



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

*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*

1 August 2022



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Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022

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**The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission presents its Annual Report and
Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022**

PERFORMANCE REPORT - Performance Overview

This overview is intended to provide a summary of the performance of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Assembly Commission) for the reporting period. It is aimed at giving sufficient information to users of the Annual Report and Accounts so that they may gain an understanding of the organisation, its purpose, the key risks it faces and how it has performed during the period.

Statutory basis for the Assembly Commission

The Assembly Commission is the corporate body which has the statutory responsibility for providing the Northern Ireland Assembly (the Assembly), or ensuring that the Assembly is provided with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Assembly Commission is established under section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Assembly Commission comprises the Speaker and five other members of the Assembly who are responsible for representing the interests of the Assembly and its elected Members. The Assembly Commission has appointed a Clerk/Chief Executive in accordance with schedule 5 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and other staff.

In seeking to undertake the work of the Assembly Commission, staff are assigned to a number of functional directorates. The detailed organisational chart is attached in Annex A for ease of reference on page 116.

Principal Activities

The Assembly Commission considers and makes decisions on a wide range of issues to do with the running of the Assembly, the provision of accommodation and the delivery of supporting services in Parliament Buildings.

Although funded from the Northern Ireland Block Grant, the Assembly Commission is independent of the Northern Ireland Executive (the Executive) and as such does not contribute to the Executive's Programme for Government.

The Assembly Commission's performance targets and the associated outputs are therefore, those that are developed internally to continually enhance the delivery of services to the Assembly, enabling it to function effectively. The Assembly Commission has a Corporate Strategy 2018-23 (the Corporate Strategy) which guides its work.

Key Aims and Objectives

The Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy has a strategic focus. It sets out an ambitious and innovative approach to the improvements and developments that will be prioritised by the Assembly Commission in support of the Assembly. It also outlines a small number of aims and objectives that capture the wide variety of interdependent roles and responsibilities of the Assembly Commission's staff. 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.*

The Corporate Strategy sets out an 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 have different roles, they are working towards shared and common goals. No matter what their individual responsibilities are, as one team they will 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.*

While the Corporate Strategy establishes an overarching framework for the delivery of objectives, the corporate planning process translates the Strategic Aims of the Corporate Strategy into corporate and annual plans with a series of actions, targets and milestones

assigned to each action.

In addition to the Corporate Strategy, a Corporate Plan for 2019-23 (the Corporate Plan) has been developed that sets out the key projects and priorities the Assembly Commission intends to deliver up to March 2023 to underpin the Corporate Strategy. A detailed Annual Plan for 2021-22 was developed from the Corporate Plan to establish specific and measurable targets for 2021-22.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Annual Report and Resource Accounts have been prepared in the context of continuing Assembly business, while preparing for the dissolution of the Assembly on 28 March 2022 and the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021-22.

While continuing to operate in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the Assembly Commission has effectively and rigorously monitored and implemented the Coronavirus Regulations and guidance issued by the Executive to manage the risk of COVID-19 infection across all of its operations. While established risk management processes have continued to be used, significant additional measures remained in place to enable the Assembly to carry out all its business despite the prevailing public health situation. These measures included the reporting and monitoring of business area risk assessments. Where this operating environment has a direct impact on the delivery of corporate targets, this has been considered in the Corporate Risk Register.

The principal risks to the Assembly Commission are identified and managed through a risk management regime. The principal responsibility for the management of risk falls to the Secretariat Management Group (SMG) through a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy. Further details on the role and composition of SMG is provided in the Management Structures section within the Director's Report commencing at page 38.

SMG is responsible for both the corporate planning process and the implementation of the Risk Management Strategy. Therefore, 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 Assembly Commission's capacity to handle risk, the risk and control framework within which the Assembly Commission operates and a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control are provided in the Governance Statement on pages 44 to 53.

The political environment that the Assembly Commission exists in continues to present a risk to the work of the Assembly Commission. However, this risk is wholly outside the control of the Assembly Commission and as such it cannot be captured through the normal risk management processes.

Chief Executive's Performance Overview

Once again, I would like to thank staff for their commitment, dedication and sheer hard work to deliver continuous, consistently high-quality services to the Assembly in what has been another extremely challenging year.

The Assembly continues to operate within the context of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented many challenges to the Assembly Commission, as it supported the work of the Assembly in a demanding, final year of the mandate. The resumption of normal Assembly business in January 2020 resulted in a very large volume of legislation being processed by the Assembly during 2021-22. This placed a significant pressure on the Assembly as a parliament, its Members and staff. The effectiveness and initiative of the staff in dealing with the demanding final year of the Assembly mandate and continuing to deal with the uncertainties and complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic have been outstanding.

The Assembly Commission continued to ensure strict adherence to all Coronavirus Regulations and guidance issued by the Executive. From the outset of the pandemic, the Assembly Commission was able to facilitate the remote participation in Assembly business by Members and this continued during the reporting period. Where possible a comprehensive programme of home-working for staff remained in place.

While the Annual Plan 2021-22 factored in that it was the last year of the mandate, the legislative programme was significantly more demanding than anticipated. This combined with the on-going effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had been unforeseen and therefore they continued to impact on the nature of, and the level of activities that could be delivered through the year.

The Assembly Commission's budget for 2021-22 was scrutinised by the Audit Committee on 14 December 2020 and then voted on by the Assembly on 2 March 2021. The Assembly resolved that the Assembly Commission's Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) budget for 2021-22 should be £49.333 million and £1.684 million Capital DEL.

The opening budget was prepared on the basis that there would be a return of many of the outreach and engagement activities and investments that were planned in 2020-21, but which had to be paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It assumed that the operating environment would return more or less to normal. It also included the first full year of costs associated with the implementation of Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020, which was agreed by the Assembly in August 2020. Therefore, it represented an increase of £4.486 million from the 2020-21 budget (£44.847 million, increase 10%) for Resource DEL and £0.591 million from the 2020-21 budget (£1.093 million, increase 54%) for Capital DEL.

The continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, for most of the year, meant that the building remained closed to the public for longer than anticipated. Many of the expected outreach and engagement activities and investments were not able to go ahead. The continuing pandemic also had an impact on the ongoing programme of staff recruitment, which could not proceed as quickly as anticipated. While there was some improvement in the supply chain for goods and services, generally long delays with suppliers meant that a

number of initiatives and projects could not be completed.

The combined impact of these factors was that Assembly Commission's final Resource DEL budget position for 2021-22, as recorded in the Spring Supplementary Estimate (SSE) position, was £46.954 million with £0.478 million for Capital DEL. The SSE position for Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) was £1.900 million, with a further £0.057 million for notional costs.

As set out in the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply - note 1, the final outturn for Resource DEL for the Assembly Commission was £45.049 million, £1.905 million less than the SSE position of £46.954 million. The outturn for AME was £1.903 million, £0.003 million more than the SSE position of £1.900 million. The outturn for Capital DEL was £0.396 million, £0.082 million less than the Capital DEL allocation of £0.478 million.

Performance Summary

As noted in the Performance Report – Performance Overview on page 4, the work of the Assembly Commission staff is guided by the Strategic Aims contained within the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 and the Corporate Plan 2019-23, which are augmented in the Annual Plan for 2021-22.

While the Annual Plan 2021-22 factored in that it was the last year of the mandate, the legislative programme was significantly more demanding than anticipated. This combined with the on-going effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had been unforeseen and therefore they continued to impact on the nature of, and the level of activities that could be delivered through the year.

The Annual Plan 2021-22 translated the high-level actions of the Corporate Plan into 39 actions and milestones to be achieved during this period. 18 (46.2%) of targets were reported as being achieved, 16 (41.0%) were partially achieved and 4 (10.2%) were not achieved and 1 (2.6%) was superseded.

The total final outturn of the year was £47.405 million compared with an allocation of £49.389 million in the SSE. The outturn for the Net Resource Requirement (excluding capital) was £47.009 million, against the SSE allocation of £48.911 million. The Capital outturn was £0.396 million against the SSE allocation of £0.478 million.

The budget setting process, while undertaken during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, had assumed that the impact of the pandemic would have subsided enough to return to a pre-pandemic level of outreach, engagement and recruitment activities and investments. It had also assumed Members' would avail of the full amount of the allowances and expenses accessible to them.

The underspends arose across a number of expenditure categories. These were particularly: Staff Salaries, due to lower levels of recruitment and a delay on the outcome of the commissioned pay, grading and benchmarking exercise; Admin Costs, due to the reduced level of planned activities, savings from which were used to offset the rapidly increasing utility costs; Members' Costs due to the under-utilisation by Members of their full allowances.

A detailed analysis and explanation of performance can be found in the Performance Analysis section of the Performance Report on pages 10 to 37.

PERFORMANCE REPORT – Performance Analysis

Performances Analysis - linkages to Corporate Planning

Targets

The Annual Plan 2021-22 translated the high-level actions of the Corporate Plan into 39 actions and milestones to be achieved during this period. 18 (46.2%) of targets were reported as being achieved, 16 (41.0%) were partially achieved and 4 (10.2%) were not achieved and 1 (2.6%) was superseded.

