



Annual Report and Accounts

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

“Achieving Excellence through People”



The Local Government Staff Commission
for Northern Ireland

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972 by the Local Government Staff Commission



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

I have pleasure in introducing the Local Government Staff Commission's Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23.

Whilst we await the Minister's decision on the outcome of the consultation to ascertain if there are any reasons that the Executive decision to dissolve the Commission should be reconsidered, in November 2022 the Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities confirmed an extension to the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025.

Throughout the year the Commission continued to deliver high quality services to local Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), supporting the recovery and renewal of services ensuring that our sector not only recovers from the pandemic but continues to improve and transform.

Since April 2017 the Commission has continued to reduce its core staff to one fixed term full time employee and one full time secondee and two part-time employees, one on a fixed term contract and one on a consultancy basis (previously 10 full time employees). The services provided to local government and the NI Housing Executive by the Commission continued at a high level despite the reduced staffing level and staff morale has been maintained during a period of continuing uncertainty and financial challenges.

The 2022/23 year was productive with support and assistance provided to Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, that included:

- Initiating a review of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection for adoption by Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
- Continuing to support Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with the recruitment of senior officers and the provision of best practice advice and training as required.
- Ongoing work with the sector and key stakeholders to develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum
- Development and adoption by SOLACE of a regional talent management strategy, providing a robust approach to succession planning talent acquisition, identification, and development.
- Support provided in the provision of advice and assistance in respect of the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.
- Continuing to support the work of the Equality and Diversity Strategic Working Group, with the completion of an Equality and Diversity Baseline and Impact Study to inform the new strategy and through the delivery of a programme of work to improve and maintain people's mental wellness through the delivery of the regional Mental Health Strategy.
- Delivering human resource and organisational development advice and assistance to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Commission Members and the Officer team who have continued to deliver significant progress towards the achievement of the Commission's mission to "*achieve excellence through people*". The Commission remains committed to delivering high quality services to the sector and we look forward to working with all our stakeholders and partners in the incoming year.



Bumper Graham
Chairperson

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES' / ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S REPORT

Throughout 2022/23 the Commission concentrated on delivering the objectives that were set out in the Management and Dissolution Plan 2022-23 (the Plan). This defined our overall objectives and key performance areas for the year as detailed below:

Key Area 1 – Essential Statutory Functions

The delivery of the Commission's statutory functions during the management and dissolution period and the integration of designated functions within Councils, including:

- Advisory Appointments Panels
- Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- Code of Conduct for Local Government Officers
- Negotiating Machinery

Key Area 2 – Oversight of Statutory Functions Transferred to Councils on Dissolution

To maintain oversight of the functions already transferred to Councils in line with the planned 31 March 2017 dissolution date and in addition continue to provide:

- Advisory and support services
- Monitoring of Fair Employment Practices

This oversight ensures the proper discharge of the Commission's functions during the pre-dissolution period.

Key Area 3 – Corporate Governance

To ensure continuing good governance, accountability, and operational management of the Commission as a statutory body, including:

- Provision and maintenance of a sound system of control (audit, risk etc.)
- Finance and Administration
- Orderly Dissolution Arrangements

PERFORMANCE

All staff take personal responsibility for ensuring that the objectives as detailed in the Plan are met in their day-to-day work and areas of responsibility are individually assessed. These objectives are challenging, and regular monitoring takes place to ensure compliance and detailed reports are presented regularly to the Commission and the Department for Communities.

KEY AREAS OF WORK IN SUMMARY

This section highlights some of the activities the Commission has undertaken in 2022/23. All our strategic objectives were matched with outputs and related to initiatives to ensure increased effectiveness. To provide a full understanding of the work of the Commission this section should be read in conjunction with the Operating Review (page 5) which provides greater detail of the results achieved in relation to the objectives as set out in the Management and Dissolution Plan 2021-2023.

Due to the ongoing difficulties encountered by the NI Assembly, it has not been possible to have the necessary 'Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution) Order (Northern Ireland)' in place to wind up the Commission as planned.

Accordingly, the Department for Communities (DfC) reconstituted the Commission membership with effect from 01 April 2017 (up to the final dissolution date) and the Commission continues to develop a Management and Dissolution Plan to enable it to continue to implement its statutory duties.

