

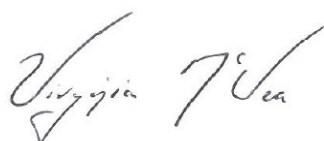
THE ELECTORAL OFFICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BUSINESS PLAN 2022 - 2023

FOREWORD

This Business Plan sets out the work planned for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

We are still operating in a pandemic and that influences the administration of the planned May 2022 NI Assembly elections and we are not able at this juncture to state the context for the work required in year to lead up to the May 2022 Local Council elections.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Virginia McVea". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and 'M'.

Virginia McVea
Chief Electoral Officer

INTRODUCTION

The Business Plan does not include the routine work carried out by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI).

This document is available on request, in other formats and languages. Please phone 028 9044 6680 or email info@eoni.org.uk. It can also be viewed on www.eoni.org.uk.

STRATEGIC AIM AND BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

The EONI Strategic plan has been developed for a three year period. It can be accessed on <http://www.eoni.org.uk/Utility/About-EONI/Plans-and-reports>. This section sets out the strategic targets and related business objectives which the EONI intends to achieve in the current year.

EONI is committed to continuous improvement. This should impact not only the accessibility, quality and efficiency of our services to the public but also the development of our expert staff team.

REGISTRATION

Strategic Aims

- Carry out follow-up work with those who did not respond to the Canvass but who were retained in order to add them to the Register.
- Improve the accuracy and completeness of the data on the Register including making best use of administrative data sets available and optimising data analytics.
- Carry out research to identify sectors of the population with lower levels of registration and from that prioritise outreach programmes to enhance the comprehensiveness of the Register.
- Develop a programme of work with the education and care sectors following up on our new data sets to ensure improved levels of registration with attainers and those in care facilities.
- Scope the possibility of look-up facilities for electors to check if they are registered.
- Review access for the electorate to their DRN.

Business Objectives:

1	By 5 th May to have processed registration applications for the NI Assembly election in accordance with the election timetable.
2	By September 2022 following the NI Assembly election to have cleansed the Register with the benefit of the election updated data.
3	By December 2022 to have followed up with those retained who were Canvass non-responders again. Consider reports in the EMS and potential development required.
4	By March 2023 to have scoped a 'look up' facility online for Canvass non responders.
5	By December 2022 to have engaged with all Schools on the schools registration data.
6	By December 2022 to have reviewed elector ranges in the parliamentary scheme following the May NI Assembly election.
7	By October 2022 to have engaged with RQIA on the care facilities registration data and develop a plan for ongoing engagement to review the sector response.
8	By March 2023 to have completed a data cleansing programme of work in preparation for the May 2022 Local Council elections.
9	By end of July 2022 to have carried out an Audit on all special category electors type against current data held.
10	By March 2023 to have conducted research to identify harder to reach groups in NI for those not on the register.

11	By March 2023 to have conducted at least 7 registration events across NI.
12	By December 2022 have engaged with government and the Electoral Commission on Digital Registration Number issues for the electorate at elections with a view to optimising support for the electorate going forward.
13	By March 2023 to have reviewed and updated absent vote systems in checking signatures and DRNs this will engage with any potential 'look up' system.
14	By March 2023 to have reviewed indefinite absent voter data.
15	To support the Local Government Boundary Review process.
16	To support the Parliamentary Boundary Review process.

ELECTIONS

Strategic Aims

- Ensure the administration of free and fair elections in NI.
- Provide the Parliamentary polling station scheme review in 2022.
- Provide the Local Council polling station scheme review in 2023.
- Set out the programme of election readiness for each election.
- Review count operations in 2023-24.
- Improve accessibility for candidates and agents to information.
- Improve access to information and statistics for the public and media.
- Review communications practices and process for casual staff operating at elections to improve efficiency and experience for our key staff.

Business Objectives:

1	For 1 st April to ensure preparedness for the May NI Assembly elections 2022.
2	For the May NI Assembly elections 2022 to ensure all covid protection measures are in place.
3	To administer the May NI Assembly elections 2022 to include set up for polling stations and count centres.
4	By the end of June 2022 to have concluded the storage of all May NI Assembly materials.
5	By the end of June 2022 to have concluded the processing of candidates expenses and to return to the Electoral Commission.
6	By the end of May 2022 to have reported to the Electoral Commission on the May NI Assembly elections.

