



Department of

Finance

An Roinn

Airgeadais

www.finance-ni.gov.uk

Business Plan

April 2021 - March 2022





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FOREWORD

The Department of Finance provides departments and public bodies with money, staff, professional services and business support systems, helping them to deliver excellent, value for money public services.

This plan for 2021/22 sets out our priorities for the year ahead and reflects the many challenges being faced by us all from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Finance has wide ranging responsibilities. This has never been more apparent than in the last 12 months.

From administering £3.3 billion of COVID funding to Departments, providing IT services to enable the NICS workforce to work remotely ensuring continuity of public services, to procuring vital goods and services including Personal Protective Equipment, right through to the provision of vital COVID-19 statistics.

I have been hugely impressed by the ‘can do’ attitude of the whole Department. Their work has made a huge impact and has played a vital role in sustaining thousands of businesses and protecting jobs.

COVID-19 will undoubtedly continue to pose challenges in the months ahead. In addition to continuing to support the pandemic response, the plan for the year ahead includes ambitious targets across a wide range of areas and rightly so.

Delivery of this plan will not be possible without the department’s people. Partnership working and collaboration has never been more important, particularly as we continue to operate in a financially challenging environment.

I am determined to work with my Executive colleagues and those in the voluntary, community and private sectors to deliver this plan and ensure our excellent public services continue to help those who use them.

Conor Murphy.

CONOR MURPHY MLA
Minister of Finance



INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce the Departmental Business Plan for 2021/22. This plan has been drafted and developed within the overall context of the Programme for Government and the New Decade, New Approach document.

The return of the Executive and the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic presented new and huge challenges for all of us, including government departments.

Within this business plan we have presented the flagship achievements for 2020/21. The Department of Finance responded in a proactive and flexible way, working collaboratively internally and externally to support those in need.

In dynamic circumstances the Department adjusted to new ways of working and in parallel ensured the continuous provision of excellent public services. I want to put on record my deep appreciation to everyone in the Department for their individual and collective contribution.

This plan sets out the key activities we will undertake to deliver against strategic priorities, including supporting the Executive's recovery plans.

As we look ahead to 2021/22, I am very conscious of our purpose and a need to ensure we provide the Civil Service and other public bodies with money, staff, professional services and business support systems, helping to deliver excellent, value for money public services.

I have no doubt that by working together and delivering this business plan for 2021/22, we will deliver the best service we can, no matter what the circumstances are.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colum Boyle' with a stylized flourish at the end.

COLUM BOYLE
Interim Permanent Secretary



OUR PURPOSE

The Department of Finance provides the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and other public bodies with money, staff, professional services and business support systems, helping them to deliver excellent, value for money public services.

The strategic context for our work and the services we provide to others is that set out in the New Decade New Approach agreement (January 2020) and in the Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework (January 2021). Responding to the COVID-19 crisis and emerging from that has and will continue to be a key Executive and Department of Finance priority.

We do this by:

- Managing public expenditure and effectively allocating resources to where they are most needed to support the delivery of public services;
- Collecting rates revenue to provide funding for public services such as health, education and infrastructure as well as council services;
- Recruiting, developing and supporting the best people for the NICS and providing opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential;
- Providing a range of expert shared and professional services to the NICS, and other parts of the public sector; and
- Improving effectiveness across the public sector by transforming the way we work.

Further detail on the Department, our responsibilities, management and structure can be accessed on our website – www.finance-ni.gov.uk

ACHIEVEMENTS

APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021



£3 billion

of COVID-19 funding allocated



Produced and delivered weekly death statistics in relation to COVID-19



£288 million

in rate relief provided to businesses most affected by the pandemic



Developed a further support package of **£9.5million** for Belfast City and Belfast International Airports, protecting jobs and connectivity



£242 million

in grants paid to small, medium and large businesses affected by COVID restrictions



100% rates relief for Belfast International, Belfast City & City of Derry Airports until 31 March 2021, worth **£2.7 million**



Secured Executive agreement to support Hospice Services



nidirect Contact Centre supported:

- the Department of Health's COVIDCareNI Symptom Checker and Test Booking;
- StopCOVID NI (Proximity app);
- COVIDCare NI Vaccination Booking Service;
- business grants;
- support schemes; and
- changes to existing services including those impacted by restrictions, for example, driver testing.



