 75 duties and Disability Action Plans	<i>The Statutory Duty Network, facilitated by the Commission, met in September, December 2024 and March 2025. At the September meeting Dr Livingston Thompson presented 'Living Cultural Solutions', in December the DfC provided an overview of the Sign Language Bill, In March, NISRA delivered a session on the Government Wellbeing Framework.</i>
Assist Councils and the NIHE to pilot and develop model employment policies, as appropriate	<i>The Commission has drafted and is consulting on a Neurodiversity in the Workplace guidance document.</i>
Act as secretariat to the Equality and Diversity Group and assist it to implement its strategic plan.	<i>The Equality and Diversity Network met in November 2024 and March 2025. The Commission hosted Diversity Ambassadors' workshops in June, October and November 2024. The Commission sponsored the EDI award at the Local Government Awards on 27 March 2025.</i>

Key Performance Area – People Strategies

Strategic Objective: 'To develop and implement for local government which will deliver on the workforce issues necessary to address the business priorities of the sector.'

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Lead the implementation of the talent management framework for local government	<p><i>The Commission supported five talent management pilot projects during 2024/25. The learning was presented to the Talent Management Group in September 2024.</i></p> <p><i>Arrangements were finalised to support six Councils during 2025/26 to undertake leadership development team pilots.</i></p> <p><i>The Talent Management Group met in June and September 2024.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission is a key partner in the delivery of the Workforce Theme of the SOLACE Business Plan.</i></p>
To undertake a review of the Performance Appraisal System for Council Chief Executives, as directed by the Department for Communities	<p><i>The review report was issued in May 2024 and Best Practice Guidelines finalised and issued in September 2024.</i></p> <p><i>The development of training materials for the e-learning portal are due to be finalised in June 2025.</i></p>
Partner the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) to promote best practice examples of people and OD management.	<p><i>Engagement continues on issues including: recruitment matters, employee relations, EDI and talent management. Commission Officers contributed to the LGMA Conference in October 2024.</i></p>
Implement revised procurement procedures with a view to establishing select lists of consultants, providers and assessors across the full range of Commission services	<p><i>Framework agreements for the provision of independent investigators and mentors have been utilised a number of times to assist the Commission to support Councils and the NIHE.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission continues to avail of Departmental collaborative frameworks to support requests to undertake investigations on behalf of Councils and NIHE. The total cost of these arrangements 2024/25 is in excess of £50K.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission is finalising details for two further frameworks for workplace mediation and facilitation of Chief Executive Performance Appraisals.</i></p>

Key Performance Area – Employee Relations

Strategic Objective: 'To ensure that effective, productive and harmonious working environments and staff/management relationships are sustained within local government.'

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Support the creation of a new regional industrial relations framework	<i>In April 2024, August 2024, September 2024, and March 2025, the Commission facilitated meetings with NILGA, PPMA and SOLACE to discuss collaborative working opportunities.</i> <i>The Chairperson and Director also met with NIC-ICTU representatives.</i>
Assist Councils to progress with Code of Conduct matters, complaints, grievances and disciplinary matters as requested	<i>Assistance has continued to be given to Councils in relation to grievance and disciplinary matters. Commission Officers have provided independent assistance for 12 complaints in six Councils during 2024/25.</i> <i>In addition, the Commission is still involved in assisting 2 other Councils with investigations at a senior level.</i>
Assist Councils to develop actions and initiatives to reduce employee sickness absence and promote health and well being	<i>Health and Wellbeing initiatives were supported by the Commission in seven Councils and NIHE.</i> <i>The Commission facilitates the local government Stay Well Hub for Councils and NIHE.</i>

Key Performance Area – Corporate Governance

Strategic Objective: 'To provide the highest level of public service standards in all areas of the Commission's operation.'

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PROGRESS
<u>Accountability</u> Continue to implement a sound system of control to support the Commission's objectives in accordance with Government Accounting Northern Ireland	<i>The Annual Report and Accounts were completed by 30 September 2024 and issued to the Department and Assembly Library, as required.</i> <i>Two internal audit exercises were undertaken with an outcome of satisfactory assurance.</i>
<u>Equality</u> Advance the Commission's equality agenda	<i>Commission Officers undertook 1 screening exercise between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.</i>

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PROGRESS
<u>Operational Support Services</u> Provide continuous improvement in the provision of the Commission's Administrative Support and Financial Services	<p><i>A review was completed by January 2025 of the Commission's Management Framework Document to take account of revised financial procedures, public service policies and directives and was approved by the Commission and DfC.</i></p> <p><i>The Chairperson and Director meet monthly, and Team Briefings are a regular feature of the internal communication system.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission's website was redesigned in the Autumn 2024 to increase awareness of the Commission's functions and current initiatives via an improved website. Four ezines were published and distributed.</i></p>

Working in Partnership

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 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 of Public Service Excellence (APSE)
- ARC21
- SOLACE NI
- PPMA

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

In April 2024 a Memorandum of Cooperation was formally agreed between the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the Commission. The two organisations are committed to working together in building strong efficient local government, and have identified the following agenda for cooperation:

- Promoting public policies that will achieve strong efficient local government.
- Tackling leadership and human resources issues arising from the transformation and improvement programme.
- In partnership with the LGTG, creating learning and development opportunities for Local Government employees and elected representatives.
- Supporting individual Councils by building their capacity and strengthening their corporate governance arrangements.
- Building NILGA's capacity as the representative body for Local Government in Northern Ireland.
- Supporting effective relationships with trade unions at regional level for the benefit of councils.
- Improving communications.

Marketing and Communications

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 underpin 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. The Commission's website was revised and refreshed to better highlight the work of the Commission.

