

Parades Commission for Northern Ireland: Public Body Review 2024

The Northern Ireland Office completed a review of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland as part of the government's Public Bodies Review Programme. It was started in December 2023 and concluded in February 2024.

The current Public Bodies Review Programme was initiated in December 2021 and builds on the lessons learned from the 2010 to 2015 Public Bodies Reform Programme and the 2015 to 2020 tailored review programme. The aim of such reviews is to identify opportunities for reform in order to deliver savings and efficiencies to complement the HMT Efficiency and Savings Review.

1. Background of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland

Under the Public Processions (NI) Act 1998 the Duties and Functions of the Commission are:

- To promote greater understanding by the general public of issues concerning public processions.
- To promote and facilitate mediation as a means of resolving disputes concerning public processions.
- To keep itself generally informed as to the conduct of public processions and protest meetings.
- To keep under review, and make such recommendations as it thinks fit to the secretary of state concerning the operation of the Act.

To access the full Act, as amended, click [here](#).

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office.

2. Purpose of the review

The review aimed to ensure that the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland is:

- delivering with a clear purpose which remains relevant and is appropriately classified
- on track to be effective, efficient and aligned to the government's priorities
- well governed and properly accountable for what it does

3. Recommendations and conclusions

The review team concluded that the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland is in good health and the evidence considered demonstrated that the organisation is well run across leadership, strategy, processes, and people management.

The review team further concluded that the current classification and operating model is optimal to deliver the Commission's function and objectives.

One recommendation was identified, to improve governance and accountability processes. The recommendation to formally undertake an annual board effectiveness review in line with best practice will be prioritised for action during 2024/25 once the new board of commissioners has had time to bed-in.

This stage 1 review did not indicate the need for a full-scale review of the Parades Commissioner for Northern Ireland at this time.

A summary of how the Commission is meeting the requirements across all four elements of the self-assessment model used during a stage 1 review is as follows:

- ***Efficacy***

The Commission is an independent statutory body established under the Public Processions (NI) Act 1998 for which there is no alternative delivery model. It continues to meet the government's [tests for public body status](#) with a clear mandate and strategic priorities that are aligned with those of the department and wider government objectives.

- ***Efficiency***

The Commission has demonstrated it is operating efficiently by consistently managing within its Spending Review resource allocation, and despite a significant increase in parade notifications over the past three years, continues to perform effectively.

- ***Governance***

The Commission has a strong governance framework with an independent audit committee and has consistently delivered unqualified accounts. It has a good working relationship with the NIO sponsor team supported by regular engagement with the NIO Sponsor Team.

- ***Accountability***

As indicated above the Commission has effective governance and accountability arrangements in place to ensure regularity and propriety and accounts to parliament through publication of its annual report and accounts.