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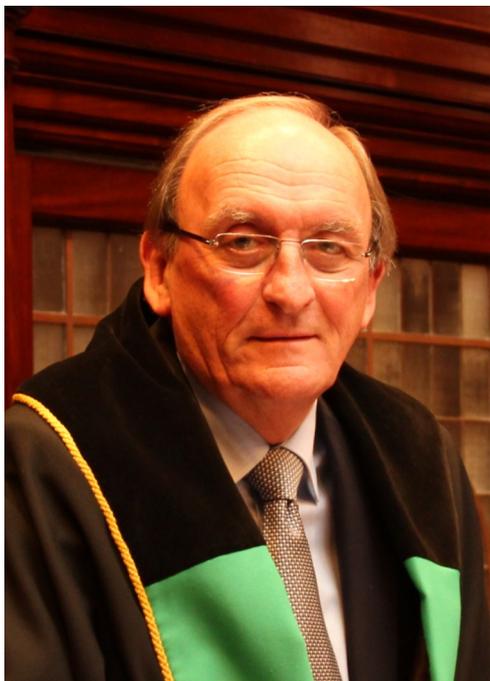
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INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMEN OF BOTH HOUSES



We are pleased to present the eighth Annual Report of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

As well as providing details of parliamentary activity throughout 2011 and early 2012, it also accounts for the public money spent in running the Houses of the Oireachtas last year. As you will see, our focus has been on how to build engagement between the public and the parliamentary process. In essence, the greater the level of public involvement with parliament, the greater the parliament. So, the Commission's support for the creation of a multiple of ways by which the public can access and feel part of their parliament is one of the most meaningful acts it can undertake.

For instance, last year saw a number of Dáil reforms, including extended sittings times and Friday sittings for members to introduce their own legislation. Reforms also included a new appeal mechanism for Parliamentary Questions and a new system for the topical issues debates. The topical issues debates have also proven popular with Deputies as they can now raise current issues with Ministers early in the Dáil sitting day allowing members play a more active and immediate role in parliament.



In November, the Commission established a sub-Committee to oversee the preparation of a detailed cost-effective Parliamentary Channel Development Plan. This coincided with the launch, by the Commission and UPC, of a pilot transmission of Oireachtas proceedings on a dedicated parliamentary transmission called "Oireachtas TV" on UPC channel 801.

Also in the past year the Parliament has developed innovative ways of engaging with the public and providing opportunities to strengthen dialogue between the Parliament and the public.

In the Seanad, in July 2011, Senators passed a motion allowing people in public and civil life to address sittings of Seanad Éireann. Under the new arrangements, people have been invited to make an address to the chamber and have had, and will continue to have, an opportunity to exchange ideas and views with Senators.

In addition, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee was launched in October 2011 to provide for direct engagement and consultation between members of the public and the 24th Seanad.

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMEN OF BOTH HOUSES

Furthermore, the Joint Committee on Investigations, Oversight and Petitions has proposed that its name be changed to the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions with a remit to cover engagement with the Ombudsman, a public petitions process and the oversight of Public Service Delivery and provide a meaningful opportunity for citizens to engage with the democratic process on matters of concern to them. The Committee will provide a strong petitions system and public service oversight with the emphasis on outcomes that are responsive to the needs of citizens.

It is our intention to continue to make Leinster House more accessible to members of the public, particularly on non-sitting days, and also to improve the flow of information on the workings of parliament.

Finally, we would like to thank our Commission colleagues for their hard work and commitment during 2011 and to express our deep appreciation to the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service for their hard work and dedication during the year.



Séan Barrett, T.D.,
Ceann Comhairle,
Chairperson.



Senator Paddy Burke,
Cathaoirleach,
Deputy Chairperson.

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.
June 2012.

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION (“the Commission”)

The Commission is the governing board which oversees the provision of services to the Houses and their members by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (i.e. the parliamentary administration) in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009. It is comprised of 11 members and is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. First established in 2004, it is a statutory corporate body and is independent in the performance of its functions. It is accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions and has responsibility for ensuring value for money. The Commission has no role in relation to parliamentary business or procedure.

