27 March 2013

Dear Accounting Officer

NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE FACT SHEET ON THE COMPLETION OF GOVERNANCE STATEMENTS

Purpose

1. To highlight a Fact Sheet issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the completion of governance statements.

Background

2. Whilst Northern Ireland departments, agencies and arm’s length bodies will be completing a governance statement for the first time this year (DAO (DFP) 10/12), Whitehall departments were required to produce a governance statement last year and these statements have been subject to audit by the National Audit Office (NAO).

3. On the back of this exercise NAO produced a “Fact Sheet: Governance Statement: good practice observations from our audits document” highlighting the key messages and good practice they identified during their audit work.
4. The Fact Sheet provides an insight and commentary on the first year of Whitehall departments’ governance statement reporting; observations on good practice; and “challenge questions” for those whose role it is to oversee and scrutinise the organisation’s governance statement. This Fact Sheet is attached for your information, as is a recent presentation given by the National Audit Office on the same subject.

5. It is considered that there is much useful information contained within these documents which will be of assistance to Accounting Officers, Boards and Audit Committees as they work towards developing the 2012/13 governance statement in line with DAO (DFP) 10/12 requirements.

**Action**

6. Given the requirement to produce a governance statement you may wish to draw this letter and its associated documents to the attention of relevant staff in your department, agencies and arm’s length bodies, including Audit Committee Chairs of such organisations.

**Queries**

7. Any queries regarding this letter or report should be addressed to Alison Caldwell (alison.caldwell@dfpni.gov.uk), telephone 028 9185 8249, ext 68249.

Yours sincerely

[Signed]

FIONA HAMILL
Treasury Officer of Accounts

cc: Alison Caldwell
Cris Farmer
Paddy Hoey
John McGinnity