



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# The Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat

A large, classical-style building with a prominent portico supported by columns, situated on a grassy hillside under a blue sky with light clouds. The building is the Northern Ireland Assembly building.

Corporate Plan  
2008 - 2011

This document is available in a range of alternative formats.

For more information please contact the  
Northern Ireland Assembly, Printed Paper Office,  
Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX

Tel: 028 9052 1078

# Contents

Foreword	2-3
Aims and Values	4-5
Results	6-7
Customers	8-9
Internal Processes	10-11
Organisational Capability	12-13
NIA Secretariat Strategy Key	14

# Foreword

We are pleased to present this Corporate Plan for the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat which looks ahead with confidence to supporting the business of the Northern Ireland Assembly during the next three years.

In the Autumn of 2007 a comprehensive review of the Assembly Secretariat was undertaken which examined the organisation's structure and processes and provided the Assembly Commission with a framework from which the Secretariat could make a fresh start. The Review included recommendations within key business areas and unveiled a dynamic approach to corporate and business planning.

Using the popular balanced scorecard as a management tool, the Secretariat has been able to encompass four major strategic themes on which our organisation will focus its energies; those of:

- Delivering continuous improvement of support for Members in their work in Plenary sessions, Committees and constituencies;
- Developing a dynamic and responsive strategy for outreach and public engagement;
- Fully and effectively implementing the 2007 Review of the Assembly Secretariat; and
- Managing and developing accommodation to facilitate all of the above.

These themes, underpinned by the Commission's vision, "to be an Assembly that strengthens democracy and engages the people in creating a better future for all", translates our high level aspirations into tangible actions and measures of success across four quadrants of a balanced scorecard.

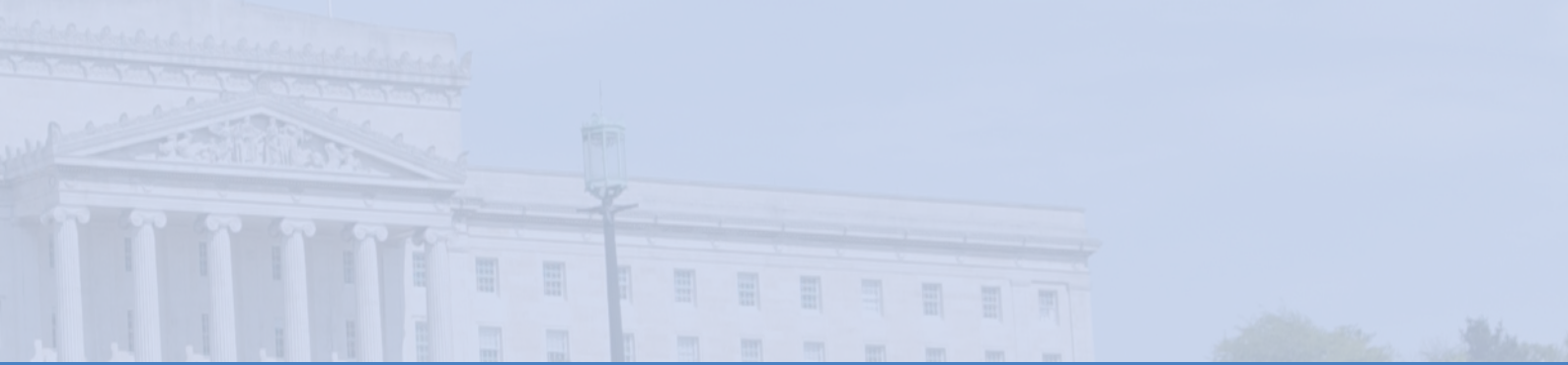
By using this approach the Secretariat has been able to identify **Internal Processes** to be developed and improved at all levels which in turn will enable the efficient operation of the Assembly and, in effect, achieve the desired **Results**. The Secretariat's commitment to its **Customers** is also effectively quantified within this plan and all of this will be delivered by a dedicated and motivated group of staff, measured in **Organisational Capability**.

The guiding principles and beliefs which all staff are expected to demonstrate in their daily work are captured within the following values:

**Professionalism:** Reflected by a commitment to excellence; team-working; and a focus on meeting the needs of elected Members and the public whom the Assembly serves.

