



**Commissioner for Public Appointments for
Northern Ireland**

Summary of Audit Findings 2006-07

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CITB – Construction Industry Training Board

DARD – Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

DEL – Department for Employment and Learning

DHSSPS – Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

DSD – Department for Social Development

DRD – Department for Regional Development

OA – OCPA NI Assessor

NIFRSB – Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board

NIHE – Northern Ireland Housing Executive

NILGA – Northern Ireland Local Government Association

**OCPA NI – Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for
Northern Ireland**

OFMDFM – Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

PAWAC – Planning and Water Appeals Commissions

REAP – Research and Education Advisory Panel

Introduction

My responsibilities as Commissioner for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland cover a number of key areas. One of these is the requirement to audit the policies and practices of Departments in making public appointments, to establish whether my Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (OCPA NI) Code of Practice is being observed and applied.

As I noted in my 2006/07 Annual Report, I have changed the method of auditing Departmental public appointments for 2006-07 a decision which was conveyed to all Northern Ireland Government Departments in writing before the audit process commenced. At that time I also reached the view that it would be beneficial to produce a summary report providing a synopsis of my findings together with relevant evidence from the individual competitions.

The detailed reports for each competition have been published for some time and can be found at: www.ocpani.gov.uk/publications

This report gives those interested in public appointments a snapshot of where there are weaknesses in the process as currently administered.

A quick review of the evidence will show that one underlying problem is lack of consistency of approach to public appointments. Each of our 11 Departments administers its public appointments in a different way. In some departments, each sponsor unit runs its own competitions. There is therefore no consistency even within this one department. Such inconsistency undermines my Code's principle of equal opportunity.

In Scotland a central unit has been established, staffed partly by HR specialists, to administer all public appointments. Individual Departments and Ministers remain involved in identifying the skills and qualities needed for bodies and the Minister still makes the final decision on appointment. I believe there is merit in applying a similar system to the process in Northern Ireland. As a bare minimum we require consistency of approach within a department.

When I gave evidence to our Public Accounts Committee in 17th April 2008 I raised the issue that Departments rarely deal with Conflict of Interest issues as would be hoped or expected. The evidence summarised in this report illustrates some of the points I was making. I would refer those with a particular interest in this area to the detailed reports on the OCPA NI website, in particular those on the OFMDFM's Planning and Water Appeals Commissioners, the Children's and Young People's Commissioner and DRD's Chair of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

This report incorporates four main aspects as follows:

- the main issues identified through the audit process for 2006-07, highlighting areas for improvement, as well as points of good practice;

- a section on statutory nominees on our public bodies, analysing some of the selection methods which have been used;
- a detailed summary of the 06/07 audit methodology; and
- proposals for audit in the future.

The 2006-07 Audit Approach

The audit approach used for the public appointment processes during 2006-07 represented a change to previous years. The key difference being that Departments' public appointments would no longer be subject to audit on a cyclical basis every three years. Instead individual competitions are to be audited, ensuring any Department can be audited in any year.

The overriding audit objective was to evaluate whether Ministerial public appointments, which fall within the OCPA NI remit, had been made in accordance with the OCPA NI Code of Practice. This work took the form of:

- testing a selection of appointment processes which fall within the OCPA NI remit for compliance; and
- reviewing appointments made under the Monitored Kitemark scheme, the voluntary regulation process for Ministerial appointments which are not regulated in legislation by my Office (although the same standard of compliance with the Code of Practice is expected).

The audit findings from each appointment process selected and related recommendations for improvement were set out in a detailed report for the Department concerned and discussed with them as part of the audit wash-up process. A priority rating was also attached to each recommendation, where Priority 1 is a Code Compliant issue which should be addressed immediately. There was also an added-value element to the 2006-07 process, with related observations arising from each audit examination (while outside the area of Code compliance) being included in Departmental audit reports, as a means of contributing to improvements in process efficiency. The findings from each public appointment audited are reproduced in full on the OCPA NI website: <http://www.ocpani.gov.uk/index/publications.htm>

Eight public appointment processes, as set out in the table below, were examined as part of the process. The findings are set out on a thematic basis within the later sections.