The 2021-22 year saw an exceptionally high level of Parliamentary activity as is common for the final year of each Assembly mandate. As staff continued to manage the impacts of COVID-19 and deliver an increased level of core Assembly business in both Plenary and in Committees, a number of intended activities were either partially achieved or have been delayed until 2022-23. Details are set out in the table 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 | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| 1. | 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. | <p>Further development of the Strategy and consultation with staff.</p> <p>Seek approval of SMG for the Strategy and associated action plan/priorities.</p> <p>Develop business cases for individual components arising from the Strategy.</p> <p>Develop a four-year implementation plan for the Strategy.</p> <p>Implement the actions for 2021-22 of the Strategy and evaluate its</p> | <p>Partially Achieved.</p> <p>A draft four-year implementation plan has been developed but not yet agreed due to end of mandate pressures.</p> <p>This will be carried forward to 2022-23.</p> |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| 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 | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | | components on an ongoing basis. | |
| 2. | Maximising the potential of our people through a longer term focus on learning and development opportunities | Implement a new approach to Recruitment and Selection and Induction. | Undertake a review of the new approach to recruitment and selection and induction. | Achieved. |
| 3. | 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. | Implement the actions for 2021-22 arising from the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. Review the Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Framework. | Partially Achieved. All of the actions for 2021-22 were completed, but due to end of mandate pressures the review of the Health and Wellbeing Framework will be considered in May 2022. |
| 4. | Focusing on the welfare of our people by supporting their health, well-being and resilience | Establish a Supporting Personal Resilience (SPR) Working Group to promote and develop the measures available to support the personal resilience of staff. | 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. Working group to consider information compiled on best practice in other legislatures and other relevant organisations. Engage with staff to identify remaining issues | Partially Achieved. Research and initial engagement has been carried out but further engagement will be carried forward to 2022-23. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| 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 | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | | to be addressed. Resilience communication issued to staff. Develop initial proposals for consideration by SMG. Produce a plan of agreed short and long-term additional measures required. | |
| 5. | 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. | Complete consultation with staff on the draft Internal Communications Strategy (which includes ways to recognise achievements) and obtain SMG approval for the final Strategy. Cultivate a successful recognition culture by implementing the actions for 2021-22 across the organisation. | Achieved. |
| 6. | Creating opportunities to come together as one team and to recognise our achievements | Bring staff from all business areas together, twice per year, for updates on major corporate developments and to recognise the organisation's achievements. | Two events to be held. | Achieved. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| 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 | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| 7. | Promoting and Developing our Values | Develop a plan to promote and embed our Values. | Consultation on the draft Internal Communications Strategy (which includes a plan to develop a Values campaign) to be finalised and a Values Plan to be approved by SMG. Implement Strategy actions for 2021-22. | Achieved. |
| 8. | Promoting and Developing our Values | Gather the views of staff through the biennial staff survey and present findings and any associated recommendations to SMG. | Design and conduct staff survey. Analyse findings. Present findings and any recommendations to SMG. | Partially Achieved. The staff survey has been completed and the findings are being analysed so the findings and recommendations will be considered in 2022-23. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Building excellence and innovation in our services | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019- 23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| 9. | 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. | Seek Assembly Commission approval of OBC. Complete pre-procurement analysis and system design. Issue Tender and award contract(s). | Achieved. |
| 10. | Promoting innovation in our systems to improve services to our customers | Upgrade and modernise our security infrastructure through delivery of the new Parliament Buildings Security System (PBSS). | Prepare pre-tender procurement documentation. Issue Tender and award contract. Implement System. | Partially Achieved. Contract award is anticipated in July 2022 with implementation later in 2022-23. |
| 11. | Promoting innovation in our systems to improve services to our customers | Replace, upgrade and modernise Parliament Buildings telephone system. | Finalise decommissioning of analogue system including disposal of redundant hardware. Complete Post Project Evaluation and close project. | Partially Achieved. Decommissioning took longer than anticipated as it was dependent on a third party solution. The Post Project Evaluation will therefore be considered in June 2022. |
| 12. | Promoting innovation in our systems to improve services to our customers | Review information management in the Assembly Secretariat to develop a more efficient and effective | Establish Project Team and Board for governance of the project. Develop and gain approval for business case for the project. | Not Achieved. The project was delayed due to due to staffing and end of mandate pressures. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Building excellence and innovation in our services | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019- 23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | information management system. | | |
| 13. | Ensuring our people have the support policies and tools required to adapt to changing demands | Conduct an organisation wide Pay and Grading exercise. | <p>Review and Updating of Job Specifications.</p> <p>Evaluate all Secretariat posts using revised methodology.</p> <p>Develop revised grading structure and pay scales proposals.</p> <p>Negotiate with TUS on pay scales and grade boundaries.</p> <p>Make recommendations to the Assembly Commission on final pay and grading settlement.</p> | <p>Partially Achieved.</p> <p>All posts were reviewed, updated and evaluated. A grading structure was developed but the pay scales are still being developed.</p> |
| 14. | Ensuring our people have the support policies and tools required to adapt to changing demands | Reassess all allocated accommodation, improve the physical working environment, and how we can interact with it. | <p>Review all allocated accommodation and survey building users.</p> <p>SMG to consider recommendations from the review.</p> <p>Implement agreed actions for 2021-22.</p> | <p>Partially Achieved.</p> <p>Engagement has taken place with building users to determine the main areas of concern. Further actions will be carried forward to 2022-23.</p> |
| 15. | 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 improvement | <p>Communicate and pilot methodology.</p> <p>Embed methodology to ensure regular use across all business areas.</p> | <p>Not Achieved.</p> <p>Methodology not rolled out due to competing work pressures.</p> |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Building excellence and innovation in our services | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019- 23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | s to their business processes. | | |
| 16. | 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. | Develop plan and consult with key stakeholders. Agree planned improvements. Implement planned improvements. | Not Achieved. The actions were delayed due to due to staffing and end of mandate pressures. |
| 17. | Ensuring high standards in equality, governance and regulatory compliance through effective and efficient processes | Review corporate monitoring requirements to include source, volume, frequency, and requirement (organisational versus statutory). | Review current position. Develop draft recommendations and consult stakeholders on draft recommendations. Implement agreed recommendations. | Partially Achieved. Consultation has been initiated but not completed due to staffing and end of mandate pressures. Implementation of agreed recommendations will be completed in 2022-23. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Strengthening engagement with the public | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| 18. | 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. | Consult internal stakeholders on proposed Assembly Style Guide. Implement agreed proposals. | Achieved. |
| 19. | Embedding the value of public engagement, openness and transparency across every area of the Secretariat's work | Gauge the public's understanding of the Assembly and its services by conducting regular surveys. | Finalise proposals and business case for surveys. Procure an independent survey provider. Design the survey, including consultation with stakeholders. | Partially Achieved. Comparative research with other legislatures has been undertaken to help inform the business case. The additional actions will be completed in 2022-23. |
| 20. | 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. Introduce the engagement toolkit. | Achieved. |
| 21. | Developing new approaches to engagement which enable the public to interact with the work of the Assembly | Hold a biennial Assembly engagement week. | Undertake comparative research on similar events in other legislatures. Develop proposals and business case for an engagement week. | Partially Achieved. Comparative research has been undertaken and proposals for an engagement week will be developed in 2022-23. |
| 22. | Building connections with target groups including for example, support for greater | Establish and support the delivery of a | Implement proposals and recruit Youth | Achieved. The Youth Assembly |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Strengthening engagement with the public | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | female participation and the delivery of a Youth Assembly | Youth Assembly. | <p>Assembly members.</p> <p>Hold the inaugural meeting of the Youth Assembly.</p> <p>Develop induction programme for Youth Assembly members.</p> <p>Hold second sitting of Youth Assembly.</p> <p>Agree MoU between Youth Assembly and Assembly Commission.</p> <p>Co-design Youth Assembly's processes and procedures.</p> <p>Co-design and agree programme of work.</p> <p>Establish Committees of Youth Assembly.</p> | was successfully implemented during 2021-22. The MoU is awaiting consideration by the Assembly Commission. |
| 23. | Building connections with target groups including for example, support for greater female participation and the delivery of a Youth Assembly | 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). ACN and ABN are now | <p>Collate feedback from all Assembly Connects activities and include information in biannual engagement reports to SMG.</p> <p>Review events and activities of Assembly Connects in light of feedback and</p> | Achieved. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Strengthening engagement with the public | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|------------------|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | collectively known as Assembly Connects. | refine events/activities as required. | |
| 24. | Building connections with target groups including for example, support for greater female participation and the delivery of a Youth Assembly | Increase female participation in the work of the Assembly. | Commission officials to continue to engage with the Women’s Caucus on the delivery of relevant aspects of its Gender Sensitive Assembly Action Plan and regular monitoring and review to be conducted to capture all of the initiatives and events supported by the Commission with a focus on the participation of women. Proposals to be presented to Chairpersons Liaison Group (CLG) in relation to promoting diversity amongst witnesses giving evidence to committees. | Achieved. |
| 25. | Building connections with target groups including for example, support for greater female participation and the delivery of a Youth Assembly | 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. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Strengthening engagement with the public | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | | <p>Arrange for and host a Pensioners' Parliament.</p> <p>Arrange for and host a Disability Parliament.</p> | |
| 26. | Modernising the communication of Assembly business and proceedings through investment in high quality broadcasting, digital technology and social media | Improve the Assembly and the Commission's use of digital technology and social media. | Consult with stakeholders and develop a web and online roadmap to set out how to redevelop the current Assembly website. | Achieved. |
| 27. | 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. | <p>Develop OBC for Room 21 upgrade – including upgrade of broadcasting equipment and supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Develop OBC for the upgrade of broadcasting equipment in the Assembly and Senate Chambers.</p> <p>Procure and implement new broadcasting equipment and supporting infrastructure.</p> | <p>Partially Achieved.</p> <p>The procurement approach to modernising the broadcasting infrastructure was amended from a series of individual projects to a framework approach. While this will not impact the timescale for the overall programme, it required a longer lead in which delayed the commencement of the Room 21 upgrade.</p> <p>A contractor has been appointed to upgrade all Committee rooms and to upgrade the broadcasting equipment in the Assembly and Senate Chambers.</p> |
| 28. | Modernising the | Provide an | Develop OBC for | Partially Achieved. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Strengthening engagement with the public | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | communication of Assembly business and proceedings through investment in high quality broadcasting, digital technology and social media | Assembly Chamber and Committee rooms that facilitate business in line with the Assembly's requirements and that comply with all relevant legislation. | Room 21 upgrade Complete upgrade of Room 21. | See above update (no. 27). |
| 29. | 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 allocation of accommodation in Parliament Buildings. Consider recommended improvements from review. | Not Achieved. Due to competing work priorities, the Review's Terms of Reference was not drafted but will be carried forward to 2022-23. |
| 30. | Improving the visitor experience in Parliament Buildings with a focus on customer service, public facilities and accessibility to Assembly business | Review and develop the Parliament Buildings visitor offering/ experience, including the possible development of a visitor centre, car parking, signage, access etc. and implement agreed proposals. | Review of the display of items and artefacts within Parliament Buildings including using items exhibited to add to the visitor experience and educate on history connected to the building. | Achieved. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Developing a confident legislature with a strong parliamentary culture | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| 31. | 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. | Develop and deliver a programme of regular briefings from parliamentary services business areas for 2021-22 on key current issues for other business areas. | Partially Achieved. The Parliamentary Services Directorate introduced a podcast series that focuses on Assembly procedures or changes to legislation that impact on the Assembly. Briefings will be further developed in 2022-23. |
| 32. | Embedding the importance of our parliamentary context in all areas of the Secretariat’s work | 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. Develop a mandatory programme of training for all staff on the business of the Assembly, with optional advanced modules for further staff development (including possible certification). | Partially Achieved. An ‘Assembly Essentials’ training programme has been developed and will be rolled out to staff during 2022-23. The development of advanced modules will be progressed in 2022-23. Possible certification of the programme will not be further explored as accredited parliamentary skills programmes are now being provided by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association through the CPA Parliamentary Academy, which was launched in 2021. |
| 33. | Embedding the importance of our parliamentary context in all areas of the Secretariat’s work | Prepare content on the Assembly’s powers, functions and procedures for inclusion in orientation, induction and | Prepare audio and video content to give staff applied insight into Assembly procedures. | Achieved. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Developing a confident legislature with a strong parliamentary culture | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | wider staff learning and development. | | |
| 34. | Developing the Assembly's distinct purpose and identity by supporting its legislative, scrutiny and representative roles | Through peer review against international parliamentary standards, develop proposals to strengthen the Assembly's legislative, scrutiny, financial and budgetary oversight and representative roles. | Conduct a peer review of the Assembly against the benchmarks set out in the CPA's 'Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures' and implement agreed proposals. | Partially Achieved. Potential providers were identified and a procurement exercise to secure their services will be undertaken in 2022-23. |
| 35. | 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 agreed definition of parliamentary culture. | Achieved. |
| 36. | Creating solutions to improve the operation of the Assembly in response to constitutional and political change, or service and infrastructure requirements | Prepare for, and ensure appropriate resourcing for, the resumption of normal Assembly business and the end of the current mandate. | Liaise with other legislatures, if necessary, to secure additional staffing to support the improved management of end of mandate Assembly business pressures. | Achieved. |
| 37. | 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. | Explore opportunities for accreditation of the Member Development Programme. | Superseded. Possible certification of the Member Development Programme will not be further explored |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Developing a confident legislature with a strong parliamentary culture | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | | | as accredited parliamentary skills programmes are now being provided by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association through the CPA Parliamentary Academy, which was launched in 2021. |
| 38. | Investing in the continuing professional development of Assembly Members with a focus on parliamentary and scrutiny skills | Develop a virtual one-stop shop for Members in relation to the business of the Assembly. | Explore potential options for a dedicated Intranet site for Members, which would be used to host e-learning materials and associated policies, documents and links for Members. Develop a dedicated Intranet site for Members – to be fully populated for the start of the next Assembly mandate in May 2022. | Achieved. |
| 39. | Designing Assembly specific models of legislative scrutiny and support based on relevant international best practice | Enhance support for Members in their policy and budget scrutiny, legislative scrutiny and post-legislative scrutiny by increasing capacity, capability, opportunity and independent input. | Develop guidance and professional development for Members and committees on policy and legislative scrutiny. Explore approaches and develop options to further improve financial and legislative scrutiny. Explore | Achieved. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
 Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| Strategic Aim: Developing a confident legislature with a strong parliamentary culture | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|----------------|
| | Corporate Strategy 2018-23 High Level Objective | Corporate Plan 2019-23 Action | 2021-22 Actions / Milestones | Outcome |
| | | | <p>approaches and develop proposals to enhance scrutiny of secondary legislation.</p> <p>Develop and implement agreed proposals to enhance policy and budget scrutiny, legislative scrutiny and post-legislative scrutiny.</p> | |

Performance Analysis - Budgeting Framework

The Department of Finance (DoF) is responsible for management of the Executive's budget process in line with a budgetary framework set by HM Treasury.

The total amount that the Assembly Commission spends is referred to as the Total Managed Expenditure (TME), which is split into:

- Annually Managed Expenditure (AME); and
- Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL).

HM Treasury, and in turn DoF, do not set firm AME budgets. They are volatile or demand-led in a way that the Assembly Commission cannot control. The Assembly Commission monitors AME forecasts closely and this facilitates reporting to DoF, who in turn report to HM Treasury.

As DEL budgets are understood and controllable, HM Treasury sets firm limits for DEL budgets for Whitehall Departments and the Devolved Administrations at each Spending Review. The Executive, based on advice from the Finance Minister, will in turn agree a local budget that will set DEL controls for Executive Departments.

Although not part of the Executive, the Assembly Commission ensures that its budgetary requirements are co-ordinated with the Executive's budgeting processes.

DEL budgets are classified into resource and capital.

- Resource budgets are further split into non-ringfenced resource that pays for programme delivery and running costs, and separately ringfenced resource that covers non-cash charges for depreciation and impairment of assets.
- Capital DEL is split into 'financial transactions' for loans given or shares purchased and 'general capital' for spending on all other assets or investments. The Assembly Commission does not have financial transactions capital.

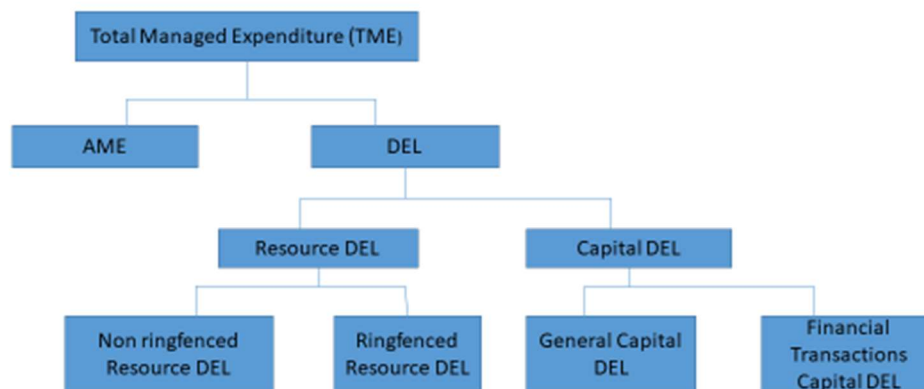
The information contained within budgetary controls does not currently read directly to financial information presented in Financial Statements due to a number of misalignments. It is intended that the Executive's Review of Financial Process (RoFP) will help address these differences and improve transparency. RoFP is due to be implemented in 2022-23. Further information on the Executive's RoFP can be found on the Northern Ireland Assembly website:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2017-2022/public-accounts-committee/reports/review-of-the-northern-ireland-budget-process/>

Further detail on the Budgeting Framework can be found in the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance published by HM Treasury at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-budgeting-guidance-2021-to-2022>.

Budget Structure



Budgetary Performance

Details of the Assembly Commission's performance against its Budgetary Control totals are set out in the table below.

| | SSE 2021-22 £000 | Outturn 2021-22 £000 | Underspend / (Overspend) £000 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Resource DEL | 46,954 | 45,049 | 1,905 |
| <i>Including</i> | | | |
| <i>Non-ringfenced</i> | 43,745 | 41,846 | 1,899 |
| <i>Ringfenced D/I</i> | 3,209 | 3,203 | 6 |
| Capital DEL | 478 | 396 | 82 |
| <i>Including</i> | | | |
| <i>General Capital</i> | 478 | 396 | 82 |
| <i>FTC</i> | - | - | - |
| Total DEL | 47,432 | 45,445 | 1,987 |
| AME | 1,900 | 1,903 | (3) |
| <i>Including</i> | | | |
| <i>AME Resource</i> | 1,900 | 1,903 | (3) |
| <i>AME Capital</i> | - | - | - |
| Total Managed Expenditure | 49,332 | 47,348 | 1,984 |

Performance Analysis – Detailed Financial Performance

The Assembly Commission's main areas of spend during 2021-22 continued to be the costs of staff salaries; the payments to Members, either by way of salary, or through the system of allowances payable to Members; and the administration running costs that are needed to maintain Parliament Buildings and deliver the wide range of services required by the Assembly.

The opening budget for the Assembly Commission was £49.333 million for Resource DEL, and £1.684 million for Capital DEL. This represented an increase of 10% for Resource DEL and 54% for Capital DEL from the previous year's budget position. The opening budget was prepared on the assumption that there would be a return to pre-pandemic levels of outreach, engagement and recruitment activities and investments during the year. It had assumed that the operating environment would return more or less to normal.

However, the heavier than anticipated legislative programme and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 meant a return to pre-pandemic level of activities was not possible during the year. As a result, some activities were paused or delayed and savings were identified throughout the year.

The closing budget position as set in the SSE was £46.954 million for Resource DEL and £0.478 million for Capital DEL. The SSE also included an allocation of £1.900 million for AME, for the Members' Pension Scheme Service Costs and Provisions. Additionally there were Notional Charges of £0.057 million.

The final outturn (excluding capital) for the period was £47.009 million against an allocation of £48.911 million when compared to the SSE position. The Capital outturn was £0.396 million against a SSE allocation of £0.478 million. This is summarised in the table overleaf.

