

**Parades Commission for Northern Ireland**

**Annual Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 March 2024**



# **Parades Commission for Northern Ireland**

**Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024**

**for the period 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024**

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to Schedule 1 paragraphs 12 and 13 of  
the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998**

**Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed on 23 July 2024**



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E-number: E03120767  
ISBN: 978-1-5286-4855-4

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

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## **FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR**

I am pleased to present this Annual Report on behalf of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland. It covers the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, spanning both the tenures of new Commission members appointed on 1 January 2024 and Commissioners whose terms of office ended on 31 December 2023 and 31 March 2024.

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the former Chair, the Very Reverend Graham Forbes CBE, and Commissioners Joelle Black, Marian Cree and Eimear McAllister whose significant contribution to the work of the Commission is much appreciated. The current Commissioners and I look forward to building upon their valuable work in the coming period.

The year under review saw a small increase in the number of notified parades and parade-related protests, including those deemed sensitive. The Commission noted an increased number of notifications in the latter part of the year, due to events in the Middle East.

The Commission continued to carry out its statutory functions in an independent manner throughout the year, giving careful consideration to all relevant factors, including representations made by relevant stakeholders. We appreciate the engagement with local political representatives, community leaders and residents' groups who come to share their views with us, which greatly enhances our decision making. During the year the Commission also carried out a successful community engagement event in Downpatrick which was well attended by all sections of the community.

Commissioners and staff regularly monitor parades and protests, noting that generally there is good compliance with the Code of Conduct.

The Commission will continue its efforts this year to consider all notified parades and protests in a timely manner and aims to ensure that parading can continue to take place in a peaceful and collaborative manner with respect and dialogue at its heart. Finally, I would also like to thank the Commission's excellent staff who do a great job in serving the Commission in its work, and to wish Sarah Teer, Secretary until 31 December 2023, every success in her new role.

**Professor Evelyn Collins CBE**

## **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Parades Commission was established on 27 March 1997, initially as a non-statutory body. The Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, amended by the Public Processions (Amendment) Northern Ireland Order 2005, gives the Commission statutory responsibilities in relation to regulating public processions and related protests.

The Parades Commission operates from a single site in Belfast City Centre. Contact details are as follows:

Parades Commission  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Andras House  
60 Great Victoria Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7BB  
Telephone: 028 9089 5900  
E-mail [info@paradescommissionni.org](mailto:info@paradescommissionni.org)  
Web: [www.paradescommission.org](http://www.paradescommission.org)

The Commission's statutory role is set out in the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. Section 2 (1) of that Act provides that:

"It shall be the duty of the Commission –

- a) to promote greater understanding by the general public of issues concerning public processions;
- b) to promote and facilitate mediation as a means of resolving disputes concerning public processions;
- c) to keep itself generally informed as to the conduct of public processions and protest meetings;
- d) to keep under review, and make such recommendations as it thinks fit to the Secretary of State concerning, the operation of the Act."

Section 2(2) provides that:

"The Commission may in accordance with the provisions of this Act:

- a) facilitate mediation between parties to particular disputes concerning proposed public processions and take such other steps as appear to the Commission to be appropriate for resolving disputes; and
- b) issue determinations in respect of particular proposed public processions."

The Commission is made up of six Commissioners, including a Chair, with the exception of the period 1 January 2024 until 31 March 2024, when only five were appointed. The Commissioners are appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. A secretariat supports the Commission in the delivery of its statutory responsibilities as set out in the Act.

The Secretary to the Commission was Sarah Teer, from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. Ralph Roche was appointed Secretary on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024. Two members of the Secretariat served as joint Secretary in the intervening period. The



Secretary is responsible for the effective operation of the secretariat and for managing its financial and human resources.

The Secretariat is responsible for providing advice and support to the Chair and Commissioners in support of their aims and objectives, and in undertaking their statutory responsibilities. The Secretariat had an average of six staff in post over the year. The Commission also made use of services provided by external professionals such as media services, auditors and an accountant.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Under paragraph 12 (1) of Schedule 1 to the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, as amended by the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 (Accounts and Audit) Order 1998, the Commission is required to:

- (a) keep proper accounts and proper records in relation to the accounts; and
- (b) prepare a statement of accounts in respect of each financial year of the Commission.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with a direction issued by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) under the 1998 Act. The accounts incorporate a Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, a Statement of Financial Position, a Statement of Cash Flows, a Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and related notes.

## **GOING CONCERN**

The Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2024 shows net liabilities of £59,074 (2023: £110,653). In addition, there are lease liabilities committed for future years of £79,845 (2023: £23,553).

The Commission prepares financial statements in accordance with the FReM, which has adapted going concern for non-trading entities to be based on the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, as evidenced by inclusion of financial provision for that service in published documents.

The Commission's sponsoring body is the Northern Ireland Office as laid out in the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. The Commission's budget for 2024-25 has been approved by the Northern Ireland Office, and we received a three-year financial settlement as part of the UK Government Spending Review covering the period 2022-25. Due to this Spending Review ending on 31 March 2025, the Commission has also prepared a budget out to 30 September 2025 and has engaged with the Northern Ireland Office as its sponsoring body who have provided a letter of support that confirms the provision of financial support to the Commission by the Northern Ireland Office, to assist it in meeting its liabilities as and when they fall due, but only to the extent that money is not otherwise available to the Commission to meet such liabilities for a period to 30 September 2025.

The Northern Ireland Office have confirmed that they have the ability to provide such support and will provide this support to the Commission, to the extent outlined above, for the period to 30 September 2025.

As a result at the date of this report, with this letter of support in place, the Accounting Officer has considered it appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the 2023-24 financial statements.

## PARADING ACTIVITIES

The current legislation requires that all public processions, with the exception of funerals and Salvation Army organised parades, are notified to the police at least 28 days before the date of the parade. Parade related protests are required to be notified to the police at least 14 days before the date of the parade. These notices are then passed on to the Parades Commission. Notifications can be submitted manually at a Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) station or by using the on-line notification function on the website [www.paradescommission.org](http://www.paradescommission.org)

This reporting period has seen public processions and procession related protests increase to close to pre pandemic levels.

There was an increase (271) in the number of notified parades and parade related protests taking place during 2023-24 when compared with the previous year.

Table 1: detailed breakdown of Parades and Parade related protests notified to take place during the reporting period

Parades and Parade related protests	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Total notifications received:	3,856	3,585	2,488
Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist notifications	2,676	2,558	1,846
Catholic/Republican/Nationalist notifications	99	92	42
"other" notifications*	1,081	935	600
Total notifications considered sensitive:	192	177	141
Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist sensitive**	150	162	135
Catholic/Republican/Nationalist sensitive	1	1	2
"others"	41	14	4
Number of parades or parade-related protests with conditions imposed:	145	154	120
Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist sensitive**	141	152	118
Catholic/Republican/Nationalist sensitive	1	1	2
"others"	3	1	0

\*Other category includes charity, civic, rural and sporting events, as well as church parades. Collectively, these constituted 28 percent of the overall total number of parades.

\*\*Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) sensitive parades include 51 notified weekly protest parades in Portadown.

### **Sensitive Parades and Parade Related Protests**

Some parades and parade related protests are deemed “sensitive” as they have the potential to raise concerns and community tensions. In making its decisions, the Commission seeks to balance the conflicting rights of different groups within the statutory criteria laid down in the legislation. It approaches all “sensitive parades” independently and fairly.

In 2023-24, 145 parades and parade-related protests were subject to restrictions (2022-23:154 and 2021-22:120). The type of restrictions placed on parades or parade related protests include the route, size and timing of a parade or parade related protest, type of music to be played, behaviour and dress code.

The Commission’s overall objective is to help bring about a situation in which parades can take place peacefully in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

### **KEY ISSUES AND RISKS THAT COULD AFFECT THE COMMISSION IN DELIVERY OF ITS OBJECTIVES**

The principal risk identified is anything that would prevent the Commission from discharging its statutory duties in respect of notified processions and related protests. The highest-ranking risks relate to our infrastructure, including provision and maintenance of IT systems, financial risks due to increased costs and protection of information. We will continue to engage with all stakeholders to encourage them to adhere to their obligations as per the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

Within the executive processes of the Parades Commission, there is embedded a corporate risk register in line with Government guidance. Risks are identified, assessed in terms of likelihood and impact, and then ranked in terms of priority.

