



**Partnership Agreement between  
Department of Education (DE)  
and  
Education Authority (EA)**

**VERSION 1.10 FINAL (March 2026)**

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## INTRODUCTION

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### 1. The Partnership Agreement

- 1.1 This document sets out the partnership arrangements between the Education Authority (EA) and the Department of Education (DE). In particular, it explains the overall governance framework within which EA operates, including the framework through which the necessary assurances are provided to stakeholders. Roles/responsibilities of partners within the overall governance framework are also outlined.
- 1.2 The partnership is based on a mutual understanding of strategic aims and objectives; clear accountability; and a recognition of the distinct roles each party contributes. Underpinning the arrangements are the principles set out in the [Partnerships between departments and arm's length bodies: Code of Good Practice \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#) which should be read in conjunction with this document. The principles which are laid out in the Code are as follows.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

Partnerships work well when Departments and Arm's Length Bodies demonstrate good leadership to achieve a shared vision and effective delivery of public services. Strong leadership will provide inspiration, instil confidence and trust and empower their respective teams to deliver good outcomes for citizens.

#### **PURPOSE**

Partnerships work well when the purpose, objectives and roles of Arm's Length Bodies and the sponsor department are clear, mutually understood and reviewed on a regular basis. There needs to be absolute clarity about lines of accountability and responsibility between departments and Arm's Length Bodies. In exercising statutory functions Arm's Length Bodies need to have clarity about how their purpose and objectives align with those of departments.

#### **ASSURANCE**

Partnerships work well when departments adopt a proportionate approach to assurance, based on Arm's Length Bodies' purpose and a mutual understanding of risk. Arm's Length Bodies should have robust governance arrangements in place and in turn departments should give Arm's Length Bodies the autonomy to deliver effectively. Management information should be what is needed to enable departments and Arm's Length Bodies to provide assurance and assess performance.

#### **VALUE**

Partnerships work well when departments and Arm's Length Bodies share knowledge, skills and experience in order to enhance their impact and delivery. Arm's Length Bodies are able to contribute to policy making and departmental priorities. There is a focus on innovation, and on how departments and Arm's Length Bodies work together to deliver the most effective policies and services for its customers.

#### **ENGAGEMENT**

Partnerships work well when relationships between departments and Arm's Length Bodies are open, honest, constructive and based on trust. There is mutual understanding about each other's objectives and clear expectations about the terms of engagement.

A full copy of the NI Code can be found at Annex 8.

- 1.3 This document should also be read in conjunction with guidance on proportionate autonomy which provides an outline of the principles and characteristics for proportionate autonomy (see [Partnerships between departments and arm's length bodies: Code of Good Practice \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#)). Guidance on proportionate autonomy has been considered in determining the extent of engagement and assurance to be established between EA and DE and this is reflected in this agreement ([Section 11](#) and [Annex 2](#)).
- 1.4 DE and EA are committed to:
- working together within distinct roles and responsibilities;
  - maintaining focus on successful delivery of Programme for Government outcomes, Ministerial priorities and associated strategies (see also paras 2.6 and 2.7);
  - maintaining open and honest communication and dialogue;
  - keeping each other informed of any issues and concerns, and of emerging areas of risk;
  - being open and transparent in sharing of information and data (as appropriate);
  - supporting and challenging each other on developing policy advice and delivering agreed policy priorities and actions [when developing policy advice and implementation this may cut across more than one department];
  - seeking to resolve issues quickly and constructively; and
  - acting at all times in the public interest and in line with the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.
- 1.5 The effectiveness of the partnership and the associated Engagement Plan will be reviewed formally each year by DE and EA in order to assess whether the partnership is operating as intended and to identify any emerging issues/opportunities for enhancement. This can be carried out as part of existing governance arrangements. This Partnership Agreement will be reviewed formally at least once every three years to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up-to-date in terms of current governance frameworks. The formal review will be proportionate to EA's size and overall responsibilities and will be published on DE and EA websites as soon as practicable following completion.
- 1.6 A copy of this agreement has been placed in the Assembly Library and is available on the DE and EA websites.

## EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE

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### 2. Statutory Purpose and Strategic Objectives

2.1 EA is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) established by statute, the Education Act (NI) 2014. For national accounts purposes the EA is classified to the central government sector.

2.2 The functions, duties and powers of EA are set out in the following:

- Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014;
- The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986;
- Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998;
- The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003;
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005; and
- Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

2.3 EA's core functions, duties and powers include the following.

EA is an Arm's Length Body of DE and is a delivery organisation with statutory responsibilities (as set out in legislation – see 2.2 above and Annex 1) for ensuring that efficient and effective nursery, primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people; and for supporting the provision of adequate youth facilities having regard to facilities provided by others. EA is the lead planning authority and the managing authority for controlled schools. EA supports all our children and young people in their journey through education, from admission to pre-school, through to their transition into further education, training or employment. As DE is dependent on EA (for the most part) for operationalisation or implementation of policy and delivery of services, and allocates the majority of its budget through them, EA will provide assurances that risk is being managed and escalated appropriately.

2.4 EA has responsibility for all aspects of the Local Management of Schools undertaken by Boards of Governors. Within this responsibility the EA Chief Executive is accountable for the public resources delegated under the Common Funding Scheme, to all grant-aided schools (controlled and maintained, including special schools, Irish Medium, voluntary grammar, and grant-maintained integrated). Further information on schools' delegated budgets can be found in Appendix 3(b).

2.5 This approach clearly creates a structural misalignment between accountability and authority, and both DE and EA has recognised the need for a new and sharper approach to financial stewardship across the education system. This work will be taken forward through the Strategic Programme Board.

2.6 EA also delivers a wide range of non-education statutory functions on behalf of schools through advice, guidance and direct delivery. This includes areas of work within Human Resources and Corporate Services, Finance and Audit, and Operations and Estates; this is not an exhaustive list.

2.7 The Minister of Education is answerable to the Assembly for the overall performance of the education system in Northern Ireland.

2.8 The Executive's approach to delivering on its [Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'](#) recognises the importance of arm's length bodies and

departments working collaboratively and together in a joined up approach to improve overall outcomes and results.

- 2.9 To that end there is strategic alignment between the aims, objectives and expected outcomes and results of EA and DE. These will be consistent with Ministerial and DE's strategic priorities.
- 2.10 As a delivery organisation, EA is a key player in the broader DE family. EA's Business Plan is directly aligned with the wider Executive Programme for Government and associated strategies, in addition to Ministerial and DE's strategic priorities. DE recognises that EA has a key role in helping to inform education policy development and direction of both DE and other departments. DE is committed to involving EA in the policy making stage, which will be articulated in the Annual Engagement Plan.

## EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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### 3. Organisational Status

EA is a body corporate created by statute and therefore a legal entity in its own right and operating at arm's-length from DE. As a legal entity it must comply with all associated legislation including that relating to its employer status.

### 4. Governance Framework

4.1 EA has an established Corporate Governance Framework which reflects all relevant good practice guidance. The framework ([Corporate Governance Framework 2022 2025 | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](#)) includes the governance structures established in EA along with the internal control and risk management arrangements in place. This includes its Board and its Committee Structure.

4.2 An account of this is included in EA's annual Governance Statement together with the EA Board's self-assessment of its compliance with the extant Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice (NI). Any departure from the Corporate Governance Code must be explained in the Governance Statement. The extant Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice (NI) is available on the [DoF website](#).

4.3 EA is required to follow the principles, rules, guidance and advice in *Managing Public Money Northern Ireland*. A list of other applicable guidance and instructions which EA is required to follow is set out in Annex 6. Good governance should also include positive stakeholder engagement, the building of positive relationships and a listening and learning culture.

### 5. EA Board

5.1 EA is led by a Board, the constitution of which is set out in [Schedule 1](#) of the 2014 Act with 20 members, plus the Chairperson. The Chair is appointed by the Minister, through an open public appointment competition, compliant with the Code of Practice for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland. The 20 Board members are appointed as follows.

- 8 nominations from political parties ("political members")
- 12 persons appointed by DE ("appointed members"), of whom:
  - a) 4 will be members representative of the interests of transferors of controlled schools;
  - b) 4 will be members representative of the interests of trustees of maintained schools; and
  - c) 4 will be members representative of the interests of integrated, Irish-Medium, controlled grammar and voluntary grammar school sectors.

5.2 As Public Appointees, Board members are office holders rather than employees, they are not subject to employee terms and conditions.

5.3 The Board's operating framework, 'EA's Standing Orders' provides further detail on roles and responsibilities and should align closely with this Partnership Agreement.

5.4 The role of EA's Board is to provide strong, confident and effective leadership, strategic direction, constructive challenge and guidance to the organisation. The Board has corporate responsibility to ensure that EA fulfils the aims, objectives, policies and priorities set by DE and the Minister. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the organisation has effective and proportionate governance arrangements in place and an internal control framework which

allow risks to be effectively identified and managed. The Board will set the culture and values of EA and will set the tone for the EA's engagement with stakeholders and service users.

- 5.5 EA's Board is responsible for holding the Chief Executive to account for the management of the organisation and the delivery of agreed plans and outcomes. EA's Board should also, however support the Chief Executive as appropriate in the exercise of their duties.
- 5.6 Board members should act solely in the interests of EA and must not use the Board as a platform to champion their own interests or pursue personal agendas. They occupy a position of trust and their standards of action and behaviour must be exemplary and in line with the seven principles of public life (Nolan principles). EA has a Code of Conduct for Board Members and there are mechanisms in place to deal with any Board disputes/conflicts to ensure they do not become wider issues that impact on the effectiveness of the Board.
- 5.7 A Board Register of Interests is maintained, kept up to date and is publicly available, to help provide transparency and promote public confidence in EA.
- 5.8 Communication and relationships within the EA Board are underpinned by a spirit of trust and professional respect. The Board recognises that using consensus to avoid conflict or encouraging members to consistently express similar views or consider only a few alternative views does not encourage constructive debate and does not give rise to an effective Board dynamic. The principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility should be upheld at all times. Once the Board has decided, each Board member must support that decision.
- 5.9 It is for EA's Board to decide what information it needs, and in what format, for its meetings/effective operation. If EA's Board is not confident that it is being fully informed about the organisation this will be addressed by the Chair of EA's Board through engagement with the Chief Executive as the Board cannot be effective with out-of-date or only partial knowledge.
- 5.10 In order to fulfil their duties, Board members must undertake initial training and regular ongoing training and development. The review of Board members skills and development will be a key part of the annual review of Board effectiveness.
- 5.11 DE should be provided with copies of minutes of all meetings of the EA Board and its committees as soon as possible, and no later than 5 days after being agreed by the Board as the accurate and final record.

## **6. Governance, Risk and Audit Committee**

- 6.1 A further important aspect of EA's governance framework is its Governance, Risk and Audit Committee, EA in line with the extant Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI), has established the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee as an advisory committee of EA to support it in its responsibilities of reviewing the reliability and integrity of its:
  - corporate governance framework;
  - management of risk across EA;
  - financial statements, accountability and reporting; and
  - delivery of internal audit function.
- 6.2 EA's Board has agreed a Scheme specifying the duties and responsibilities of EA's Governance, Risk and Audit Committee pursuant to the NI Code of Good Practice.
- 6.3 EA's Governance, Risk and Audit Committee's purpose/role is to support the Accounting Officer and Board on governance issues. In line with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) ([DAO 03/18](#)), the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee will focus on:

- arrangements are in place to provide assurance over governance, risk and audits in EA;
- ensuring that accounting policies, annual report and accounts, including the Governance Statement, are properly prepared; and
- ensuring there is an adequate and effective risk management and assurance framework in place.

6.4 EA and DE have agreed arrangements in respect of the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee which includes:

- attendance by the DE Director of Finance in an observer capacity at Governance, Risk and Audit Committee meetings;
- access to Governance, Risk and Audit Committee papers and minutes; and
- any input required from Governance, Risk and Audit Committee to the departmental Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

6.5 Full compliance with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) is an essential requirement. In the event of significant non-compliance with the handbook's five good practice principles (or other non-compliance) discussion will be required with DE and a full explanation provided in the annual Governance Statement.

## **7. EA Board Chair**

7.1 The EA Chair is appointed by, and is responsible to, the Minister of Education and shall ensure that the EA's policies and actions support the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government targets and the policies and priorities of the Minister of Education.

7.2 The Chair is responsible for setting the agenda and managing the Board to enable collaborative and robust discussion of issues and effective decision making. The Chair's role is to develop and motivate the EA Board and ensure effective relationships in order that the EA Board can work collaboratively to reach a consensus on decisions. To achieve this, the Chair should ensure:

- the Board has an appropriate balance of skills appropriate to its business;
- Board members are fully briefed on terms of appointment, duties, rights and responsibilities;
- Board members receive and maintain appropriate training;
- the Minister is advised of EA Board vacancies as they arise;
- there is a Board operating framework (Standing Orders) in place setting out the roles and responsibilities of EA's Board in line with relevant guidance; and
- there is a Board Member Code of Conduct in place, consistent with relevant guidance.

