Department of Justice
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY GEORGE CROSS FOUNDATION

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

BETWEEN THE

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

AND THE

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY GC FOUNDATION

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

1. The Partnership Agreement 1

The Foundation's Establishment and Purpose 3

2. Statutory Purpose and Strategic Objectives 3

The Foundation's Governance Arrangements 4

3. Organisational Status 4

4. Governance Framework 4

5. The Foundation's Board 4

6. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 5

7. The Foundation's Chair 6

Role of the DoJ 7

8. Partnership Working with the Foundation 7

9. Lead Official 7

10. Annual Engagement Plan 8

11. Departmental Accounting Officer 8

12. Attendance at Public Accounts Committee 9

Assurance Framework 10

13. Autonomy and Proportionality 10

14. Board Effectiveness 10

15. Board Appraisals 11

16. Internal Audit Assurance 11

17. Externally Audited Annual Report and Accounts 12

Signatories 13

Annex 1 – Applicable Legislation 14

Annex 2 – Illustrative Annual Engagement Plan 14

Annex 3 – Delegations 21

Annex 4 – Illustrative System of Assurance 22

Annex 5 – Concerns/Complaints in respect of Board members 23

Annex 6 – Applicable Guidance 24

Annex 7 – Role of the Minister 25

Introduction

1. The Partnership Agreement

1.1 This document sets out the partnership arrangements between the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation (the Foundation) and the Department of Justice (DoJ). It explains the overall governance framework within which the Foundation operates, including the framework through which the necessary assurances are provided to stakeholders. Roles/responsibilities of partners within the overall governance framework are also outlined.

1.2 The partnership is based on a mutual understanding of strategic aims and objectives; clear accountability; and a recognition of the distinct roles each party contributes. Underpinning the arrangements are the principles set out in Partnerships between Departments and Arm's-Length Bodies: NI Code of Good Practice (attachment to DAO (DoF) 03/19), which should be read in conjunction with this document. The principles which are laid out in the Code are:

LEADERSHIP
Partnerships work well when departments and arm's-length bodies demonstrate good leadership to achieve a shared vision and effective delivery of public services. Strong leadership will provide inspiration, instil confidence, and trust and empower their respective teams to deliver good outcomes for citizens.
PURPOSE
Partnerships work well when the purpose, objectives and roles of arm's-length bodies and the sponsor department are clear, mutually understood and reviewed on a regular basis. There needs to be absolute clarity about lines of accountability and responsibility between departments and arm's-length bodies. In exercising statutory functions, arm's-length bodies need to have clarity about how their purpose and objectives align with those of departments.
ASSURANCE
Partnerships work well when departments adopt a proportionate approach to assurance, based on arm's-length bodies' purpose and a mutual understanding of risk. Arm's-length bodies should have robust governance arrangements in place, and, in turn, departments should give arm's-length bodies the autonomy to deliver effectively. Management information should be what is needed to enable departments and arm's-length bodies to provide assurance and assess performance.
VALUE
Partnerships work well when departments and arm's-length bodies share knowledge, skills, and experience to enhance their impact and delivery. Arm's-length bodies can contribute to policy making and departmental priorities. There is a focus on innovation, and on how departments and arm's-length bodies work together to deliver the most effective policies and services for its customers.

ENGAGEMENT
Partnerships work well when relationships between departments and arm's-length bodies are open, honest, constructive, and based on trust. There is mutual understanding about each other's objectives and clear expectations about the terms of engagement.

1.3 This document should also be read in conjunction with guidance on proportionate autonomy which provides an outline of the principles and characteristics for proportionate autonomy. Guidance on proportionate autonomy has been considered in determining the extent of engagement and assurance to be established between the Foundation and the DoJ and this is reflected in this agreement.

1.4 The DoJ and the Foundation are committed to:

- working together within distinct roles and responsibilities.
- maintaining focus on successful delivery of Programme for Government (PfG) outcomes and Ministerial priorities (see also paras 2.6 and 2.7).
- maintaining open and honest communication and dialogue.
- keeping each other informed of any issues and concerns, and of emerging areas of risk.
- seeking to resolve issues quickly and constructively; and
- always acting in the public interest and in line with the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality.

1.5 The effectiveness of the partnership and the associated Engagement Plan will be reviewed each year by the DoJ and the Foundation to assess whether the partnership is operating as intended and to identify any emerging issues/ opportunities for enhancement. This can be conducted as part of existing governance arrangements. The Partnership Agreement document itself will be reviewed formally at least once every three years to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up to date in terms of current governance frameworks. The formal review will be proportionate to the Foundation's size and overall responsibilities and will be published on the DoJ and the Foundation websites as soon as practicable following completion.

1.6 A copy of this agreement has been placed in the Assembly Library and is available on the DoJ and Foundation websites.

The Foundation's Establishment and Purpose

2. Statutory Purpose and Strategic Objectives

2.1 The Foundation is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) established under the Police (NI) Act 2000 sec 70 and then the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Foundation Regulations 2002 (the 2002 Regulations). It's status and constitution are set out in those Regulations. For national accounts purposes the Foundation is classified to the central government sector.

2.2 The Foundation's statutory function is the disbursement of funds and funding of projects commensurate with the aims of marking the sacrifices, honouring the achievements of the RUC, and supporting the professional development of police officers and innovations of policing.

2.3 The Foundation also undertakes joint initiatives with the Widows Association and other groups within the police family and has responsibility for the Memorial Garden.

2.4 The Minister of Justice is answerable to the Assembly for the overall performance and delivery of both the DoJ and the Foundation.

2.5 The Executive's outcome-based approach to delivery recognises the importance of arm's-length bodies and departments working collaboratively and together in a joined-up approach to improve overall outcomes and results.

2.6 To that end there is strategic alignment between the aims, objectives and expected outcomes and results of the Foundation and the DoJ.

2.7 The strategic aims of the Foundation are:

- to mark the sacrifices and honour the achievements of the RUC, support the professional development of police officers and innovations in policing. This links to the 2024-2027 PfG prosperity, people, and peace missions, and relates to the following indicators, skills, crime prevalence rates, personal safety, safe towns and city centres and shared community.

The Foundation's Governance Arrangements

3. Organisational Status

3.1 The Foundation is a legal entity, operating at arm's-length from the DoJ. As a legal entity it must comply with all associated legislation.

4. Governance Framework

4.1 The Foundation has an established corporate governance framework which reflects all relevant good practice guidance. The framework includes the governance structures established within the Foundation and the internal control and risk management arrangements in place. This includes its Trustees and committee structure. DoJ should be satisfied with the framework.

4.2 An account of this is included in the Foundation's annual Governance Statement together with the Foundation Board's assessment of its compliance with Corporate governance in central government departments – code of good practice NI (attachment to DAO (DFP) 06/13). Any departure from the Corporate Governance Code must be explained in the Governance Statement.

4.3 The Foundation is required to follow the principles, rules, guidance, and advice in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland *(MPMNI*). A list of other applicable guidance and instructions which the Foundation is required to follow is set out in Annex 6. Good governance should also include positive stakeholder engagement, the building of positive relationships and a listening and learning culture.

5. The Foundation's Board

5.1 The Foundation is led by a Board, comprising of a Chair and five Trustees appointed by the DoJ. One of the Trustees may be nominated by the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and one by the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, subject to the approval of the DoJ. The appointment process for Chair and Trustees complies with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland.

5.2 As public appointees, Trustees are office holders rather than employees and so are not subject to employee terms and conditions. Trustee appraisal arrangements are set out in paras 15.1 and 15.2 and matters for consideration in dealing with any concerns or complaints which might arise in respect of Trustees are provided in Annex 5.

5.3 The Board's operating framework/terms of reference provides further detail on roles and responsibilities and should align closely with this Partnership Agreement.

5.4 The purpose of the Foundation's Board is to provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the organisation, engaging actively to deliver the mandate and associated objectives of the organisation, and to ensure that the policies and priorities set by the Minister of Justice are implemented. It ensures that the organisation has effective and proportionate governance arrangements in place and an internal control framework which allow risks to be effectively identified and

managed. The Board will set the culture and values of the organisation and set the tone for the organisation's engagement with stakeholders and customers.

5.5 The Board is responsible for the management of the organisation and the delivery of agreed plans and outcomes. The Board should also however support the Chair as appropriate in the exercise of their duties.

5.6 Trustees act solely in the interests of the Foundation and must not use the Board as a platform to champion their own interests or pursue personal agendas. They occupy a position of trust, and their standards of action and behaviour must be exemplary and in line with the seven principles of public life (Nolan principles). The Foundation has a Board Code of Conduct and there are mechanisms in place to deal with any Board disputes/conflicts to ensure they do not become wider issues that impact on the effectiveness of the Board. A Board Register of Interests is maintained, kept up to date and is publicly available to help provide transparency and promote public confidence in the Foundation.

5.7 Communication and relationships within the Board are underpinned by a spirit of trust and professional respect. The Board recognises that using consensus to avoid conflict or encouraging members to consistently express similar views or consider only a few alternative views does not encourage constructive debate and does not give rise to an effective Board dynamic.

5.8 It is for the Board to decide what information it needs, and in what format, for its meetings/effective operation. If the Board is not confident that it is being fully informed about the organisation, this will be addressed by the Chair of the Board as the Board cannot be effective with out-of-date or only partial knowledge.

5.9 To fulfil their duties, Trustees are required to undertake an initial induction meeting with the Chair. This will be supported, as required and on a proportionate basis, through regular ongoing discussions, information sharing, and, where appropriate, training and development activities to enable them to perform their role effectively. Review of Trustee skills and development, as part of Board effectiveness, will be supported through proportionate ongoing internal organisational collaboration and engagement.

6. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

6.1 A further important aspect of the Foundation's governance framework is its Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), established in line with the extant *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI)* (attachment to DAO (DoF) 03/18).

6.2 The ARAC's purpose/role is to support the Accounting Officer and Board on governance issues. In line with the handbook, the ARAC focuses on:

- assurance arrangements over governance; financial reporting; annual reports and accounts, including the Governance Statement; and
- ensuring there is an adequate and effective risk management and assurance framework in place.

