



Corporate Plan

2024-27

Annex A Business Plan 2026-27
April 2026

Date	Author	Detail	Version No.
20/04/26	MB	For Publication	1.0

Annex A - Business Plan 2026-27

Priority: Focus on Performance

To deliver a high-quality service that meets the needs of our customers. To achieve this, we will:

- Actively review those cases received in the penultimate business year to ensure they are delivered as soon as practically possible.
- Aim to ensure that the timeliness of our decisions is improved upon.
- Continue to ensure that the quality of decisions is maintained.
- Review and agree revised performance measures across all workstreams.

Priority 2: Looking Forward

To ensure that the organisation is placed in the best position to deal with future challenges we will:

- Aim to fill existing vacancies by the end of the financial year.
- Continue to invest in the training and development of our workforce.
- Review the findings of recent customer engagement exercises within three months and action any recommendations as appropriate.
- Continue discussions with our sponsor body regarding funding and resourcing.
- Respond to any recommendations arising from the publication of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report.
- Continue to engage in meaningful outreach work to ensure all interested parties understand our role in the planning process.

In addition to these objectives, we have several 'Hear and Report' cases in hand which have been referred to us from government departments. We conducted six hearings in relation to such cases during the last financial year. Of the cases that remain, there are ten requests for public inquiries, six of these are referrals from the DfI. Four of those referred by the DfI are included in the Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) conjoined public local inquiry (consisting of eight applications). The inquiry is to be reconvened at the start of the 2026/27 financial year. Six cases are currently with DfI and the Commission awaits instructions as to whether the public inquiry or hearing as originally requested is still required. One EIA hearing request case has been heard and the report is pending. Another hearing has been scheduled. One EIA hearing request case requires the legal grounds on a linked appeal case to be heard first and another EIA hearing case has been postponed pending the outcome of court action in respect of a linked appeal case.

In respect of the above area of work, for the business year 2026/27 we intend to:

- Undertake the hearing sessions in relation to the Dalradian conjoined public inquiry (2021/C005, 2021/C006, 2021/C007, 2021/DR001, 2021/WHR01, 2021/WHR02, 2024/WHR01, 2024/WHR02).
- Issue a decision in respect of legal grounds for the enforcement case linked to the EIA hearing request and schedule a hearing in respect of the EIA determination if necessary.
- Conduct at least two other hearings and issue reports thereafter.
- Where cases revert to us (by virtue of the outcome of court proceedings or the conclusion of DfI statutory undertakings) we will aim to assign a Commissioner to the case within three weeks of such notification.

The Commission has successfully addressed the backlog of cases and is significantly improving on the timeliness of its decision making. We will continue to use our best endeavours to improve on delivery times where these are within our control and subject to the resources available.