



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2020**

*Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly by the
Department of Finance under
section 10(4) of the Government Resources
and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001*

22 October 2020



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Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020

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**The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission presents its Annual Report and
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020.**

PERFORMANCE REPORT - Performance Overview

The purpose of this overview is to provide a short summary of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's (the Commission's) performance for the reporting year. It is aimed at giving sufficient information to stakeholders so that they may gain an understanding of the organisation, its purpose, the key risks it faces and how it has performed during the year.

Statutory basis for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

The Northern Ireland Assembly (the Assembly) is the devolved parliament for Northern Ireland, established as a result of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement on 10 April 1998. It governs Northern Ireland in respect of all transferred matters, while excepted matters remain the responsibility of the United Kingdom Parliament. The only excepted matters are those matters of national importance, e.g. national defence, taxation and foreign policy.

Under section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Assembly appoints the Commission, which has statutory responsibility for providing the Assembly with the property, staff and services to carry out its business. The Commission is chaired by the Presiding Officer (known under Standing Orders as the "Speaker") and has five other members who are responsible for representing the interest of the Assembly and its elected Members.

The Assembly Secretariat

The staff of the Assembly Secretariat (the "Secretariat") are employed by the Commission to provide the Assembly with the supporting services required for the Assembly's purposes.

Principal Activities

Unlike an Executive Department, the Commission does not develop Public Service Agreement targets. The service delivery aspect of the Secretariat's work and, hence, its principal activities, relate to the procedural support, resources and services that it provides to the legislature to enable it to function effectively. Consequently, the Commission's performance outputs are those that are developed internally to enable an assessment of performance against aims and objectives during the year. Following the Assembly election on 2 March 2017, there was no return to normal Assembly business.

Recognising that many of the principal activities would not be undertaken until normal Assembly business was resumed, the Commission agreed at its meeting on 30 May 2017 that the work of the Secretariat should be guided by three principles namely:

- Retaining readiness;
- Maximising the use of public resources; and

- Supporting and motivating staff.

In the continuing absence of an Executive and with a reduced level of Assembly business for the first 9 months of the year, these three principles continued to guide the work of the Secretariat; guiding the decisions taken by officials and the advice brought to the Commission. The earlier work undertaken in 2017-18 to identify continuing activities that would be required to achieve these three principles or objectives was reviewed in 2018-19 and again in 2019-20.

Following the appointment of an Executive on 11 January 2020, the Commission met and formally adopted the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 which now guides the work of the Secretariat.

Key Aims and Objectives

The Corporate Strategy was developed for 2018-23 based on a return to normal Assembly business. While this was approved in principle by the former Commission in 2018-19 to guide the direction of the Secretariat, it was only formally approved and adopted by the newly appointed Commission in February 2020.

The Corporate Strategy has a strategic focus, seeking to set out an ambitious innovative approach to the improvements and developments, which will be prioritised by the Commission as it supports the Assembly. It outlines a package of aims and objectives that captures the wide variety of interdependent roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat. The Corporate Strategy assists in determining and allocating resources, whilst ensuring value for money.

The Corporate Strategy is influenced by four common elements:

- **People:** *Every business area relies upon the commitment, skills and expertise of our people;*
- **Culture:** *Every business area is influenced by the principles which underpin the support of a legislature, including accountability and political sensitivity;*
- **Engagement:** *Every business area is impacted by the fact that the Assembly is elected to represent the public; and*
- **Services:** *Every business area should continually seek better and more efficient ways to meet the needs of our customers while providing value for the public purse.*

It sets out the overarching vision of “Excellence, expertise and innovation in support of the Northern Ireland Assembly as a legislature which is accessible to the public it represents.”

This vision is distilled into four strategic aims:

1. ***Investing*** *in the development, expertise, and well-being of our people.*
2. ***Building*** *excellence and innovation in our services.*
3. ***Strengthening*** *engagement with the public.*

4. ***Developing a confident legislature with a strong parliamentary culture.***

The Corporate Strategy recognises that while staff in the Secretariat have different roles, they are working towards common goals. No matter what their individual responsibilities are, they will as one team demonstrate:

- ***Professionalism in everything we do;***
- ***Respect for each other, Members and the public; and***
- ***Impartiality and integrity in all our work.***

The Corporate Strategy seeks to deliver:

- ***High levels of satisfaction among Members, stakeholders and visitors;***
- ***Enhanced understanding of the role and the work of the Assembly; and***
- ***Skilled and motivated people.***

The Corporate Strategy establishes an overarching framework for delivery of objectives, while the corporate planning process translates the strategic aims of the Corporate Strategy into corporate and annual plans with a series of actions and targets and milestones assigned to each action. Operational targets are managed and monitored at Business Area level, through individual plans.

During the year, a Corporate Plan for 2019-23 was developed, setting out the key projects and priorities the Commission and Secretariat intend to deliver over the next four years to underpin the Corporate Strategy. A detailed Annual Plan for 2019-20 was developed in conjunction with the Corporate Plan 2019-23 and the outgoing Commission approved these in December 2019. The new Commission affirmed the Corporate Plan 2019-23 in February 2020.

Principal risks and uncertainties

Political uncertainty represents the principal risk to the work of the Commission. Over the years there have been a number of periods of political hiatus, the most recent arising from the resignation of the deputy First Minister in January 2017. Following the subsequent Assembly election in March 2017 there was no immediate return to normal Assembly business until a new Executive was appointed on 11 January 2020.

The Annual Report and Resource Accounts have been prepared in the context of this return to normal Assembly business late in the reporting period and in the context of the emerging public health emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the adoption of the Commission's three guiding principles during the period of the political hiatus and the existing Strategic Aims, encapsulated in the Corporate Strategy, the Secretariat successfully supported the return of the Assembly at extremely short notice, facilitating the immediate return to normal Assembly business.

Subsequently, the Commission had to quickly adapt to the new regulations and lockdown restrictions implemented by the Executive to manage the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst there are elements of the COVID-19 response that are outside the control of the Commission, considerable work has been done to control the risk through the established risk management process, with a number of significant measures being put in place to address those elements that are within the control of the Commission. Where this environment has a direct impact on the delivery of corporate targets, this has been considered in the Corporate Risk Register.

The political environment can continue to be seen as the principal risk to the work of the Commission; however, this risk is wholly outside the control of the Commission and, as such, cannot be captured in normal risk management processes.

Internally, the principal risks to the Commission and Secretariat are identified and managed through a risk management regime. The principal responsibility for the management of risk falls to Secretariat Management Group (SMG). Further details on the role and composition of SMG is provided in the Management Structures section within the Director's Report commencing at page 34.

SMG is responsible for both the corporate planning process and the implementation of the Risk Management Strategy. The ongoing corporate planning process and the administration of the Risk Management Strategy provide a strong emphasis on the identification and management of risks.

The Risk Management Strategy is reviewed annually by SMG. Further details on the Secretariat's capacity to handle risk, the risk and control framework within which the Commission operates and a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control are provided in the Governance Statement on pages 40 to 50.

Chief Executive's Performance Overview

Previous commentary notes that the work of the Commission is significantly impacted by the complexities of the political environment that exist. During 2019-20, those political complexities again prevailed for much of the reporting period. However, a new Executive was successfully appointed on 11 January 2020, following which there was a swift return to normal Assembly business. Shortly following the return to normal Assembly business, the COVID-19 pandemic materialised, presenting many challenges to the Secretariat as it sought to support the work of a fully functioning Assembly, within the terms of the Executive's emerging Coronavirus regulations.

In February 2019, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland established the Commission's 2019-20 opening budget through Westminster. This budget was based on the fact that the Assembly had yet to return to normal business, allocating £37.148 million for Resource and Capital DEL. For another consecutive year, this was a significantly reduced budget, representing a reduction of 7.38% on the previous year (2018-19; £40.109 million for Resource and Capital DEL).

During the early part of the reporting period, the Commission delivered further reductions of £463k in Resource DEL and £738k in Capital DEL due to the on-going reduced level of Assembly business and lower than anticipated level of staffing activities. However, as it became apparent that political progress was being made, it became more likely an Executive would be appointed in the last quarter of the year.

Therefore, the Commission revised its budget forecast and advised the DoF that a further £593k of Resource DEL was required. This increase was mainly required to meet the increase in Members' salary costs as the reductions introduced by the Secretary of State in the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Present period when there is no Executive) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2018 (the 2018 Determination), ceased to have effect once the Executive was appointed. The Commission's final DEL budget position was therefore £36.540 million.

While the Assembly did return to normal business in the last quarter, materialisation of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 impacted on the level of other planned activities, such as capital projects, recruitment and engagement activities, and further savings were achieved. The final outturn of the Commission was £2.013 million less when compared to the Spring Supplementary Estimate (SSE) position (£1.141 million less for Resource DEL and £0.108 million less for Capital DEL and £0.872 million less for Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)).

In terms of performance against the measures of success set out in the Annual Corporate Plan 2019-20, 14 (39%) of the 36 targets were fully achieved and 13 (36%) were partially achieved. During the year, 9 of the targets (25%) were not achieved.

The Corporate Plan 2019-23 and Annual Plan 2019-20 were developed in the knowledge that the Assembly was not conducting normal business, but with the expectation that the Assembly would resume in doing so in the near future. It was therefore recognised that different activities could be progressed to different stages during the political hiatus. Equally, it was recognised that at the point the Assembly did return to normal business, a number of activities would have to be paused in order to support the return of the

Assembly after such a significant absence.

A large number of activities in the Annual Plan 2019-20 therefore were paused to support the immediate return to Assembly business. The combination of the return of Assembly business followed by the need to respond to the COVID-19 measures introduced by the Executive, explains why the majority of targets were not achieved, or only partially achieved, during the year.

The significant uncertainty for the Commission and, in particular, for the Secretariat staff that arises following extended periods of political uncertainty should not be underestimated. This has, unfortunately, been compounded by the uncertainty and disruption of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the fragility of a newly returned Assembly and the uncertainty and disruption that has been brought by the pandemic, the Secretariat has risen to the challenge, and rapidly adapted working practices and established new protocols to ensure that the standard of service delivery to the Assembly and Members was maintained at its usual exemplary level.

I would like to thank the Secretariat staff for their continued dedication, hard work and commitment and for the high standard of service provided during this extremely challenging period.

Performance Summary

As noted in the Performance Report – Performance Overview on page 5, the work of the Secretariat was guided for most of the year by the Commission’s three guiding principles of Retaining Readiness, Maximising the Use of Public Resources and Supporting and Motivating Staff. The work of the Secretariat is now guided and directed by the Strategic Aims contained within the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 and the Corporate Plan 2019-23.

The Annual Plan for 2019-20 translated these aims into 36 high level actions. A series of targets and milestones were established to monitor and control the delivery of these actions. 14 (39%) of the 36 targets were fully achieved, 13 (36%) were partially achieved and 9 of the targets (25%) were not achieved.

As noted, a large number of activities in the Annual Plan 2019-20 were paused to support the immediate return to Assembly business in January 2020. The combination of the return to Assembly business followed by the need to respond to the COVID-19 measures introduced by the Executive meant that the majority of targets were not achieved or were only partially achieved during the year. Performance against these targets is discussed in detail within the Performance Analysis commencing on page 11.

The final total outturn for the year was £40.109 million against an allocation of £42.230 million when compared to the SSE position. The outturn for the Net Resource Requirement (excluding Capital) was £39.955 million, against an SSE allocation of £41.968 million. The Capital outturn was £0.154 million against a SSE allocation of £0.262 million. As in previous years, the budgeting process was undertaken within the context of uncertainty and a changing political landscape, with a return to normal Assembly business occurring in the last quarter of the year.

In preparing the SSE it has been assumed that there would be a return to the levels of Assembly business experienced pre-March 2017. While there was a return to immediate Assembly business the materialisation of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic meant the Assembly and the Commission had to adapt rapidly to the measures introduced by the Executive to control the spread of the virus. This had a direct impact on other planned activities, such as capital projects, recruitment and engagement activities. Thus, further savings were achieved. The final outturn of the Commission was £1.141 million less for Resource DEL, £0.108 million less for Capital DEL and £ 0.872 million less for AME when compared to the SSE position.

These underspends arose across a number of expenditure categories. These were particularly: Admin costs, due to the reduced level of planned activities; Members’ costs due to the under-utilisation by Members of their full allowances; Provisions due to the revision in estimates for the liability that may arise as a result of the wider impact of the Bear Scotland Ltd court ruling; and Members’ Pension Scheme Finance Costs, due to a revision in estimates of back-service costs associated with the wider impact of the McCloud court ruling on the transitional protection arrangements of pension schemes.

A detailed analysis and explanation of performance can be found in the Performance Analysis section of the Performance Report on pages 11 to 33.

Performance Analysis

Performance Linkages to Corporate Planning

Developments outside of its control had a significant impact on the Secretariat's performance during the final quarter of the year. Until an Executive was formed on 11 January 2020, the Secretariat's work continued to be guided by the Commission's three principles of Retaining Readiness, Maximising the Use of Public Resources and Supporting and Motivating Staff. A large number of staff also remained temporarily redeployed, supporting other publically funded bodies. This was due to the political hiatus, which had existed since March 2017.

Activities were guided by the draft Corporate Strategy 2018-23. As was noted in last year's Annual Report, the then Commission agreed that the draft Corporate Strategy should guide the direction of the Secretariat until the Assembly appointed a new Commission and formally approved the Corporate Strategy. The Commission also agreed that annual plans would take account of the impact of political circumstances on pursuing individual objectives.

An accompanying Corporate Plan 2019-23 was developed during 2019 setting out the key actions intended to be implemented in the four-year period to achieve the high level objectives of the Corporate Strategy. An Annual Plan for 2019-20 was also produced setting targets for 2019-20 to ensure progress towards meeting the actions of the overall four-year plan. The former Commission approved both the Corporate Plan 2019-23 and the Annual Plan 2019-20 in December 2019.

The Corporate Plan 2019-23 was developed in the knowledge that the Assembly was not conducting normal Assembly business, but with the expectation that the Assembly would resume doing so in the near future. It was therefore acknowledged that different activities could be progressed to different stages in the current circumstances. Equally, it was noted that at the point the Assembly returned to normal business, it was likely that a number of activities would have to be paused in order to support the return of the Assembly after such a significant absence.

“New Decade, New Approach” was published by the United Kingdom and Irish Governments in January 2020, which allowed the Assembly to return to normal business on 11 January 2020. As had been anticipated, many of the Secretariat's activities had to be paused to support the resumption of the Assembly. Due to the large number of staff vacancies and the immediate resumption of Assembly business, at extremely short notice, a number of staff had to be transferred from other business areas to support parliamentary work.

Following the appointment of an Executive, a new Commission was appointed. It formally approved the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 and reaffirmed the Corporate Plan 2019-23.

Resumption of Assembly business was swiftly followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, which further prevented progress against many of the targets that were scheduled for completion in the last quarter of 2019-20. It has therefore been an extremely challenging year for the Secretariat.

However, once all activities can resume following the easing of the current public health restrictions, the return of the Assembly leaves the Commission in a much more positive position to deliver the Corporate Strategy and Corporate Plan going forward.

Key Performance Indicators – Strategic Aims and Measures of Success

The Annual Plan 2019-20 translated the high level actions of the Corporate Plan 2019-23 into 36 targets and milestones to be achieved during this period. 14 (39%) of targets were reported as being achieved, 13 (36%) were partially achieved and 9 (25%) were not achieved.

As noted above, the resumption of normal Assembly business and the COVID-19 pandemic were the primary reasons for non-achievement. Where these factors were not the reason for non-achievement, an explanation is given below:

Strategic Aim: Investing in the development, expertise and well-being of our people			
Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective	Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action	2019-20 Target/Milestones	Outcome
Maximising the potential of our people through a longer term focus on learning and development opportunities	Develop and implement a 4-year Learning and Development Strategy.	Appoint a temporary Senior HR Manager (L&D).	Not Achieved
	Develop the Strategy including consultation with key stakeholders and training needs analysis.		
	Create a bespoke learning and development room within Parliament Buildings.	Identify, design, specify and fit out bespoke room (including furnishing and any IT).	Partially Achieved A room was identified and refurbishment has commenced. Work will continue in 2020-21.
	Implement a new approach to Recruitment and	Implement a new approach to recruitment (Success Profiles) and induction	Achieved

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	Selection and Induction.	(Getting On-Board).	
Focusing on the welfare of our people by supporting their health, well-being and resilience	Review the Health and Well-Being Strategy and develop and implement Health and Well-Being Action Plans.	Develop 2019-20 Health and Well-Being Action Plan.	Achieved
	Establish a Supporting Personal Resilience (SPR) working group to promote and develop the measures available to support the personal resilience of staff.	Establish SPR working group. Provide staff with an overview of the range of existing measures available, together with a statement indicating that supporting personal resilience is an important objective in the corporate plan. Consider best practice in other legislatures.	Not Achieved The Chair of the Group has been identified, and this work will be returned to in 2020-21.
Creating opportunities to come together as one team and to recognise our achievements	Identify opportunities in business areas to celebrate success and implement ways in which to recognise achievement throughout the organisation	Consult with business areas, communicating the key messages about recognition and achievement and identifying ways to thank staff, showcase activities and achievements and share stories about positive outcomes.	Partially Achieved A draft Values Engagement Plan has been developed for further consideration, taking account of the need for staff recognition.
	Bring staff from all business areas together, twice per year, for updates on major corporate	Two events held	Achieved

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	developments and to recognise the organisation's achievements.		
Promoting and Developing our Values	Develop a plan to promote and embed our Values.	Develop a plan to embed Values in everything we do, to include staff engagement.	Partially Achieved A draft Values Engagement Plan has been developed for further consideration.

