



Business Plan 2019-2020



This draft Business Plan has been prepared for consideration and approval by an incoming Minister. Pending the appointment of a Minister, the Department is working towards delivery of the priorities and targets specified in this Plan within the limits of the financial and other resources allocated to the Department for the current financial year.



Contents

Introduction	01
Our Purpose	03
2018-19 Achievements	04
Our resources	
• Money	09
• People	11
Our Priorities and Targets	13

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Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary





INTRODUCTION

I am proud to introduce the Department's Business Plan for 2019/20 which sets out at a high level our strategic priorities and targets for the year ahead.

The Department of Finance is at the heart of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. With responsibility for a budget in excess of £13billion, public procurement, responsibility for the HR, IT and finance services function for all 23,000 NICS staff and through Land & Property Services the collection of £1.3billion in rates which contributes to the funding of vital public services.

As I reflect on my first year as Permanent Secretary, yes, there have been challenges and uncertainty with no Ministers, a reduced budget and Brexit preparations but overall the Department has made considerable progress delivering a wide range of services making a real impact on people's lives.

We continue to operate within significant financial and political uncertainty and with finite resources and infinite demands which will require tough decisions. However, with careful planning and management, we will face these challenges together and work collaboratively to deliver the best possible outcome for the people of Northern Ireland.

Externally we will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders and sectors to deliver efficient and effective public services that really make a difference to people's lives. Internally we have engaged with our people to develop a new common purpose which sets out clearly our shared priorities and responsibilities. This is fundamental to ensuring we direct our resources in the most effective manner.

I am very proud to be a member of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and privileged to lead the Department of Finance. I want to thank everyone in the Department for everything they do every day to deliver a wide range of services both in and outside the NICS. Thank you.

Sue Gray

Sue Gray
Permanent Secretary



OUR PURPOSE

The Department of Finance (DoF) provides the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and other public bodies with money, professional services and business support systems, helping them to deliver excellent, value for money public services.

We do this by:

- Managing public expenditure and effectively allocating resources to where they are most needed to support the delivery of public services
- Collecting rates revenue to provide funding for central and local public services
- Recruiting, developing and supporting the best people for the NICS and providing opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential
- Providing a range of expert shared and professional services to the NICS, and other parts of the public sector
- Improving effectiveness across the public sector by transforming the way we work
- Making the way the NICS works more open and transparent and promoting the release of government data in an accessible format.

2018 - 19 ACHIEVEMENTS



£1.343billion+
collected in rates to fund
vital public services



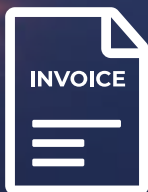
processed over 1 million
payments to the local
economy worth over

£3billion



480 contracts awarded
valued at

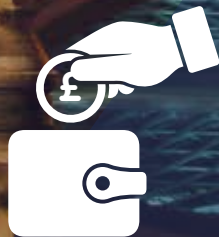
£275million



90%+
of invoices paid within
10 days



97,626 birth;
18,503 marriage;
9,473 death
certificates issued



£44million+
paid out to pensioner
members



200+ business cases
approved totalling over
£2.8billion



5.5million+
digital transactions



Fairer system
for employee pension
contributions introduced



136%
increase in NICS
Awards nominations



for first time NICS
took part in
Pride



c.3,370
vacancies filled across
the NICS (31% more
than the previous year)



Stormont Estate awarded
Green Flag

5th year



98 pieces
of Brexit related
legislation delivered



supported
departments in
1,500+
litigation cases



OUR RESOURCES

MONEY

The Department has been allocated £192.2m of resource funding and £35.3m of capital funding for the year 2019-20. Delivery of the Department's services will prove challenging within this budget allocation given the pressures arising across a number of areas. However, we will seek to address those pressures within the budget allocated.