6.3 The Foundation and the DoJ have agreed arrangements in respect of ARACs which may include:

- attendance by departmental representatives in an observer capacity at the Foundation's ARAC meetings.
- access to the Foundation ARAC papers and minutes.
- any input required from the Foundation's ARAC to the departmental ARAC.

6.4 Full compliance with the *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI)* is an essential requirement. In the event of significant non-compliance with the Handbook's five good practice principles (or other non-compliance), discussion will be required with the DoJ and a full explanation provided in the annual Governance Statement.

7. The Foundation's Chair

7.1 The Chair is responsible for setting the agenda and managing the Board to enable collaborative and robust discussion of issues. The Chair's role is to develop and motivate the Board and ensure effective relationships in order that the Board can work collaboratively to reach a consensus on decisions. To achieve this, he or she should ensure:

- the Board has an appropriate balance of skills appropriate to its business.
- Board members are fully briefed on terms of appointment, duties, rights, and responsibilities.
- Board members receive and maintain appropriate training.
- the Department is advised of the Foundation's needs when board vacancies arise.
- there is a Board Operating Framework in place setting out the roles and responsibilities of the Board in line with relevant guidance; and
- Board members act in line with the seven principles of public life as defined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

7.2 The Chair has a presence in the organisation and cultivates external relationships which provide useful links for the organisation.

7.3 The Chair is designated as the Foundation Accounting Officer by the departmental Accounting Officer (see section 12). As Accounting Officer, they are responsible for safeguarding the public funds in their charge and ensuring they are applied only to the purposes for which they were voted and more generally for efficient and economical administration.

7.4 Further detail on the role and responsibilities of the Chair is as laid out in MPMNI and their Accounting Officer appointment letter.

The Chair's role as Principal Officer for Ombudsman Cases

7.5 The Chair is the Principal Officer for handling cases involving the NI Public Services Ombudsman. He/she shall advise the departmental Accounting Officer of any complaints about the Foundation accepted by the Ombudsman for investigation, and about the proposed response to any subsequent recommendations from the Ombudsman.

Role of the DoJ

8. Partnership Working with the Foundation

8.1 The DoJ and the Foundation are part of a total delivery system, within the same Ministerial portfolio. The partnership between the DoJ and the Foundation is open, honest, constructive, and based on trust. There is mutual understanding of each other's objectives and clear expectations on the terms of engagement.

8.2 In exercising its functions, the Foundation has absolute clarity on how its purpose and objectives align with those of the DoJ. There is also a shared understanding of the risks that may impact on each other, and these are reflected in respective Risk Registers.

8.3 Where appropriate there is a regular exchange of skills and experience between the DoJ and the Foundation and where possible joint programme/project delivery boards/ arrangements. The Foundation may also be involved as a partner in policy/strategy development and provides advice on policy implementation/the impact of policies in practice.

8.4 DoF has established, on behalf of the Assembly, a delegated authority framework which sets out the circumstances where prior DoF approval is required before expenditure can be occurred or commitments entered into. The Accounting Officer of the DoJ has established an internal framework of delegated authority for the DoJ and its ALBs which applies to the Foundation. Periodic updates to this framework will be notified separately. Other specific approval requirements established in respect of the Foundation are as set out at Annex 3.

8.5 Once the Foundation's budget has been approved by the DoJ [and subject to any restrictions imposed by statute] the Foundation shall have authority to incur expenditure approved in the budget without further reference to the DoJ. Inclusion of any planned and approved expenditure in the budget shall not, however, remove the need to seek formal departmental approval where proposed expenditure is outside the delegated limits (as laid out in Annex 3) or is for new schemes not previously agreed. Nor does it negate the need to follow due processes laid out in guidance contained in MPMNI and the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation. A proportionate assessment of restricted and unrestricted donations will be recorded and reported to the DoJ as part of the in-year internal monitoring exercise.

9. Lead Official

9.1 The DoJ has appointed the head of Policing Policy and Strategy Division (PPSD) as lead senior official to manage the relationship with the Foundation and ensure effective partnership working. Engagement between the DoJ and the Foundation will be co-ordinated, collaborative, and consistent. A clear sense of collaboration and partnership will be communicated to staff in both the DoJ and the Foundation to promote mutual understanding and support. The lead senior official is supported by a small sponsor team within PPSD: financial advice and guidance is provided as required by colleagues in Financial Services Division (FSD).

9.2 The lead senior official is the policy lead for the policy area relating to the Foundation's business and has a clear understanding of the Foundation's responsibilities for policy implementation/operational delivery and the relevant audiences/stakeholders involved.

9.3 The lead senior official will ensure that where there are departmental staff changes, time is taken to ensure they have a full understanding of the Foundation's business and challenges.

10. Annual Engagement Plan

10.1 The DoJ and the Foundation will agree an engagement plan before the start of each business year. The Annual Engagement Plan (Annex 2) will set out the timing and nature of engagement between the Foundation and the DoJ. The engagement plan will be specific to the Foundation and should not stray into operational oversight.

10.2 Engagement between the DoJ's lead official/their teams and the Foundation will be centred on partnership working, understanding of shared risks, and working together on business developments that align with policy objectives.