Strategic Aim: Developing a confident legislature with a strong parliamentary culture			
Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective	Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action	2019-20 Target/Milestones	Outcome
Embedding the importance of our parliamentary context in all areas of the Secretariat's work	Develop and implement a strategic approach to staff communication and engagement on parliamentary matters.	Implement a strategic approach to the development and delivery of internal communications on parliamentary matters with the aim of linking communications activity to Secretariat-wide business areas and issues.	Achieved
	Develop and implement a parliamentary knowledge and skills framework for staff.	Develop detailed proposals for a parliamentary skills framework following consideration of best practice in other legislatures.	Not Achieved
	Prepare content on the Assembly's powers, functions and procedures for inclusion in orientation,	Prepare a standardised set of internal guidance on the business of the Assembly, available in one	Not Achieved

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	induction and wider staff learning and development.	electronic location.	
Developing the Assembly’s distinct purpose and identity by supporting its legislative, scrutiny and representative roles	Engage all staff in exploring and defining parliamentary culture, how it can add value and how its context should be reflected in our work.	Develop a clear understanding of ‘parliamentary culture’.	Achieved
Creating solutions to improve the operation of the Assembly in response to constitutional and political change, or service and infrastructure requirements	Through peer review against international parliamentary best practice, develop proposals to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly as an e-parliament.	Enhance capacity within the IS Office in order to support the development of procedural systems.	Achieved
	Prepare for, and ensure appropriate resourcing for, the resumption of normal Assembly business and the end of the current mandate.	Implement the agreed recruitment schedule to fill vacant posts. Support the development of the proposed inter-parliamentary network on procedural business. Develop proposals for internal work placements to share experience and to increase expertise.	Achieved
Investing in the continuing professional development of Assembly Members with a focus on parliamentary and scrutiny skills	Develop and implement a new Member Development Strategy.	Develop in-house capacity for the delivery of the Member Development Strategy.	Achieved
Designing Assembly specific models of legislative scrutiny and	Enhance support for Members in their	Develop proposals for roll out and	Partially Achieved

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support based on relevant international best practice	policy and budget scrutiny, legislative scrutiny and post-legislative scrutiny by increasing capacity, capability, opportunity and independent input.	resourcing of an enhanced Private Members' Bill support model. Explore approaches and development of proposals for a review of standards for the quality of legislation.	A fully resourced Non-Executive Bills Team has been established to support the Private Members' Bills model.
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Strategic Aim: Building excellence and innovation in our services			
Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective	Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action	2019-20 Target/Milestones	Outcome
Promoting innovation in our systems to improve services to our customers	Conduct a Corporate Systems Review and implement revised, effective and efficient, corporate systems for expenditure proposals, procurement, finance, HR and management information.	Complete process mapping and market sounding.	Partially Achieved The process mapping has progressed well for the majority of business areas. Work will continue in 2020-21.
	Upgrade and modernise our security infrastructure through delivery of the new Parliament Buildings Security System (PBSS).	Prepare pre-tender procurement documentation.	Not Achieved A delay in securing expert support contributed to non-achievement.
	Replace, upgrade and modernise Parliament Buildings telephone system.	Complete required project documentation. Launch tender process.	Achieved
	Review information management in the Assembly Secretariat to develop a more efficient and effective information	Start review including Terms of Reference, Scope, Intended Outcomes, etc.	Partially Achieved Work was delayed due to the need to

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	management system.	Decide on recommendations from review.	appoint a replacement member of staff.
Ensuring our people have the support, policies and tools required to adapt to changing demands	Conduct an organisation wide Pay and Grading exercise.	Seek agreement with TUS on approach to grading and pay benchmarking process. Develop business case.	Not Achieved
	Reassess all allocated accommodation; improve the physical working environment, and how we can interact with it.	Establish working group. Establish intended outcomes. Develop Terms of Reference and commence review.	Not Achieved
Driving improvement in our performance by monitoring key service standards and benchmarking against relevant comparators	Establish a methodology to assist Business Areas to review and, where possible, make improvements to their business processes.	Agree, communicate and pilot methodology.	Partially Achieved A methodology for conducting business area reviews has been developed. The communication and pilot of the methodology will be completed once there is a return to more normal working arrangements.
Ensuring high standards in equality, governance and regulatory compliance through effective and efficient processes	Investigate, implement and embed best practice equality, governance and regulatory compliance processes across the Secretariat.	Establish working group, representative of the relevant parts of the organisation to consider best practice improvements.	Not Achieved
	Review corporate monitoring requirements to include source,	Establish working group, representative of the organisation.	Not Achieved

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	volume, frequency, and requirement (organisational versus statutory).	Review current position and develop draft recommendations. Consult stakeholders on draft recommendations.	
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Strategic Aim: Strengthening engagement with the Public			
Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective	Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action	2019-20 Target/Milestones	Outcome
Embedding the value of public engagement, openness and transparency across every area of the Secretariat's work	Communicate the work of the Assembly in a way that is easily understood by all.	Develop an Assembly house style for communicating the work of the Assembly in clear, consistent language and formats that enable it to be easily understood by the public.	Partially Achieved A draft style guide has been developed but will not be progressed further until the wider Assembly branding project has been initiated later in 2020.
	Gauge the public's understanding of the Assembly and its services by conducting regular surveys.	Undertake comparative research on surveys in other legislatures.	Achieved
Developing new approaches to engagement which enable the public to interact with the work of the Assembly	Introduce an engagement toolkit for the work of Committees.	Review and refresh existing proposals for an engagement toolkit, including consultation with stakeholders. Produce a revised (if necessary) toolkit.	Partially Achieved Existing proposals have been reviewed and further work will be taken forward in the context of work planned by the Chairpersons' Liaison Group's on innovative

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			practices in committees.
	Introduce an e-petitions system, as agreed by the Assembly.	Review and if necessary refresh previously agreed proposals. <i>Following resumption of normal Assembly business:</i> Seek Committee on Procedures approval of proposals. Implement proposals on a pilot basis.	Achieved
Building connections with target groups including for example, support for greater female participation and the delivery of a Youth Assembly	Establish and support the delivery of a Youth Assembly.	Develop a detailed draft proposal for a Commission-supported Youth Assembly. Seek Commission approval for the detailed draft proposal.	Partially Achieved Extended stakeholder engagement to take account of the level of interest delayed Commission consideration of the proposal.
	Build and improve connections with the business and community sector through the introduction of an Assembly Community Network (ACN) and an Assembly Business Network (ABN).	Support the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust. Review and update proposals for the establishment of an ABN and ACN.	Achieved
	Increase female participation in the work of the Assembly.	Engage with the Assembly Women's Caucus and	Achieved

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		other stakeholders to develop proposals for increased female participation.	
	Create opportunities to include groups representing sections of the wider community within each yearly programme of events in Parliament Buildings.	Deliver the event programme and review opportunities to include different sections of the wider community by for example, considering marking specific defined days and/or theming recurring annual events.	Achieved
Modernising the communication of Assembly business and proceedings through investment in high quality broadcasting, digital technology and social media	Review and modernise the broadcasting infrastructure and implement recommendations as agreed.	Review current position in relation to broadcasting infrastructure. Undertake comparative research on broadcasting infrastructure in other legislatures and broadcasting technology in general.	Partially Achieved Three broadcasting infrastructure modernisation projects have been identified for implementation subject to approval of business cases and the availability of capital funds. Comparative research has commenced and will continue in 2020-21.
	Provide an Assembly Chamber and Committee rooms that facilitate business in line with the Assembly's	Review existing provision and facilities in the Assembly Chamber and	Partially Achieved Initial desk-based research concluded that there was

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	requirements and that comply with all relevant legislation.	Committee rooms. Undertake comparative research on business accommodation in other legislatures.	minimal scope to alter provision and facilities in the Assembly Chamber and Committee rooms. A further desk-based review will take place during 2020-21, in parallel with the development of plans to upgrade the Assembly Chamber and Committee rooms.
Improving the visitor experience in Parliament Buildings with a focus on customer service, public facilities and accessibility to Assembly business	Undertake a strategic review of the use and allocation of accommodation in Parliament Buildings in order to facilitate the delivery of the Corporate Plan.	Review existing use and allocation of accommodation in Parliament Buildings. Assess how this meets the needs of the Assembly and the Commission.	Partially Achieved A review of the current position has been carried out. Wider discussions will be held in 2020-21.

Review of Financial Performance

The 2019-20 opening budgets for Northern Ireland Departments and Non-Departmental bodies were allocated by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in a written Statement at Westminster in February 2019, due to the on-going political hiatus.

The opening budget for the Commission was based on the fact that the Assembly had not returned to normal business, and represented a reduction of 7.38% when compared to the opening position of the previous year. The opening budget allocated £37.148 million (£36.148 million for Resource DEL and £1.000 million for Capital DEL (2018-19); (£40.109 million, £39.309 million for Resource DEL and £0.800 million for Capital DEL).

Further savings of £463k in Resource DEL and £738k Capital DEL were delivered throughout the year, however, an anticipated appointment of the Executive in the last quarter of the year meant that an increase in resources was required of £593k, and this

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was notified in the January Monitoring round. This brought the Commission’s final budget position to £36.540 million (£36.278 million for Resource DEL and £262k for Capital DEL). This excludes the AME provision of £5.6 million and provision for notional costs of £44k. The restored Assembly laid the SSE in February 2020.

The total resource outturn for 2019-20 is shown in the table below:

	Outturn*	Spring Supplementary Estimate (SSE)**	Under/(over)	Under/(Over)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Income	(165)	(165)	-	-
Gross Resource Requirement	40,120	42,133	2,013	4.8%
Net Resource Requirement	39,955	41,968	2,013	4.8%
Capital	154	262	108	41.2%
Total	40,109	42,230	2,121	5.0%

* Outturn includes non-budget notional costs (£44k) and AME (£4.8m)
**SSE includes non-budget notional costs (£44k) and AME (£5.6m)

Following the Assembly election on 2 March 2017, the non-appointment of an Executive meant there was no return to normal Assembly business. This political hiatus continued until a new Executive was appointed on 11 January 2020. The timing of this return to normal Assembly business and the development of the COVID-19 pandemic in the latter stages of the financial year impacted on the Commission’s budget position for 2019-20.

In preparing the SSE it had been assumed a slightly earlier return to full Assembly business would be achieved and that business would resume at a level equivalent to pre-March 2017 levels. While there was an immediate return to Assembly business the impact of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic in early March 2020, meant that, the Commission had to adapt rapidly to the measures put in place by the Executive to control the spread of the virus. This meant that a number of planned activities, such as capital projects, recruitment and engagement activities were paused, or did not take place resulting in additional savings for the Commission.

Following the return to Assembly business in January 2020 many Members started to address the issues of staff vacancies and renting properties for use as constituency offices. However, the impact of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent measures put in place by the Executive meant that Members had to close their offices and most of the planned recruitment activity had to stop. This led to a reduction in Members’ Constituency Office expenses.

The Commission’s budget, as reported in the SSE is not split by expenditure type. However, for internal budgetary purposes the overall budget is broken down into a number of broad expenditure categories. The breakdown of outturn by category is set out in the table overleaf and for comparison purposes a breakdown of the SSE position is provided for each category.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE BY EXPENDITURE CATEGORY				
Expenditure Category	Spring Supplementary Estimate (SSE) Position	Outturn	Performance Against SSE Under / (Over)	Performance Against SSE Under / (Over)
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	%
Accruing Resources (Income)	-165	-165	-	0.0%
Secretariat Salaries	16,701	16,639	62	0.4%
Admin Costs	4,451	4,214	237	5.3%
Members' Salaries	4,947	4,894	53	1.1%
Members' Other Costs	96	49	47	49%
Members' Travel	313	270	43	13.7%
Constituency Costs (incl staff)	5,795	5,416	379	6.5%
Party Allowance	767	695	72	9.4%
Depreciation & Impairment	3,373	3,125	248	7.4%
Total Resource DEL	36,278	35,137	1,141	3.2%
Members' Pension Finance Costs (AME)	5,200	4,600	600	11.5%
Provisions – iro Pay and Procurement(AME)	446	174	272	61%
Notional Costs	44	44	-	-
Total Estimate Resource	41,968	39,955	2,013	4.8%
CAPITAL	262	154	108	41.2%
Total Requirement	42,230	40,109	2,121	5.0%

The total Net Resource Requirement outturn was £39.955 million. This represents an underspend of £2.013 million (4.8%) when compared to the SSE position.

While it is recognised that there was an immediate return to normal Assembly business on 11 January 2020, the level of other planned activities was impacted greatly by the emerging COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adapt rapidly to the Executive measures put in place to control the spread of the virus. A number of planned activities were paused or did not take place, such as capital projects, recruitment and engagement activities, which lead to savings in the last quarter. The additional savings meant the final outturn for the Commission was £1.141 million less for Resource DEL and £0.108 million less for Capital DEL when compared to the SSE position. A further reduction in the estimate of the back-service costs associated with the impact of the McCloud court ruling on transitional protection arrangements of pension schemes and a revision of the estimate for the retrospective impact of the Bear Scotland Ltd court ruling on holiday pay led to a lower than anticipated outturn in AME of £0.872 million.

The single most significant area of underspend (£0.6 million, 11.5%) is in AME for Members' Pension Finance Costs. This relates to a revision in the estimate of back-service costs in the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme relating to the McCloud court

ruling.

In 2018, groups of firefighters and members of the Judiciary brought a claim of age discrimination in relation to the transitional protection arrangements of pension schemes. The Court of Appeal handed down its judgement on this on 20 December 2018 and ruled that the transitional protection arrangements were discriminatory on the basis of age. On 27 June 2019, the Supreme Court gave notice that permission to appeal McCloud had been refused.

As a result of the notice, the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) was instructed by the Trustees of the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme to include an allowance in the end of year disclosures for the additional liability potentially arising from the McCloud judgement. The additional liability has been included as a past service cost.

An initial estimate of these potential past service costs was provided in December 2019, based on the prevailing circumstances of reduced Members' salary costs and contributions as provided for by the Secretary of State's 2018 Determination. However, these estimates were subsequently revised downwards following the appointment of the new Executive and the associated restoration of Members' salaries as provided by the 2016 Determination. This led to an underspend of £0.600 million in AME costs when compared to the SSE position.

For Secretariat salaries, an underspend of £62k (0.4%) is reported when outturn is compared against the SSE position. Following the preparation of the SSE forecasts, due to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic a number of planned manpower planning events did not occur. The planned level of engagement of agency workers was not achieved and recruitment of staff was paused leading to this overall underspend.

Administrative Costs show an underspend in expenditure of £237k (5.3%). This arose across a number of expenditure categories as a direct result of the Assembly business not resuming at the anticipated date and also due to the emerging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning and Development costs were lower than anticipated as the resumption of Assembly business meant that staff in particular areas of the business had reduced capacity to attend courses. Following the resumption of Assembly business, reprioritisation of work to service the immediate demands of the Assembly meant a slippage in internal maintenance programmes and the corporate systems review project, leading to an underspend in maintenance and consultancy costs.

Members' Salary costs show an underspend of £53k (1.1%). The full impact of the appointment of the Executive and the consequential restoration of Members' salaries to the levels prescribed in the 2016 Determination was considered in preparing the SSE. However, it has been assumed that the Executive would be appointed a full week earlier. This had a direct impact on the amount of salaries payable during the month of January leading to the underspend when compared to the SSE position.

Members' Other Costs shows an underspend of £47k (49.0%). The SSE position had anticipated that a number of Members may leave the Assembly and incur winding up costs. While a number did leave this was lower than anticipated, leading to an underspend in Members' Other Costs.

Members' Travel Costs shows an underspend of £43k (13.7%). A number of planning assumptions regarding the eligibility of Members to claim the full Assembly Travel Allowance (ATA) for travel to and from Parliament Buildings had been made during the preparation of the SSE. In 2019-20, Members had to attend a minimum of 84 days to be eligible for the full amount of this ATA. It had been assumed all Members would achieve the minimum requirement, however, this was not the case, which led to the underspend.

Another significant area of underspend was in Members' Constituency costs (including support staff costs) (£379k, 6.5%). Following the introduction of the Secretary of State's 2018 Determination Members were not permitted to appoint staff on a permanent basis. Some Members chose to appoint staff on a temporary basis during the political hiatus, but many remained cautious about making appointments until normal levels of Assembly business resumed. This led to an overall underutilisation of support staff costs.

The SSE position had assumed that the full remaining allowances would be used. However, while many Members started to address the issue of staff vacancies following the resumption of normal Assembly business in January 2020, the impact of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic meant many of the recruitment competitions were put on hold. This led to an underspend in support staff costs of £208k. While Members continued to seek to offer a full range of services to constituents through their Constituency Offices, this was impacted directly by the emerging COVID-19 pandemic with all offices having to close. Costs were therefore lower than anticipated (£171k).

The remaining underspend can be attributed to Party Allowance (£72k, 9.39%), and Depreciation and Impairment (£248k, 7.35%).

Funding is available to political parties under the Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2016 ('the FAPP Scheme'). This FAPP Scheme provides funding to parties, for the purpose of assisting Members of the Assembly, who are connected with each eligible party, to perform their Assembly duties. The FAPP Scheme also provides assistance for the administration of a Whip's office. Funding is based on the number of eligible Members connected to each party. This is an annual allowance, however for administration purposes it is paid monthly. The overall reduced level of Assembly business for the full reporting period meant that parties did not utilise the full funding allowances available (£72k, 9.4%).

The estimate for Depreciation and Impairment was based on prior year estimates as amended by in-year Capital acquisitions and the interim valuation obtained from Land and Property Services for Parliament Buildings. Given the significant increase in the value of Parliament Buildings in the first 9 months of the year, an additional amount was included in the depreciation calculation for the SSE. However, the value of Parliament Buildings actually fell sharply in the period between December 2019 and March 2020 (a reduction of £4.6m). As Parliament Buildings is the most significant asset held by the Commission, this dramatically reduced the depreciation charge for the year, leading to the underspend (£248k, 7.4%).