7.3 The role also requires the establishment of an effective working relationship with EA's Chief Executive that is simultaneously collaborative and challenging. It is important that the Chair and Chief Executive act in accordance with their distinct roles and responsibilities as laid out in Managing Public Money NI and their appointment letters.

7.4 The Chair has a presence in the organisation and cultivates external relationships which provide useful links for the organisation while being mindful of overstepping boundaries and becoming too involved in day to day operations or executive activities.

## **8. EA Chief Executive**

- 8.1 The role of EA's Chief Executive is to run EA's business. The Chief Executive is responsible for all executive management matters affecting the organisation and for leadership of the executive management team.
- 8.2 The Chief Executive is designated as EA Accounting Officer by the departmental Accounting Officer (see section 12). As Accounting Officer they are responsible for safeguarding the public funds in their charge and for ensuring they are applied only to the purposes for which they were voted and more generally for efficient and economical administration.
- 8.3 The Chief Executive is accountable to EA's Board for EA's performance and delivery of outcomes and targets and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the EA Board and its Committees. The Chief Executive maintains a dialogue with the Chair on the important strategic issues facing the organisation and for proposing Board agendas to the Chair to reflect these. The Chief Executive ensures effective communication with stakeholders and communication on this to the Board. The Chief Executive also ensures that the Chair is alerted to forthcoming complex, contentious or sensitive issues, including risks affecting the organisation.
- 8.4 The Chief Executive acts as a role model to other executives by exhibiting open support for the Chair and Board members and the contribution they make. The Chair and Chief Executive have agreed how they will work together in practice, understanding and respecting each other's role, including the Chief Executive's responsibility as Accounting Officer.
- 8.5 Further detail on the role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive are as laid out in Managing Public Money NI and their Accounting Officer appointment letter.

### The Chief Executive's role as Principal Officer for Ombudsman Cases

- 8.6 The Chief Executive is the Principal Officer for handling cases involving the NI Public Sector Ombudsman. They shall advise the departmental Accounting Officer of any complaints about EA accepted by the Ombudsman for investigation, and about the proposed response to any subsequent recommendations from the Ombudsman.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **9. Partnership Working Between the Department and the Education Authority**

- 9.1 DE and EA have distinct roles in the planning and delivery of education services while both work to achieve the strategic priorities of the Minister of Education. The partnership between DE and EA should be open, honest, constructive and based on trust. There should be mutual understanding of each other's objectives and clear expectations on the terms of engagement.
- 9.2 In exercising its functions, EA should have absolute clarity on how its purpose and objectives align with those of DE. There is also a shared understanding of the risks that may impact on each other and these are reflected in respective Risk Registers.
- 9.3 DE will continue to have responsibility for developing and reviewing educational policy (in line with Ministerial direction) whilst the EA will have responsibility for implementing policy and delivering services to children and young people in line with Departmental policy. There should be a regular exchange of skills and experience between DE and EA and where possible joint programme/project delivery boards/ arrangements. Where appropriate, EA will also be involved as a partner in policy/strategy development and provide advice on policy implementation/ the impact of policies in practice.
- 9.4 The Department of Finance (DoF) has established, on behalf of the NI Assembly, a delegated authority framework which sets out the circumstances where prior DoF approval is required before expenditure can be incurred or commitments entered into. The DE Accounting Officer has established an internal framework of delegated authority for DE and its ALBs which apply to EA. Other specific approval requirements established in respect of EA as set out at Annex 3.
- 9.5 Once EA's budget has been approved by the Minister and DE [and subject to any restrictions imposed by statute] EA shall have authority to incur expenditure approved in the budget without further reference to DE. Inclusion of any planned and approved expenditure in the budget shall not however remove the need to seek formal departmental approval where proposed expenditure is outside the delegated limits (as laid out in Annex 3(a)) or is for new schemes not previously agreed. Nor does it negate the need to follow due processes laid out in guidance contained in Managing Public Money NI and Better Business Cases NI (Section 12 "Departmental Accounting Officer" also refers).

### **10. Lead Officials**

- 10.1 DE has appointed a lead senior official, Director of Corporate Services and Education Governance, to manage the relationship with EA and ensure effective partnership working and EA has similarly appointed a lead senior officer, the Head of Chief Executive's Office. Engagement between DE and EA should be co-ordinated, collaborative and consistent. A clear sense of collaboration and partnership should be communicated to staff in both DE and EA in order to promote mutual understanding and support.
- 10.2 DE's Director of Corporate Services and Education Governance will liaise directly with EA on governance and all general accountability matters, sponsorship, business planning and risk management issues.
- 10.3 DE's Finance Director will liaise directly with EA's Chief Finance Officer on budget matters, financial accountability, and audit assurance/audit planning issues (with input from policy leads as required), as set out in the Annual Engagement Plan.
- 10.4 The relevant DE policy Directors are the policy leads for all other policy-specific and delivery matters relating to EA's business; they should have a clear understanding of EA's responsibilities for policy implementation and operational delivery along with the relevant

audiences/stakeholders involved and therefore they should directly engage with their EA counterpart in relation to policy-development and delivery matters.

- 10.5 The relevant DE policy Director will ensure that where there are senior departmental staff changes, time is taken to ensure they have a full understanding of EA's business and challenges. The EA will take the equivalent approach where there are senior officer changes within its organisation.
- 10.6 A designated Single Point of Contact (SPoC) will be established in both DE and EA to address any areas of engagement which fall outside the Annual Engagement Plan (see Annex 2).

## **11. Annual Engagement Plan**

- 11.1 DE and EA will agree an engagement plan before the start of each business year. The Annual Engagement Plan (Annex 2) will set out the timing and nature of engagement between EA and DE. The engagement plan will be specific to EA and should not stray into operational oversight.
- 11.2 Engagement between DE's lead official/their teams and EA will be centred on partnership working, understanding of risks, including shared risks, and working together on business developments that align with policy objectives.
- 11.3 EA will work in collaboration and partnership with DE to prepare and agree its corporate and business plans. There should be good high level strategic alignment between departmental and EA plans. Once approved it will be the Board of EA that primarily holds the Chief Executive to account for delivery and performance. DE should engage with EA on areas of strategic interest, linking departmental policy and EA's delivery of policy intent.
- 11.4 The Annual Engagement Plan will also reference the agreed management and financial information to be shared over the course of a year. The aim will be to ensure clear understanding of why information is necessary and how it will be used. Where the same, or similar information is required for internal governance information requirements will be aligned so that a single report can be used for both purposes. In addition, the engagement plan should consider opportunities for learning and development, growth and actions which could help achieve better outcomes.

