

The Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat Corporate Plan 2008/2011 (Revised 2009)



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Foreword

We are delighted to present this revised Corporate Plan 2008-2011 for the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat. The Plan, originally launched in 2008, has been revised to take account of developments and experience over its first year of implementation.

The past twelve months have been a period of considerable change for the Secretariat. The vast majority of the recommendations from the Secretariat Review Report of 2007 have now been implemented and the few remaining recommendations have been mainstreamed within this revised Plan and its associated Business Plans.

During this period of significant change, support for the work of the Assembly and its Committees, for Members and for visitors has continued to be provided effectively and consistently to a high standard. The staff of the Secretariat deserve high praise for this achievement.

The revised Plan builds on the work completed during its first year and responds to changing needs and developments. At its heart lies the delivery of effective services through a dedicated and motivated team of staff. The Assembly Commission and the Secretariat Management Group are committed to developing and maintaining good industrial relations between management and the Trade Union Side (TUS) under the new Joint Agreement between the Commission and TUS.

The vision of the Commission is of an Assembly that strengthens democracy and engages the people in creating a better future for all. We commend the Members of the Commission and the staff of the Secretariat who have shown themselves to be fully committed to ensuring the delivery of that vision with professionalism and commitment.

We are grateful to Commission Members, staff and trade union representatives who have contributed to the revised Plan and commend it to you.



The Speaker



Clerk/Director General

Background

The Assembly Commission and the Secretariat Management Group are responsible for developing the Corporate Plan and for ensuring that its objectives are met. 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 Commission consists of the Speaker and five other Assembly Members:

- Speaker, William Hay MLA (Chair)
- Paul Butler MLA
- Robert Coulter MLA
- Alban Maginness MLA
- Stephen Moutray MLA
- Sean Neeson MLA

The Secretariat Management Group is the top level management forum which advises and supports the Clerk/Director General in the exercise of his duties. It consists of the Clerk/Director General and four Directors:

- Trevor Reaney, Clerk/Director General (Chair)
- Gareth McGrath, Director of Engagement
- John Stewart, Director of Clerking and Reporting
- Richard Stewart, Director of Resources
- Stephen Welch, Director of Properties

When the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat's Corporate Plan for the three year period to 31 March 2011 was published, it was emphasised that this was a "living document" which would be continuously modified in line with developments or changes. The Assembly Commission has undertaken an annual review of the Plan and this revised Plan is the outcome of that process.

A significant range of work has been completed in the past year including:

- the maintenance and development of high quality services to Plenary sittings, Committees and visitors during a period of great organisational change
- a new organisational structure in place
- a new Clerk/Director General and team of Directors appointed
- a major recruitment programme under way
- a new Joint Agreement between the Assembly Commission and the Trade Union Side
- new corporate governance and risk management arrangements in place
- a new Engagement Strategy approved and being implemented
- improvements to internal communications
- a major refurbishment of the Chamber and replacement of the associated camera and audio equipment

One of the strategic themes of the original Corporate Plan was the implementation of the 2007 Review of the Assembly Secretariat. The majority of the Review recommendations have now been implemented leaving those which are longer term and which relate to the separation of the Secretariat from the NI Civil Service, and the recruitment programme. The Commission has agreed that these should be incorporated in the revised Corporate Plan and that a Report be prepared in relation to the implementation of the Review recommendations.

The review of the Corporate Plan indicated that while the Balanced Scorecard is a useful tool in business planning, the strategic objectives could be better focused on business issues rather than the four quadrants of the balanced scorecard. Following consultation with the Commission and all Secretariat staff, it has been agreed that the revised Corporate Plan should be structured around the following Strategic Priorities:

- Supporting Assembly Business
- Engaging the public
- Supporting and developing our staff
- Ensuring the effective governance of the Secretariat
- Accommodating the Assembly

The revised format of the Corporate Plan for the remaining two years reflects these priorities and the progress which has been made in the first year of the Plan. The Corporate Objectives will cascade down into a range of supporting strategies (eg Human Resources; Engagement); into Directorate Business Plans; and ultimately to Personal Performance Agreements.

Our Purpose

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.

Our Vision

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

Our Values

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, discretion 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.