GOVERNANCE REPORT

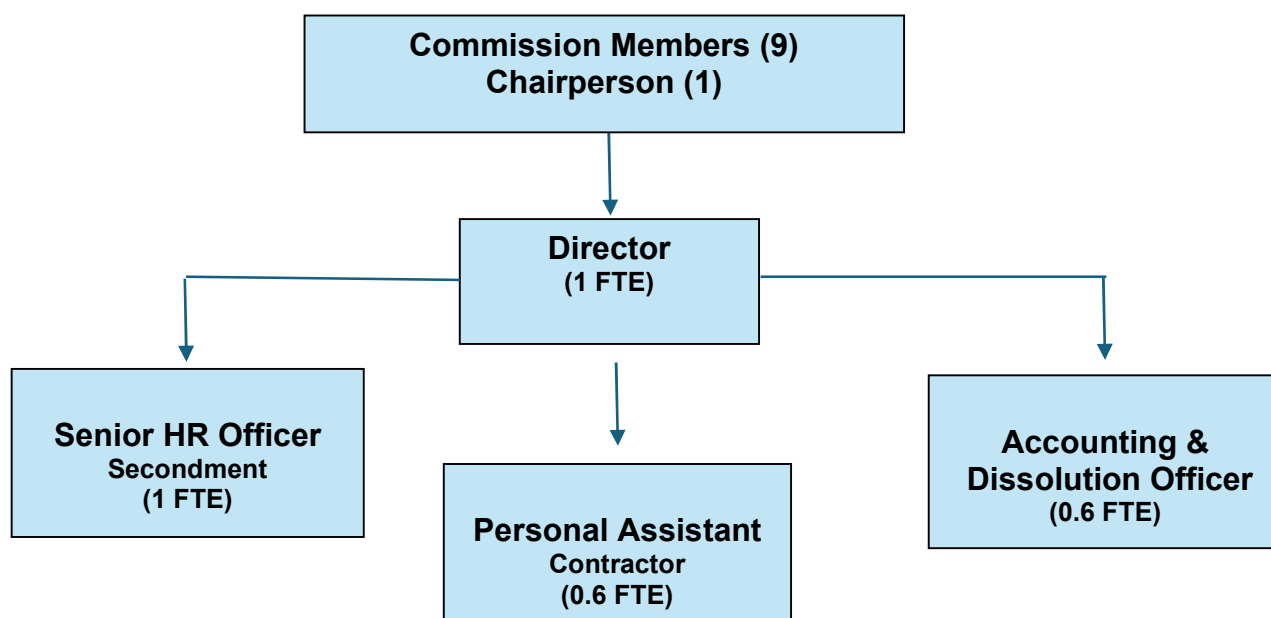
Director's Report

The Commission is constituted in accordance with the Local Government Act and consists of a Chairperson and not more than fourteen or less than six other Members appointed by the Minister for Communities after a public appointment process. The term of office of Commission Members is four years and is generally co-terminus with Councils. The DfC reconstituted the Commission membership with effect from 01 April 2017 up to the final dissolution date.

Organisational Structure

During 2024/25 the Commission continued to discharge its statutory functions and provide advice and support to local Councils and the NIHE, with a core staff of two officers (1 full time, 1 part time) plus part time administrative support engaged on a consultancy basis and a secondment appointment through the public sector Interchange Programme.

The organisation structure is shown below:



The functions of the Commission are managed by officers as follows:

DIANA STEWART Director and Accounting Officer	Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Commission's Management and Dissolution Plan and the management of resources
DIANE HUNT Accounting & Dissolution Officer	(to date of termination 31 Jan 2025) Responsible for financial services and dissolution activities
PAULA HAMILTON Senior HR Officer	Responsible for assisting with the implementation of the Commission's Management and Dissolution Plan
PATRICIA MURRAY Personal Assistant	Administrative support and PA to the Director
VIVIEN DAVIDSON Accounting & Dissolution Officer	(Date of commencement 1 Feb 2025) Responsible for financial services and dissolution activities

Register of Interests

The Commission has arrangements in place to manage the reporting on and recording of a register of interest, details of the policy and process governing the register of interests can be inspected on application to the Director at info@lgsc.org.uk

None of the Commission Members, Commission Officers or other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the Commission during 2024/25.

Personal Data

There were no incidents of personal data loss during 2024/25 which required notification to the Information Commissioner.

Corporate Risk Governance Arrangements

The Commission adheres to the principles endorsed by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) in its guidance 'Good Practice in Risk Management' as well as the Good Practice Guides on Board Effectiveness (2022) and Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committees (March 2025).

The Commission's key principles in relation to risk management and internal control are as follows:

- Commission Officers support, advice and implement the management of risks.
- The Director is responsible for encouraging good risk management practice by Commission Officers in their designated managed area and reporting risks to the Director, as appropriate.
- Corporate risk analysis is completed at scheduled meetings between the Chairperson and Director and reported to the Audit Committee at its meetings.
- The Commission maintains a corporate risk register setting out the approach to the management of risk at all levels of the organisation. The risk register is used to monitor and report on the identification and treatment of risks and is reviewed at each Audit Committee meeting and reported to each Commission meeting.
- The Commission's Audit Committee has responsibility for oversight of the strategic risk management and providing advice to the Commission.

The Chair of the Audit Committee reports to the Commission on audit activity, including risk management. Key risks are also reported to and discussed with DfC, the sponsoring department, through bi-annual assurance and performance reports and accountability meetings. The Commission has complied with the terms of current relevant Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) letters issued by the Department of Finance (DoF).

Fraud

Fraud risk is a standing agenda item on Audit Committee meetings. In accordance with agreed departmental procedures all suspected and proven frauds should be notified to DfC, the sponsor department and other relevant bodies. There were no suspected frauds reported during 2024/25.

