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| <b>Title of Report:</b>                | <b>Correspondence</b>      |
| <b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>  | <b>The Council Meeting</b> |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                | <b>1 September 2026</b>    |
| <b>For Decision or For Information</b> | <b>For Decision</b>        |
| <b>To be discussed In Committee</b>    | <b>No</b>                  |

|                                          |                                                                                                            |        |       |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Linkage to Council Plan 2026–2031        |                                                                                                            |        |       |
| Strategic Theme                          | Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement                                                               |        |       |
| Outcome                                  | Continuous improvement embedded in all services based on evidence, performance data, and customer feedback |        |       |
| Lead Officer                             | Director of Corporate Services                                                                             |        |       |
| Estimated Timescale for Completion       |                                                                                                            |        |       |
| Date to be Completed                     |                                                                                                            | N/A    |       |
| Budgetary Considerations                 |                                                                                                            |        |       |
| Cost of Proposal                         |                                                                                                            |        |       |
| Included in Current Year Estimates       |                                                                                                            | No     |       |
| Capital/Revenue                          |                                                                                                            | N/A    |       |
| Code                                     |                                                                                                            | N/A    |       |
| Staffing Costs                           |                                                                                                            | N/A    |       |
| Legal Considerations                     |                                                                                                            |        |       |
| Input of Legal Services Required         |                                                                                                            | YES/NO |       |
| Legal Opinion Obtained                   |                                                                                                            | YES/NO |       |
| Screening Requirements                   | Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.                     |        |       |
| Section 75 Screening                     | Screening Completed:                                                                                       | Yes/No | Date: |
|                                          | EQIA Required and Completed:                                                                               | Yes/No | Date: |
| Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)             | Screening Completed                                                                                        | Yes/No | Date: |
|                                          | RNA Required and Completed:                                                                                | Yes/No | Date: |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) | Screening Completed:                                                                                       | Yes/No | Date: |
|                                          | DPIA Required and Completed:                                                                               | Yes/No | Date: |

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1** The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

**1.2** The following correspondence has been received:

**2.0 Gerard Murray, Director of Local Government and Housing Regulation Division, Department of Communities** (letter dated 10 July 2026, copy of letter attached)

### **Extract**

*Progress to dissolve the Local Government Staff Commission. The Dissolution Board is currently working to ensure an orderly and effective dissolution, with suitable succession arrangements in place, where appropriate. This includes transferring any functions which are still considered necessary, to another body. This will require subordinate legislation.*

## **3.0 Recommendation**

**It is recommended** that Council considers the correspondence.

10/07/2026

Dear David,

## **Dissolution of the Local Government Staff Commission**

I am writing to update you on the progress to dissolve the Local Government Staff Commission (the Commission).

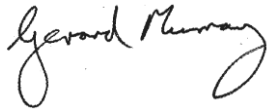
As you may know, back in 2014 during the Review of Public Administration, the former Executive took the decision to dissolve the Commission. For various reasons, dissolution has not been progressed and in November 2025, the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons MLA, secured Executive agreement to proceed to dissolve the Commission with effect from 31 March 2027. Work is now ongoing to make this happen, and a Dissolution Board, chaired by Grainia Long, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities (DfC) has been established. The Membership of the Board can be found at **Annex A**.

The Dissolution Board is currently working to ensure an orderly and effective dissolution, with suitable succession arrangements in place, where appropriate. This includes transferring any functions which are still considered necessary, to another body. This will require subordinate legislation. I have attached a Functions Table at **Annex B** which lists the Commission's current statutory and non-statutory functions and the proposed arrangements for them post-dissolution.

We would be happy to keep you informed of progress and if you would like to meet with me to discuss any aspects of the proposed dissolution, you can contact Roisin Yates at [LGFinanceBranch@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:LGFinanceBranch@communities-ni.gov.uk) to arrange a meeting in person or via Microsoft Teams.

I should also be grateful if you would please confirm if you wish to receive any future communication and updates via letter or email.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerard Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

**Gerard Murray**

**Director of Local Government and Housing Regulation Division**

## Annex A

### Local Government Staff Commission Dissolution Board Members

|                           |                                                                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Grainia Long</b>       | <b>DfC Permanent Secretary (Chair)</b>                                |
| <b>Gerard Murray</b>      | <b>Director Local Government and Housing Regulation, DfC</b>          |
| <b>Martina Campbell</b>   | <b>Head of Local Government Finance, DfC</b>                          |
| <b>Carol Henry</b>        | <b>DfC Finance Business Partner</b>                                   |
| <b>Bumper Graham</b>      | <b>Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission</b>                 |
| <b>Bernie Kelly</b>       | <b>Vice Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission</b>            |
| <b>Robert Hutchinson</b>  | <b>Audit Committee Chairperson, Local Government Staff Commission</b> |
| <b>Diana Stewart</b>      | <b>Director of Local Government Staff Commission</b>                  |
| <b>Adrian McCreesh</b>    | <b>CEO, Mid-Ulster District Council [SOLACE Rep]</b>                  |
| <b>Christine Sheridan</b> | <b>Director of Human Resources, Belfast City Council [SOLACE Rep]</b> |
| <b>Elaine Magee</b>       | <b>Assistant Director, HR Advisory, NIHE Rep</b>                      |