**Integrity:** Reflected by political impartiality; honesty, and respect for diversity.

**Accountability:** Reflected by each member of staff taking responsibility for individual, team and corporate performance; and openness and transparency towards the public.



It is vitally important, though, to remember that this three year Plan is a 'living document' and, as such, will be continuously modified in line with developments or changes during its three year term.

Looking to the structure of the organisation, staff tasked with taking forward the substantial workload contained in the Plan may find themselves in new areas and Directorates. The new structure, refocusing the organisation to meet future challenges, will, in the near future, consist of a new Director General, supported by four new directorates. It is envisioned that this new structure will enable work to be efficiently progressed on issues such as developing an engagement strategy, delivering accommodation for the Assembly's needs, developing a new pay and grading system and terms and conditions for all Assembly staff.

In presenting this three year plan we would like to pay tribute to the staff of the Assembly Secretariat. Through their commitment and professionalism Members of the Assembly and the Northern Ireland public are provided with the services they need, delivered to the highest standards.



The Speaker



Interim Clerk/  
Director General

# Aims and Values

## The Purpose of the Assembly Commission:

The Commission's purpose is to support the Assembly and its Members in their role as elected representatives and legislators, and to facilitate engagement between the Assembly and the public.

## The Vision of the Assembly Commission:

The Commission's vision is of an Assembly that strengthens democracy and engages the people in creating a better future for all.

## The Commission's Strategic Priorities:

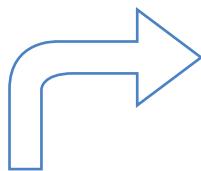
1. The delivery and continuous improvement of support for Members in their work in Plenary sessions, Committees and constituencies.
2. The development of a dynamic and responsive strategy for outreach and public engagement.
3. The full and effective implementation of the 2007 Review of the Assembly Secretariat.
4. The management and development of accommodation to facilitate all of the above.

## The Values of the Assembly Commission:

1. **Professionalism**  
(reflected by a commitment to excellence; team-working; and a focus on meeting the needs of elected Members and the public whom the Assembly serves)
2. **Integrity**  
(reflected by political impartiality; honesty, and respect for diversity)
3. **Accountability**  
(reflected by each member of staff taking responsibility for individual, team and corporate performance; and openness and transparency towards the public)



# To support the Assembly and its Members in their role as elected representatives and legislators, and to facilitate engagement between the Assembly and the public



**Results**

- R1: To facilitate effective operation of the Assembly.
- R2: To encourage Citizen Engagement with the Assembly.
- R3: To ensure the efficient operation of the Assembly.
- R4: To improve the understanding and perception of the Assembly.

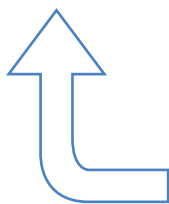
**Customers**

- C1: To support members in fulfilling their parliamentary duties.
- C2: To satisfy needs of all who engage with the Assembly.
- C3: To improve access.

**An Assembly that strengthens democracy and engages the people in creating a better future for all.**

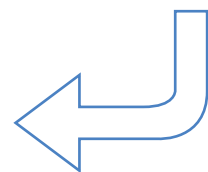
**Organisational Capability**

- OC1: To have in place the dedicated, trained and competent group of staff needed to meet the Assembly needs.
- OC2: To have in place agreed Pay & Grading and Terms & Conditions to meet the Assembly needs.
- OC3: To complete implementation of the appropriate structures to support the effective operation of the Assembly.
- OC4: To put in place good governance arrangements including compliance.
- OC5: To embed the values within the Assembly.
- OC6: To have well motivated staff.



**Internal Processes**

- IP1: To ensure business continuity.
- IP2: To improve key business processes.
- IP3: To develop Sustainability Strategy.
- IP4: To develop an Information Strategy.
- IP5: To improve Communications.
- IP6: To develop effective Partnership arrangements.