Risk Policy and Register

Risk management is an integral part of the Commission's strategic planning, management and decision making.

The Accounting Officer, supported by Commission Members, is responsible for ensuring there are robust governance, risk management and internal control arrangements in place.

The risks facing the Commission during the period 2024/25 were identified and reported in the risk register. These included risks in the following areas:

- Dissolution of the Commission in an unplanned manner.
- Insufficient resources to fulfil discharge of the statutory functions and dissolution activities.
- Financial loss/Fraud and corruption.

Procurement

Procurement for the supply of goods and services is facilitated by the DfC Procurement Team, a Centre of Procurement Excellence (CoPE), or in line with procurement advice provided by a CoPE or DoF. All contracts are evaluated on a best value for money basis, which may consider cost and quality factors. Contracts are reviewed on an annual basis. During 2024/25 the Commission conducted a number of in-house procurements and one through eTenders.

Dissolution Costs

DfC as the sponsor Department of the Commission will absorb the costs associated with the dissolution process, including any liabilities arising from redundancy. Any future revenue from the sale of the Commission's assets, including property, will transfer to DfC to help offset costs, including pension liabilities. In December 2023 the DfC Permanent Secretary confirmed that the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission was extended to 31 March 2027. As a result of this extension and prior year uncertainties, no provision has been included within the accounts for the potential exit costs and will be reevaluated in March 2026.

Access of Information

The Commission is committed to making information about its statutory functions and how it operates available to Councils and NIHE, the public and staff. During 2024/25 the Commission updated and revised its website www.lgsc.org.uk. Requests for information can be submitted electronically via the Commission's website or by contacting the Commission. During 2024/25 nil requests were received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and nil requests received under the Data Protection Act 2018. All requests would be responded to within the appropriate legislative timescales.

Preparation of the Accounts

The Accounts are prepared in accordance with a Departmental Accounts Direction and comply with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FreM) 2024/25. They are prepared on an accrual basis and give an accurate and balanced view of the Commission's financial position, including its comprehensive net expenditure and cash flows for the financial year.

Payment of 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 265 invoices totalling £ 246,748.79, all of which were paid within 30 days and 252 (95%) of which were paid within the 10-day target.

Charitable Donations

There were no charitable donations made during 2024/25.

Fixed Assets

During 2024/25 the Commission continued to rent fully serviced office accommodation. Details of the movement of fixed assets are set out in Note 7 to these accounts.

Resourcing

During 2024/25 there was one recruitment exercise carried out for the Accounting and Dissolution Officer role. Following a review of the role the post was filled on a contractor basis.

Agency requirements are obtained under DfC's Agency Worker Framework. During 2024/25 there was no requirement to support short term business need, including sickness cover.

All Commission Officers are engaged on a fixed term contract until 31 March 2027. During 2024/25, one member of staff left the employment of the Commission due to being offered a permanent role. The role was reviewed resulting in the staff complement reducing to 2.4 FTE.

Employee Relations

The Commission is committed to providing a range of flexible arrangements which create a more inclusive and productive workplace that suits both the needs of the organisation and its officers and has a range of policy and procedures to support staff. Employee engagement and trade union consultation takes place regularly to promote and support positive employment relationships.

Employee Involvement

The Commission remains 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.

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.

Health and Wellbeing

During 2024/25, the Commission continued to provide officers with a work environment and opportunities to encourage and enable them to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their overall wellbeing. This included access to Inspire, an employee assistance provider and the Stay Well Hub.

Learning and Development

Delivery of training interventions were facilitated by external resources including the Chief Executives Forum, PPMA and NIAO, specific training to support individual learning needs was also facilitated.

Research and Development

The Commission is committed to a programme of research to develop and improve service provision in the discharge of its statutory functions and in support of Councils and the NIHE.

Environmental, Sustainability, Social and Community Issues

The Commission operates in a political environment and is required to be adaptable to changing central and local government structures. In developing policies and procedures special attention is paid to legislative

changes in employment matters, the need to conform to the obligations placed on public bodies by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and environmental impact including the Commission's approach to sustainability, balancing social economic and environmental costs.

Statement of THE Commissions and Accounting Officers' Responsibilities

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

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 DfC has directed the 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 ended 31 March 2025 in accordance with:

- the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) which is in force for the financial year for which the accounts are being prepared. The accounting policies contained in the NDPB template apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commission for the purposes of giving a true and fair view should be selected.
- other guidance which the Department of Finance may issue from time to time in respect of accounts which are required to give a true and fair view;
- any other specific disclosures required by the Department for Communities, except where agreed otherwise with the Department for Communities, in which case the exception shall be described in the notes to the accounts.

The DfC has appointed Diana Stewart, Director, as Accounting Officer of the Commission. The responsibilities of the Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Commission's assets, are set out in the Managing Public Money by the HM Treasury.

In preparing the accounts, as Accounting Officer I am 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.

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 Commission's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

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



DIANA STEWART
Director and Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2025

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

As Accounting Officer for the Commission, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the organisation's statutory duties, aims, objectives and policies, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money (NI).

I am required to provide assurance in respect of expenditure incurred by the Commission, in discharging its statutory functions, delivering objectives and targets set out in the Commission's Management and Dissolution Plan. The Management and Dissolution Plan is developed and agreed by the Commission taking into account departmental priorities (including the Programme for Government), identified through meetings with DfC officials.

Commission Effectiveness and Compliance

During 2024/25 the Commission completed a review of its effectiveness and compliance, taking into account best practice guidelines in relation to corporate governance. The Commission's Management Framework Document and Financial Memorandum were revised to ensure as a Non-Departmental Public Body the Commission complies with government Codes of Practice where it is relevant and meaningful to do so.

