



NI Input to the UK Open Government Action Plan DFP/NI OGN Collaborative Workshop 19th November 2015

Present: *Colm Burns, Jonathan Bell, David McBurney, Ruairi MacDonald, Brian Cleland, Clare McMillan, Paul Gribben, Eoin McFadden, Gordon Browne, John Bradley, Suzanne McLaughlin*

Apologies: *Yvonne Cooke, David Bingham, Trevor Steenson, Tracey Power, Andrea Thornbury, Rose Long, Wendy Osborne, Eleanor Brown*

Facilitator: *Gavin Quinn*

Background

Northern Ireland Open Government Network (NIOGN) has been in dialogue with the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) regarding the development of NI commitments for the 3rd UK Open Government National Action Plan. NIOGN representatives pointed out the positive rapport that had been developed with government and stated that they looked forward to building strong and ambitious commitments.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together public sector and civic society representatives to help inform the development of Northern Ireland commitments for inclusion to the third UK National Action Plan.

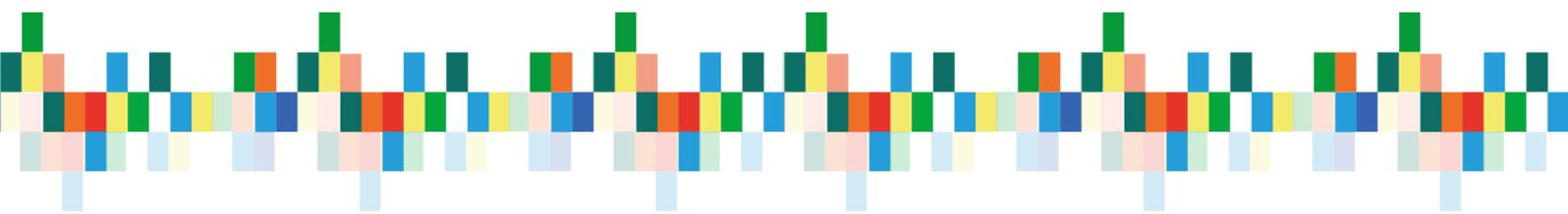
Workshop Overview

NIOGN reps outlined the process undertaken by civic society to develop the commitments, which included a crowd sourcing exercise on the NIOGN Forum. DFP officials provided a composite document of suggested commitments from civic society and other public sector reps. This composite document provided the basis for discussion.

Following initial introductions, scene setting and an ice breaker, it was agreed that there is some inherent tension between identifying what is 'right' or important in the context of democratic enhancement and what is politically realistic and the workshop was framed around the categorisation of commitments under the following headings: agreed, not yet agreed and requiring amendment. Each theme was briefly introduced by an NIOGN representative and each of the commitments were discussed in turn.

There was a reasonable level of agreement around the commitments proposed. However,

- *Some commitments were removed on the basis that they were beyond the remit of the Executive Departments.*
- *Some commitments required further input from other public sector business areas*
- *Some commitments required further testing by civic society*





It was felt that it is reasonable to include commitments around what government is already doing. For example, a commitment to deliver and build upon the excellent work that has been undertaken around the open data strategy.

Next Steps

DFP officials will refine and develop the composite document according to workshop feedback. The document will be circulated amongst those who attended for further refinement. DFP will also contact other public sector bodies to assist with the re-wording and editing of commitments. A 'Task & Finish' group will meet to finalise workshop outputs.

The revised process for developing the National Action Plan, as issued by the Cabinet Office, was also discussed. While the new timeline gives the impression that time is not of the essence (commitment drafting until the end of February with sign off in March), it was pointed out that the process of gaining sign off in NI would need to commence immediately. NIOGN is in the process of meeting with all political parties; a meeting with the DFP Ministerial Special Advisor has been requested and both the OFM DFM and Finance and Personnel Committees have been contacted. NIOGN is also contacting local government to discuss the Action Plan and agree commitments that affect them.