# Results

Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
R1: To facilitate the effective operation of the Assembly.	Business as planned.	100%	100%	100%	Plenary meetings go ahead as scheduled.
		100%	100%	100%	Committee Meetings as scheduled.
	Support Services in Place.	✓			Identify Key business standards.
	Directorate Standards met.		✓	✓	Monitor key business standards.
	Business Continuity Plan in place.	✓			Assess extent of business continuity planning in place.
			✓		Develop Business Continuity plans for all areas.
				✓	Complete corporate Business Continuity Plan.
R2: To encourage Citizen Engagement with the Assembly.	Engagement strategy in place.	Third Quarter			Engagement strategy to include targets for number of visitors, website usage, attendance at Committee meetings, demographic and other spreads of activity, MLA involvement and school involvement.
	Engagement Strategy implemented.		✓	✓	
R3: To ensure the efficient operation of the Assembly.	Budget Compliance.	Spend within 5%	Spend within 5%	Spend within 5%	Establish a programme of benchmarking against functional areas.
	Efficiency targets in place.	✓			Set efficiency targets, monitor and review.
	Unqualified Audit opinion.	✓	✓	✓	Review VFM Audit report.
		✓	✓	✓	Develop a VFM Strategy.
	Improved Internal Audit Reports.	✓	✓		Set targets for internal review reports.





Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
R4: To improve the understanding and perception of the Assembly.	Engagement strategy in place.	Third Quarter			Engagement strategy to include proposals for: developing a visitor survey, national survey, media monitoring, and to develop a public information strategy.
			✓		Implement a staff survey.
			✓		Set further targets.

# Customers

Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
C1: To support members in fulfilling their parliamentary duties.	Member Survey.	✓			Develop survey to include needs analysis.
			✓		Carry out survey.
				✓	Develop response plan.
	Support Services in place.	✓			Identify key business standards.
			✓		Monitor key business standards.
	Induction programme in place for MLAs.			✓	Identify and implement improvements to induction.
	Complaints Management System in place.		✓		Develop Complaints Management System for Members.
C2: To satisfy needs of all who engage with the Assembly.	Engagement Strategy in place.	Third Quarter			Develop Engagement Strategy.
	Engagement Strategy implemented.		✓		
	Customer Service Standards in place.	✓			Develop and put in place Customer Service Standards.
	Compliance with Customer Service standards.		90%	90%	
	Website review complete.	March 09			
	Website Review recommendations implemented.		✓		
	Accommodation requirement specified.		✓		
	Complaints management system in place.		✓		Develop complaints management system for the public.



Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
C3: To improve access.	Engagement Strategy in Place.	Third quarter			
	Language policy in place.		✓		Review facilities for frequent visitors and develop and publish a language policy.
	Website review complete and actions implemented.		✓		
	DDA Action Plan implemented.	✓			
	Equality Scheme implemented.	✓			
	Press Office in place.	✓			
	Appropriate Transport Links in place.	✓			Engage with transport authorities to review timing/frequency.
	Accommodation requirements specified.	First quarter	✓		Develop proposals to improve reception area.

# Internal Processes

Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
IP1: To ensure business continuity.	Assembly Business Conducted as scheduled.	100%	100%	100%	
	Business Continuity Plan in place.	✓			Assess extent of Business continuity planning in place.
			✓		Develop Business Continuity plans for all areas.
				✓	Complete corporate Business Continuity Plan.
	Emergency plan in place.		✓		Take forward Critical Incident Planning with emergency services.
	Corporate planning/ business planning conducted to corporate timetable.	100%	100%	100%	Business plans in place as per corporate targets.
IP2: To improve key business processes.	Process Review Programme in place.	✓			Process Maps for key business processes: plenary business, committee servicing, HR processes, publications – completed and areas for improvement identified.
			✓	✓	Implementation of improvements.
			✓		Programme of ongoing reviews planned.
	Review of Secretariat Implemented.	✓	✓	✓	As per review programme.
IP3: To develop Sustainability Strategy.	Strategy in place.		✓		Develop Targets once strategy in place – to include carbon footprint, energy consumption and paper usage.
	Sustainability Officer appointed.	✓			

Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives	
IP4: To develop an Information Strategy.	Information strategy in place.	Second quarter			Agree scope of an information strategy.	
	IT Strategy in place.	✓	Third quarter		Strategy in place.	
IP5: To improve Communications.	<b>External</b> Media Monitoring proposals in place.		✓		Targets to be developed as part of engagement strategy, inc review of public info literature.	
	Household Survey proposals in place.		✓			
	Website upgraded.		✓			
	<b>Internal</b> Staff Survey conducted.			✓		Develop staff survey.
				✓	✓	Implement staff survey.
	Reduction in number of FOI requests from staff.		10%	10%	10%	
			4th quarter			Put a proposal on FOI disclosure log to Commission.
			✓			Internal communications group to report with recommendations to IMB.
IP6: To develop effective Partnership arrangements.	Joint initiatives/ collaborations.	✓			Develop measures for joint initiatives/partnerships etc.	
	Engagement strategy.	✓	✓		Engagement strategy to be developed and implemented.	
	Good relations strategy in place.	✓	✓		Identify lead on good relations strategy. Strategy in place.	

# Organisational Capability

Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
OC1: To have in place the dedicated, trained and competent group of staff needed to meet the Assembly needs.	% Staff directly employed by Assembly.			95%	
	Performance Management System in Place.	✓			Training in new appraisal system.
	Corporate and Directorate Training Plans in place.	✓			Scorecard for each directorate to be developed.
		June 09			Develop and deliver training plan.
OC2: To have in place agreed Pay & Grading and Terms & Conditions to meet the Assembly needs.	Bespoke pay and grading process in place.		Third quarter		To develop a pay and grading system for assembly staff.
	Commission/TUS/Staff Agreement in place.	✓			HR policies on recruitment and starting pay agreed.
	HR Policies on Recruitment, Pay, Succession Planning etc.			✓	HR policies on succession planning, internal promotions and filling posts.
OC3: To complete implementation of the appropriate structures to support the effective operation of the Assembly.	New Structures in place.	✓			
	Clerk/Director General and Directors appointed.	✓			
OC4: To put in place good governance arrangements including compliance.	Review Recommendation in place.	✓	✓	✓	As per Review Plan.
	Unqualified Audit Opinion.	✓	✓	✓	
	Improved Internal Audit reports.	✓	✓	✓	Reductions in poor ratings.
				✓	Good Relations Strategy.
	Compliance monitoring arrangements in place.	✓			Proposals for compliance monitoring.

Objective	Measures of Success	08-09	09-10	10-11	Actions / Initiatives
OC5: To embed the values within the Assembly.	Members survey.	✓			Directors to be given specific responsibility in delegations.
	Staff survey.			✓	Staff survey conducted.
	Performance Management System in place.	✓			Values to be reflected in Directorate plans. Values to be part of performance management system. Values to be included in staff induction and MLA induction.
				✓	Set targets for absenteeism, grievances, turnover.
OC6: To have well motivated staff.	Turnover targets agreed.				Develop proposals for reward recognition scheme.
	Absenteeism targets agreed.				
	Number of Grievances.				
	Training Plan in place.	✓	✓	✓	Training plan in place.
	Staff Survey.			✓	Staff survey conducted.
	Performance Management system in place.	✓			

# NIA Secretariat Strategy Key

<b>Results</b>	Effective Operation of Assembly	Improve Perception	Citizen Engagement	Efficiency		
<b>Customers</b>	Support Members in Parliamentary Duties	Improve Access	Satisfy Needs of those who Engage			
<b>Internal Processes</b>	Partnerships	Business Continuity	Improve Communications	Information Strategy	Process Improvement	Sustainability Strategy
<b>Organisational Capability</b>	Dedicated, Trained, Competent Staff	Implement Pay & Grading	Good Governance	Embed Values	Motivate Staff	Implement Structures





Published by TSO (The Stationery Office) and available from:

**Online**

[www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk)

**Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail**

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0870 600 5522

Fax orders: 0870 600 5533

E-mail: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk)

Textphone 0870 240 3701

**TSO Shops**

16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD

028 9023 8451 Fax 028 9023 5401

71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AZ

0870 606 5566 Fax 0870 606 5588

**TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents**