

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland 2016-2017

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 9(1) of the
Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 19 October 2017

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ISBN 978-1-5286-0054-5

CCS0917125718 10/17

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by the APS Group on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

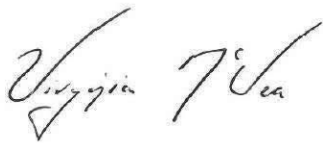
The Rt. Hon James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Office
1 Horse Guards Road
LONDON
SW1A 2HQ

18 September 2017

Dear Secretary of State,

I have the honour, in accordance with section 9(1) of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, to present this Report on how I have discharged my functions for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Virginia McVea', written in a cursive style.

Virginia McVea

Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland

St. Anne's House
15 Church Street
Belfast
BT1 1ER

FOREWORD

This Annual report covers the last year up to 31 March 2017. Mr Graham Shields OBE was Chief Electoral Officer until the 31 January 2017 and the Electoral Office wishes to acknowledge his service, record our grateful thanks and wish him well in his retirement.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Election was held on 5 May 2016 followed by the Referendum on 23 June 2016. By January 2017 a further Northern Ireland Assembly Election had been called which took place on 2 March 2017. This last year has been one of unparalleled effort by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland with some 261,386 changes to the Register (a 67% increase on the previous year) and a 65% election turnout in March 2017, figures not seen for many years.

A consultation on future service delivery was jointly conducted by the Northern Ireland Office and the Chief Electoral Officer in year. Due to ongoing political developments since the publication of the consultation the response has not yet been published. The work to facilitate online registration has continued and the new electronic management system designed to allow Northern Ireland services to link to the existing GB wide service is nearing completion. As part of the broader programme of change, thirteen staff were successful in the Voluntary Exit Scheme process and left the organisation in March 2017. We wish to acknowledge the service of those staff and thank them. As in previous years the Electoral Office also acknowledges the contribution made to its work by key agencies such as the Electoral Commission, local councils and our sponsor branch of the Northern Ireland Office. Additionally, we are grateful for the engagement of political parties and their representatives. Most of all, I wish to express gratitude to our permanent staff for shouldering a heavy burden of work in a period of uncertainty and ensuring the delivery of a high quality service to the public. This thanks must then extend to the thousands of people across Northern Ireland who come together to be a part of our team during elections, working to serve society in ensuring free and fair elections.

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Electoral Administration in Northern Ireland

1.1 The arrangements for electoral administration in Northern Ireland are different from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The system in Northern Ireland is administered centrally by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for Northern Ireland who is a statutory office holder appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The CEO is assisted by the staff of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI), the administrative structure created to support the CEO in the discharge of her duties. The CEO is both the electoral registration officer for all 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland and returning officer for all elections and referendums in that jurisdiction. The CEO's main duties and responsibilities are set out in the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 (as amended by Article 6 of the Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Order 1972), the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. The Accounting Officer of the Northern Ireland Office is responsible to Parliament for all expenditure incurred by the CEO.

Role of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

1.2 The main duties of the CEO are:

- to act as electoral registration officer for all constituencies in Northern Ireland;
- to act as returning officer for all elections and Referendums in Northern Ireland;
- to recommend to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by 16 April each year whether or not a registration canvass should be conducted;
- to act as an assessor to the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland;
- to act as an assessor to the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner; and
- to lead and manage the EONI.

1.3 The CEO is required to report to the Secretary of State on an annual basis on how she has discharged her functions. Section 9(2) of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 requires her to include in her Report an assessment of the extent to which the relevant registration objectives in Northern Ireland have been met in the year to which the report relates.

Role of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI)

1.4 The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland is the name given to the organisation that supports the CEO in the performance of her duties. It operates from a headquarters building in Belfast and area offices across Northern Ireland.

1.5 There are five Area Electoral Offices located across Northern Ireland.

SECTION 2 - PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

- 2.1 This section summarises the performance achieved against the Targets and Development Objectives set out in the Business Plan 2016/17 which can be viewed at www.eoni.org.uk.
- 2.2 All Targets were achieved.
- 2.3 Fifteen of the seventeen Development Objectives were achieved in full. One was partially achieved and one did not proceed. Further information can be found at Annex A.

SECTION 3 – REGISTRATION

- 3.1 EONI staff continued their engagement with organisations and community groups throughout Northern Ireland and participation in various registration initiatives continued during the year. Registration forms and promotional material were supplied for display and distribution at the offices of Registrars, District Councils, the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, the Simon Community, Larne Credit Union and the offices of the Citizens Advice. Registration forms were also supplied to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for inclusion in their 'New Tenant' packs. The University of Ulster received 4000 registration forms for inclusion in 'Freshers' student information packs for distribution to campuses in Londonderry, Newtownabbey, Belfast and Coleraine.
- 3.2 EONI continued to receive quarterly data from the Business Services Organisation (BSO) containing the names and addresses of those who had moved address or had registered a change of name with a health professional in the previous quarter. This was 'data matched' against the information held on the EONI database. As a result, during the period covered by this report, initial 'invitations to register' or to update information on the register were issued to around 96,373 electors. 37,688 follow-up letters were also issued to those who did not respond to the initial contact letter.
- 3.3 The Vital Statistics Department of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency provide weekly lists of births, deaths and marriages. Information on deaths is data matched with the EONI database and approximately 260 records are removed from the register on a weekly basis. Marriage data is also data matched and a report showing change of name and/or address is used by Area Offices to issue registration forms to those who may need to update their details.
- 3.4 Lisburn and Castlereagh District Council continued to send fortnightly records to EONI of those who have attended Citizenship ceremonies and who have attained British Citizenship. Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 letters were sent to 572 individuals who were not already registered or who had changed their details.

- 3.5 In August 2016 staff contacted 179 schools with pupils in the age range 17-18 years. Area Electoral Office staff arranged visits to the schools from September through to January 2017 and as a result registered and issued electoral identity cards to approximately 9,000 pupils. The Electoral Office contacts all college students not already registered to encourage registration.
- 3.6 Following the canvass in 2013, the legislation was amended under The Representation of the People Act 2013, to allow those who had not responded to the canvass to be retained on the register for a period of two years. This was extended to three years in 2015 to cover the Northern Ireland Assembly elections in 2016. The legislation specified that those retained were to be removed before the publication of the register in December 2016. In September 2016 the Electoral Office wrote to 76,029 electors who had been retained on the register under this legislation but who had not registered in the intervening period. The letter advised the recipients to complete the enclosed electoral registration form and explained that if they did not do so they would be removed from the electoral register. As a result 15,596 electors responded updating their details on the register. 60,433 electors were removed from the December 2016 register.
- 3.7 In January 2017 staff wrote to nursing homes on the property database, enclosing electoral registration forms and application forms for absent voting. Nursing home managers were asked to ensure all residents were registered and if required, had applied for postal or proxy votes. This initiative continues to be effective in maintaining the accuracy of the register for this particular group of electors whose details are more likely to be subject to change.

Online Registration

3.8 Preparations which commenced in 2016 for the introduction of online registration in Northern Ireland, continued, although progress was slow due to the work involved in running the elections in the period covered by this report. The Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2016 were debated and passed by both Houses of Parliament but were not brought into force awaiting the 'going live' of the computer system to support the online system.

Data matching

3.9 Following the successful collaboration with NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency) and the development of data matching systems designed to process the data received by EONI from various public authorities, a data matching module has been developed with the supplier for the new Electoral Management System. The data matching module will be used to improve the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the register and will remove the need for labour-intensive and time-consuming manual checking processes.

3.10 This module, when operational will extend the effectiveness of data matching allowing additional data sources to be electronically matched and with more efficiency. Testing and development of the system continued during the period covered by this report.

Registration Statistics April 2016 - March 2017

3.11 During the reporting period 119,355 additions were made to the electoral register. 134,532 records were removed as deceased, no longer eligible for registration at a given address or in accordance with the legislation (see paragraph 3.4). 7,499 records were modified, for example as a result of a name change. As expected there was a 'looming election effect' with over 36,671 additions to the register in the period preceding the Northern Ireland Assembly Election in May 2016 and the UK Referendum on 23 June 2016. A further 33,708 were added to the register in the period before the Northern Ireland Assembly Election on 2 March 2017. The number of removals is also comparatively high as a result of the removal of the 60,433 electors as outlined in paragraph 3.6 above.

3.12 The total number of changes to the register in this period was 261,386 a 67% increase on the figure for 2015-16. This is indicative of the 'election effect' and the effectiveness of the various registration initiatives undertaken by EONI staff to achieve the statutory registration objectives as outlined above.

Meeting the Registration Objectives

3.13 Under Section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 I am required to include in the Annual Report an assessment of the extent to which the relevant registration objectives have been met.

3.14 These objectives as set out in Section 10ZB of the Representation of the People Act 1983 are –

“to secure, so far as reasonably practicable –

- (a) that every person who is entitled to be registered in a register is registered in it,
- (b) that no person who is not entitled to be registered in a register is registered in it, and
- (c) that none of the required information relating to any person registered in a register is false.”

3.15 I am satisfied that the work completed during the reporting period has ensured, so far as reasonably practicable, the successful delivery of these objectives. The register published in December 2016 held 1,234,354 electors, a reduction of 36,410 electors from the figure at December 2015. This was largely attributable to the removal of the 60,433 electors in accordance with the legislation. However, by the end of the period covered in this report and as a result of the election effect prior to the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 2 March 2017, the register had risen to 1,260,778.

3.16 The Electoral Commission published a report in September 2016 entitled 'The December 2015 electoral register in Northern Ireland'. The report assessed the results of a survey aimed at measuring the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the electoral register. This indicated

that the register was 81% complete (Parliamentary register), 79% complete (Local Government register) and 87% accurate for both. The Commission reported that 'there has been a significant improvement in both accuracy and completeness in Northern Ireland since 2012'. This report alongside the registration initiatives as described and the high level of matching achieved with the records of the Department of Work and Pensions (around 98% of those registered matched on name, date of birth and national insurance number) suggest that the accuracy of the register remains at a high level.

3.17 Having regard to the comments and observations above, no recommendation for a canvass in the year 2016/17 was made to the Secretary of State.

SECTION 4 - ELECTIONS

In the last reporting year there has been one scheduled election in May 2016 and two further unscheduled electoral events, namely, the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union Northern Ireland in June 2016 and a snap Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly election called in March 2017.

NI Assembly Election 2016

- 4.1 The NI Assembly election was held on 5 May 2016. The eligible electorate was 1,281,595.
- 4.2 There were 1380 polling stations and over 3,600 polling staff appointed and trained. Polling day proved successful with all polling stations across Northern Ireland being opened on time and no queues were reported at the close of poll.
- 4.3 Eight count venues were utilised throughout Northern Ireland and over 1500 staff were employed. The counts commenced at 8am on Friday 6 May and 11 of the 18 constituency counts were completed overnight. All counts were completed by 16.40pm on Saturday 7 May 2016.
- 4.4 The overall turnout was 703,744 (54.91%) and the total number of spoiled votes was 9,425 (1.34%) of the votes cast. The total number of postal votes issued was 17,573 (2.49%) and the total number of proxy votes issued was 6,644 (0.94%).

Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union (EU) Northern Ireland 2016

- 4.1 The EU Referendum was held on 23 June 2016. The eligible electorate was 1,260,955.
- 4.2 There were 1380 polling stations and over 3,700 polling staff appointed and trained. Polling day proved successful with all polling stations across Northern Ireland being opened on time and no queues were reported at the close of poll.

- 4.3 Eight count venues were utilised throughout Northern Ireland and over 1400 staff were employed. The counts commenced immediately after the close of poll and all 18 constituency counts were completed overnight with the last completing at 04.30am on Friday 24 June 2016 producing the Northern Ireland overall result.
- 4.4 The overall turnout was 790,523 (62.69%) and the total number of spoiled votes was 374 (0.05%) of the votes cast. The total number of postal votes issued was 22,932 (2.9%) and the total number of proxy votes issued was 6,291 (0.79%).

Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly Election 2017

- 4.1 The NI Assembly election was held on 2 March 2017. The eligible electorate was 1,254,709.
- 4.2 There were 1380 polling stations and over 3,600 polling staff appointed and briefed. Polling day proved successful with all polling stations across Northern Ireland being opened on time and no queues were reported at the close of poll.
- 4.3 Seven count venues were utilised throughout Northern Ireland and over 1500 staff were employed. The counts commenced at 8am on Friday 3 March and all 18 constituency counts were completed overnight with the last completing at 03.00am on Friday 4 March 2017.
- 4.4 The overall turnout was 812,783 (64.78%) and the total number of spoiled votes was 9,450 (1.16%) of the votes cast. The total number of postal votes issued was 19,670 (2.42%) and the total number of proxy votes issued was 9,920 (1.22%).

Electoral Offences

- 4.5 One case was reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland during the reporting year. The Public Prosecution Service directed 'No Further Action' in respect of all cases. Four cases were referred to the PPS because the payment for an invoice was made after the expiry of the 28 day deadline.

SECTION 5 – CENTRAL SERVICES

Premises

5.1 There were no changes to the premises occupied by Headquarters. However the leases for the Newtownards and Ballymena locations expired on 31 October 2016. The Newtownards staff relocated to Headquarters and the Ballymena staff relocated to the Newtownabbey Area office.

Staffing

5.2 A voluntary exit scheme was launched on 17 October 2016. Fourteen staff were successful in their application and left the organisation on 30 March 2017.

5.3 There was one resignation and one retirement during the course of the year

Recruitment

5.4 Approximately 800 reserve staff applications were processed in preparation for the Northern Ireland Assembly Election and EU Referendum. Over 5,000 staff were employed at both polling stations and count centres throughout NI. A further external recruitment campaign was taken forward for the snap election to the Northern Ireland Assembly in March 2017.

Training

5.5 Annual mandatory e-learning was completed by permanent and casual staff on information assurance and data handling through the Civil Service Learning website.

Equality

5.6 The annual fair employment monitoring return was submitted to the Equality Commission in April 2016

5.7 A Section 75 annual progress report was completed and submitted to the Equality Commission in August 2016.

Sick Absence

5.8 Sick absence continues to be closely monitored and reviewed. There were approximately 11 average sick days per person taken during the period, however, the majority of absence related to long term sickness.

Funding

5.9 Total operational funding, excluding capital and depreciation, provided to EONI for 2016/17 was £2.331m compared with £2.104m in 2015/16. Total expenditure excluding capital and depreciation was £2.280m, an underspend of £51k. Capital expenditure was £221k with corresponding budget of £288k.

5.10 Approximately 230 separate procurement exercises were completed and 626 invoices were sent to NIO Central Finance during the reporting period. The majority of valid invoices were paid within five working days.

5.11 Funding for elections is non-voted money and does not form part of EONI core funding. Election expenditure is accounted for in the annual Returning Officer's Expenses, Northern Ireland which are audited by the National Audit Office before being presented to Parliament.

5.12 The spending limit (maximum recoverable amount) for the NI Assembly election held on 5 May 2016 was £3.843.2m. Estimated expenditure at 31 March 2017 was £3.262m. The maximum recoverable amount for the NI Assembly election held on 2 March 2017 was £3.843.2m. Estimated expenditure at 31 March 2017 was £3.2m. The cost of candidates mailing expenses are not included in the maximum recoverable amount and are funded separately. These amounted to £1.867m for the NI Assembly election 2016 and £ 1.533m for the NI Assembly election 2017. The spending limit (maximum recoverable amount) for the EU Referendum held on 23 June 2016 was £3.292.7m. Estimated expenditure at 31 March 2017 was £2.579m.¹

¹ The elections account is not yet complete due to the introduction of new accounting processes by the NIO, therefore, final figures are not available.

Stakeholder and Media Relations

Media

- 5.13 Primary responsibility for all matters relating to public awareness of elections and registration remained with the Electoral Commission.
- 5.14 A number of press releases were issued during the year and Graham Shields and I participated in a number of printed and broadcast interviews on electoral registration and election issues.
- 5.15 A communications strategy was rolled out for the 2016 NI Assembly election, EU Referendum and 2017 NI Assembly election. This included key media briefing sessions and information packs.

Political Parties

- 5.16 Both Graham Shields and I attended all of the Assembly Parties Panel meetings convened by the Electoral Commission to discuss electoral matters. At these meetings, information was provided on changes made to electoral law and practice, on current initiatives and planning arrangements for the elections.
- 5.17 Candidates and campaigner seminars were held at a number of locations across Northern Ireland in advance of the 2016 NI Assembly election, EU Referendum and 2017 NI Assembly election.

Electoral Commission

- 5.18 Strategic planning meetings were held with the Electoral Commission which included regular ongoing communication and review to ensure continuous improvement.

Northern Ireland Office

- 5.19 There is regular contact on a range of issues, including suggested amendments to various aspects of electoral legislation.

Helpline

5.20 The Helpline at Headquarters dealt with 87,543 enquiries from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

Website

5.21 There were 516,239 visits to the EONI website during the year.

Records Management

5.22 Twenty requests were received for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 of which all but three were dealt with within the statutory timeframe. Eighteen requests were received for information under the Data Protection Act 1998 and were processed within the statutory timeframe.

Electoral Identity Cards

5.23 There were 27,021 Electoral Identity Cards issued during the year.

Complaints

5.24 The EONI complaints system operated satisfactorily, responding to all queries and concerns raised and attempting to resolve all issues quickly and effectively.

IT Systems

5.25 Work continues on the development of the replacement Electoral Administration system and introduction of online registration in Northern Ireland. Due to the unforeseen elections called in 2017 progress was delayed with the implementation of the new system now planned for late 2017. EONI received the PSN Certificate of Compliance in October 2016 to allow for connection to the online portal which will facilitate digital electoral registration in due course.

5.26 The IT health check on EONI IT systems was carried out in August 2016. All identified vulnerabilities are addressed and mitigated against with a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) update.

SECTION 6 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Management Board

- 6.1 The Management Board operated in year until the retirement of the Head of Corporate Services and the previous Chief Electoral Officer. During the election period from January 2017 the Election Strategic Planning Group took over this role temporarily
- 6.2 In addition to taking all strategic business decisions, the Board reviewed performance against targets and development objectives, finances, contracts and procurement, staffing issues, risk management, contingency planning and complaints. The Board continued to take account of equality and human rights considerations as part of the normal decision making process.

Internal Audit

- 6.3 During 2016/17, internal audit services were provided by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA). The internal audit services undertook planned audits of four areas agreed by the Chief Electoral Officer as suitable for detailed examination.
- 6.4 The auditors made a total of 18 recommendations which were accepted.
- 6.5 Internal Audit reported that they were satisfied with progress made and the majority of recommendations were implemented by agreed dates or explanations provided if any slippage. Progress reports were provided to the Audit and Risk Committee of the Northern Ireland Office.
- 6.6 The Internal Audit opinion for 2016/17 reported a moderate level of assurance. Overall the risk and control governance framework was considered adequate during the reporting period. All recommendations have been agreed and action is being taken forward to implement all 18 recommendations.

