

Written Ministerial Statement

The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.

Department for Infrastructure

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FORENSIC AUDIT INTO THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS IN NI WATER

Published at 8am on Friday 4 September 2026

Ms Liz Kimmins (The Minister for Infrastructure): I wish to advise the Assembly of my decision to commission a governance audit of NI Water.

Regrettably, there are a number of issues which are ongoing in NI Water, some of which have been the subject of NI Water investigations and have already resulted in the need for action plans.

The scale, volume and severity of these concerns combined with the time it has taken NI Water to conduct the required investigations, alongside other matters of compliance, have led me to conclude that this work is necessary to provide appropriate assurance that NI Water's systems and processes are robust, effective and fit for purpose.

It is incumbent on me as Minister to satisfy myself that the internal checks and balances of the organisation are functioning as they should. The Department allocates over half a billion pounds of taxpayers' money to NI Water annually.

Therefore, it is crucial that I am assured that there is accountability to the Department, the Assembly, the NI Water Board, wider stakeholders and the public.

This further audit provides an opportunity to enable better planning going forward and full transparency for partners, stakeholders and the public.

I have therefore instructed the Civil Service's Internal Audit to put in place the necessary steps to progress this further governance audit as quickly, but as thoroughly as possible. The Terms of Reference are currently being finalised, and I will publish these in due course.

I will update members again once this important piece of work is complete.