The outturn for the Net Cash Requirement was £41.840 million, against an SSE allocation of £44.138 million. This is shown in the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply at page 74.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Performance Report – Performance Analysis

| | Outturn | SSE | Under/(over) | Under/(Over) |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| Income | (634) | (740) | (106) | 14.3% |
| Resource DEL | 45,683 | 47,694 | 2,011 | 4.2% |
| AME | 1,903 | 1,900 | (3) | (0.2%) |
| Non-budget notional costs | 57 | 57 | - | -% |
| Net Resources | 47,009 | 48,911 | 1,902 | 3.9% |
| | | | | |
| Capital | 396 | 478 | 82 | 17.2% |
| | | | | |

The above variances arose across a number of expenditure categories. The Assembly Commission's budget, as reported in the SSE, is not split by expenditure type but the Assembly Commission further analyses its overall budget into a number of broad expenditure categories for internal budgetary purposes. The breakdown of outturn by category is set out in the table below and, for comparison purposes, a breakdown of the SSE position is provided for each category.

| Expenditure Category | Outturn | SSE | Performance Against SSE | Performance Against SSE |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | £'000s | £'000s | Under / (Over) | Under / (Over) |
| | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | % |
| Income | (634) | (740) | (106) | 14.3% |
| Staff Salaries | 20,062 | 20,545 | 483 | 2.4% |
| Admin Costs | 5,394 | 5,541 | 147 | 2.7% |
| Members' Salaries | 6,762 | 6,821 | 59 | 0.9% |
| Members' Other Costs | 108 | 144 | 36 | 25.0% |
| Members' Travel | 282 | 300 | 18 | 6.0% |
| Constituency Costs (incl. staff) | 9,182 | 10,416 | 1,234 | 11.8% |
| Party Allowance | 690 | 718 | 28 | 3.9% |
| Depreciation & Impairment | 3,203 | 3,209 | 6 | 0.2% |
| Total Resource DEL | 45,049 | 46,954 | 1,905 | 4.1% |
| AME – Members' Pension Finance Costs | 1,800 | 1,900 | 100 | 5.3% |
| AME – Provisions Other | 103 | - | (103) | 0.0% |
| Notional Costs – Audit Fee | 57 | 57 | - | 0.0% |
| Net Resources | 47,009 | 48,911 | 1,902 | 3.9% |
| | | | | |
| Capital | 396 | 478 | 82 | 17.2% |

Further analysis is provided for items where the variation between the Outturn and the SSE position is greater than ±£0.250 million or the percentage difference is greater than ±6.00%.

The Assembly Commission receives income from a limited number of sources. While it is primarily received from the Executive Departments for the reimbursement of ministerial salary costs, it is also generated from the reimbursement of salary costs for seconded staff or from the hire of Parliament Buildings for hosting events. Substantially all of the shortfall in 2021-22 was due to a lower than expected recoupment of ministerial salaries, as the posts of First Minister and deputy First Minister became vacant after the SSE had been completed.

For Staff Salaries, the SSE position was submitted in late November 2021 in the expectation that further progress could be made to deliver the Assembly Commission's programme of planned recruitment to fill vacant posts. However, the recruitment of some posts was paused to await the outcome of the ongoing grading and pay benchmarking exercise and this combined with the heavier than anticipated legislative programme meant that the recruitment activity in the last quarter of the year was not as high as anticipated. The SSE had also assumed that the grading and pay benchmarking exercise would be complete and partially implemented by the end of the year. However, this is ongoing, which has resulted in an underspend of £0.483 million (2.4% of the SSE position).

Financial support to Members is provided under the provisions of the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 as amended by the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020.

Under the provisions of the Determination Members may seek reimbursement for costs associated with winding up their Assembly business if they cease to be Members. They are also entitled to apply for an Ill-Health Retirement Allowance if they are forced to resign during a mandate on the grounds of ill-health. These costs are recorded as "Members' Other Costs". An underspend of £0.036million (25% of the SSE position) arose, as it is difficult to predict the number of ill-health retirements each year.

The most significant underspend arose in respect of Constituency Costs (incl. staff). This category of costs includes the range of allowances payable to Members to run constituency offices and employ staff. The amending Determination published in August 2020 by the Assembly Commission enabled Members to engage additional staffing support. However, as the Assembly election approached and due to the continuing impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of constituency office services, Members remained cautious about engaging additional staff and therefore did not fully utilise this allowance. In addition, the closure and subsequent cautious re-opening of Members' constituency offices meant that a significant underspend of £1.234 million (11.8%) arose.

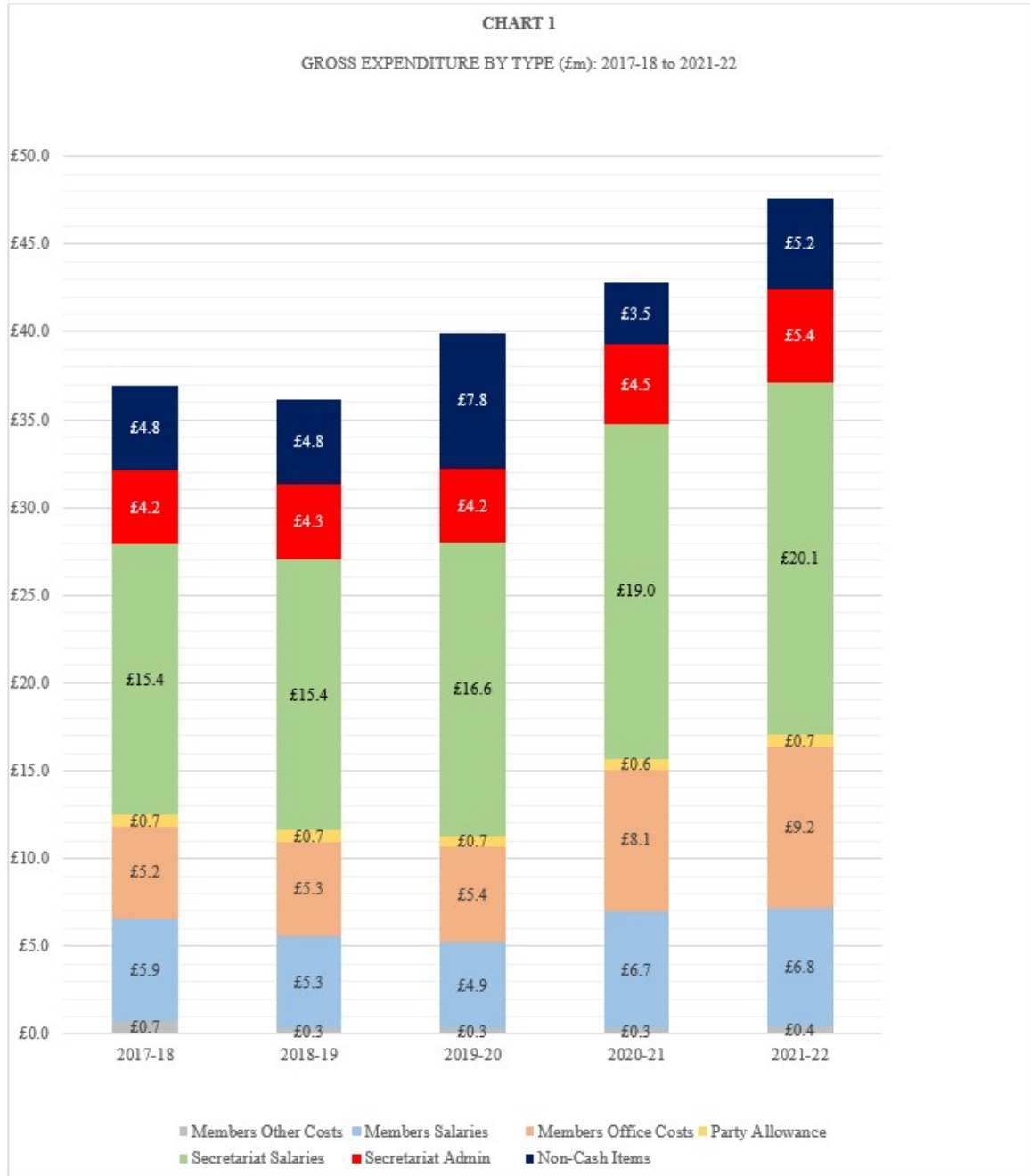
Capital expenditure shows a net outturn of £0.396 million, which is an underspend of £0.082 million (17.2%). This underspend is attributable to a number of factors. Two projects that were completed during the year were under budget. This released funds, which were then utilised to fund the purchase of IT equipment, to support the continuing hybrid working arrangements for staff. A further underspend arose, as costs associated with a software replacement project were re-categorised from Capital to Admin. This followed the publication of guidance from the IFRS Interpretation Committee (IFRIC) in relation to costs associated with purchasing software as a service, instead of hosted solutions.

Trend data

Chart 1 overleaf shows the Assembly Commission’s gross expenditure for the past five years, split against the relevant expenditure categories. This 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.

The chart highlights the impact of the ongoing recruitment activity as the Assembly Commission seeks to ensure that Assembly is provided with and supported by the appropriate level of staff. It also shows the emerging impact of the additional support available to Members through the amendment to the Determination in 2020.

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 4 to the Accounts.

Reconciliation of resource expenditure between Estimates, Accounts and Budgets

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Net Resource Outturn (Estimates) | 47,009 | 42,621 |
| 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 | (99) | (50) |
| 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) | 46,910 | 42,571 |
| Adjustments to remove: | | |
| Voted expenditure outside the budget | (57) | (53) |
| Adjustments to additionally include: | | |
| Other Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts | - | - |
| Resource Budget Outturn (Budget) | 46,853 | 42,518 |
| of which | | |
| Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) | 44,950 | 42,110 |
| Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) | 1,903 | 408 |

Policy on payment of suppliers

The Assembly 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 2021-22 the Assembly Commission paid 98.2% of bills, without queries, within this standard (2020-21; 97.7%).

In addition to this, the Assembly Commission has sought to comply with DoF's initiative to pay all supplier invoices within a suggested target of 10 days. During 2021-22, 90.8% of invoices were paid within 10 days of being received (2020-21; 91.5%).

The Assembly Commission made no payment of interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988 during the year ended 31 March 2022.

Sustainability Report

The Assembly Commission has a long-standing commitment to being an exemplar organisation in respect of Sustainable Development and as such has a dedicated Sustainable Development Office (SDO), which continues to seek to embed responsible business practices throughout the Assembly Commission.

The Assembly Commission's Environmental Policy sets out their aspirations to operate in a sustainable manner.

The key responsibilities of the SDO include:

- Implementing the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 its supply chain.

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 2021 was D, which is very good for a building of its age and nature. This achievement is due, mainly to building energy monitoring controls being in place and the installation of some relevant renewables.

Business in the Community Northern Ireland (BiTCNI) is a leading authority on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development throughout the UK and Ireland. The Human Resources Office (HR 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.

Each year, the Assembly Commission participates in the BiTCNI Environmental Benchmarking Survey. The Assembly Commission received the Gold standard in 2021.

The Assembly Commission continued with Silver Status Career Membership of BiTCNI. This ensured that staff could participate in four specific environmental challenges (such as a beach clean) throughout the year as well as general volunteering days. As the events for 2021-22 were outside activities, the number of opportunities offered to staff during 2021-

22 were not significantly impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The ongoing use of established waste recycling streams, including compostable packaging, and encouraging staff to bring their own thermal mugs, have proved to be successful in helping to improve recycling efforts. The Assembly Commission is pleased to report that by continuing to use a DoF recycling contract no waste is currently being sent to landfill.

The Assembly Commission continues to promote sustainable travel initiatives aimed at encouraging staff to avail of more sustainable modes of transport to travel to and from work. Two additional charging points for electric vehicles (EVs) have been installed, bringing the total to six.

The ‘Cycle to Work’ scheme continues to be available to all eligible staff and Members, allowing them to purchase bicycles and safety equipment in a tax efficient manner for travelling to work.

The Assembly 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 relevant public and private organisations.

All of the Assembly 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/>

Improvements have been made in terms of the Assembly Commission’s carbon footprint with the reduction in business travel and with staff working from home, where possible, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social, Community and Human Rights Issues

The Assembly Commission is committed to social responsibility, which is demonstrated by establishing a range of fair and equitable corporate reward and recognition policies. In particular, the Assembly Commission recognises the importance of sustainable salaries

for its staff. In this regard, all members of staff employed by the Assembly Commission are paid remuneration that exceeds the *living wage*¹ of £9.90 per hour.

The on-going COVID-19 public health situation meant that Parliament Buildings was closed to visitors until July 2021 and no physical in-person events were held. Instead, a range of engagement activities were delivered remotely, to increase awareness and understanding of the Assembly and the wider democratic process.

The activities sought to engage with the community, and included the education programme for schools and young people, as well as a number of other engagement and outreach activities. After July 2021, in-person events and activities were gradually reintroduced, in line with public health guidelines and regulations, however a number of services continued to be delivered remotely. Public tours recommenced at the end of March 2022.

In particular, the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly was established in June 2021 after a recruitment process based on enhanced random selection. A total of 90 members aged between 13 and 17 were appointed and the Youth Assembly met on three occasions up to the end of 2021-22. In addition, the Youth Assembly has established four subject committees covering Education, Health, Environment, and Rights and Equality, and a Business Committee that helps to plan and prioritise the Youth Assembly's work. Youth Assembly members also participated in youth consultations in partnership with third parties, including Government Departments.

The Assembly 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:

- 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 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 facilities.

¹ As calculated by the Living Wage Foundation – <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/calculation>

Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Issues

The Assembly Commission requires 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 Assembly Commission recognises there is a continuing need to raise staff awareness of their responsibility with regard to these matters.

The Assembly Commission has a Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy. This policy seeks to provide a clear and coherent framework for 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.

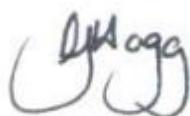
The Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy and response plan are reviewed at on a biennial basis to ensure they continue to represent best practice and reflect all appropriate legislative changes. The next review is due to be undertaken in Autumn 2022.

No incidents of suspected fraud were reported under the response plan during 2021-22.

The Assembly Commission also participates in the biennial National Fraud Initiative (NFI), which is a 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 2020. All matches investigated were genuine and no further action was required.

A number of additional self-assessments are undertaken biennially to consider the risks associated with fraud, bribery, corruption, risk management and cyber security. These include a Fraud and Bribery Self-Assessment, Risk Management Self-Assessment and a Cyber Security and Information Security Self-Assessment. Action plans from these self-assessments are monitored quarterly and presented to the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC). The last self-assessments took place during autumn 2021.

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 21 July 2022

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Corporate Governance Report

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

Directors’ Report

The Assembly Commission and the Accounting Officer

The statutory basis for the Assembly Commission is provided in the Performance Report - Performance Overview starting at page 4.

The Speaker is chairperson of the Assembly Commission and it is comprised of five other Members of the Assembly. The membership of the Assembly Commission and the percentage attendance at meetings is given below:

Membership of Assembly Commission (Seven meetings held):

| Role | Name | Percentage of Meetings attended |
|-------------|---|--|
| Chairperson | Alex Maskey MLA | 86% |
| Member | John O’Dowd MLA | 100% |
| Member | Dolores Kelly MLA | 100% |
| Member | Robbie Butler MLA | 100% |
| Member | John Blair MLA | 100% |
| Member | Trevor Clarke MLA <i>(appointed to the Assembly Commission with effect from 21 June 2021, to replace Keith Buchanan)</i> | 100% <i>(for the period from 21 June 2021 to 31 March 2022)</i> |
| Member | Keith Buchanan MLA <i>(resigned from the Assembly Commission with effect from 15 June 2021)</i> | 100% <i>(for the period from 1 April 2021 to 15 June 2021)</i> |

The work of the Assembly Commission is detailed in the Governance Statement on pages 44 to 53.