10.3 In line with relevant guidance[1], the Foundation will work in collaboration and partnership with the DoJ to prepare corporate and business plans. There should be good, high-level, strategic alignment between the departmental and Foundation's plans. Once approved, it will be the Board of the Foundation that is responsible for delivery and performance. The DoJ will engage with the Foundation on areas of strategic interest, linking departmental policy and the Foundation delivery of policy intent.

10.4 The Annual Engagement Plan will also reference the agreed management and financial information to be shared over the course of a year. The aim will be to ensure clear understanding of why information is necessary and how it will be used. Where the same, or similar, information is required for internal governance, information requirements will be aligned so that a single report can be used for both purposes. In addition, the engagement plan should consider opportunities for learning and development, growth and actions which could help achieve better outcomes.

11. Departmental Accounting Officer

11.1 The departmental Accounting Officer is accountable to the NI Assembly for the issue of grant-in-aid to the Foundation. He/she has designated the Chair of the Foundation as the Foundation Accounting Officer; the respective responsibilities of the departmental Accounting Officer and the Foundation Accounting Officer are set out in Chapter 3 of *MPMNI* The departmental Accounting Officer may withdraw the Foundation Accounting Officer designation if he/she concludes that the Foundation Accounting Officer is no longer a fit person to carry out the responsibilities of an Accounting Officer or that it is otherwise in the public interest that the designation be withdrawn.

1. Guidance issued by TEO on NICS Work Programme which includes guidance on business planning for an outcomes-based PfG/ODP

11.2 As outlined in section 8, the Foundation Chair is accountable to the Foundation Board for his/her stewardship of the Foundation. This includes advising the Board on matters of financial propriety, regularity, prudent and economical administration, efficiency, and effectiveness. The Foundation Chair is the Accounting Officer and should have an awareness of relevant issues, which should be proportionately communicated through regular collaboration between Trustees.

11.3 The departmental Accounting Officer must be informed if the judgement of the Foundation Accounting Officer (on matters for which they are responsible) is over-ridden by the Foundation Board. The Foundation Accounting Officer must also act if the Foundation Board is contemplating a course that would infringe the requirement for financial propriety, regularity, prudent and economical administration, efficiency, or effectiveness. In all other regards, the departmental Accounting Officer has no day-to-day involvement with the Foundation.

11.4 In line with DoF requirements, the Foundation Accounting Officer provides, as part of stewardship reporting arrangements, a periodic declaration of fitness to function as Accounting Officer to the departmental Accounting Officer.

12. Attendance at Public Accounts Committee

12.1 The Foundation Accounting Officer may be summoned to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the discharge of their responsibilities as Accounting Officer (as laid out in their Accounting Officer appointment letter) on issues arising from the C&AG's studies or reports following the annual audit of accounts.

12.2 The Chair may also, on occasion, be called to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on such relevant issues arising within the C&AG's studies or reports, in relation to the role and actions taken by the Board, where appropriate.

12.3 In addition, the departmental Accounting Officer may be summoned to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the discharge of their responsibilities as departmental Accounting Officer with overarching responsibility for the Foundation. In such circumstances, the departmental accounting Officer may therefore expect to be questioned on their responsibilities to ensure that:

- there is a clear strategic control framework for the Foundation.
- sufficient and appropriate management and financial controls are in place to safeguard public funds.
- the nominated Accounting Officer is fit to discharge his or her responsibilities.
- there are suitable internal audit arrangements.
- accounts are prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and any accounting direction; and
- intervention is made, where necessary, in situations where the Foundation Accounting Officer's advice on transactions in relation to regularity, propriety or value for money is overruled by the Foundation's Board or its Chair.

Assurance Framework

13. Autonomy and Proportionality

13.1 The DoJ will ensure that the Foundation has the autonomy to deliver effectively, recognising its status as a separate legal entity which has its own Board and governance arrangements. Guidance on proportionate autonomy has been considered in determining the extent of engagement and assurance established between the Foundation and the DoJ and is reflected in this agreement.

13.2 A proportionate approach to assurance will be taken based on the Foundation's overall purpose, business and budget and a mutual understanding of risk. The approach will include an agreed process through which the Foundation Accounting Officer provides written assurance to the DoJ that the public funds and organisational assets for which they are personally responsible are safeguarded, have been managed with propriety and regularity, and use of public funds represents value for money.

13.3 Recognising the governance arrangements in place within the organisation, the Foundation Accounting Officer will arrange for their written assurance to be discussed at the Foundation ARAC and presented to the Foundation Board prior to submission to the DoJ where possible.

13.4 The Foundation Chair will provide written confirmation that the formal assurance has been considered by the Board and is reflective of the Foundation's current position.

13.5 In addition to the Foundation Accounting Officer's written assurance, the DoJ will take assurance from the following key aspects of the Foundation's own governance framework:

- annual review of Board Effectiveness.
- completion of Board Appraisals which confirm Board member effectiveness.
- Internal Audit assurance and External Quality Assessment of the Internal Audit function; and
- externally audited Annual Report and Accounts, reviewed/considered by the Foundation ARAC.