The Management and Dissolution actions relate to main Key Performance Areas as follows:

- Assistance was provided to Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to implement the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, to include the delivery of the observer strategy for 37 recruitment panels for senior posts.
- The Commission administered Chief Executive exercises on behalf of Belfast City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and arc21.
- Commission has initiated an exercise to review and update the Code Procedures for Recruitment and Selection with a view that it will be issued for application from 01 Jan 2024
- There has been significant consultation with Councils, trade unions, NILGA, the Labour Relations Agency and other key stakeholders to develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum. Work will continue over the course of the next year to engage with the sector to design and develop a framework that adds value to all the stakeholders.
- Advisory services were provided to Councils and the NIHE in relation to employee relations problems and general HR practices.
- Commission officers continued to support and facilitate joint working groups, for example, the Equality and Diversity Group, the Talent Management Group, Health and Well-Being Group, the Statutory Duty Network and the Diversity Ambassadors' Network.
- The Commission provides secretariat support to PPMA.
- Working in partnership with Councils and the NIHE, the Commission continued to support the Equality and Diversity Strategic Working Group, to deliver the new strategy and through the delivery of a regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy to support employee well-being and attendance management.
- The Commission completed an Equality and Diversity Baseline and Impact Study for the local government sector.
- An employment law seminar was organised by the Commission for Councils and the NIHE in September 2022.
- A conference entitled 'Making a Difference' was held for Councils and the NIHE in April 2022.
- Drafted, consulted and issued a 'Conducting an Investigation Toolkit' for use in Councils and NIHE.

- Published four newsletters (LGSC News) providing updates from stakeholders and key areas of work of the Commission.

To support an integrated system of management controls, the Commission's Audit Committee met five times and reviewed Audit Reports and continue to implement sound systems of control to support the Commission's objectives in accordance with Government Accounting Northern Ireland.

The Commission retained its Cyber Essentials Plus (CE+) accreditation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Stewart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

DIANA STEWART
Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer

OPERATING, FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT REVIEW **for the year ended 31 March 2023**

Background Information

The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC) and established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972: as amended by the Finance Act 2011. Its powers were further extended under the Housing Orders (NI) 1976 and 1981 and the (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1992.

The Commission's principal function is to:

'exercise general oversight of matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers of district Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and of making recommendations to district Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on such matters.'

Specific functions are:

- developing good practice in HR management (in conjunction with wider public sector partners);
- initiating HR policy development, evaluation and review;
- acting as a single point of entry to the local government sector for major consultation exercises on HR related issues;
- representing local government on HR related issues as necessary;
- providing and/or recommending independent expert consultancy support;
- hosting and planning events on HR related topics to inform policy developments and legislative change;
- providing access to expert employment-specific legal advice and providing employment law updates;
- facilitating capacity building initiatives and promoting co-operation in the Public Sector;
- constituting and facilitating local government-specific and cross-sectoral working groups;
- arranging conferences, seminars and other networking mechanisms.

The accounts of the Commission have been prepared under a direction given by the Department for Communities, with the approval of the Department of Finance, in accordance with paragraph 11 of schedule 3 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (as amended). Accordingly, the Commission's accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis.

Results for the Year

The financial results of the Commission's operation in 2022/23 are set out in detail on page 24 of this Annual Report and Accounts. The surplus for the year for net expenditure after interest was £44k compared with a deficit of £420k for 2021/22.

Dissolution Costs

As a result of the proposed dissolution of the Commission, as at 31 March 2023 there was an estimated liability of £1,747,473 due to exit costs from the NILGOSC pension scheme including redundancy costs (£4,373). Of this estimated liability, £1,740,727 was included in the provision and a £2,373 deficit was included in the pension liability (see Notes 12 and 13). These costs will be met by the Department for Communities. Redundancy payments were made in the financial year up to 31 March 2023 totalling £4,373.

Pension Liabilities

The Commission participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) Scheme for its employees. Following the confirmation by the Permanent Secretary in November 2022 of an extension to the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025, this year the Commission only obtained IAS 19 actuarial valuations and consequently the resulting net liability and IAS 19 disclosures have been highlighted in these financial statements (see Note 13).

