

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE
THROUGH PEOPLE

MANAGEMENT PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2021 - 31 MARCH 2023



The Local Government Staff Commission
for Northern Ireland



CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

The Commission welcomes the Ministers decision to carry out a follow-up consultation to ascertain if there are any reasons that the Executive decision to dissolve the Commission should be reconsidered.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and following containment measures will have a long-lasting impact on the economy, businesses and working lives. Organisations have had to make rapid changes to how they operate, including how and where jobs are carried out, as well as planning for, or returning staff to work safely. Employees in turn, must navigate new ways of working, as well as adapt to changing circumstances in their personal life.

To reflect the Ministers' decision and the revised timeframe the Management Plan for the Commission has been updated for the period September 2021 to March 2023. The Plan reflects stakeholder requirements and takes account of the changing needs of Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). It aims to support the recovery and renewal of services ensuring that our sector not only recovers from the pandemic but continues to improve and transform.

In focusing on these activities, continuing to work with our strategic partners and responding to stakeholder needs, the Commission aims to support and develop the HR capacity in councils and the NIHE, thereby assisting to improve organisational effectiveness within the local government sector.

The Management Plan is not designed to describe all the Commission's day-to-day work. It is supported by a portfolio of action plans which will be reviewed continually to track our progress and respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.



Bumper Graham

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bumper Graham', written over a light blue background with a diagonal line pattern.

STATUS OF THE COMMISSION

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 is an Arm's Length Body of the Department for Communities (DfC), and the Department determines the Staff Commission's performance framework considering the Department's wider strategic aims and current key commitments. The areas of operation, timeline and actions required by the Commission are set out in this Plan. The Minister is accountable to the Assembly for the activities and performance of the Staff Commission. The Departmental Accounting Officer has designated the Director of Corporate Services of the Staff Commission as the Staff Commission's Accounting Officer.

In general, the terms of reference for the Commission are 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.'

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended by the Housing Orders (NI) 1976 and 1981]

Appendix 1 provides further details of the Commission's statutory remit and specific functions.



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



REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION

In October 2013, 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. However, to date it has not been possible to have necessary Dissolution Order in place to wind up the Commission. On this basis, the Department for Communities reconstituted the Commission membership from 01 April 2017 up to the final dissolution date.

In June 2021 the Minister for Communities decided that, given the passage of time that had evolved since the review in 2012, a follow-up consultation should be carried out to ascertain if there are any reasons that the Executive decision to dissolve the Commission should be reconsidered. It is expected that the consultation will commence in the autumn of 2021.



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To ensure fair and equitable treatment for all by promoting an environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and where diversity is valued.”

VISION STATEMENT

“
**ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE
THROUGH PEOPLE**”

VALUES

- ✓ **Accountable** to all our stakeholders.
- ✓ **Proactive** in the delivery of value-added services to support the sector.
- ✓ **Receptive** through listening to and considering the range of views of our stakeholders.
- ✓ **Responsive** through our services and support to our stakeholders.
- ✓ **Collaborative** in our approach to partnership working and engagement with stakeholders.



“
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.