The risk register is kept under constant review and updated as necessary. Management considers signs or warnings of risks altering, examine existing controls to reduce or manage risks and, if necessary, take additional action.

### **PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

In line with its sponsor department, the Northern Ireland Office, the Commission took an outcomes-based accountability approach to its business planning this year. The below table details its key objectives, activities, performance measures and outcomes.

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Parades notifications are processed and published on the Commission website in a timely manner</b>
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Process and publish all parade notifications on the Commission website</li><li>● Hold formal meetings throughout the year for full consideration of sensitive parades</li><li>● Gather information and evidence to ensure it takes into account all relevant</li></ul>

	factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft determinations/decisions, where appropriate, following full consideration of all factors</li> <li>● Issue determinations/decisions in a timely manner</li> </ul>
Measures	Outputs
# of notifications processed and uploaded to PCNI website	3760 *this includes parades processed during the reporting period notified to take place outside the reporting parade. 3856 parades were notified to take place during this period (this does not include those that were withdrawn by the organiser).
# of sensitive notifications considered by the Commission	192 sensitive notifications considered during the reporting period (185 of which were notified to take place during the reporting period).
# of determinations/decisions issued within 5 days of the Commission meeting	192

Objective 2	A greater understanding by the public of issues concerning public processions
Key activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include context to determinations/decisions to provide background to the decision-making process and aid understanding</li> <li>● Make ourselves available for engagement with stakeholders and all members of society</li> <li>● Respond to media enquiries and other correspondence, as appropriate</li> <li>● Initiate survey work with NI Life and Times</li> </ul>
Measures	Outputs
# of determinations which contain context to the Commission's decision-making process	145 *there were 41 no action letters issued
# of media enquiries dealt with	21
Trend change in attitude/perception of the general public on the stability of parading in Northern Ireland	Life and Times Survey results

Objective 3	The Commission is kept informed of parading issues, including the conduct of public processions and protest meetings
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage proactively with parade and protest organisers, elected and community representatives and other stakeholders</li> <li>Gather information and evidence to ensure the Commission has a comprehensive range of data on which to base decisions</li> <li>Observe identified parades and prepare reports on the conduct of those parades</li> <li>Monitor media reports and statements relating to processions and protest meetings and attend relevant events</li> </ul>
Measures	Outputs
# of sensitive parades where the Commission had engagement with stakeholders  # of parades observed  # of observer reports prepared	185  26 (however some of these parades included multiple notifications for 12th July)  26 updates provided at Commission meetings and recorded in Minutes

Objective 4	Mediation is promoted and used as a means to resolve parading disputes
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore mediation in areas where local agreement has not been reached, to ensure that the parties are made aware of the benefits of dialogue</li> <li>Facilitate mediation where appropriate</li> </ul>
Measures	Outputs
# of parading disputes in which mediation is facilitated	The Commission has had significant engagement with stakeholders and has continued to undertake outreach. Formal mediation is taking place in one area with a report expected from Mediation NI once completed.

Objective 5	Effective succession planning for the appointment of Commissioners and Secretariat staff
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staffing levels are adequate to discharge functions</li> <li>Advertise Secretariat vacancies in a timely manner</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify when vacancies in the Commission are likely to arise and liaise with NIO with regard to replacements</li> <li>• Ensure a suitable induction programme is in place and is provided to all Commissioners and members of the Secretariat</li> </ul>
Measure	Outputs
# of secretariat vacancies unfilled for one month or more	1
# and % of Commissioner vacancies	0
% of staff and Commissioners who complete mandatory training	Due to changes in Commissioners and Secretariat staff from January – March, training has been moved to Qtr 2 of 2024.

Objective 6	High standards of governance and stewardship maintained
Key activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Risk Committee meet on a regular basis</li> <li>• Ensure adequate and appropriate systems are in place</li> <li>• Regularly review and monitor progress against the Business Plan</li> <li>• Regularly review and update Risk Register</li> <li>• Complete Stewardship statements</li> <li>• Attend governance meetings with Sponsor body</li> <li>• Completion of Annual Report and Accounts in a timely manner</li> <li>• Implementation of audit recommendations</li> <li>• Training for Commissioners and Secretariat</li> <li>• Completion of Audit Self-Assessment</li> <li>• Completion of Commissioners' self-assessment audit</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of budget to ensure spend within budget</li> </ul>
Measure	Outputs

# of Audit and Risk Committee meetings	4
# of Internal Audit Reports with an overall rating of satisfactory	2
% spend against budget	The Commission finished the financial year in a 4.39% underspend position.
Completion and publication of Annual Report and Accounts as per statute	Completed. Annual Report and Account published and laid before parliament July 2023.

## SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Commission has received a *de minimis* exemption from reporting on the full spectrum of sustainability requirements on the grounds that it is an Arms Length body with a staff complement of 6.5 and a floor space of 175m<sup>2</sup>.

The Commission has a recycling policy that involves the recycling of dry office waste, recycling of print cartridges and using electronic means of communication were possible.

The Secretariat has developed an action plan to reduce the reliance on paper within the office practices using an electronic document record management system. The Commission uses a web-based system for providing meeting papers to Commissioners and as a default uses e-mail rather than hard copy correspondence were possible.

From March 2015, parade and protest organisers are able to notify parades and parade-related protests on-line, reducing use of paper. The number of on-line notifications in 2023-24 was 75 per cent of total notifications, with 25 per cent being submitted in hard copy via the PSNI.

Over the reporting period the Commission has moved to a hybrid work model reducing the carbon footprint of staff and Commissioners travelling to the office, also resulting in the reduction in use of electricity.

The Commission used 9107 units of electricity with a total spend on electricity of £2,903.

The Commission encourages the use of carpools and public transport for travelling to business engagements.

Over the reporting period the Commission's total spend on business related travel was £4,498. This was a decrease on last year's spend due to new Commissioners not requiring flights and accommodation for the last quarter of the year.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ralph Roche". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and slightly larger than the rest of the letters.

**R Roche**  
**Secretary and**  
**Accounting Officer**

**18 July 2024**



## **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

### **Background**

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office. Created on 27 March 1997, its statutory responsibilities are set out in the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, as amended by the Public Processions (Amendment) Northern Ireland Order 2005.

The Budget for the Commission is set by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the financial activities form part of the NIO Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) and Capital DEL estimates. In 2023-24, the Commission was allocated a budget of £771,156. Efficiencies were achieved during 2023-24 due to the Secretary position not being filled for the last quarter of the year and the continued reduction of a full-time member of administration staff to a six-month agency recruitment. Some Commission meetings took place virtually and new Commissioners being based locally reduced travel expenses. This resulted in reduced funding of £737K being received from NIO.

The Directors of the Commission comprise the Secretary and the Commissioners. Sarah Teer was appointed Secretary and Accounting Officer on 1 July 2020 until 31 December 2023, Susan Senior was appointed Interim Accounting Officer from January 2024 until 3 May 2024, when the new Secretary, Ralph Roche, was appointed.

### **ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF THE PARADES COMMISSION**

The Chair is required to attend and chair Commission meetings, ensuring that these meetings are at appropriate intervals. The Chair must develop policy and provide strategic direction to the Commission to enable the effective and efficient performance of its statutory duties. The Chair must ensure personal and corporate compliance with the Code of Practice for Members of the Commission. The Chair must accept corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Commission complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for its use of public resources (including the promotion of regularity, propriety and value for money). The Chair shall assess the effectiveness and performance of the individual members of the Commission and report those assessments to the NIO.