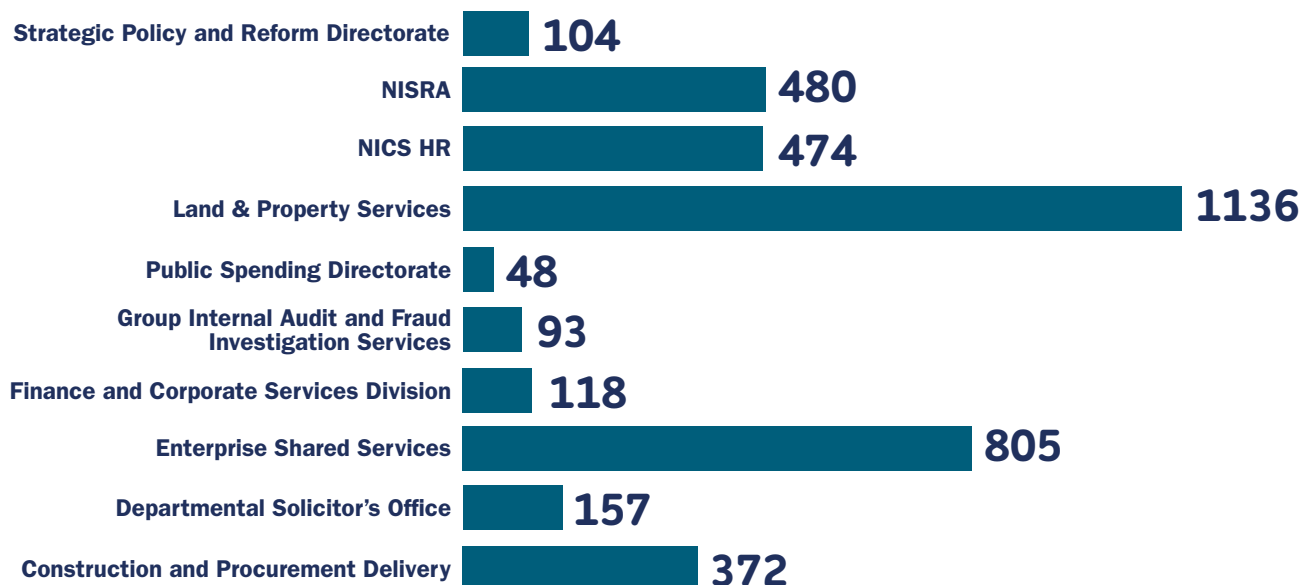
	2018-19	2019-20
	£m	£m
Net Resource	189.7	192.2
Net Capital	27.3	35.3



PEOPLE



As at 3 June 2019, the Department employed 3,787 staff.
 This is made up of **3,507 permanent staff** and **280 temporary staff**



Our People Plan

Our People Plan was developed in response to feedback from our staff. During the year we will undertake a wide ranging programme of engagement to address areas identified. This includes:

- Increasing visibility and sharing of information by senior management through blogs, events and attendance at meetings
- Rolling out our new common purpose and helping our people to understand how their role contributes to the work of our Department
- Launching and embedding a new DoF Induction package
- Further developing and promoting our volunteering programme
- Launching a programme of information sessions
- Strengthening and developing the role of the Staff Engagement Forum
- Promoting awareness of diversity-related matters with our people through the Department's Diversity Network.

Employee engagement is one measure of how we will assess the impact of these actions.

DoF Employee Engagement Index



(source: NICS People Survey: 2018 results)

We will continue to support change programmes associated with implementation of the wider NICS People Strategy. This Department also delivers a number of corporate staff engagement initiatives on behalf of the wider NICS. Developments to this work for 2019/20 include:

- Developing a rolling programme of NICS events throughout the year
- Holding quarterly NICS senior leader events
- Broadening the scope of participants to involve Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) and the wider public sector
- Engaging with young people involving schools and colleges as part of NICS external engagement through events
- Running the NICS Awards in autumn 2019
- Carrying out the NICS People Survey in autumn 2019.



OUR PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

PRIORITY 1: Work with Departments in the NICS to prepare for and deliver an orderly exit from the European Union, ensure effective delivery of current EU funding and develop future policies to replace EU funding after the UK leaves the EU.

TARGETS

- Ensure Departments have the right financial and staffing resources to prepare for and help mitigate any adverse impacts of the UK leaving the EU in both a deal and no deal scenario
- Prepare and delivering mitigation plans for Public Sector data sharing and Banking and Industry Services
- Effectively co-sponsor the Special EU Programmes Body and ensure achievement of 2019 EU expenditure targets
- Framework for agreement of 2021-27 EU PEACE Plus Programme to be in place by 31 March 2020
- Policy approaches to replace current EU funding Programmes to be in place by 31 March 2020.