Governance Framework

The Commission's governance framework consists of the following elements:

The Director is the designated Accounting Officer and is responsible for:

- Safeguarding public funds for which the Commission has responsibility.
- Ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds.
- Day to day operation and management of the Commission, including maintaining administrative structures which enable the discharge of the Commission's statutory functions effectively and efficiently and for ensuring that all legitimate decisions of the Commission are implemented.

The Commission consists of a Chairperson and nine Members appointed by the Minister for Communities. The Chairperson was appointed on 05 October 2020.

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 Members meet at least four times each year as detailed in the Commission's Standing Orders May 2024 by which the Members are bound.

The Commission met on 6 occasions during 2024/25. In addition, there was a workshop held to facilitate a review of effectiveness.

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 Commission 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.

The membership of the Commission during 2024/25 was as follows:

Chairperson

Mr Bumper Graham Former Deputy General Secretary, NIPSA

Vice Chairperson

Ms Bernie Kelly Former SDLP Councillor, Belfast City Council, Former Assistant Director of Physical and Sensory Disability Services, Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Former Development Manager, Shared Lives Plus

Members

Mr Charlie Mack Chief Executive, Cranstoun Group

Mrs Hilary Singleton, OBE Former Practising Solicitor

Miss Lindsay Boal Self-Employed Barrister

Ms Monica Burns International Health Development Consultant

Mr Paul Corrigan Independent Investigator and Arbitrator (Former Director of Logistics, Royal Mail) Non-Executive Director, Northern Health and Social Care Trust (from June 2022)

Professor Robert Hutchinson Former Dean of the Ulster Business School and Provost University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus

Ms Roisin McDonough Chief Executive, Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Mr William Francey, MBE Former Director of Health & Environmental Services, Belfast City Council

During 2024/25 the Commission continued to participate in the Boardroom Apprentice Scheme, hosting an apprentice in a designated non-voting capacity. The scheme is aimed at providing opportunity for individuals aspiring to future membership of a Board to develop judgement and decision-making skills as well as the transfer of knowledge such as strategy, governance, audit and risk. The Commission has fully complied with the Corporate Governance Code with no unexplained departures during the year.

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

Membership of the Audit Committee during 2024/25 was as follows:

Professor Robert Hutchinson	Chair
Mrs Hilary Singleton	Commission Member
Mrs Roisin McDonough	Commission Member

The Commission Chairperson, Director and Accounting and Dissolution Officer attended all meetings of the Audit Committee. Representatives of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), the External Auditors, Cavanagh Kelly, Internal Audit providers, the Independent Audit Committee Member and DfC were also invited to attend all meetings.

The Staffing Committee is responsible for monitoring annual performance objectives of the Director and for determining the appropriate levels of pay to be awarded annually to Commission Officer in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment. Any such award must be within the national agreements and approved by the DfC.

During 2024/25 the Staffing Committee met on one occasion. Membership of the Staffing Committee during 2024/25 was as follows:

Mr Bumper Graham	Chair
Mrs Monica Burns	Commission Member
Mr Paul Corrigan	Commission Member
Mrs Lindsay Boal	Commission Member

Attendance at Commission and Committee Meetings during 2024/25

Attendance at Commission and Committee Meetings 2024/25	Commission Meetings	Audit Committee Meetings	Staffing Sub-Committee
Number of meetings held	6	3	1
Bumper Graham	6	3	1
Monica Burns	6	N/A	1
Paul Corrigan	3	N/A	1
William Francey	6	N/A	N/A
Lindsay Boal	5	N/A	0
Robert Hutchinson	6	3	N/A
Bernie Kelly	6	N/A	N/A
Charlie Mack	5	N/A	N/A
Roisin McDonough	3	2	N/A
Hilary Singleton	6	3	N/A

The Commission Officer Team comprises of the Director, Senior HR Officer (seconded), Accounting and Dissolution Officer and Personal Assistant (Contractor).

The Accounting Officer, DfC has designated Mrs Diana Stewart as Accounting Officer of the 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 Commission's assets.

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

Other elements of the corporate governance structure include:

- An agreed organisation structure with detailed role descriptions for Commission Officers, including a performance scheme, to ensure all Officers are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities.
- A Strategic Plan for the period 2024 – 2027.
- An annual Management and Dissolution Plan approved by DfC, setting out the vision, aims and objectives of the Commission as well as key activities and targets.

- A Management Framework Document which sets out the role and responsibilities of the Accounting Officer, the Commission and its Committees, including matters reserved for the Commission for decision making and those delegated to the Committees and the Director as Accounting Officer.
- A range of policies, strategies and procedures which guide the work of the Commission and are regularly reviewed.
- A risk management policy approved by the Accounting Officer and the Commission through the Audit Committee.
- Assurance Statements completed bi-annually by the Accounting Officer and scrutinised by the Audit Committee and the Commission. When the Commission is satisfied of the assurances provided in the Assurance Statement it is submitted to DfC.

Risk Management

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 2024/25 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.

The Commission reviewed its Risk Management Strategy and Policy in March 2024 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 Register is reviewed in detail at each Audit Committee meeting and is considered at each Commission meeting. In addition, the management of risk is discussed at the monthly meetings of the Chairperson and Director and at meetings between DfC and the Accounting Officer.

Training on corporate governance and risk management is provided for Commission Members and Officers to assist them in understanding the governance and risk management frameworks.

Fraud Risk

The Commission has a number of policies and associated procedures in place, designed to minimise the risk of fraud in the following areas:

- Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- Conflicts of Interest
- Acceptance and Provision of Gifts and Hospitality
- Raising a Concern
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Code of Conduct for Commission Members
- Risk Management Strategy and Policy
- Credit Card Protocol
- Guidance on Members' Expenses
- Financial Memorandum including cash handling, pay processes and procurement.

Commission Officers have received Fraud Awareness Training. There were no suspected frauds identified during 2024/25.

Information Risk

Information technology continues to be a key area of operations for the Commission and a range of policies are maintained to ensure the security and integrity of information and information systems. The Commission successfully achieved Cyber Essential re-accreditation in November 2024.

Operational responsibility for information security rests with the Director and is reported to the Audit Committee. There were no incidents of personal data loss which required notification to the Information Commission during 2024/25.

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 2025 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts and accords with Treasury guidance.

Commission Members are supplied with reports and information at least 5 working days prior to each meeting of the Commission or its Committees.

Sources of Independent Assurance – 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. Internal Audit is to provide an annual level of assurance for the system of internal controls within the Commission for 2024/25 at the May Audit Committee meeting. The Internal Audit Report for 2024-25 gave an overall assurance of 'Satisfactory' in the audit areas covered; Members and Officers' expenses and implementation of the Commission's Observer Strategy.

Sources of Independent Assurance - 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

The decision of the Minister on 23 October 2013 to wind up the Commission in March 2017 was endorsed by the Executive Committee in June 2014 representing a significant governance risk. A project plan was put in place by the DfC 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 Commission's Dissolution legislation was not passed therefore the Commission was extended beyond 31 March 2018 for an undefined period of time. 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, the findings have yet to be published.

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. A further extension was confirmed in December 2023 to the provisional date for dissolution to 31 March 2027.

REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT

Director and Senior Officers' Remuneration

The Commission operates pay and conditions for Officers in accordance with the provisions adopted by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. The NJC is the negotiating body for all staff in Councils in Northern Ireland (except Chief Executives). The pay and conditions of service for the Director 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 emolument's 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. A secondment arrangement commenced in March 2023 for the post of Senior HR Officer and the Accounting and Dissolution Officer postholder resumed their role in March 2024 both contracts are in place until 31 March 2027.

Employees with a Disability

The Commission actively seeks applications for employment from people with a disability where the requirements of the job may be adequately performed. Where existing employees acquire a disability, it is the Commission's policy, whenever reasonably possible, to provide continuous employment under normal terms and conditions and to provide training and development, where appropriate.

Pensions

The Staff Commission participates in the NILGOSC scheme for all 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.

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 December 2023 of an extension to the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2027, this year the Commission only obtained IAS 19 actuarial valuations and consequently the resulting net asset 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 1.0%, the CPI inflation assumption has reduced by 0.10% and the salary increase assumption has reduced by 0.10% 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.

McCloud Remedy

While NILGOSC continues to work through the implications of implementing the McCloud remedy, it has been agreed with DfC that the pension benefits disclosed for 2024/25 do not take the McCloud remedy into account. It is expected these will be included in disclosures for 2025/26.

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. Bumper Graham was appointed as the Chairperson with effect from 5 October 2020.

Chairperson and Members' Emoluments

	2024-25 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Mr Bumper Graham <i>Chairperson</i>	14.4	14.4
Members' Emoluments	7.9	11.2

Senior Officer's Emoluments

Single total figure of remuneration										
Officials	Salary (£'000)		Bonus Payments (£'000)		Benefits in Kind (£'000)		Pension Benefits (£'000)		Total (£'000)	
	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24
Ms Diana Stewart Director (FT)	85-90	75-80	-	-	-	-	32,000	29,000	115-120	105-110

Pay ratios

	2024-25	2023-24
Band of Highest Paid Total Remuneration	£85k -£90k	£75k -£80k
Median Total Remuneration	£46,091	£45,441
Ratio	1.87	1.71

Percentage Change in Remuneration

	2024-25 v 2023-24	2023-24 v 2022-23
Average employee salary and allowances	3.7%	15.1%
Highest paid director salary and allowances	3%	0.0%

All of the above figures are subject to audit.

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 2024/25 was £85k - £90k and in the financial year 2023/24 was £75k - £80k. This was 1.87 times the median remuneration of the workforce in 2024/25, an increase from 2023/24 (1.71).

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	2024/25 Total No's	2023/24 Total No's
(a) The average weekly number of employees (full time equivalent) was:	1.6	1.0	2.6	2.7
	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2024/25 Total No's	2023/24 Total No's
(b) The costs incurred in respect of these employees were:				
Salaries and Wages	107	45	152	151
Social Security Costs	13	5	18	17
Pension Costs – NILGOSC	40	9	49	49
	160	59	219	217
Current/Past Service Costs	35	-	35	32
Superannuation - re: charge to provision	(45)	-	(45)	(38)
TOTAL	150	59	209	211

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 25. The overall breakdown of staff employed by the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2025 was 3 female staff. This headcount consists of two full time staff and one part time member of staff.

The average number of sick days for 2024/25 was nil days per staff member; a reduction from 2023/24 (3.4 days).

Expenditure on seconded staff in 2024/25 was £59,824 (2023/24 - £57,691). Expenditure on agency staff in 2024/25 was £nil (2023/24 - £nil). Expenditure on consultancy in 2024/25 was £25,000 (2023/24 - £20,885). This relates to administration and accounting 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	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£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	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
Total cost	£Nil (£Nil)	£Nil (£Nil)	£Nil (£Nil)

There were no staff redundancies in the 2024/25 year.

There were no early retirements or ill-health retirements agreed during 2024/25.