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Members are appointed by the NIO. The term of appointment for the outgoing commission was from 1 January 2021, with the exception of Mr Billy Gamble who started on 1 March 2021. From January 2024 a new Commission was appointed on a three-year term, with the exception of Ms Joelle Black who was appointed until 31 March 2024. From 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024, membership of the Commission was as follows:

<b>Commission Members</b>	
<b>Membership 1 April 2023 - 31 December 2023</b>	<b>Membership 1 January 2024 – 31 March 2024</b>
Very Revd Dr Graham Forbes (Chair)	Prof Evelyn Collins CBE (Chair)
Ms Joelle Black	Ms Joelle Black
Mr Derek Wilson	Mr Derek Wilson

Mr Billy Gamble	Mr Billy Gamble
Ms Marian Cree	Ms Nicola Rountree
Ms Eimear McAllister	

**VERY REVD DR GRAHAM FORBES (Chair) (1 April 2023 - 31 December 2023)**

The Very Revd Dr Graham Forbes CBE is a retired Anglican clergyman and former Provost of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh. His wide variety of public appointments include Chair of Court, Edinburgh Napier University, and Chair of the Scottish Committee of University Chairs. A former member of the Parole Board, he served as HM (Lay) Inspector of Constabulary, as Chair of Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission, and also as a member of the Security Vetting Appeals Panel. Within health he served on the General Medical Council, chaired the Scottish Parliament's Expert Group on the safety of the MMR vaccine and chaired the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. He chaired OSCR, Scotland's charity regulator and was a member of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. He is the Portuguese Honorary Consul in Scotland. He was awarded the CBE in 2003.

**MARIAN CREE (COMMISSIONER) (1 April 2023 - 31 December 2024)**

Marian Cree is Legal Service Oversight Commissioner for Northern Ireland and formerly the Northern Ireland representative at the Competition and Markets Authority.

**EIMEAR Mc ALLISTER (COMMISSIONER) (1 April 2023 - 31 December 2024)**

Eimear Mc Allister has been a barrister in private practice and has worked at a senior level in legal services regulation and in financial dispute resolution. She has held a variety of adjudication roles since 2017 including at High Speed Two, the Health and Care Professions Council and The Appeals Service.

**JOELLE BLACK (COMMISSIONER)**

Joelle was appointed to the Commission in May 2018. Joelle is a Barrister-at-law and has been a Principal Public Prosecutor with the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland since 2008. During this period, Joelle was seconded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to EULEX Kosovo as a Special Prosecutor.

**DEREK WILSON (COMMISSIONER)**

Derek Wilson is a former banker who chaired the Northern Ireland mortgage committee of UK Finance. He currently serves on a number of boards, committees and governing bodies, including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Board where he chairs the Resources and Performance Committee, having previously served on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for over five years. He is the Non-Executive Chair of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency, he is vice Chair the Co-ownership Board, is a member of the governing body of the South Eastern Regional College and serves as a lay member on the Statutory Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society of NI and is an independent member of Belfast City Councils Audit and Risk Panel.

**BILLY GAMBLE (COMMISSIONER)**

Billy Gamble now works as a Strategy Consultant following his retirement as a senior civil servant in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. During his civil service career, he held roles including Director of Equality and Head of Good Relations and

Reconciliation Division in the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, and Director of Regional Planning and Transportation in the Department for Regional Development.

He has previously held a number of board and trustee appointments, including membership of the board of the International Fund for Ireland, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Community Relations Council, the Integrated Education Fund and Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

**PROFESSOR EVELYN COLLINS CBE (CHAIR) (1 January 2024 – 31 March 2024)**

Professor Evelyn Collins CBE is Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Equal Rights Trust, a Trustee on the Board of the Abraham Initiatives UK and a member of the National Statistician's Inclusive Data Advisory Committee. She is an Honorary Professor in the School of Law at Queen's University Belfast. Evelyn was Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland from March 2000 to February 2023. She was Chair of the Board of Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, from October 2013 to October 2017.

**NICOLA ROUNTREE (COMMISSIONER) (1 January 2024 – 31 March 2024)**

Nicola Rountree was appointed to the commission in January 2024. Nicola is a barrister. She was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 2009 and practices in both criminal and family law.

**REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

Commission members and senior secretariat staff are required to provide information of personal or business interests that might be perceived by a reasonable member of the public to influence their judgement in the exercise of their public duty. The Parades Commission maintains a register of interests which is available for public inspection. No interests were declared which may be perceived to conflict with their regulatory role or management responsibilities.

**PERSONAL DATA RELATED INCIDENTS**

There were no personal data related incidents formally reported to the Information Commissioner's Office.

## **REMUNERATION AND STAFF REPORT**

### **REMUNERATION POLICY**

The remuneration of the Chair and Commissioners is determined by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The Parades Commission does not directly employ staff, it seconded staff from the Home Civil Service (HCS), the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) or via the interchange scheme.

For senior civil servants seconded from HCS, the remuneration is set by the Prime Minister, following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries. In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body has regard to the following considerations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their responsibilities;
- regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- Government policies for improving the public services, including the requirement on departments to meet the output targets for the delivery of departmental services;
- the funds available to departments as set out in the Government's departmental expenditure limits; and
- Government's inflation target.

For senior civil servants seconded from NICS, the remuneration is set by the Minister for Finance and Personnel following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries.

Further information about the work of the Review Body can be found at [www.ome.uk.com](http://www.ome.uk.com).

The remuneration of all senior civil servants is entirely performance-related. Performance is appraised by line managers in respect of achievement of agreed objectives.

### **SERVICE CONTRACTS**

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 requires HCS appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Principles published by the Civil Service Commission specify the circumstances when appointments may be made or otherwise. Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Further information about the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at [www.civilservicecommission.org.uk](http://www.civilservicecommission.org.uk) <http://www.nicscommissioners.org/>

NICS appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland's Recruitment Code, which requires appointment to be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made. Unless otherwise stated below, the officials

covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Policy relating to notice periods and termination payments is contained in the NICS Staff Handbook. Further information about the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at [www.nicscommissioners.org](http://www.nicscommissioners.org)

Details of salaries and allowances paid, benefits in kind and accrued pension entitlement are shown below.

### COMMISSIONERS' NUMBERS AND COSTS (AUDITED)

The total emoluments of the Commissioners (including the Chair) during the year ended 31 March 2024 amounted to £157,500 (2022-23: £160,000) and the expenses incurred by the Commissioners were £4,059 (2022-23: £6,645). Both the Chair and Commissioners are non-Northern Ireland Civil Service, therefore their salaries are not pensionable. There was an additional £3,000 in accruals for training of new Commissioners, before their start date of 1 April 2024. The salary received by the Chair and Commissioners for 2023-24 was as follows:

Commission Member	2023-24		2022-23	
	Salary Range £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)	Salary Range £'000	Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)
Graham Forbes (Chair)*	35-40	-	50-55	-
Joelle Black	20-25	-	20-25	-
Marian Cree**	15-20	-	20-25	-
Derek Wilson	20-25	-	20-25	-
Eimear McAllister**	15-20	-	20-25	-
Billy Gamble	20-25	-	20-25	-
Evelyn Collins (Chair)*	10-15	-	-	-
Nicola Rountree**	5-10	-	-	-

\*The full year equivalent salary for the Chair is in the range £50,000 to £55,000

\*\* The full year equivalent salary for a Commissioner is in the range £20,000 to £25,000

The Chair and Commissioners are all appointed for a three-year term.

The Commissioners are expected to devote approximately two days per week to Commission business over the course of a year, with a proportionately greater commitment required during the summer months.

## REMUNERATION (INCLUDING SALARY) AND PENSION ENTITLEMENTS 2022-23 – AUDITED

Single Total Figure of Remuneration										
Officials	Salary (£'000)		Performance Pay or Bonus payments (£'000)		Non-Cash Benefits (to nearest £100)		Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000) (£'000)		Total (£'000)	
	2023-24	2022-23	2023 - 24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23
<b>Sarah Teer</b>	*60 - 65	75 - 80	-	-	-	-	20	15	100 - 105	90 - 95
<b>Susan Senior</b>	45 - 50	-	-	-	-	-	24		69 - 74	-

\*The full year equivalent salary for the Secretary is in the range £80,000 to £85,000

No bonus payments were paid in 2023-24 (2022-23: none).

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

### SALARY

This report is based on accrued payments made by the Commission and thus recorded in these accounts. "Salary" includes gross salary; overtime; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowances to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation.

### BENEFITS IN KIND

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the Parades Commission and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. There were no benefits-in-kind in 2023-24, (2022-23: none).

### BONUSES

Bonuses are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year in which they become payable to the individual. There were no bonuses paid in 2023-24 or 2022-23.