14. Board Effectiveness

14.1 The Foundation Chair will ensure that the Foundation Board undertakes an annual review of Board effectiveness[2] which encompasses committees established by the Board.

14.2 The Chair will discuss the outcome of the annual review of Board effectiveness with the lead official to ensure a partnership approach to any improvements identified. This will inform the annual programme of Board training/development and discussions in respect of Board composition and succession.

2. NIAO: *Board Effectiveness: A Good Practice Guide*

14.3 In line with any parameters set out in founding (or other) legislation, the Chair, in conjunction with the DoJ, and Ministers where appropriate, will consider the size and composition of the Foundation Board, proportionate to the size and complexity of the Foundation and keep this under review.

15. Board Appraisals

15.1 The Chair of the Foundation will conduct a proportionate annual appraisal in respect of each Board member which will also inform the annual programme of Board training/ development. The Chair will engage with the lead official as appropriate on improvements identified through the appraisal process and the annual training/ development programme.

15.2 The Chair's proportionate annual appraisal will be completed by the head of PPSD within the DoJ. The appraisal will take account of the Key Characteristics of a good chairperson (particularly for the Chair to have well-developed interpersonal skills) set out in Board Effectiveness: A Good Practice Guide, available on the NIAO website. There will be close engagement between the Chair and the lead official on improvements identified through the appraisal process.

16. Internal Audit Assurance

16.1 The Foundation is required to establish and maintain arrangements for an internal audit function that operates in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) (attachment to DAO (DoF) 02/17). The DoJ must be satisfied with the competence and qualifications of the Head of Internal Audit and that the requirements for approving appointments are in accordance with *PSIAS*. [In practice, the Foundation's internal audit function is provided by the Government Internal Audit Service (GIAS).]

16.2 The Foundation will provide its internal audit strategy, periodic audit plans, and annual audit report, including the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on risk management, control, and governance to the DoJ. The Foundation will ensure the DoJ's internal audit team have complete right of access to all relevant records. This applies whether the internal audit function is provided in-house or is contracted out.

16.3 The Foundation will ensure regular, periodic self-assessments of the internal audit function in line with PSIAS and will share these with the DoJ. The Foundation will also liaise with the DoJ on the External Quality Assessment (EQA) of the internal audit function as appropriate.

16.4 The Foundation will alert the DoJ to any less than satisfactory audit reports at the earliest opportunity on an ongoing basis. The Foundation will also alert the DoJ to a less than satisfactory annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit at the earliest opportunity. The Foundation and the DoJ will then engage closely on actions required to address the less than satisfactory opinion to move the Foundation to a satisfactory position as soon as possible.

16.5 The DoJ will take assurance from the fact that the Foundation has met the requirements of *PSIAS* and has a satisfactory annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit as part of its overall assurance assessment.

17. Externally Audited Annual Report and Accounts

17.1 The Foundation is required to prepare an Annual Report and Accounts in line with the *Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM)* issued by DoF and the specific Accounts Direction issued by the DoJ, and in accordance with the deadlines specified.

17.2 The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) will arrange to audit the Foundation's annual accounts and will issue an independent opinion on the accounts. The Foundation is responsible for laying its annual report and accounts before the Assembly.

17.3 The C&AG will also provide a Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) to the Foundation which will be shared with the DoJ.

17.4 The Foundation will alert the DoJ to any qualification of the accounts at the earliest opportunity. In the event of a qualified audit opinion or significant issues reported in the RTTCWG, the DoJ will engage with the Foundation on actions required to address the qualification/significant issues.

17.5 The DoJ will take assurance from the external audit process and an unqualified position as part of its overall assurance assessment.

17.6 The C&AG may conduct examinations into the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the Foundation has used its resources in discharging its functions. The C&AG may also conduct thematic examinations that encompass the functions of the Foundation.

17.7 For audit and any other examinations, the C&AG has statutory access to documents as provided for under Articles 3 and 4 of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

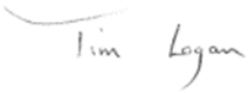
17.8 Where making payment of a grant, or drawing up a contract, the Foundation should ensure that it includes a clause which makes the grant or contract conditional upon the recipient or contractor providing access to the C&AG in relation to documents relevant to the transaction. Where subcontractors are likely to be involved, it should also be made clear that the requirements extend to them.

Signatories

The Foundation and the DoJ agree to work in partnership with each other in line with Partnerships between Departments and Arm's-Length Bodies: NI Code of Good Practice and the arrangements set out in this Agreement.

Signed (Foundation Chair)

Date 22.10.26



Signed (DoJ – Head of PPSD)

Date 23.10.26

Annex 1 – Applicable Legislation

List the founding legislation and other key statutes which provide the Foundation with its statutory functions, duties, and powers.

- Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (c. 32), section 70
- The Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Foundation Regulations 2002 (S.R. 2002 No. 260)

Annex 2 – Illustrative Annual Engagement Plan. Good engagement is one of the key principles in the Partnership Code, underpinning the other principles of: Leadership; Purpose; Assurance; and Value.

