



Northern Ireland Audit Office

# ***MEDIA RELEASE***

## **Board Effectiveness - A Good Practice Guide**

Mr Kieran Donnelly, the Comptroller and Auditor General, will today publish a good practice guide for public sector bodies on board effectiveness. This is the sixth in a series of good practice guides to be written and published by the Northern Ireland Audit Office<sup>1</sup>. In producing this latest publication Mr Donnelly consulted widely with many interested stakeholders.

The importance of effective boards in the current climate of change is critical. They are a key component to the successful operation of an organisation through support and scrutiny of senior managers. The guide is a quick and easy way to access clear and concise advice to maximise the effectiveness of a board.

Effective boards are:

- Proactive;
- A driving force in achieving delivery against an organisation's mission, vision, values and objectives by embedding corporate values and behaviours and by creating the right culture;
- Alert to risk and changes in the organisation's operating environment; and
- Firmly focussed on strategic issues.

To maximise effectiveness, the guide recognises that a board should:

- Be strategic in its approach;
- Invest in training and development of board members;
- Promote openness, transparency, trust and respect;
- Maintain robust procedures to support its operation; and
- Perform and act on regular board evaluations.

There are currently over 1,000 non-executive board positions within the Northern Ireland public sector. There are many individuals who aspire to become board members. This guide should be a valuable tool for potential and existing board members, as well as departmental staff administering public appointments, senior civil servants, chief executives and ministers. The guide is targeted to Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), however, many of the points and practices outlined are equally valid for government departments, health trusts and other governing bodies such as colleges and school governors.

The guide is being launched today when Mr Donnelly speaks at the CIPFA Annual Governance and Leadership Conference and will also be available to access on NIAO's website.

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

### 1. NIAO Good Practice Guides

- Managing Fraud Risk in a Changing Environment
- Conflicts of Interest: A Good Practice Guide
- Whistleblowing in the Public Sector: A Good Practice Guide
- Value for Money Standards
- Good Practice in Risk Management

### 2. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). He and the NIAO are totally independent of Government. He certifies the accounts of Government Departments and a range of other public sector bodies. He has statutory authority to report to the Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and public bodies use their resources.

### 3. This report is available on the Northern Ireland Audit Office website at [www.niauditoffice.gov.uk](http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk). The report is embargoed until 00.01 hrs on Thursday 24 November 2016.

### 4. Background briefing can be obtained from the Northern Ireland Audit Office by contacting Rodney Allen (9025 1122) or Christine Burns (9025 1083).