**PENSION BENEFITS**

<b>Pension Entitlements</b>					
	Real increase in pension at pension age and lump sum at 31/3/24	Total accrued pension at pension age at 31/03/24 and related lump sum	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value at 31/03/24	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value at 31/03/23	Real increase in CETV
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Sarah Teer	0-1.5	15-20	239	208	15
Susan Senior	-1	20-25	471	452	11

**PENSION ARRANGEMENTS**

The Secretary and Deputy Secretary are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (the Scheme) which is a funded defined benefit scheme, which provides retirement benefits for Council employees on a “career average revalued earnings” basis from 1 April 2015. Prior to that date benefits were built up on a “final salary” basis.

From 1 April 2015, a member builds up retirement pension at the rate of 1/49<sup>th</sup> pensionable pay for each year. Pension benefits in relation to membership between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2015 were built up at the rate of 1/60<sup>th</sup> pensionable pay for each year of membership. There is no automatic lump sum provided in respect of membership after 31 March 2009. Pension benefits in relation to any membership before 1 April 2009 were built up at the rate of 1/80<sup>th</sup> (pension) and 3/80<sup>ths</sup> (tax-free lump sum) of pensionable pay for each year of membership up to 31 March 2009. At retirement, members may give up some pension for additional lump sum, subject to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) limits. The conversion rate is £12 additional lump sum for every £1 of pension given up.

The scheme is funded by contributions made by both employees and employers. Prior to 1 April 2009, a member's contribution rates were fixed at 6% of their pensionable remuneration (except for those who were entitled to contribute to the Scheme at 5% before 1 February 2003 and have remained in continuous employment). Tiered member contribution rates, determined by the whole-time equivalent rate of pay, were introduced from 1 April 2009. From 1 April 2015, the member contribution rates are determined on the actual rate of pay.

The ranges for the bands for tiered contribution rates are revised by the Department for Communities in April each year in accordance with the increase applied to a pension in payment.

The bands, effective from 1 April 2023 were as follows:

### Employee Contribution Rates

Band	Range	Employee Contribution Rate
1	£0-£16,900	5.5%
2	£16,901- £26,000	5.8%
3	£26,001 – £43,400	6.5%
4	£43,401 - £52,800	6.8%
5	£52,801 - £104,700	8.5%
6	More than £104,700	10.5%

Employers' contributions rates are determined by the fund's actuary every three years at the triennial valuation. A formal triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund for 1 April 2023 was carried out in March 2022 and set the employer contribution rates for the 3 years commencing 1 April 2023 as follows:

### Employer Contribution Rates

Year	Employer Contribution Rate
1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024	19%
1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025	19%
1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026	19%

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 27 June 2014 and The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 30 June 2014. Both sets of regulations are effective from 1 April 2015.

### 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.

### **McCloud Remedy**

Discrimination identified by the courts in the way the 2015 UK Public Sector pension reforms were legislated for has resulted in changes being made to the Scheme by the Department of Communities. Members who fulfil the statutory eligibility criteria and who have relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period. This is known as 'McCloud Remedy and will impact many aspects of the Local Government Pension Scheme. At this stage allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for the remedy as NILGOSC has not received Government Actuary guidance in time for it to do so. It is expected that this will be included in the disclosures for the 2024/25 year. More information on the McCloud Remedy can be found on the NILGOSC website.

### **COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF OFFICE (Audited)**

There were no redundancy or departure costs paid or payable by the Parades Commission in 2023-24 or 2022-23 in respect of Civil Service or other compensation schemes.

### **PAYMENTS TO PAST DIRECTORS (Audited)**

No payments have been made to any person who was not a Director at the time the payment was made, but who had been a Director previously.

### **FAIR PAY DISCLOSURE (Audited)**

The Commission is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the most highly-paid Director, as disclosed in the remuneration table on page 20, in the organisation and the 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

Total remuneration represents salary and allowances as there were no bonuses, performance pay or non-cash benefits provided to employees this year (none in 2022-23). Staff are seconded from other organisations and their remuneration is set in line with the relevant HR policies within those organisations.

	2023-24	2022-23	% change
	Total Remuneration	Total Remuneration	
Band of Highest Paid Director's FYE Total Remuneration	£000 80-85	£000 75-80	6%
Bonuses and Performance Pay	-	-	-
25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	£30,612	£27,421	10%
Ratio 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	2.69	2.83	
Median 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	£35,629	£31,758	11%
Ratio 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	2.32	2.44	
75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	£45,911	£39,922	3%
Ratio 75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	2	1.94	
Total remuneration (excluding pension)	£426,013	£429,846	1%

The highest paid Director in the Parades Commission in the financial year 2023-24 was paid in the band £80,000 - £85,000 (2022-23 was £75,000 - £80,000). In 2023-24, the salary of the highest paid Director, was 2.32 times (2022-23: 2.44 times) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £35,629 (2022-23: £31,758).

From 2022/23 to 2023/24 there was a very minor decrease in the pay ratios (ratio 40<sup>th</sup> percentile 2.44 (22/23) to 2.32 (23/24)). This reflects the pay and benefits of the entity's employees taken as a whole. There has been no change in the Commission's employment model. The Commission believes the median pay ratio for the relevant financial year is consistent with the pay, reward and progression policies for its workforce taken as a whole.

Remuneration ranged from £25,000 to £85,000 (2022-23: £25,000 to £80,000).

The calculations exclude the remuneration to the Commissioners as their employment terms and conditions, including rates of remuneration, are determined by the United Kingdom Government, and the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland is unable to influence those rates. Details of their remuneration are provided above.

**STAFF REPORT****Number of Senior Civil Service Staff**

<b>Grade of Senior Civil Servant</b>	<b>2023-24 Number of Staff</b>	<b>2022-23 Number of Staff</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**Staff Numbers and Costs (Audited)**

The average number of full-time equivalent persons engaged during the year was as follows:

	2023-24				2022-23
	Total	Commissioners*	Seconded Staff	Agency Staff	Total
Directly Engaged	6.00	6.00			6.00
Other	6.1		5.75	0.37	5.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>5.75</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>11.93</b>

\* The Commissioners are expected to devote approximately two days per week to Commission business over the course of a year, with a proportionately greater commitment required during the summer months. Each commissioner is included as one whole-time equivalent person in the above numbers.

			<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>Seconded staff</b>	<b>Agency Staff</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Wages and Salaries	416,046	12,861	428,907	<b>431,603</b>
Social security costs	43,010	-	43,010	<b>45,382</b>
Other pension costs	47,383	-	47,383	<b>48,963</b>
<b>Total net costs</b>	<b>506,439</b>	<b>12,861</b>	<b>519,300</b>	<b>525,948</b>

**Staff Composition**

	<b>2023-24</b>			<b>2022-23</b>		
	Total Average Number of Persons Engaged	Average Number of Female Persons Engaged	Average Number of Male Persons Engaged	Total Average Number of Persons Engaged	Average Number of Female Persons Engaged	Average Number of Male Persons Engaged
<b>Commissioners</b>	6.00	3.00	2.75	6.00	3.00	3.00
<b>Senior Civil Service</b>	0.75	0.75	0	1.00	1.00	0
<b>Secretariat Staff</b>	5.35	2.35	3	5.51	1.93	3.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.10</b>	<b>6.10</b>	<b>5.75</b>	<b>12.51</b>	<b>5.93</b>	<b>6.58</b>

**Average Staff Turnover**

The Commission does not currently employ staff, all members of the Secretariat are on secondment or are agency workers.

The average number of staff movements for full-time equivalent permanent persons employed during the year was as follows:

	<b>2023-24</b>
Joiners	0
Leavers	2
Transfers In from Other Government Bodies	0
Transfers Out to Other Government Bodies	0
Agency Staff	0.37
Net Movement	<hr/> 2.37 <hr/>

This equates to a staff turnover rate of 40%

### **Managing Attendance**

The Parades Commission is comprised of seconded civil servants and manages attendance in line with the policies of secondees' parent departments. Staff absence arising as a result of illness, including injuries, disability or other health problems, was approximately 1 day per employee in 2023-24 (2022-2023:1 day).

