

PERMANENT SECRETARIES' STOCKTAKE (PSS)

Friday 13 March 2026, 09:00am

Executive room, Stormont Castle

In attendance:

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| Jayne Brady/HOCS (Chair) | Alex Gordon |
| Emer Morelli | David Malcolm |
| Moira Doherty | Ian Snowden |
| Katrina Godfrey | Hugh Widdis |
| Neil Gibson | Peter Toogood |
| Susan Anderson | Joanne Timoney |

Malcolm McKibbin (Agenda item 4 only)
Marie Doyle (Agenda item 4 only)
Philip Wales (Agenda item 5 only)
Sharon Gallagher (Agenda item 6 only)
Suzanne McLaughlin (Agenda item 6 only)

Trevor Rea (Observing Agenda item 6 only)
Ursula Mayers (Observing Agenda item 6 only)
Tracy Flanagan (Observing Agenda item 6 only)

Debbie Murphy (Secretariat)
Jayne Byrne (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mike Farrar, Declan McGeown and Louise Crilly provided apologies, Peter Toogood, Susan Anderson and Joanne Timoney deputised respectively.

All welcomed NG back and sent their best wishes to MF. HoCS updated on a piece of work being undertaken with HW on the Strategic Health and Wellbeing objective of the People Strategy and a recent meeting with L Hogg NIA.

2. Minutes & Actions arising from PSS 27 February 2026

The minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2026 were agreed subject to minor amendments communicated in advance.

Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and discussed.

3. Update on Pathway to Fiscal Sustainability

HoCS provided a high-level update on the work on the Pathway to Fiscal Sustainability followed by a high-level update on ongoing Executive Business.

4. Presentation on Deloitte State of the State 2026 Report @9.30am

Malcolm McKibbin and Marie Doyle from Deloitte joined the meeting to present the findings of the Report which launched on 26 February. Discussion followed with PSS members focussing on the need for accountability, transparency, financial management and improving communications in relation to what is being delivered and developed.

Action: Work to be taken forward across all departments to identify how to bed in the findings of the report to actions and sustainable delivery.

5. Northern Ireland Population Projections @ 10.20am

Philip Wales, NISRA Chief Executive, joined the meeting to present on the National Population Projections for Northern Ireland.

On 12 February NISRA released 2022-based population projections for the current Local Government Districts (LGDs) showing that the populations in all LGDs are projected to age.

PW presented on these findings and sought input from PSS on which projection variants are most useful to support policy planning and decision making, and, whether there are any additional population projection or analytical products that would help policymakers better understand and respond to demographic change.

Members thanked PW for his presentation and noted the implications for all. MD queried whether there was a way of comparing the data with deprivation statistics to identify any correlation. NG noted the potential need for forecasting what population might be if PfG's aims are achieved. KG noted while the projections may mean an increased chance of meeting some aims they could hamper others and it is important to look at how we join this work up. Lessons learned from other administrations were also noted alongside the need to develop policy solutions in response to the projections.

Action: Members to come back to PW with any requirements or specific asks and PW to be invited back to a future meeting of PSS for a fuller discussion.

6. Strategic Overview of Land & Property Assets in NI Central Government Report @ 10.45am

NG introduced Suzanne McLaughlin and Sharon Gallagher from Land and Property Services who joined for this agenda item only. Members were reminded that the Strategic Asset Management Unit (SAMU) has been funded collectively and the relevance of this work to all departments.

SG noted that the report is purely factual, it does not make recommendations and that SAMU can provide tools to help departments build capacity and capability but cannot make decisions.

Members were asked to note the development process of the Report, the planned communications approach and expected scrutiny; and SAMU's intention to provide a Year 1 Progress, Findings and Lessons Learned Report.

SMcL provided a demonstration of the Government Land & Property portal which will be made available to all departments and is intended to facilitate more collaborative working in asset management.

NG praised the work of the teams involved and SG thanked Trevor Rea and Ursula Mayers who have led this work from the start and Tracy Flanagan who recently joined the SAMU team, all of whom were attending in an observing capacity.

GL noted the need to recognise PSS members roles as stewards and the need to develop a collective plan and to be aspirational in our goals.

HoCS thanked SG and SMcL for the presentation and noted that the population forecast and the SAMU report will need to be considered in the development of ISNI.

7. Tour de Table

Given the full agenda there were no pressing issues raised under Tour de Table.

9. AoB

No AoB was raised.

10. Date of next PSS meeting:

Friday 20 March 9.00 – 10.30

Meeting closed 11.00