As laid out in the Code, partnerships work well when relationships between departments and ALBs are open, transparent, honest, constructive, and based on trust and when there is mutual understanding of each other's objectives and clear expectations about the terms of engagement.

The template provided outlines the key areas of engagement between departments and ALBs. The template is not intended to be prescriptive and should be completed collaboratively and agreed between the Department and the ALB.

Engagement Plan 2026/27		
Policy Development and Delivery *Add details of the planned engagement between the Foundation and the Department in relation to development and monitoring of existing and new areas of policy.*		
Policy Area	**Frequency/Timing**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Officials**
Relevant updated DoJ/DoF policies and guidance not publicly available (e.g. DoJ policy on gifts and hospitality) will be shared with the Foundation as and when available.	Ad hoc	Sponsor team and Chair of the Board (Chair)

Strategic Planning		
Activity	**Date**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Officials**
Foundation Strategic Planning Workshops – encompassing strategic planning and risk identification. Informed by input on departmental priorities/plans and risk areas	Sufficiently well in advance of the Business Year to inform development of the Business Plan for the year ahead	Sponsor team & Chair
Engagement on the draft Business Plan and identification of areas of strategic interest to the Department to inform further scheduled engagement during the year	Last quarter (in advance)	Sponsor team & Chair
Submission/presentation of the Foundation Business Plan	Last quarter (in advance)	SLO & Chair
Approval of the Foundation Business Plan	Last quarter (in advance)	SLO & Chair
Engagement on areas of strategic interest iro the Foundation Business Plan during the year	Ad hoc	SLO & Chair
Engagement on the draft Corporate Plan and identification of areas of strategic interest to the DoJ to inform further scheduled engagement during the year.	Sufficiently in advance of the upcoming period covered by the Corporate Plan.	Sponsor Team & Chair
Submission/presentation of the Foundation Corporate Plan	As soon as possible	SLO & Chair
Approval of the Foundation Corporate Plan	As soon as possible	SLO & Chair

Joint Working *Add details of any interchange opportunities, and/or joint programme/project delivery boards*		
Activity	**Frequency/Timing**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Officials**
To be updated by the Foundation & Sponsor Team as appropriate.	Keep under review.	Sponsor team & Chair

Board Appointments *Add details of any engagement related to Public Appointment exercises*		
Activity	**Date**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Officials**
Appointment. As appropriate, seek Foundation input, to support development of candidate skillsets for the role of Chair/ Trustee.	Ad Hoc Seek timely input in line with recruitment timelines as need identified.	Sponsor Team & Chair

Assurances *Add details of the timetable for submission of key assurance sources and any other assurance related activity*		
Action	**Date**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Official**
Outcome of the Review of Board Effectiveness?	Annual review with an externally facilitated review at least once every three years	SLO & Chair
Planning for the externally facilitated review of Board Effectiveness?	Externally facilitated review at least once every three years	Sponsor team & Chair
Board Appraisals – To note these will be supported through regular, collaborative proportionate engagement/discussions between Chair and Trustee colleagues.	Ad hoc Supported through regular engagement & collaboration	Chair
Chair Appraisal	Following the end of the Business year.	Chair & SLO
Departmental Attendance at ARAC	Attendance as observer 1 per annum	Sponsor team

Annual Accountability Review by the Perm Sec/Minister	Annually – Perm Sec / Minister meets the Chair formally each year	Chair & SLO
Governance Meetings	Bi-annual frequency. A desktop review q1/q2 circa Nov./Dec. with in-person q3/q4 circa May/June. Additional meetings will be scheduled if need is identified. The (ALB) will seek to ensure that agenda papers, reports and other relevant documentation are circulated to DoJ officials two weeks in advance of governance meetings and other formal engagements, to support for review and consideration of.	Chair and Sponsor Team
Stewardship Statement	Bi-annual.	Chair and SLO
Draft Governance Statement	Late first/early second quarter	Sponsor team & Chair
Annual Report and Accounts including provision of relevant financial accounts information for DoJ Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts under the Review of Financial Process	End April/week 1 in May. Financial information at September, December, and March	Sponsor team & Chair
Report to those Charged with Governance	Late second quarter	Sponsor team & Chair, escalated as appropriate
Engagement on other planned NIAO reports	At planning and report stages	Sponsor team
Head of Internal Audit Annual report/Opinion	First quarter	Sponsor team & Chair
Internal Audit Strategy and Plans	Fourth quarter	Sponsor team & Chair
Internal Audit External Quality Assessment	Keep under review	Sponsor team & Chair, escalated as appropriate

Budget Management *Add details of the information and returns to be provided.*		
Item and Purpose	**Date**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Official**
Engagement on budget requirements and Forecast Expenditure for the Financial Year	Summer of preceding financial year	FSD and Sponsor Branch/Chair supported by the Foundation Administration Team
Departmental approval of the annual budget	Last quarter of preceding financial year	Approved by Minister and DoJ Senior Management team. FSD lead with DoJ Sponsor Branch copied in
Monthly Financial Management Returns, including year-to-date expenditure and annual forecast	Monthly	FSD & Foundation Administration Team with DoJ Sponsor Branch to review
Monthly Cash Forecast	Monthly	FSD & Foundation Administration Team with Sponsor Branch copied in
Monitoring Round Returns Returns will support proportionate reporting of restricted and non-restricted donations.	June, October & January	FSD and Sponsor Branch/Chair supported by Foundation Administration Team
Provisional Outturn	March	FSD and Sponsor Branch/Chair supported by Foundation Administration Team
Final Outturn	July	FSD and Sponsor Branch/Chair supported by Foundation Administration Team
Ad hoc financial exercises	Ad hoc	FSD and Sponsor Branch/Chair supported by Foundation Administration Team