### **Disabled Employees**

The Parades Commission aims to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability and that access to employment and career advancement in the Commission is based solely on ability, qualifications and suitability for the post. The Commission complies with all existing legislation in regard to its disabled employees.

### **Equal Opportunities**

In keeping with the NIO Equal Opportunities Policy Statement, everyone in the Parades Commission has the right of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which all staff are encouraged to apply their diverse talents and in which no member of staff feels under threat or intimidation.

### **Employee Involvement**

The Commission does not directly employ staff, all staff are on secondment and the Commission does not contribute to the Civil Service People Survey, however the Commission acknowledges that the maintenance of a highly skilled workforce is key to the future of the business. The Parades Commission is committed to and complies with the policies of equal opportunity and responsibility for employee and career development of all staff.

The Parades Commission recognises the benefits of keeping employees informed of the progress of the business and of involving them in the Commission's performance. During the year the employees were regularly provided with information regarding the financial and economic factors affecting the performance of the Commission and on other matters of concern to them, as employees, through notices and regular staff meetings. All members of the secretariat are required to complete training through the Civil Service Learning platform on areas such as fraud, managing information and inclusion.

As the Commission does not directly employ the Secretariat, policies in relation to pay and benefits are set by the home organisations.

### **Health & Safety**

The Parades Commission recognises its legal responsibilities in relation to the health and safety of its staff and is committed to operating an effective health and safety regime. In line with this commitment the Commission has complied with the relevant legislation.

### **Expenditure on Consultancy**

There was no expenditure on consultancy in 2023-24 (2022-23: £nil).

**Off-payroll engagements**

There were no off-payroll engagements in 2023-24 (2022-23: £nil).

**Exit packages (Audited)**

There were no exit packages in 2023-24 (2022-23: £nil).

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under paragraph 12(1) and para (2) of Schedule 1 to the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, the Secretary of State (with the consent of HM Treasury and Northern Ireland Office) has directed the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland to prepare for each financial year, a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland and of its comprehensive net expenditure, statement of financial position, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows 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 the Northern Ireland Office on behalf of the Secretary of State, 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 financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements 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 judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Accounting Officer of the Northern Ireland Office has designated the Secretary as the Accounting Officer for the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland. 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 Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's assets, are set out in *Managing Public Money* published by the HM Treasury.

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 Parades Commission for Northern Ireland'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. I confirm that the Annual report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable. I take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

## **GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

### **Introduction and Context**

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an independent executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) which was created on 27 March 1997. It was given statutory responsibilities on 16 February 1998 by the commencement of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

For the year ending 31 March 2024 the Commission had on average six Commissioners, including a Chair. It is supported by a secretariat. The secretariat had on average six seconded staff, all seconded to the Commission from public sector bodies together with 0.37 Agency staff.

The Commission normally meets on a weekly basis and has a collective responsibility for approving any significant changes relating to the operation or use of resources of the Parades Commission. The Commission also has an Audit and Risk Committee which meets formally four times a year, or more frequently as required, to assist and advise the Accounting Officer on governance responsibilities. Any recommendations made by the Audit and Risk Committee must be approved by the Commission.

Throughout the year the Accounting Officer has had regularly discuss operational performance and corporate issues with the sponsor group within the NIO.

### **Scope of Responsibility**

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, 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. During this accounting period the Secretary left post on 31 December 2023 and an Interim Accounting officer was assigned, until I took up the post on 3 May 2024. They were also responsible for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds and for the day-to-day operations and management of the Commission.

I am also responsible for the effective operation of the secretariat and for managing its financial and human resources. I provide advice and support to the Chair and Commissioners in support of their aims and objectives and in undertaking their statutory responsibilities. One of the statutory responsibilities of the Commission is "to keep under review, and make such recommendations as it thinks fit to the Secretary of State, concerning, the operation of the Act". There were no recommendations made to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in 2023-24. There were no Ministerial directions in the 2023-24 financial year.



## Governance Framework

In my role as Accounting Officer, I discharge my responsibilities with the support of the Audit and Risk Committee and my Management Team. This is outlined below:



## Commission's Performance

The statutory duties of the Commission include:

- promoting greater understanding by the general public of issues concerning public processions;
- promoting and facilitating mediation as a means of resolving disputes concerning public processions;
- keeping itself generally informed as to the conduct of public processions and protest meetings; and
- keeping under review, and making such recommendations as it thinks fit to the Secretary of State concerning, the operation of the Act.

Throughout 2023-24 the Commission effectively discharged its statutory functions and duties. It received representation and where necessary, issued determinations on parades and parade related protests. In line with best practice, the operational

procedures of the Commission and the quality of data used by the Commission is kept under continuous review to ensure that the Commission is content that it is provided with all requisite information to enable it to make informed decisions.

Attendance at Commission meetings during 2023-24 is set out in the following table:

<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Commission Meeting Attendance/Eligible to attend</b>
Graham Forbes (Chair 01/04/23 – 31/12/23)	25/25
Evelyn Collins (Chair 01/01/24 – 31/03/24)	10/10
Joelle Black	33/35
Marian Cree (01/04/23 – 31/12/23)	23/25
Billy Gamble	35/35
Eimear McAllister (01/04/23 – 31/12/23)	25/25
Derek Wilson	32/35
Nicola Rountree (01/01/24 – 31/03/24)	7/10

All meetings were quorate.

Strategic objectives were agreed to reflect the Commission's statutory duties and functions, incorporating its strategic vision. The Commission uses these objectives as a basis for the 2023-24 Business Plan. The 2023-24 Business Plan can be found on the website.

### **Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee supports the Accounting Officer and the Commission in their responsibilities for the management of risk and the effectiveness of the internal system of control and governance arrangements. The Committee fulfils this responsibility by reviewing whether proportionate assurances for meeting the Commission's and Accounting Officer's responsibilities are available and by testing the reliability and integrity of these assurances. This includes oversight of the effective operation and impact of the Framework Document and the Commission's business planning process.

The Audit and Risk Committee is comprised of five Commissioners, and must have two Commissioners in attendance to be quorate. The Committee is also attended by the Accounting Officer, Deputy Secretary, Internal Audit, the National Audit Office (as external auditors), external accountant and representatives from the sponsor department. The Committee meets four times per year and more frequently as required. In addition to providing all Commissioners with a copy of the minutes of meetings of the Committee, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee briefs the Commission after each meeting.

Attendance at the Audit and Risk Committee is disclosed in table below:

Membership in 2023/24	No. of Meetings attended/ Eligible to attend
Joelle Black	4/4
Marian Cree	3/3
Eimear McAllister	3/3
Derek Wilson	3/4
Billy Gamble	4/4
Nicola Rountree (01/01/24 – 31/03/24)	1/1

All meetings were quorate.

During the 2023-24 financial year, the Audit and Risk Committee advised the Commission on the following significant areas:

- The accounting policies, the accounts and the annual report of the organisation, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for audit, level of errors identified and management's letter of representation to the external auditors;
- The risk management process;
- The planned activity and results of both internal and external audit;
- The adequacy of management responses to issues identified by audit activity, including the external auditor's Audit Completion Report and the progress on the implementation of recommendations from internal and external audit reports; and
- Specific, significant issues for the attention of the Committee.

Based on the views expressed by the Accounting Officer, the Internal Auditors and the External Auditors, the Committee was satisfied with its overall effectiveness.

**Corporate Governance** The Commission conducts its affairs in accordance with a comprehensive corporate governance framework. Although not part of central government, the Commission abides by the spirit and principles set out in the Corporate Governance Code (*Corporate governance in central government departments, code of good practice, published by HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office, April 2017*) as far as applicable. There are elements of the Code which are either not applicable to the Commission e.g. the composition of the board, or which are disproportionate due to the size and remit of the organisation and good governance can be achieved by other more proportionate means. The Commission has a comprehensive Framework Document agreed with the NIO which sets down its values and principles, roles and responsibilities and clear lines of accountability.

