

Foreword

On behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission I am pleased to present the Assembly's first Report for the period December 1999 – March 2002. This Report represents a very significant milestone in the establishment of democratic structures in Northern Ireland as envisaged in Strand One of the Belfast Agreement. It is common practice for organisations to publish an annual report at the end of each fiscal year. However, the Assembly Commission has been somewhat constrained in bringing forward its first report due to the very uncertain and stop-start political environment which has existed from the very first meeting of the Shadow Assembly on 1 July 1998.

The Assembly Commission is responsible for putting in place and maintaining the necessary corporate infrastructure to support a fully functioning legislative Assembly, and I would pay tribute to the past and current members of the Commission who have worked very hard to meet that objective. I would also like to thank our own Assembly staff for their dedication. They have given their energetic support to ensure that the Assembly, in

plenary and committee, is properly facilitated and that all 108 Members have access to high-quality and responsive services.

The Commission has conducted its business in an open and transparent manner with all minutes being published on the Assembly's web site. In all of its deliberations the Commission has been guided by the principles of equality of opportunity, fair treatment and best value for money.

And now, as we move towards the final year of this current mandate, the Commission is committed to completing its recruitment programme and putting in place the necessary preparations so that the Assembly is ready to receive newly elected Members after the 2003 elections.



Lord Alderdice

The Speaker