## **12. Departmental Accounting Officer**

- 12.1 The Departmental Accounting Officer is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the issue of grant in aid to EA. The Departmental Accounting Officer has designated EA's Chief Executive as EA's Accounting Officer and respective responsibilities of the Departmental Accounting Officer and the EA Accounting Officer are set out in Chapter 3 of Managing Public Money NI.
- 12.2 The Departmental Accounting Officer may withdraw the EA Accounting Officer designation if it is considered that the EA Accounting Officer is no longer a fit person to carry out the responsibilities of an Accounting Officer or that it is otherwise in the public interest that the designation be withdrawn. In such circumstances the EA Board will be given a full account of the reasons for withdrawal and a chance to make representations. Withdrawal of EA Accounting Officer status would bring into question the continued employment of that individual as Chief Executive and the Chair should engage with DE should such circumstances arise.
- 12.3 The Departmental Accounting Officer must be informed in the event that the judgement of the EA Accounting Officer (on matters for which they are responsible) is over-ridden by EA's Board. EA's Accounting Officer must also take action if EA's Board is contemplating a course that would infringe the requirement for financial propriety, regularity, prudent and economical administration, efficiency or effectiveness. In all other regards, the Departmental Accounting Officer has no day to day involvement with EA or its Chief Executive.

12.4 In line with DoF requirements, EA's Accounting Officer will provide an annual declaration of fitness to act as Accounting Officer to DE's Accounting officer through the end-year Governance Statement.

### **13. Attendance at Public Accounts Committee**

13.1 EA's Chief Executive/Accounting Officer may be summoned to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the discharge of their responsibilities as Accounting Officer (as laid out in their Accounting Officer appointment letter) on issues arising from the Comptroller & Auditor General's (C&AGs) studies or reports following the annual audit of accounts.

13.2 The Chair may also, on occasion, be called to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on such relevant issues arising within the C&AG's studies or reports, in relation to the role and actions taken by the Board, where appropriate.

13.3 In addition, the DE Accounting Officer may be summoned to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the discharge of their responsibilities as departmental Accounting Officer with overarching responsibility for EA. In such circumstances, the departmental accounting Officer may therefore expect to be questioned on their responsibilities to ensure that:

- there is a clear strategic control framework for the EA;
- sufficient and appropriate management and financial controls are in place to safeguard public funds;
- the nominated EA Accounting Officer is fit to discharge his or her responsibilities;
- there are suitable internal audit arrangements;
- accounts are prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and any accounting direction; and
- intervention is made, where necessary, in situations where the EA Accounting Officer's advice on transactions in relation to regularity, propriety or value for money is overruled by EA Chair or its Board.

### 14. Autonomy and Proportionality

- 14.1 DE will ensure that EA has the proportionate autonomy to deliver effectively, recognising its status as a separate legal entity which has its own Board and governance arrangements. Guidance on proportionate autonomy has been considered in determining the extent of engagement and assurance established between EA and DE and is reflected in this agreement.
- 14.2 A proportionate approach to assurance will be taken based on EA's overall purpose, business and budget and a mutual understanding of risk. The approach will include an agreed process through which EA's Accounting Officer provides written assurance to DE that the public funds and organisational assets for which they are personally responsible are safeguarded, have been managed with propriety and regularity, and use of public funds represents value for money.
- 14.3 In accordance with the principles of partnership working, the aim is for DE and EA to work in partnership to increase and delegate autonomy to the EA and this will be reviewed annually with actions identified to help increase the level of autonomy.
- 14.4 Recognising the governance arrangements in place within the organisation, the EA Accounting Officer will arrange for their written assurance statements (Mid-year and End-year Governance Statements) to be discussed at the EA Governance, Risk and Audit Committee and presented to the EA Board prior to submission to DE where possible. If not possible, or practicable, the EA Chair should have sight of the assurance statement, prior to being submitted to DE.
- 14.5 For the end-year Governance Statement the EA Chair will provide written confirmation that the EA Accounting Officer's formal assurance has been considered by the EA Board and is reflective of EA's current position.
- 14.6 In addition to the EA Accounting Officer's written assurance, DE will take assurance from the following key aspects of EA's own governance framework:
- annual review of Board Effectiveness;
  - completion of Board Appraisals which confirm EA Board member effectiveness;
  - Internal Audit assurance and External Quality Assessment of the Internal Audit function;
  - externally audited Annual Report and Accounts, reviewed/considered by the EA Governance Risk and Audit Committee.

### 15. Board Effectiveness

- 15.1 EA's Chair will ensure that EA's Board undertakes an annual review of Board Effectiveness<sup>1</sup> which encompasses committees established by the Board.
- 15.2 The Chair will discuss the outcome of the annual review of Board Effectiveness with the lead official to ensure a partnership approach to any improvements identified. This will inform the annual programme of Board training/development and discussions in respect of Board composition and succession.
- 15.3 In line with any parameters set out in founding (or other) legislation, the Chair in conjunction with DE, and Ministers where appropriate, will consider the size and composition of the EA Board, proportionate to the size and complexity of EA and keep this under review.

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<sup>1</sup> NIAO Good Practice Guide on Board Effectiveness

15.4 In addition to the annual review of Board Effectiveness, EA will undertake an externally facilitated review of Board effectiveness at least once every three years covering the performance of the Board, its Committees and individual Board members. The Chair will liaise with DE to identify a suitably skilled facilitator for the external review (this can be a peer review, and should be proportionate) and will share the findings/outcome report with DE on completion of the review.

## **16. Board Appraisals**

16.1 EA's Chair will conduct an annual appraisal in respect of each Board member which will also inform the annual programme of Board training/ development. The Chair will engage with the Chief Executive and DE's lead official as appropriate on improvements identified through the appraisal process and the annual training/development programme.

16.2 The Chair's annual appraisal will be completed by DE's Permanent Secretary. The appraisal will take account of the key characteristics of a good chairperson (particularly for the Chair to have well developed interpersonal skills) set out in the NIAO Good Practice Guide on Board Effectiveness available on the NIAO website. There will be close engagement between the EA Chair and DE's lead official on improvements identified through the appraisal process.

## **17. Internal Audit Assurance**

17.1 EA is required to establish and maintain arrangements for an internal audit function that operates in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS). DE must be satisfied with the competence and qualifications of the Head of Internal Audit and that the requirements for approving appointments are in accordance with GIAS.

17.2 In the event that the internal audit function is contracted out EA shall ensure DE is satisfied that the contract specification for the internal audit service meets the requirements of GIAS.

17.3 EA will provide its internal audit strategy, periodic audit plans and annual audit report, including the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on risk management, control and governance to DE. EA will ensure DE's internal audit team have complete right of access to all relevant records. This applies whether the internal audit function is provided in-house or is contracted out.

17.4 EA will ensure regular, periodic self-assessments of the internal audit function in line with GIAS and will share these with DE. EA will also liaise with the DE on the External Quality Assessment (EQA) of the internal audit function which (in line with GIAS) is required to be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified independent assessor.

17.5 EA will alert DE to any less than satisfactory audit reports at the earliest opportunity on an ongoing basis. EA will also alert DE to a less than satisfactory annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit at the earliest opportunity. EA and DE will then engage closely on actions required to address the less than satisfactory opinion in order to move EA to a satisfactory position as soon as possible.

17.6 DE will take assurance from the fact that EA has met the requirements of GIAS and has a satisfactory annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit as part of its overall assurance assessment.

## **18. Externally Audited Annual Report and Accounts**

18.1 EA is required to prepare an Annual Report and Accounts in line with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance (DoF) and the specific Accounts Direction issued by DE and in accordance with the deadlines specified.

- 18.2 The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) will arrange to audit the EA annual accounts and will issue an independent opinion on the accounts. EA Finance pass the EA accounts, including the independent C&AG audit certificate and report (if appropriate), to DE, who shall lay them before the NI Assembly together with EA's annual report.
- 18.3 The C&AG will also provide a Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) to EA which will be shared with DE.
- 18.4 EA will alert DE to any likely qualification of the accounts at the earliest opportunity. In the event of a qualified audit opinion or significant issues reported in the RTTCWG, DE will engage with EA on actions required to address the qualification/significant issues.
- 18.5 DE will take assurance from the external audit process and an unqualified position as part of its overall assurance assessment.
- 18.6 The C&AG may carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which EA has used its resources in discharging its functions. The C&AG may also carry out thematic examinations that encompass the functions of EA.
- 18.7 For the purpose of audit and any other examinations, the C&AG has statutory access to documents as provided for under Articles 3 and 4 of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.
- 18.8 Where making payment of a grant, or drawing up a contract, EA should ensure that it includes a clause which makes the grant or contract conditional upon the recipient or contractor providing access to the C&AG in relation to documents relevant to the transaction. Where subcontractors are likely to be involved, it should also be made clear that the requirements extend to them.

## SIGNATORIES

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The Education Authority and the Department of Education agree to work in partnership with each other in line with the NI Code of Good Practice '**Partnerships between Departments and Arm's-Length Bodies**' and the arrangements set out in this Agreement.

Signed (Chairperson of the Education Authority)  
Date

Signed (Chief Executive of the Education Authority)  
Date



Signed (Department – *[at least Senior Lead Official]*)  
Date 24 March 2026

## **Annex 1 - Applicable Legislation and Policy**

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### [Department of Education legislation | Department of Education](#)

#### **Legislation<sup>2</sup>**

- Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (NI 3)
- Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (NI 20)
- Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (NI 22)
- Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (NI 1)
- Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (NI 5)
- Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (NI 13)
- Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (NI 12)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (NI 6)
- Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (NI 11)
- Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (C. 12)
- Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (C. 20)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (C. 8)
- Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (C. 15)
- Identify and Language (Northern Ireland) Act (received Royal Assent on 6/12/2022 but has not yet been commenced)
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

#### **Strategic functions of EA's Board**

- a) Overseeing the delivery of EA's strategic priorities and adapting to changes in education
- b) Approving corporate strategies and policies
- c) Approving EA's business plan and tracking organisational delivery and overall performance
- d) Ensuring effectiveness and performance of EA services, including service users' experiences
- e) Encourage, facilitate and promote shared education and community use of schools
- f) Encourage, facilitate and promote integrated education
- g) Supporting the context of the Department's duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education
- h) Providing strategic oversight for all of EA's financial planning
- i) Ensure that EA is managing its estates efficiently
- j) Ensure that EA is demonstrating value for money through the delivery of its CoPE
- k) Oversee the delivery of people strategies and how they contribute to improved organisational performance
- l) Approving senior officer pay frameworks and annual progression
- m) Ensuring that the Board is supported by an advisory Committee who reviews the reliability and integrity of its corporate governance framework and delivery of EA's internal audit function.
- n) Supporting controlled schools facing governance or leadership challenges

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<sup>2</sup> Outlined in the Landscape Review of EA – Project 1 Report – Recommendation 1

- o) Ensuring school development plans meet legal and organisational standards
- p) Ensuring that the services we deliver effectively impact school improvement
- q) Appoint representatives to school Boards of Governors
- r) Carry out EA's duties under the Teaching Appointments Scheme for the recruitment of principals, vice principals, and teachers in controlled schools.
- s) Ensuring that for children with special educational needs are placed in suitable provisions and have the most appropriate support
- t) Ensuring robust child protection and safeguarding procedures
- u) Managing the expulsions process

### **Policies That EA Delivers On Behalf Of DE<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Name of DE Policy</b>	<b>DE Policy Code Ref.</b>
Addressing Bullying	N/A
Assessment Arrangements	33
Attendance of non-teaching staff	40
Boarding and Clothing Allowances	24
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training and Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Awareness	67
Careers Education	31
Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding	6
Class Sizes	29
Community Asset Transfer	60
Community Relations, Equality and Diversity	38
Community Use of School Premises	12
Compulsory School Age	26
Disposal of Surplus Education Authority Assets	59
Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	25
Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS)	10
Elective Home Education (EHE)	23
Emotional Health & Wellbeing in Education Framework	8
Entitlement Framework	30
Equality and Human Rights	49
Exceptional Teaching Arrangements	N/A
Executive Children and Young People's Strategy (CYPS)	53
Extended Schools	11
Food in Schools	20

<sup>33</sup> Outlined in the Landscape Review of EA – Project 1 Report – Recommendation 1. This document should be consulted for a detailed description of EA's role in delivering the above policies, These will be kept under review as part of DE's regular review of the DE Policy Code.