As Clerk to the Assembly, Lesley Hogg is the principal adviser to the Assembly. As well as advising the Speaker and office holders on parliamentary procedure, and the Assembly Commission on corporate matters, she is Chief Executive of the Assembly Commission and Accounting Officer for the Assembly Commission’s resources.

The Management Structure

The Assembly Commission has a two-tier management structure, comprising the Assembly Commission and SMG. Assembly Commission members are appointed by the Assembly from its membership. While the Assembly Commission has the legislative authority to provide the Assembly with the wide range of services needed by it, 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 B at page 117.

The work of all Assembly Commission staff 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. A copy of the organisational chart has been included in Annex A at page 116 for ease of reference.

SMG has responsibility for the delivery of the work of the Assembly Commission. This includes responsibility for ensuring effective corporate governance and ensuring that staff are equipped to fulfil their 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 (Nine meetings held):

| Role | Name | Percentage of Meetings attended |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Clerk/Chief Executive | Lesley Hogg | 100% |
| Director of Corporate Services | Richard Stewart | 100% |
| Director of Legal Governance and Research Services | Tara Caul | 100% |
| Director of Parliamentary Services | Gareth McGrath | 100% |

The Remuneration and Staff Report within this Annual Report and Accounts contains information about the salary and pension entitlements of Assembly Commission members 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 the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors are held on a continuing basis.

Register of interests

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 Assembly mandate was established. This Register is continuously updated. A new Register is being established and will be published following the Assembly election in May 2022. 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 updated as necessary by SMG members and reviewed formally on an annual basis. The last review was undertaken in March 2022. 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 54 to 72 provide details of the pensions liabilities of the Assembly Commission.

Auditors

The Assembly Commission's financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, whose certificate and report appears at page 81 of the Accounts. The notional cost of the work performed by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) for 2021-22 was £57,000 (Assembly Commission audit, £48,000 and Assembly Members' Pension Scheme audit, £9,000) (2020-21; £53,500 (Assembly Commission audit, £45,000 and Assembly Members' Pension Scheme, £8,500)) and related solely to audit services.

The Assembly 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 2021-22 was £Nil (2020-21; £2,499).

Disclosure to Auditors

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Assembly 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 Assembly Commission's auditors are aware of that information.

Personal Data Related Incidents

During 2021-22, the Assembly Commission reported three personal data incidents to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO has decided not to take any further action in these cases (2020-21; none).

Communication with staff

Following a robust consultation process in 2021 the Internal Communications Strategy was published on 7 February 2022.

Four themes, resulting from the consultation, underpin this new strategy. They are:

- Listening to your views;
- Understanding how we communicate;
- Improving our communications channels and platform; and
- Developing meaningful and authentic content.

The aim of the Strategy is to link communication activity to Assembly Commission-wide activities, initiatives and projects to develop an engaged workforce who will meet the opportunities and challenges of the organisation.

Regular communication with staff continued to take place throughout the year and in particular as part of the Assembly Commission's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This communication sought to keep staff fully aware of changes to regulations and guidance, and to keep them informed about the measures and precautions that were in place in Parliament Buildings in relation to infection-control.

In addition, the Internal Communications Group continued to provide advice and guidance on internal communications matters. A staff survey, launched on 7 February 2022, achieved a 69.5% staff response rate. Work will now be undertaken to collate the responses and report to SMG any issues arising, so that an appropriate action plan can be established.

The Assembly Commission's HR Office continued to advise staff on wellbeing issues.

A newly appointed permanent Internal Communications Officer took up post on 1 April 2022.

Charitable donations

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

Complaints

The Assembly Commission has an established Complaints Policy and Procedure and welcomes feedback from the public. The Assembly Commission uses this feedback to help improve the services that it provides. It 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 Policy and Procedure covers complaints from members of the public relating to the delivery of services in Parliament Buildings. The Complaints Policy and

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Procedure does not cover complaints from members of staff relating to their employment, or from contractors providing services to the Assembly Commission. Separate procedures are available in both cases.

Full details of the Assembly Commission's Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found at:

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

Under the Complaints Policy and Procedure, a complainant can contact the Assembly 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 complaints register is held by the Assembly Commission and appropriate details relating to the detail of each complaint are held on this register. During 2021-22, the Assembly Commission received one complaint, which was not upheld (2020-21; two complaints, of which one was upheld). The complaint did not have an impact on the policies and procedures of the Assembly 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 (Northern Ireland) 2001, DoF has directed the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 me as Accounting Officer for the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly Commission complies with all relevant requirements of the “*Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI)*” which was issued by the then Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) (now Department of Finance (DoF) in April 2013.

The Assembly Commission has a two-tier management structure comprising the Assembly Commission and Secretariat Management Group (SMG). It is the corporate body, which, under section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, has the statutory authority to provide the Assembly with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly’s purposes. It is chaired by the Speaker and five other Members are appointed 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 the SMG are robust. These delegations offer clarification on the roles and responsibilities of the Assembly Commission, the Accounting Officer and Directors.

While the details of the structure and statutory authority of the Assembly Commission are provided, for the purposes of this statement, the corporate governance arrangements, including the requirement to review effectiveness, has been applied to SMG, which is charged with the delivery of services on behalf of the Assembly Commission. The members of SMG are not deemed to be Non-Executive members.

The Corporate Governance Role of the Assembly Commission

When the Assembly is in session, the Assembly Commission customarily meets monthly. I attend the meetings with Directors, 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 Assembly Commission members in the absence of officials.

It is the Assembly, through the annual Budget Act, that appropriates funds directly from the Consolidated Fund to the Assembly Commission.

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 Assembly Commission members' conflicts of interest. Therefore, this is a standing agenda item at each Assembly Commission meeting.

During 2021-22 the Assembly Commission met seven times.

The Corporate Governance Role of SMG

SMG is the top-level leadership and management team within the Assembly Commission. 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 staff.

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 38.

SMG advises the Assembly 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 appropriate management systems are in place and 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 Assembly Commission. The Assembly Commission has retained responsibility for matters relating to the appointment, terms and conditions and remuneration of Directors. 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 published Minutes of each meeting.

Administrative support for SMG and the Assembly Commission is provided by the Clerk/Chief Executive's Office. Formal processes exist for providing information to SMG and the Assembly Commission, to ensure it is provided in a timely manner, to an agreed standard and in a concise format. A clearly defined approval process has also been established for the presentation of papers, with Director approval of papers prior to submission to me. This 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/tax, 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 Assembly Commission is reviewed regularly and updated, to ensure it continues to represent the information needs of SMG and the Assembly Commission.

SMG undertakes an annual self-assessment of its effectiveness. The last assessment was carried out by SMG in June 2021 and the next one is planned for June 2022. Any issues arising from the self-assessment or, through the governance arrangements and business planning processes, are discussed by SMG. An action plan is devised to address the issues as appropriate.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Assembly Commission has identified 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 Assembly Commission established SARC to support me in my role as Accounting Officer and to support the Assembly Commission and SMG in their 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. In addition, SARC reviews the Assembly Commission's Annual Report and Resource Accounts, including the Governance Statement.

SARC meets on a quarterly basis to monitor progress on all of these matters.

SARC comprises two independent Non-Executive members, one of whom chairs the Committee, and an Assembly Commission member. The new Chairperson, Edward Lord OBE JP was appointed in December 2021 and the new Independent Member, Maurice Keady was appointed in May 2022. The presence of an independent chairperson and independent member continues to provide a robust challenge to the corporate governance regime within the Assembly Commission.

The membership of SARC and the percentage of meetings attended is given in the table

below.

Membership of SARC (Four meetings held):

| Role | Name | Percentage of Meetings attended |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Independent Chairperson (From 10 December 2021) | Edward Lord OBE JP | 100% (for the period from 10 December 2021) |
| Independent Chairperson (Until 30 November 2021) | James Brooks | 100% (for the period from 01 April 2021 to 30 November 2021) |
| Independent Member (Until 30 November 2021) | Derek Martin | 100% (for the period from 01 April 2021 to 30 November 2021) |
| Assembly Commission Member | John O’Dowd MLA | 100% |

SARC’s Terms of Reference provide for another Assembly 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 Assembly Commission’s Internal Audit Unit 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.

A three-year Internal Audit Strategy covering the three financial years from 2020-21 to 2022-23 was agreed by SMG in April 2020. The Internal Audit Strategy enhances the strategic focus of Internal Audit coverage while continuing to provide assurance over routine business activity. By dedicating audit resources to priority areas, while ensuring

cyclical coverage of business areas, systems and processes, enhanced assurance can be provided to the Clerk/Chief Executive, SMG and SARC on the framework of risk management, internal control and corporate governance.

The Internal Audit Strategy included a three-year Strategic Plan which is augmented by individual annual plans. The 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan was informed by the methodology set out in the Internal Audit Strategy, including reviews of the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, the Corporate Plan, previous audit coverage, and detailed discussions with the Accounting Officer and Directors.

Progress against the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan was monitored throughout the year and performance reported to SMG and SARC. In-year revisions to the plan were agreed by the Accounting Officer and presented to SARC. Detailed reports on the findings from individual audits, together with associated recommendations for control enhancement, were prepared and presented to senior managers and SARC for consideration.

The audits completed comprised areas from each Directorate of the Assembly Commission. 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 quarterly with progress on each recommendation formally reported to SARC.

In 2021-22, thirteen final reports were issued. Eight reviews resulted in substantial assurance, and five in satisfactory assurance. All of the recommendations made during the year were accepted by management and follow-up activity has further contributed to the assurance provided. Of the eight follow-up reports issued, six resulted in substantial assurance and two in satisfactory assurance.

Last year's Governance Statement outlined the limited assurance provided by Internal Audit's Review of Broadcasting Infrastructure, relating to the risk associated with the resilience of broadcasting infrastructure. A follow-up review has been carried out, which concluded that the measures implemented by management have improved resilience sufficiently to enable the provision of satisfactory assurance over this area.

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 2021-22.

Internal Audit is subject to an external assessment of how it conforms with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The last assessment was carried out in June 2021 and the recommendations included in the report have been added to the Internal Audit Continuous Improvement Plan. Any issues or recommendations arising from this report are routinely discussed by SARC.

External Audit

The Comptroller and Auditor General is responsible for auditing the Assembly Commission's Annual Reports and Resource Accounts, and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) undertakes the statutory audit of the Assembly Commission on his behalf.

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The purpose of the external audit is to form an opinion on the truth, fairness and regularity of figures reported and disclosed in the accounts.

Further assurance on the effectiveness of the system of internal control is received by the work of the NIAO, through its Report to Those Charged with Governance and the certification of, and report on, the Annual Reports and Resource Accounts. The Report to Those Charged with Governance 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 both internal and external audit recommendations is monitored quarterly and reported to SARC.

Members' Expenses

Financial support to Members continues to be provided under the terms of the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 as amended by the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020, (the Determination).

Full details of all Determinations can be found on the Assembly's website:

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

Payments made to Members under the provisions of the Determination are subject to regular reviews for compliance, either by the on-going compliance testing carried out by the Assembly Commission's 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 Determination.

In the year of an Assembly election, Members are provided with detailed election planning guidance. This guidance assists Members following dissolution of the Assembly and seeks to remind Members of the purpose of financial support. Members are reminded that all resources are provided to assist them in carrying out their functions as Members and that no party political activities are covered by the provisions. Any issues of non-compliance which arise during this specific period are also dealt with in accordance with the processes prescribed in the Determination.

Similar principles are also applied to payments made to political parties under the Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2016, which are also reviewed by an independent external auditor each year.

Strategic Planning and Performance Management

Details of performance against the Strategic Aims and targets set in the Annual Plan 2021-22 are summarised in the Performance Analysis section of the Performance Report commencing at page 10.

Internal Control Environment

Systems of internal control are designed to continuously identify and prioritise the principal risks to the achievement of the Assembly 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 throughout the period. Risks and internal controls are reviewed routinely by management and are tested as part of the ongoing Internal Audit programme.

Personal Data Related Incidents

During 2021-22, the Assembly Commission reported three personal data incidents to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO decided not to take any further action in these cases (2020-21; none).

Risk Management

The Assembly 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 Assembly Commission during the reporting period. The Risk Management Strategy includes a detailed analysis of risk appetite and defines the Assembly Commission's approach to risk management. The Strategy is reviewed biennially by SMG to ensure that it remains adequate and appropriate. However, when any new or revised risk management guidance is published, which affects the Strategy, it is considered by SMG by exception. It is next due for review in April 2023.

The Risk Management Strategy notes that risk management is not a process for avoiding risk, but instead acts 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 audits delivered by Internal Audit 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 Assembly Commission. It is reviewed and approved by SMG on a quarterly basis. As at the reporting date, three corporate risks were identified.

These are:

1. *Major Incident / Breakdown / Security Incident / Pandemic;*

2. *Major errors or omissions in equality, governance or regulatory requirements; and*
3. *Shortage of staff, skills and knowledge and / or staff engagement.*

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.

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 Data Protection and Governance Officer.

Assurance Stewardship Statements are prepared every six months by each Director. The Statements are submitted to me 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 2021 and the end of March 2022. All Directors confirmed that they were satisfied that controls were in place and that these controls were appropriate.

A number of additional self-assessments are undertaken biennially to consider the risks associated with fraud, bribery, corruption, risk management and cyber security. These include a Fraud and Bribery Self-Assessment, Risk Management Self-Assessment and a Cyber Security and Information Security Self-Assessment. Action plans from these self-assessments are monitored quarterly and presented to SARC. The last self-assessments took place during autumn 2021.

Anti-fraud and Anti-Bribery Issues

The Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy and associated Response Plan are reviewed on a biennial basis. The next formal review will be undertaken in autumn 2022 to ensure that they continue to represent best practice and reflect all appropriate legislative changes.

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

The Assembly Commission also participates in the biennial National Fraud Initiative exercise, which is a data matching exercise to compare data from across a range of public sector organisations to identify potentially fraudulent claims. The matching exercise involves comparing data sets, such as payroll, creditors, pension, or benefit records of a body, against other records held by the same or other bodies. This allows potentially fraudulent claims or payments to be identified. Where no match is found, the data matching process will have no material impact on the reporting body, however where a match is found it indicates that there may be an inconsistency which may require further investigation.

The last exercise was undertaken during October 2020. The Assembly Commission reported 349 matches across all of the datasets uploaded. Using the agreed processes for investigating matches, no issues were identified as requiring further investigation therefore, the exercise is now closed. The next exercise will take place in October 2022.