Capital expenditure shows a net outturn of £154k, which is £108k less than anticipated. This was due to an inability to finish the planned work on the dedicated Learning and Development Training room, as a result of the COVID-19 measures, slippage on the project to replace the Security Management System and the expenditure on the

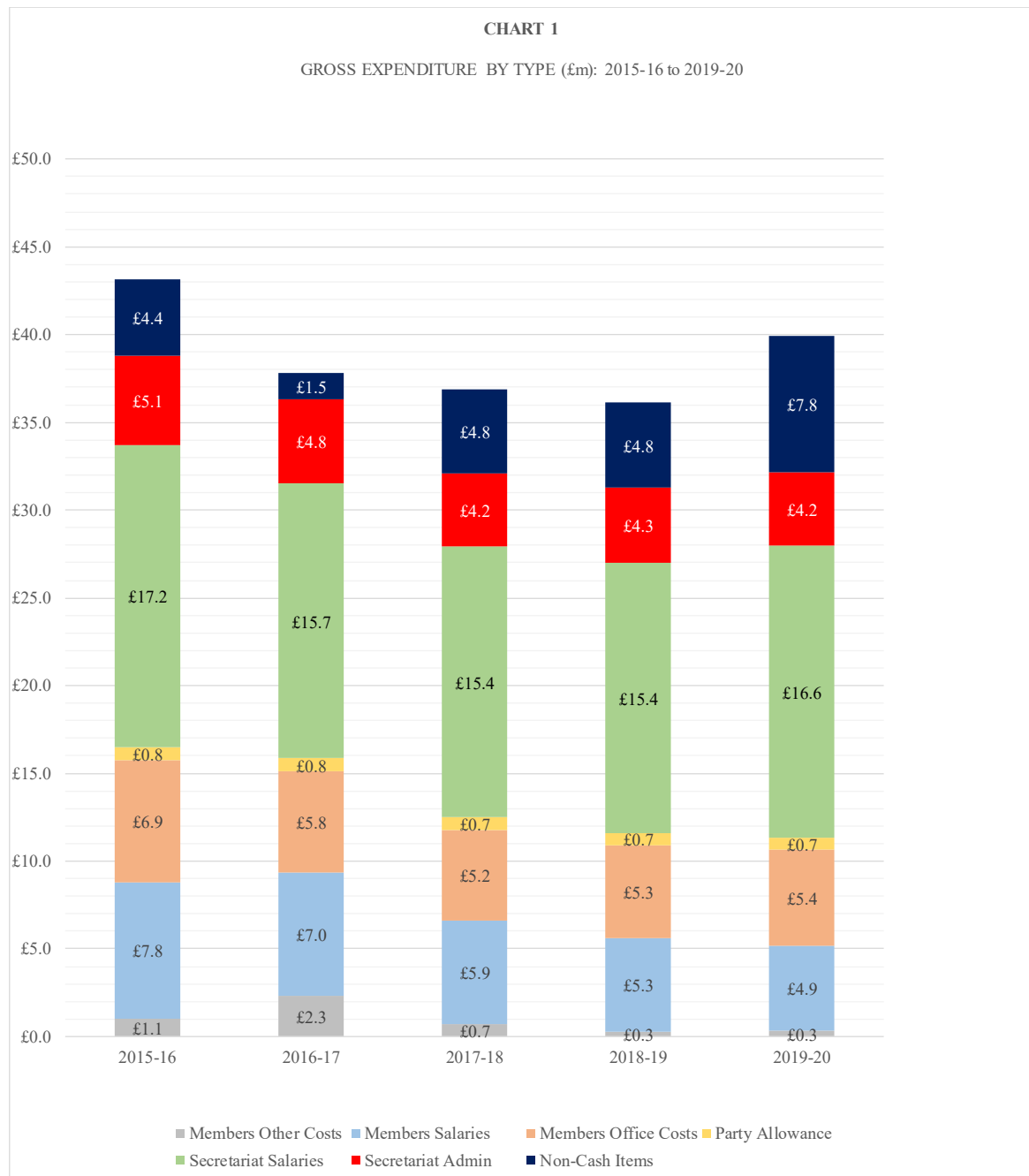
replacement broadcasting infrastructure being much lower than anticipated. Finally, the release of accruals no longer required, but carried forward from previous reporting periods all contributed to the overall level of capital underspend.

Long term expenditure trends

Chart 1, overleaf shows the Commission's gross expenditure for the past five years split against relevant expenditure categories. This expenditure includes all items included in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, but excluding any net gain or loss on the actuarial valuation of the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme, on the revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment or the net gain or loss on revaluation of Intangibles.

This chart highlights the impact on Members' costs in the context of changing determinations. It clearly shows the impact of the 2016 and 2018 Determinations. Also the impact of the revised employer's contributions for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme can be clearly seen this year through the increase in salary costs.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Performance Report – Performance Analysis



“Non-Cash Items” includes depreciation, impairment of assets, notional costs, provisions and Members’ Pension Finance costs. See Note 5 to the Accounts. 2016-17 also includes the Prior Period Adjustment in relation to Member’s Pensions.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

Reconciliation of resource expenditure between Estimates, Accounts and Budgets

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Net Resource Outturn (Estimates)	39,955	35,795
Adjustments to remove:		
Provision voted for earlier years	-	-
Adjustments to additionally include:		
Non-voted expenditure in the SOCNE	-	-
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts in the SOCNE	(7)	(31)
Other adjustments	-	-
IFRS adjustments	-	-
Adjustments to account for downward revaluation	-	-
Adjustment to account for change in treatment of non-exchange transactions (for which Outturn not restated)	-	-
Net Operating Cost (Accounts)	39,948	35,764
Adjustments to remove:		
Voted expenditure outside the budget	(44)	(38)
Adjustments to additionally include:		
Other Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts	-	-
Resource Budget Outturn (Budget)	39,904	35,726
of which		
Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL)	35,130	34,026
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	4,774	1,700

Policy on payment of suppliers

The Commission is committed to prompt payment of bills for goods and services. The current policy is to comply with the Confederation of British Industry's Prompt Payers' Code. Unless otherwise explicitly stated in a contract payment is due within 30 days after delivery of the invoice or the goods or services, whichever is latest.

During 2019-20 the Commission paid 98.7% of bills, without queries, within this standard (2018-19; 97.9%).

In addition to this the Commission has sought to comply with Department of Finance's (DoF's) initiative to pay all supplier invoices within a suggested target of 10 days. During 2019-20, 95.2% of invoices were paid within 10 days of being received (2018-19; 94.3%).

The Commission made no payment of interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988 during the year ended 31 March 2020.

Sustainability Report

The Commission has a long-standing commitment to being an exemplar organisation in respect of Sustainable Development. A dedicated Sustainable Development Office (SDO) within the Secretariat seeks to embed responsible business practices throughout the Assembly.

The Commission’s Environmental Policy sets out the Commission’s aspirations to operate in a sustainable manner.

The key responsibilities of the SDO include:

- Implementing the Commission’s Environmental Policy; and
- Retaining accreditation to the International Standard for Environmental Management Systems (EMS), namely EN ISO 14001:2015.

The EMS ensures compliance with all relevant environmental legislation and helps to identify and assess any environmental risks. All environmental aspects and impacts are regularly reviewed and controlled as part of the measures to achieve continuous improvement. Environmental considerations are also embedded across the organisation through environmental awareness training.

The Commission has procedures in place to improve the process for evaluating prospective suppliers’ environmental practices within procurement competitions and to help reduce the direct and indirect environmental impacts of the supply chain. At a practical level, the SDO has continued to work closely with other business areas to reduce the paper use within the Assembly and this has resulted in a significant reduction and associated cost saving.

An Energy Performance Rating has been calculated for Parliament Buildings by an independent government body. The energy rating is calculated by taking into account the energy performance of the building’s fabric and its services (such as heating, cooling, hot water, ventilation and lighting). The rating is presented on a scale of A to G, with A being the most efficient.

The energy rating achieved by Parliament Buildings for 2019 was D which is very good for a building of its age and nature. Much of this achievement is due to building energy monitoring controls and the installation of renewables. Following the replacement of the antiquated external lighting with new LED lights in 2018-19 and the upgrading of office and corridor lighting within Parliament Buildings, further energy savings have been realised.

Each year, the Commission participates in the Business in The Community Northern Ireland (BiTCNI) Environmental Benchmarking Survey. The Commission received the Gold standard in 2019 and will be participating again this year. The Commission, working in partnership with DoF also achieved Platinum standard in BiTCNI Business and Biodiversity Award for the Stormont Estate in 2018. This award is valid for a period of three years.

The Commission continues to work closely with external bodies, including the Energy Unit within the DoF, the Support Services contractor, Soil Association, Belfast Food Network, Sustainable NI, Love Food Hate Waste, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and local charities/groups to help ensure continuous improvement in all areas of sustainable development.

In recent years, the introduction of new waste recycling streams, including compostable

packaging, and staff being issued with thermal cups have proved to be successful in helping to improve recycling efforts. Waste management practices have been significantly improved with the average amount of waste that is recycled continuing to increase.

The SDO continues to work with the Commission's Education Officers on a scheme for school groups 'The Zero Waste Challenge', which asks all school groups to bring a lunch with entirely recyclable packaging. This has proved to be very successful, with each school that meets the challenge being awarded a certificate. The SDO is now working in partnership with EcoSchools and the Education Officers, to help educate young people on sustainability at the Assembly and at home. In 2019 SDO staff, along with the Education Officers, carried out Eco School audits at local schools and awarded successful schools a 'Green Flag' for their sustainability initiatives.

In 2019 the Commission, working in partnership with Infinity Farm and the Belfast Soroptomists, installed an apiary consisting of four beehives in the grounds of Parliament Buildings. Following its installation, some members of staff within Building Services completed a bee-keeping course to allow them to assist with the day to day management of the hives.

The Commission has continued with Silver Status Career Membership of BiTCNI. This ensures that Secretariat staff can participate in three specific environmental challenges (such as a beach clean) throughout the year as well as general volunteering days.

BiTCNI is a leading authority on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development throughout the UK and Ireland. The Human Resources Office, Outreach Office and SDO have worked closely with BiTCNI over the past year on an action plan with several positive steps being taken, such as including the provision of relevant training. A new action plan is being developed for the coming year.

The Commission has continued to promote sustainable travel initiatives aimed at encouraging staff to avail of more sustainable modes of transport to travel to and from work. These initiatives are Translink's TaxSmart Scheme (an employer salary sacrifice scheme, where the Commission purchases travel passes for employees and the employees then repay the Assembly from their gross salary) and Translink's Annual Commuter Travel cards (an interest free loan made to employees to allow them to purchase travel cards where repayments are made out of net salary). In addition to this, an additional two charging points for electric vehicles (EVs) have been installed in the upper car park, bringing the total to four.

The 'Cycle to Work scheme' continues to be available to staff and Members, allowing them to purchase bicycles and safety equipment in a tax efficient manner for travelling to work, up to a value of £1,000.

The Commission plans to continue to improve its environmental performance by:

- Improving waste management and reducing the amount of waste produced;
- Working with partners to improve the biodiversity of Parliament Buildings and the Stormont Estate.

- Maintaining ISO14001:2015 accreditation; and
- Benchmarking against similar public and private organisations.

It is intended to continue to communicate the sustainability message internally and externally. All of the Commission's energy usage figures and associated costs are available online at the Northern Ireland Assembly website:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/sustainability/>

Social, Community and Human Rights Issues

As the Commission is not a Government Department and does not provide services to citizens, its *Social, Community and Human Rights* impacts have a more internal focus.

The Commission is pleased to report that its commitment to social responsibility includes a range of fair and equitable corporate reward and recognition policies. In particular, the Commission recognises the importance of sustainable salaries for its entire staff. In this regard, all members of staff employed by the Commission are paid remuneration that exceeds the *living wage*¹ of £9.30 per hour.

The Commission delivered a range of measures to engage with the community, including a popular and successful education programme for schools and young people, engagement and outreach activities and a programme of tours and events at Parliament Buildings. All of these have helped increase awareness and understanding of the Assembly and indeed the wider democratic process.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Charity of the Year initiative demonstrates the Commission's commitment to harnessing the collective efforts of the employees and the organisation itself, in supporting the voluntary and community sector. It also reflects the desire of Secretariat staff to demonstrate their social responsibility by supporting charitable endeavours. It is staff led and activities are coordinated by the Northern Ireland Assembly Charity Fund Raising Group. The Charity of the Year is a non-lobbying initiative.

The term of the previous Assembly charity of the year expired in April 2018 and, due to the political situation (the Assembly did not sit between March 2017 and January 2020) and latterly the COVID-19 pandemic, no successor charity of the year has yet been appointed. However, the Assembly has continued to host a number of events for a variety of charitable purposes.

The Commission, in recognition of its corporate social responsibility, is committed to encouraging and supporting staff to make a positive impact to the wider community through Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV). The ESV policy has been designed to provide a framework to support staff who wish to undertake volunteering activities. The ESV policy aims to:

¹ As calculated by the Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP) – <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/crsp/mis/thelivingwage/>

- Develop and strengthen links with the local community, by sharing the knowledge, skills and abilities of staff with community activities, programmes and organisations;
- Have a demonstrable positive impact on the local community;
- Raise the profile of volunteering activities and support local charities;
- Enhance the personal development of Secretariat staff by helping to develop and build a range of skills and abilities they can use in the workplace;
- Raise morale and motivation amongst staff;
- Provide support to those staff involved in volunteering activities, through the provision of reasonable time off work to prepare and/or participate in such activities; and
- Provide reasonable access to Secretariat facilities.

Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Issues

The Commission requires all staff, at all times to act honestly and with integrity to safeguard the public resources for which they are responsible. Fraud, bribery and corruption is an ever present threat to these resources and must be a concern for all staff. The Commission recognises there is a continuing need to raise staff awareness of their responsibility with regard to these matters.

The Commission has a Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy on these matters. This policy seeks to provide a clear and coherent framework for all staff, enabling them to understand their responsibilities and to help them implement the necessary controls, to ensure full compliance with legislation, minimising the risk of incidents occurring. A response plan also exists, which clearly defines the steps that must be taken when a suspicion of fraudulent or corrupt behaviour arises. Such behaviour is not tolerated at any level; consequently, any case of suspected fraudulent or corrupt behaviour is thoroughly investigated and dealt with appropriately.

The Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy and response plan are reviewed at on a biennial basis to ensure they both continue to represent best practice and reflect all appropriate legislative changes. The last review was undertaken in March 2020. No changes were made to the policy or response plan and the mandatory training associated with the review will be undertaken by all staff between September and December 2020.

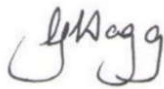
No incidents of suspected fraud were reported under the response plan during 2019-20.

The Commission also participates in the biennial National Fraud Initiative (NFI), which is an effective data matching exercise to compare data from across a range of public sector organisations to identify potentially fraudulent claims. The last exercise was undertaken in October 2018 and the next exercise will be completed during the month of October 2020. In the last exercise all matches investigated were genuine and no further action was required.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

As in previous years, a number of additional self-assessments were completed to consider the risks associated with fraud, bribery, corruption, risk management and cyber security. These included Fraud and Bribery Self-Assessment Checklists, Bribery Risk Assessment and Action Plan, Risk Management Self-Assessment checklists and Action Plan, and the National Audit Office Cyber security and information risk guidance for Audit Committees, Checklist and Action Plan. No additional issues arose from the review of these self-assessments and given the near full compliance achieved in these assessments, SMG agreed these reviews would now be carried out every two years. Action plans from these self-assessments are monitored quarterly and presented to the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee.

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 15 October 2020

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Corporate Governance Report

The purpose of the Corporate Governance Report is to explain the composition and organisation of the Commission's governance structures and outline how these structures support the achievement of the Commission's objectives.

Directors' Report

The Commission and the Accounting Officer

The statutory basis for the Commission is provided in the Performance Report: Overview starting at page 4. The Assembly held a Plenary sitting on 11 January 2020, during which a new Speaker, Mr Alex Maskey MLA, was appointed. He also took on the role of Chairperson of the Commission. The Commission was reconstituted following the appointment of the new Members on the 14 and 27 January 2020.

The Speaker, Robin Newton MBE MLA, was chair of the outgoing Assembly Commission from 1 April 2019 to 10 January 2020. The percentage attendance at meetings of the outgoing Commission is given below:

Role	Name	Percentage of Meetings attended
Chairperson	Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA	100%
Member	Mr Jim Wells MLA	86%
Member	Mr Alex Maskey MLA	100%
Member	Mr Alex Attwood	14% (resigned 10/05/2019)
Member	Mr Robin Swann MLA	100%
Member	Mr Stewart Dickson MLA	86%

Seven meetings were held during the period 1 April 2019 to 10 January 2020.

The percentage attendance at meetings of the newly appointed Commission, until 31 March 2020, is given overleaf:

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Accountability Report - Corporate Governance Report

Role	Name	Percentage of Meetings attended
Chairperson	Mr Alex Maskey MLA	100%
Member	Mr Keith Buchanan MLA	100%
Member	Mr John O'Dowd MLA	100%
Member	Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA	100%
Member	Mr Robbie Butler MLA	100%
Member	Mr John Blair MLA	100%

One meeting was held during the period 11 January 2020 to 31 March 2020.

The work of the Commission is detailed in the Governance Statement on pages 40 to 50.

As Clerk to the Assembly, Mrs Lesley Hogg is the principal adviser to the Assembly. As well as advising the Speaker on all procedural and organisational matters, she also undertakes the role of Chief Executive of the Secretariat, and is the Accounting Officer for the Commission's resources.

The Management Structure

The Commission has a two-tier management arrangement. While the Commission has the legislative authority to provide the Assembly with the wide range of services needed by a modern legislature, the day to day delivery of those services is achieved through a formal delegation to the Clerk/Chief Executive. A copy of the letter of delegation is attached at Annex A at page 105.

The work of the Secretariat is organised and monitored by SMG. SMG is chaired by the Clerk/Chief Executive and comprises the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services and the Director of Parliamentary Services.

SMG has responsibility for the delivery of the work of the Secretariat. This includes responsibility for ensuring effective corporate governance of the Secretariat and ensuring that the Secretariat is equipped to fulfil its role in supporting Members in carrying out their Assembly functions. SMG meets monthly to consider progress on strategic and key management issues.

Membership of SMG (10 meetings held):

Role	Name	Percentage of Meetings attended
Clerk/Chief Executive	Mrs Lesley Hogg	100%
Director of Parliamentary Services	Dr Gareth McGrath	90%
Director of Corporate Services	Mr Richard Stewart	100%
Director of Legal Governance & Research Services	Ms Tara Caul	100%

For the purposes of this report, corporate governance arrangements have been applied to SMG, which is charged with the delivery of the services on behalf of the Commission.

The Remuneration and Staff Report within this Annual Report and Accounts contains information about the salary and pension entitlements of the Commission and SMG. Claims for reimbursement of expenses are published quarterly on the Assembly website which can be viewed at

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/principal-officers-and-officials/directors-expenses/>

The appointments of Directors to SMG are held on a continuing basis.

Register of interests

The Assembly's corporate body is the Commission. Commission Members are appointed by the Assembly from its membership. The Assembly's Standing Order 69 (1) requires that a Register of Members' interests be established, published and made available for public inspection. Following the Assembly election on 2 March 2017, a Register of Members' Interests for the sixth mandate was established. This Register is continuously updated. The latest version of the Register can be viewed at:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/register-of-interests/>

A Register of Interests is also maintained for SMG. This Register is continually updated by individuals and reviewed formally on an annual basis. The last review was undertaken in March 2020. The latest version of the Register can be viewed at:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/secretariat/secretariat-management-group/register-of-interests/>

Pensions liabilities

Note 1.13 to the Accounts and the Remuneration and Staff Report on pages 51 to 65 provide details of the pensions liabilities of the Commission.

Auditors

The Commission's financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, whose certificate and report appears at page 73 of the Accounts. The notional cost of the work performed by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) for 2019-20 was £43,500 (Commission Audit, £37,500 and Assembly Members' Pension Scheme, £6,000) (2018-19; £38,000 – Commission Audit, £32,000 and Assembly Members' Pension Scheme, £6,000) and related solely to audit services.

The Commission participates in the biennial National Fraud Initiative. The Comptroller and Auditor General also has statutory powers to undertake the biennial data matching exercises for the National Fraud Initiative. The cost of this work performed by the NIAO for 2019-20 was £Nil (2018-19; £2,312).

Disclosure to Auditors

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Commission's auditors are unaware and she has taken all reasonable steps to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Commission's auditors are aware of that information.