£1.05 billion collected in rates to fund vital public services



10 locations for Connect2 Hubs agreed - addressing regional imbalance, supporting economic recovery, carbon reduction and urban regeneration



Delivery of Executive's 2021-22 Budget



Approximately **€1 billion secured** for the 2021-27 PEACE PLUS Programme

census 2021

Successfully planned and ran the data collection phase of the 2021 Census with an overall return rate of **97%**, with 80% of returns made online



Recruitment activity brought **840 new recruits** into the Civil Service and **promoted 720 existing staff**



506 supplies and services contracts awarded at a value of **£928 million** to help Departments and bodies deliver public services



Supported over **20,000** NICS' staff to transition to remote working
Provided **9,000** more laptops
re-provisioned **4,000** desktop devices
and issued over **2,000** new mobile devices.



Refreshed purpose and functions of procurement board



Departmental Solicitor's Office DSO drafted or assisted in **181** sets of legislation or amendments in relation to the Coronavirus Restrictions



midirect website supported around **9.9 million** service transactions with Government



Establishment of Independent Fiscal Council and Fiscal Commission



Published a new Register of Interests for Ministers and Special Advisers



Made revisions to Ministerial Guidance, Special Adviser Codes and Civil Service Code of Ethics. Incorporated Functioning of Government Act changes



Secured Executive Subcommittee on Reform following the RHI Inquiry agreement to present a draft Response to the Inquiry Report



Building on the establishment of the Dormant Accounts Fund, applications have opened to build capacity, resilience and sustainability in the Third Sector



Progressed construction of a new Changing Places Toilet on the Stormont Estate.



OUR RESOURCES



MONEY

For the 2021-22 year, the Department was allocated an opening budget of £208.8m resource funding and £45.0m capital funding. Delivery of the Department's services will prove challenging within this budget allocation given the pressures arising across a number of areas. However, we will seek to address those pressures within the budget allocated.

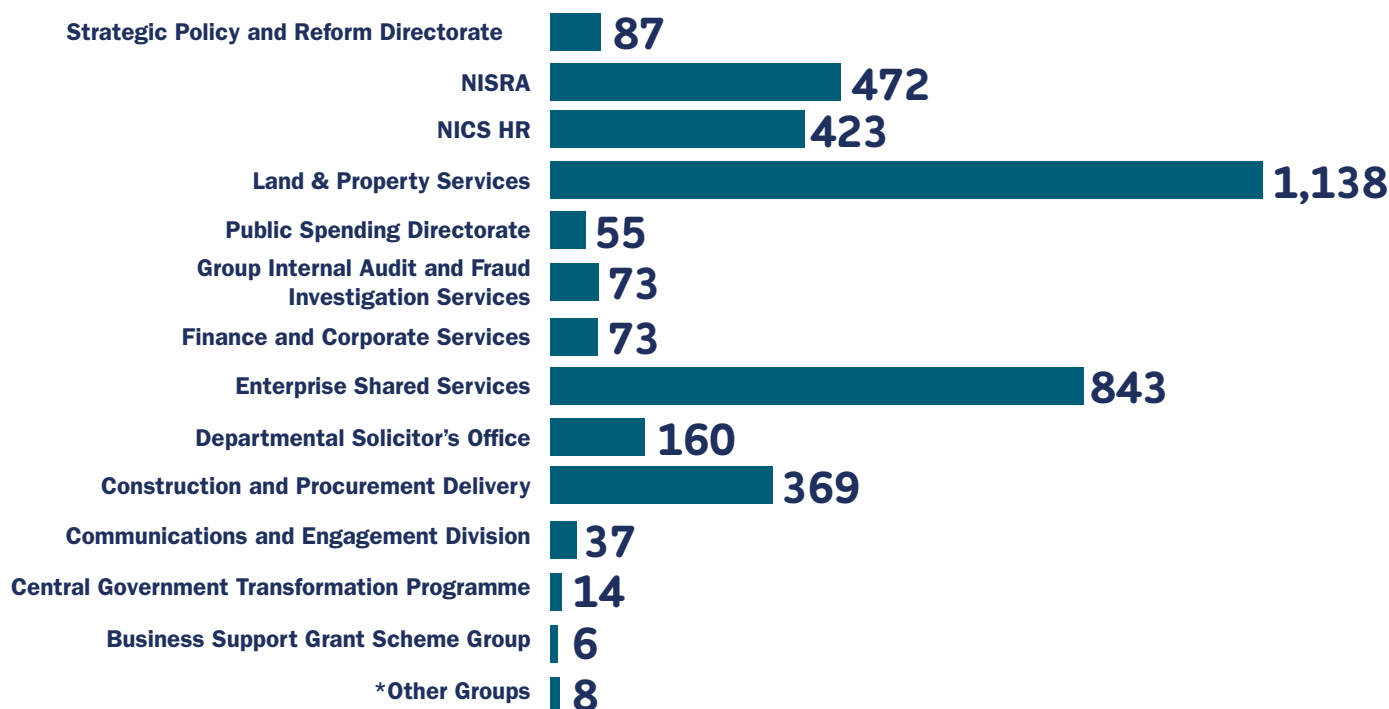
	2020-21	2021-22
	£m	£m
Net Resource	204.8	208.8
Net Capital	28.3	45.0