Budget Position and Authority

The Assembly passed the Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 in March 2022 which authorised the cash and use of resources for all departments for the 2021-22 year, based on the Executive's final expenditure plans for the year. The Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 also included a Vote on Account which authorised departments' access to cash and use of resources for the early months of the 2022-23 financial year. The cash and resource balance to complete for the remainder of 2022-23 will be authorised by the 2022-23 Main Estimates and the associated Budget Bill based on an agreed 2022-23 Budget. In the event that this is delayed, then the powers available to the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance under Section 59 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 7 of the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 will be used to authorise the cash, and the use of resources during the intervening period.

General

Over the last year, the on-going COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have an impact on staff recruitment plans, work practices and parliamentary procedures as the Assembly Commission operated to support the work of the Assembly, as it approached dissolution on 28 March 2022. While many restrictions were lifted in July 2021, it is taking some time to see activities return to pre-pandemic levels.

Work continues to develop and embed efficient working practices that will see the Assembly Commission avail of many of the innovative technologies emerging as a result of the pandemic.

Work is also continuing with the ongoing staff recruitment programme which is required to fill the remaining vacancies across the organisation. This will ensure that the Assembly Commission is best placed to continue to deliver the high-quality of service to the Assembly as it commences the new mandate, following the Assembly election.

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

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issued by the then DFP under DAO (DFP) 06/13. While recognising the fact that the Assembly 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:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Hogg', written in a cursive style.

Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 21 July 2022

Remuneration and Staff Report

The purpose of the Remuneration and Staff report is to set out the Assembly 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 Assembly 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

Assembly Commission Members

The salaries and pensions of all Members (including those Members elected to serve as members of the Assembly Commission) during 2021-22, 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.

Non-Executive Directors

The Assembly 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 an Assembly Commission Member. The Non-Executive members are paid a daily rate as established and reviewed by the Assembly Commission. The Assembly 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 the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly’s purposes*”. The Assembly Commission has the legal authority to appoint the staff and to set the remuneration of staff.

The pay award for all staff including its senior managers is normally based on an incremental uplift on all pay scales. A one year pay award was made from 1 August 2021 which included the following distinct elements:

- a 2% consolidated pay increase on all pay scales; and
- a one-step progression for staff who were not at the maximum point of their pay scale at 1 August 2021 and whose performance met the required standard.

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Service Contracts

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 Assembly Commission’s staff policies and procedures.

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

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Assembly Commission, the most senior officials and the Non-Executive members of SARC.

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

| Single total figure of remuneration | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|---|---------|-----------------------------|---------|
| Assembly Commission Members | Salary £ | | Benefits in kind (to nearest £100) | | Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000) | | Total (to nearest £1000) | |
| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
| Alex Maskey MLA | 38,000 | 38,000 | - | - | 9,000 | 12,000 | 47,000 | 50,000 |
| John O’Dowd MLA | 6,000 | 6,000 | - | - | 1,000 | 2,000 | 7,000 | 8,000 |
| Dolores Kelly MLA | 6,000 | 6,000 | - | - | 1,000 | 2,000 | 7,000 | 8,000 |
| Robert Butler MLA | 6,000 | 6,000 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 |
| John Blair MLA | 6,000 | 6,000 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 |
| Trevor Clarke MLA (from 21 June 2021) | 4,667 | - | - | - | 1,000 | - | 6,000 | - |
| Keith Buchanan MLA (until 15 June 2021) | 1,250 | 6,000 | - | - | - | 2,000 | 1,000 | 8,000 |

*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 Assembly Commission Members in respect of their position as officeholders.

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Remuneration SARC Members (audited)

| Single total figure of remuneration | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|-------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| SARC | Fees | | Benefits in kind | | Total | |
| | £ | | (to nearest £100) | | (to nearest £1000) | |
| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
| Edward Lord – Chairperson (from 10 December 2021) | 826 | - | - | - | 1,000 | - |
| James Brooks – Chairperson (until 30 November 2021) | 3,717 | 1,640 | - | - | 4,000 | 2,000 |
| Derek Martin – Independent Member (until 30 November 2021) | 1,735 | 1,560 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 |

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

| Single total figure of remuneration | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|-------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| payOfficials | Salary | | Benefits in kind | | Pension Benefits* | | Total | |
| | £'000 | | (to nearest £100) | | (to nearest £1000) | | £'000 | |
| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
| Lesley Hogg Clerk/Chief Executive | 140-145 | 135-140 | - | - | 58,000 | 59,000 | 200-205 | 195-200 |
| Gareth McGrath Director of Parliamentary Services | 95-100 | 90-95 | - | - | 41,000 | 42,000 | 135-140 | 135-140 |
| Richard Stewart Director of Corporate Services | 95-100 | 90-95 | - | - | 48,000 | 56,000 | 140-145 | 150-155 |
| Tara Caul Director of Legal, Governance & Research Services | 95-100 | 90-95 | - | - | 38,000 | 27,000 | 130-135 | 120-125 |

*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.

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 lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation’s workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid Director in the Assembly Commission in the financial year 2021-22 was £140,000 - £145,000 (2020-21; £135,000 - £140,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation’s workforce is disclosed below.

| 2021-22 | 25th percentile | Median | 75th percentile |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| Total remuneration | £30,886 | £37,925 | £48,273 |
| Pay ratio | 4.61 | 3.76 | 2.95 |

| 2020-21 | 25th percentile | Median | 75th percentile |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| Total remuneration | £30,280 | £33,665 | £47,326 |
| Pay ratio | 4.50 | 4.08 | 2.91 |

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

The values for the salary component of remuneration for the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile were £30,886, £37,295 and £48,273 respectively.

In 2021-22, no (2020-21; 0) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £19,459 to £142,500 (2020-21; £16,000 to £137,500).

The percentage changes in respect of the Assembly Commission are shown in the following table. It should be noted that the calculation for the highest paid director is based on the mid-point of the band within which their remuneration fell each year. The reason for the percentage increase in the average employee salary is mostly due to the average employee now being of a higher grade than last year.

| Percentage change for: | 2021-22 v 2020-21 |
|--|-------------------|
| Average employee salary and allowances | 2.5% |
| Highest paid director’s salary and allowances | 3.6% |

No performance pay or bonuses were payable to staff in these years.

Salary

‘Salary’ for Assembly Commission staff includes gross salary, overtime, any other

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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 Assembly Commission and thus recorded in these accounts. In respect of Members of the Assembly Commission (including the Speaker), ‘salary’ represents the *additional* salary payable for being a Member of the Assembly Commission or the Speaker, over and above the salary payable as a Member.

The 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. It sets out the total salary payable to Members generally and for each officeholder.

The additional amount paid for holding the office of Assembly Commission Member was £6,000 (2020-21; £6,000). For the Speaker, the additional amount paid for holding office was £38,000 (2020-21; £38,000). The salary figures reported here do not include the salary for a Member generally of £51,000 (2020-21; £51,000).

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 31/03/22 | Real increase/(decrease) in pension at age 65 | CETV at 31/03/22 (or end date) | CETV at 31/03/21 (or start date)* | Real increase in CETV |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Alex Maskey MLA | 0-5 | 0-2.5 | 57 | 45 | 8 |
| John O’Dowd MLA | 0-5 | (0-2.5) | 81 | 77 | (1) |
| Dolores Kelly MLA | 0-5 | 0-2.5 | 19 | 17 | 1 |
| Robert Butler MLA | 0-5 | 0-2.5 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| John Blair MLA | 0-5 | 0-2.5 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Trevor Clarke MLA (from 21 June 2021) | 0-5 | 0-2.5 | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| Keith Buchanan MLA (until 15 June 2021) | 0-5 | 0-2.5 | 2 | 2 | - |

**The calculation of the starting pension for the 2021-22 CETV was based on the pensionable salary used in the 2021-22 annual benefit statement and may therefore be greater or lower than the closing pension for the 31 March 2021 CETV*

Assembly Commission pensions

Pension benefits for Assembly Commission members are provided by the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016. In 2011, the Assembly passed the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 establishing an Independent Financial Review Panel (IFRP) to make determinations in relation to the salaries, allowances and pensions payable to Members of the Assembly. The tenure of the first panel ended in July 2016. As a consequence of the Assembly Commission's desire to consider a reform of the Panel and the political situation between March 2017 and January 2020, a new Panel was not appointed. Legislation to reform the panel, although started, was not completed before the dissolution of the Assembly on 28 March 2022, therefore, the legislation and appointment of the Panel will be taken forward during the next mandate.

In April 2016, IFRP issued the Assembly Members (Pensions) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 which introduced a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme for new and existing members. The scheme is named the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2016 (AMPS).

Assembly Members aged 55 or over on 1 April 2015 and in continuous service between 1 April 2015 and 6 May 2016 retained their Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. The McCloud judgement found that the transitional protection offered to members of the Judiciary and Firefighters Schemes when their schemes were reformed was discriminatory on grounds of age. In light of this decision, the Government has agreed to provide remedy to eligible members across the main public sector schemes. This judgement could have an impact on Members who missed out on the Transitional Protection policy in the AMPS because of their age. However the applicability of, and approach to, the McCloud judgement in relation to this scheme is not a matter for the Assembly Commission, instead it is a matter for IFRP. Therefore, this matter will be given further consideration once a new panel is appointed.

As Assembly Commission Members are Members of the Legislative Assembly, they also accrue a Member's pension under AMPS (details of which are not included in this report). Pension benefits for Assembly Commission members under transitional protection arrangements are provided on a "contribution factor" basis, which takes account of service as an Assembly Commission member. The contribution factor is the relationship between salary as an Assembly Commission member and salary as a Member for each year of service as a Commission member. Pension benefits as an Assembly 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 Assembly 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). Up to the 6 May 2021 those Assembly Commission Members under the transitional protection arrangements paid contributions of either 9% or 12.5% of their Assembly Commission member salary, depending on the accrual rate. The contribution paid by Assembly Commission members in the CARE scheme pay 9% of the officeholder's salary. There is also an employer's

contribution paid by the Consolidated Fund out of money appropriated by Act of Assembly for that purpose representing the balance of cost. Following the publication of the triennial valuation of the AMPS by the Government Actuary's Department, this was increased from 14.4% to 17.1% of officeholder salary, effective from 1 April 2021.

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the Assembly Commission member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age for their section of the scheme. Officeholders under transitional protection arrangements may retire at age 65. Officeholders in the CARE scheme have a pension age aligned to their State Pension Age.

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 office holder service, not just their current appointment as an officeholder.

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 Commission's contributions to AMPS, and excludes increases due to inflation and contributions paid by the Assembly Commission member. It is calculated using valuation factors for the start and end of the year.

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Pension Benefits for Assembly Commission Staff (audited)

| Officials | Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/22 and related lump sum | Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age | CETV at 31/03/22 | CETV at 31/03/21 | Real increase in CETV | Employer contribution to partnership pension account |
|---|--|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | Nearest £100 |
| Lesley Hogg Clerk/Chief Executive | 25-30 | 2.5-5 | 375 | 321 | 32 | - |
| Gareth McGrath Director of Parliamentary Services | 35-40 | 2.5-5 | 544 | 491 | 21 | - |
| Richard Stewart Director of Corporate Services | 45-50 (plus a lump sum of 100-105) | 2.5-5 (plus a lump sum of 0-2.5) | 938 | 856 | 32 | - |
| Tara Caul Director of Legal, Governance & Research Services | 20-25 | 0-2.5 | 313 | 278 | 21 | - |

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 initially 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 (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date.

At that time, members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age did not move to alpha (full protection) 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 (tapered protection).

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, the discrimination identified by the Courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced must be removed by the Department of Finance. It is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period. The different pension benefits relate to the alternative schemes e.g. legacy PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' (legacy scheme) or alpha. Scheme regulations made in March 2022, closed the PCSPS(NI) to future accrual from 31 March 2022, and all remaining active PCSPS(NI) members (including partially retired members in active service) moved to 'alpha' from 1 April 2022. This completes Phase One to

remedy the discrimination identified by the Courts. Any pension benefits built up in the legacy scheme prior to this date are unaffected and PSCPS(NI) benefits remain payable in accordance with the relevant scheme rules. Phase Two will see the implementation of the Deferred Choice Underpin. That is, giving eligible members a choice between legacy scheme and alpha scheme benefits for service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. At this stage, allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which are available at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-resource-accounts>.

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%.

Currently, 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 who joined on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the legacy PCSPS(NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based ‘final salary’ legacy defined benefit arrangements (Classic, Premium and Classic Plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under these arrangements have been reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants who joined on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 will have chosen between membership of premium or joining the Partnership Pension Account.

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).

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. 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. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is

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linked to the member’s State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy Classic, Premium, and Classic Plus arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in Nuvos. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni.

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 2021 was 3.1% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2022.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 are as follows:

| Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) | | Contribution rates – All members |
|---|-------------|---|
| From | To | From 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 |
| £0 | £24,449.99 | 4.60% |
| £24,450.00 | £56,399.99 | 5.45% |
| £56,400.00 | £153,299.99 | 7.35% |
| £153,300.00 and above | | 8.05% |

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

The following section is subject to audit

Average number of persons employed

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

| Objective | Permanently employed staff | Agency, Temporary and Inward Secondees | Members | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| | | | | Number | Number |
| 1 | 323 | 44 | 90 | 457 | 427 |
| Total | 323 | 44 | 90 | 457 | 427 |

During 2021-22, an average of Nil members of staff (2020-21; Nil) were redeployed externally to other legislatures and public sector employers.

The Assembly Commission does not employ any staff exclusively for capital projects (2020-21; Nil).

The rate of staff turnover was 5.3% (2020-21; 3.1%).

Directors, Senior Managers and Employees (audited)

As at 31 March 2022, the number of permanent employed Directors, senior managers and employees split by gender was as follows:

| Role | Female | Male |
|---|------------|------------|
| Senior managers | 2 | 2 |
| Employees (not including senior managers) | 154 | 174 |
| Total | 156 | 176 |

The Assembly Commission 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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The following section is subject to audit

Staff costs comprise:

| | 2021-22 | | 2020-21 | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|---------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Permanently employed staff* | Agency, Temporary and Inward Seconded Staff | Members | Total |
| Wages and salaries | 12,880 | 1,818 | 5,221 | 19,919 |
| Social security costs | 1,401 | - | 661 | 2,062 |
| Other pension costs | 3,963 | - | 880 | 4,843 |
| Sub Total | 18,244 | 1,818 | 6,762 | 26,824 |
| Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments | (58) | - | - | (58) |
| Less recoveries in respect of Ministerial Salaries | (566) | - | - | (566) |
| Total net costs ** | 17,620 | 1,818 | 6,762 | 26,200 |
| | | | | 25,684 |
| | | | | 25,545 |

* There were no staff costs incurred in respect of Special Advisers in 2021-22 (2020-21; £Nil).

** Of the total, £Nil has been charged to capital (2020-21; £Nil).

All staff costs are charged to programme costs.

Temporary Staff

The Assembly Commission made payments of £1,540,248 (2020-21; £1,988,133) in relation to temporary workers during the year.

Pension Arrangements

The NICS main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Assembly Commission is unable to identify its share of underlying assets and liabilities.

The Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the benefits being provided. These valuations inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers every four years following the scheme valuation. The Act also provides for the establishment of an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of the pension schemes remain sustainable in future.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary 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 2023.

The 2016 Scheme Valuation requires adjustment as a result of the ‘McCloud remedy’. The Department of Finance also commissioned a consultation in relation to the Cost Cap element of Scheme Valuations which closed on 25 June 2021. The Cost Cap Mechanism (CCM) is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether member costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. By taking into account the increased value of public service pensions, as a result of the ‘McCloud remedy’, scheme cost control valuation outcomes will show greater costs than otherwise would have been expected. Following completion of the consultation process the 2016 Valuation has been completed and the final cost cap determined. Further information can be found on the Department of Finance website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations>.

A case for approval of a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) was laid in the Assembly to extend the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill (PSP&JO) to Northern Ireland. Under the LCM agreed by the Assembly on 1 November 2021 provisions are included in the Act for devolved schemes in NI. A second LCM was laid in the Assembly to implement the CCM changes in the Westminster Bill for devolved schemes. The second LCM, as agreed by the Assembly on 31 January 2022, ensured the reformed only scheme design and the economic check will now be applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The PSP&JO Act received Royal Assent on 10 March 2022. The UK Act legislates how the government will remove the discrimination identified in the McCloud judgment. The Act also includes provisions that employees will not experience any detriment if the adjusted valuation costs breach the set cost cap ceiling but any breaches of the cost cap floor (positive employee impacts) in the completed valuations will be honoured.

For 2021-22, employers’ contributions of £3,959,431 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2020-21; £3,642,144) at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers’ contributions of £3,604 (2020-21; £3,511) 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% (2020-21; 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 £129, 0.5% (2020-21; £115, 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.

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Pension benefits for Members are provided through AMPS. In 2016, IFRP 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. The transitional protection was effective up to 6 May 2021.

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

All 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 Commission and are managed by an Investment Manager. A full actuarial valuation was carried out for the period ending 31 March 2020 by GAD, with the final report being considered by the Trustees in October 2021 and laid before the Assembly.

For 2021-22, contributions of £0.9m (2020-21; £0.7m) were paid to AMPS. From 1 April 2021 contributions were at a rate of 17.1% (2020-21; 14.4%) of pensionable pay, as determined by GAD and advised by HM Treasury. Further disclosures can be found in Note 5 "Members' and Staff related Costs".

Ill Health Retirement – Staff

No members of staff (2020-21; one) retired early on ill-health grounds, with no enhancement; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2020-21; £Nil).

Ill Health Retirement – Members

During the year, two Members retired due to ill health (2020-21; Nil). Members retiring early through ill health are entitled to apply to the Assembly Commission to receive an ill health retirement allowance under the terms of the 2016 Determination (as amended). The total amount paid by way of ill health retirement allowance was £51,000 (2020-21; £Nil).

Compensation Schemes – exit packages (audited)

There was £Nil compensation payments made in 2021-22 (2020-21; £Nil)

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 Assembly Commission has agreed early retirements, the

additional costs are met by the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 2021-22.

Consultancy (audited)

The Assembly Commission made payments of £173,341 (2020-21; £47,928) to External Consultants during the year.

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

The Assembly 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 and selection are based solely on objective and job-related criteria. All staff are afforded equal opportunity to learning and development opportunities. The Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly Commission operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS provides a candidate with a disability automatic access to an interview if 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 HR Office of any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, that may be required in relation to the recruitment and selection process, for example to attend/complete an aptitude test or interview.

For existing employees, the Assembly 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 Assembly Commission provides employees with a competitive reward package that includes salary and up to 30 day's annual leave plus up to 12 public and privilege holidays each year. All permanent employees are automatically 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 Assembly Commission also has a range of family friendly policies in place to enable staff to balance work with other aspects of their lives.

The Assembly 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 Assembly 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. This consultation is carried out through a range of mechanisms including staff focus groups and through the online policy consultation portal.

The Assembly Commission (Management Side) and Trade Union Side have in place a signed Joint Agreement, setting out the principles that underpin the commitment of both bodies to conduct employee relations business in partnership. The Joint Agreement facilitates consultation, discussion and negotiation in all areas of employment affecting the Assembly Commission and its employees.

The Assembly Commission recognises the importance of employee health and wellbeing and a Health and Wellbeing Framework is 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.

The Assembly Commission is committed to the learning and development of its employees and has in place a Learning & Development Strategy and Action Plan, developed in partnership with business areas, staff and Trade Union Side. The Learning & Development Team, based in the Human Resources Office, is responsible for the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan. At a corporate level, the Learning and Development Team supports the delivery of courses and information sessions that are aligned to the Learning & Development Framework and the Assembly Skills and Behaviours. The Assembly Commission encourages and supports staff to take responsibility for their own learning and development needs, through discussion with their line manager as part of regular performance conversations. Learning and development is delivered in a range of ways including formal learning activities and completion of examinations; webinars; on-line and in person courses; and “on the job” learning, providing flexibility to meet the needs of staff. The Assembly Commission aims to develop staff by: providing access to a wide variety of learning opportunities; facilitating outward secondments for staff; job shadowing and opportunities for temporary promotion.

In addition, the Assembly Commission has a Health and Safety Unit whose role it is to create a positive health and safety culture. 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.

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Assembly Commission has complied with relevant legislation and Government guidance in relation to its employees. In addition, the

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Assembly Commission has taken all reasonable steps to support employee health, well-being and safety for those working at home and those required, on occasion, to attend Parliament Buildings.

Sickness Absence (audited)

There was an average absence rate of 4.6% during the year April 2021 – March 2022 (2.7% during the year April 2020 – March 2021). 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 during the year April 2021 – March 2022 was 10.2 days (5.9 days during the year April 2020 – March 2021). Health and well-being initiatives and supports are specifically promoted to all employees through weekly briefings, the Assembly Commission intranet and a range of other supports such as Welfare Service, Inspire Workplace Services and Occupational Health.

Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply (SOAS)

In addition to the primary statements prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) requires the Assembly Commission to prepare a Statement of Outturn against 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 DoF 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), a reconciliation of income recorded within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund (note 5); and detail on non-operating income – excess Accruing Resources (note 6).

The SOAS and Estimate are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different to, IFRS. An understanding of the budgeting framework and an explanation of key terms is provided on page 26, in the Financial Analysis section of the Performance Report. Further information on the Public Spending Framework and the reasons why budgeting rules are different to IFRS can also be found in chapter 1 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-budgeting-guidance-2021-to-2022>.

Summary tables – mirror Part II and III of the Estimates

Summary of Resource Outturn 2021-22, all figures presented in £'000s

| Request for Resources | Note | Outturn | | | Estimate | | | Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess) | Prior Year Outturn Total, 2020-21 |
|---|--------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | Gross Expenditure | Accruing Resources | Net Total | Gross Expenditure | Accruing Resources | Net Total | Net Total | |
| 1 | SoAS 1 | 47,643 | (634) | 47,009 | 49,651 | (740) | 48,911 | 1,902 | 42,621 |
| Total Resources | SoAS 2 | 47,643 | (634) | 47,009 | 49,651 | (740) | 48,911 | 1,902 | 42,621 |
| Non-operating Accruing Resources | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Net Cash Requirement 2021-22, all figures presented in £'000s

| | Note | Outturn | Estimate | Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess) | Prior Year Outturn Total, 2020-21 |
|----------------------|--------|---------|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Net Cash Requirement | SoAS 3 | 41,840 | 44,138 | 2,298 | 39,389 |

Summary of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

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

| | Note | Forecast 2021-22 | | Outturn 2021-22 | |
|--|--------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | | Income | Receipts | Income | Receipts |
| Total amount payable to the Consolidated Fund | SoAS 4 | 95 | <i>95</i> | 99 | <i>99</i> |

Explanation of variances between Estimate and outturn are given in the Performance Overview in the Performance Report.

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Statement of Outturn against Assembly Supply 2021-22 (£'000s)

This note mirrors part II of the Estimates: (Revised) Subhead Detail and Resource to Cash Reconciliation

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, – 2020-21 |
|--|------------------|---------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | 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> | - | 47,643 | - | 47,643 | (634) | 47,009 | 48,911 | - | 48,911 | 1,902 | 42,621 |
| Departmental Expenditure in DEL: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A-1 Administration | - | 45,683 | - | 45,683 | (634) | 45,049 | 46,954 | - | 46,954 | 1,905 | 42,160 |
| Annually Managed Expenditure (AME): | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A-2 Administration provisions & Members' Pension Finance Costs | - | 1,903 | - | 1,903 | - | 1,903 | 1,900 | - | 1,900 | (3) | 408 |
| Non Budget: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A-3 Notional Charges | - | 57 | - | 57 | - | 57 | 57 | - | 57 | - | 53 |
| Resource Outturn | - | 47,643 | - | 47,643 | (634) | 47,009 | 48,911 | - | 48,911 | 1,902 | 42,621 |

**Virements are the reallocation of provision in the Estimates that do not require Assembly authority (because the Assembly does not vote to that level of detail and delegates to DoF). Further information on virements are provided in the Supply Estimates in Northern Ireland Guidance Manual, available on the DoF website.*

The Outturn vs Estimate column is based on the total including virements. The Estimate total before virements have been made is included so that users can reconcile this Estimate back to the Estimate approved by the Assembly.

Detailed explanations of the variances are given in the Management Commentary.

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

SoAS note 2. Reconciliation of Outturn to net operating expenditure

| 2 | Note | Outturn | Supply Estimate | Outturn compared with Estimate | Prior Year Outturn Total, 2020-21 |
|--|---------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Net Resource Outturn | SoAS 1 | 47,009 | 48,911 | 1,902 | 42,621 |
| Non-supply income (CFERs) | SoAS 4 | (99) | (95) | 4 | (50) |
| Net Operating Expenditure in Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure | SOCNE | 46,910 | 48,816 | 1,906 | 42,571 |

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, IFRS. Therefore, this note reconciles the resource outturn to net operating expenditure, linking the SoAS to the financial statements.

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

SoAS note 3. Reconciliation of net resource outturn to Net Cash Requirement

This note mirrors Part II of the Estimates: Resource to Cash reconciliation.

| Item | Note | Outturn total | Estimate | Outturn vs Estimate, Saving/ (excess) |
|---|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Resource Outturn | SoAS 1 | 47,009 | 48,911 | 1,902 |
| Capital | | | | |
| Acquisition of property, plant and equipment | 7 | 380 | 478 | 98 |
| Acquisition of heritage assets | 7 | - | - | - |
| Acquisition of intangible assets | 8 | 16 | - | (16) |
| 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 | | (3,203) | (3,209) | (6) |
| Members' Pension finance costs | | (1,800) | (1,900) | (100) |
| New provisions, and adjustments to previous Provisions | | (103) | - | 103 |
| Prior period Adjustments | | - | - | - |
| Other non-cash items | | (57) | (57) | - |
| <i>Adjustments to reflect movement in working balances:</i> | | | | |
| Increase/(decrease) in inventories | | - | - | - |
| Increase/(decrease) in receivables | | 58 | - | (58) |
| (Increase)/decrease in payables due within one year | | (460) | (85) | 375 |
| 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 | | 41,840 | 44,138 | 2,298 |

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.

Explanation of Variances

Further explanation for variances is set out in the Performance Overview on page 28.

For Resource DEL, the largest contributor to the underspend of £1.905 million came about through less expenditure on the allowances payable to Members in respect of the operation of their constituency offices £1.234 million. A further £0.483 million was underspent on staff salaries with £0.147 million underspent on Admin Costs associated

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
Assembly Accountability Report and Audit Report - Notes to the Statement of Outturn
against Assembly Supply

with the running costs incurred in Parliament Buildings.

For Capital DEL, outturn of £0.396 million against the SSE position of £0.478 million – an underspend of £0.082 million which resulted from a reclassification of costs to Admin from Capital, following publication of guidance from IFRIC on purchasing software as a service and an underspend on two other projects, which were successfully completed under budget.

For AME, an overspend of £0.003 million resulted from an additional provision that is anticipated for legal fees and lower than anticipated service costs for Members pension.

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

SoAS note 4. Amounts of income to the Consolidated Fund

This note mirrors Part III of the Estimates: Extra Receipts Payable to the Consolidated Fund.

SoAS note 4.1 Analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

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

| Item | Note | Forecast 2021-22 | | Outturn 2021-22 | |
|---|------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | | Income | Receipts | Income | Receipts |
| Operating income and receipts - excess Accruing Resources | | - | - | - | - |
| Other operating income and receipts not classified as Accruing Resources | | 95 | 95 | 99 | 99 |
| Total income payable to the Consolidated Fund | | 95 | 95 | 99 | 99 |

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

| Item | Note | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Operating income | 6 | 733 | 195 |
| Adjustments for transactions between RfRs | | - | - |
| Gross Income | | 733 | 195 |
| Income authorised to be Accruing Resources | | (634) | (145) |
| Operating income payable to the Consolidated Fund | SoAS 4.1 | 99 | 50 |

SoAS note 6. Non-operating income Excess Accruing Resources

| Item | Note | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|---|------|------------------|------------------|
| Principal Repayments of voted loans | | - | - |
| Proceeds on Disposal of property, plant and equipment | | - | - |
| Non-operating income – Excess Accruing Resources | | - | - |

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

Other Assembly Accountability Disclosures

i. Losses and special payments

The following section is subject to audit

There were two Losses or Special Payments (2020-21; two) identified during 2021-22. However, none of these exceeded £250,000 either individually or cumulatively during the year.

ii. Fees and Charges

This section is subject to audit

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

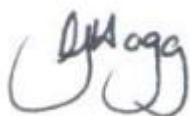
iii. Remote Contingent Liabilities

This section is subject to audit

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 Assembly Commission's Resource Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 21 July 2022

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 2022 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. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the Statement of Outturn against 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 Department's affairs as at 31 March 2022 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 Outturn against Assembly Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Assembly control totals for the year ended 31 March 2022 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 for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom'². 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 that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled

² Reference to Practice Note 10 is to cover the basis for the regularity opinion.

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.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

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

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the 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.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report.

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
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; 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.

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 in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission will not continue to be provided in the future.

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 reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Northern Ireland Assembly Commission’s compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Northern Ireland Assembly Commission’s financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: management override of controls relating to the posting of unusual journals and the use of estimates in the financial statements, payments to members, and travel and subsistence;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;

- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business; and
- applying tailored risk factors to datasets of financial transactions and related records to identify potential anomalies and irregularities for detailed audit testing.