Personal Data Related Incidents

There was one (2018-19; Nil) personal data incident. This was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on 27th September 2019. Information was miss-sent via email internally and was properly deleted from the accounts who received it in error.

It was an isolated incident caused by one member of staff and affecting one other member of staff. The ICO considered the incident to be appropriately contained and advised that no further action was required on this occasion.

As recommended by the ICO the business area investigated the cause of the incident and implemented a double checking procedure to prevent further breaches occurring in future.

Communication with staff

During the year, a variety of actions were undertaken to ensure good internal communications. These included the appointment of an Internal Communications Officer; the work of the Employee Relations Group and the Employee Relations Board; the further development of the intranet (AssISt); postmaster notices via email; briefing sessions by the Clerk/Chief Executive; and regular team meetings.

In addition, the Internal Communications Group (ICG) continued to provide advice and guidance on internal communications matters and presented recommendations to SMG following the 2019 staff survey. With the Internal Communications Officer now in place, an interim programme of communications has been delivered to provide staff with support during COVID-19.

Charitable donations

The Commission did not make any charitable donations in the year.

Complaints

The Commission has an established Complaints Procedure and welcomes feedback from the public. The Commission uses this feedback to help improve the services that it provides. The Commission does not provide statutory services to the public so the nature of its complaints handling differs from other entities within the public sector.

The Complaints Procedure therefore covers complaints from members of the public relating to the delivery of services in Parliament Buildings and/or perceived failures in complying with the Commission's Equality Scheme. The Complaints Procedure does not cover complaints from members of staff relating to their employment or from contractors providing services to the Commission. Separate procedures are available in both cases. Full details of the Commission's Complaints Procedure can be found at:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/complaints-procedure/>

Under the Complaints Procedure, a complainant can contact the Commission by email, post or by telephone. The receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged, an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the complaint will be undertaken and the results of that investigation including any remedial actions that are required will be communicated to the complainant. This process will normally be completed within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint.

A central complaints register is held by the Commission and appropriate details relating to the detail of each complaint are held on this register. During 2019-20, the Commission received one (2018-19; Nil) complaint. This did not have an impact on the policies and procedures of the Commission.

Events after the Reporting Period

There are no events after the reporting period that require disclosure.

Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under the Government Resource and Accounts Act (NI) 2001, DoF has directed the Commission to prepare for each financial year resource accounts detailing the resources acquired, held or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the Commission during the year.

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 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the financial year.

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

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by DoF, 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 accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that is fair, balanced and understandable.

DoF has appointed the Clerk to the Assembly, Mrs Lesley Hogg, as Accounting Officer of the Commission. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the 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 Accounting Officers' Memorandum issued by DoF and published in *Managing Public Money Northern Ireland*.

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 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.

Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of corporate governance that supports the achievement of the policies, aims and objectives of the Commission, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in *Managing Public Money Northern Ireland*.

This includes ensuring that the arrangements for delegation are robust and promote good management, supported by staff with an appropriate balance of skills and experience. Appropriate management systems and procedures are also essential to support service delivery.

Governance Framework

Corporate governance is the way in which an organisation is directed, controlled and led. The underpinning framework consists not only of the formal systems and processes, but also of organisational culture and values. It defines relationships, distributes responsibility, determines the rules and procedures by which objectives are set, monitored and achieved and ensures accountability is clearly defined.

The Commission complies with all relevant requirements of the “*Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI)*” which was issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) (now DoF) in April 2013. The Commission is not a Government Department so not all of the provisions in the Code and guidance are appropriate or relevant.

The Commission has a two-tier management arrangement. The Commission is the corporate body, which under section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 has the statutory authority to provide the Assembly with the wide range of services needed by a modern legislature. Members are appointed to the Commission by the Assembly. The day-to-day delivery of these services is achieved through delegation to me in my role as Clerk/Chief Executive. I have responsibility to ensure arrangements for delegation to SMG are robust. These delegations offer clarification on the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, the Accounting Officer and Directors.

While the details of the structure and statutory authority of the Commission are provided, for the purposes of this statement, the corporate governance arrangements, including the requirement to review effectiveness, has been applied to the senior management team charged with the delivery of services on behalf of the Commission. Commission Members are not deemed to be non-executive members.

The Corporate Governance Role of the Commission

When the Assembly is in session, the Commission customarily meets monthly. However, as there was no return to normal Assembly business following the Assembly election in March 2017 the Commission met on a slightly less frequent basis with eight meetings during this period. I attend Commission meetings with senior officials, along with the Non-Executive Chairperson of the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC). The

Chairperson of SARC also has an annual meeting with the Commission in the absence of officials.

When the Assembly is in session it is the Assembly, through the annual Budget Act, that appropriates funds directly from the Consolidated Fund to the Commission (in the same way as occurs for Northern Ireland Departments). Powers were conferred on the Secretary of State to pass the Budget Acts at Westminster for all Departments and public bodies funded from the Consolidated Fund during 2017, 2018 and 2019. However, following the appointment of an Executive on 11 January 2020 there was a return to normal Assembly Business and the Budget Act was passed by the Assembly in February 2020.

While under Standing Order 69 (1) there is a requirement that a Register of Members' Interests is established and published for public inspection, this does not deal specifically with conflicts of interest. Therefore, this is a standing agenda item at each Commission meeting.

The Corporate Governance Role of the SMG

SMG is the top-level leadership and management team within the Secretariat. SMG supports me in my role as Accounting Officer to discharge the obligations set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland. This includes advice and support on the strategic direction and overall management of the Secretariat.

As the Clerk/Chief Executive, I chair the monthly SMG meetings and am supported by the other Directors. Details of the Directors and the attendance at each meeting are given in the Directors' Report commencing at page 34.

SMG advises the Commission on major proposals and decisions in relation to policy, expenditure, asset management and staffing. SMG reviews progress against the aims and targets established in the Corporate Strategy and reviews progress on key operational issues. It also ensures that the appropriate management systems are in place and are operating effectively to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory duties. This includes promoting best practice in corporate policies to ensure effective governance across the whole organisation, taking account of risks and performance.

The members of SMG are full-time employees of the Commission. The Commission has retained responsibility for matters relating to the appointment, the terms and conditions and the remuneration of any director. There are no Non-Executive Directors appointed to SMG.

Conflicts of interests are addressed as a standing agenda item at each SMG meeting and, as such, are included in the Minutes of each meeting.

Administrative support for SMG is provided by the Secretariat. Formal processes exist for providing information to SMG and the Commission, to ensure it is provided in a timely manner, to an agreed standard and in a concise format. The process is the same for both SMG and the Commission. A clearly defined approval process has also been established for the presentation of papers with Director approval of papers prior to submission, which adds a further level of scrutiny as to the relevance and quality of

information being provided.

In preparing papers for SMG, it is necessary to demonstrate that a number of key areas have been considered including Freedom of Information, legal, staffing, financial, data protection and the equality implications of the material recommendations being presented. If appropriate, it must be demonstrated that the appropriate consultation has been undertaken in preparing the papers.

Papers must clearly set out the context of the matter being discussed, including references to any previous papers that have been presented on the matter. They must include comprehensive and relevant evidence to inform the decision making process, concluding in a series of recommendations which are directly linked to the information provided in the paper.

This process of communicating with SMG and the Commission is reviewed regularly and updated to ensure it continues to represent the information needs of SMG and the Commission.

SMG undertakes an annual self-assessment of its effectiveness. The last assessment was carried out by SMG in July 2020. Any issues arising from this or through the governance arrangements and business planning processes are discussed by SMG and an action plan is devised to address the issues as appropriate.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Commission's principal risk remains one of political uncertainty and this is discussed in detail in the Performance Report at page 6. However, the Commission also identifies a number of corporate risks, through the risk management process, and these are discussed further in this Governance Statement.

The Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee

The Commission established SARC to support me in my role as Accounting Officer, the Commission and SMG in our responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance. SARC provides this support by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting the organisation's assurance needs and reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances. SARC operates in accordance with DoF's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) 2018.

SARC advises on the strategic processes for risk, control and governance and the Governance Statement, the planned activity of the Internal Audit Unit and the results of its work, the planned activity of the NIAO and the results of its work and the overall adequacy of management responses to any audit issues raised. SARC meets on a quarterly basis to monitor progress on all of these matters. In addition, SARC reviews the Commission's Annual Reports and Resource Accounts, including the Governance Statement.

SARC comprises two independent non-executive members, one of whom chairs the Committee, and a Commission member. The presence of an independent chair and independent member provides for a robust challenge to the corporate governance regime within the Secretariat.

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The members of SARC during 2019-20 were:

Role	Name	Percentage of Meetings attended (4 meetings)
Independent Chairperson	Mr James Brooks	75%
Independent Member	Mr Derek Martin	100%
Commission Member (until 11 January 2020)	Mr Jim Wells MLA	75%
Commission Member (commencing 19 February 2020)	Mr Keith Buchanan MLA	N/A (no SARC meetings took place between February and March)

SARC’s Terms of Reference provide for another Commission Member to attend on behalf of the nominated Member, if required.

As Accounting Officer, I attend all SARC meetings, along with all Directors, the acting Head of Internal Audit, the Head of Finance and a NIAO representative.

The Minutes, Terms of Reference and Annual Reports of SARC are published on the Assembly’s website along with a Register of Interests of independent members.

Internal Audit

The Commission’s Internal Audit Office complies with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) as per the following definition:

“Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operation. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.”

Internal Audit continues to use four assurance rating classifications: substantial, satisfactory, limited, and unacceptable. The decision to retain the Substantial assurance rating, rather than adopt only the ratings outlined in DAO (DoF) 07/16, was considered and agreed by SARC in 2016.

The 2019-20 risk-based Internal Audit Plan was informed by Internal Audit’s detailed risk analysis, the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, the results of previous audits, and detailed discussions with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors. The plan was approved by SMG on 16 April 2019 and presented to the SARC at its meeting on 15 May 2019.

During the planning stage, and for the majority of the year, there was no normal procedural Assembly business. The scope of the plan was therefore necessarily limited to reflect business activity. The range of areas included within the Internal Audit Plan and its risk-based nature ensured that it allowed for sufficient coverage to enable the provision of a meaningful level of assurance.

Following the appointment of an Executive on 11 January 2020, a number of business areas were unable to accommodate internal audit engagements in the immediate term, given the pressures associated with the resumption of Assembly business. This coincided with a period of unanticipated staff resource shortage within Internal Audit. The Internal Audit Plan was consequently amended with the approval of the Accounting Officer. The Accounting Officer and SARC agreed that the plan would still provide a meaningful level of assurance.

Progress against the plan was monitored throughout the year and reported to SMG and SARC. Detailed reports on the findings from individual audits, together with associated recommendations for control enhancement, were prepared and presented to senior management and SARC for consideration.

The audits completed comprised areas from each Directorate of the Secretariat. As per the requirements of the PSIAS, this enabled the acting Head of Internal Audit to give an overall opinion to the Accounting Officer representing the system of risk management, control and governance across the organisation. Formal monitoring of the implementation of audit recommendations continued for each Directorate with progress on each recommendation formally reported to SARC.

Since 1 April 2019, ten final reports have been issued. Six reviews resulted in a satisfactory level of assurance, three received a substantial level of assurance, and one received a limited level of assurance. The level of acceptance of recommendations remained high and improvement was noted through follow-up activity. Of the seven follow-up reports issued during the reporting period, the assurance rating of six increased to substantial, while the other remained satisfactory. Draft reports of the remaining three reviews of the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan are currently under consideration.

Limited assurance was provided in respect of the review of Broadcasting Infrastructure. The report raised a significant issue relating to risk associated with the resilience of the broadcasting infrastructure and Internal Audit's inability to provide assurance over measures to prevent its operational failure in the short-term.

The report acknowledged that this was a legacy issue which management was aware of and had included it in the Corporate Risk Register. Mitigation measures had been identified and included in the Corporate Plan 2019–23, as it would have been imprudent to make the significant investment required during the period when the Assembly was not meeting.

Mitigation measures include a refresh of Assembly broadcasting infrastructure, along with other measures to reduce the risk of operational failure. Given the nature of this issue, and the planned mitigating actions, the acting Head of Internal Audit advised that it did not have a material impact on the overall level of assurance for 2019-20.

Based on the results of the above programme of Internal Audits and associated follow-up activity, the acting Head of Internal Audit reported an overall satisfactory level of assurance for 2019-20.

Members Expenses

Members' salaries and expenses continue to be provided for under the provisions of the 2016 Determination. As noted in previous reports, the tenure of the Independent Financial Review Panel (the Panel) ended in July 2016. As a consequence of the Commission's desire to consider a reform of the Panel and the prevailing political situation, a new Panel has not been appointed yet. The Commission's Finance Office administers the Determination and provides advice and support to Members on matters arising from the financial support framework.

During 2016-17 the Commission received briefings and considered a number of options to reform the Panel, however this work was not completed prior to the Assembly election in March 2017. In the absence of normal Assembly business this work was paused until the appointment of the new Commission in February 2020, when the work was resumed.

After considering the matter further, and in the absence of a Panel, a motion was brought to the Assembly on 30 June 2020 to confer powers on the Commission to determine allowances payable to Members. This motion was brought forward to enable the Commission to ensure that Members can legitimately purchase basic items to help deliver services to constituents and to ensure that the terms and conditions of employment for support staff are fair and reasonable and in line with those offered within the context of the wider public sector.

This motion did not seek to amend the process for determining Members' salaries or pensions, the powers for such will continue to reside with a Panel, when it is appointed. The Commission intends to bring forward a Bill that will change the remit and scope of the Panel to focus solely on Members' salaries and pensions.

In the absence of the Panel, powers were conferred on the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to determine salaries and other benefits for Members of the Assembly in respect of periods when there is no Executive, through the enactment of the Northern Ireland Assembly Members (Pay) Act 2018. Three determinations were issued in 2018 and 2019, amending the provisions of the 2016 Determination in terms of Members' salaries, expenses and allowances. However, on appointment of the Executive on 11 January 2020 these determinations ceased to have effect and all provisions of the 2016 Determination were fully restored. The most substantial amendment under the Secretary of State's determinations had been a reduction in Members' salaries. On 11 January 2020 Members' salaries were restored, after the application of inflationary increases, to £50,500.

Using the new powers conferred on it by the Assembly, the Commission published the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020 on 27 August 2020. This determination amends the 2016 Determination, bringing about changes to support staff terms and conditions and increasing the scope of basic items that Members may purchase to continue to deliver services to constituents, particularly in the context of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. This determination

was implemented with immediate effect and the financial impact of its provisions will be accounted from 2020-21 onwards.

Full details of all determinations can be found in the detail of the determinations, published on the Assembly's website:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/members-salaries-and-expenses/>

Under the current governance framework, payments made to Members under the provisions of the 2016 Determination are subject to regular reviews for compliance, either by the on-going compliance testing carried out by the Finance Office, or through the annual review by Internal Audit. During the reporting period any issues of non-compliance or inadmissible expenditure that were highlighted as a result of these reviews were dealt with through the established administrative processes as prescribed in the 2016 Determination.

These principles are also applied to payments made to political parties under the FAPP Scheme, which are reviewed by an independent external auditor each year.

External Audit

The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland is responsible for auditing the Commission's Annual Report and Resource Accounts. The purpose of the external audit is to form an opinion on the truth and fairness and regularity of the figures disclosed in the accounts.

As part of the external audit process weaknesses in the effectiveness of the system of internal control may be identified in the NIAO's Report to those Charged with Governance. The report also provides a commentary on the observations for each significant risk as recognised by the NIAO and where appropriate, makes recommendations for the enhancement of controls. The implementation of audit recommendations is monitored quarterly and reported to SARC.

Strategic Planning and Performance Management

Details of performance against the strategic aims and targets set in the Annual Plan for 2019-20 are set out in the *Key Performance Indicators – Delivery of the Corporate Strategy* section of the Performance Report commencing at page 11.

Internal Control Environment

Systems of internal control are designed to continuously identify and prioritise the principal risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives. The systems also evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, assess the impact should they be realised, and seek to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Generally, the systems of internal control seek to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. These arrangements were in place for the throughout the year. Risks and internal controls are reviewed routinely by management and are tested as part of the ongoing Internal Audit programme.

Personal Data Related Incidents

There was one (2018-19; Nil) personal data incidents formally reported to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Risk Management

The Commission's risk management arrangements comply with generally accepted best practice principles and relevant guidance.

A Risk Management Strategy and associated policies and procedures were in place across the Secretariat during the reporting period. This Strategy includes a detailed analysis of risk appetite and continues to define the Secretariat's approach to risk management. The Strategy is reviewed annually by SMG to ensure that it remains adequate and appropriate.

The Risk Management Strategy was reviewed in May 2020 when SMG considered a number of updates to the guidance issued by HM Treasury in its 'Orange Book – Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts', which was published in 2020.

SMG agreed a number of enhancements and points of clarification to the existing Risk Management Strategy, including a minor amendment to the definition of risk. However, overall SMG agreed that the risk appetite and classification of risk as stated in the Risk Management Strategy remained appropriate, however some additional examples of risk categories within the classifications were added by way of clarification. SMG further agreed that the annual Risk Management Self-Assessment could be further enhanced, by using a number of the questions included in the Orange Book, to assist in assessing how the risk management principles are being applied throughout the Secretariat.

The Risk Management Strategy notes that risk management is not a process for avoiding risk but instead can act as a tool to encourage the organisation to take on activities that have a higher level of risk, because the risks have been identified, are being managed and that the exposure to risk is both understood and acceptable.

The Risk Management Framework includes the Risk Management Strategy, Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, Assurance Statements, the activities of SARC, risk-based audit delivered by the Internal Audit team and external audit, and the annual Governance Statement. In delivering the Risk Management Strategy, SMG has sought to ensure that a strong risk management culture is embedded across the entire organisation, which is assisted by a process of regular and ongoing monitoring and reporting of risk.

SMG has ownership of the Corporate Risk Register. The Corporate Risk Register is presented quarterly to SARC and biannually to the Commission. It is reviewed and approved by SMG on a quarterly basis. As at the reporting date, five corporate risks were identified.

These are:

- 1. Insufficient budget approved by the Assembly to enable delivery of the Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy 2018-23;*

2. *Major Incident / Breakdown (including security incident);*
3. *Errors or omissions in equality, governance or regulatory requirements;*
4. *Loss of staff, skills and knowledge and / or staff engagement; and*
5. *Obligations arising from the United Kingdom leaving the EU are placed on the Assembly.*

Risks are identified and assessed using a 5 x 5 matrix of impact and probability, with appropriate Red, Amber, Green colour coding being applied to each risk. The risk appetite is assessed for each risk, using one of the five identified levels. The risk owner documents the root causes of the risk and appropriate responses to address the risk. The adequacy of controls is then reviewed and the degree of acceptance of any gaps in controls and any further actions that are required to improve control are determined.