There has been a change to the financial assumptions over the period. The discount rate has increased by 1.9% points, the CPI inflation assumption has reduced by 0.40% and the salary increase assumption has reduced by 0.40% points. This has had a positive effect on the balance sheet position than if the financial assumptions at the start of the period had been used. The impact of this change is recognised in Other Comprehensive Income.

Fixed Assets

Details of the movement of fixed assets are set out in Note 7 to these accounts.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

- **Capacity to Handle Risk**

Procedures are implemented to identify risks associated with the implementation of the Commission's key objectives and a control strategy is put in place for each significant risk and ownership allocated to appropriate staff.

- **The Risk and Control Framework**

The risk management strategy is fully embedded into the work and future planning work of the Commission and all staff are trained in the management of risk and have an input into the regular ongoing reviews of the risk management process.

Risk management has been incorporated into the Commission's policy and decision-making process and risk procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with experience and best practice.

Charitable Donations

There were no charitable donations made during 2022/23.

Payment to Suppliers

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of suppliers for goods and services within 10 working days on receipt of invoice, in accordance with the Better Payment Practice Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days from the receipt of the goods or services by the Commission, or on presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand to the Commission, whichever is later. During the year, the Commission paid 388 invoices, all of which were paid within 30 days and 384 of which were paid within the 10-day target (see Note 17).

Research and Development

The Commission is committed to an ongoing programme of research to develop and improve service provision. During the year, the Commission carried out research into talent management and an equality and diversity baseline and impact study.

Business Review

The Commission prepares strategic and business plans for each area of responsibility and monitors performance against key performance targets. A full review of the Commission's activities is provided on pages 9 to 13 of this Annual Report.

Important Events Occurring After the Year End

There have been no significant events since the year-end 31 March 2023, which would affect these accounts.

Members

Membership of the Commission is set out in Appendix 2 of the 2022/23 Annual Report. A Register of Members' Interests is held in Commission offices.

Equality Scheme

In pursuance of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission has prepared an equality scheme, which has been approved by the Equality Commission. This scheme details the Commission's commitment to, and proposals for, fulfilling the statutory obligations to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Employee Involvement

The Commission was committed to the involvement of employees in the decision-making process and to their development to ensure the highest standards in the delivery of all services. Learning and development opportunities were provided to all employees and a supportive culture of employee engagement exists.

Environmental, Social and Community Issues

The Commission operates in a political environment and was required to be adaptable to the changing central and local government structures. In developing policies and procedures special attention was paid to legislative changes in employment matters and the need to conform to the obligations placed on public bodies by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Disclosure of Audit Information

There is no relevant audit information of which the Commission's auditors are unaware.

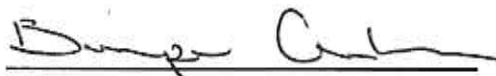
The Accounting Officer has taken all reasonable steps to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Commission's auditors are aware of the information.

No fees have been raised, either this year or last year, in respect of non-audit work.

Signed:



DIANA STEWART
Director of Corporate Services
and Accounting Officer
Date: 28 September 2023



BUMPER GRAHAM
Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission

**KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1
ESSENTIAL STATUTORY
FUNCTIONS**

1. ADVISORY & APPOINTMENT PANELS and CODE OF PROCEDURES ON RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p>We will assist Councils to implement the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and provide advice on best practice in recruitment and selection as required.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide assistance with recruitment exercises for senior posts in Councils and the NIHE, as required in line with agreed procedures. 2. Provide advice on best practice recruitment and selection training on an ongoing basis. 3. Attend meetings of the recruitment working group when appropriate and provide assistance, as required. 4. Advise Councils and the NIHE on the use of assessment centres and situational judgement tests, as required. 5. Implement the Observer Strategy for the recruitment of senior posts. 6. Review of the Code of Practice for Recruitment & Selection, to include assessment testing and assist Councils to implement new techniques. 7. Review the regional competency framework. 8. Issue a new Code of Procedures to Councils to coincide with the Dissolution Order and provide training to Councils on the provisions of the new Code. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of senior recruitment exercises the Commission has provided assistance with. • Revised Code of Procedures in place. • Revised Competency Framework in place. • Agreed arrangements in place post-dissolution.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p>We will provide advice and assistance in respect of the Code of Conduct for local government officers.</p>	<p>We will work in partnership with local Councils to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide professional advice and assistance regarding HR and OD matters including complaints, grievance, and disciplinary matters. 2. Develop e-learning materials to support the Code of Conduct. 3. Assist with the smooth transition in accordance with the dissolution order for new arrangements post-dissolution. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employee relations cases supported. • Have arrangements in place post-dissolution. • Develop e-learning materials to support Councils.