Future Challenges

The main challenges to be addressed by the Assembly Secretariat over the next two years are:

- Development of an independent parliamentary service, including a major recruitment programme
- Improving public engagement
- Accommodation pressures
- Potential resource pressures
- Secretariat preparations for devolution of Policing and Justice
- Preparations for new Assembly mandate in 2011

Strategic Priorities and Associated Corporate Objectives

1 Supporting Assembly Business

This means the effective delivery and continuous improvement of support for Members in their work in Plenary sittings, Committees, constituencies and as Office Holders. To achieve this, we will implement the following Corporate Objectives:

- 1.1 To ensure the effective operation of the Assembly
- 1.2 To ensure the efficient operation of the Assembly
- 1.3 To support Members in fulfilling their Assembly, constituency and office holder duties
- 1.4 To support the Assembly in assessing its effectiveness as the devolved legislature for Northern Ireland
- 1.5 To make preparations for the next Assembly mandate in 2011

2 Engaging the Public

This means the implementation of a dynamic and responsive strategy for outreach and public engagement. To achieve this, we will implement the following Corporate Objectives:

- 2.1 To increase public engagement with the Assembly
- 2.2 To improve the understanding of the role of the Assembly in the governance of Northern Ireland
- 2.3 To ensure effective partnership arrangements
- 2.4 To promote good relations
- 2.5 To improve access to the Assembly and its services

3 Supporting and developing our staff

This means having a dedicated, professional and motivated group of staff to meet the needs of the Assembly. To achieve this, we will implement the following Corporate Objectives:

- 3.1 To develop an independent parliamentary service
- 3.2 To improve the way we communicate with each other
- 3.3 To have in place a dedicated, professional and motivated group of staff to meet the needs of the Assembly
- 3.4 To embed the Corporate Values within the Assembly

4 Ensuring the effective governance of the Secretariat

This means ensuring the effective corporate governance of the Assembly Secretariat. To achieve this, we will implement the following Corporate Objectives:

- 4.1 To ensure delivery of all Secretariat business services
- 4.2 To improve key business processes
- 4.3 To reduce the environmental impact of the Assembly
- 4.4 To ensure effective delivery of IT services
- 4.5 To ensure good governance arrangements including statutory compliance
- 4.6 To have effective risk management arrangements in place
- 4.7 To ensure effective information management
- 4.8 To ensure the effective, efficient and economic use of resources

5 Accommodating the Assembly

This means the provision of accommodation which meets the needs of the Assembly, its staff and its visitors. To achieve this, we will implement the following Corporate Objective:

- 5.1 To seek to provide appropriate accommodation which meets the needs of all buildings users and visitors

Risk Management

A number of risks have been identified which may impact on the achievement of the Corporate Objectives. These are managed as described in the Corporate Risk Register. Risk owners report twice yearly, and more frequently if necessary, to the Clerk/Director General to provide assurance that these risks are being managed effectively. The Corporate Risk Register is a living document which is reviewed on a regular basis.

Financial Requirements

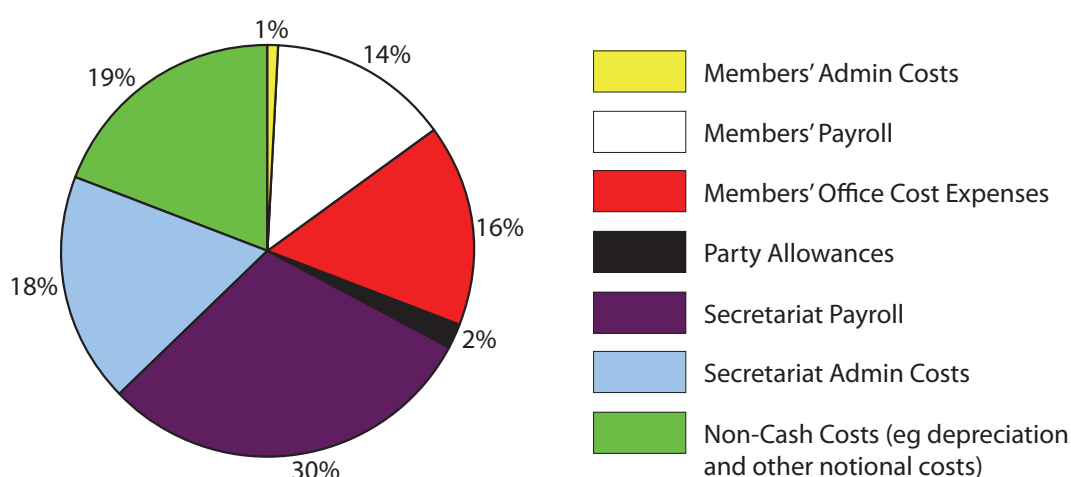
The Commission is mindful of the need for the efficient and effective use of all resources in order to ensure value for money. It has estimated that the following financial resources are required to deliver the Corporate Plan.

	Revenue Expenditure £m	Capital Expenditure £m	Total Expenditure £m
2009/2010	51.7	3.5*	55.2
2010/2011	54.2	3.7*	57.9

Note: * Indicative figures based on current capital forecasts. A number of intended projects require further analysis including the development of business cases and, in some instances, approval by the Assembly Commission.

