



about performance and financial management. Action has already been taken to address many of these areas but there is still room for improvement. The proper and effective operation of quangos is all the more important because of the continued absence of a tier of regional Government in Northern Ireland. When agreed new local political institutions are established it will of course be a matter for them as to what structures and procedures they consider appropriate for such bodies.

I am aware that concerns have been expressed by local representatives and others about operational issues and about appointments. These concerns tend to focus on the overall number of quangos, the scope of improvements in their efficiency and financial management and whether their functions are necessary, or could be performed differently; but there are also concerns about the procedures by which members are appointed to quango boards - part of a set of issues in the public appointments field which is the subject of a review now underway within Government in Northern Ireland.

The review is examining a number of aspects of current and future public appointments arrangements, including ways of achieving the widest possible political representation on public bodies, means of attracting applications from under-represented groups (such as community-based applicants, younger people and women), and methods to give the public adequate and appropriate information about public appointments. Respondents to the Consultation Paper on Quangos may wish to address these issues when giving their views on public appointments.

The Government has placed emphasis on the need to modernise and improve the way in which services are delivered to the public and the need to live within the public expenditure limits which have been set. Quangos form a very substantial