Dept	Competition
DARD	REAP – Economist
DEL	CITB – Members
OFMDFM	PAWAC – Principal Commissioner
OFMDFM	Commissioner for Children and Young People
DSD	NIHE – Members
DHSSPS	New Health and Social Services – Chair
DHSSPS	Fire and Rescue Board
DRD	Belfast Harbour Commissioners – Chair

Main Issues from the 2006-07 Audit Process

As a result of the 2006-07 audit process, six main themes have emerged in the context of individual appointments processes and across the Northern Ireland Government Departments, in terms of issues highlighted for improvement. These relate to:

1. How Probity and Conflict of Interest Issues are handled throughout the selection process;
2. The arrangements for publicising public appointments at time of appointment;
3. The use of the Validation Certificate as an assurance tool;
4. The collation of Political Activity and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information;
5. General issues around process; and
6. The involvement of the OA's role within the process.

The following series of tables incorporate examples within each of these broad themes, with reference to named public appointments processes. Examples where good practice has been observed have also been incorporated. More detail on all of these examples can be found on the OCPA NI website <http://www.ocpani.gov.uk/index/publications.htm> where the detailed report prepared on each of the audits is located.

Thematic Review of 2006-07 Audits

1. Probity and Conflict of Interest Issues

As Table 1 over illustrates, in six of the eight competitions in the 2006-07 audit round, I found that while candidates may have been questioned with regard to probity and conflict of interest issues (although there was scope for further exploratory questioning), Selection Panel members did not consistently take this to the next level, ie agreeing and documenting a conclusion in relation to the circumstances raised. If carried out properly, this approach should result in the Minister being left in no doubt at the end of a public appointments process as to the actual or potential conflict of issues which exist and how candidates deemed eligible for appointment intend to manage them, should they be appointed. On the other hand, not doing so can leave a Department at risk of having to deal reactively if a situation arises later. The more appropriate means of handling it would have been as part of the appointments process, with time to proactively address any points arising.

I have also noted examples of Selection Panel members apparently either not being aware or judging it unnecessary to record probity and conflict of interest outcomes in interview documentation. This reduces the audit evidence that such matters were even discussed at interview. We are left with verbal assurances that these matters were discussed.

As a consequence, I have recommended that Departments ensure that panellists are well-briefed on their responsibilities (including the documenting of outcomes) in relation to this key aspect.

I also issued instructions to all OCPA NI Assessors that they must ensure these matters are dealt with robustly at interview, even if the candidate does not address the point on his or her application form. The OA must also ensure that full records are kept of the discussion both with the candidate and subsequently amongst the panel.

Even within a Department which is handling a series of public appointment process, a lack of consistency in approach often exists. There is room for improvement in the dissemination of information held by Departmental Contacts. This will encourage more uniformity of approach, and reduce duplication of effort leading to increased process efficiency.

Whilst some departments handled Conflict of Interest matters poorly, some dealt with them much better e.g. the process administered by DHSSPS to appoint Chairs for the new Health and Social Services Trusts. All but one applicant had indicated that conflict of interest was not relevant to their candidature. However potential conflicts of interest were identified for four candidates as a result of exploratory questioning. The panel was also provided with a summary of other public appointments held by candidates (extracted from application forms) to indicate where time commitment could be an issue, which was also probed and the outcomes documented.

This clearly indicates that when a little time and effort is taken these matters can be dealt with properly.

Table 1 - Issues on Probity and Conflicts of Interest

No	ISSUE	DARD	DEL	OFMDFM	OFMDFM	DSD	DHSSPS	DHSSPS	DRD
		REAP Economist	CITB Members	PAWAC – Principal Commissioner	Commissioner for Children and Young People	NIHE Members	New Health and Social Services Trusts - Chairs	Fire and Rescue Service Board	Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Chair
1	No <u>overall conclusion</u> reached on conflict of interest circumstances raised with candidates at interview and formally documented (S3.35/Annex C)	√	√	√	√		√		√
2	Inconsistent recording of probity and conflict of interest outcomes by panel members (S3.35)	√	√				√	√	√
3	Application form wording failed to draw attention to the need for applicants to read the OCPA NI 'Probity and Conflicts of Interest Booklet' before responding to a direct question in this area (S2.11)			√	√		√	√	
4	Discussion on a key decision-making process in respect of a conflict of interest or other issue not formally recorded or available for audit (Annex C)		√		√	√			√
5	No documented evidence of coverage of probity and conflict of interest issues (S3.36/Annex C)			√					√
6	OCPA NI's 'Probity and Conflict of Interest' Booklet not issued with the Information Pack to applicants (S2.16/3.26)				√				

2. Arrangements for Announcing Public Appointments

Table 2 sets out a range of examples where I found that arrangements around the publicising of public appointments were not as required by my Code of Practice.

