

Mr Alan Chambers
Chair Assembly Audit Committee
Room 254, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

[by e-mail]

8th May 2025

Dear Alan

NIPSO: 2025-26 Main Estimates

I refer to the email of 6th May 2025 seeking briefing from NIPSO on the 2025-26 Main Estimates for the Audit Committee meeting on Wednesday 14th May 2025.

2025-26 Main Estimates.

In accordance with the Assembly Audit Committee's remit to approve the Estimates for NIPSO, I have attached NIPSO's Main Estimate for 2025-26. However, it is important to note, that while we have endeavoured to ensure accuracy of these, it is possible that DOF may wish - through discussion with NIPSO to make final editing changes to the narrative or figures therein during the course of finalising these Estimates for laying in the Assembly, inclusion in the Budget Bill and publication. In the unlikely event that any of these would have any bearing on the budget figures previously agreed by the Committee I will of course ensure that these are brought to the Committee's attention.

For the purposes of this briefing I attach at Annex A the pivotal financial schedule from our Estimates submission, namely the "Part 1" sheet. Please note that a number of other worksheets within the overall Estimates document support this particular summary sheet and provide further analysis of the figures.

I can confirm that the figures contained within the Estimates are consistent with the 2025-26 NIPSO budget that the Committee has previously agreed and in respect of which the Committee Chair wrote to the Finance Minister on 15 November 2024. We would, however, draw your attention to an additional reconciling item relating to £37k depreciation. The adjustment arose due to an error in reporting between NIPSO and DoF and will be corrected at the June 2025 monitoring round to align Estimates and the Committee agreed budget.

Extract from NIAAC Committee Chair's letter to the Finance Minister:

Arising from its scrutiny of the NIPSO budget plan for 2025-26, the Audit Committee agreed that the Executive's Budget document should make provision for NIPSO having a Resource DEL Budget of £5,150K and Capital DEL Budget of £0K. The Resource DEL broken down as follows: £4,950K of Non Ring-Fenced DEL and £200K of Ring-fenced DEL (subject to the outcome of the Pay and Grading exercise).

Reconciliation to Main Estimate:

| | £k |
|--|--------------|
| Approved Resource DEL Budget agreed by the Committee: | 5,150 |
| Depreciation | 37 |
| Consolidated Fund Standing Services (Ombudsman Salary & Employment Costs, not included in Estimates) | (178) |
| Net Resource Requirement per 2025-26 NIPSO Estimates (as per Annex A) | 5,009 |

Yours sincerely



MARGARET KELLY
Ombudsman

| Part I | | | £ |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| | Voted | Non-Voted | Total |
| Departmental Expenditure Limit | | | |
| Resource | 5,009,000 | 178,000 | 5,187,000 |
| Capital | - | - | - |
| Annually Managed Expenditure | | | |
| Resource | - | - | - |
| Capital | - | - | - |
| Total Net Budget | | | |
| Resource | 5,009,000 | 178,000 | 5,187,000 |
| Capital | - | - | - |
| Non-Budget Expenditure | | | |
| Resource | - | - | - |
| Capital | - | - | - |
| Net cash requirement | 4,972,000 | | 4,972,000 |

Amounts required in the year ending 31 March 2026 for expenditure by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman on:

Departmental Expenditure Limit:

Expenditure arising from:

Investigating complaints of injustice suffered through maladministration by government departments, statutory agencies, public bodies, local government and health and social care bodies, general and independent health care providers, colleges, universities and boards of governors of grant aided schools; undertaking investigations into systemic maladministration without the need for complaint; improving standards of complaints handling by public bodies including publication of statistics, best practice and training; investigating and adjudicating on complaints on local government ethical standards against councillors; severance payments; governmental response to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic; UK Covid-19 Inquiry activities; activities that are required as a result of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union; administration; backdated holiday compensation payments; related services; investigation of complaints about judicial appointments made by Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission; other non-cash items.

Income arising from:

Recoupment of salary and associated costs for any seconded staff.

Annually Managed Expenditure:

Expenditure arising from:

Creation and movement in provisions.

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman will account for this Estimate.