PEOPLE

As at 31 May 2021, the Department employed 3,758 staff.

This is made up of **3,525 permanent staff and 233 agency workers.**



*International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and Legal Review

Our People Plan

The DoF People Plan has been updated to reflect the challenges posed by COVID-19 and in response to feedback from colleagues. During the year we will undertake a programme of engagement to address areas identified. This includes:

- Assessing our future ways of working to inform where we work, and how and when we work;
- Promoting flexible and innovative ways of working and making better use of technology and agile working;
- Promoting two-way communications and ongoing engagement with people at all levels through information that is timely, open and clear and through regular, virtual staff engagement events;
- Strengthening and developing the role of the Staff Engagement Forum;
- Supporting the Department's Diversity Network to promote awareness of diversity matters;
- Piloting a virtual mentoring programme; and
- Embedding the corporate induction programme.

Colleagues from this department have played a central role in supporting NICS employees through the COVID-19 crisis by:

- Developing the COVID-19 staff information hub to provide NICS employees with timely HR information and guidance and relevant health and safety, remote working and IT information;
- Promoting health and wellbeing support available to NICS employees through weekly emails and articles on a range of topics;
- Providing access to a series of Health and Wellbeing webinars on topics including resilience, coping with stress and mindfulness;
- Developing a range of new, virtual wellbeing and remote working products on LInKS (Learning Management System);
- Providing wellbeing support to staff through the Welfare Support Service including signposting staff to additional sources of support available from sources such as INSPIRE, the WELL Programme and the Charity for Civil Servants;
- Announcing that agency workers would receive additional measures to protect them and their income during the pandemic; and
- Introducing video interviewing facilities and expansion of online testing to safely enable continued recruitment across the NICS.

We will continue to support change programmes associated with the implementation of the wider NICS People Strategy, including:

- Supporting the launch of the NICS Diversity Action Plan;
- Supporting the NICS diversity champions and the development of their associated staff networks;
- Supporting the New Ways of Working Programme; and
- Carrying out the NICS People Survey in Autumn 2021.

OUR PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

PRIORITY 1: Our People.

