

# CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

## STRATEGIC PLAN: 2020-2025

*Ensuring appointment on merit  
& supporting ethical standards*

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## CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE(S)</b>
Vision, Mission and Core Values	4
Strategic Priorities	5
Delivery of the plan	9

As guardians of merit, Commissioners uphold the principle that selection for appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) should be on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition. Our Recruitment Code interprets the Merit Principle and applies it to the NICS recruitment process. Our auditing of this process encourages confidence in recruitment procedures and helps ensure the most suitable candidate is appointed. We also have an independent role in hearing appeals from civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics to support the core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

**Our Vision:**

A Civil Service for Northern Ireland which recruits and promotes the best and most diverse talent available in accordance with merit and free from personal and political patronage or partiality.

**Our Mission:**

Promote public confidence in appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

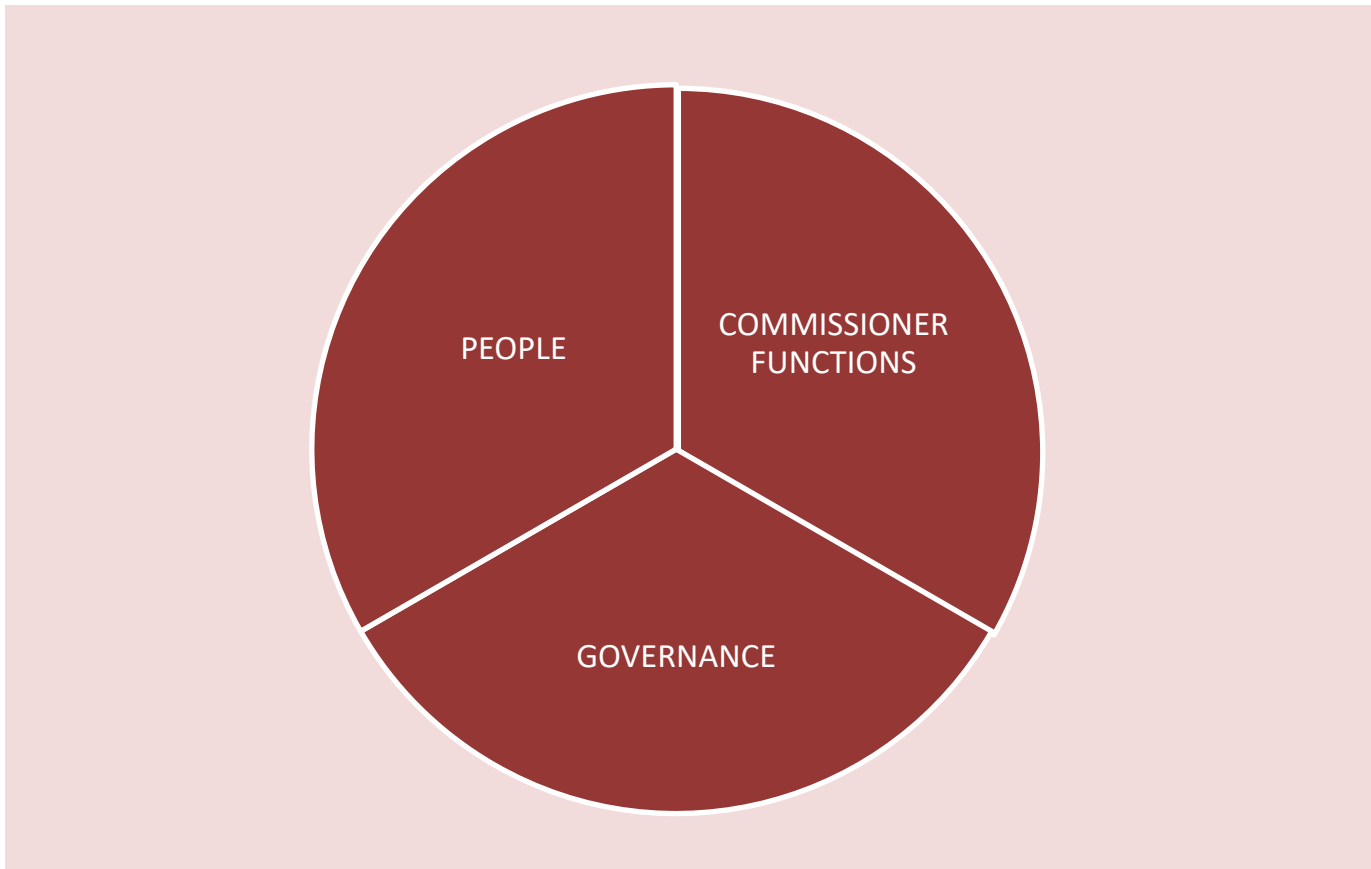
**Core Values:**

In fulfilling their responsibilities under this Plan, Commissioners and the Secretariat will seek at all times to adhere to the core principles of public life, which are:

Selflessness;  
Integrity;  
Objectivity;  
Accountability;  
Openness;  
Honesty; and  
Leadership.

**Strategic Priorities:**

Commissioners have identified 3 Strategic Priorities which they consider fundamental to assisting them in achieving their Vision and Mission.



## PRIORITY 1: COMMISSIONER FUNCTIONS

**Objective:** Commissioners will safeguard an impartial and independent Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) by maintaining the principle of selection on merit and considering and determining appeals made by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

**Commissioners will achieve this by:**

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| 1.1 | Providing assurance that all civil servants are recruited on the basis of fair and open recruitment.   |
| 1.2 | Prescribing in General Regulations the permitted exceptions to the Merit Principle.  |
| 1.3 | Prescribing and publish the Recruitment Code ensuring it remains fit for purpose.  |
| 1.4 | Auditing NICS recruitment policies and practices to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed.  |