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 31/03/2025	CETV at 31/03/2024	Real Increase in CETV after adjustment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Diana Stewart <i>Director</i>	0.0 – 2.5 Plus lump sum 0.0 – 0.0	27.5 – 30.0 Plus lump sum 35 – 37.5	587	494	77

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 and Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2025

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 (LGSC) for the year ended 31 March 2025 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 2024-25, of the financial position of the LGSC as at 31 March 2025 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 LGSC 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 LGSC'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 LGSC'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.

The going concern basis of accounting for the LGSC is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

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 Statement of 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 Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the LGSC and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Statement of 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 2024-25;
 - 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 statement of 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, or
- 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 the 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 LGSC's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the LGSC will not continue to be provided in the future.

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 LGSC 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 2024-25;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the LGSC'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 the LGSC'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. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following area; management override of controls;
- 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;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- 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; and
- 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. This description forms part of my certificate.

This report is made solely to the Members of the LGSC 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 LGSC in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.



Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

26th September 2025

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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 2025 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 and Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2025

Commission Approval of Statement of Accounts

These accounts were approved by the Commission on 9 September 2025

Signed:



BUMPER GRAHAM

Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission

Date: 25 September 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Income from district Councils and N.I. Housing Executive		379	378
Contracted Income	4	37	137
Statutory income to defray provision	3	-	(2)
Other operating income	4	0	-
Net Return on Assets	13	1	1
Total operating income		417	514
Staff costs	5	209	211
Purchase of goods and services	6	161	161
Contracted Expenditure		37	137
Depreciation and impairment charges	7	3	3
Provision expense	12	-	
Other operating expenditure			
Total operating expenditure		410	512
Net operating expenditure/ (income)		(7)	(2)
Finance income			-
Finance expenses			-
Net expenditure/ (income) for the year ended 31 March 2025		(7)	(2)
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to the operating costs:			
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant and Equipment	7	1	
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets			-
- Actuarial (gain)/loss on pension scheme liabilities	13(h)	11	7
Items which may be reclassified to net operating costs:			
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of investments			-
Comprehensive net expenditure/ (income) for the year		5	5

The amounts set out above arise wholly from continuing operations.
The notes on pages 42 to 60 form part of these accounts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	31 Mar 25 £000s	31 Mar 24 £000s Restated
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant & equipment	7	4	8
Intangible assets		-	-
Trade & other receivables	9	-	-
Financial assets		-	-
Total non-current assets		4	8
Current assets			
Assets classified as held for sale	8	-	-
Inventories		-	-
Trade & other receivables	9	2	2
Other current assets		-	-
Financial assets		-	-
Cash & cash equivalents	10	760	786
Total current assets		762	788
Total Assets		766	796
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	(56)	(80)
Provisions	12	-	-
Other liabilities			
Total current liabilities		(56)	(80)
Total assets less current liabilities		710	716
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	12	-	-
Other payables	11	-	-
Financial liabilities	13	-	-
Total non-current liabilities		-	-
Total assets less total liabilities		710	716
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves			
General Fund Revaluation Reserve		710	716
Total equity		710	716

The financial statements were approved by the Commission on 9 September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Stewart', written over a horizontal line.

DIANA STEWART
Director & Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bumper Graham', written over a horizontal line.

BUMPER GRAHAM
Chairperson, Local Government Staff
Commission

Date: 25 September 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost		7	2
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	7	3	3
Interest Payables			
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	9		1,773
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	11	(24)	(4)
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	12	-	(1,745)
Return on Net Assets in Pension Fund	13	(1)	(1)
Current/Past Service Cost/Settlement Cost	13	35	32
Net cash outflow from operating activities		20	60
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	7	-	(3)
Employer's Superannuation	13	(45)	(38)
Interest			
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant and equipment			
Proceeds of disposal of intangibles			
Net cash outflows from investing activities		(45)	(41)
Cash flows from financing activities			
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		-	-
Net financing			-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the Period		(25)	19
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		786	767
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	10	760	786

The notes on pages 42 to 60 form part of these accounts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAXPAYERS' EQUITY
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	General Fund	Revaluation Reserve	Total Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 31 March 2022	690	-	690
Retained surplus/(deficit)	44	-	44
Revaluation of non-current assets (see Note 7)	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension (see Note 13h)	(13)	-	(13)
Transfer between reserves	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2023	721	-	721
Retained surplus/(deficit)	2	-	2
Revaluation of non-current assets (see Note 7)	-	-	-
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension (see Note 13h)	(7)	-	(7)
Transfer between reserves	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2024	716	-	716
Retained surplus/(deficit)	5		6
Revaluation of non-current assets (see Note 7)			
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension (see Note 13h)	(11)		(11)
Transfer between reserves			
Balance at 31 March 2025	710		711

The notes on pages 42 to 60 form part of these accounts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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

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. A further extension was confirmed in December 2023 to the provisional date for dissolution to 31 March 2027. On this basis, the Commission has developed a Management and Dissolution 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 NIHE 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 2025.

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 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to 3/80^{ths} 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 1/60th of pensionable salary for each year of service. From 1 April 2015 benefits accrue at the rate of 1/49th 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 2024/25 has been set at 37.6% and no annual charge.

The total amounts paid into the scheme this financial year were employees £7,533.25 and employer £33,323.44. The Commission is not currently paying any deficit contributions; therefore no additional liability has been calculated.

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 2025 in accordance with IAS 19 and Financial Reporting Manual (FreM) 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 2025 % per annum	31 March 2024 % per annum
Discount Rate	5.8	4.8
Pension Increases	2.5	2.6
Pension Accounts Revaluation Rate	2.5	2.6
Salary Increases	4.0	4.1

The total net pension asset as at 31 March 2025 is £1,584,000 representing the sum of the net assets as at that date. This has not been recognised this year in the accounts.