TARGETS

- By 31 March 2022, we will have diversified the resourcing mix across the Civil Service by:
 - Responding to critical recruitment requirements of Departments and plan to ensure supply at every large scale general service grade
 - expanding the number of Civil Service apprentices
 - expanding the number of student placements in the Civil Service
 - developing a new Civil Service management trainee scheme
 - developing a Civil Service employability programme for those furthest removed from the labour market
- Take forward the review of NICS recruitment and selection process:
 - By 30 September 2021, produce a set of recommendations and revised policy framework for the Minister's consideration and approval
 - By 31 March 2022, agree related HR policies and progress delivery of business change implementation activities
- Develop the approach and proposals for a new target operating model and prepare for the procurement of replacement technology for HR, payroll and Finance services to commence in 2022.
- External review of NICS HR operating model by 31 March 2022.
- By September 2021, develop the approach and an implementation plan to improve workforce planning, development of job roles and career frameworks and review the role of the Head of Profession.
- By 31 March 2022, implement the Civil Service Diversity Action Plan and develop a Civil Service Mental Health Strategy building on current services and initiatives.
- By 31 March 2022, an NICS learning needs analysis will be conducted to ensure appropriate development support for staff is available to assist with any capability issues identified within departments.

PRIORITY 2: Provide targeted emergency support to businesses impacted by the pandemic.

TARGETS

- Deliver £210 million in business support grants to businesses impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions by, 31 March 2022.
- Award £230 million in rates relief to businesses.

PRIORITY 3: Departmental cash requirements.

TARGETS

- Successfully manage required Estimates and Budget Bill processes throughout 2021–22 to ensure Departments have the legislative authority for use of cash and resources.
- Effectively manage NI Consolidated Fund including issue of cash to departments.

PRIORITY 4: Increase commercial capability across DoF.

TARGETS

- By 31 July 2021 appoint Commercial Director.
- By 31 March 2022 all contract managers to have completed the Contract Management Foundation and Beyond Foundation Training by 31 March 2022.
- By 31 March 2022 Contract Managers to be registered on the Cabinet Office expert of practitioner training courses.
- By 31 March 2022 all staff managing contracts/projects over £20m to have been accredited (or moving towards accreditation) through the Cabinet Office's Assessment and Development Centre by 31 March 2022.
- By October 2021 a deep culture audit of DoF with respect to contract management approach, knowledge and skills will be completed. The process and findings will be shared with other Departments to enable them to consider a similar audit activity.

PRIORITY 5: Deliver social value through contracts for goods, works and services.

TARGETS

- From September 2021, the following requirements will be incorporated into DoF contracts:
 - i) compliance with relevant employment, equality and health and safety law and human rights standards;
 - ii) adherence to relevant collective agreements;
 - iii) adoption of fair work practices for all workers engaged in the delivery of the contract. Fair work is as per the Carnegie Trust definition.
- By 22 June 2022, tenders must include a minimum of 10% of the total award criteria to score social value. This will apply to contracts for services and works above the threshold where the Procurement Regulations apply. In preparation for this DoF, will develop a training scheme for commissioners, procurement staff and suppliers by January 2022.

PRIORITY 6: To seek full replacement of past EU funding spending power that is delivered in line with Executive priorities/the devolved settlement.

TARGETS

- Maximise replacement spending power from UK government EU funding replacement programmes at Spending Review 2022.
- Negotiate and agree delivery arrangements that deliver spending in line with Executive priorities and devolved competence by Budget 2022.

PRIORITY 7: To sponsor the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to ensure effective delivery of current EU funding and the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme.

TARGETS

- Provide NI Sponsorship role for SEUPB in line with North/South Ministerial Council governance requirement.
- Ensure PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes EU financial targets are met by December 2021.
- Ensure PEACE Plus Programme and its legislative and regulatory framework is in place by April 2022.

PRIORITY 8: Collect rates revenue to fund central and local services.

TARGETS

- Collect £1.125 billion of rates revenue by 31 March 2022.
- Increase the % of rates collected in the year to 91% of the total amount due, including debt from previous years.
- Preparation for Reval 2023.

PRIORITY 9: Effective management of public expenditure in Northern Ireland.