PRIORITY 2: Collect rates revenue to fund central and local services.

TARGETS

- Collect £1.39 billion of rates revenue by 31 March 2020
- Reduce rating debt to £120 million by 31 March 2020
- Publish a new non-domestic Valuation List by 31 March 2020
- Carry out a comprehensive review of business rates in Northern Ireland and produce recommendations by 31 March 2020.

PRIORITY 3: Effective management of public expenditure in Northern Ireland promoting accountability and good governance while maximising benefit, securing value for money and ensuring no breach of Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL).

TARGETS

- Establish NI Budget 2020-21 prior to March 2020
- Ensure Estimates and associated Budget Acts, are in place by required dates to provide legal cover for departments' spend
- Provide a high quality procurement service, achieving a 95% satisfaction rate from customers
- Issue Directions to the National Lottery Community Fund to establish a Dormant Accounts Scheme in Northern Ireland and develop a Strategic Action Plan for the scheme by March 2020
- Work in partnership with the Chief Executives' Forum, the Chairs' Forum and NI Audit Office to develop a suite of guidance that will lead to better relationships between departments and Arms Length Bodies resulting in more effective service delivery systems.

PRIORITY 4: Continue preparations for the successful delivery of the 2021 Census to ensure government policies, plans and services continue to be based on strong and accurate population evidence.

Targets

- In autumn 2019, undertake a large scale rehearsal of the Census systems and services
- By March 2020, prepare legislation to run a 2021 Census.

PRIORITY 5: Ensure government continues to work in an open and transparent way, by championing open government principles for transparency, accountability, good governance and citizen participation.

TARGETS

- Develop and launch the new Open Data Strategy for Northern Ireland by October 2019
- Significantly increase number of open datasets published through the OpenDataNI portal by 31 March 2020
- Launch the Open Data Innovation Fund by November 2019 to incentivise uptake and creative use of datasets
- Develop an online e-learning module for Open Data and Open Government for NICS staff by 31 March 2020
- Proactively publish on a quarterly basis gifts and hospitality received by the Department's Senior Civil Servants and the Permanent Secretary's expenses.

PRIORITY 6: Enable the NICS to deliver the vision set out in the People Strategy of an outcomes focused, well led, high performing NICS with a diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

TARGETS

- By February 2020 develop a new approach to talent management across the NICS
- Complete the rollout of Phase 1 of the Employee Relations Project relating to absence management, giving managers across departments and Public Prosecution Service the authority to carry out absence review, warning and appeal meetings
- Deliver an NICS-wide approach to strategic workforce planning and strengthen strategic workforce planning in departments
- Review the NICS approach, policy and processes in relation to recruitment and selection
- By September 2019, complete NICS submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
- By October 2019, develop an NICS Diversity and Inclusion Outreach Plan and agree implementation approach.

PRIORITY 7: Provide a range of expert shared and professional services to the NICS and other parts of the public sector.

TARGETS

- Deliver high quality innovation labs and consultancy services promoting solutions to policy challenges
- Invest in new technology to manage and respond to cyber threats including developing and delivering a programme of cyber security awareness across the Department for all staff from September 2019
- Enable implementation of Integrated Pensions IT System by May 2020.

PRIORITY 8: Improve effectiveness across the public sector by transforming the way we work to better meet the needs of citizens, business and government.

TARGETS

- Engage with Departments and the wider public sector to deliver the 2019-20 phase of the Digital Transformation Programme plan to improve citizen facing services
- Commence engagement with potential suppliers for the replacement of finance, HR and payroll systems (Account NI and HR Connect) by 30 September 2019 and develop proposals for their replacements by 31 March 2020
- Raise awareness, secure buy-in and identify resources to progress the roll out of agile working across the NICS. To include establishing agile drop-in zones in 6 locations, implementing electronic booking for these and promoting availability by March 2020.

PRIORITY 9: Deliver high quality, independent legal services and counsel to NICS departments, their agencies and other public bodies.

TARGETS

- Deliver 95% of legal services in line with Service Level Agreement targets and with 95% client satisfaction
- Introduce, by March 2020, a high quality, modern case management system in line with legal sector industry standards.