(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 where a provision

Note 1: Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

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 Management and Dissolution Plan. The annual financial scheme and any subsequent schemes are presented at Commission and Audit Committee meetings for recommendation and approval.

Note 3: Statutory Income to defray provision

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Statutory income to defray provision	-	(2)
TOTAL	-	(2)

Note 4: Contracted Income

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Income from the Local Government Training Group	-	-
Income from the Local Government Staff Commission Conference	-	-
Income from the recharged services to Local Government	37	137
TOTAL	37	137

Note 5: Staff Costs

	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2024/25 Total No's	2023/24 Total No's
(a) The average weekly number of employees (full time equivalent) was:	1.6	1.0	2.6	2.7
	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2024/25 Total £000s	2023/24 Total £000's
(b) The costs incurred in respect of these employees were:				
Salaries and Wages	107	45	152	151
Social Security Costs	13	5	18	17
Pension Costs – NILGOSC	40	9	49	49
	160	59	219	217
Current/Past Service Costs and Settlement Costs	35 -	-	35	32
Superannuation - re: charge to provision	(45)	-	(45)	(38)
TOTAL	150	59	209	211

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 exit packages were agreed in year.

Note 6: Other Operating Costs

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
These comprise:		
Commission Chairperson and Members' Allowances	23	26
Research, Marketing and Development	-	3
Conferences, Courses and Training	4	12
Rent	19	20
Rates	-	-
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	1	1
Other General Administration Expenses	15	27
Professional Fees	41	20
IT Services	21	17
Agency & Consultancy	25	21
External Auditor's Remuneration	10	10
Travel and Subsistence – Staff	1	1
Travel and Subsistence – Commission Members	1	3
TOTAL	161	161

Note 7: Plant and Equipment

Current Year:	Land and Buildings £000s	Computer Equipment £000s	Fixtures and Fittings £000s	Total £000s
COST OR VALUATION				
At 1 April 2024	-	18	-	18
Additions (including accruals)	-			
Disposals	-	(4)	-	
Adjustment arising on revaluation. At 31 March 2025	-		-	-
	-	14	-	14
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2024	-	10	-	10
Opening Balance Adjustment			-	
Charge for the year	-	3	-	3
Disposals	-	(3)	-	(3)
Adjustment arising on revaluation. At 31 March 2025	-	-	-	-
	-	10	-	10
CARRYING VALUE				
At 31 March 2024	-	8	-	8
At 31 March 2025	-	4	-	4

Asset Financing:	Land and Buildings £000s	Computer Equipment £000s	Fixtures and Fittings £000s	Total £000s
Owned	-	4	-	4
Finance Leased	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-	-
Carrying Value at 31 March 2025	-	4	-	4

Note 7: Plant and Equipment

Comparative Year:	Land and Buildings £000s	Computer Equipment £000s	Fixtures and Fittings £000s	Total £000s
COST OR VALUATION				
At 1 April 2023	-	42	-	42
Additions (including accruals)	-	3	-	3
Disposals	-	(27)	-	(27)
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	-	18	-	18
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2023	-	33	-	33
Opening Balance Adjustment	-	-	-	-
Charge for the year	-	3	-	3
Disposals	-	(26)	-	(26)
Adjustment arising on revaluation	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	-	10	-	10
CARRYING VALUE				
At 31 March 2023	-	9	-	9
At 31 March 2024	-	8	-	8

Asset Financing:	Land and Buildings £000s	Computer Equipment £000s	Fixtures and Fittings £000s	Total £000s
Owned	-	8	-	8
Finance Leased	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI (and other service concession arrangements) contracts	-	-	-	-
Carrying Value at 31 March 2024	-	8	-	8

Note 8: Assets Classified as Held for Sale

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Land and Buildings	-	-
TOTAL	-	-

Note 9: Trade Receivables and Other Current Assets

Amounts falling due within one year:	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Trade receivables	-	-
Deposits and advances	-	-
Other Receivables*	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	2	2
Current part of PFI (and other service concession arrangements) prepayment	-	-
TOTAL	2	2
Amounts falling due after more than one year:	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Other Receivables*	-	-
TOTAL	-	-

*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.

Due to the extension of the dissolution date to 31 March 2027 and historical uncertainty, no provision for dissolution costs and corresponding funding from the Department have been recognised

The dissolution costs will be reassessed when there is greater certainty around potential dissolution. These costs will be met by the Department for Communities.

Note 9.1: Intra-Governments Balances

	Amounts falling due within one year £000s		Amounts falling due after more than One year £000s	
	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24
Balances with central government	-	-		
Balances with local authorities	-		-	
Balances with NHS bodies	-		-	-
Sub-total: intra government balances	-	-		
Balances with bodies external to Government	2	2		
Trade Receivables at 31 March	2	2		

Note 10: Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Balance at 1 April	786	767
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(26)	19
Balance at 31 March	760	786
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	760	786

Note 11: Trade Payables and Other Current Liabilities

Amounts falling due within one year:	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
VAT	-	-
Other taxation and social security	-	-
Trade payables	-	-
Other Creditors	2	-
Accruals	54	58
Accrued and deferred income	-	22
Current part of finance leases	-	-
Current part of imputed finance lease element of on balance sheet (SoFP) PFI contracts	-	-
Current instalments due on loans	-	-
TOTAL	56	80

Amounts falling due after more than one year:	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	-	-
TOTAL	-	-

Note 11.1 Intra-Government Balances

	Amounts falling due within one year £000s		Amounts falling due after more than one year £000s	
	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24
Balances with central government		-	-	-
Balances with government bodies	13	11	-	-
Balances with local authorities	16	38	-	-
Balances with NHS bodies		-	-	-
Sub-total: intra-government balances	29	49	-	-
-Balances with bodies external to government	27	31	-	-
Trade payables at 31 March	56	80	-	-