Grant Recovery / Clawback (NB: no role for EA in respect of grant recovery from voluntary schools)	58
Home to School Transport	3
Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS)	7
Integrated Education Act: Implementation	54
Learning Leaders – Teacher Professional Learning Strategy	N/A
Learning to Learn – A Framework of Early Years Education & Learning	18
Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	36
Local Management of Schools	63
Northern Ireland Curriculum	27
Northern Ireland Executive Public Sector Pay	48
Northern Ireland Teachers' Pensions Scheme (NITPS)	46
Nurture provision	N/A
Open Enrolment and Transfer	4
Period Dignity	15
Priorities for Youth	17
Provision of Teacher Professional Learning	65
Pupil Attendance	14
Qualifications and Examinations	32
Rentals and Grant-Aided Schools	61
Restraint and Seclusion	N/A
Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016	50
School Age Mothers Programme	N/A
School Board of Governors	2
School Building Handbooks	57
School Days of Operation and Closure	28
Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools	1
School Improvement Policy	35
School Meals	21
School Scheme of Management	55
Shared Education	37
Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy Statement	N/A
Special Educational Needs (SEN) – code of practice and supplement	5
Strategic Cost Base Reduction – Non-Teaching Staff	42
Strategy for Children Looked After (CLA): Improving Children's Lives	9
Support for Newcomer Pupils (and Asylum Seekers and Refugees Provision)	51

Suspensions and Expulsions	N/A
Teachers' Negotiating Arrangements	43
Teachers' Pay	44
Teachers' Premature Retirement Compensation (PRC) Scheme	47
Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Service	45
Traveller and Roma Pupils	52
Vetting and Barring of School Staff	41
Young Carers	N/A

## **Annex 2 - Annual Engagement Plan**

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At a high level, the DE/EA Engagement Plan will consist of the following:

- Weekly Issues meeting with Minister
- Strategic Programme Board for Financial Stability of Education
- Governance and Accountability Review meetings
- Budget Management meetings
- DE/EA Policy Development and Delivery meetings as required policy oversight/stocktake meetings as required
- Assurance meetings / returns
- Board Appointments

DE officials and EA officers will work together to develop a more detailed engagement plan for 2026/27 which reflects the key/strategic areas of engagement and will be agreed by the end of Quarter 1 2026/27.

## Annex 3(a) - Delegations

### Delegated authorities

EA shall obtain DE's prior written approval before:

- entering into any undertaking to incur any expenditure that falls outside the delegations or which is not provided for in the ALB's annual budget as approved by DE;
- incurring expenditure for any purpose that is or might be considered novel or contentious, or which has or could have significant future cost implications (including the composition of the EA's senior staffing structure i.e. Directors and Assistant Directors);
- making any significant change in the scale of operation or funding of any initiative or particular scheme previously approved by DE;
- making any change of policy or practice which has wider financial implications that might prove repercussive or which might significantly affect the future level of resources required; or
- carrying out policies that go against the principles, rules, guidance and advice in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

### EA's Specific Delegated Authorities

The delegated expenditure limits set out in the table below have been agreed by DE and the EA. In addition, Departmental Delegations (above which DoF approval is required) are published on the [DoF website](#) (currently in [DAO \(DoF\) 05/25](#) along with specific [DE delegations](#)). DE is responsible for obtaining DoF approval on the EA's behalf, as appropriate.

	EA £000s	DE £000s
School Buildings – expenditure on all capital projects	5,000	>5,000
All other expenditure of capital projects	1,000	>1,000
Resource	All	-
IT	1,000	>1,000
External Consultancy	Nil	All
Campaign Advertising	10	>10

### Special Payments and Losses

Type of loss/special payment	Maximum amount per case/ incident £
Cash losses Including losses by theft, burglary, fraud, arson or gross carelessness, physical losses of cash, losses of equivalents of cash, and charges to accounts to clear an inexplicable debit balance in Suspense Accounts (where fraud is not suspected and it is not possible to explain how the debit arose).	15,000
Stores/Equipment losses	50,000
Constructive losses and fruitless payments	50,000

Fruitless payment is where payment cannot be avoided but the organisation received nothing of use in return. Constructive loss is similar but where procurement action itself caused the loss.	
Compensation payments made under legal obligation, e.g. by Court Order	Full delegation
Compensation payments following legal advice – individual compensation claims settled out of court over £250k where the legal advice is that the department will not win the case if contested in court. This includes plaintiff legal costs.	100,000 (between 30,000 and 100,000 DE to be notified in advance)
Compensation payments without legal advice – individual compensation claims settled out of court over £10k. This includes plaintiff costs	No delegation – all proposals must be submitted to DE for approval
Claims abandoned or waiver of claim	50,000
Extra contractual payments Payments which, though not legally due under contract appear to place an obligation which the court might uphold. (A payment made as a result of an arbitration award is contractual.)	30,000
Special severance payments	No delegation – all proposals must be submitted to DE for approval
Ex gratia payments	30,000
Extra statutory and extra regulatory payments Payments made within the broad intention of the statute or regulation, but go beyond a strict interpretation of its terms.	30,000
Overpayments of pay pensions and allowances By miscalculation / misinterpretation / full facts unavailable)	no delegation - all proposals must be submitted to DE for approval
Losses – foregoing recovery of the whole or any of the collective overpayment	No delegation – all proposals must be submitted to DE for approval
Foregoing the recoupment of overpayments of pay, pensions and allowances over £20k	20,000
Financial remedy payments over £500 (i.e. payments made to complainants through an organisation's internal complaints procedures/processes) unless as a result of a recommendation from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman and the Pensions Ombudsman	No delegation – all proposals must be submitted to DE for approval

These delegations shall not be altered without the prior agreement of DE and, where applicable, DoF.

## Gifts

The Chief Executive may authorise individual gifts up to the value of £100, or collective gifts up to the value of £1,000 – these gifts will not be used for the benefit of staff or members.

Records of gifts should be kept. If EA is in any doubt whether a particular expenditure counts as publicity or a gift, it should consult DE. The prior approval of DE must be obtained for amounts above these values.

## Commercial Insurance

Normally the Department will require the EA to insure commercially only where there is a legal obligation to do so, for example, for motor fleet insurance to comply with the Road Traffic legislation. However, the Department accepts that there may also be other circumstances where commercial insurance can be justified, for example:

- i. Buildings insurance where insurance is a condition of the lease (e.g. school meals accommodation at a maintained school)
- ii. Income generation – under Article 32 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993 the Board may generate income by undertaking commercial activities. This initiative is intended to provide income over and above that made available from the Exchequer. The general principle whereby the Crown bears its own losses is inappropriate in these circumstances. It has therefore been decided that income generation activities should be entirely self-supporting and that appropriate commercial insurance should be taken out in respect of these.