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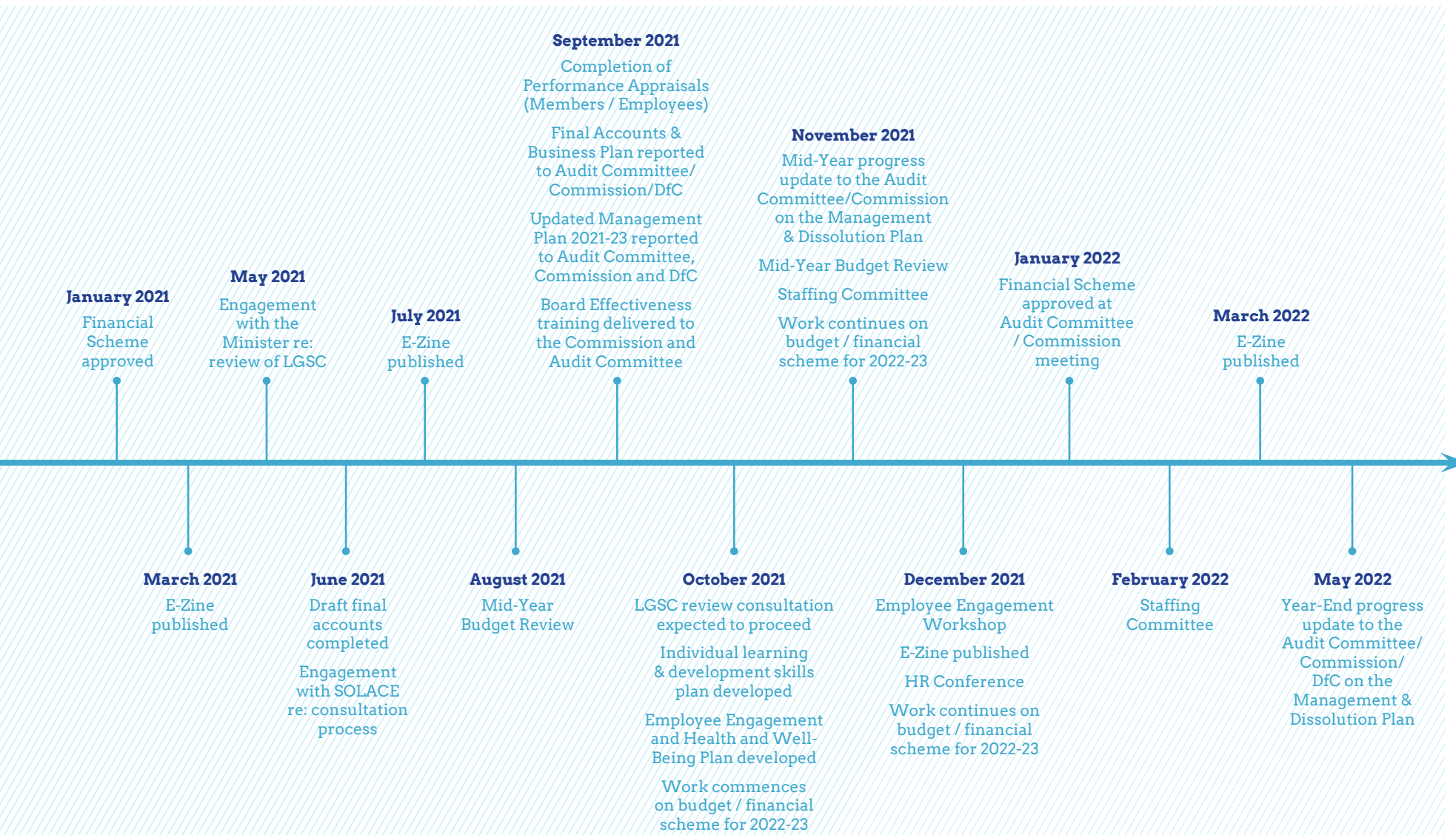
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE



“
To develop and implement solutions for local government which will deliver on the workforce issues necessary to address the business priorities of the sector.”