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the control environment and I am satisfied that the Commission has the necessary policies and controls in place to ensure good governance and meet the Code of Practice as far as applicable. This review is informed by the work of staff who have the responsibility for the development and maintenance of the control framework, by the

work of internal audit and by the findings of the external auditors in their report to those charged with governance and any other reports. I also complete Stewardship Statements bi-annually. These statements help to identify areas of improvement and provide assurances to the NIO's Principal Accounting Officer on the effectiveness of management controls. The statements also inform the content of this Governance Statement.

The Commission has a raising concerns (whistleblowing) policy in place to ensure that staff who raise concerns receive a response and are informed about how their concerns are being dealt with. The handling of complaints is set out in the Commission's Complaints Procedure.

### **Internal Audit Reports Submitted to Audit and Risk Committee**

In 2023-24 ASM were internal auditors to the Parades Commission, appointed through a tender competition. The services provided by ASM operate to standards defined by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Internal Audit's work plan is informed by an analysis of the risk to which the Commission is exposed and the plan is considered by the Audit and Risk Committee before it is agreed by the Commission.

Internal Audit's findings are presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and copies of all final reports are sent to me, as Accounting Officer. In addition, Internal Audit provides an annual written statement to the Audit and Risk Committee, setting out a formal opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Committee's risk management, control and governance processes. Internal Audit conducted three reviews on the following activities during 2023-24:

- Review of Communications and Stakeholder Relations;
- Review of Cyber Security, and
- Follow-up review from 2022-23.

All of the above reports received 'Satisfactory' opinion ratings. There were six Priority 3 and one Priority 2 recommendations made, these are low level recommendations which could lead to an increased risk exposure. All of these recommendations have been accepted by management and will be implemented during 2024-25.

In the Annual Assurance Statement, the Internal Auditors stated that, during the year ended 31 March 2024, the Commission's systems in relation to risk management, control and governance were adequate and operated effectively, thereby providing an overall 'Satisfactory' assurance in relation to the effective and efficient achievement of the Commission's objectives.

## Risk Assessment

The Commission's corporate governance controls are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. Risks are managed on an ongoing basis in a process that is designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives; to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control was in place for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts, and accords with HM Treasury guidance.

The system is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures, including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget which is reviewed and agreed by the Secretary to the Commission;
- Regular reviews of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance; and
- As appropriate, formal project management disciplines.

Throughout the year the Commission had a risk register in place that has been assessed and considered at management level. The register has been scrutinised, discussed at both the Audit and Risk Committee and Commission meetings.

The Commission operates a "traffic light" corporate risk register in line with Government guidance. The Commission revised its corporate risk register following feedback received from the internal auditors. Changes have been made to the format of the register and each risk has been assigned a risk owner. The register is kept under constant review, with a formal quarterly review, and update by management as necessary. Risks are identified and assessed in terms of likelihood of occurrence and impact of risk. Management considers signs of risks changing, examines existing risk control tools and, if necessary, takes remedial action.

The Commission's risks are identified by the Commissioners, by me as Accounting Officer and by my management team and they are ratified by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Commission. The risks have been ranked according to 'Likelihood' and 'Impact'. We have also assessed what actions are in place, or need to be taken, to mitigate the organisational risks identified.

During the course of 2023-24 our main risks were financial and reputational risks, including procedures not being followed, protection of our information including risk from cyberattack and loss of knowledge due to Commission and staff turnover, as a result of a number of key staff contracts coming to an end. One risk which continues into 2024-25, relates to the development of a new website and notification management system, the present contract was extended until 2026 when the contract will be terminated, and a new website has to be developed. The Secretary and a number of Commissioners left the organisation in December 2023, with the loss of corporate and parading knowledge, this had been mitigated against with the temporary

upgrade of some staff members, the completion of relevant recruitment procedures and intense training during the final quarter of the year.

On-going operational risks are managed as follows:

- all operational risks are identified, captured, evaluated and controlled by my management team and communicated to the Audit and Risk Committee;
- Any changes to the assessment and evaluation of risk are noted by the Audit and Risk Committee and ratified by the full Commission; and
- The full Commission has a responsibility to lead on determining and evaluating the Commission's risks; and
- Risks are communicated to staff by management, via regular staff meetings and in the risk register.

### **Personal Data Related Incidents**

There were no personal data related incidents formally reported to the Information Commissioner's Office.

### **Significant Internal Control Issues**

There were no significant internal control issues identified during 2023-24.

### **Events after the Reporting Period**

There are no events to note.



**R Roche**  
**Secretary and**  
**Accounting Officer**

**18 July 2024**

## Parliamentary Accountability and Audit Report

The accounts of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General under the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. The audit fee charged was £24,750 (£20,875 in 2022-23). The auditors received no fees for non-audit services.

All expenditure was applied to the purpose intended by Parliament (audited).

No fees or charges were collected by the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland (audited).

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland has no remote contingent liabilities (audited) (2022-23:nil)

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland had no losses or special payments (audited) (2022-23:nil)

The Commission has given due consideration to the UK Functional Standards in all aspects of its work embedding these into its Corporate Plan and ways of working as appropriate. The Commission will continue to assess its compliance with these standards and make improvements as necessary.

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's net expenditure was as follows:

### **Expenditure and income**

	<b>2023-24</b> <b>£</b>	<b>2022-23</b> <b>£</b>
Net Expenditure	740,129	722,298
Other Comprehensive Expenditure	-	-
<b>Total Comprehensive Expenditure</b>	<b>740,129</b>	<b>722,298</b>



**R Roche**  
**Secretary and**  
**Accounting Officer**

**18 July 2024**

## **THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

### ***Opinion on financial statements***

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

The financial statements comprise the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK-adopted international accounting standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and its net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 and Secretary of State directions issued thereunder.

### ***Opinion on regularity***

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament 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 (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019. I am independent of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.



### ***Conclusions relating to going concern***

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland'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 Parades Commission for Northern Ireland'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.

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

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

### ***Other Information***

The other information comprises information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's 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 certificate, 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 the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions issued under the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

### ***Matters on which I report by exception***

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

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 by the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury'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:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;

- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, and
- assessing the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland'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 Parades Commission for Northern Ireland 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 Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

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.

### ***Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud***

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

### ***Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud***

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's accounting policies.
- inquired of management, the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's policies and procedures on:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud; and

- the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's controls relating to the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's compliance with the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 and Managing Public Money;
- inquired of management, the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's head of internal audit and those charged with governance whether:
  - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
  - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- discussed with the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: posting of unusual journals and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland operates. I focused on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, Managing Public Money, employment law, pensions legislation and tax legislation.

### **Audit response to identified risk**

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- I enquired of management, the Audit and Risk Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Commission and internal audit reports; and
- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my report.

### **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I am required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during my audit.

Gareth Davies  
Comptroller and Auditor General  
National Audit Office  
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road  
Victoria  
London  
SW1W 9SP

Date

## Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

### Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024

		2023-24	2022-23
	Notes	£	£
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff costs	2	519,300	525,948
Other expenditure	3	187,788	163,618
Depreciation and amortisation	3	31,631	30,319
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>		<b>738,719</b>	<b>719,885</b>
Interest payable	3	1,410	2,413
<b>Net Expenditure</b>		<b>740,129</b>	<b>722,298</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Expenditure</b>			
<i>Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:</i>			
<b>Total Comprehensive Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024</b>		<b>740,129</b>	<b>722,298</b>

The above expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

The notes on pages 48 - 59 form part of these accounts.