7	By June 2022 to have updated all election data from the May NI Assembly elections.
8	By end of June 2022 to have paid staff working at the election.
9	By September 2022 to have reviewed the May NI Assembly elections and operationalise an improvement plan.
10	By March 2023 to have completed all digital materials including task timetables, both overarching schedules and team detail to accompany election readiness guidance and monitoring tools for local council elections.
11	By December 2022 to have prepared overnight verification training and developed team guidance for caretaker and premises management at elections.
12	By December 2022 to finalise performance targets and staffing needs for election readiness.
13	By September 2022 to have refreshed STV count training internally with a work through for all staff of the 2022 May NI Assembly election.
14	By March 2023 to have updated caretaker details.
15	By March 2023 to have reviewed and created a workplan with some updated electronic count calculator materials and processes.
16	By March 2023 to have set up barcoding for all electoral equipment.
17	By March 2023 to have updated the polling station catalogue.
18	By December 2022 develop a process for PSI returns at elections.
19	By September 2022 to have presented a plan on upscaling of F&L for elections to SMT.
20	By February 2023 to have reviewed and updated virtual polling station staff training materials and count staff virtual training materials.
21	By March 2023 develop proposals for a new sign in system for staff at polling stations and create proposals for the count.
22	By November 2022 to have developed a communication plan including outreach for the election.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Strategic Aims:

- Review how we work at the EONI considering the impact of Covid, automation potential, working from home elements and staff welfare.
- Institute a continuous improvement process which will include a review of election administration 2022 - 2023.

- Design and roll out a legal awareness programme with supporting internal systems.
- Further develop our data protection programme across operations in the EONI.
- Develop and roll out online internal and external training programmes with review processes.
- Develop enhanced communication tools internally and with external partners.
- Develop performance management and accountability tools for the EONI.
- Develop contract monitoring tools and roll out programme.
- Roll out AEA accreditation for the EONI staff.
- Design and roll out a programme for maximum agility in staffing roles.
- Review ID card production.

1	By March 2023 to have developed the website platform with a focus on security and accessibility.
2	By December 2022 to have updated IT infrastructure i.e. servers in St Annes, servers in DR site to facilitate period until move to cloud.
3	By December 2022 to carry out a review of current IT software and digital comms requirements.
4	Continuing to March 2023 provide support of current IDOX EMS and identify any low risk enhancements that could be developed and tested on the EMS to enhance the user experience and include support of the EONI developed Digital Developments (PPCF, ADA, Auto Printing, Polling Station Catalogue, Turn Out App etc).
5	By March 2023 to have developed a recruitment strategy outreach in harder to staff areas and rolled out.
6	By March 2023 to have begun a training programme for staff aimed at AEA accreditation.
7	To March 2023 ongoing development of the new EMS system.
8	By March 2023 to move to plan final stages of user acceptance testing of a new Electronic Management System.
9	By September 2022 to have the draft of phone system to all teams to be in use for the May 2023 Local Council elections.
10	By March 2023 to have rolled out actions from the audit.
11	By September 2022 to roll out the first year of development of the legal search and training tool for the EONI.

12	By September 2022 to have a training plan in place to ensure optimal agility of staff in counter, recruitment, registration and absent vote administration.
13	By December 2022 to move to consultation on the polling station scheme.
14	By September 2022 to have a development programme for AO staff.
15	By March 2023 to have reviewed the mid-level group development programme and engaged with staff to discuss future development need and potential.

ANNEX A: ELECTORAL OFFICE BUDGET	
Description	
	£
Basic Pay -	
Permanent Staff	775,132
Employers National Insurance -	
Permanent Staff	67,667
Accrued Superannuation Liability Charge -	
Permanent Staff	226,656
TOTAL PAY	1,069,455
Premises	100,307
Premises Other	194,875
Training	31,666
Travel	5,370
Other Employee Costs	11,660
Hospitality	500
Printing & Stationery	137,400
Equipment Maintenance	340,639
Legal and Audit	75,450
Telecommunications	76,955
ID Card	7,000
TOTAL NON PAY	981,822
Receipts	-128,794
Non Cash Costs	TBC
TOTAL	1,922,483