Other *Tailor as required to reflect the specific requirements*		
Item and Purpose	**Submission Date**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Official**
Accounting Officer – Fitness to Act as Accounting Officer	Incorporated in bi-annual Stewardship Statement	Chair and SLO
Fraud Reporting	Immediate reporting of all frauds (proven or suspected including attempted fraud	DoJ will report frauds immediately to DoF and C&AG.
Fraud Reporting	Annual fraud return commissioned by DoF on fraud and theft suffered by the Foundation.	FSD/Chair supported by the Foundation Administration Team with Sponsor Branch copied in
Preparation of business cases – departments and ALBs to consider working together to share expertise where appropriate.	Ad hoc	Sponsor team and Foundation staff
Whistleblowing cases/ Speaking Up/Raising Concerns.	Ad hoc	Chair & SLO
Actual or suspected data security incidents to be reported to Justice Sponsorship Branch asap. To note, in line with good practise, ALBs should keep the I Information Security team (dojincidentreporting@justice-ni.gov.uk) informed of any serious incidents arising.	Email and telephone call within 24-48 hours of incident being known.	Head of Sponsor Team and Chair

Review of the Partnership Arrangement *Tailor as required to reflect the specific requirements*		
Item and Purpose	**Date**	**Lead Departmental/ Foundation Official**
Light touch review of the Partnership Agreement	Schedule following the end of the Business Year	Chair & SLO
Formal review of the Partnership Agreement	To be conducted once every three years	Chair & SLO

Annex 3 – Delegations

Delegated authorities

The Foundation shall obtain the DoJ's prior written approval before:

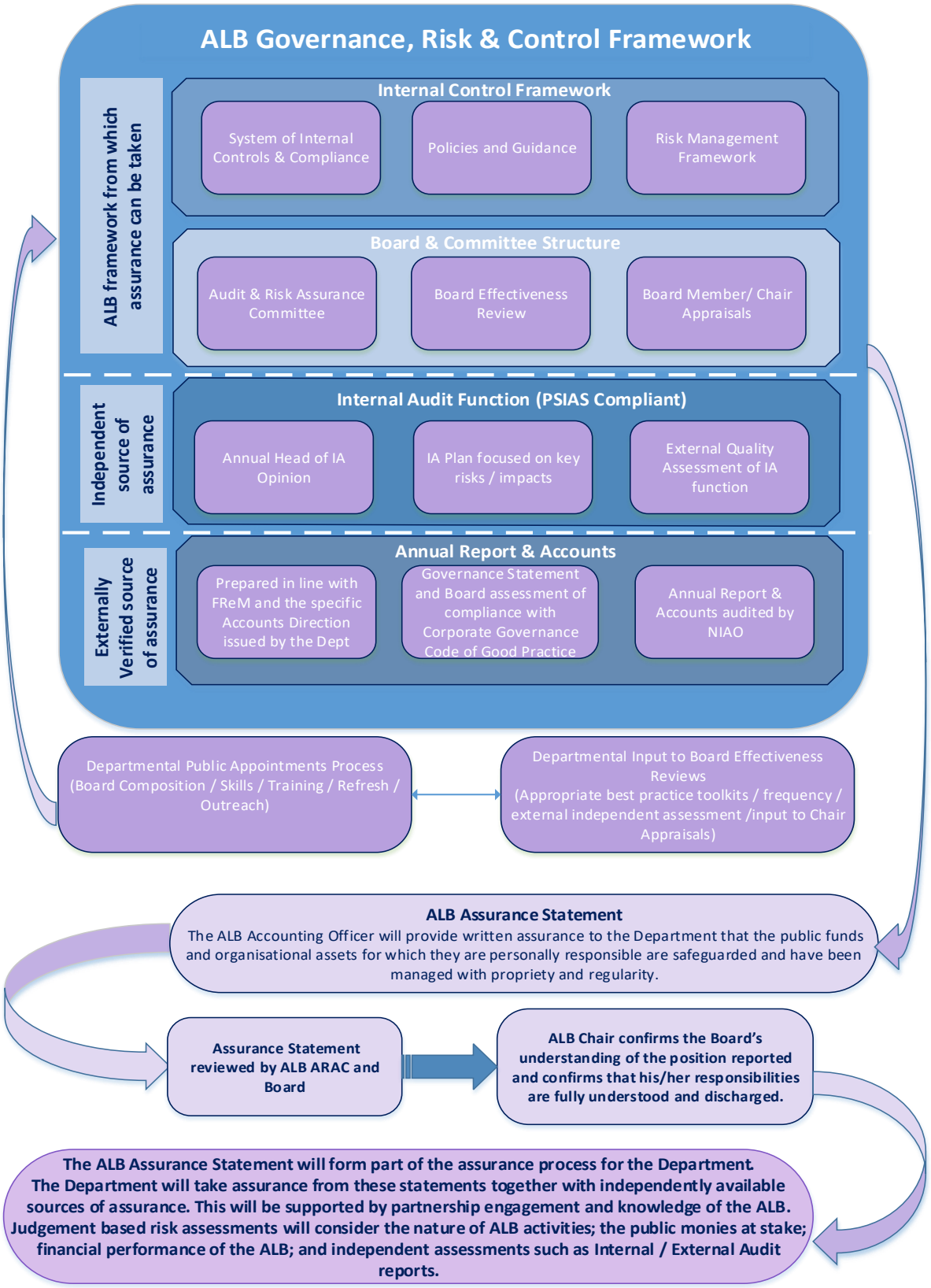
- entering into any undertaking to incur any expenditure that falls outside the delegations, or which is not provided for in the Foundation's annual budget as approved by the DoJ.
- incurring expenditure for any purpose that is or might be considered novel or contentious, or which has or could have significant future cost implications.
- making any significant change in the scale of operation or funding of any initiative or particular scheme previously approved by the DoJ.
- making any change of policy or practice which has wider financial implications that might prove repercussive or which might significantly affect the future level of resources required.
- conducting policies that go against the principles, rules, guidance, and advice in MPMNI and
- commencing a new service in advance of specific legislation, where specific legislation is a requirement.