The requirements which a Department should include in publicising appointments, (usually in the form of a Press Release) are clearly listed in my Code, at Section 3.42. It is disappointing; therefore, that audit examination has identified several poor examples of Press Release contents, particularly when compliance is straightforward.

Departments need to ensure that requirements regarding the issue of Press Releases to the OCPANI Assessor involved and OCPA NI in the latter stages of a public appointments process are met. In this regard, I found that where a simple action checklist linked to the various stages of an appointments process was in place and being used by staff involved, these actions were carried out on a timely basis.

My Code also requires that a Press Release should refer to *'any other Ministerial appointments held and any remuneration received. If none, this should be clearly stated'*. This requirement aims to promote openness and transparency in the public appointments process.

On a more general point, my Code also requires a Press Release to include details of an appointee's party political activity within the last 5 years in addition to any local Council membership held, where this exists.

Unfortunately this does not always happen. I have had to challenge departments to amend press releases to include the correct information – including one occasion where a Departmental Press Officer told me he was 'not minded' to issue a corrected press notice to ensure it complied with my Code of Practice.

One can only assume that, despite being a press officer, he did not understand the importance of dealing openly with this issue to ensure no criticism was directed towards his Minister.

Table 2 - Arrangements for Announcing Public Appointments

No	ISSUE	DARD	DEL	OFMDFM	OFMDFM	DSD	DHSSPS	DHSSPS	DRD
		REAP Economist	CITB Members	PAWAC – Principal Commissioner	Commissioner for Children and Young People	NIHE Members	New Health and Social Services Trusts - Chairs	Fire and Rescue Service Board	Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Chair
7	Press Release issued without all the relevant details (S3.42)	√	√	√	√			√	
8	No formal notification to an OA of the final outcome from an appointments process, by Press Release (S3.35)	√	√						√
9	No formal notification to OCPA NI of the final outcome from an appointments process, by Press Release (S3.43)	√	√						
10	No documented independent check with CAU on other public appointments held, before inclusion in a Press Release (S3.42)			√	√				
11	A copy of the media advertisement not provided to OCPA NI by the Department (S3.23)	√							

3. Use of the Validation Certificate as an Assurance Tool

The Validation Certificate completed by an OCPA NI Assessor now forms part of the documentation contained within the Submission to the Minister at the close of an appointments process. It represents a means of providing the necessary assurances that the elements of a public appointments process in which an OCPA NI Assessor has been involved have been carried out to the required standard, with any anomalies clearly set out for the Minister's consideration.

The format of this document was altered in January 2007 by my Office to enhance its usefulness as an assurance tool in the public appointments process. It is important, therefore, that Departments ensure that an Assessor is given sufficient time to provide the considered responses required within this detailed document, in advance of a final Ministerial Submission.

OA's must also ensure they complete this certificate in full.

Table 3 - Use of the Validation Certificate as an Assurance Tool

No	ISSUE	DARD	DEL	OFMDFM	OFMDFM	DSD	DHSSPS	DHSSPS	DRD
		REAP Economist	CITB Members	PAWAC – Principal Commissioner	Commissioner for Children and Young People	NIHE Members	New Health and Social Services Trusts - Chairs	Fire and Rescue Service Board	Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Chair
12	Incomplete Validation Certificate from the OA accepted by the Department (S3.36)	√			√				
13	Late submission of a Validation Certificate, with reliance on verbal assurance (S3.36)					√			
14	Completed Validation Certificate not forwarded by the Department to OCPA NI in a timely manner(S3.36)		√						

4. Collation of Political Activity and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information

During the 2006-07 audit round, my Code still required that all applicants should provide information on Political Activity and Equal Opportunities for monitoring purposes.