The allocation of revenue expenditure to Assembly Secretariat functions is as follows:

Assembly Resource Expenditure 2009/2010 (% of estimated total of £51.7m)



In addition, capital expenditure is forecast at £3.5m for 2009/2010.

Business Plan

Detailed objectives for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 which relate to the Corporate Objectives are contained in the following Corporate Business Plan.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat Business Plan (2009/2011)

1
**Supporting
Assembly
Business**

2
**Engaging
the Public**

3
**Supporting and
Developing our
Staff**

4
**Ensuring the
Effective
Governance of
the Secretariat**

5
**Accommodating
the Assembly**

**Working
for
You**

Corporate Business Plan 2009/2011

1 Supporting Assembly Business

Corporate Objective		Planned outcome			Lead Responsibility
			2009/2010	2010/2011	
1.1	To ensure the effective operation of the Assembly	Effective support provided for all plenary business	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Clerking and Reporting supported by other Directors
		Effective support provided for all Committee business	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Clerking and Reporting supported by other Directors
		Key business standards monitored	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	All Directors
		Arrangements in place to support the devolution of Policing and Justice	As required	As required	Director of Clerking and Reporting supported by other Directors
		Corporate Business Continuity Plan in place	31 March 2010		Director of Properties supported by other Directors
		Major Incident Management and Recovery Plan in place	31 March 2010		Director of Properties
1.2	To ensure the efficient operation of the Assembly	Budget underspend within 5% of total budget	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Resources supported by other Directors
		Annual efficiency targets set, monitored and reviewed	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Resources supported by other Directors
1.3	To support Members in fulfilling their Assembly, constituency and office holder duties	Member Survey undertaken and recommendations implemented	31 March 2010		Director of Clerking and Reporting
		Feedback system for Members in place	30 September 2009		Director of Clerking and Reporting
		Initial Members' development programme in place	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG supported by Directors
		Members' development programme reviewed and implemented		31 March 2011	Clerk/DG supported by Directors

Corporate Objective		Planned outcome			Lead Responsibility
			2009/2010	2010/2011	
1.4	To support the Assembly in assessing its effectiveness as the devolved legislature for Northern Ireland	Development of a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of the Assembly	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG
1.5	To make preparations for the next Assembly mandate in 2011	Project Team established	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Clerk/DG supported by Directors
		Action Plan developed and implemented			Clerk/DG supported by Directors

Corporate Business Plan 2009/2011

2 Engaging the Public

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome			Lead Responsibility
			2009/2010	2010/2011	
2.1	To increase public engagement with the Assembly	Engagement Strategy recommendations implemented	31 March 2010 (50%)	31 March 2011 (80%)	Director of Engagement
		Review of public facing telephony services:			Director of Engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review complete • Recommendations implemented 	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Engagement
		Feedback system for the public and visitors developed	30 September 2009		Director of Engagement
2.2	To improve the understanding of the role of the Assembly in the governance of Northern Ireland	Review of Education Service completed and recommendations implemented	30 November 2009		Director of Engagement
		Annual Assembly Road Shows to be held	31 October 2009	31 October 2010	Director of Engagement
2.3	To ensure effective partnership arrangements	Effective ongoing support for existing parliamentary partnerships eg BIPA, NIABT, CPA, CALRE etc	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Engagement
		Support for Commission in progressing North/South Parliamentary Forum	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG
2.4	To promote Good Relations	Good Relations Strategy developed	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG
		Good Relations Strategy implemented		31 March 2011	Clerk/DG
2.5	To improve access to the Assembly and its services	Contribute to achieving adequate transport links to Parliament Buildings for staff and visitors	31 March 2010		Director of Properties
		Language policy in place	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG

Corporate Business Plan 2009/2011

3 Supporting and Developing our Staff

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome			Lead Responsibility	
			2009/2010	2010/2011		
3.1	To develop an independent parliamentary service	Pay and Grading system developed	30 September 2009		Director of Resources	
		Pay and Grading system implemented	31 March 2010		Director of Resources	
		Terms and Conditions of Employment developed and implemented	31 March 2010		Director of Resources	
		Recruitment				
		(a) 85% of staff directly employed by the Assembly	31 March 2010			Director of Resources
		(b) 95% of staff directly employed by the Assembly			31 March 2011	Director of Resources
		Non HR separation issues addressed (eg IT etc)	31 March 2010			Director of Resources
3.2	To improve the way we communicate with each other	Internal Communications Audit conducted	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Clerk/DG	
		Recommendations from Internal Communications Audit implemented			Clerk/DG and Directors	
3.3	To have in place a dedicated, professional and motivated group of staff to meet the needs of the Assembly	Annual Directorate Training Plans implemented	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Clerk/DG and Directors	
		Attendance targets agreed and monitored	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Resources	
		Annual staff survey undertaken and Action Plan implemented	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Resources supported by Clerk/DG and other Directors	
		Feedback system in place for staff	30 September 2009		Clerk/DG	
		Effective operation of Joint Agreement between the Commission and Trade Union Side	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Resources	
3.4	To embed the Corporate Values within the Assembly	Guidance on practical application of Values developed and implemented	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG and Directors	