3. NEGOTIATING MACHINERY

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
We will develop an overall strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum.	<p>We will progress a programme of work to ensure that the regional machinery will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have robust operating and governance arrangements in place. 2. Facilitate maximum engagement between and be representative of and owned by the main stakeholders i.e., the 11 Councils and the main recognised trade unions. 3. Engage with stakeholders to create an agenda that is pro-active, performance driven, productive and effective, and produce agreements that are relevant to the needs of the sector. 4. Give leadership on relevant people and organisational development matters. 5. Ensure employers side representatives are nominated directly by the 11 Councils. 6. Provide advice, assistance, and independent secretariat facilities as required. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a strategy for the establishment of a Negotiating Forum within the agreed timeframe.

The Commission is satisfied that these actions in the Management Plan either have been fully implemented or are on track for completion by the due date.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2 OVERSIGHT OF STATUTORY FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO COUNCILS ON DISSOLUTION

4. ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
We will support Councils and NIHE in the provision of HR and OD advice and assistance.	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide advice and assistance as required. 2. Promote best practice through 'LGSC News' and other mediums. 3. Attendance at regional networking meetings and engage with all relevant stakeholders to understand their needs e.g. PPMA 4. Assist with investigations and independent consultancy support as required. 5. Develop a Formal Investigation Toolkit and roll out a programme of training to provide guidance and support to managers who undertake the role of Investigating Officer as part of formal Disciplinary, Capability and other related policies and procedures. <p>This toolkit will provide advice and guidance in respect of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Importance of Robust Workplace Investigations • The Investigation Process • Step 1 - Investigators Appointed/Terms of Reference Agreed • Step 2 - Devise a Plan/Investigation Interviews • Step 3 - Collate and Analyse Information • Step 4 - Create Report • Step 5 - Forward Report to Employee Relations

	<p>6. Provide support to the Local Government Training Board with the Transition Strategy and the development and implementation of a project plan. Provide update reports from LGTG Board to the Commission to allow the Commission to exercise its oversight role.</p> <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of editions of 'LGSC News' published. • Provision of expert consultancy support. • Number of sectoral working groups LGSC contribute to. • Evidence of advice/support. • Delivery of employment law update seminars as required.
<p>We will deliver an equality and diversity programme to support Councils and NIHE to ensure fair and equitable workplaces.</p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and support the delivery of an Equality and Diversity Strategy 2021-2023. 2. Establish robust arrangements to include governance and training for the role of Diversity Champions (Ambassadors) to encourage networking, disseminating best practice. (Elected Members and Officers). 3. Provide advice and assistance in relation to best practice arrangements for high level governance, education and training and reporting arrangements to ensure commitment and buy-in. 4. Provide advice and assistance in relation to queries on equality and diversity. 5. Facilitate regular meetings of the Statutory Duty Network to address common issues and collaborate on sector wide initiatives and support Councils and the NIHE to implement their Section 75 duties and Disability Action Plans. 6. Provide best practice events on issues such as absence management and health and wellbeing. 7. Assist with the smooth transition of the work of the Equality and Diversity Group in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution) Order (NI) 2017 (currently in draft form) for new arrangements post dissolution. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and delivery of an Equality and Diversity Strategy. • Review of the role of Diversity Ambassadors and roll out off training. • The number of Equality and Diversity events supported. • Robust arrangements in place post-Dissolution.
<p>We will support Councils and NIHE to improve and maintain people's mental wellness through the delivery of the regional Mental Health Strategy.</p>	<p>We will work with the sector to:</p> <p>Implement the regional Mental Health Strategy to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivery of a Health and Well-being Conference (half-day best practice Health and Well-Being event to launch the mental health toolkit, video and feature a best practice speaker). 2. The creation of a case study document to celebrate the innovative work that has been taking place across all 11 Councils and NIHE. This will be an example of the sector's commitment to the Health and Well-Being of staff and of shared learning across the sector. 3. Development of a Mental Health Toolkit (in partnership with Business in the Community). 4. Commission formal research to establish a baseline position for the sector and use this as a benchmark to determine the impact and outcomes of the Mental Health Strategy. 5. Lead on the roll out of the 'Wellbeing Hub' across the local Councils and NIHE.

	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Regional Mental Health Strategy across the local government sector • The number of Health and Well-being events. • % customer satisfaction with the 'Wellbeing Hub'
<p>To develop a talent management strategy for the sector which provides a robust approach to succession planning, talent acquisition, identification, and development.</p>	<p>We will work in partnership with local Councils to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish and lead a regional Talent Management Working Group, reporting to SOLACE. 2. Scope the understanding of talent management within the sector. 3. Develop a concise definition of talent management and a model of best practice. 4. Develop a talent management strategy for the sector which provides a robust approach to succession planning, talent acquisition, identification, and development. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Talent Management Strategy for the sector.
<p>The Commission is satisfied that these actions in the Management Plan either have been fully implemented or are on track for completion by the due date.</p>	

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

6. SOUND SYSTEM OF CONTROL

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p>To continue to implement a sound system of control to support the Commission's objectives in accordance with Government Accounting Northern Ireland.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation and publication of Annual Report and Accounts. 2. Ensure sound systems of control and good governance are in place for all Commission business. 3. Arrange Audit Committee meetings as required. 4. Facilitate NIAO as required. 5. Review and update the Commission's Risk Register. 6. Provision of a secretariat service to all Commission meetings. 7. Compliance with equality reporting arrangements. 8. Update policies as per DOF and DfC instruction. 9. Prepare responses for FOI and Data Protection meetings. 10. Annual review of systems to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation. 11. Ongoing liaison with Public Records Office NI to ensure special circumstances are agreed to enable PRONI to take delivery of files less than 20 years old. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Reports and Accounts published. • Unqualified audit opinion. • Compliance with all necessary regulation and policy.

7. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p>To ensure the efficient and effective day to day management of the Commission's Financial Affairs in accordance with Government Accounting Practice and Accounts Direction issued by DfC / NIAO.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of financial schemes and ongoing budgetary management practices. 2. Budget reports presented at Commission and Audit Committee meetings on a bi-annual basis. 3. Preparation of budgetary performance reports on a monthly basis for scrutiny by the Director of Corporate Services. 4. Preparation and publication of Annual Report and Accounts 5. Processing of salaries, allowances receipts and payments in line with agreed timelines. 6. Monthly bank reconciliation prepared and monitored by the Director of Corporate Services. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report and Accounts published in accordance with the timeline defined by DfC. • Unqualified audit opinion with financial statement. • Financial Scheme in place. • Payment of salaries and allowances on agreed date. • Meet statutory prompt payment targets. • Delivery of services within budget.

8. DISSOLUTION ARRANGEMENTS

AREAS OF OPERATION	ACTIONS
<p>Progress necessary governance and resource actions to ensure the efficient and orderly dissolution of the Commission</p>	<p>Actions Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review assets and update asset Register, as necessary. 2. Implement all governance arrangements relating to the Commission's dissolution as agreed by the DfC-LGSC Dissolution Project Board. 3. Prepare for handover to DfC Dissolution Group and Public Records Office. 4. Dispose of remaining assets. 5. Review of accommodation provision. 6. Draft final accounts and handover of server, etc., to the Department for Communities. <p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orderly dissolution of the Commission.

The Commission is satisfied that these actions in the Management Plan either have been fully implemented or are on track for completion by the due date.

REMUNERATION REPORT

Director of Corporate Services and Senior Officers' Remuneration

The Commission operates pay and conditions for Officers in accordance with the provisions adopted by the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services. The NIJC is the negotiating body for all staff in Councils in Northern Ireland (except Chief Executives). The pay and conditions of service for the Director of Corporate Services is determined in line with NJC pay scales rather than decisions of the negotiating body for Chief Executives in Local Government in Northern Ireland. There are no benefits in kind included in the emoluments figures.

Service Contracts

All appointments are made in line with the Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection which requires appointments to be made on merit and based on fair and open competition. Given the impending dissolution of the Commission, Diana Stewart, was appointed to act as Director of Corporate Services in September 2022 and carry out duties which would have been within the remit of the former Chief Executive, as well as 'Winding Up Officer' until the Commission is dissolved.

Pensions

The Staff Commission participates in the NILGOSC scheme for all of its employees. This is a fully funded defined benefit scheme and is a statutory scheme that provides benefits on a "final salary" basis for service to 31 March 2015 and on a "career average revalued earnings (CARE)" basis for service from 1 April 2015. Benefits accrue at a rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service up to 31 March 2009; at a rate of 1/60th of pensionable pay from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2015; and at a rate of 1/49th of total pay each year thereafter. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to 3/80ths of pensionable salary for each year of service up to 31 March 2009 is payable on retirement. Members pay contributions of between 5.5% to 10.5% of pensionable earnings. Pension payments increase in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

On death, pensions are payable to the surviving spouse, nominated co-habiting partner or civil partner. On death in service, the scheme pays a lump sum benefit of three times pensionable pay and also provides a service enhancement on computing the spouse's pension. The enhancement depends on length of service and cannot exceed 10 years. Medical retirement is possible in the event of serious ill-health. In this case pensions are brought into payment immediately without actuarial reduction and with service enhanced as for widow(er) pensions.

The Chairperson is not a contributing member of the NILGOSC pension scheme.

Chairperson and Commission Members

The Chairperson and Commission Members' allowances, travel and subsistence are set by the Department for Communities as per the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland). The Chairperson's annual remuneration is £14,398 and Commission Members may claim expenses of £126 per day for attending Commission meetings and events.

Service Contracts for Chairperson and Commission Members

The appointments of the Chairperson and Commission Members are made by the Minister for Communities. All appointments are made in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments for the Northern Ireland Code of Practice. The current Commission was appointed in December 2014 until 31 March 2017 and reconstituted from 1 April 2017 until the final dissolution date, due to ongoing difficulties encountered in the NI Assembly. Bumper Graham was appointed as the Chairperson with effect from 5 October 2020.

Chairperson and Members' Emoluments

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Mr Bumper Graham Chairperson	14.4	14.4
Members' Emoluments	9.6	12.2

Senior Officers' Emoluments

Date of Contract	Scales	2023 £'000	2023 £'000 Bonus	2023 (to nearest £100) Benefits In Kind	2023 (to nearest £1,000) Pension	2023 £'000 Total	2022 £'000 Bonus	2022 (to nearest £100) Benefits In Kind	2022 (to nearest £1,000) Pension	2022 £'000 Total
Helen Hall (Full-time) Director of Corporate Services 01/08/19 to 31/03/22 PT 01/04/22 to 30/09/22 FT 36	PO14 70 - 75	-	-	-	7	40 - 45	40 - 45	-	17	55-60
Diana Stewart (Full-time) Director of Corporate Services 19/09/22	PO14 70 - 75 FT 38	-	-	-	15	50 - 55	-	-	-	-

	2022/23	2021/22
Band of Highest Paid Total Remuneration	£70k – £75k	£65k - £70k
Median Total Remuneration	£42,000	£47,737
Ratio	1.79	1.6

All of the above figures were subject to audit.

Senior Officers' Emoluments

The Commission is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid officer and the median remuneration of the Commission's Workforce.

The banded full-time equivalent (FTE) remuneration of the highest-paid officer in the financial year 2022/23 was £70k - £75k and in the financial year 2021/22 was £65k - £70k. This was 1.79 times the median remuneration of the workforce in 2022/23, an increase from 2021/22 (1.6).

Total remuneration includes annual salary (the Commission does not pay any benefits in kind or operate a staff bonus scheme). The calculation does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions or cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Staff Costs

	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2022/23 Total No's	2021/22 Total No's
(a) The average weekly number of employees (full time equivalent) was:	2.4	0.5	2.9	3.6
	Employed staff	Seconded staff	2022/23 Total No's	2020/21 Total No's
(b) The costs incurred in respect of these employees were:				
Salaries and Wages	115	38	153	132
Social Security Costs	11	5	16	26
Pension Costs – NILGOSC	39	7	46	34
	165	50	215	192
Current/Past Service Costs	52		52	24
	4		4	
Superannuation - re: charge to provision	(38)		(38)	(18)
TOTAL	183	50	233	198

All of the above figures were subject to audit.

Under IAS 19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense once the employee earns the benefits, irrespective of whether they have been paid. This includes the cost of any untaken leave at the year end. The cost of untaken leave is determined using the Commission's annual leave records.

There is one member of senior staff on pay scales as laid out in page 15. The overall breakdown of staff employed by the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2023 was 5 female staff.

The average number of sick days for 2022/23 was 16.7 days per staff member (2021/22: 3.6 days) due to long term sickness absence by one employee.

Expenditure on seconded staff in 2022/23 was £50,006 (2021/22 - £122,071). Expenditure on agency staff in 2022/23 was £nil (2021/22 - £3,191.82, FTE: 0.08). Expenditure on consultancy in 2022/23 was £19,830 (2021/22 - £17,570). This relates to administration services.

Reporting of Review of Public Administration compensation scheme – exit packages

Exit packages cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
		£'000	£'000
< £10,000	- (-)	- (1)	- (1)
£10,000 - £25,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£25,000 - £50,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£50,000 - £100,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£150,000 - £200,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
£250,000 - £300,000	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)
Total number of exit packages	- (-)	- (1)	- (1)
Total cost	£Nil (£Nil)	(£4)	(£4)

One member of staff received redundancy in the 2022/23 year as a result of a review of staffing requirements. Redundancy costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Review of Public Administration Staff Severance Scheme and The Local Government Reorganisation (Compensation for Loss of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Exit costs have been accounted for in full in the year that the departure was agreed.

There were no early retirements or ill-health retirements agreed during 2022/23.

Pension Entitlement of Director of Corporate Services

	Real Increase in Pension and related lump sum at age 65	Total Accrued Pension at age 65 and related lump sum	CETV at 31/03/2022	CETV at 31/03/2023	Real Increase in CETV after adjustment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Helen Hall Director of Corporate Services	0.0 – 2.5 Plus lump sum 0.0–0.0	0 – 5 Plus lump sum 0-0	17	7	-
Diana Stewart Director of Corporate Services	0.0 – 2.5 Plus lump sum 0.0–0.0	0 – 5 Plus lump sum 0-0	--	15	-

All of the above figures were subject to audit.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV)

A CETV is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by members at a particular point in time. 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 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 include any other pension details which an individual has transferred from another pension scheme and any additional benefit which has resulted from the purchasing of additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

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.

Signed:



DIANA STEWART
Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer
DATE: 28 September 2023

LOOKING AHEAD

In November 2022 the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities confirmed an extension to the provisional date for the dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2025.

Accordingly, the Department for Communities (DfC) reconstituted the Commission membership with effect from 01 April 2017 (up to the final dissolution date). The Commission has developed a Management Plan 2022 – 2023 to enable it to continue to determine its statutory and non-statutory work until it is gradually passed to Councils.

To reflect the Ministers' decision to carry out a follow-up consultation and to ensure good governance the Commission's workplan was updated. The Management Plan reflects stakeholder requirements and takes account of the changing needs of Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

The Management and Dissolution Actions relate to three main Key Performance Areas as follows:

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1 – ESSENTIAL STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

The delivery of the Commission's statutory functions during the management and dissolution period and the integration of designated functions within Councils, including:

- Advisory Appointments Panels
- Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection
- Code of Conduct for Local Government Officers
- Negotiating Machinery

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2 – OVERSIGHT OF STATUTORY FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO COUNCILS ON DISSOLUTION

To maintain oversight of the functions already transferred to Councils in line with the planned dissolution date, including:

- Advisory and support services
- Monitoring of Fair Employment Practices

This oversight ensures the proper discharge of the Commission's functions.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

To ensure continuing good governance, accountability, and operational management of the Commission as a statutory body, including:

- Sound System of Control (audit, risk etc.)
- Finance and Administration
- Orderly Dissolution Arrangements

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Over recent years the Commission has adopted a more focused approach to business planning and implementation and has amended its policy statement to reflect this. The work of the Commission has become more output focused and the Commission's commitment to continuous improvement and raising standards in local government and the wider public service is demonstrated by its statement of purpose – "Achieving Excellence through People".

The Commission recognises that it is part of a wider public service community and has formed partnering arrangements with the following organisations:

- Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)
- Labour Relations Agency (LRA)
- Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)
- Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)
- Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services (NIJC)
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
- Local Government Management Association (LGMA – Southern Ireland)
- Public Appointments Service (PAS – Southern Ireland)
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Public Sector People Managers' Association (PPMA)
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)
- Health and Safety Executive NI (HSE)
- Chief Executives Forum
- Ulster University
- Trade Unions

This partnership working has brought economies of scale to the development of new initiatives and provided for benchmarking arrangements.

To integrate an improvement culture in all aspects of the Commission's work overarching themes of Communication, Marketing Services and Measuring Success were developed and have underpinned the work of the Commission. These informed the operational areas of the Commission's work and ensured that key objectives were implemented in a consistent manner.

Plans were developed and reviewed regularly to increase service delivery.

The Commission has an Audit Committee which meet regularly and approved the Commission's accounting procedures, risk management strategy, policy and risk register and received significant input from both the Commission's internal and external auditors.



DIANA STEWART
Director of Corporate Services and Accounting Officer

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To be the strategic organisation for the development of human resource management and the promotion of excellence through people in the delivery of local government services in Northern Ireland.

STRATEGIC AREAS AND MANDATES

These mandates are derived from Local Government legislation and are quoted in full where appropriate.

Equality of Opportunity

"establishing a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to Councils and to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers, and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

Monitoring "the fair employment practices of Councils and their compliance with statutory requirements in relation to fair employment."

[Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1992]

Training and Development

"promoting or assisting the development of, or providing, facilities for the training of officers."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972]

Employee Relations

"promoting or assisting the establishment of, or establishing procedures for the negotiation between Councils and officers of Councils, or the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, or associations representing either of them of standard rates of remuneration, or other terms and conditions of employment, for officers of Councils, and recommending the adoption by Councils of rates, terms and conditions so negotiated."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

Advisory and Support Services

"assessing the probable future requirements of Councils and of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for the recruitment of officers."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

Promoting Co-Operation

"promoting co-operation between Councils, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, public bodies, government departments and educational institutions in matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers, and promoting the temporary transfer of officers (with their consent) in pursuance of arrangements made between Councils or between Councils and any such bodies, departments or institutions."

[Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended]

COMMISSION MEMBERS (01 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023)**Chairperson**

Mr Bumper Graham Former Deputy General Secretary, NIPSA

Vice Chairperson

Ms Bernie Kelly Former SDLP Councillor, Belfast City Council
 Former Assistant Director of Physical and Sensory
 Disability Services, Belfast Health and Social Services
 Trust,
 Development Manager, Shared Lives Plus

Members

Mr Charlie Mack Chief Executive, Cranstoun Group

Mrs Hilary Singleton, OBE Former Practising Solicitor

Miss Lindsay Boal Self-Employed Barrister

Ms Monica Burns International Health Development Consultant

Mr Paul Corrigan Independent Investigator and Arbitrator (Former Director of
 Logistics, Royal Mail)
 Non-Executive Director, Northern Health and Social Care
 Trust (from June 2022)

Professor Robert Hutchinson Former Dean of the Ulster Business School and
 Provost University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus

Ms Roisin McDonough Chief Executive, Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Mr William Francey, MBE Former Director of Health & Environmental Services,
 Belfast City Council

COMMISSION OFFICERS

The functions of the Staff Commission are managed by staff as follows:

DIANA STEWART

Director of Corporate Services

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Commission's Management Plan and the Management of Resources

VIVIEN DAVIDSON

Accounting & Dissolution Officer

Responsible for financial services and dissolution activities