Apart from the circumstances identified above the Department will expect the Board not to insure against all other risks unless it can demonstrate, to satisfaction of DE and DoF that it would be more cost effective to insure commercially. Specifically, the EA should self-insure in the following areas:

- i. EA Property – in line with policy on public sector property insurance, the EA already carries its own risk for EA property rather than take out commercial insurance; and
- ii. Public and employer's liability – the EA is not required to insure against employers' liability risks. The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Exemption (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 exempt the Education Authority from the requirements of part III of the Employer's Liability (Defective Equipment and Compulsory Insurance) (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 which places a duty of employers to insure and maintain against liability for personal injury suffered by their employees and arising out of and in the course of their employment. A guarantee in respect of employer's liability is issued in accordance with annex 4.5 of MPMNI.

Where commercial insurance policies are being considered, proportionate business cases must be completed and submitted for DE and DoF approval prior to purchasing policies.

### **Annex 3(b) - Schools' Delegated Budget: Financial Control**

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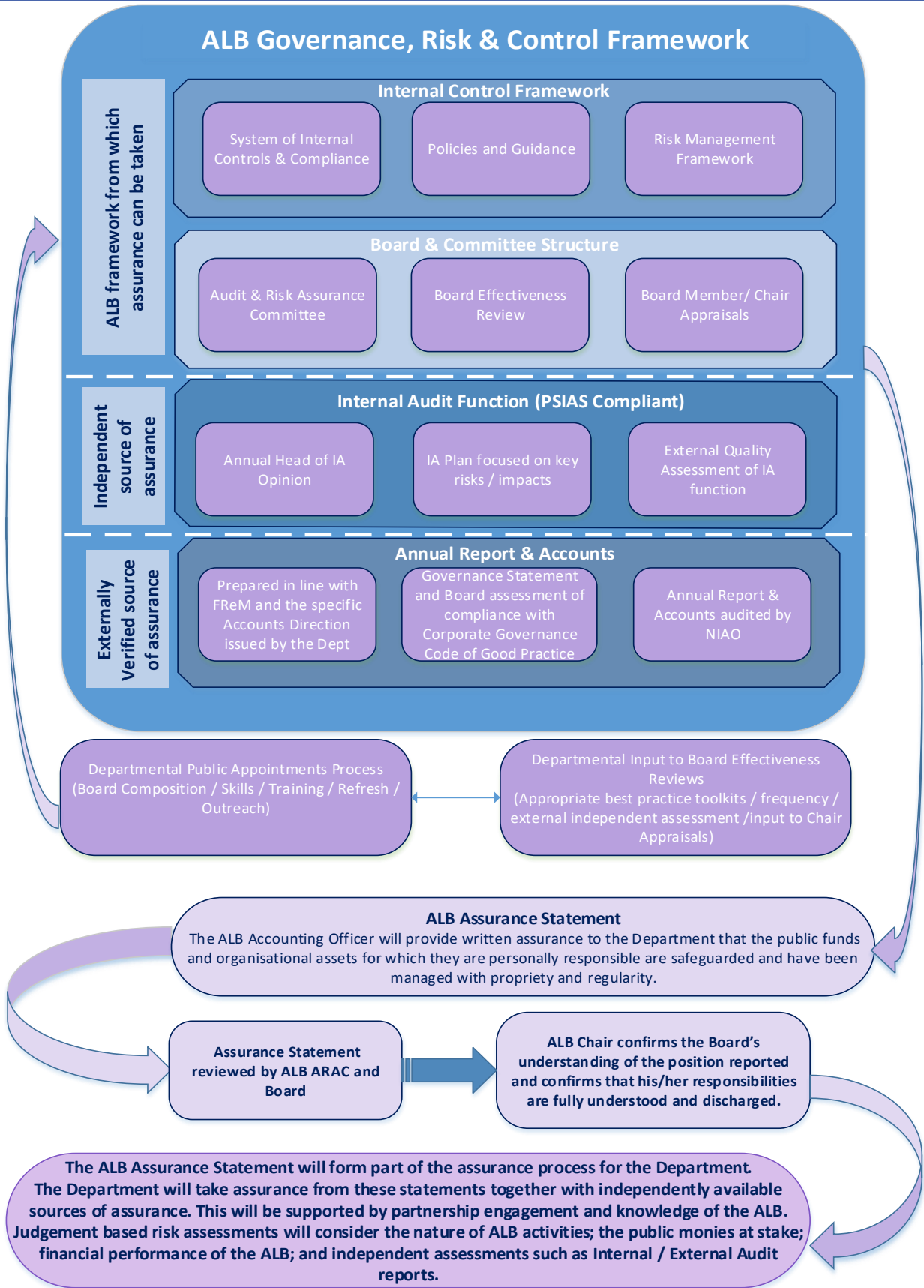
As highlighted in paragraph 2.5 of the Agreement, there is a structural misalignment between accountability and authority set out above, there is a clear need for a shared and realistic approach to financial stewardship across the education system. As a priority, EA proposes to work with DE to clarify roles and responsibilities within the Local Management of Schools framework, strengthen system-wide controls where funding pressures are material, and agree a small number of practical levers that would enable earlier and more effective intervention.

- 1 The Chief Executive of EA, as Accounting Officer, is responsible for all aspects of the Local Management of Schools undertaken by Boards of Governors. As part of this responsibility, the Chief Executive is accountable for the public resources delegated under the Common Funding Scheme, to all grant-aided schools (controlled and maintained, including Irish Medium, voluntary grammar, and grant maintained integrated). In addition to funding allocated directly to school budgets by means of the Common Funding Scheme, schools also have access to the central funds held by the Chief Executive for specified purposes.
2. EA's Chief Executive should set out the conditions under which the Board of Governors of a school is given delegated authority for its delegated budget. The EA's "Guidance on Financial and Management Arrangements for Controlled and Maintained schools funded under the Common Funding Scheme" sets out the agreed arrangements which should be followed by the EA in setting out the conditions to apply to controlled and maintained schools served by the common formula. DE's Financial and Audit Arrangements Manuals further set out the agreed arrangements for voluntary grammar schools and grant maintained integrated schools. The Chief Executive should also take account of the requirements and obligations set out in this Financial Memorandum, the Common Funding Scheme and any other guidance (including roles and responsibilities documentation) issued by the DE.
3. Where appropriate, the EA has the right and the responsibility to invoke its overseeing role. Existing legislation makes provision for suspension of delegation, should there be substantial or persistent failure on the part of the Board of Governors to comply with requirements or conditions under the scheme or where the Board of Governors is not managing the school's budget in a satisfactory manner. The EA must therefore be satisfied that a school is taking appropriate action to manage its expenditure within approved allocations and corrective actions should therefore be agreed between the school and the EA. In addressing any such issues in relation to a Catholic Maintained school, there should be full consultation at each stage, and on each material issue, with CCMS.
4. Decisions on financial arrangements for controlled and maintained schools are properly a matter for the EA Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, within the context of the Common Funding Scheme. However, arrangements must provide for the Chief Executive, or a member of EA staff acting on his/her behalf to work closely with the Chief Executive of CCMS on any decisions that may have implications for CCMS as employing authority of teachers in maintained schools and to involve the CCMS Chief Executive at the earliest possible stage in discussions relating to maintained schools with significant budget deficits and surpluses.
- 5 EA's systems and procedures must account for all income due and expenditure incurred on behalf of the EA, including those in respect of schools funded by the EA, and controls must be in operation to protect assets from loss, waste, fraud or impropriety. Any arrangements put in place should have due regard for the proper accountability for, and control over, the use of public funds. Arrangements must provide for the EA Chief Executive, or a member of EA staff acting on his/her behalf, to have access to all relevant documentation in addition to the right to attend meetings of Boards of Governors of all schools to give advice or report on major financial matters related to that responsibility.
6. The procedures put in place should enable the EA Chief Executive to:

- confirm the reliability of ALL source data used in the calculation of the budget share for each school under the Common Funding Scheme (including subsequent verification/audit of the data used for funding) and inform schools accordingly;
- deal fairly with all schools in respect of the allocation of non-delegated schools expenditure which may from time to time be allocated as well as the schools delegated budgets;
- establish and keep under review the conditions within which Boards of Governors must operate;
- establish and operate a system of audit to provide the necessary and appropriate level of assurance that proper controls are in place to safeguard public funds;
- ensure that financial plans submitted by the Board of Governors of each school align with its School Development Plan and that plans are consistent with the financial resources available to the school and based on realistic assumptions as regards pupil numbers and income together with estimates of expenditure on key items of expenditure;
- ensure that schools do not accumulate surplus or deficit balances in excess of acceptable limits, liaising with the Chief Executive of CCMS in relation to maintained schools as appropriate; and
- apply sanctions, where appropriate, including suspension of delegation.

7. In addition to the requirements imposed by the legislation, EA's Chief Executive should bear in mind the importance of making information available to, and, where appropriate, consult, schools, statutory bodies and other interests affected in matters of relevance to them.

**Annex 4 - System Of Assurance**



## **Annex 5 - Concerns/Complaints in Respect of Board Members**

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In line with the NI Code of Good Practice and the arrangements in this Partnership Agreement the approach to concerns/complaints raised in respect of EA Board members should be transparent and collaborative. The Chief Executive / Chair should inform their counterparts in DE of any escalating issues and what measures are being progressed.

Extract from EA Board Members' Code of Conduct

### **Responsibilities as a Member**

Members are expected to actively participate in Board activities and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously, always acting with integrity and prioritising the Board's strategic goals.

Members should maintain the highest levels of propriety, demonstrating impartiality, honesty, and objectivity when managing public funds and Board affairs. They must treat the public fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively, and sensitively, giving their best effort at all times.

Members are prohibited from granting undue advantage or discriminating against any individuals or interests, and they must adhere to collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. Once the Board reaches a decision, it must be supported by all Members.

Members are required to embrace openness and hold themselves accountable to service users, the Chairperson, and the Department of Education regarding Board activities, use of public funds, and achievement of key objectives.

Members may not use their position in public service to further their own personal interests or those of any person, company, or organisation to which they are connected.

### **Responsibilities towards Officers**

Members and EA officers are expected to treat each other with courtesy and respect.

Members will not ask nor encourage anyone working for EA, in any capacity, to act in any way that would conflict with his/her own Code of Conduct.

The appropriate method for Members to communicate with EA officers regarding any matters pertaining to the Board's statutory responsibilities is through the Chairperson or the EA Board Services Manager. In accordance with this protocol, Members are not permitted to issue instructions directly to any officer but can seek clarification and information on specific operational issues, generally through Chief Officers.

### **Raising a Concern**

The Board fosters a safe environment for Members and officers to raise concerns. Issues should be reported to the Chairperson or Chief Executive and will be addressed promptly; if needed, EA's Whistleblowing Policy will be enacted.

Board Members with concerns should report them to the Chairperson, who will address the issue confidentially and provide follow-up. If unresolved or involving the Chairperson, concerns can be taken to the Board's Governance, Risk and Audit Committee.

If a Member suspects the Board is not fulfilling its statutory duties, they should promptly notify the Chairperson for corrective action. The Chairperson must then inform the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee about the non-compliance and proposed solutions. Members may request independent professional advice at a reasonable cost, with approval from the Chairperson and adherence to procurement procedures.

## **Annex 6 - Applicable Guidance**

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The following guidance is applicable to EA

### **Guidance issued by the Department of Finance**

- Managing Public Money NI
- Public Bodies – A Guide for NI Departments
- Corporate Governance in central government departments – code of good practice
- DoF Risk Management Framework
- HMT Orange Book
- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook
- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- Accounting Officer Handbook – HMT Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money
- Better Business Cases (NI)
- Dear Accounting Officer Letters
- Dear Finance Director Letters
- Dear Consolidation Officer and Dear Consolidation Manager Letters
- The Consolidation Officer Letter of Appointment
- Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM)
- Guidance for preparation and publication of annual report and accounts
- Procurement Guidance

### **Other Guidance and Best Practice**

- Specific guidance issued by the Department
- EU Delegations
- Recommendations made by the NI Audit Office/NI Assembly Public Accounts Committee
- NIAO Good Practice Guides
- Guidance issued by the Executive's Asset Management Unit
- NI Public Services Ombudsman guidance

## **Annex 7 - Role Of The Minister**

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### **Role of the Minister**

EA's Chair is responsible to the Minister. Communication between the Board and the Minister should normally be through the Chair.

The Departmental Accounting Officer is responsible for advising the Minister on a number of issues including the EA's objectives and targets, budgets and performance.

In addition to being answerable to the Assembly as laid out in paragraph 2.4, the Minister is also responsible for:

- setting the strategic direction and overall policies and priorities for the ALB as reflected in the PfG and other Ministerial and DE strategic priorities;
- approving EA's annual Business Plan and multi-year Corporate Plan;
- setting the EA's budget; and
- appointing the EA Chairperson (through an open public appointment competition) and 12 persons nominated by the relevant interest sectors (as detailed in Schedule 1 of the 2014 Act). The Minister may also be involved in considering the size and composition of the EA Board – see para 15.3.

# Annex 8 - Partnerships Between Departments And Arm's Length Bodies: NI Code Of Good Practice

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## NI Code of Good Practice



Code of Good Practice 2023 - print f