Corporate Business Plan 2009/2011

4 Ensuring the Effective Governance of the Secretariat

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome			Lead Responsibility
			2009/2010	2010/2011	
4.1	To ensure delivery of all Secretariat business services	Corporate Planning/ Business Planning conducted to corporate timetable and Plans implemented	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Clerk/DG supported by Directors
4.2	To improve key business processes	Training provided in relation to Process Mapping	30 September 2009	31 March 2011	Director of Resources
		Process maps prepared	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG and all Directors
		Implementation of improvements identified in mapping of key business processes			Clerk/DG and all Directors
4.3	To reduce the environmental impact of the Assembly	Sustainability Strategy: (a) developed	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Properties supported by Director of Resources
		(b) implemented			Director of Properties supported by Director of Resources
		(c) Annual measurement (baseline) of environmental impact reduction			Director of Properties supported by Director of Resources
4.4	To ensure effective delivery of IT services	IT Strategy developed and implemented	31 March 2010		Director of Resources
4.5	To ensure good governance arrangements including statutory compliance	Compliance with statutory duties in respect of Equality, FOI, DDA, DPA etc monitored and reviewed annually	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Clerk/DG
		Unqualified Audit Opinion achieved	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Resources
		Improvement in overall level of assurance provided by Internal Audit Reports	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Clerk/DG supported by Directors

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome			Lead Responsibility
			2009/2010	2010/2011	
4.6	To have effective risk management arrangements in place	Corporate Risk Register reviewed	Monthly	Monthly	Clerk/DG supported by Directors
		Assurance Statements received from Corporate Risk Owners	Twice yearly	Twice yearly	Clerk/DG supported by Directors
4.7	To ensure effective information management	Development and implementation of an Action Plan arising from policy in relation to Protective Marking	31 March 2010		Clerk/DG
		Development of Records Management Policy	30 June 2009		Clerk/DG
		Development and implementation of an Action Plan in relation to Records Management Policy		31 March 2011	Clerk/DG
4.8	To ensure the effective, efficient and economic use of resources	Implementation of VFM Action Plan	31 March 2010		Director of Resources supported by other Directors

Corporate Business Plan 2009/2011

5 Accommodating the Assembly

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome			Lead Responsibility
			2009/2010	2010/2011	
5.1	To seek to provide appropriate accommodation which meets the needs of all buildings users and visitors	Accommodation Audit of Parliament Buildings and Annexe C complete	30 April 2009		Director of Properties
		Accommodation Audit recommendations implemented	31 March 2010	31 March 2011	Director of Properties
		Development of Action Plan for improvement of visitor facilities within existing accommodation	31 March 2010		Director of Engagement supported by Director of Properties
		Future use of Ormiston House agreed by Assembly Commission	31 March 2010		Director of Properties

2009/2011 Objectives under Balanced Scorecard Categories

RESULTS

- 1.1 To ensure the effective operation of the Assembly
- 1.2 To ensure the efficient operation of the Assembly
- 1.3 To support Members in fulfilling their Assembly, constituency and office holder duties
- 1.4 To support the Assembly in assessing its effectiveness as the devolved legislature for Northern Ireland
- 1.5 To make preparations for the next Assembly mandate in 2011
- 5.1 To seek to provide appropriate accommodation which meets the needs of all buildings users and visitors

CUSTOMERS

- 2.1 To increase public engagement with the Assembly
- 2.2 To improve the understanding of the role of the Assembly in the governance of Northern Ireland
- 2.3 To ensure effective partnership arrangements
- 2.4 To promote Good Relations
- 2.5 To improve access to the Assembly and its services

INTERNAL PROCESSES

- 4.1 To ensure delivery of all Secretariat business services
- 4.2 To improve key business processes
- 4.3 To reduce the environmental impact of the Assembly
- 4.4 To ensure the effective delivery of IT services
- 4.5 To ensure good governance arrangements including statutory compliance
- 4.6 To have effective risk management arrangements in place
- 4.7 To ensure effective information management
- 3.2 To improve the way we communicate with each other
- 4.8 To ensure the effective, efficient and economic use of resources

ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

- 3.1 To develop an independent parliamentary service
- 3.3 To have in place a dedicated, professional and motivated group of staff to meet the needs of the Assembly
- 3.4 To embed the Corporate Values within the Assembly

Notes



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