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TIMELINE



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>We will develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum.</p>	<p>We will progress a programme of work to ensure that the regional machinery will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have robust operating and governance arrangements in place. Facilitate maximum engagement between and be representative of and owned by the main stakeholders i.e., the 11 councils and the main recognised trade unions. Engage with stakeholders to create an agenda that is pro-active, performance driven, productive and effective, and produce agreements that are relevant to the needs of the sector. Give leadership on relevant people and organisational development matters. Ensure employers side representatives are nominated directly by the 11 councils. Provide advice, assistance, and independent secretariat facilities as required. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum within the agreed timeframe. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Feb 2022</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>
<p>We will support the Department to undertake the 'Review of the Local Government Commission - 2021' consultation.</p>	<p>Actions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation design and approval process. Procurement/appointment of a facilitator. Design of workshops/focus groups. Organisation and delivery of workshops/focus groups. Data collection and analysis. Reporting. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation completed in line with the timetable agreed by DfC. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2022</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>We will assist Councils to implement the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and provide advice on best practice in recruitment and selection as required.</p>	<p>Actions Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide assistance with recruitment exercises for senior posts in Councils and the NIHE, as required in line with agreed procedures. Provide advice on best practice recruitment and selection training on an ongoing basis. Attend meetings of the recruitment working group when appropriate and provide assistance, as required. Advise Councils and the NIHE on the use of assessment centres and situational judgement tests, as required. Implement the Observer Strategy for the recruitment of senior posts. Review of the Code of Practice for Recruitment & Selection, to include assessment testing and assist Councils to implement new techniques. Review the regional competency framework. Issue a new Code of Procedures to Councils to coincide with the Dissolution Order and provide training to Councils on the provisions of the new Code. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of senior recruitment exercises the Commission has provided assistance with. Revised Code of Procedures in place. Revised Competency Framework in place. Agreed arrangements in place post-dissolution. 	<p>Oct 2021 - Mar 23</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>
<p>We will provide advice and assistance in respect of the Code of Conduct for local government officers.</p>	<p>We will work in partnership with local Councils to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional advice and assistance regarding HR and OD matters including complaints, grievance, and disciplinary matters. Develop e-learning materials to support the Code of Conduct. Assist with the smooth transition in accordance with the dissolution order for new arrangements post-dissolution. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of employee relations cases supported. Have arrangements in place post-dissolution. Develop e-learning materials to support Councils. 	<p>Oct 2021 - Mar 2023</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>To develop a talent management strategy for the sector which provides a robust approach to succession planning, talent acquisition, identification, and development.</p>	<p>We will work in partnership with local Councils to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and provide the secretariat for a regional Talent Management Working Group. Scope the understanding of talent management within the sector. Develop a concise definition of talent management and a model of best practice. Develop a talent management strategy for the sector which provides a robust approach to succession planning, talent acquisition, identification, and development. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Talent management Strategy for the sector. 	<p>Oct 2021 - Jun 2022</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>
<p>We will deliver an equality and diversity programme to support Councils and NIHE to ensure fair and equitable workplaces.</p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Design and support the delivery of an Equality and Diversity Strategy 2021-2023. Establish robust arrangements to include governance and training for the role of Diversity Champions (Ambassadors) to encourage networking, disseminating best practice. (Elected Members and Officers). Provide advice and assistance in relation to best practice arrangements for high level governance, education and training and reporting arrangements to ensure commitment and buy-in. Provide advice and assistance in relation to queries on equality and diversity. Facilitate regular meetings of the Statutory Duty Network to address common issues and collaborate on sector wide initiatives and support councils and the NIHE to implement their Section 75 duties and Disability Action Plans. Provide best practice events on issues such as absence management and health and wellbeing. Assist with the smooth transition of the work of the Equality and Diversity Group in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution) Order (NI) 2017 (currently in draft form) for new arrangements post dissolution. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and delivery of an Equality & Diversity Strategy. Review of the role of Diversity Champions and roll out off training. A number of Equality & Diversity events supported. Robust arrangements in place post-Dissolution. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2023</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>We will support Councils and NIHE to improve and maintain people’s mental wellness through the delivery of the regional Mental Health Strategy.</p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <p>Implement the regional Mental Health Strategy to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a Health and Well-being Conference (half-day best practice Health and Well-Being event to launch the mental health toolkit, video and feature a best practice speaker. • The creation of a video to celebrate the innovative work that has been taking place across all 11 Councils and NIHE featuring Minister, Commission Members, Mayors, Council Chairpersons, Board Members, Mental Health Champions, and people who have been supported. This will be an example of the sector’s commitment to the Health and Well- Being of staff and of shared learning across the sector. • Development of a Mental Health Toolkit (in partnership with Business in the Community). • Commission formal research to establish a baseline position for the sector and use this as a benchmark to determine the impact and outcomes of the Mental Health Strategy. • Lead on the roll out of the ‘Wellbeing Hub’ across the local Councils and NIHE. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Mental Health Strategy. • A number of Health & Wellbeing events. • % customer satisfaction. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2022</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>

“
To ensure that effective, productive and harmonious working environments and staff/management relationships are sustained within local government.”



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>We will support Councils and NIHE in the provision of HR and OD advice and assistance.</p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and assistance as required. Promote best practice through 'LGSC News' and other mediums. Attendance at regional networking meetings and engage with all relevant stakeholders to understand their needs e.g. PPMA Assist with investigations and independent consultancy support as required. Develop a Formal Investigation Toolkit and roll out a programme of training to provide guidance and support to managers who undertake the role of Investigating Officer as part of formal Disciplinary, Capability and other related policies and procedures. <p>This toolkit will provide advice and guidance in respect of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Importance of Robust Workplace Investigations The Investigation Process Step 1 - Investigators Appointed/Terms of Reference Agreed Step 2 - Devise a Plan/Investigation Interviews Step 3 - Collate and Analyse Information Step 4 - Create Report Step 5 - Forward Report to Employee Relations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to the Local Government Training Board with the Transition Strategy and the development and implementation of a project plan. Provide update reports from LGTG Board to the Commission to allow the Commission to exercise its oversight role. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of editions of 'LGSC News' published. Provision of expert consultancy support. Number of sectoral working groups LGSC contribute to. Evidence of advice/support. Delivery of employment law update seminars as required. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2023</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor</p>