In respect of Political Activity, Annex F to the Code clearly sets out a prescribed form of words which was introduced on the recommendation of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, with the requirement that *'it must not be amended in any way'* - however, I noted that two Departments, DSD and OFMDFM, did not observe this requirement in three different public appointment processes.

I also found that in these same appointments and also in respect of a process administered by DHSSPS, the required follow-up was not carried out with candidates where Political Activity and/or Equal Opportunities monitoring information was missing or incomplete, in an attempt to have this made available or note that its provision had been refused.

As these monitoring forms are also separated from the main application form on submission prior to the Selection Panel having sight of application details, it is also important that applicants are required to sign these off to formally endorse the information provided, before this takes place.

Table 4 - Collation of Political Activity and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information

No	ISSUE	DARD	DEL	OFMDFM	OFMDFM	DSD	DHSSPS	DHSSPS	DRD
		REAP Economist	CITB Members	PAWAC – Principal Commissioner	Commissioner for Children and Young People	NIHE Members	New Health and Social Services Trusts - Chairs	Fire and Rescue Service Board	Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Chair
15	Content of Political Activity Form not exactly as prescribed (Annex F)				√	√			
16	No Departmental follow-up on incomplete Equal Opportunity (EO) or Political Activity (PA) information (S3.28/3.29)				√ EO and PA	√ EO		√ PA	
17	Applicants not required to complete an EO Monitoring Form (S3.28/3.29)			√					

5. General Issues around Process

As in previous years' reports, I continue to emphasise the fact that documentary evidence remains a key component within any public appointments process, as a means to:

- (1) clearly support decision-making
- (2) promote transparency and openness in the process by Selection Panel members, for example, through the recording of interview responses and related scores in sufficient detail on all areas for all candidates and
- (3) demonstrate when guidance has been sought from OCPA NI, for example, in exceptional circumstances as required under my Code and then acted upon.

The requirement for full and complete documentary evidence to be provided for audit purposes also features in my Code and, it is worth reiterating that this means any Departmental document which has been produced as part of a public appointments process. When Departments provide such documentation at the outset of an audit, the level of staff involvement required is reduced and the process can be completed more efficiently.

Completeness of documentary evidence includes the endorsement of documents including application forms, by which applicants signify their understanding of, and agreement to, certain requirements being placed upon them through their candidature, not least that elements of the information which they provide may be disclosed in the public domain and that statutory disqualifications may apply to the appointment being sought.

Circumstances may arise where a criterion cannot be assessed in the usual way at interview, as was the case with DARD's appointment of an Economist to the Research and Education Advisory Panel. One of the essential criteria required the attainment of academic qualifications to a specific standard; however validation of this requirement was not carried out, as a means of gaining independent assurance that the criterion had been met in full.

My Code sets down a requirement that Departments announce all vacancies, which are to be publicly advertised, in the CAU's six-monthly list of forthcoming vacancies (its 'All Aboard' publication), which is widely circulated. However, I noted that in four of the audits (in DHSSPS; OFMDFM and DARD), the timing of public appointments did not synchronise with the routine biannual request from CAU for details of the vacancies to be filled. I have recommended to Departments that each request for the announcement of a vacancy through the CAU mechanism should be retained on file, with formal confirmation sought as to whether this can be included. Recognition also has to be given the transitory nature of some media formats which emphasises the need for hard copy evidence to be retained on file.

6. Responsibilities of the OA within the Process

The role of an OA in a public appointments process is as a representative of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, to scrutinise compliance with my Code and to provide advice and guidance to Departments in the context of Selection Panel membership. My Assessors also have a role in challenging Departments on their approach on areas within their remit of responsibilities, which are set out in my Code of Practice.

My OA's do not have a role in ensuring consistency of approach within or between public appointment processes, which is a Departmental responsibility.

The provision of feedback by Departments on Assessor contributions (which my Code requires at the close of an appointments process) acts as a measure against the standards expected, as well as for the development of an individual Assessor. It is also a means of identifying aspects where improvement may be required, and provided in a timely basis, represents a valuable output for use by my Office.