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 Outturn against 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.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K J Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
1 Bradford Court
Galwally
BELFAST
BT8 6RB

22 July 2022

The Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2022

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.

| | | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|------|---------------|---------------|
| | Note | £'000 | £'000 |
| Other operating income | 6 | (733) | (195) |
| Total Operating Income | | (733) | (195) |
| Staff Costs | 4, 5 | 26,824 | 25,684 |
| Purchase of goods and services | 4 | 15,656 | 13,597 |
| Depreciation and impairment charges | 4 | 3,203 | 3,024 |
| Members' Pension finance cost | 4 | 1,800 | 400 |
| Administrative Provisions | 4 | 103 | 8 |
| Other Operating Expenditure | 4 | 57 | 53 |
| Total operating expenditure | | 47,643 | 42,766 |
| Net Operating Expenditure | | 46,910 | 42,571 |
| Net expenditure for the year | | 46,910 | 42,571 |
| 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 | (5,623) | 462 |
| Net Actuarial loss/(gain) on pension scheme liabilities | 17 | 900 | (2,300) |
| Comprehensive net expenditure for the year | | 42,187 | 40,733 |

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

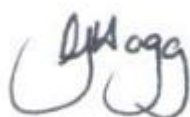
Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2022

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

| | | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Note | | |
| Non-current assets: | | | |
| Property, plant and equipment, Heritage Assets | 7 | 146,806 | 143,993 |
| Intangible assets | 8 | 16 | 6 |
| Total non-current assets | | 146,822 | 143,999 |
| Current assets: | | | |
| Trade and other receivables | 15 | 718 | 660 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 14 | 801 | 99 |
| Total current assets | | 1,519 | 759 |
| Total assets | | 148,341 | 144,758 |
| Current liabilities | | | |
| Trade and other payables | 16 | (4,336) | (3,174) |
| Total current liabilities | | (4,336) | (3,174) |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | 144,005 | 141,584 |
| Non-current liabilities | | | |
| Provisions | 17 | (24,084) | (21,281) |
| Total non-current liabilities | | (24,084) | (21,281) |
| Total assets less total liabilities | | 119,921 | 120,303 |
| Taxpayers' equity & other reserves | | | |
| General fund | | 67,490 | 70,761 |
| Pension reserve | | (23,800) | (21,100) |
| Revaluation reserve | | 76,231 | 70,642 |
| Total equity | | 119,921 | 120,303 |

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

Signed:



Lesley Hogg
Accounting Officer
Clerk/Chief Executive
Date: 21 July 2022

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Assembly Commission during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Assembly 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 Assembly Commission. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash inflows and outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Assembly Commission's future public service delivery.

| | | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Note | | |
| Cash flows from operating activities | | | |
| Net operating expenditure | | (46,910) | (42,571) |
| Adjustments for non-cash transactions | 4 | 5,163 | 3,486 |
| (Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables | | (58) | (136) |
| <i>less movements in receivables relating to items not passing through the SOCNE</i> | | | |
| Increase in trade payables | | 1,162 | 722 |
| <i>(Add)/less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the SOCNE</i> | | (886) | 59 |
| Net cash outflow from operating activities | | (41,529) | (38,440) |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | | |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | 7 | (196) | (891) |
| Purchase of intangible assets | 8 | (16) | (1) |
| Net cash outflow from investing activities | SOAS3 | (212) | (892) |
| Cash flows from financing activities | | | |
| From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - current year | | 42,500 | 39,250 |
| Net financing | | 42,500 | 39,250 |
| Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund | | 759 | (82) |
| Payments of amounts due to the Consolidated Fund | | (57) | (7) |
| Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund | | 702 | (89) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year | 14 | 99 | 188 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year | 14 | 801 | 99 |

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers’ Equity for the year ended 31 March 2022

This statement shows the movement in the period on the different reserves held by the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 | Taxpayers’ Equity £’000 |
|--|------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Balance at 31 March 2020 | | 73,521 | 71,116 | (23,000) | 121,637 |
| Net Assembly Funding – drawn down | | 39,250 | - | - | 39,250 |
| Net Assembly Funding – deemed supply | | 181 | - | - | 181 |
| Supply (payable)/receivable adjustment | | (42) | - | - | (42) |
| Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year | | (42,571) | (462) | 2,300 | (40,733) |
| CFERs payable to the Consolidated Fund | | (50) | - | - | (50) |
| Non-cash charges - auditors remuneration | 4 | 53 | - | - | 53 |
| Non-cash charges – other | | - | 7 | - | 7 |
| Transfers between reserves | | 419 | (19) | (400) | - |
| Balance at 31 March 2021 | | 70,761 | 70,642 | (21,100) | 120,303 |
| Net Assembly Funding – drawn down | | 42,500 | - | - | 42,500 |
| Net Assembly Funding – deemed supply | | 42 | - | - | 42 |
| Supply (payable)/receivable adjustment | | (702) | - | - | (702) |
| Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year | | (46,910) | 5,623 | (900) | (42,187) |
| CFERs payable to the Consolidated Fund | | (99) | - | - | (99) |
| Non-cash charges - auditors remuneration | 4 | 57 | - | - | 57 |
| Non-cash charges – other | | - | 7 | - | 7 |
| Transfers between reserves | | 1,841 | (41) | (1,800) | - |
| Balance at 31 March 2022 | | 67,490 | 76,231 | (23,800) | 119,921 |

The notes on pages 91 to 115 form part of these accounts.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

Notes to the Resource Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2021-22 FReM issued by the DoF. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply 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 Assembly Commission for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Assembly 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 Assembly Commission to prepare one additional primary statement. The *Statement of Outturn against 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 2021-22 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 retained their Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. This element of the scheme was a defined benefit scheme, which provided 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 opted to pay contributions of either 12.5% (2020-21; 12.5%) of pensionable salary, including officeholder’s salary or 9% (2020-21; 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.

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 Assembly 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 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.

Since 2019-20, HM Treasury have set out further information on the members expected to be eligible for the McCloud remedy in the main public sector schemes, which restricts the members who will be in scope for the remedy. The AMPS is not covered by the HM Treasury consultation document, but it is likely to take a similar approach to determining which members are in scope.

As a result of the further information received, GAD have amended the allowance for McCloud in last year’s AMPS accounts by assuming that only members who were active on 1 April 2015 and 6 May 2016 would be eligible for any McCloud remedy within the scheme. This produced a negative past service cost in 2020-21

(£2.1m). The actual remedy that will be offered to Members will be a matter for the next IFRP and as such, no further consideration has been made in the GAD valuation for this year.

1.14 Provisions

The Assembly 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 HM Treasury discount rate. However, the discount rate used for the provision for pension costs was 2.65% 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly 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 2022. It is not anticipated that IFRS 16 will have a material impact on the financial statements of the Assembly Commission, once adopted.

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 HM Treasury. A similar review in Northern Ireland, which will bring Northern Ireland 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. Arms-Length Bodies apply IFRS in full and their consolidation boundary may have changed as a result of these Standards.

1.19 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash and demand deposits with commercial banks. As at each year-end, the carrying value of cash and cash equivalents approximates their fair value due to their short term nature.

2 Statement of Operating Expenditure by Operating Segment

As required under Section 40 (4) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Assembly Commission is responsible for ensuring that the necessary property, staff and services are provided to support the successful operation of the Assembly. The Assembly Commission's purpose 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 Assembly Commission 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 Assembly 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 Assembly Commission considers that it operates with a single Operating Segment.

3 Other Administration Expenditure

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

4 Programme Expenditure

| | | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Note | | |
| Staff Costs | | | |
| Wages and Salaries | 5 | 19,919 | 19,355 |
| Social Security Costs | 5 | 2,062 | 1,938 |
| Other Pension Costs | 5 | 4,843 | 4,391 |
| Payments to Members | | | |
| Constituency costs (incl staff) | | 9,182 | 8,074 |
| Members' winding-up costs | | 74 | 3 |
| Members' Other costs (incl Travel) | | 316 | 327 |
| Party Allowance | | 690 | 631 |
| Other Costs | | | |
| Premises | | 1,273 | 1,063 |
| Office running costs | | 341 | 354 |
| Contracted services | | 1,913 | 1,755 |
| Repairs & maintenance | | 1,038 | 1,045 |
| Staff travel, subsistence and training | | 114 | 64 |
| Miscellaneous expenses | | 715 | 280 |
| Total cash items | | 42,480 | 39,280 |
| Non-cash items | | | |
| Depreciation | | 3,196 | 3,018 |
| Pension Finance costs | | 1,800 | 400 |
| Permanent diminution of assets | | 7 | 3 |
| Reversal of previous impairment loss | | - | 4 |
| Auditor's remuneration and expenses (notional) | | 57 | 53 |
| Provisions: provided in year | 17 | 103 | 8 |
| Total non-cash items | | 5,163 | 3,486 |
| Total | | 47,643 | 42,766 |

5 Member and Staff Related costs

5.1 Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Total | Total |
| Wages and salaries | 19,919 | 19,355 |
| Social security costs | 2,062 | 1,938 |
| Other pension costs | 4,843 | 4,391 |
| Sub Total | 26,824 | 25,684 |
| Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments | (58) | (139) |
| Less recoveries in respect of Ministerial Salaries | (566) | - |
| Total net costs | 26,200 | 25,545 |

* Of the total, £Nil has been charged to capital (2020-21; £Nil).

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:

| | | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Note | | |
| Present value of scheme liabilities | | (67,700) | (64,100) |
| Fair value of scheme assets | | 43,900 | 43,000 |
| Net liability | 17 | (23,800) | (21,100) |

Amount in the Statement of Financial Position:

| | | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 |
| | Note | | |
| Liabilities | | (23,800) | (21,100) |
| Assets | | - | - |
| Net liability | 17 | (23,800) | (21,100) |

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

| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Note | | |
| Current Service cost | 2,300 | 2,700 |
| Past Service cost | - | (2,100) |
| Interest on pension liability | 1,300 | 1,300 |
| Interest on scheme assets | (900) | (800) |
| | 2,700 | 1,100 |

Allocated in the account as:

| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Note | | |
| Other pension costs (contribution by employer) | 900 | 700 |
| Members' Pension Finance cost (Net) | 5 1,800 | 400 |
| | 2,700 | 1,100 |

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

| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Note | | |
| Actual return less interest on scheme assets | 700 | 7,900 |
| Experience gains and (losses) arising on pension liabilities | (1,700) | 800 |
| Changes in assumptions | 100 | (6,400) |
| Net actuarial gain/(losses) recognised in SCITE | (900) | 2,300 |

Movements in liabilities during the year:

| | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Note | | |
| Liabilities at 1 April | 64,100 | 57,200 |
| Current service cost (net of member contributions) | 2,300 | 2,700 |
| Past service cost | - | (2,100) |
| Member contributions (including net transfers-in) | 500 | 500 |
| Benefits paid during the year | (2,100) | (1,100) |
| Interest on pension liability | 1,300 | 1,300 |
| Changes in assumptions | (100) | 6,400 |
| Actuarial (gains)/losses | 1,700 | (800) |
| Liabilities at 31 March 2022 | 67,700 | 64,100 |

Movements in assets during the year:

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Note | | |
| Assets at 1 April | 43,000 | 34,200 |
| Interest on scheme assets | 900 | 800 |
| Actual return less interest on scheme assets | 700 | 7,900 |
| Contributions by Assembly Commission | 900 | 700 |
| Contributions by Members (including net transfers-in) | 500 | 500 |
| Benefits paid and expenses | (2,100) | (1,100) |
| Closing fair value of scheme assets 31 March | 43,900 | 43,000 |

The Assembly Commission expects to contribute £0.9m to the Members' Pension scheme in 2022-23.

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

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Equities | 20,400 | 27,300 |
| Alternative investments | 3,300 | 5,800 |
| Fixed interest and cash | 20,200 | 9,900 |
| Total major categories of scheme assets | 43,900 | 43,000 |

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date:

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Discount rate | 2.65% | 2.00% |
| Future salary increases | 4.65% | 4.15% |
| Future pension increases (CPI) | 3.15% | 2.40% |
| Expectation of life at age 65 (years) | | |
| Men | 23.5 | 23.8 |
| Women | 25.1 | 25.2 |

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 2.0% and the change in total liabilities by circa £1.4m.

If the real rate of return in excess of pension changes by 0.5% the total actuarial liability would change by about 9.0% and the change in total liabilities by circa £6.1m.

If longevity at retirement were assumed to be 2 years greater, this would increase the total actuarial liability by about 8.0% and would increase total liability by circa £5.4m.

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.

Since last year, HM Treasury have set out further information on the members expected to be eligible for the McCloud remedy in the main public sector schemes, which restricts the members who will be in scope for the remedy. The AMPS is not covered by the HM Treasury consultation document, but it is likely to take a similar approach to determining which Members are in scope.

As a result of the further information received, GAD have amended the allowance for McCloud in last year's AMPS accounts by assuming that only members who were active on 1 April 2015 and 6 May 2016 would be eligible for any McCloud remedy within the scheme. This produces a negative past service cost in 2020-21 (£2.1m). The actual remedy that will be offered to Members will be a matter for the next IFRP and as such, no further consideration has been made in the GAD valuation for this year

Further information on the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme can be found in the annual report and accounts for the scheme ending 31 March 2021 which are published and can be found at:

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

6 Income – Other Operating Income

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Note | | |
| Recoupment of salaries | 624 | 139 |
| Other Income | 109 | 56 |
| Total | 733 | 195 |

Consideration has been given to IFRS 15 – Revenue from Contracts with Customers. There is no material impact on the Assembly Commission's income. The Assembly 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

2021-22

| | 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 2021 | 7,000 | 135,086 | 2,431 | 3,373 | 1,197 | 1,019 | 624 | 150,730 |
| Additions | - | (5) | 284 | 74 | - | 27 | - | 380 |
| Revaluations | - | 2,583 | (11) | 82 | 23 | 44 | 200 | 2,921 |
| At 31 March 2022 | 7,000 | 137,664 | 2,704 | 3,529 | 1,220 | 1,090 | 824 | 154,031 |
| Depreciation | | | | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2021 | - | - | 1,847 | 2,973 | 1,151 | 766 | - | 6,737 |
| Charged in year | - | 2,753 | 193 | 136 | 34 | 74 | - | 3,190 |
| Revaluations | - | (2,753) | (2) | 10 | 16 | 27 | - | (2,702) |
| At 31 March 2022 | - | - | 2,038 | 3,119 | 1,201 | 867 | - | 7,225 |
| Carrying amount | | | | | | | | |
| At 31 March 2022 | 7,000 | 137,664 | 666 | 410 | 19 | 223 | 824 | 146,806 |
| At 31 March 2021 | 7,000 | 135,086 | 584 | 400 | 46 | 253 | 624 | 143,993 |
| Asset financing | | | | | | | | |
| Owned | 7,000 | 137,664 | 666 | 410 | 19 | 223 | 824 | 146,806 |
| At 31 March 2022 | 7,000 | 137,664 | 666 | 410 | 19 | 223 | 824 | 146,806 |

Parliament Buildings is an operational heritage asset which opened in 1932, and as such is included in the Assembly 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 2022. 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 (DRC) 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 2021 and 31 March 2022 is due to an increase to the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) Index. This is the resource Land and Property Services use to calculate the cost of replacing an asset. An increase in this index arises when it is deemed more expensive to build.

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 greater than £1k are included under Furniture and 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.