**Statement of Financial Position  
as at 31 March 2024**

		2023-24		2022-23	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
<b>Non-current assets:</b>					
Property, plant and equipment	5		-		-
Right-of-Use Assets	5		84,645		23,936
Intangible assets	6		-		-
<b>Total non-current assets</b>			<b>84,645</b>		<b>23,936</b>
<b>Current assets:</b>					
Trade and other receivables	8	41,466		9,803	
<b>Total current assets</b>			<b>41,466</b>		<b>9,803</b>
<b>Total assets</b>			<b>126,111</b>		<b>33,739</b>
<b>Current liabilities:</b>					
Trade and other payables	10	(105,340)		(120,839)	
Lease Liabilities	11	(29,696)		(23,553)	
<b>Total current liabilities</b>			<b>(135,036)</b>		<b>(144,392)</b>
<b>Non-current assets less net current liabilities</b>			<b>(8,925)</b>		<b>(110,653)</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities:</b>					
Lease Liabilities	11		(50,149)		-
<b>Assets less liabilities</b>			<b>(59,074)</b>		<b>(110,653)</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity</b>					
General reserve			(59,074)		(110,653)
			<b>(59,074)</b>		<b>(110,653)</b>

The financial statements on pages 44-47 were approved by the Commission on 19 June 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

*Ralph Roche*

Accounting Officer

18 July 2024

Date

The notes on pages 48 - 59 form part of these accounts

**Statement of Cash Flows**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2024**

		<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net expenditure	SoCNE	(740,129)	(722,298)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Depreciation & amortisation	5,6	31,631	30,319
Interest	3	1,410	2,413
(Increase) / decrease in trade and other receivables	8	(31,663)	7,601
<i>Less movements in receivables relating to items not passing through the Net Expenditure account</i>			
Increase / (decrease) in trade payables	10	40,793	43,024
<i>Less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the Net Expenditure account</i>		(61,578)	(17,248)
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(759,536)</b>	<b>(656,189)</b>
<b>Net cash outflow from investment activities</b>		-	-
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Capital payments in respect of lease liabilities		(30,762)	(35,411)
Interest payments in respect of lease liabilities		(1,410)	(2,413)
Funding from Parent Department	SoCITE	791,708	694,013
<b>Net cash inflow from financing activities</b>		<b>759,536</b>	<b>656,189</b>
<b>Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>	9	-	-
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period</b>	9	-	-
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	9	-	-

The notes on pages 48 - 59 form part of these accounts.



**Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2024**

		<b>General Reserve</b>	<b>Revaluation Reserve</b>	<b>Total Reserves</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>		<b>(82,387)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>(82,368)</b>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' equity for 2022-23</b>				
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	-	-	-
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of intangible assets	6	-	-	-
Comprehensive expenditure for the year		(722,298)	-	<b>(722,298)</b>
Transfers between reserves		19	(19)	-
Funding from parent		694,013	-	<b>694,013</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>(110,653)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(110,653)</b>
<b>Changes in Taxpayers' equity for 2023-24</b>				
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	-	-	-
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of intangible assets	6	-	-	-
Comprehensive expenditure for the year		(740,129)	-	<b>(740,129)</b>
Transfers between reserves		-	-	-
Funding from parent		791,708	-	<b>791,708</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>(59,074)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(59,074)</b>

The notes on pages 48 - 59 form part of these accounts.

## **Notes to the Parades Commission's Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024**

### **1. Statement of accounting policies**

The Financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2023-24 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (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 Parades Commission for Northern Ireland for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland for the year ending 31 March 2024 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

#### **1.1 Accounting convention**

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention, modified by the revaluation of non-current assets.

The accounts comply with the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board, FReM and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Treasury, insofar as those requirements are appropriate.

#### **1.2 Critical accounting estimates and key judgements**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires the use of accounting estimates and assumptions. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the accounting policies. We continually evaluate our estimates, assumptions and judgements based on available information and experience. As the use of estimates is inherent in financial reporting, actual results could differ from these estimates. The estimates and assumptions which have the most significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities are discussed below.

##### **(i) - Depreciation of property, plant and equipment**

Depreciation is provided in the accounts so as to write-down the respective assets to their residual values over their expected useful lives and as such the selection of the estimated useful lives and the expected residual values of the assets requires the use of estimates and judgements. Details of the useful lives are as shown in Note 1.4.

##### **(ii) - Impairment of property, plant and equipment**

Where there is an indication that the carrying value of items of property, plant and equipment may have been impaired through events or changes in circumstances, a review will be undertaken of the recoverable amount of that asset.

### 1.3 Going Concern

The Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2024 shows net liabilities of £59,074 (2023: £110,653). In addition, there are lease liabilities committed for future years of £79,845 (2023: £23,553).

The Commission's sponsoring body is the Northern Ireland Office as laid out in the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. The Commission's budget for 2024-25 has been approved by the Northern Ireland Office, and we received a three year financial settlement as part of the UK Government Spending Review covering the period 2022-25. In addition, as a result of the Commission's project budget shortfall in 2024-25 the Commission has engaged with its sponsoring body the Northern Ireland Office who confirms the provision of financial support to the Commission, to assist it in meeting its liabilities as and when they fall due.

The Northern Ireland Office have confirmed that they have the ability to provide such support and will provide this support to the Commission, to the extent outlined above, for a period of 12 months from the date of approval of the Commissions' balance sheet.

As a result at the date of this report, with this letter of support in place, the Accounting officer has considered it appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the 2023-24 financial statements.

### 1.4 Property, plant and equipment and depreciation

Expenditure on items, or groups of items, of property, plant and equipment costing £1,000 or more (including VAT) is capitalised. Expenditure on a complete computer unit is classified as capital expenditure regardless of the price. Expenditure on printer is classified as capital expenditure if the purchase cost of an individual item (including VAT) is over £500.

On initial recognition, separate component assets are identified and are measured at cost including any costs such as installation directly attributable to bringing them into working condition. Owned assets are subsequently re-valued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics.

All non-property operational assets are measured at cost and are subsequently re-valued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis at rates calculated to write-off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life. Depreciation is charged in the month following acquisition. The estimated useful lives for depreciation purposes are:

Furniture & equipment	15 years
Computer hardware	5 years
Right of Use Assets	over life of the lease

## **1.5 Intangible Assets**

Identifiable intangible assets are recognised when the Commission controls the asset, it is probable that future economic benefits attributable to the asset will flow to the Commission and the cost of the assets can be reliably measured.

The Commission's intangible assets consist of software licences where expenditure is £1,000 (including VAT) and website development.

Intangible assets are re-valued annually using appropriate indices compiled by the ONS. Amortisation is provided on a straight line basis. The estimated useful lives for amortisation purposes are:

Website development	5 years
---------------------	---------

## **1.7 Pensions**

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Schemes (PCSPS), the Principal Civil Service Pension Schemes (NI) (PCSPS (NI)) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) which are described in Note 2. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded and the Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying liability. The 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, PCSPS (NI) and the Scheme of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS, PCSPS (NI) and the Scheme. In respect of the defined contribution schemes the Commission recognises the contributions payable for the year.

## **1.8 Value Added Tax**

The Commission is not VAT-registered, therefore all expenditure is inclusive of VAT and included in the capitalised value of non-current assets.

## **1.9 Staff Costs**

Under IAS19 Employee Benefits, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as the organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the cost of any untaken leave as at the year end.

## **1.10 Leases**

Leases are recognised in line with IFRS 16. The standard requires recognition of assets and liabilities for all leases in the Statement of Financial Position (SoFP), with exemption given to low value and short-term leases, i.e. those with lease terms of less than 12 months. The standard results in the recognition of a right-

of-use asset, representing a right to use the underlying leased asset and a lease liability, representing an obligation to make lease payments. The standard was adopted from 1 April 2022.

### **Measurement of right-of-use asset on transition**

The right-of-use asset and lease liability is recognised at the commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for initial direct costs, prepayments or incentives, and costs related to restoration at the end of the lease.

The right-of-use assets are subsequently measured at either fair value or current value in existing use in line with property, plant and equipment assets. The cost measurement model in IFRS16 is used as an appropriate proxy for current value in existing use or fair value for the majority of leases (consistent with the principles for subsequent measurement of property, plant and equipment) except for those which meet one of the following:

- A longer-term lease that has no provisions to update lease payments for market conditions or if there is a significant period of time between those updates; and
- The fair value or current value in existing use of the underlying asset is likely to fluctuate significantly due to changes in market prices.

The right-of-use assets are depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis of those of property, plant and equipment. IAS36 Impairment of Assets is used to determine whether the right-of-use asset is impaired and to account for any impairment loss identified.

### **Measurement of lease liability**

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, the rate provided by HMT.

The lease payment is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is remeasured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in the index or rate, if there is a change in estimate of the amount expected to be payable under residual value guarantee, or if there is a change in the assessment of whether an option to purchase, extend or terminate is exercised.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprises of the following:

- Fixed payments, including in-substance fixed payments;

- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee;
- The exercise price under a purchase option when it is reasonably certain to be exercised, lease payments in an optional renewal period if it is reasonably certain an extension option will be exercised, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless it is reasonably certain that the lease will not be terminated early.