**Annex B**

|          | <b>Statutory Function/Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Current Status</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Assessment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Dissolution Board Recommendation on Transfer of Functions /Transitional Argts</b>                                                                                                                                  |
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|          | <b>The main functional areas of the Commission are outlined in Section 40, sub-section 4, paragraph (a) – (f) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 as follows: -</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>1</b> | Establishing in such a manner as the Staff Commission thinks fit, bodies (to be known as “advisory appointment panels”) for the purpose of giving advice to Councils on the suitability of applicants for appointment to the office of clerk and to other offices for which qualifications are prescribed under section 41[1] (including the making of a selection of persons who may be treated as eligible for such appointments). | Currently incorporated into the Code of Procedures for Recruitment and Selection recommending panel composition for all posts and specific procedures for the recruitment and selection of Chief Executives. | In 2016 Project Dissolution Board (PDB) agreed Section 40 (4) (b) which deals with establishing a Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection as a revised Code would be issued to councils as a best practice guide to take effect from dissolution. The Commission's | Responsibility for Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection to be transferred to DfC. Code to advise that independent observer role to be undertaken by senior council officer responsible for internal audit. |

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|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                        | current consultation draft proposes that the observer role could be carried out by the Council's Head of Internal Audit.                                                                                                  |                                               |
| <b>2</b> | Establishing a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to Councils and to the Executive [2] by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers, and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed. | Code of Procedures for Recruitment and Selection currently recommended to councils for implementation. | In 2016 agreed Section 40 (4) (b) which deals with establishing a Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection as a revised Code would be issued to council as a best practice. guide to take effect from dissolution. | As above                                      |
| <b>3</b> | Assessing the probable future requirements of Councils and the NIHE for the recruitment of officers and securing publicity for the opportunities that are available to persons who may seek employment as such officers.                            | Transferred to Councils and NIHE in 2016 in advance of scheduled 2017 dissolution date. From           | Responsibility to remain with Councils and NIHE.                                                                                                                                                                          | Subsumed into Councils/NIHE business as usual |

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|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 2022 work has been incorporated into regional Talent Management Strategy led by the Commission.                                                                                              |                                                  |                                               |
| <b>4</b> | Promoting co-operation between Councils, the NIHE, public bodies, government departments and educational institutions in matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers and promoting the temporary transfer of officers (with their consent) in pursuance of arrangements made between Councils or between Councils and any such bodies, departments or institutions. | Transferred to Councils and NIHE in 2016 in advance of scheduled 2017 dissolution date. From 2022 work has been incorporated into regional Talent Management Strategy led by the Commission. | Responsibility to remain with Councils and NIHE. | Subsumed into Councils/NIHE business as usual |
| <b>5</b> | Promoting or assisting the development of officers. This function is carried out by the Local Government Training Group (LGTG) who the Commission work closely with.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Transferred to SOLACE in advance of scheduled 2017 dissolution date.                                                                                                                         | Responsibility to remain with SOLACE.            | Responsibility to remain with SOLACE          |

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|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Currently administered via SLA by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council on behalf of 11 Councils.                                      |                                                      |                                               |
| <b>6</b> | Promoting or assisting the establishment of, or establishing, procedures for the negotiation between Councils and the NIHE and officers of Councils or the NIHE, or associations representing either of them, of standard rates of remuneration, or other terms and conditions of employment, for officers of Councils and the NIHE and recommending the adoption by Councils and the NIHE of rates, terms and conditions so negotiated. | Proposal to establish regional body revised and issued in 2021 based on Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements agreed in 2018. | Responsibility should transfer to Councils and NIHE. | Subsumed into Councils/NIHE business as usual |