The quarterly review by SMG ensures that SMG can evaluate the nature and extent of corporate risks and ensures the risks are being managed efficiently. An additional review was undertaken by SMG in May 2020, to ensure that all risk responses, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, were recorded on an on-going basis.

Directorate and business area risk registers (where appropriate) are maintained. The Risk Management Strategy includes a monthly review of Directorate risk registers by each Director and Heads of Business. These monthly review meetings are attended by the Governance Officer.

Assurance Stewardship Statements are prepared every six months by each Director. The Statements are submitted to the Clerk/Chief Executive and are subsequently considered by SARC. These Statements confirm if the management of risks in respective areas have been effectively managed, and provide a narrative on how this assurance has been achieved.

If controls have been inappropriate or ineffective in managing the risk, a narrative must also be provided on any remedial actions that may be required. The Statements also require risk owners to provide a commentary on other governance issues, such as the control of expenditure, information management practices, fraud and bribery prevention measures and the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations.

The Stewardship Statements were prepared as at the end of September 2019 and the end of March 2020 and all Directors have confirmed that they are satisfied that controls were in place and that these controls were appropriate.

As in previous years, a number of self-assessments were completed to consider the risks associated with fraud, bribery, corruption, risk management and cyber security. These included Fraud and Bribery Self-Assessment Checklists, Bribery Risk Assessment and Action Plan, Risk Management Self-Assessment checklists and Action Plan, and the National Audit Office Cyber security and information risk guidance for Audit Committees, Checklist and Action Plan. No additional issues arose from the assessments and therefore SMG has agreed due to the near full compliance these assessments will now

be carried out on a biennial basis. The Action plans for these self-assessments will continue to be monitored quarterly and presented to SARC.

Anti-fraud and Anti-Bribery Issues

The Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy and associated response plan are reviewed on a biennial basis. The review in May 2020 sought to ensure that they continue to represent best practice and reflect all appropriate legislative changes. No further changes were made to the policy or response plan at this time and the associated mandatory training programme will be rolled out to all staff between September and December 2020.

There were no reported incidents of suspected fraud during the reporting period.

The Commission also participates in the biennial NFI exercise, which is an effective data matching exercise to compare data from across a range of public sector organisations to identify potentially fraudulent claims. This exercise was last completed in October 2018 and is due to be completed during the month of October 2020. In October 2018 all matches investigated were found to be genuine which required no further action to be taken.

Budget Position and Authority

Following the Assembly election on 2 March 2017 an Executive was not appointed. Consequently, from that date, until the Executive was appointed in January 2020 the annual Budget Acts were passed through Westminster. The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2020 was passed by the Assembly and received Royal Assent on 26 March 2020. The authorisations, appropriations and limits in this Act provided the authority for the 2019-20 financial year and a vote on account for the early months of the 2020-21 financial year.

On 29 March 2017, the UK Government submitted its notification to leave the EU in accordance with Article 50. Following ratification of the withdrawal agreement by the UK Parliament the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020. The departure from the EU has little or no impact on the budgetary position of the Commission as the Commission does not have any EU funded programmes.

General

Over the last year, there have been many manpower planning challenges facing the Commission. The reduced Assembly activity in the first 9 months of the year, due to the political hiatus, continued to have a significant impact on all areas of the Secretariat, with activities being regularly reviewed and temporary redeployment opportunities for staff being sought.

When an Executive was formed at extremely short notice in January 2020 the focus of the Commission rapidly turned to implementing its restoration plans, terminating all temporary redeployment opportunities and ensuring that sufficient staffing resources could be secured to service a fully functioning Assembly, given the large number of vacant posts in the organisation.

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Progress on recruiting staff and engaging agency workers, where required, to fill the large number of vacant posts was impacted significantly by the materialisation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations that were put in place by the Executive to slow the spread of the virus. Also work practices and procedural processes rapidly had to be adapted to ensure that the necessary work of the Assembly could continue within the restrictions of the measures from the Executive. The Commission continues to review its staffing resource requirements, carefully seeking to ensure that the necessary staff are in place to service the Assembly in this new dynamic environment.

As Accounting Officer, my assessment of the current corporate governance arrangements is that they comply with the best practice principles, as contained within the “Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013” as issued by DFP under the DAO (DFP) (now DoF) 06/13. While recognising the fact that the Commission is not a Government Department, many of the principles can be applied. However, the application may not always be straightforward and where alternative governance arrangements are deemed to be more appropriate, deviation from the code has been explained for the purposes of this statement.

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 15 October 2020

Remuneration and Staff Report

The purpose of the Remuneration and Staff report is to set out the Commission’s remuneration policy for senior management, reporting on how this policy has been implemented and what has been paid to senior management. This report explains the provisions for Commission Members as set by the relevant determination, therefore providing the users of the Annual Report and Resource Accounts with information on those individuals who are central in terms of accountability. The report also provides information on overall staff numbers and associated costs for the reporting period.

Remuneration Policy

Commission Members

The salaries and pensions of all Members (including those Members elected to serve as members of the Commission) for the 2019-20 year, were set by the 2016 Determination, and the Assembly Members (Pensions) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016. These determinations were made by the Panel which was established by the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to make determinations in relation to salaries, allowances and pensions payable to Members.

However, powers were conferred on the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under the provisions of The Northern Ireland Assembly Members (Pay) Act 2018 to determine salaries and other benefits for Members of the Assembly in respect of periods when there is no Executive.

The provisions of the 2016 Determination were subsequently amended following the introduction of two determinations: (i) The Assembly Members (Inflationary increase to salary) (Period when there is no Executive) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2018 and (ii) The Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Present period when there is no Executive) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2018 (2018 Determination).

The second of these determinations revoked the first, and its introduction meant that salaries payable to Members and officeholders were reduced in two phases from 1 November 2018 and any inflationary increases due were deferred. Following the appointment of the Executive on 11 January 2020, the provisions of the 2016 Determination were restored in full and Members’ salaries returned to the levels prescribed in the 2016 Determination.

Non- Executive Directors

The Commission has established SARC to consider and advise the Accounting Officer on all matters of governance, audit and internal controls. SARC comprises two independent non-executive members, one of whom chairs the committee, and a Commission Member. The non-executive members are paid a daily rate as established and reviewed by the Commission. The Commission Member receives no additional remuneration for undertaking this particular role.

Senior Management

Section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 states that “*The Commission shall provide*

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the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly’s purposes”. The Commission has the legal authority to appoint the staff of the Secretariat and to set the remuneration of staff.

The pay award for all Secretariat staff including its senior managers is normally based on an incremental uplift on salary scales following an annual assessment of staff performance. A one year pay award was made from 1 August 2019 which included the following distinct elements:

- A consolidated 3% increase was applied to all spine points on all pay scales; and
- All eligible staff whose performance met the stated requirements received a one-step progression to the next spine point on the relevant pay scale.

Service Contracts

Secretariat staff are appointed on merit on the basis of a fair and open competition. Staff are normally appointed on a permanent basis. Early termination, other than for misconduct, may result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Commission’s staff policies and procedures.

Appointments to senior management positions are made by the Commission on the basis of fair and open competition and the Commission has set its own policies and procedures in this regard.

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commission, the most senior officials within the Assembly Secretariat and the non-executive members of SARC.

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Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements for Assembly Commission Members (audited)

Assembly Commission Members	Salary £		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)		Total (to nearest £1000)	
	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19
Robin Newton MBE MLA (until 11 Jan 2020)	15,609	30,483	-	-	9,000	11,000	25,000	41,000
Jim Wells MLA (until 14 Jan 2020)	3,794	5,500	-	-	2,000	1,000	6,000	7,000
Alex Maskey MLA (Commission Member until 10 Jan 2020); Speaker from 11 Jan 2020)	12,208	5,500	-	-	2,000	1,000	14,000	7,000
Alex Attwood (until 10 May 2019)	529	5,500	-	-	1,000	1,000	2,000	7,000
Stewart Dickson MLA (until 14 Jan 2020)	3,794	5,500	-	-	2,000	2,000	6,000	8,000
Robin Swann MLA (until 10 Jan 2020)	3,729	5,500	-	-	1,000	1,000	5,000	7,000
John O'Dowd MLA (from 14 Jan 2020)	1,290	-	-	-	1,000	-	2,000	-
Keith Buchanan MLA (from 27 Jan 2020)	1,081	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
Dolores Kelly MLA (from 14 Jan 2020)	1,290	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
Robert Butler MLA (from 14 Jan 2020)	1,290	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
John Blair MLA (from 27 Jan 2020)	1,081	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
Pam Cameron MLA (14 Jan to 27 Jan 2020)	226	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increase excludes increases due to inflation and any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights.

The above figures only relate to the remuneration received by Commission Members in respect of their position as officeholders.

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Remuneration SARC Members (audited)

SARC	Fees £		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Total (to nearest £1000)	
	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19
James Brooks – Chairperson	2,442	2,823	-	-	2,000	3,000
Derek Martin – Independent Member	856	846	-	-	1,000	1,000

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements for Secretariat staff (audited)

Secretariat Officials	Salary £'000		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)		Total £'000	
	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19
Lesley Hogg Clerk/Chief Executive	130-135	125-130	-	-	151,000	94,000	285-290	220-225
Gareth McGrath Director of Parliamentary Services	90-95	85-90	-	-	35,000	29,000	125-130	115-120
Richard Stewart Director of Corporate Services	90-95	85-90	-	-	30,000	32,000	120-125	120-125
Tara Caul Director of Legal, Governance & Research Services	85-90	80-85	-	-	44,000	40,000	130-135	120-125
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Remuneration	135-140				130-135			
Median Total Remuneration	£35,805				£29,917			
Ratio	3.84				4.43			

*The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the

contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation and any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights.

Hutton Fair Pay Review Disclosure (audited)

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid Director in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The reported figure for the banded remuneration of the highest paid Director under the Hutton Fair Pay Review Disclosure was 3.84 times (2018-19; 4.43) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £35,805 (2018-19; £29,917). The increase in the median salary is due to a combination of the pay rise awarded during the year, and a change in mix of the median grade of employee. In 2019-20, no (2018-19; 0) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid Director. The remuneration range for 2019-20 was £17,931 to £136,220 (2017-18; £17,526-£130,278).

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Salary

'Salary' for Secretariat staff includes gross salary, overtime, any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any ex gratia payments.

This report is based on payments made by the Commission and thus recorded in these accounts. In respect of Members of the Commission (including the Speaker), 'salary' represents the *additional* salary payable for being a Member of the Commission or the Speaker over and above the salary payable as a Member.

The 2016 Determination provides for salaries to be paid in respect of certain offices within the Assembly where the salary is higher than the salary payable to Members of the Assembly generally. The 2016 Determination sets out the total salary payable to Members generally and for each officeholder.

These amounts were amended following the introduction of 2018 Determination. The 2018 Determination provided for the salaries payable to certain officeholders and Members generally during the period of no Executive.

Following the appointment of an Executive on 11 January 2020 the provisions of the 2016 Determination were restored and the salaries payable to Members and officeholders returned to those levels set out in the 2016 Determination. For the purposes of the remuneration report, it is only the *additional* salary payable for the role of Commission Member and Speaker that is reported.

From 6 May 2016, the additional amount paid for holding the office of Commission Member was £6,000 (2018-19; £6,000, £4,800 from 1 November 2018). This returned to the levels prescribed in the 2016 Determination following the appointment of the Executive on 11 January 2020. For the Speaker, the additional amount paid for holding office was £38,000 (2018-19; £38,000, £19,960 from 1 November 2018). This returned

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to the levels prescribed in the 2016 Determination following the appointment of the Executive on 11 January 2020. The salary figures reported here do not include the salary for a Member generally of £50,500 (2018-19; £49,500 reduced from 1 November 2018 to £42,075 and further reduced to £35,888 from 1 January 2019).

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue & Customs as a taxable emolument.

Pensions Benefits for Assembly Commission Members (audited)

Assembly Commission Members	Accrued pension at age 65 as at 31/03/20	Real increase in pension at age 65	CETV at 31/03/20 (or end date)	CETV at 31/03/19 (or end date)	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Robin Newton MBE MLA	0-5	0-2.5	56	49	5
Jim Wells MLA	0-5	0-2.5	57	54	1
Alex Maskey MLA	0-5	0-2.5	33	29	3
Alex Attwood	0-5	0-2.5	56	54	1
Stewart Dickson MLA	0-5	0-2.5	9	7	1
Robin Swann MLA	0-5	0-2.5	17	15	1
John O'Dowd MLA	0-5	0-2.5	70	69	1
Keith Buchanan MLA	0-5	0-2.5	-	-	-
Dolores Kelly MLA	0-5	0-2.5	14	13	-
Robert Butler MLA	0-5	0-2.5	-	-	-
John Blair MLA	0-5	0-2.5	-	-	-

**The calculation of the starting pension for the 2019-20 CETV was based on the pensionable salary used in the 2019-20 annual benefit statement and was therefore greater than the closing pension for the 31 March 2019 CETV.*

Commission pensions

Pension benefits for Commission Members are provided by the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016 (AMPS). In 2011 the Assembly passed the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 establishing a Panel to make determinations in relation to the salaries, allowances and pensions payable to members of the Assembly. In April 2016 the Panel issued The Assembly Members (Pensions) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 which introduced a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme for new and existing

members. AMPS 2016 replaces the 2012 scheme. Existing members born on or before 1 April 1960 retain their Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. It should be noted that the current transitional protection offering is subject to change as a result of the McCloud Judgement.

As Commission Members are Members of the Legislative Assembly, they also accrue an MLA's pension under AMPS (details of which are not included in this report). Pension benefits for Commission Members under transitional protection arrangements are provided on a "contribution factor" basis, which takes account of service as a Commission Member. The contribution factor is the relationship between salary as a Commission Member and salary as a Member for each year of service as a Commission Member. Pension benefits as a Commission Member are based on the accrual rate (1/50th or 1/40th) multiplied by the cumulative contribution factors and the relevant final salary as a Member. Pension benefits for all other Members are provided on a career average (CARE) basis.

Benefits for Commission Members are payable at the same time as Assembly Member's benefits become payable under the AMPS. Pensions are increased annually in line with changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Commission Members in the Final Salary section can pay contributions of either 9% or 12.5% of their officeholder's salary, depending on their accrual rate. Commission Members in the CARE section pay 9% of the officeholder's salary. There is also an employer contribution paid by the Consolidated Fund out of money appropriated by Act of Assembly for that purpose representing the balance of cost. This is currently 14.4% of the Commission Member's salary.

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the Commission Member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age for their section of the Scheme. Commission Members under transitional protection arrangements may retire at age 65. Commission Members in the CARE section have a pension age aligned to their State Pension Age. This accrued pension arises from all previous service during which the Commission Member held any remunerated office within the Assembly. It does not relate solely to service as a Commission Member.

Under the Northern Ireland Assembly Members (Pay) Act 2018 while the provisions of the 2018 Determination were in force and Members' and officeholders' salaries were reduced, Members were treated as having whatever salary they would generally had, apart from this 2018 Determination. That means for pension purposes benefits continued to accrue on the salaries that would generally be payable under the 2016 Determination.

The Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV)

This is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a Member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the Member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. It 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 pension benefits they have accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total service as an officeholder, not just their current appointment as an officeholder.

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CETVs are calculated in accordance with the Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) Regulations 1996 (as amended) and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

The real increase in the value of the CETV

This is the increase in accrued pension due to the Assembly’s contributions to AMPS, excluding increases due to inflation and contributions paid by the Commission Member. It is calculated using valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Pension Benefits for Secretariat Staff (audited)

Secretariat Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/20 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/03/20	CETV at 31/03/19	Real increase in CETV	Employer contribution to partnership pension account
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	Nearest £100
Lesley Hogg Clerk/Chief Executive	20-25	7.5-10	270	161	91	-
Gareth McGrath Director of Parliamentary Services	30-35	0-2.5	445	404	16	-
Richard Stewart Director of Corporate Services	40-45	0-2.5	787	735	15	-
Tara Caul Director of Legal, Governance & Research Services	15-20	2.5-5	248	208	23	-

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension schemes which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP). The alpha pension scheme was introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of existing members of the classic, premium, classic plus and nuvos pension arrangements also moved to alpha from that date.

Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did not move to alpha and those who were within 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age. Alpha is a ‘Career Average Revalued Earnings’ (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate is 2.32%.

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New entrants joining can choose between membership of alpha or joining a ‘money purchase’ stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account).

New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is also a CARE arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current rate is 2.3%.

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based ‘final salary’ defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium and classic plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining the partnership pension account.

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2019 was 1.7% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2020.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands)		Contribution rates – All members
From	To	From 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021
£0	£23,999.99	4.60%
£24,000.00	£55,499.99	5.45%
£55,500.00	£152,499.99	7.35%
£152,500.00 and above		8.05%

Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years’ pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic plus is essentially a variation of premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match

these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Scheme pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni>.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. 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 pension 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, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost.

CETVs are calculated in accordance with the Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

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. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

Staff Report

Average number of persons employed (audited)

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed during the year was as follows:

Objective	Permanent employed staff	Agency, Temporary and Inward Secondees	Members	2019-20	2018-19
				Number	Number
				Total	Total
1	295	9	90	394	407
Total	295	9	90	394	407

During 2019-20, an average of 73 members of staff (2018-19; 87) were redeployed externally to other legislatures and public sector employers. A further average of 51 members of staff were assisting other legislatures and working with public sector employers on a range of duties, while still located in Parliament Buildings.

The Commission does not employ any staff exclusively for capital projects (2018-19; Nil).

Directors, Senior Managers and Employees (audited)

As at 31 March 2020, the number of permanent employed directors, senior managers and employees split by gender was as follows:

Role	Female	Male
Director	1	-
Senior managers	1	2
Employees (not including Directors)	137	172
Total	139	174

The Secretariat does not apply the grading structures used by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. “Senior manager” is defined as a member of staff at Assembly Grade 1 or Assembly Grade 2 which is broadly analogous to Senior Civil Service grades.

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Staff costs (audited) comprise:

				2019-20	2018-19
				£'000	£'000
	Permanently employed staff*	Agency, Temporary and Inward Seconded Staff	Members	Total	Total
Wages and salaries	11,436	495	3,683	15,614	15,674
Social security costs	1,213	-	443	1,656	1,718
Other pension costs	3,495	-	768	4,263	3,330
Sub Total	16,144	495	4,894	21,533	20,722
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(145)	-	-	(145)	(294)
Total net costs **	15,999	495	4,894	21,388	20,428

* There were no staff costs incurred in respect of Special Advisers in 2019-20 and 2018-19.

** Of the total, £0 has been charged to capital (2018-19; £Nil).

All staff costs are charged to programme costs.