The role and duties of an OA will change in the new Code of Practice.

Table 6 - Involvement of the OA's role within the Process

No	ISSUE	DARD	DEL	OFMDFM	OFMDFM	DSD	DHSSPS	DHSSPS	DRD
		REAP Economist	CITB Members	PAWAC – Principal Commissioner	Commissioner for Children and Young People	NIHE Members	New Health and Social Services Trusts - Chairs	Fire and Rescue Service Board	Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Chair
31	Non-completion of the OA's performance appraisal by the Panel Chair (Annex I)		√		√	√			√
32	Less involvement by the OA than recommended for public appointments (S3.32)						√	√	
33	OA not required to formally declare any knowledge of candidates for Departmental records (Annex H)	√							

Statutory Nominees on Public Bodies

The 2006-07 audit round included examinations of:

- (1) the appointment of Members to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Board as statutory nominees, which falls under the responsibility of the Department for Social Development to administer; and
- (2) the appointment of four out of ten Non-Executive Members to the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board (NIFRSB) as nominees of local Councils.

Statutory Nominees to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Board

Statutory nominees to the NIHE Board exist through legislation. During 2005, the Northern Ireland Housing Council, with a representative from each of the 26 local Councils, obtained the right through a Ministerial decision to increase their places on the NIHE Board from three to four, thereby enabling all the major political parties to be represented. This meant that, for the first time, the Housing Council had to nominate a number of individuals, in order to provide the Minister with a choice. The means by which this would take place was the subject of considerable discussion and correspondence and required the Department and the Housing Council to overcome a reluctance to engage in a simplified interview process with the statutory nominees, known as a 'Conversation with a Purpose'. The issues identified from the audit largely reflect the ongoing developmental nature of the methodology during the appointments process itself.

The key audit issues included:

- a full and complete audit trail not being available
- lack of detailed information being made available to nominees at the outset of the process, for example, lack of provision of a role or person specification or OCPA NI complaints leaflet and no indication that participation in a Conversation with a Purpose would be necessary

In its response, the Department indicated that it would "take cognisance of these issues as part of the process linked to a new NIHE Board competition" which was coming up

- a nominee who was unavailable to participate in a Conversation with a Purpose being included in a Ministerial Submission on the assumption that they would have "passed"

The Department responded that its action was linked to the "need to work to a very tight timetable" and that "the course of action taken was acceptable"

- lack of a requirement for nominees to declare conflicts of interest, either during the nomination process or at any later stage, with an audit recommendation that additional wording should be included within the relevant documentation to address this

The Department noted this recommendation.

The audit also identified the importance of the challenge function which the OA was able to provide in representing my Office during this public appointments process, particularly in ensuring that a method for verification of the Conversation with a Purpose element was put in place. My Assessor also provided a suitable form of words to assist the panel in exploring the issues of conflict of interest and probity with each nominee as part of the process.

Overall, the response to the audit recommendations made was positive and since this audit was finalised, I commend both the Department and its associated bodies for the steady progress which is being made to put the public appointments process for statutory nominees to the NIHE Board on a more formal footing.

Statutory Nominees to the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board

Legislation introduced in 2006 established the NIFRSB. It also allows for four Non-Executive Members representing local Councils to be brought onto the Board, using a nomination process carried out in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA). The Department had sought guidance on this process during 2005 and was advised that “the Sponsor Branch should ensure that NILGA understands that nominees must be fit for purpose and the other Code stipulations on Statutory Nominees are applied”. However, the Department’s Public Appointments Unit subsequently informed the Sponsor Branch that there would be no requirement for nominee participation in a formal interview or a less formal Conversation with a Purpose – they were instead assessed using written evidence provided on a nomination form. This is not compliant with my Code of Practice. In line with the Code requirement, NILGA was also asked by the Department to provide at least two nominees for each of the four appointment opportunities, however, only four nominations in total were received.

The key audit issues identified here included:

- no evidence that the Department had either followed up with NILGA and further encouraged it to comply with its request for at least eight nominees or consulted with OCPA NI to set out the “exceptional circumstances” which resulted in single nominations, which the Commissioner for Public Appointments might have permitted, as per the Code requirement

The Department indicated that it will endeavour to fully implement these particular sections of the Code for future competitions

- permitting Board appointments of statutory nominees on the basis of written evidence alone

The Department indicated that it will endeavour to fully implement the particular sections of the Code for future competitions.