The Foundation's Specific Delegated Authorities

[Foundation/DoJ to discuss and insert]

These delegations shall not be altered without the prior agreement of the DoJ and, where applicable, DoF.

Annex 4 – Illustrative System of Assurance



Annex 5 – Concerns/Complaints in respect of Board members

In line with the NI Code of Good Practice and the arrangements in this Partnership Agreement, the approach to concerns/complaints raised in respect of the Foundation Board members should be transparent and collaborative. The principle of early and open engagement is important, with the DoJ made aware of any concerns/complaints as soon as practicable.

While Board Members are Public Appointees/office holders rather than the Foundation employees, a Foundation employee may use the Foundation's grievance procedure/ other HR procedure to raise a complaint against a Board member. The Foundation employee raising the grievance should expect this to be managed in line with the Foundation's HR procedures.

Concerns/complaints might also be raised through:

- Raising Concerns/Whistleblowing arrangements.
- Complaints processes.
- Directly with the Foundation or the DoJ.

Where a concern/complaint is received within the Foundation in respect of an individual Board Member, this should be provided to the Foundation Chair who should notify the DoJ at the outset in order that the lead responsibility for handling the complaint/concern is clear in advance.

Where a concern/complaint relates to the Foundation Chair, the Foundation should notify the DoJ at the outset for the DoJ to determine the approach to handling the complaint/ concern.

Differences of view in relation to matters which fall within the Board's responsibilities are a matter for the Board to resolve through consensus-based decision making in the best interests of the Foundation.

Exceptionally a concern/complaint may be raised by a Board Member about a fellow Board Member or a senior member of the Foundation staff. The Foundation Chair should notify the DoJ at the outset to ensure that arrangements for handling the concern/complaint are clear. The DoJ may determine that it should make arrangements to deal with the concern/ complaint. This will be agreed at the outset.

Arrangements for concerns/complaints in respect of Board members should be reflected in all relevant procedures, including Standing Orders and Board Operating Frameworks.

Annex 6 – Applicable Guidance

The following guidance is applicable to the Foundation.

Guidance issued by DoF

- Managing Public Money NI
- Consolidated Budgeting Guidance
- Public Bodies: A Guide for NI Departments
- Corporate governance in central government departments – code of good practice NI
- DoF Risk Management Framework
- The Orange Book: Management of Risk: Principles and Concepts
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI)
- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money – HMT Accounting Officer Handbook
- The Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation
- Dear Accounting Officer Letters
- Dear Finance Director Letters
- Dear Consolidation Officer and Dear Consolidation Manager Letters
- The Consolidation Officer Letter of Appointment
- Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM)
- Guidance for preparation and publication of annual report and accounts
- Procurement Guidance

Other Guidance and Best Practice

- Specific guidance issued by the DoJ
- EU Delegations
- Recommendations made by the NI Audit Office/NI Assembly Public Accounts Committee
- NIAO Good Practice Guides
- Guidance issued by the Executive's Asset Management Unit
- NI Public Services Ombudsman guidance

Annex 7 – Role of the Minister

Role of the Minister of Justice

The Chair of the Foundation is responsible to the Minister. Communication between the Board and the Minister should normally be through the Chair.

The departmental Accounting Officer is responsible for advising the Minister on a number of issues including the Foundation's objectives and targets, budgets, and performance.

In addition to being answerable to the Assembly as laid out in paragraph 2.4, the Minister is also responsible for:

- setting the strategic direction and overall policies and priorities for the Foundation as reflected in the PfG.
- setting the Foundation's budget; and
- appointment of non-executive Board members. The Minister may also be involved in considering the size and composition of the Foundation Board – see para 14.3.