Note 12: Provision for Liabilities and Charges

Current Year:	Departure Costs	Other	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2024	-	-	
Provided in the year	-	-	
Provisions utilised in the year	-	-	
Provisions not required written back	-	-	
Unwinding of discount	-	-	
Balance at 31 March 2025	-	-	

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

Current Year:	Departure Costs	Other	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Not later than one year			
Later than one year and not later than five years			
Later than five years			
Balance at 31 March 2025			

Comparative Year:	Departure Costs	Other	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2023	1,745	-	1,745
Provided in the year		-	
Provisions utilised in the year	-	-	-
Provisions not required written back	(1,745)	-	(1,745)
Unwinding of discount	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2024	-	-	-

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

Comparative Year:	Departure Costs	Other	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Not later than one year	-	-	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-	-
Later than five years	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2024	-	-	-

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 December 2023 the Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities confirmed an extension to the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2027.

Due to the extension of the dissolution date to 31 March 2027 and uncertainty around the provision and corresponding receivable as at 31 March 2025 no liability has been recognised.

Note 13: Pensions Relating to Officers

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Scheme Liability at Beginning of the Year	0	0
Current Service Cost	(35)	(32)
Past Service (Cost)/Gain		-
Settlement Cost		-
Employer Contributions	45	38
Net Return on Assets	1	1
Actuarial Gains/(Losses)	(11)	(7)
Scheme Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 March	0	0

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 2025 % p.a.	Assets at 31 March 2025 £000s	Expected Long Term Return at 31 March 2024 % p.a.	Assets at 31 March 2024 £000s
Equities	41.3	2,044	4.8	1,977
Bonds	19.6	970	4.8	977
Property	9.5	470	4.8	463
Cash	10.7	529	4.8	617
Other	18.9	938	4.8	946
Total		4,951		4,980

Note 13(b): Net Pension Asset

	31 March 2025 £000s	31 March 2024 £000s
Estimated Employer Assets (A)	4,951	4,980
Present Value of Scheme Liabilities	(3,367)	(3,939)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities		-
Total Value of Liabilities (B)	(3,367)	(3,939)
Net Pension Asset (A-B)	1,584	1,041
IAS19 Surplus Restriction	(1,584)	(1,041)
	0	0

Note 13(c): Reconciliation of Defined Benefit Obligation

	Year to 31 March 2025 £000s	Year to 31 March 2024 £000s
Opening Defined Benefit Obligation	3,939	4,106
Current Service Cost	35	32
Interest Cost	183	187
Contributions by Members	10	8
Actuarial Losses/(Gains)	(534)	(145)
Past Service Costs/(Gains)		-
Losses/(Gains) on Curtailments		-
Liabilities Extinguished on Settlements		-
Liabilities Assumed in a Business Combination		-
Exchange Differences		-
Estimated Unfunded Benefits Paid		-
Estimated Benefits Paid	(266)	(249)
Settlements		-
Closing Defined Benefit Obligation	£3,367	£3,939

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

	Year to 31 March 2025 £000s	Year to 31 March 2024 £000s
Opening Fair Value of Employer Assets	4,980	4,703
Interest Income on Assets	234	216
Contributions by Members	10	8
Contributions by the Employer	45	38
Contributions in Respect of Unfunded Benefits		-
Remeasurement Gains/(Losses) on Assets	(52)	264
Assets Distributed on Settlements		-
Assets Acquired in a Business Combination		-
Exchange Differences		-
Unfunded Benefits Paid		-
Benefits Paid	(266)	(249)
Closing Fair Value of Employer Assets	£4,951	4,980

Note 13(e): Net Return on Assets:

	Year to 31 March 2025 £000s	Year to 31 March 2024 £000s
Interest Income on Assets	234	216
Remeasurement Gains/(Losses) on Assets	(52)	264
Net Return	182	480

Note 13(f): Actuarial Analysis

	Year to 31 March 2025 %	Year to 31 March 2024 %
Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	2.5	2.6
Salary Increase Rate	4.0	4.1
Expected Return on Assets	3.7	4.1
Discount Rate	5.8	4.8

Note 13(g): Mortality Assumptions

Actuarial Assumptions for average future life expectancy at age 65	Males	Females
Current Pensioners	21.6 years	24.5 years
Future Pensioners (aged 45 at accounting date)	22.2 years	25.2 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 2025 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2024 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2023 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2022 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2021 £000s	Year to 31 Mar 2020 £000s
Fair Value of Employer Assets	4951	4,980	4,703	5,131	4,922	4,143
Present Value of Defined Benefit Obligation	3367	3,939	(4,106)	(5,025)	(5,437)	(4,645)
Surplus/(Deficit)	1,584	1,041	597	106	(515)	(502)
Remeasurement Gains/(Losses) on Assets	(52)	264	(395)	172	894	(567)
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) on Obligation	534	145	897	317	(711)	658
Adjustment loss/gain due to restriction on surplus	(493)	(416)	(515)	(80)	-	-
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) recognised in OCNE	(11)	(7)	(13)	409	183	91

Note 14: Commitments under Leases

	2024/25 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Not later than one year	20	19
Later than one year and not later than five years		-
	20	19

The lease for office at St Anne's House ended on 31 March 2025.

A new annual lease for accommodation at Formation Works, Meadow View is in place since 1 April 2025.

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:

	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Less than three months	-	-
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 265 invoices totalling £246,748.79

The Commission paid 252 (95%) 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 2024/25.

Note 19: Events after the Reporting Period

There were no events occurring after 31 March 2025, 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 **26 September 2025**.