When the lease liability is re-measured a corresponding adjustment is made to the right-of-use asset or recorded in the SoCNE if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset is zero.

### **1.11 Accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards adopted in the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Parades Commission has reviewed the standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards that became effective during 2023-24 and which are relevant to its operations.

### **1.12 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective**

Management has reviewed new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective, nor adopted early for these accounts. These standards include:

- Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current (Amendments to IAS 1)
- Definition of Accounting Estimates (Amendment to IAS 8)
- Initial Application of IFRS 17 and IFRS 9 - Comparative Information (Amendment to IFRS 17)
- Assets and Liabilities Arising From a Single Transaction (Amendments to IAS 12)
- Lease Liability in a Sale and Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16)

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 2025. Management consider that this standard is unlikely to have a significant impact on the accounts in the period of initial recognition.

### **1.13 Segmental Reporting**

All the activities carried out by the Parades Commission relate to a single business and are reported internally on this basis.

## 2. Staff Costs

Staff costs comprise:

			2023-24	2022-23
	Seconded staff	Agency Staff	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Wages and Salaries	416,046	12,861	428,907	431,603
Social security costs	43,010	-	43,010	45,382
Other pension costs	47,383	-	47,383	48,963
<b>Total net costs</b>	<b>506,439</b>	<b>12,861</b>	<b>519,300</b>	<b>525,948</b>

Further detail is provided in the Remuneration and Staff Report

## 3. Other Expenditure

There were no payments made to the auditors during the year for non-audit services (2022/23: £nil).

		2023-24	2022-23
	Note	£	£
<b>Other Expenditure:</b>			
Computer maintenance and software		79,750	50,413
Rent, rates and service charges		37,593	43,253
Professional advisers' fees		29,519	31,448
Auditor's remuneration		24,750	20,625
Accommodation costs		5,322	7,104
Advertising & publications		3,020	3,388
Travel, subsistence & hospitality		4,307	6,720
Telecommunications		3,445	277
Other expenditure		82	390
<b>Subtotal Other Expenditure</b>		<b>187,788</b>	<b>163,618</b>
<b>Non-cash items:</b>			
Depreciation	5	31,631	30,319
Interest Payable		1,410	2,413
<b>Subtotal non-cash items</b>		<b>33,041</b>	<b>32,732</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>220,829</b>	<b>196,350</b>

#### 4. Income

There was no income received in 2023-24 or 2022-23.

#### 5.a. Property, Plant and Equipment

	Right of Use assets - Buildings	Computer hardware	Furniture & equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>52,659</b>	<b>51,077</b>	<b>6,593</b>	<b>110,329</b>
Additions	92,340	-	-	<b>92,340</b>
Disposals	(52,659)	(1,290)	-	<b>(53,949)</b>
Revaluations through SoCNE	-	-	-	-
Revaluations through Reserves	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>92,340</b>	<b>49,787</b>	<b>6,593</b>	<b>148,720</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 April 2023	28,723	51,077	6,593	<b>86,393</b>
Charged in year	31,631	-	-	<b>31,631</b>
Disposals	(52,659)	(1,290)	-	<b>(53,949)</b>
Revaluations through SoCNE	-	-	-	-
Revaluations through Reserves	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>7,695</b>	<b>49,787</b>	<b>6,593</b>	<b>64,075</b>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	84,645	-	-	<b>84,645</b>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	23,936	-	-	<b>23,936</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>				
Owned	-	-	-	-
Leased	84,645	-	-	84,645
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>84,645</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>84,645</b>



**5.b. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)**

	Right of Use assets - Buildings	Computer hardware	Furniture & equipment	Total
		£	£	£
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 31 March 2022	-	51,077	6,593	<b>57,670</b>
IFRS 16 adjustment *	52,659	-	-	<b>52,659</b>
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>52,659</b>	<b>51,077</b>	<b>6,593</b>	<b>110,329</b>
Additions	-	-	-	-
Revaluations through SoCNE	-	-	-	-
Revaluations through Reserves	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>52,659</b>	<b>51,077</b>	<b>6,593</b>	<b>110,329</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 April 2022	-	49,481	6,593	<b>56,074</b>
Charged in year	28,723	1,596	-	<b>30,319</b>
Revaluations through SoCNE	-	-	-	-
Revaluations through Reserves	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>28,723</b>	<b>51,077</b>	<b>6,593</b>	<b>86,393</b>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	23,936	-	-	<b>23,936</b>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	-	1,596	-	<b>1,596</b>
<b>Asset financing:</b>				
Owned	-	-	-	-
Leased	23,936	-	-	<b>23,936</b>
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>23,936</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,936</b>

\* IFRS 16 'Leases' was adopted from 1 April 2022, and as a result, the buildings category above, previously classified as Operating Leases, have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Position.

**6.a Intangible assets**

	<b>Website</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
At 1 April 2023	89,001	<b>89,001</b>
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>89,001</b>	<b>89,001</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 April 2023	89,001	<b>89,001</b>
Charged in year	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>89,001</b>	<b>89,001</b>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	-	-
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	-	-
<b>Asset financing:</b>		
Owned	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**6.b Intangible assets (continued)**

	<b>Website</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
At 1 April 2022	89,001	<b>89,001</b>
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>89,001</b>	<b>89,001</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 April 2022	89,001	89,001
Charged in year	-	-
<b>Accumulated Depreciation at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>89,001</b>	<b>89,001</b>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	-	-
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	-	-
<b>Asset financing:</b>		
Owned	-	-
<b>Carrying amount at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## 7. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of the Commission are met through funding provided by the Northern Ireland Office, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the non-departmental public bodies expected purchase and usage requirements and the non-departmental public body is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

## 8. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2023-24	2022-23
	£	£
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Prepayments and Accrued Income	40,568	5,920
Other Receivables	898	3,883
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,466</b>	<b>9,803</b>

## 9. Cash and cash equivalents

The Parades Commission does not operate a bank account in its own name. The Commission authorises NIO to make payments from the NIO bank account on behalf of the Commission, through Account NI, the Northern Ireland Civil Service accounting system. These payments must be authorised by the Commission in advance and are treated as funding in the financial statements. NIO staff do not have permission to authorise any bank payments on behalf of the Parades Commission. Purchasing and payment controls and regular reconciliation of the general ledger accounts provides assurance that only authorised spend is included within the Commission Accounts.

## 10. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2023-24	2022-23
	£	£
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade Payables	63,916	82,243
Accruals and deferred income	41,424	38,596
Current portion of lease liability	29,696	23,553
<b>Total</b>	<b>135,036</b>	<b>144,392</b>

**11. Non current liabilities**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after one year:</b>		
Non current portion of lease liability	50,149	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,149</b>	<b>-</b>

**12. Commitments under leases for Right of Use Assets**

There were commitments under leases of £79,845 at 31 March 2024 for Andras House office and carparks. This includes £50,149 due after one year. At 31 March 2023 there were commitments under leases of £23,553 all of which were current.

**13. Capital Commitments**

The Parades Commission does not have any capital commitments as at 31 March 2024 (31 March 2023: £nil).

**14. Contingent Liabilities disclosed under IAS 37**

The Parades Commission has no contingent liabilities at 31 March 2024 (31 March 2023: £nil).

**15. Related-party transactions**

The Parades Commission is an independent statutory body, established by the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, and funded by the Secretary of State through the Northern Ireland Office.

The Northern Ireland Office is regarded as a related party. During the year, the Parades Commission has had various material transactions with the Northern Ireland Office including the Crown Solicitor's Office.

None of the Parades Commission members, key managerial staff or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with the Parades Commission during this year.

## **16. Events after the Reporting Date**

There were no events after the reporting date which required disclosure or adjustment of the Accounts.

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10, events after 31 March 2024 are considered up to the date on which the accounts are authorised for issue by the Accounting Officer. This is interpreted as the date of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Audit Certificate.

The Annual Report and Accounts were authorised for issue by the Accounting Officer on the same date as the Comptroller and Auditor General signed the audit certificate.



E03120767  
978-1-5286-4855-4