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>To continue to implement a sound system of control to support the Commission's objectives in accordance with Government Accounting Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Actions Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation and publication of Annual Report and Accounts. b. Ensure sound systems of control and good governance are in place for all Commission business. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange Audit Committee meetings as required. • Facilitate NIAO as required. • Review and update the Commission's Risk Register. • Provision of a secretariat service to all Commission. • Compliance with equality reporting arrangements. • Update policies as per DOF and DfC instruction. • Prepare responses for FOI and Data Protection meetings. • Annual review of systems to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation. • Ongoing liaison with Public Records Office NI to ensure special circumstances are agreed to enable PRONI to take delivery of files less than 20 years old. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Reports and Accounts published. • Unqualified audit opinion. • Compliance with all necessary regulation and policy. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2023</p>	<p>Accounting and Dissolution Officer</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Principal HR Advisor</p>
<p>To ensure the efficient and effective day to day management of the Commission's Financial Affairs in accordance with Government Accounting Practice and Accounts Direction issued by DfC / NIAO.</p>	<p>Actions Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparation of financial schemes and ongoing budgetary management practices. b. Budget reports presented at Commission and Audit Committee meetings on a bi-annual basis. c. Preparation of budgetary performance reports on a monthly basis for scrutiny by the Director of Corporate Services. d. Preparation and publication of Annual Report and Accounts e. Processing of salaries, allowances receipts and payments in line with agreed timelines. f. Monthly bank reconciliation prepared and monitored by the Director of Corporate Services. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report and Accounts published in accordance with the timeline defined by DfC. • Unqualified audit opinion with financial statement. • Financial Scheme in place. • Payment of salaries and allowances on agreed date. • Meet statutory prompt payment targets. • Delivery of services within budget. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2023</p>	<p>Accounting and Dissolution Officer</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p>



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>To progress the necessary governance and resource actions to ensure the efficient and orderly dissolution of the Commission.</p>	<p>Actions Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review assets and update asset Register, as necessary. Implement all governance arrangements relating to the Commission’s dissolution as agreed by the DfC-LGSC Dissolution Project Board. Prepare for handover to DfC Dissolution Group and Public Records Office. Dispose of remaining assets. Review of accommodation provision. Draft final accounts and handover of server, etc., to the Department for Communities. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orderly dissolution of the Commission. 	<p>Sep 2021 - Mar 2023</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services Principal HR Advisor Accounting and Dissolution Officer</p>

“
To provide the highest level of public service standards in all areas of the Commission’s operation.”



APPENDIX 1

Legislation

In addition to the Commission’s general oversight role as detailed in the introduction of this document, the following specific functions are detailed in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, as amended by the Housing Orders (NI) 1976 and 1981 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1992.

The functions of the Staff Commission shall include:

- a) *Establishing in such a manner as the Staff Commission thinks fit, bodies (to be known as “advisory appointment panels”) for the purpose of giving advice to councils on the suitability of applicants for appointment to the office of clerk and to other offices for which qualifications are prescribed under section 41 (including the making of a selection of persons who may be treated as eligible for such appointments);*
- b) *Establishing a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to councils and to the Executive¹ by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers, and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed;*
- c) *Assessing the probable future requirements of councils and of the Executive for the recruitment of officers and securing publicity for the opportunities that are available to persons who may seek employment as such officers;*
- d) *Promoting co-operation between councils, the 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, between councils and the Executive or between councils or the Executive and any such bodies, departments or institutions;*
- e) *Promoting or assisting the development of, or providing, facilities for the training of officers;*
- f) *Promoting or assisting the establishment of, or establishing, procedures for the negotiation between councils, the Executive and officers of councils or the Executive or associations representing any of them, of standard rates of remuneration, or other terms and conditions of employment, for officers of councils or the Executive and recommending the adoption by councils and the Executive of rates, terms and conditions so negotiated.*



¹The term ‘Executive’ refers to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive



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