Again, the Department's response to the audit recommendations made was positive, while NILGA has indicated to me that it wants to engage more fully in future appointment processes of this nature.

The issue of how statutory nominees find their way onto public bodies continues to be reviewed by all involved. I hope we will find a pragmatic way forward in the revised Code.

Summary of Audit Methodology for 2006/07

An audit methodology was developed for the 2006-07 programme of audits whereby identified risk factors were analysed for each public appointments process which took place during that period. This marked a change from the existing method of auditing public appointments by Department on a three-year cyclical basis only.

Risk Factors

Development of the methodology began with the identification of wide-ranging risk factors, in order to reflect the magnitude of risk which could be associated with any public appointment. Once each factor had been assessed for a public appointment process during the period, a system of scoring was produced and applied – this resulted in a final ‘risk score’ for each appointment. Examples of the risk factors identified were:

- the sensitivity of individual appointments (on a scale of low/medium/high)
- value of the budget overseen by Ministerial appointees (less than £100,000 to £500 million)
- number of appointments within individual public appointment processes (1 to 11 appointments)
- term of appointment (up to 12 months to a full-time appointment)
- level of remuneration and/or expenses, linked to time commitment required (less than £1,000 to over £150,000)
- the extent of the involvement by OCPA NI with the Department during the public appointments process (minimal/moderate/extensive)
- reasons for referrals to OCPA NI by an OCPA NI Assessor (the Commissioner for Public Appointments’ representative), during a public appointments process (not required/for assurance/to challenge)
- the extent of most recent audit recommendations (identified from previous audit reports) (minimal/moderate/extensive)
- the extent of Departmental action on past audit recommendations identified from previous audit reports (partially, largely or fully compliant).

These last two factors were included to take account of previous audit outcomes, both in terms of the extent of any recommendations which had been made, and perhaps more importantly, to reflect the extent to which a Department had been proactive in fully implementing them.

Selection of Public Appointment Processes for Audit

Having established the overall 'population' of appointments processes which had taken place during 2006-07 with individual risk scores, these were translated into one of three bands - High, Medium or Low Risk.

The public appointment processes within these bands were then selected in the ratio 10%:7.5%:5%, which resulted in the audit examination of five High Risk, three Medium Risk and one Low Risk appointment. Implementing a three-band approach in this way meant that the sampling risk was more widely spread across the overall population, while also ensuring that appointments assessed as High Risk would be included without those in the Low Risk category automatically being excluded (bearing in mind that other factors could be present but not considered through a risk assessment process).

Involvement by OCPA NI Assessors

Another new development for 2006-07 was the involvement of my OCPA NI Assessors as part of the audit process through discussion with my auditor. This pool of individuals exists to represent my Office in acting as my 'eyes and ears on the ground', by helping to ensure that the requirements of my Code are observed, both within appointment processes which come under my remit (Regulated appointments), and where a Department has opted for an appointment process to be voluntarily regulated (Monitored appointments).

Follow-up on Audit Recommendations accepted in Previous Years

Appendix 1 of each audit report produced sets out the audit issues raised within the relevant Department in previous years, which have been revisited for compliance in conjunction with the 2006-07 audit process. DSD and DHSSPS have recorded a 100% improvement in compliance in the context of the current audit; however, this does not represent grounds for complacency. For the remaining Departments covered by the audit process, improvements of between 50 and 75% have been noted. The 2006-07 audit recommendations will again be followed-up as an integral element of the 2007-08 process.

Proposals for Audit in the Future

Future audit work will consider the system under which reappointments and extensions to public appointments currently operate. With regard to reappointments in particular, my Code of Practice at Paragraph 3.19 states that “all processes and decisions relating to reappointments are subject to the same information requirements as initial appointments and to review by the auditors”.

My intention during the 2007-08 programme of audit work is to include a sample of reappointments and extensions and examine the underlying processes in place which govern these, as well as the relevant links to ongoing performance assessments completed on public appointees during their term of appointment.