TARGETS

- Facilitate Executive agreement of next NI Budget prior to March 2022.
- Ensure appropriate oversight of NI Departmental budgets throughout 2021-22, ensuring no breach of Departmental Expenditure limits (DEL).
- Promote accountability, good governance and value for money through provision of guidance and expenditure approval process.
- Have the 2022-23 public sector pay policy in place by 31 March 2022.
- Support effective delivery of City Deals, ensuring appropriate funding flows and governance arrangements are in place for each City Deal.
- By 31 March 2022, to have introduced legislation on Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) to enable changes identified through review, in accordance with New Decade New Approach.

PRIORITY 10: Deliver key statistical and registration services.

TARGETS

- Publish a detailed timeline for the publication of 2021 Census results by January 2022.
- Run and report the key findings of the 2021 Civil Service People Survey by January 2022.
- Introduce civil registration certificates with English/Irish headings, by March 2022.

PRIORITY 11: Deliver high quality and independent professional services.

TARGETS

- Deliver 95% of legal services in line with Service Level Agreement (SLA) targets and with 95% client satisfaction.
- Provide a high quality procurement service, achieving a 95% satisfaction rate from customers.
- Achieve a 95% satisfaction rate from innovation labs and events that promote solutions to policy challenges and embed an innovative culture within the NICS.
- Deliver a range of high quality consultancy services to improve government services with a 95% satisfaction rate.

PRIORITY 12: Lead the response of the Executive and Departments to the RHI Inquiry Report.

TARGETS:

- To present for Executive agreement, the Executive Sub Committee response to the RHI Inquiry and present it to the Assembly by the end September 2021.
- To deliver the action plan and commitments in that response in line with published timescales.

PRIORITY 13: Improve effectiveness across the public sector by transforming the way we work, to meet better the needs of citizens, business and government.

TARGETS:

- Publish a NICS Digital Strategy by 31 March 2022.
- Procure and award contract to deliver future government contact centre services by 31 March 2022, to facilitate improved delivery of citizen facing services.
- Provide digital solutions to support ‘New Ways Of Working’.
- Improve the Digital Skills of staff by 31 March 2022.
- To have 4 Connect2 Hubs in Ballykelly, Downpatrick, Ballymena and Craigavon operational by 31 March 2022 (subject to public health advice).
- A DoF implementation plan for ‘New Ways of Working’ to be completed by September 2021.
- New Ways of Working to be implemented in DoF by 31 March 2022.

PRIORITY 14: To sponsor and support the Fiscal Council and Fiscal Commission to ensure 2021-22 Terms of Reference are met.

TARGETS:

- Financial and staffing resources in place by June 2021.
- Finalise Terms of Reference of Fiscal Council following period of engagements by end summer 2021.
- Fiscal Council legislation drafting stage completed by end March 2022.
- Final report by the Fiscal Commission to Finance Minister by end of March 2022.

PRIORITY 15: Actions to support the New Decade New Approach and Executive's Green Growth Strategy and Action Plan.

TARGETS:

- To develop a DoF Green Growth Action Plan to ensure wider green growth targets are delivered within wider timeframes of 2030 and 2050, by end September 2021.
- To review expenditure approval and business case guidance to reflect green growth and social value principles by March 2022.
- To review procurement guidance on green growth by March 2022.
- To develop building standards and workplace policies in line with green growth framework.

PRIORITY 16: Deliver quality support to the DoF Minister and the institutions of Government.

TARGETS:

- Arrangements in place to support the Minister in relation to Executive meetings and Assembly business.
- Respond to Assembly questions and Ministerial correspondence within agreed deadlines.
- Support the Minister and the Department in relation to the legislative work programme.

PRIORITY 17: Amendments to local Building Regulations and associated guidance.

TARGETS:

- Make new buildings more accessible to all users by including a requirement for Changing Places Toilets in new buildings by March 2022.
- Make new buildings safer by amending the building regulations to provide further measures on protection against fire and radon by March 2022.
- Subject to Executive approval deliver revised guidance to make new buildings more energy/carbon efficient by March 2022.
- Deliver increased resourcing to District Councils Control by increasing the fees they can charge to perform certain Building Control services by March 2022.