Temporary Staff

The Commission made payments of £350,059 (2018-19; £83,215) in relation to temporary workers during the year.

Pension Arrangements

The NICS main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Commission is unable to identify its share of underlying assets and liabilities. GAD is responsible for carrying out the scheme valuations. GAD reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2016 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in March 2019. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2021.

For 2019-20, employers' contributions of £3,495,280 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2018-19; £2,607,437) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

This change is primarily due to the reduction in the SCAPE discount rate (as announced at Budget 2018) to 2.4% per annum above CPI. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2019-20 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £2,415 (2018-19; £5,316) were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer

contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2018-19; 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay.

The partnership pension account offers the employee the opportunity of having a “free” pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the employee does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay.

Employer contributions of £142, 0.5% (2018-19; £242, 0.5%) of pensionable pay were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees.

Contributions due to **partnership** pension providers at the reporting date were nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were nil.

Pension benefits for Members are provided through AMPS. In 2016 the Panel introduced a new CARE scheme effective from 6 May 2016. Returning Members within 10 years of retirement at 1 April 2015 were afforded transitional protection for a period of 5 years allowing them to remain in the final salary section of AMPS.

Members in the final salary section pay contributions of 12.5% of pensionable salary accruing benefits at 1/40th of final salary for each year of service, or 9% of pensionable salary accruing benefits at 1/50th of final salary for each year of service. Normal retirement age for the final salary section is age 65.

All new Members, and returning Members without transitional protection, join the CARE section of AMPS, building up pension benefits at a rate of 2% of pensionable earnings in the year. Normal retirement age for the CARE section is aligned with the Member’s State Pension age. Members make contributions from their officeholder salary at the same rate as their Assembly Members’ salary. All pensions increase in line with the Consumer Price Index once in payment.

There is a separate scheme statement for AMPS. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Assembly and are managed by an Investment Manager. A full actuarial valuation was carried out for the period ending 31 March 2017 by GAD.

For 2019-20, contributions of £0.8m (2018-19; £0.7m) were paid to AMPS. From 6 May 2016 contributions were at a rate of 14.4% (2018-19; 14.4%) of pensionable pay, as determined by GAD and advised by the Treasury. Further disclosures can be found in Note 5 “Members’ and Staff related Costs”.

Ill Health Retirement – Staff

Two members of staff (2018-19, One) retired early on ill-health grounds, one with enhancement less than £2k (2018-19, Nil); the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2018-19, £7,955).

Ill Health Retirement – Members

During the year, no Members retired due to ill health (2018-19; Nil). Members retiring early through ill health are entitled to apply to the Commission to receive an ill health retirement allowance under the terms of the 2016 Determination. The total amount paid

by way of ill health retirement allowance was £Nil (2018-19; £Nil).

Compensation Schemes – exit packages (audited)

There were no compensation payments made in 2019-20.

Redundancy and other departure costs are paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. Where the Commission has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the Commission and not by the Civil Service Pension Scheme. Ill health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.

Off-Payroll Engagements (audited)

All Off-Payroll arrangements were assessed in line with IR35 requirements. The Commission had no Off-Payroll Engagements which cost more than £245 per day, lasted longer than six months, and were in place at any time during 2019-20.

Consultancy (audited)

The Commission made payments of £2,832 (2018-19; £8,974) to External Consultants during the year.

Equal opportunity policy (including employment of persons with a disability)

The Commission is an equal opportunities employer. It does not discriminate against staff or eligible applicants on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, disabilities, age or sexual orientation. Every possible step is taken to ensure that staff are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management are based solely on objective and job-related criteria. The Commission is committed to creating a culture in which individual differences are valued and respected and where no one is disadvantaged. This position is reflected in the Commission's Recruitment and Selection Procedures and in the Staff Handbook.

In keeping with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's "Positive Action for People who are Disabled" guidance, the Commission operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS provides a candidate with a disability automatic access to an interview provided that they have demonstrated in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the post. Guidance is also given in the Recruitment and Selection Procedures on how a candidate can advise the Human Resources Office of any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, that may be required in relation to the recruitment and selection process, for example to attend an aptitude test or interview.

For existing employees, the Commission carries out a disability audit each year to assess whether an employee has a disability that requires reasonable adjustments to be made to their job or matters relating to their job e.g. access to training.

Other Employee Matters

The Commission provides employees with a competitive reward package which includes salary and up to 30 day's annual leave plus up to 12 public and privilege holidays each year. All permanent employees are enrolled into the Civil Service Pension Scheme from their first day of employment. Personal and professional learning and development opportunities are available to employees through a range of formal and informal learning. The Commission also has a range of family friendly policies in place to enable staff to balance work with other aspects of their lives.

The Commission recognises the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) for the purpose of negotiation and consultation and the relationship between Management and NIPSA is managed in accordance with a formal Joint Agreement. Negotiations on policy and pay matters are undertaken by Management and NIPSA.

The Commission seeks the views of staff on a range of workplace issues through a Staff Survey which is issued every two years. Following completion of each Staff Survey, an action plan is developed to address the key findings. Staff are also consulted directly on policy issues and a recent example is Performance Management. This consultation is carried out through a range of mechanisms including staff focus groups and through the online policy consultation portal.

The Commission recognises the importance of employee health and wellbeing and a strategy and action plan are in place to promote and deliver a variety of initiatives to staff. These initiatives are aimed at facilitating employees to make informed choices about their own health and wellbeing; to target areas of concern identified through sickness absence information; providing external expert advice through our employee assistance programme; and promoting the importance of good mental health.

In addition, the Commission has a Health and Safety Branch whose role it is to create a positive health and safety culture within the Secretariat. This is achieved for example, by reporting and investigating accidents; carrying out building inspections; organising training for staff and displaying health and safety information; completing risk assessments and taking corrective action as necessary.

Sickness Absence (audited)

There was an average absence rate of 4.8% during 2019-20 (2018-19; 4.0%). The absence rate is the percentage of available working days which were lost due to sickness absence. SMG has set a benchmark of 7.5 days per employee per annum. The average number of days lost per employee due to sickness for 2019-20 was 10.7 days (2018-19; 8.9 days). Investment was made in health and well-being initiatives to specifically address the root causes of sickness absence.

Statement of Assembly Supply (*audited*)

In addition to the primary statements prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) requires the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission to prepare a Statement of Assembly Supply (SoAS) and supporting notes.

The SoAS and related notes are subject to audit, as detailed in the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The SoAS is a key accountability statement that shows, in detail, how an entity has spent against their Supply Estimate. Supply is the monetary provision for resource and cash (drawn primarily from the Consolidated Fund), that the Assembly gives statutory authority for entities to utilise. The Estimate details Supply and is voted on by the Assembly at the start of the financial year and is then normally revised by a Supplementary Estimate at the end of the financial year. It is the final Estimate, normally the Spring Supplementary Estimate, which forms the basis of the SoAS.

Should an entity exceed the limits set by their Supply Estimate, called control limits, their accounts will receive a qualified opinion.

The format of the SoAS mirrors the Supply Estimates to enable comparability between what the Assembly approves and the final outturn. The Supply Estimates are voted by the Assembly and published on the Department of Finance website.

The supporting notes detail the following: Outturn detailed by Estimate line, providing a more detailed breakdown (note 1); a reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure in the SOCNE, to tie the SoAS to the financial statements (note 2); a reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement (note 3); an analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund (note 4), and a reconciliation of income recorded within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund (note 5).

Summary tables – mirror Part II and III of the Estimates

Summary of Resource Outturn 2019-20, all figures presented in £'000s

Request for Resources	Note	Outturn			Estimate			Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total, 2018-19
		Gross Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Gross Expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total		
1	SoAS 1	40,120	(165)	39,955	42,133	(165)	41,968	2,013	35,795
Total Resources	SoAS 2	40,120	(165)	39,955	42,133	(165)	41,968	2,013	35,795
Non-operating Accruing Resources		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Net Cash Requirement 2019-20, all figures presented in £'000s

	Note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2018-19
Net Cash requirement	SoAS 3	31,748	32,917	1,169	31,635

Summary of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

In addition to accruing resources, the following income relates to the Commission and is payable to the Consolidated Fund (cash receipts being shown in *italics*)

	Note	Forecast 2019-20		Outturn 2019-20	
		Income	Receipts	Income	Receipts
Total amount payable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 4	-	-	7	<i>17</i>

Explanation of variances between Estimate and outturn are given in SoAS Note 1 and in the Performance Analysis section of the Performance Report.

Notes to the Statement of Assembly Supply, 2019-20 (£'000s)

SoAS note 1. Outturn detail, by Estimate line

Type of spend	Resource outturn						Estimate			Outturn vs Estimate (inc virements), saving/ (excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total, – 2018-19
	Admin	Other Current	Grants	Gross expenditure	Accruing Resources	Net Total	Net Total	Virements*	Net Total inc. virements		
<i>Request for Resources A: Members' salaries, expenses and administration costs</i>	-	40,045	75	40,120	(165)	39,955	41,968	-	41,968	2,013	35,795
Departmental Expenditure in DEL:											
A-1 Administration	-	35,227	75	35,302	(165)	35,137	36,278	-	36,278	1,141	34,057
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME):											
A-2 Administration provisions & Members' Pension Finance Costs	-	4,774	-	4,774	-	4,774	5,646	-	5,646	872	1,700
Non Budget:											
A-3 Notional Charges	-	44	-	44	-	44	44	-	44	-	38
Resource Outturn	-	40,045	75	40,120	(165)	39,955	41,968	-	41,968	2,013	35,795

Detailed analysis of expenditure variances is given in the Review of Financial Performance as part of the Performance Report commencing at page 21. Following the appointment of an Executive by the Assembly on 11 January 2020, normal Assembly business resumed. Legal responsibility for passing the necessary Budget Act and laying of the Estimates returned to the Assembly from the Secretary of State and the Spring Supplementary Estimates (SSE) were laid on 24 February 2020.

The SSE for the Commission allocated £36.278 million for Resource DEL, £262k for Capital DEL and £5.646 million for AME. Total Outturn for the year was £40.109 million compared to the SSE allocation of £42.230 million, representing an underspend of £2.121 million or 5.0%. The outturn for the Net Resource Requirement (including AME) was £39.955 million, against an allocation of £41.968 million, or an underspend of £2.013 million (4.8%). The Capital outturn was £154k against an allocation of £262k, an underspend of £108k or 41.2%.

As in previous years, the budgeting process was undertaken within the context of

uncertainty and a changing political landscape. The opening budget position was based on a reduced level of Assembly business, but as this continued during the first 9 months of the year further savings were achieved. However, a return to normal Assembly business in the last quarter of the year, meant additional resources were required to meet the costs of servicing a fully functioning Assembly and to meet the costs of Members' salaries which were once again restored to the levels prescribed by the 2016 Determination.

The final outturn of the Commission was £1.141 million less for Resource DEL and £108k less for Capital DEL when compared to the SSE position. The outturn for AME was £0.872 million less when compared to the SSE position. These underspends arose across a number of expenditure categories, particularly Members' Pension Finance Costs, Members' constituency office costs, Admin costs and Depreciation and Impairment.

Key to Request for Resources and Functions

Request for resources A – Remunerating and supporting Members of the Assembly in discharging their duties in the Assembly, constituencies and elsewhere, enhancing public awareness of, and involvement in, the working of the Assembly; hosting events; compensation and severance payments; expenditure on activities that are required as a result of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union; administration; related services and associated non-cash items.

SoAS note 2. Reconciliation of Outturn to net operating expenditure

	Note	Outturn	Supply Estimate	Outturn compared with Estimate	Prior Year Outturn Total, 2018-19
Net Resource Outturn	SoAS 1	39,955	41,968	2,013	35,795
Non-supply income (CFERs)	SoAS 4	(7)	-	7	(31)
Net Operating Expenditure in Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	SOCNE	39,948	41,968	2,020	35,764

As noted in the introduction to the SoAS above, outturn and the Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different from, the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Therefore, this note reconciles the resource outturn to net operating expenditure, linking the SoAS to the financial statements.

SoAS note 3. Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement

Item	Note	Outturn total	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, Saving/(excess)
Resource Outturn	SoAS 1	39,955	41,968	2,013
Capital				
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	7	154	262	108
Acquisition of heritage assets	7	-	-	-
Acquisition of intangible assets	8	-	-	-
Investments		-	-	-
Non-operating Accruing Resources				
Net book value of asset disposals		-	-	-
Accruals to cash adjustments:				
<i>Adjustments to remove non-cash items:</i>	3,4			
Depreciation, impairments and revaluations		(3,125)	(3,373)	(248)
Members' Pension finance costs		(4,600)	(5,646)	(1,046)
New provisions, and adjustments to previous provisions		(174)	-	174
Prior period Adjustments		-	-	-
Other non-cash items		(44)	(44)	-
<i>Adjustments to reflect movement in working balances:</i>				
Increase/(decrease) in inventories		-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in receivables		66	50	(16)
(Increase)/decrease in payables due within one year		(484)	(300)	184
Changes in payables falling due after more than one year				
Use of provisions	17	-	-	-
Excess cash receipts surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 4	-	-	-
Net Cash Requirement		31,748	32,917	1,169

As noted in the introduction to the SoAS above, outturn and the Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, not on a cash basis. This reconciliation bridges the resource outturn to the net cash requirement.

SoAS note 4. Amounts of income to the Consolidated Fund

SoAS note 4.1 Analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

In addition to income retained by the Commission, the following income is payable to the Consolidation Fund (*cash receipts being shown in italics*).

Item	Note	Forecast 2019-20		Outturn 2019-20	
		Income	Receipts	Income	Receipts
Operating income and receipts - excess Accruing Resources		-	-	-	-
Other operating income and receipts not classified as Accruing Resources		-	-	7	<i>17</i>
Total income payable to the Consolidated Fund		-	-	7	<i>17</i>

SoAS note 5. Reconciliation of income recorded within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund

Item	Note	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Operating income	6	172	339
Adjustments for transactions between RfRs		-	-
Gross Income		172	339
Income authorised to be Accruing Resources		(165)	(308)
Operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund	SoAS 4.1	7	31

Other Assembly Accountability Disclosures *(audited)*

i. Losses and special payments

There were no Losses or Special Payments identified during 2019-20.

ii. Fees and Charges

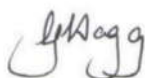
A detailed analysis of fees and charges information is not provided as the income and full cost of each service are immaterial.

iii. Remote Contingent Liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of IAS37, the Assembly also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability. No remote contingent liabilities exist at the reporting date.

I hereby approve the Commission's Resource Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 15 October 2020

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

I have also audited the Statement of Assembly Supply, and the related notes, and the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals for the year ended 31 March 2020 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom. 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 Northern Ireland Assembly Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, 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 opinions.

Emphasis of Matter – Uncertainty Regarding Property Valuation

We draw attention to the disclosures in note 7 to the financial statements in relation to the valuation of the land and buildings owned by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission. This property is annually revalued by Land and Property Services and

included in the financial statements at this value. A valuation of £145.195 million was obtained at 31 March 2020. The note draws attention to the fact that there is little or no empirical evidence at the moment to indicate disruption in the Northern Ireland property market in particular as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. However given the potential impact of this uncertainty we consider it should be brought to your attention. Our audit opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Conclusions relating to going concern

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require me to report to you were:

- the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission’s use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission’s has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission’s ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis.

Other Information

The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in the report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, 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, 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:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department of Finance directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer’s Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001.

My objectives are to obtain evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free

from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. 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.

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.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. I am also required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Matters on which I report by exception

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability 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
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Date: 21 October 2020

The Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2020

This account summarises the expenditure and income generated and consumed on an accruals basis. It also includes other comprehensive income and expenditure, which include changes to the values of non-current assets and other financial instruments that cannot yet be recognised as income or expenditure.

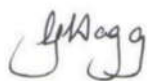
		2019-20	2018-19
	Note	£'000	£'000
Revenue from contracts with customers	6	-	-
Other operating income	6	(172)	(339)
Total Operating Income		(172)	(339)
Staff Costs	4	21,533	20,722
Purchase of goods and services	4	10,644	10,586
Depreciation and impairment charges	4	3,125	3,057
Members' Pension finance cost	4	4,600	1,700
Administrative Provisions	4	174	-
Other Operating Expenditure	4	44	38
Total operating expenditure		40,120	36,103
Net Operating Expenditure		39,948	35,764
Finance Income		-	-
Finance Expense		-	-
Net expenditure for the period		39,948	35,764
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating expenditure:			
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of Heritage assets, Property, Plant and Equipment	7	(7,430)	(7,822)
Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of Intangible assets	8	3	-
Net Actuarial (gain)/loss on pension scheme liabilities	17	(200)	300
Comprehensive net expenditure for the period		32,321	28,242

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2020

This statement presents the financial position of the Commission. It comprises three main components: assets owned or controlled; liabilities owed to other bodies; and equity, the remaining value of the entity.

		2019-20	2018-19
		£'000	£'000
	Note		
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment, Heritage Assets	7	146,541	142,062
Intangible assets	8	9	25
Financial Assets	10	-	-
Total non-current assets		146,550	142,087
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	15	524	475
Cash and cash equivalents	14	188	194
Total current assets		713	669
Total assets		147,262	142,756
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	16	(2,451)	(1,991)
Other liabilities		-	-
Total current liabilities		(2,451)	(1,991)
Total assets less current liabilities		144,811	140,765
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	17	(23,174)	(18,600)
Financial Liabilities	10	-	-
Total non-current liabilities		(23,174)	(18,600)
Total assets less total liabilities		121,637	122,165
Taxpayers' equity & other reserves			
General fund		73,521	77,068
Pension reserve		(23,000)	(18,600)
Revaluation reserve		71,116	63,697
Total equity		121,637	122,165

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 15 October 2020

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Commission during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Commission generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of service costs and the extent to which these operations are funded by way of income from the recipients of services provided by the Commission. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash inflows and outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Commission's future public service delivery.

		2019-20	2018-19
		£'000	£'000
	Note		
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating expenditure		(39,948)	(35,764)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	4	7,943	4,795
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables		(50)	(63)
<i>less movements in receivables relating to items not passing through the SOCNE</i>		-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables		461	(859)
<i>less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the SOCNE</i>		39	676
Use of provisions	17	-	-
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(31,555)	(31,215)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	7	(170)	(384)
Purchase of intangible assets	8	-	(17)
Purchase of heritage assets	7	-	(3)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(170)	(404)
Cash flows from financing activities			
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - current year		31,750	31,250
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - prior year		-	-
Net financing		31,750	31,250
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund		25	(369)
Payments of amounts due to the Consolidated Fund		(31)	(97)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund		(6)	(466)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	14	194	660
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	14	188	194

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers’ Equity for the year ended 31 March 2020

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Commission, analysed into ‘general fund reserves’ (i.e. those reserves that reflect a contribution from the Consolidated Fund). The Revaluation Reserve reflects the change in asset values that have not been recognised as income or expenditure. The General Fund represents the total assets less liabilities of the Commission, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items.