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| 7 | <p>The Commission has the power to make recommendations to Councils and the NIHE on matters related to its functions. Such recommendations are to be implemented as directed by the Commission. The legislation provides for an appeal to the Department if it is felt that the Commission's recommendation is unreasonable. This "appeal" is detailed in paragraph (5) of Section (40) of the Local Government Act as follows:</p> <p>Appeal Arrangements – "Where the Commission makes a recommendation to a Council and the Council does not comply with the recommendation within such reasonable period as the Commission requires, the Ministry, after consulting with the Council and considering any representations made by it, may give to the Council any directions that the Ministry considers necessary or expedient for the implementation of the recommendations and the Council shall comply with any such direction within a period of one month or such longer period as the Ministry may allow".</p> | <p>Currently the Commission has the power to make recommendations to Councils and NIHE on matters related to its functions.</p> | <p>In 2016 the Department's view was that: Any recommendations previously made by the Commission or functions transferring to the Department as part of the dissolution will need to be monitored to ensure that they have been implemented by the Council or NIHE. Consequently, the power of direction should remain with the Ministry.</p> | <p>Role of making recommendations will be removed upon dissolution. Outstanding recommendations at dissolution should be implemented.</p> |
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| 8 | <p>A Council (and the Executive) shall (a) make such reports and returns with respect to its officers and their terms and conditions of employment; (b) furnish such estimates of its probable future requirements for the recruitment of officers; and (c) give such information with respect to matters connected with the employment of officers; to the Staff Commission, within such reasonable period, as the Staff Commission requires.</p> | <p>Currently this statutory function remains with the Commission.</p> | <p>In 2016 the Department's assessment was:<br/>Councils are required to make reports and provide estimates and information on employment matters to the Commission. The Department's view is that given the importance of the information, a similar process should continue after the dissolution of the Commission.</p> | <p>Not required upon dissolution.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Establishing and issuing a code of recommended practice as regards to the conduct of officers of councils.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Currently this statutory function remains with the Commission.</p> | <p>In 2016 the Department's view was:<br/>A statutory code of conduct for employees is still required given</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>To be transferred to DfC.</p>      |

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|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                               | that a statutory code of conduct for councillors has now been introduced. This statutory function should be transferred to the Department for Communities. As a consequence, the Department may develop 'Model Guidance' for councils and put in place reporting structures and procedures. |                                |
| <b>10</b> | Without prejudice to any code of procedure established by the Staff Commission, a council shall not appoint any officer unless the vacancy in the office is advertised in such a manner as the Ministry may determine. | Currently this statutory function remains with the Commission and incorporated into the Code of Procedures on | In 2016 the Department's view was: Section 40(4)(b) which deals with establishing a code of procedure will be repealed as a                                                                                                                                                                 | Not required upon dissolution. |

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|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Recruitment and Selection.                                           | revised Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection will be issued to councils as a best practice guide to take effect from 01 April 2027. Section 41(3A) should be amended to remove 'without prejudice to any code of procedure established by the Staff Commission. |                                                                                 |
|           | <b>Activities undertaken to meet the Commission's Statement of Purpose to be 'the strategic organisation for the development of human resource management and the promotion of excellence through people in the delivery of local government services in Northern Ireland', as follows:</b> |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                 |
| <b>11</b> | Regional Talent Management Strategy including the Boost Mentoring programmes, talent management pilots programmes and research projects.                                                                                                                                                    | The Commission currently leads on and implements the regional Talent | These activities should be the responsibility of employing Councils who may wish to consider                                                                                                                                                                               | For councils and NIHE to consider post-dissolution. No role for the Department. |

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|           |                                                                                                                                                          | Management Strategy in particular, Workforce Planning, Succession Planning and Leadership Development.                                                                                                                                                           | collaborative arrangements, through SOLACE, for example.                                                                                                              |                                                                                 |
| <b>12</b> | Advise and assist on the implementation of Equality and Diversity initiatives across local government and Section 75 duties and Disability Action Plans. | The Equality and Diversity Group was transferred to SOLACE in 2016. The Commission acts as secretariat and co-ordinates the Diversity Ambassadors network. The Commission facilitates the Statutory Duty Network (SDN) and develops model policies and guidance. | The Equality and Diversity Group responsibility to remain with SOLACE. The SDN are considering how to move forward in light of the dissolution date of 31 March 2027. | For councils and NIHE to consider post-dissolution. No role for the Department. |

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| <b>13</b> | Lead the co-ordinated implementation of people and OD framework initiatives for local government and the NIHE.           | The Commission provides professional advice, assistance and research to support Councils working collaboratively in respect of people and OD priorities.                            | These activities should be the responsibility of employing Councils who may wish to consider collaborative arrangements, through SOLACE for example. The LGTG has agreed in principle to take forward the Well Hub procurement. | For councils and NIHE to consider post-dissolution. No role for the Department. |
| <b>14</b> | Assist Councils to develop actions and initiatives to reduce employee sickness absence and promote health and wellbeing. | The Commission supports wellbeing initiatives, e.g., emotional intelligence and emotional resilience and the procures the Local Government Well Hub on behalf of Councils and NIHE. | These activities should be the responsibility of employing Councils who may wish to consider collaborative arrangements, through SOLACE, for example. The LGTG has agreed in principle to take                                  | For councils and NIHE to consider post-dissolution. No role for the Department. |

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|           |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                    | forward the Well Hub procurement.                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                 |
| <b>15</b> | Assisting Councils with the staffing implications of organisation design, development and change, particularly in the context of transformation. | The Commission continues to provide advice to individual Councils. | These activities should be the responsibility of each employing Council who may wish to consider collaborative arrangements for advice and support through PPMA, for example. | For councils and NIHE to consider post-dissolution. No role for the Department. |

*[1] District Councils (Clerks Qualifications) Determination 1997, consideration should be given to whether these are still required*

*[2] The term 'Executive' refers to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.*