A valuation of the collection has been conducted in 2021-22, which indicated that its value at 31 March 2022 was £1.074m, an increase of £200k from the previous valuation on 24 January 2017. The main reason for the increase was the identification of assets within the library, which have been deemed to have heritage value. Included in the valuation total is £250k 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. A professional valuer, Mark Donnelly Fine Art Consultant, who worked for Sotheby’s for many years, undertook the valuation.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission – Notes to the Resource Accounts

2020-21

| | 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 2020 | 6,000 | 139,195 | 1,981 | 3,075 | 1,194 | 1,049 | 624 | 153,118 |
| Additions | - | 60 | 453 | 365 | - | 50 | - | 928 |
| Disposals | - | - | - | (75) | - | (85) | - | (160) |
| Revaluations | 1,000 | (4,169) | (3) | 8 | 3 | 5 | - | (3,156) |
| At 31 March 2021 | 7,000 | 135,086 | 2,431 | 3,373 | 1,197 | 1,019 | 624 | 150,730 |
| Depreciation | | | | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2020 | - | - | 1,689 | 2,998 | 1,116 | 774 | - | 6,577 |
| Charged in year | - | 2,702 | 158 | 47 | 32 | 75 | - | 3,014 |
| Disposals | - | - | - | (75) | - | (85) | - | (160) |
| Revaluations | - | (2,702) | - | 3 | 3 | 2 | - | (2,694) |
| At 31 March 2021 | - | - | 1,847 | 2,973 | 1,151 | 766 | - | 6,737 |
| Carrying amount | | | | | | | | |
| At 31 March 2021 | 7,000 | 135,086 | 584 | 400 | 46 | 253 | 624 | 143,993 |
| At 31 March 2020 | 6,000 | 139,195 | 292 | 77 | 78 | 275 | 624 | 146,541 |
| Asset financing | | | | | | | | |
| Owned | 7,000 | 135,086 | 584 | 400 | 46 | 253 | 624 | 143,993 |
| At 31 March 2021 | 7,000 | 135,086 | 584 | 400 | 46 | 253 | 624 | 143,993 |

8 Intangible Assets**2021-22**

| | Information Technology £'000 | Software Licences £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|--|------------------------|
| Cost or valuation | | | |
| At 1 April 2021 | 452 | 44 | 496 |
| Additions | 16 | - | 16 |
| At 31 March 2022 | 468 | 44 | 512 |
| Amortisation | | | |
| At 1 April 2021 | 446 | 44 | 490 |
| Charged in year | 6 | - | 6 |
| At 31 March 2022 | 452 | 44 | 496 |
| Carrying amount at 31 March 2022 | 16 | - | 16 |
| Carrying amount at 31 March 2021 | 6 | - | 6 |
| Asset financing | | | |
| Owned | 16 | - | 16 |
| At 31 March 2022 | 16 | - | 16 |

2020-21

| | Information Technology £'000 | Software Licences £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|--|------------------------|
| Cost or valuation | | | |
| At 1 April 2020 | 451 | 44 | 495 |
| Additions | 1 | - | 1 |
| At 31 March 2021 | 452 | 44 | 496 |
| Amortisation | | | |
| At 1 April 2020 | 442 | 44 | 486 |
| Charged in year | 4 | - | 4 |
| At 31 March 2021 | 446 | 44 | 490 |
| Carrying amount at 31 March 2021 | 6 | - | 6 |
| Carrying amount at 31 March 2020 | 9 | - | 9 |
| Asset financing | | | |
| Owned | 6 | - | 6 |
| At 31 March 2021 | 6 | - | 6 |

9 Capital and Other Commitments

9.1 Capital Commitments

Capital expenditure authorised at 31 March 2022 was as follows:

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these financial statements: | | |
| Property, plant and equipment: | - | - |
| Intangible assets: | - | - |
| As at 31 March 2022 | - | - |

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 Assembly Commission has not entered into any non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or PFI contracts or other service concession arrangements). Therefore, the Assembly Commission has no material financial commitments as at 31 March 2022. Contracts are awarded under a standard set of terms and conditions which provide the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 Assembly Commission's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Assembly 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

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Balance at 1 April | 99 | 188 |
| Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances | 702 | (89) |
| Balance at 31 March 2022 | 801 | 99 |
| The balances at 31 March 2022 were held at: | | |
| Commercial banks and cash in hand | 801 | 99 |

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 £42.50m (2020-21; £39.25m). The amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end was £0.70m (2020-21; £0.06m).

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

15 Trade receivables and other current assets

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Amounts falling due within one year: | | |
| VAT | 229 | 321 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | 452 | 304 |
| Other receivables | 37 | 35 |
| | 718 | 660 |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year: | | |
| | - | - |

Included within "Other receivables" is £Nil (2020-21; £Nil) 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

| | 2021-22 £'000 | 2020-21 £'000 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Amounts falling due within one year: | | |
| Other taxation and social security | 1,614 | 1,354 |
| Other payables | 5 | 175 |
| Accruals and deferred income | 1,916 | 1,545 |
| Amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end | 702 | 43 |
| Consolidated Fund extra receipts due to be paid to the Consolidated Fund: | | |
| Received | 99 | 57 |
| | 4,336 | 3,174 |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year: | | |
| | - | - |

Accruals and deferred income relate to both Member's Constituency Costs Expenses and the Assembly Commission.

17 Provisions for liabilities and charges

Under International Accounting Standard 19, a liability of £23.8m (2020-21; £21.1m) 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 54 to 72.

| | 2021-22 | | | 2020-21 | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | Pension Provision £'000 | Provision Other £'000 | Total £'000 | Pension Provision £'000 | Provision Other £'000 | Total £'000 |
| Balance at 1 April | 21,100 | 182 | 21,282 | 23,000 | 174 | 23,174 |
| Increase/(decrease) | 2,700 | 103 | 2,803 | (1,900) | 8 | (1,892) |
| Utilised in-year | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Balance at 31 March 2022 | 23,800 | 285 | 24,085 | 21,100 | 182 | 21,282 |

This includes the pension finance cost of £1.8m (2020-21; £0.4m), Past Service Cost write-back of £Nil (2020-21; £2.1m) and the net actuarial (loss)/gain of (£0.9m) (2020-21; £2.3m).

There may be a slight variation due to rounding.

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 retained Final Salary pension arrangements under transitional protection until 6 May 2021. This element of the Scheme was a defined benefit scheme, which provided 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 could have opted to pay contributions of either 12.5% of pensionable salary, including officeholder’s salary or 9% of pensionable salary, including officeholder’s salary. All Members with transitional protection moved to the CARE section of the Scheme on 06 May 2021. Members in the CARE scheme pay 9% of the pensionable salary and 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 £23.8 million (2020-21; £21.1 million) and, in accordance with FReM and IAS 19 at 31 March 2022, even though the Assembly Commission is not the employer, this has been provided for in the 2021-22 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.

Since last year, HM Treasury have set out further information on the members expected to be eligible for the McCloud remedy in the main public sector schemes, which restricts the members who will be in scope for the remedy. The AMPS is not covered by the HM Treasury consultation document, but it is likely to take a similar approach to determining which members are in scope.

As a result of the further information received, GAD have amended the allowance for McCloud in last year’s AMPS accounts by assuming that only members who were active on 1 April 2015 and 6 May 2016 would be eligible for any McCloud remedy within the scheme. This produces a negative past service cost in 2020-21 (£2.1m). The actual remedy that will be offered to Members will be a matter for the next IFRP and as such no further consideration has been made in the GAD valuation for this year

The value of £23.8m (2020-21; £21.1m) was estimated by GAD and represents the excess of the scheme liabilities (£67.7m) (2020-21; £64.1m) over its assets (£43.9m) (2020-21; £43.0m) 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 2.65% (2020-21; 2.00%) (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 0.5% (2020-21; 0.4%) and notional investment return less than earnings increases of 3.15% (2020-21; 2.4%). Demographic assumptions impacting the incidence of benefit outflow have also been applied including factors such as mortality and withdrawal from service.

Trustees appointed by the Assembly administer the Assembly Members' Pension Fund. The Comptroller and Auditor General audits the Annual Report and Accounts.

17.2 Litigation

Legal Claims

This represents public liability, employer liability, contract and compensation claims and dilapidations as advised by the business areas within the Assembly Commission.

The provisions details are based on evaluations made by qualified professional and technical personnel employed by the Assembly Commission.

An additional £0.103m (2020-21; £0.008m) was provided for in respect of a contractual matter.

Other Legal Issues

The existing provision in respect of holiday pay for certain staff has been reviewed in 2021-22. Recent case law has ruled that staff should be paid their full pay (including overtime) when on annual leave. The Northern Ireland Court of Appeal (NICoA) judgment from 17 June 2019 (PSNI v Agnew) determined that claims for holiday pay shortfall can be taken back to 1998. However, the PSNI has appealed the NICoA judgment to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court hearing was scheduled for the 23 and 24 June 2021 but this has subsequently been adjourned, and is now scheduled to take place in December 2022.

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, but there are still some very significant elements of uncertainty around this estimate including the appeal to the Supreme Court and the ongoing negotiations with NIPSA.

18 Contingent liabilities

Under the definition "contingent liability" in IAS 37 the Assembly Commission recognises a contingent liability that has arisen from the project to repair the roof covering of Parliament Buildings, which was completed in 2015 ("the repair").

Certain defects in the repair have been identified and the Assembly Commission

has sought to engage with the architect and contractor responsible for the repair to agree a remedy. Should that approach be unsuccessful, the Assembly Commission will seek redress through legal proceedings in the High Court. The contingent liability reflects the fact that the outcome of any proceedings will determine liability for the estimated £1.8 million cost of remedying the defects.

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of IAS37, the Assembly 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 Assembly 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 other Departments 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. Compensation for key management personnel has been disclosed as part of the Remuneration Report, beginning on page 54.

The Assembly 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 Members, representatives of the business community and two senior 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 and will be concluded in June 2022.

There have been no transactions during 2021-22 (2020-21; Nil).

In previous financial years, the Assembly Commission worked with Politics Plus Limited, which was originally 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. Whilst it has been agreed by the Board of Trustees that Politics Plus will be wound up and responsibility for Members' development has passed to the Assembly Commission, the winding up process is ongoing and during 2021-22 the Board of Trustees included 5 Members. The Trustees have agreed that any remaining funds, net of any Corporation Tax liability, should be granted to the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission.

The first grant of £38.5k to the Assembly Commission is the remainder of a grant to Politics Plus from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT), aimed at strengthening the role of women in political and public life – one of Politics Plus’ charitable objects. JRCT has consented to this being granted by Politics Plus to the Assembly Commission.

This grant must be used only for the purposes of strengthening the role of women in political and public life, by supporting the work of the Assembly Women’s Caucus. The grant must be accounted for as a restricted fund within the Assembly Commission’s accounts.

20 Third-party assets

The Assembly Commission does not have any assets for which the Assembly 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 Assembly Commission does not currently support any Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) or trading funds.

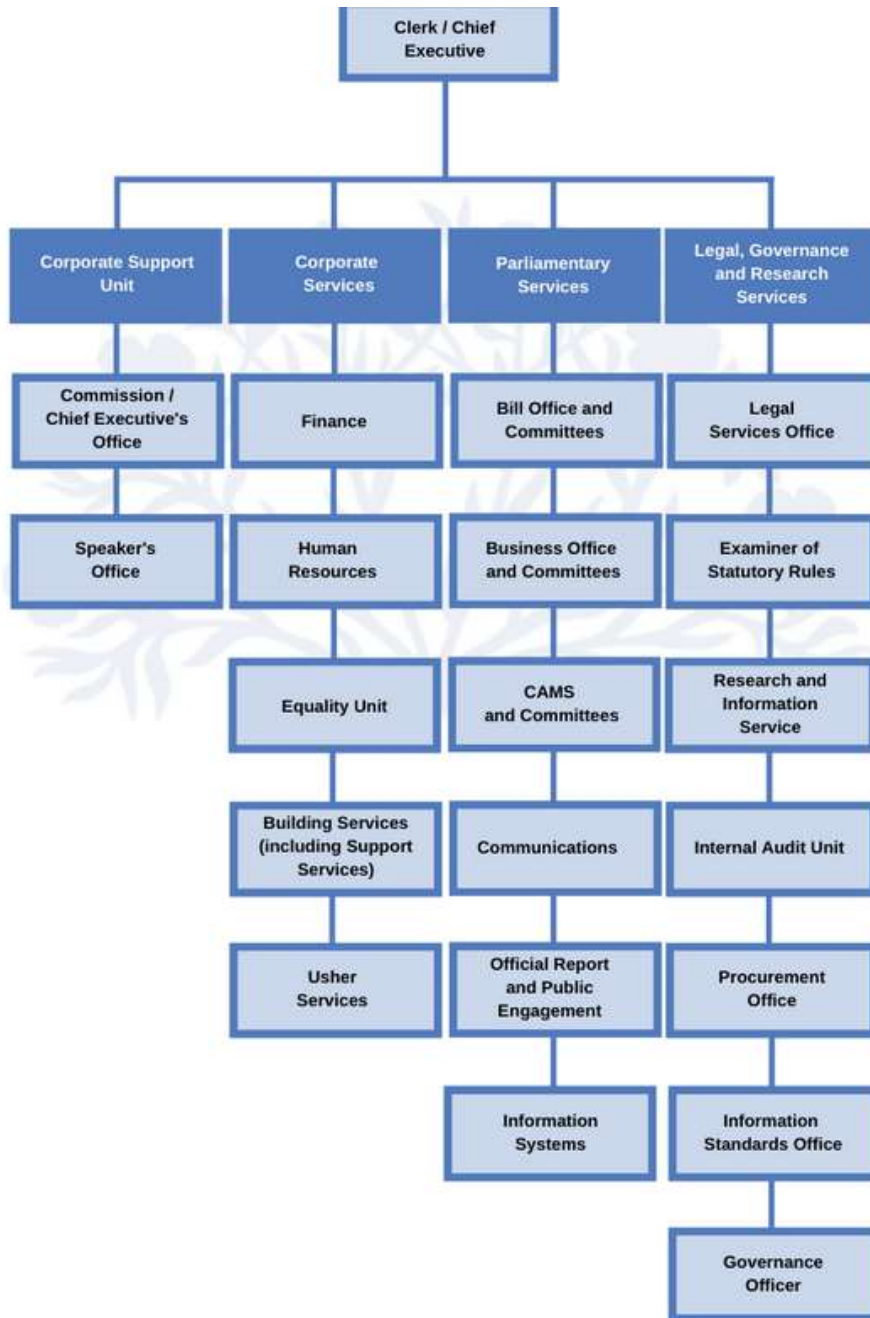
22 Events after the Reporting Period

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 22 July 2022.

Organisational Structure





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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.

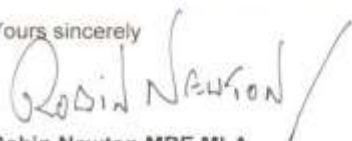
You may sub-delegate functions mentioned above but this does not prevent the exercise of those functions by the Commission.

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