SECTION 7 – THE AREA OFFICES

7.1 There were seven Area Electoral Office located across Northern Ireland. Two offices were closed during the year – Ballymena and Newtownards and staff from these offices relocated to Newtownabbey and Belfast respectively leaving five offices. The locations of these five offices and constituencies for which they are responsible are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Area Electoral Offices

LOCATION	CONSTITUENCIES
Londonderry/Derry	Foyle East Londonderry
Omagh	West Tyrone Fermanagh & South Tyrone
Banbridge	Upper Bann Newry & Armagh South Down Lagan Valley
Newtownabbey (Ballymena office now incorporated)	Belfast North East Antrim South Antrim North Antrim Mid Ulster
Belfast (Newtownards office now incorporated)	Belfast South Belfast West Belfast East Strangford North Down

7.2 Each office is managed by an Area Electoral Officer who acted as Deputy Registration Officer for either 2 or 3 constituencies. As such, these officers had, under my supervision, responsibility for all matters relating to electoral registration. Each Area Electoral Officer was supported by an Assistant Area Electoral Officer and a number of registration officers appropriate to the workload of that office.

7.3 Throughout the year there were meetings with the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) in accordance with the recognised JCC process.

Performance Against targets and Development Objectives 2016/17

OT	On Target
A	Achieved
PA	Partially Achieved
NP	Not Proceeding

REGISTRATION			
Target:		Status	Comments
1.	To publish on 1 December 2016 a register that meets the statutory objectives relating to comprehensiveness and accuracy.	A	A report by the Electoral Commission in September 2016 estimated the register to be 87% accurate and 81% complete (Parliamentary register) 79% (Local Government register).
Development Objectives:			
1.	By 30 September 2016 to have contacted electors due to be removed from the 2017 register.	A	Letter issued in September 2016 to 76,029 electors enclosing a registration form and advising that the form should be completed and returned. 15,596 responses received.
2.	By 1 December 2016 to have increased the number of attainers on the register by contacting schools with pupils in the 17-18 age range, implementing registration initiatives aimed at contacting those in Further Education Colleges.	A	179 Schools contacted in August 2016 followed by visits during September 2016 – January 2017. Nearly 9000 pupils registered and received an electoral identity card. Invitations to register issued to those in Further Education Colleges.
3.	By 1 December 2016 to have increased the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the register by the	A	Data received from BSO/Schools/GRO and DWP used to ensure register changes are recorded.

	use of prescribed data sources to contact those entitled to be registered who are not registered, those whose details on the register have changed and to remove those not entitled to be registered.		
4.	By 31 December 2016 to have introduced the facility for electors to register online including the implementation of a new Electoral Management System and amendments to electoral law.	PA	The Electoral Management System (EMS) is still under development. Due to delays in implementation of the new EMS, online registration to follow in late 2017.
5.	By 31 March 2017 to have improved the accuracy of the register by achieving verification of 90% of information (surname, date of birth and national insurance number) on the database relating to an elector and to have implemented initiatives to query discrepancies.	A	Over 90% of records held on the Electoral Management system are verified with DWP data on name/DOB and NINO. Inaccuracies where identified, have been queried.