	Note	General Fund £’000	Revaluation Reserve £’000	Pension Reserve £’000	Total Reserves £’000
Balance at 31 March 2018		79,474	55,890	(16,600)	118,764
Net Assembly Funding – drawn down		31,250	-	-	31,250
Net Assembly Funding – deemed supply		565	-	-	565
Supply (payable)/receivable adjustment		(180)	-	-	(180)
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year		(35,764)	7,822	(300)	(28,242)
CFERs payable to the Consolidated Fund		(31)	-	-	(31)
Non- cash charges - auditors remuneration	4	38	-	-	38
Non-cash charges – other		1	-	-	1
Transfers between reserves		1,715	(15)	(1,700)	-
Balance at 31 March 2019		77,068	63,697	(18,600)	122,165
Net Assembly Funding – drawn down		31,750	-	-	31,750
Net Assembly Funding – deemed supply		180	-	-	180
Supply (payable)/receivable adjustment		(181)	-	-	(181)
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the period		(39,948)	7,427	200	(32,321)
CFERs payable to the Consolidated Fund		(7)	-	-	(7)
Non-cash charges - auditors remuneration	4	44	-	-	44
Non-cash charges - other		-	7	-	7
Transfers between reserves		4,615	(15)	(4,600)	-
Balance at 31 March 2020		73,521	71,116	(23,000)	121,637

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20

Notes to the Resource Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2019-20 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the DoF. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commission for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Commission are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the FReM also requires the Commission to prepare one additional primary statement. The *Statement of Assembly Supply* and supporting notes show outturn against Estimate in terms of the net resource requirement and the net cash requirement.

1.1 Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and certain financial assets and liabilities.

1.2 Going Concern

The financial statements for 2019-20 have been prepared on the going concern basis.

1.3 Property, Plant and Equipment

As outlined in paragraph 35 of the International Accounting Standards Board's (IASB's) Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements "*information within financial statements should represent faithfully the transactions that it purports to represent. It is necessary that transactions are accounted for and presented in accordance with their substance and economic reality and not merely their legal form.*"

While DoF holds legal title to Parliament Buildings, the Commission is the beneficial owner of Parliament Buildings and as such recognises the property as an asset on its Statement of Financial Position. The building has been stated at the last professionally revalued amount (based on fair value). The valuation was undertaken by Land and Property Services (LPS), having regard to IFRS as applied to the United Kingdom public sector and in accordance with HM Treasury guidance, International Valuation Standards and the requirements of the current edition of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Valuation -

Professional Standards. Professional valuations are undertaken every five years with appropriate interim valuations in the intervening years. In addition, the building is revalued annually by a LPS professional valuer assessment and through the use of appropriate indices.

Other non-current assets are capitalised at their cost of acquisition (including any costs directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended) and are revalued annually by reference to appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics. The threshold for capitalisation as a non-current asset is £500 for IT equipment and £1,000 for all other assets.

Assets are pooled where there are a large number of certain types of asset which, if treated singly, would fall below the capitalisation threshold, but which, if aggregated, have a value exceeding £1,000. Assets which have been pooled include computer hardware, office equipment and office furniture. Depreciation on the value of these assets is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Subsequent expenditure is included in the carrying amount of the asset in the same way as the initial spend if it is probable that there will be future economic benefit and the cost can be reliably measured. Any parts of an asset that are replaced are derecognised.

Revaluation losses are charged firstly against any existing revaluation surplus, with any remaining charge being expensed to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

1.4 Heritage assets

Heritage assets are those that “are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental and historical associations”. Heritage assets generally display the following characteristics:

- their value is unlikely to be fully reflected in a financial value derived from price;
- there are severe restrictions on disposal;
- they are often irreplaceable, and their value may increase over time even if their physical condition deteriorates;
- they may require significant maintenance expenditure so that they can continue to be enjoyed by future generations; and
- their life is measured in hundreds of years.

In accordance with the FReM, non-operational heritage assets purchased within the accounting period are valued at cost. For existing non-operational heritage assets where there is a market in assets of that type, they are valued at market value for existing use or otherwise at depreciated replacement cost. Valuations are performed by experts in the field of art and antiques and are carried out with sufficient frequency to ensure that the valuations remain current. Where the asset could not or would not be replaced the value is nil. All heritage assets are valued

and incorporated within the asset register.

1.5 Donated assets

These are assets donated by third parties, either by gift of the assets or funds to buy the asset. Donated assets are recognised as income in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure when received unless there are conditions on their use which, if not met, would mean that the donated asset must be returned. In such cases, the income is deferred and released when the conditions are met.

1.6 Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets are assets which are identifiable, non-monetary assets without physical substance, e.g. computer software. Intangible assets are recognised at cost and subsequently carried at a revalued amount as described in paragraph 1.3. They are depreciated as described in paragraph 1.7 below.

1.7 Depreciation

Property, Plant and Equipment assets and Intangible assets are depreciated at rates calculated to write them down to estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is charged in the month of acquisition. No depreciation is provided on freehold land and Art and Antiquities (Heritage Assets) since they have unlimited or very long estimated useful lives. The principal asset lives used for depreciation purposes are:

	Life (years)
Buildings	50
Information technology	4
Office equipment	5
Furniture & fittings	between 5 and 10

1.8 Impairment of Assets

An impairment loss is recognised when the recoverable amount of an item of Property, Plant and Equipment or an intangible asset falls below the carrying amount. It is recognised as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, unless it relates to a previously revalued asset when it should be recognised against any existing revaluation surplus for the asset to the extent that the loss does not exceed the amount of the revaluation surplus of the asset. Once the loss is recognised the depreciation charge is adjusted for future periods to allocate the asset's revised carrying amount less residual value on a systematic basis over the remaining useful life.

1.9 Revenue

Revenue is income that relates directly to the ordinary activities of the Commission. It comprises:

- sale of souvenir stock;
- hosting events – recovery of cost;
- mobile phone – recovery of cost;
- stationery - recovery of cost;
- postage - recovery of cost; and
- recoupment of salary costs of staff seconded to other public sector bodies.

This includes both accruing resources of the Vote and income to the Consolidated Fund that DoF has agreed should be treated as revenue.

1.10 Administration and programme expenditure

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure is required to be analysed between administration and programme income and expenditure. For the Commission all costs incurred are programme costs, incorporating payments of allowances and other disbursements by the Assembly.

1.11 Foreign exchange

Transactions which are denominated in a foreign currency are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling on the date of each transaction.

1.12 Employee Benefits

Where an employee has provided a service during the accounting period, in exchange for an employee benefit to be paid at some point in the future, the Commission recognises the undiscounted amount of the benefit as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the period. Such benefits include wages, salaries, social security contributions, paid annual leave or flexi leave and paid sick leave.

1.13 Pensions

Present and past employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme NI (PCSPS (NI)). This defined benefit scheme is unfunded. The Commission recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the PCSPS (NI) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS (NI).

Pension benefits for Members are provided through the Assembly Members Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016 (AMPS). The provisions of the scheme are set by the Assembly Members (Pensions) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016, which was issued in April 2016. This introduced a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme for new and existing members. Existing members born on or before 1 April 1960 retain their Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. This element of the scheme is a defined benefit scheme, which provides benefits on a "final salary" basis at a normal retirement age of 65 (or age 60, if reckonable service is more

than 20 years, with a sliding scale from 60 to 65). Members opt to pay contributions of either 12.5% (2018-19; 12.5%) of pensionable salary, including officeholder's salary or 9% (2018-19; 9%) of pensionable salary, including officeholder's salary. Members in the CARE scheme pay 9% of pensionable salary. Members in the CARE scheme have a pension age aligned to their State Pension Age.

AMPS 2016 replaces the 2012 scheme.

All pensions increase in line with the CPI once in payment.

The valuation of AMPS is carried out by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD). The Commission's accounting policy is to provide for an amount equivalent to the annual service cost for the pension scheme with the remaining movement in actuarial gain/loss being accounted for between Revenue and Pension Reserves. Any liabilities of the fund arising from a deficit on assets will be met through increased funding by the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund.

Claims of age discrimination have been brought in relation to the terms of transitional protection by groups of firefighters and members of the Judiciary. The Court of Appeal handed down its judgement on this claim on 20 December 2018 and ruled that the transitional protection arrangements were discriminatory on the basis of age. On 27 June 2019, the Supreme Court gave notice that permission to appeal McCloud had been refused.

As a result of the notice, GAD was instructed by the Trustees of AMPS to include an allowance in the end of year disclosures for the additional liability potentially arising from the McCloud judgement. The additional liability has been included as a past service cost.

1.14 Provisions

The Commission provides for legal or constructive obligations which are of uncertain timing or amount at the Statement of Financial Position date on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is significant, the estimated risk-adjusted cash flows are normally discounted using the Treasury discount rate. However, the discount rate used for the provision for pension costs was 2.25% p.a. reflecting the real yields experienced in the bond markets (see Note 17.1).

1.15 Contingent liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in accordance with IFRS 37, the Commission discloses for Assembly reporting and accountability purposes certain statutory and non-statutory contingent liabilities where the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit is remote, but which have been reported to the Assembly in accordance with the requirements of *Managing Public Money Northern Ireland*. These comprise:

- Items over £250,000 (or lower where required by specific statute) that do not arise in the normal course of business and which are reported to the Assembly by Assembly Minute prior to the Commission entering into the arrangement;
- All items (whether or not they arise in the normal course of business) over £250,000 (or lower where required by specific statute or where material in the context of resource accounts) which are required by the FReM to be noted in the resource accounts.

Where the time value of money is material, contingent liabilities which are required to be disclosed under IFRS 37 are stated at discounted amounts and the amount reported to the Assembly separately noted. Contingent liabilities that are not required to be disclosed by IFRS 37 are stated at the amounts reported to the Assembly.

1.16 Value added tax

In the Commission output tax generally does not apply and input tax is recovered on a monthly basis from DoF. Where input tax is recoverable, the amounts are stated net of VAT.

1.17 Leases

Where substantially all risks and rewards of ownership of a leased asset are borne by the Commission, the asset is recorded as a tangible asset and a debt is recorded to the lesser for the minimum lease payments discounted by the interest rate implicit in the leases. These are known as Finance Leases and the interest element of the lease payment is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure over the period of the lease at a constant rate in relation to the balance outstanding.

Other leases are regarded as operating leases and the rentals are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the leases.

1.18 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective

IFRS 16 Leases replaces IAS 17 Leases and is effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2019. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 16 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2021.

IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts will replace IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts and is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 17 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2023.

The IASB issued new and amended standards (IFRS 10, IFRS 11 & IFRS 12) that affect the consolidation and reporting of subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures. These standards were effective with EU adoption from 1 January 2014.

Accounting boundary IFRS are currently adapted in the FReM so that the Westminster departmental accounting boundary is based on ONS control criteria, as designated by Treasury. A similar review in NI, which will bring NI departments under the same adaptation, has been carried out and the resulting recommendations were agreed by the Executive in December 2016. With effect from 2022-23, the accounting boundary for departments will change and there will also be an impact on departments around the disclosure requirements under IFRS 12. ALBs apply IFRS in full and their consolidation boundary may have changed as a result of the new Standards.

2 Statement of Operating Expenditure by Operating Segment

As required under Section 40, paragraph (4) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission is responsible for ensuring that the necessary property, staff and services are provided to support the successful operation of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Commission's purpose and that of its Secretariat is to serve and support the Assembly in its role of representing the interests of the electorate; making effective legislation and influencing the Executive and holding it to account.

Although the Secretariat has an internal structure comprising three Directorates, these Directorates are essentially support functions in the pursuit of the organisation's overall aim - to ensure the provision of resources and services enabling the Commission to meet its legal obligations. It is at an overall organisational level that performance information is routinely reported to and reviewed by SMG. As such, the Commission considers that it operates with a single Operating Segment.

3 Other Administration Expenditure

All expenditure incurred by the Commission are programme costs, incorporating payments of allowances and other disbursements by the Assembly.

4 Programme Expenditure

		2019-20	2018-19
		£'000	£'000
	Note		
Staff Costs			
Wages and Salaries	5	15,614	15,674
Social Security Costs	5	1,656	1,718
Other Pension Costs	5	4,263	3,330
Payments to Members			
Constituency costs (incl staff)		5,416	5,303
Members' winding-up costs		23	2
Members' Other costs (incl Travel)		297	311
Party Allowance		695	700
Other Costs			
Premises		1,153	1,145
Office running costs		256	211
Contracted services		1,456	1,550
Repairs & maintenance		1,066	1,009
Staff travel, subsistence and training		114	174
Miscellaneous expenses		168	181
Rentals under operating leases		-	-
Total cash items		32,177	31,308
Non-cash items			
Depreciation		3,118	3,057
Pension Finance costs		4,600	1,700
Permanent diminution of assets		7	-
Reversal of previous impairment loss		-	-
Miscellaneous notional charges		-	-
Auditor's remuneration and expenses (notional)		44	38
Release of provisions		-	-
Provisions: provided in year	17	174	-
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of assets		-	-
Total non-cash items		7,943	4,795
Total		40,120	36,103

5 Member and Staff Related costs

5.1 Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£'000	£'000
	Total	Total
Wages and salaries	15,614	15,674
Social security costs	1,656	1,718
Other pension costs	4,263	3,330
Sub Total	21,533	20,722
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(145)	(294)
Total net costs *	21,388	20,428

* Of the total, £0 has been charged to capital.

A breakdown of the above costs into permanent staff, Members costs and others can be found in the Remuneration and Staff Report within the Accountability report.

5.2 Assembly Members' Pension Scheme

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Position are as follows:

		2019-20	2018-19
		£'000	£'000
	Note		
Present value of scheme liabilities		(57,200)	(56,100)
Fair value of scheme assets		34,200	37,500
Net liability	17	(23,000)	(18,600)

Amount in the Statement of Financial Position:

		2019-20	2018-19
		£'000	£'000
	Note		
Liabilities		(23,000)	(18,600)
Assets		-	-
Net liability	17	(23,000)	(18,600)

Analysis of amount charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£'000	£'000
Note		
Current Service cost	2,000	1,900
Past Service cost	2,800	-
Interest on pension liability	1,400	1,400
Interest on scheme assets	(900)	(900)
	5,300	2,400

Allocated in the account as:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£'000	£'000
Note		
Other pension costs (contribution by employer)	700	700
Members' Pension Finance cost (Net)	5 4,600	1,700
	5,300	2,400

Analysis of the amount recognised in Statement of Change in Taxpayer's Equity (SCITE):

	2019-20	2018-19
	£'000	£'000
Note		
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	(4,100)	800
Experience gains and (losses) arising on pension liabilities	200	800
Changes in assumptions	4,100	(1,900)
Net actuarial gain/(losses) recognised in SCITE	200	(300)

Movements in liabilities during the year:

	2019-20	2018-19
	£'000	£'000
Note		
Liabilities at 1 April	56,100	54,200
Current service cost (net of member contributions)	2,000	1,900
Past service cost	2,800	-
Member contributions (including net transfers-in)	400	400
Benefits paid during the year	(1,200)	(1,100)
Interest on pension liability	1,400	1,400
Changes in assumptions	(4,100)	1,900
Actuarial (gains)/losses	(200)	(800)
Liabilities at 31 March 2020	57,200	56,100

Movements in assets during the year:

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Note		
Assets at 1 April	37,500	35,800
Interest on scheme assets	900	900
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	(4,100)	800
Contributions by Commission	700	700
Contributions by Members (including net transfers-in)	400	400
Benefits paid and expenses	(1,200)	(1,100)
Closing fair value of scheme assets 31 March 2020	34,200	37,500

The Commission expects to contribute £0.8m to the Members' Pension scheme in 2020-21.

The major categories of scheme assets are broken down as follows:

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Equities	18,800	22,900
Alternative investments	4,800	5,400
Fixed interest and cash	10,600	9,200

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date:

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Discount rate	2.25%	2.45%
Future salary increases	4.00%	4.35%
Future pension increases (CPI)	2.00%	2.35%
Expectation of life at age 65 (years)		
Men	23.7	24.5
Women	25.1	25.9

Sensitivity to main assumptions:

If the assumed rate of return in excess of earnings changes by 0.5% a year, the total actuarial liability would change by 3.0% and the change in total liabilities by circa £1.7m.

If the real rate of return in excess of pension changes by 0.5% the total actuarial liability would change by about 9% and the change in total liabilities by circa £5.1m.

If longevity at retirement were assumed to be 2 years greater, this would increase the total actuarial liability by about 6% and would increase total liability by circa £3.4m.

Claims of age discrimination have been brought in relation to the terms of transitional protection by groups of firefighters and members of the Judiciary. The Court of Appeal handed down its judgement on this claim on 20 December 2018 and ruled that the transitional protection arrangements were discriminatory on the basis of age. On 27 June 2019, the Supreme Court gave notice that permission to appeal McCloud had been refused.

As a result of the notice, GAD was instructed by the Trustees of the Assembly Members Pension Scheme to include an allowance in the end of year disclosures for the additional liability potentially arising from the McCloud judgement. The additional liability has been included as a past service cost (£2.8m).

Further information on the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme can be found in the annual report and accounts for the scheme ending 31 March 2019 which are published and can be found at:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/members-pension-scheme/reports/>

6 Income – Other Operating Income

	2019-20	2018-19
	£'000	£'000
Note		
Recoupment of salaries	145	294
Other Income	27	45
Total	172	339

Consideration has been given to IFRS 15 – Revenue from Contracts with Customers. There is no material impact on the Commission's income. The Commission will continue to assess future income streams to determine whether they may subsequently meet the conditions for disclosure under the standard.

7 Property, plant and equipment

2019-20

	Land	Buildings	Information technology	Office equipment	Security equipment	Furniture & fittings	Art and antiquities (Heritage)	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation								
At 1 April 2019	6,000	134,582	2,084	3,176	1,373	2,766	624	150,605
Additions	-	(25)	175	3	-	1	-	154
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(288)	(108)	(181)	(1,728)	-	(2,305)
Impairments	-	-	-	-	-	(6)	-	(6)
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	4,638	10	4	2	16	-	4,670
At 31 March 2020	6,000	139,195	1,981	3,075	1,194	1,049	624	153,118
Depreciation								
At 1 April 2019	-	-	1,813	3,069	1,256	2,405	-	8,543
Charged in year	-	2,784	158	36	40	87	-	3,105
Disposals	-	-	(288)	(108)	(181)	(1,728)	-	(2,305)
Impairments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	(2,784)	6	1	1	10	-	(2,766)
At 31 March 2020	-	-	1,689	2,998	1,116	774	-	6,577
Carrying amount								
At 31 March 2020	6,000	139,195	292	77	78	275	624	146,541
At 31 March 2019	6,000	134,582	271	107	117	361	624	142,062
Asset financing								
Owned	6,000	139,195	292	77	78	275	624	146,541
Financed leased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	6,000	139,195	292	77	78	275	624	146,541

Parliament Buildings is an operational heritage asset which opened in 1932, and as such is included in the Commission’s property, plant and equipment figures.