| 1.5 | Require the publication of NICS recruitment related information including to the use of permitted exceptions.  |
| 1.6 | Considering and determining appeals under the NICS Code of Ethics.   |
| 1.7 | Providing written approval for appointments to any situation in the Senior Civil Service, or to any situation prescribed by the General Regulations. |
| 1.8 | Engaging with the NICS and relevant stakeholders.  |
| 1.9 | Chairing SCS competitions  |

## **PRIORITY 2: GOVERNANCE**

**Objective: Comply with sponsor Department's governance and financial requirements and fulfill our obligations as a public authority.**

### **Commissioners will achieve this by:**

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|-----|--|
| 2.1 | Maintaining and implementing effective business planning arrangements.   |
| 2.2 | Discharging all statutory obligations as a public authority.   |
| 2.3 | Complying with the OCSC(NI) Framework Document with the sponsoring Department.   |
| 2.4 | Complying with sponsoring Department's financial requirements, to ensure all resources are allocated effectively to support the discharge of Commissioners' functions. |

### **PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE**

**Objective: Support the development of Commissioners and appointment and development of members of the Secretariat.**

#### **Commissioners will achieve this by:**

- 3.1 Ensuring suitable arrangements are put in place to assist effective succession planning for the appointment of members of the Secretariat.
- 3.2 Delivering effective strategic leadership and performance management.
- 3.3 Meeting the learning and development needs of Commissioners and Secretariat including through induction training.



## **Delivering the plan:**

This document sets out the overall strategic direction for the Commissioners in the 2020-2025 period.

This plan is underpinned by a range of strategic plans including the Annual Business Plan which sets out in more detail how Commissioners' vision and priorities will be delivered. These plans contain specific targets and timescales for delivery.

Progress against targets will be monitored and reviewed quarterly. An annual performance review will be reported upon in the Annual Report each year.

This Strategic Plan 2020-2025 sits alongside the Commissioners' annual budgets. The Strategic Plan 2020-2025 also links closely to Corporate Risk Register. Commissioners have a comprehensive approach to risk management ensuring that all strategic risks are appropriately identified, managed and mitigated against.