ELECTIONS

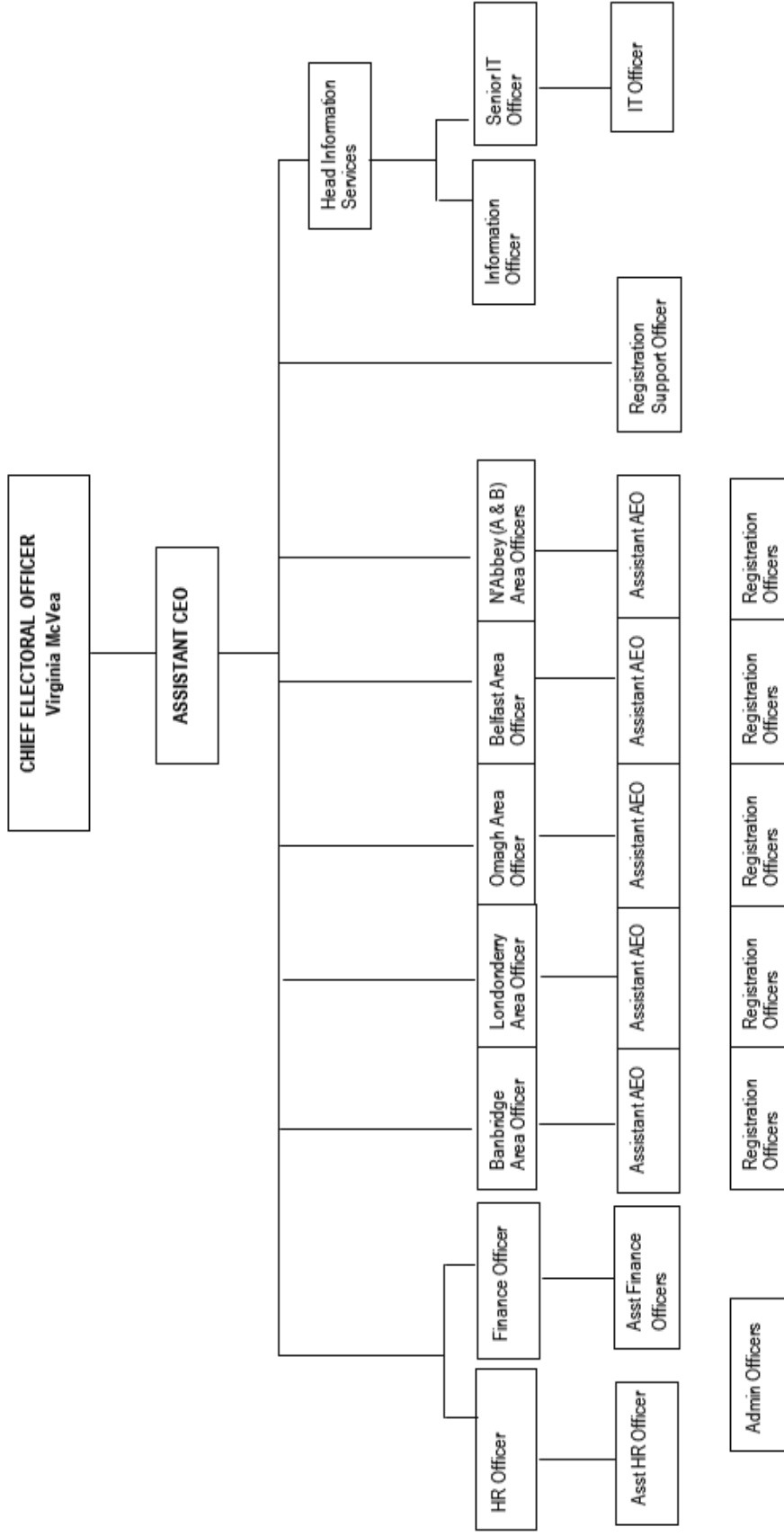
Targets:		Status	Comments
1.	By 15 April 2016 to have a project plan and risk register in place for the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union scheduled for 23 June 2016.	A	Project Plan and Risk Register for the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union 2016 were completed 31 March 2016 and quality assured by the Strategic Planning Committee.
2.	By 7 May 2016 to have conducted the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly elections effectively and impartially ensuring voter confidence in the democratic process.	A	The Northern Ireland Assembly election took place successfully on Thursday 5 May 2016 and was assessed as well-run in the Electoral Commission report.
3.	By 24 June 2016 to have conducted the 2016 Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union effectively and impartially ensuring voter confidence in the democratic process.	A	The Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union took place successfully on Thursday 23 June 2016 and was assessed as well-run by the Electoral Commission.