A full valuation of Parliament Buildings and the land on which it is situated was undertaken by Lands and Property Services (LPS) on 31 March 2020. Parliament Buildings is categorised as an in use specialised asset and has been valued to Current Value in existing use by the Depreciated Replacement Cost approach (i.e. there is no market-based evidence to support the use of Existing Use Value (EUV) to arrive at Current Value).

Land valued to DRC has been assessed to Current Value, interpreted as EUV, having regard to the cost of purchasing a notional replacement site in the same locality, equally suitable for the existing use and of the same size. The increase in the valuation between 31 March 2019 and 31 March 2020 is due to an increase in the value of the building, as a result in the increase to the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) Index.

This is the resource Land and Property Services use to work out the Gross Replacement Cost of an asset. An increase in this index arises when it is deemed more expensive to build. The index used in the 31 March 2020 valuation was 333 (31 March 2019; 319), an increase of 4.4%. LPS noted in their report that:

“until recently the Northern Ireland property market over the previous 12 months had been somewhat mixed. Some of the positivity created throughout 2018 had carried through to the early part of 2019, buoyed by record levels of office uptake within Belfast city centre, strong positive gains in the local housing market and a strong performing tourism sector assisting the hotel and buy to let markets, especially on the back of a number of showcase events, including the Open Championship staged at Royal Portrush.

The second half of 2019 proved to be more challenging as office take up within Belfast city centre slowed (with rents peaking around a headline of £23/sqft), investment activity remained muted, retailing continued to struggle against significant headwinds, mainly due to the ongoing uncertainty created by the looming spectre of Brexit and the failure, of the UK government to secure an acceptable deal. In addition, over development in the last few years in the hotel and student accommodation markets saw occupancy rates decline. The failure of several major companies continued to show just how fragile the NI economy had become.

However, the slightly surprising victory by the Conservative party at the UK polls in December’s General Election, which brought with it a clearer Brexit agenda, as well as some positive micro economic factors including robust employment figures, a modest uplift in real wages, increased inbound tourist numbers and cross border shoppers provided perhaps a chink of light at the end of 2019, with Belfast Council approving two multi million pound mixed use developments at North Street/Smithfield Market and Botanic Avenue/University Road and the NI House Price Index October to December 2019 (Q4 2019) pointing towards continued growth in the local housing market with a year on year increase from

Q4 2018 of 2.5%.

It seemed that a foundation was being laid for a period of sustained economic growth, and with it, a strengthening local property. However, inside the first quarter of 2020 the world has become a very different place. The outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), declared by the World Health Organisation as a “Global Pandemic” on 11th March 2020, has impacted global financial markets. Travel restrictions have been implemented by many countries.

Market activity is being impacted in many sectors. As at the valuation date, LPS considers that it can attach less weight to previous market evidence for comparison purposes, to inform opinions of value. Indeed, the current response to COVID-19 means that we are faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances on which to base a judgement.”

Other property, plant and equipment are valued using indices reflecting the year-end position obtained from the Office for National Statistics. Donated assets with a carrying amount of £1k are included under Furniture & fittings.

Non-Operational Heritage Assets relate to the Assembly’s art and antiquities. The collection includes a number of paintings, antiques and parliamentary items which were inherited by the Assembly from previous legislatures. Prior to the implementation of IAS 20 the value of these donated assets was represented by a credit balance in the donated asset reserve. Following the removal of this reserve the value of the assets has been recorded in the General Fund as though they were treated as income upon receipt.

The last full valuation of the collection indicated that its value at 24 January 2017 was £864,750. This includes £250,000 in relation to the “Large central gilded bronze chandelier in the central hall” that is on long term loan to the Assembly from the Royal Collection Trust. This chandelier is not included in the total for Heritage assets on the Statement of Financial Position. This is because the Royal Collection Trust have indicated that they include it in their inventory for accounting purposes. The valuation for the chandelier was received for insurance purposes only. Additions of £8,820 were made in 2017-18 with a further £566 in 2018-19. The valuation was undertaken by a professional valuer, Mark Donnelly Fine Art Consultant, who worked for Sotheby’s for many years. It is intended that further full valuations of the collection will be carried out at the later of the commencement of each new mandate or every four years.

A fixed asset stock take was completed during the year for assets over the cost of £5,000. This led to a number of assets, which no longer had any value or which had become obsolete being removed from the asset register. The emerging COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions on working practices meant that this work was not fully completed in advance of year end and further work needs to be undertaken for assets with a cost of less than £5,000.

During this exercise a small number of assets were identified that should be more appropriately reclassified as Heritage Assets. However, in order to complete the reclassification, these assets must be professionally valued and this was not

possible prior to year end due to the working restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations. These assets remain listed as Furniture and Fittings or Equipment and this reclassification will be completed once the professional valuer has resumed his valuation services.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission – Notes to the Resource Accounts

2018-19

	Land	Buildings	Information technology	Office equipment	Security equipment	Furniture & fittings	Art and antiquities (Heritage)	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation								
At 1 April 2018	6,000	129,435	2,048	3,167	1,294	2,731	624	145,299
Additions	-	22	32	5	76	42	-	177
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	5,125	4	4	3	(7)	-	5,129
At 31 March 2019	6,000	134,582	2,084	3,176	1,373	2,766	624	150,605
Depreciation								
At 1 April 2018	-	-	1,642	3,023	1,217	2,320	-	8,202
Charged in year	-	2,692	170	45	39	88	-	3,034
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	(2,692)	1	1	-	(3)	-	(2,693)
At 31 March 2019	-	-	1,813	3,069	1,256	2,405	-	8,543
Carrying amount								
At 31 March 2019	6,000	134,582	271	107	117	361	624	142,062
At 31 March 2018 (restated)	6,000	129,435	406	144	77	411	624	137,097
Asset financing								
Owned	6,000	134,582	271	107	117	361	624	142,062
Financed leased	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
On-balance sheet (SoFP) PFI and other service concession arrangements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2019	6,000	134,582	271	107	117	361	624	142,062

8 Intangible Assets**2019-20**

	Information Technology £'000	Software Licences £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2019	633	131	764
Additions	-	-	-
Donations	-	-	-
Disposals	(182)	(84)	(266)
Impairments	-	(3)	(3)
Revaluations	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	451	44	495
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2019	618	121	739
Charged in year	6	7	13
Disposals	(182)	(84)	(266)
Impairments	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	442	44	486
Carrying amount at 31 March 2020	9	-	9
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	15	10	25
Asset financing			
Owned	-	-	-
Leased	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	-	-	-

2018-19

	Information Technology £'000	Software Licences £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2018	630	131	761
Additions	3	-	3
Donations	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Impairments	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-
At 31 March 2019	633	131	764
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2018	603	113	716
Charged in year	15	8	23
Disposals	-	-	-
Impairments	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-
At 31 March 2019	618	121	739
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	15	10	25
Carrying amount at 31 March 2018	27	18	45
Asset financing			
Owned	15	10	25
Leased	-	-	-
At 31 March 2019	15	10	25

9 Capital and Other Commitments

9.1 Capital Commitments

Capital expenditure authorised at 31 March 2020 was as follows:

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these financial statements:		
Property, plant and equipment:	170	-
Intangible assets:	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	170	-

9.2 Commitments under leases

9.2.1 Operating Leases

There are no obligations under operating leases.

9.2.2 Finance Leases

There are no obligations under finance leases.

9.3 Other financial commitments

The Commission has not entered into any non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or PFI contracts or other service concession arrangements). Therefore, the Commission has no material financial commitments as at the 31 March 2020. Contracts are awarded under a standard set of terms and conditions which provide the Commission with a termination clause, where the contract may be appropriately terminated by giving the contractor not less than 30 days' notice.

10 Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of the Commission are met through the Estimates process, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body of a similar size. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts for non-financial items in line with the Commission's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Commission is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

11 Investments and loans in other public sector bodies

The Assembly has no investments or loans in other public sector bodies.

12 Assets classified as Held for Sale

There are no assets classified as Held for Sale.

13 Inventories

The Assembly does not hold any inventories.

14 Cash and cash equivalents

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Balance at 1 April	194	660
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(6)	(466)
Balance at 31 March 2020	188	194
The balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	188	194

14.1 Reconciliation of liabilities arising from financing activities

The Net Assembly Funding drawn down from the Consolidated Fund during the year, excluding prior year, was £31.75m (2018-19; £31.25m). The amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end was £0.181m (2018-19; £0.18m).

There are no other liabilities arising from financial activities that need to be disclosed.

15 Trade receivables and other current assets

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
VAT	137	75
Prepayments and accrued income	302	298
Other receivables	85	102
Amounts due from the Consolidated Fund in respect of supply	-	-
	524	475
Amounts falling due after more than one year:		
	-	-

Included within "Other receivables" is £7,311 (2018-19; £23,588) that will be due to the Consolidated Fund in respect of excess accruing resources, once the debts are collected.

16 Trade payables and other liabilities

	2019-20 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other taxation and social security	1,066	796
Other payables	65	93
Accruals and deferred income	1,125	884
Amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end	181	180
Consolidated Fund extra receipts due to be paid to the Consolidated Fund:		
Received	7	14
Receivable	7	24
	2,451	1,991
Amounts falling due after more than one year:		
	-	-

Accruals and deferred income relate to both Member's Constituency Costs Expenditure and the Assembly Secretariat.

17 Provisions for liabilities and charges

Under International Accounting Standard 19, a liability of £23.0 m is recognised for the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016 (AMPS). Further information on this is provided in the Remuneration and Staff report on pages 51 to 65.

	2019-20			2018-19		
	Pension Provision £'000	Provision iro pay £'000	Total £'000	Pension Provision £'000	Provision iro pay £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 April	18,600	-	18,600	16,600	-	16,600
(Decrease)/increase	4,400	174	4,574	2,000	-	2,000
Utilised in-year	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2020	23,000	174	23,174	18,600	-	18,600

This includes the pension finance cost of £4.6m (2018-19; £1.7m), Past Service Cost of £2.8m (2018-19; £Nil) and the net actuarial (loss)/gain of £0.2m (2018-19; (£0.3m)).

17.1 Pension Costs

Pension benefits for Members are provided through AMPS. The provisions of the scheme are set by the Assembly Members (Pensions) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016, which was issued in April 2016. This introduced a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme for new and existing members.

Existing members born on or before 1 April 1960 retain their Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. This element of the scheme is a, defined benefit scheme, which provides benefits on a “final salary” basis at a normal retirement age of 65 (or age 60, if reckonable service is more than 20 years, with a sliding scale from 60 to 65). Members opt to pay contributions of either 12.5% (2018-19 12.5%) of pensionable salary, including officeholder’s salary or 9% (2018-19 9%) of pensionable salary, including officeholder’s salary. Members in the CARE scheme pay 9% of the pensionable salary. Members in the CARE scheme have a pension age aligned to their State Pension Age.

The rules of AMPS require the employer to meet the balance of the cost of providing the benefits as recommended by the actuary from time to time. There is a current liability of £23.0 million and, in accordance with FReM and IAS 19 at 31 March 2020, even though the Commission is not the employer, this has been provided for in the 2019-20 financial statements.

Claims of age discrimination have been brought in relation to the terms of transitional protection by groups of firefighters and members of the Judiciary. The Court of Appeal handed down its judgement on this claim on 20 December 2018 and ruled that the transitional protection arrangements were discriminatory on the basis of age. On 27 June 2019, the Supreme Court gave notice that permission to appeal McCloud had been refused.

As a result of the notice, GAD was instructed by the Trustees of AMPS to include an allowance in the end of year disclosures for the additional liability potentially arising from the McCloud judgement. The additional liability has been included as a past service cost.

The value of £23.0 million was estimated by GAD and represents the excess of the scheme liabilities (£57.2 million) over its assets (£34.2 million) at the Statement of Financial Position date. The principal financial assumptions used by GAD to establish the present value of the future obligation were a discount factor of 2.25% (2018-19; 2.45%) (this rate reflects the real yields experienced in the bond markets for high quality corporate bonds rated AA or higher and equivalent in currency and term to the scheme liabilities), the rate of notional investment return in excess of pension increases (CPI) of 0.25% (2018-19; 0.10%) and notional investment return less than earnings increases of 2.00% (2018-19; 1.15%). Demographic assumptions impacting the incidence of benefit outflow have also been applied including factors such as mortality and withdrawal from service.

The Assembly Members’ Pension Fund is administered by Trustees appointed by the Assembly. The Annual Report and Accounts is audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

17.2 Litigation

A provision has been raised in 2019-20 in respect of holiday pay for certain staff. Recent case law has ruled that staff should be paid their full pay (including overtime) when on annual leave. Management has calculated the liability based on

the number of days of paid holidays, the period used to calculate pay and the number of years to be paid, however a number of details have still to be discussed and then agreed with the Trade Union.

18 Contingent liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of IAS37, the Commission also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability. No remote contingent liabilities exist at the reporting date.

19 Related-party transactions

The Commission is independent from the Executive for funding purposes. It has a number of transactions with the Executive and with other Government Departments and public bodies. Most of these transactions have been with DoF.

Related party transactions during the financial year with the Department relate to the utilisation of their call-off contracts, for example, for the provision of security and the Dial Network. None of the post-holders within the Assembly holds any post within DoF.

The Commission previously supported the work of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Business Trust (NIABT). The NIABT was an independent educational charity which served to provide Assembly Members with a better insight into how the local business sector operates and to improve the business community's understanding of how the Assembly and devolution works. The NIABT's Board of Trustees included MLAs, representatives of the business community and two senior Secretariat staff. The NIABT agreed at its AGM in December 2017 to dissolve the Trust but this action is on hold due to the political situation between 2017 and 2020, a position ratified at the NIABT's AGM in March 2019.

Following the resumption of Assembly business in January 2020, the process to dissolve the Trust was resumed. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and the Northern Ireland Assembly, the disbursement of funds will be delayed. This will in turn delay the dissolution of the Trust.

There have been no transactions during 2019-20.

The Commission also supports the work of Politics Plus Limited (formerly known as Northern Ireland Assembly Legislative Strengthening Trust). Politics Plus was established as an independent and non-partisan organisation with the objective of enhancing the capacity of elected Members of the Assembly and representatives of political parties. This objective directly supports the Commission's Corporate Strategy higher level objective of "investing in the continuing professional development of Assembly Members with a focus on parliamentary and scrutiny skills." During 2019-20 the Politics Plus Board of Trustees included 5 Members.

During the year, the Commission engaged the Politics Plus programme (operated by the Politics Plus Limited) to provide training and development opportunities for

Members. The value of this engagement was £75,000 by way of a grant (2018-19; £65,104). There were no further transactions during the year.

It has been agreed by the Board of Trustees that Politics Plus should now be wound up and responsibility for Members' development will pass to the Commission. This process has not been concluded yet.

No other Members, key managerial staff or other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the Assembly during the year.

20 Third-party assets

The Commission does not have any assets for which the Commission acts as custodian or trustee but in which neither the entity nor government more generally has a direct beneficial interest.

21 Entities within the Assembly boundary

The Commission does not currently support any Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) or trading funds.

22 Events after the Reporting Period

There have been no events between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue which require adjustment or disclosure under IAS10.

Date authorised for issue

The Accounting Officer/Clerk to the Assembly authorised these financial statements for issue on 21 October 2020.



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Mrs Lesley Hogg
Clerk to the Assembly/Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Belfast
BT4 3XX

12 September 2016

Dear Lesley

DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS (REVISED JUNE 2014)

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ('the Commission') was established by section 40(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to perform the functions conferred on it by any enactment or any resolution of the Assembly. In particular, section 40(4) confers upon it the function of providing the Assembly, or ensuring that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes.

Paragraph 4 of Schedule 5 to the 1998 Act states that the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission may delegate any of its functions to the Presiding Officer or a member of staff of the Assembly. The Clerk/Chief Executive is the senior staff member of the Assembly and as with all staff of the Assembly is responsible to the Commission.

Under paragraph 4 of Schedule 5 of the Act, the Assembly Commission hereby delegates to you all its functions (whether under any enactment or any resolution of the Assembly) including the responsibility for the management of staff subject to the following exceptions and conditions:

- (a) matters relating to your appointment, terms and conditions and remuneration;
- (b) matters relating to the appointment, terms and conditions and remuneration of any Directors;
- (c) your appraisal (the Speaker will deal with this in consultation with Commission members);
- (d) final decisions on discipline and grievance issues relating to you, and Directors;
- (e) matters relating to salaries and pensions for staff and new or significant variations to terms and conditions and personnel policies which have significant direct budget implications;

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- (f) matters relating to the appointment, terms and conditions and remuneration for public and non-executive appointments made by the Commission;
- (g) the approval of the annual budget;
- (h) the approval of expenditure on capital projects above £1m and service contracts above £1m (whole of life cost);
- (i) exercise of the power to borrow money provided by paragraph 3 (4) of Schedule 5 to the Act; and
- (j) approval of Consultancy expenditure above £10,000 to be sought from the Speaker, acting as Chair of the Commission.

You must consult the Commission before:

- (a) making appointments at Director level;
- (b) creating new Director posts or abolishing existing Director posts;
- (c) authorising ICT and consultancy projects in excess of £50,000; and
- (d) authorising expenditure on matters that could reasonably be regarded as novel or contentious.

The delegation of functions mentioned above does not prevent the exercise of those functions by the Commission.

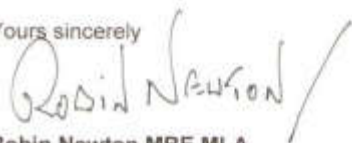
You may sub-delegate functions mentioned above but this does not prevent the exercise of those functions by the Commission.

In exercising the functions delegated to you, you and any staff to whom you further sub-delegate any functions should act, in accordance with the corporate values included in the Assembly's Corporate Strategy:

- (a) ensure propriety in the consumption of resources allocated to the Assembly Commission by following all relevant procedures in procurement and financial control;
- (b) seek wherever practicable to take account of environmental and sustainable considerations;
- (c) apply the Assembly's rules fairly and equally to all MLAs, in particular in relation to allowances.

You are also required to consult the Assembly Commission on any matters which could reasonably be considered as novel, contentious or potentially politically sensitive.

Yours sincerely



Robin Newton MBE MLA