

Finance and Major Projects Committee

Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE AND ROLE

The role of the Finance and Major Projects Committee is to assist the Departmental Board (DB) to meet the corporate governance responsibilities for the Department as outlined in the DB Operating Framework. It carries specific responsibility for:

- ensuring that the Department has in place sound financial management and effective arrangements for scrutinising the allocation of financial resources to achieve strategic objectives;
- ensuring that clear, consistent, comparable performance information is used to drive improvement, and monitoring and steering performance against plans; and
- maintaining a strategic overview of how the Department's major programmes and projects are being managed and delivered.

Reflecting the provisions of the *Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of Good Practice NI*, the committee is established to exercise governance functions and does not stray into the executive management of the Department.

The committee brings a particular focus to the challenges of financial management and the management of projects/programmes to deliver current and future needs. The committee augments the existing governance arrangements already in place to manage the Department's major programmes and projects through additional oversight and scrutiny.

2. DELEGATION

The committee will develop an annual work programme which should be agreed with DB and will report to the board after each meeting on the delivery of that workplan. The committee is authorised by the board to take decisions on how it delivers the workplan.

3. REMIT

The remit delegated from DB to the committee, which will be reflected in the annual workplan, includes:

- (i) Scrutiny and oversight of in-year monitoring round and future year budget proposals;
- (ii) Having a strategic overview of the portfolio and performance of major programmes and projects being delivered by DAERA (as defined in [Appendix 1](#)), including business cases considered by the Casework Committee, and recommending (when appropriate) that major programmes or projects should proceed to the Permanent Secretary and/or Minister for key decisions;
- (iii) Liaising with the Agency Management Boards of the Department's two agencies (NIEA and Forest Service) to scrutinise and receive assurance on how both agencies comply with their financial management responsibilities and their responsibilities for leading and managing major programmes and projects;
- (iv) Receiving assurance from the Department's ALBs on the arrangements they have in place to oversee any major programmes and projects for which they carry accountability;
- (v) Considering the financial impacts of the Department's long term estate strategy and supporting Estate Asset Management Plans;
- (vi) Monitoring the Equality Implications within Budget exercises: and
- (vii) Monitoring performance against key indicators such as Aged Debt.

4. MEMBERSHIP

The committee is chaired by the Group Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Services with the role transferring to a Non-Executive Board Member following appointment and induction.

Membership of the committee will also include the following:

- at least three Executive Board members; and
- Finance Director.

Officials in regular attendance will be:

- Deputy Finance Directors;
- Head of Future Years Financial Planning; and
- Head of In Year Financial Planning.

Other officials shall be asked to attend as and when required.

5. MEETINGS

Secretariat

Secretariat support will be provided by Future Year Financial Planning Branch or In Year Financial Planning Branch and papers will be circulated at least one week in advance of each meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

The committee will meet a minimum of four times per annum (or more frequently if required).

Record of Meetings

Formal minutes will be agreed by committee members at the next meeting. The agenda and approved minutes of each meeting will be published on the DAERA internet.

Quorum

The minimum number of FMPC members required to provide a quorum for meetings is three.

6. REPORTING

The work of the committee will be reported to DB in a paper from the chair at the next appropriate DB meeting. Where the committee decides that an issue needs to be escalated to DB for consideration, this should be clearly identified in the DB paper. The reason for the escalation should also be clearly stated. Where a matter is urgent, the request from the Chair can be discussed with the Chair of the Board so that an agreed approach can be taken. The Board may also ask the Committee for a matter to be brought to it for consideration.

This committee is supported by the work of the Casework Committee and the Estate Transformation Oversight Board.

7. REVIEW

The membership and terms of reference of the committee will be reviewed at least annually, with a short report recommending any changes provided to the Departmental Board for approval.

Approved by Departmental Board: 25/03/2026

Appendix 1

Major Projects or Programmes definitions¹

- Capital projects with a total capital value in excess of £10m;
- revenue projects which fall above departmental limits and for which central government costs will be £10m or more over the project's life; and
- Capital and revenue projects, irrespective of costs, that set precedents; could be considered novel or contentious; or are particularly high profile or high risk including any projects that the relevant SRO or the Accounting Officer consider would benefit from scrutiny and oversight by the Committee.

¹ Criteria informed by guidance from [FD \(DoF\) 11/20 Better Business Cases NI](#), in relation to the preparation of a SOC and adapted for a reduction of threshold to £10m.