Development Objectives:		Status	Comments
1.	By 30 April 2016 to have implemented plans and procedures for the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.	A	The Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union took place successfully on Thursday 23 June 2016 and was assessed as well-run by the Electoral Commission.
2.	By 30 May 2016 to have reviewed procedures and practices carried out for the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly elections and, where possible, implement procedural changes for the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.	A	Lessons learned from NI Assembly election were implemented in the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union. e.g. verification process at the counts.
3.	By 30 May 2016 to recruit a sufficient number of staff for the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.	A	A number of new staff were recruited to cover staff on holidays in June and obtain a sufficient pool of poll and count staff for the Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.
4.	By 5 August 2016 to have reviewed procedures and practices carried out for the 2016 Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.	A	Lessons learned discussed and implemented in the Northern Ireland Assembly election 2017.
5.	By 23 December 2016 to ensure the 2016 European Union Referendum Account is within the maximum amount set for the voting area of Northern Ireland in the European Union Referendum (Counting Officers' and Regional Counting Officers' Charges) Regulations 2016 and the account is submitted to Electoral Claims Unit.	A	The Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union Account was within the maximum limit and submitted by 23 December 2016.
6.	By 31 March 2017 to ensure the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections Account is within the maximum amount for each constituency set in the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections (Returning Officer's Charges) Order 2016.	A	The Northern Ireland Assembly Election 2016 Account was within the maximum limit at year end.

CENTRAL SERVICES			
Target:		Status	Comments
1.	We will provide high standards of service for the people of Northern Ireland through continuous improvement.	A	Electoral Commission report for the period confirms quality of service.
Development Objectives:			
1.	During 2016-2017 to continue to implement professional electoral qualifications for staff through EONI's Performance Management Framework.	NP	The electoral activity prevented this aspect of development.
2.	Throughout the year ensure training opportunities are provided to continuously improve standards and increase efficiency.	A	Training for elections and experience proved invaluable.
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE			
Targets:		Status	Comments
1.	Throughout the year ensure EONI has operated within budget.	A	EONI has operated within budget.
2.	Throughout the year to ensure all tendering and procurement processes are run and managed in accordance with procurement policies and relevant European Union Directives, including procurement of a new Electoral Management System.	A	Confirmed
3.	To submit an annual report for the year ending 31 March 2016 to the Secretary of State by 31 August 2016.	A	Confirmed.

4.	Working throughout the year to develop options for the organisational restructuring in the Electoral Office.		The snap NI Assembly election postponed the response to the public consultation.
5.	By 31 March 2017 to publish the Business Plan for the year commencing 1 April 2017.	A	Confirmed.
Development Objectives:		Status	Comments
1.	Throughout the year financial management systems will be continually monitored against business needs, with policies, procedures and processes being updated as required.	A	Confirmed in relation to both EONI business needs and oversight of election expenses.
2.	To continue to adhere to all statutory objectives with regard to Section 75 obligations.	A	Confirmed
3.	By 31 October 2016 to have closed the Ballymena and Newtownards Area Offices and relocated the Staff.	A	Complete. Staff relocated to Newtownabbey and Belfast.
4.	By 31 March 2017 to ensure the Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery Plan is tested and reviewed.	A	Confirmed.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART AS AT 31/3/2017



PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES:

Lagan Valley South Down Upper Bann	Foyle East Londonderry	West Tyrone Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Strangford North Down Belfast East	North Antrim Mid Ulster	Belfast North East Antrim South Antrim
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OPERATING COSTS 2016/17¹

	£k
<u>Basic Pay -</u>	
Permanent Staff	831.3
Temporary Staff	17.6
Basic Pay Total	848.9
<u>Overtime -</u>	
Permanent Staff	3.0
Temporary Staff	0.0
Overtime Total	3.0
<u>Employers National Insurance -</u>	
Permanent Staff	128.5
Temporary Staff	0.7
Employers National Insurance Total	129.2
Accrued Superannuation Liability Charge	272.8
Total Staff	1,253.9
Power, Rates, Water	128.2
Premises	387.8
Staff Costs	15.3
Training	11.5
Travel	3.1
Hospitality	0.6
Printing, Stationery, Postage	196.9
Computers (Software, Hardware, Maintenance, Line Rental etc)	132.1
Professional Services	181.1
Telecommunications	92.4
Fees and charges	0.0
Total Goods & Services	1,149.0
Electoral Identity Card	20.2
Non Cash Costs (Depreciation)	121.7
Receipts	-143.3
TOTAL PROGRAMME	2,401.5
Capital	220.7
GRAND TOTAL	2,622.2

¹ the operating costs as presented above do not represent audited figures.

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978-1-5286-0054-5