

# Media Release

## Landscape Review of the Education Authority – progress report on implementation of recommendations



The lack of progress in addressing issues previously identified in a major review of Northern Ireland's Education Authority (EA) represents a missed opportunity for improving both outcomes for pupils and value for money for taxpayers. That is the conclusion of a report published today (Wednesday 08 July 2026) by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Dorinnia Carville's report focusses on the 2022 Landscape Review of the EA, commissioned by the Department of Education. That review identified significant weaknesses in the structure, funding and function of the EA, and in governance and accountability across both the EA and the Department.

Today's report considers progress made to date and finds that the pace of implementation has been extremely slow. After four years, only three of the Review's 13 recommendations have been fully achieved, with a further six partially achieved and the remaining four not achieved. Delivery of some associated key actions has yet to begin.

The report identifies a range of factors which have contributed to this lack of progress. It notes the absence of key aspects of project management, such as defined budgets and timelines, as well as a lack of clear governance and accountability arrangements, which has reduced oversight and transparency. The report also observes that the approach taken by the Department and EA to implementing recommendations has more recently become 'business-as-usual', rather being treated as a priority programme.

Furthermore, the impact of action that has been taken remains unclear. The report highlights the Department and EA's focus has been on activities and outputs, rather than on demonstrating impact or expected benefits. As a result, the report is unable to conclude whether delivery to date has been effective in fully addressing the key themes contained in the 2022 Landscape Review.

Commenting on the findings, Dorinnia Carville said:

*"The 2022 Landscape Review represented a significant independent assessment, commissioned at public expense, to address longstanding concerns about the Education Authority. Its findings and*

*recommendations provided a positive foundation for improvement and were accepted in principle by the Department. It is disappointing, therefore, to find that, four years later, progress has been limited. While advancements have been made in some areas, many fundamental and crucial issues remain unaddressed, particularly in relation to the EA's funding and workforce planning, as well as governance and accountability within both the Department and the EA."*

*"This report's findings come as the education system faces ongoing fiscal pressures and challenges from the changing educational needs of pupils. In this context, clear and demonstrable improvement is needed if the EA is to ensure both better outcomes for children and young people, and greater value for money in its use of public funds."*

*"The Department intends to take forward a new Review of the EA in 2027, in line with best practice. Ahead of that, it is vital that both bodies learn and share lessons, and that my recommendations are addressed fully and at pace to ensure robust planning, effective oversight and reporting, and a clear focus on delivering measurable change."*

ENDS

### **Notes for Editors**

1. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (the Audit Office). She and the NIAO are totally independent of Government. The C&AG certifies the accounts of Government Departments and a range of other public sector bodies. She has statutory authority to report to the Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and public bodies use their resources. Her reports are published as Assembly papers.
2. The report is available on the Audit Office website at [www.niauditoffice.gov.uk](http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk). The report is embargoed until 00.01 hrs on Wednesday 08 July 2026.
3. In 2021, the Department of Education commissioned its first review of the Education Authority (EA) since it was established in 2015 to replace the former Education and Library Boards. Reviews of this nature are a key tool to ensure arm's length bodies (ALBs) operate effectively, efficiently and deliver value for money for the taxpayer.
4. The Independent Review, conducted by Baker Tilly Mooney Moore, was published on 22 June 2022 as the 'Landscape Review of the Education Authority'. Its scope considered the effectiveness and governance of the EA, and the extent to which it is effectively able to deliver against stated NI Executive and departmental priorities.