The 2003 Act provided the inaugural Commission with its funding for the period 2004 to 2006 as well as providing for the establishment of the Commission. Since then, the Commission has overseen the smooth running of services to both Houses and has introduced a number of significant improvements in the services provided to members and to the wider public. Amending legislation was enacted in 2006 and 2009, the primary purpose of which was to make funding available for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas and the parliamentary administration for the

following three-year periods. The requirement to provide by statute for a new Commission budget every three years is useful not just in facilitating financial planning but in also affording an opportunity to assess the adequacy of the legislation thereby allowing it to be updated as required. Technical amendments were also made to the primary 2003 Act in the follow-up amending legislation.

Commission members serve in a corporate capacity and do not represent their parties, or groups, or their own interests, at this forum. The Commission operates on the general principle that it seeks to support Parliament and all members equally in carrying out their role as elected representatives. Commission members do however carry out a valuable role in communicating information about Commission activity and decisions through the parliamentary party mechanism.

See page 9 for further details on the functions of the Commission under the Commission Acts.

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS SERVICE (“the Service”)

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (formerly called the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas¹) is the public service body which provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. The Service is headed by the Secretary General and Clerk of the Dáil. The functions of the Service are to provide advice and support services to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees, and to members of the

Houses. The Service is staffed by approximately 378 civil servants of the State (currently 367 full-time equivalents in place) and 53 State industrial staff who are employed by the Commission. There are also approximately 381 (full-time equivalents) political staff working in either Leinster House or in members’ constituency offices who are employed directly by the members or the party for whom they work and who are paid by the Commission.

¹ The 2009 Act provided for the renaming of the “Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas” as the “Houses of the Oireachtas Service” (“the Service”).

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

The Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service is the Chief Executive of the Commission and Clerk of Dáil Éireann. He has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies (in the same way as the Secretary

General of a Government Department vis-à-vis the Minister of that Department). He is a member of the Commission, while also being accountable to it and subject to its direction. He is also the Accounting Officer in respect of Commission expenditure.

THE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ("the MAC")

The Secretary General is assisted by the Service's Management Advisory Committee (MAC), which includes the four most senior managers in the Service. The top level management structure is an apex of two Assistant Secretaries reporting to the Secretary General as agreed by the Commission in 2006.

The MAC decides on issues of strategic, operational and financial importance which may then be referred on to the Commission for decision as appropriate. Its agenda is driven to a large extent by the policies adopted by the Commission, as well as by the strategies and programmes as set out in the Strategic and Corporate Business Plans of the Service. MAC members and other senior managers of the Service also attend Commission meetings as required.

The MAC comprises the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary Corporate and Members' Services

Division, the Assistant Secretary Parliamentary Services Division, the Clerk of the Seanad, and the chairs of the three MAC sub-committees.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the MAC, an external "non executive" member (a former secretary general of a government department) was appointed by the Secretary General to the Committee in October 2010.

See page 67, for further details on the activities of the MAC during 2011.

See Appendices 2 and 3, pages 76 and 77, for the new Houses of the Oireachtas Service Organisation Chart and the revised composition of the MAC since June 2011.

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (back row from left): Frank Feighan, T.D.; Catherine Byrne, T.D.; Senator Tom Sheahan; Dan Neville, T.D.; Senator Marc MacSharry; Senator John Whelan; John Browne, T.D.; Jack Wall, T.D.; (front row from left): Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General and Clerk of the Dáil; Seán Barrett, T.D., Ceann Comhairle [Chairperson]; Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach, Seanad Éireann [Deputy Chairperson].



Members of the Management Advisory Committee: Eddie Sullivan, External Member; Conan McKenna, Assistant Secretary, Corporate & Members' Services Division; Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General and Clerk of the Dáil [Chair]; Deirdre Lane, Clerk of the Seanad; Peter Finnegan, Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services Division.

ROLE OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION

The role of the Commission under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009 is “to provide for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas, to act as governing body of the Service, to consider and determine policy in relation to the Service, and to oversee the implementation of that policy by the Secretary General”. The Commission came into existence on 1 January, 2004 and is comprised of 11 members as follows:

- ◆ the Chairman of Dáil Éireann (*ex-officio* member) (*Chairperson of the Commission*)
- ◆ the Chairman of Seanad Éireann (*ex-officio* member) (*Deputy Chairperson*)
- ◆ the Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (*ex-officio* member)
- ◆ a member of one of the Houses of the Oireachtas appointed by the Minister for Finance [the “representative of the Minister for Finance”]
- ◆ 4 ordinary members appointed by Dáil Éireann
- ◆ 3 ordinary members appointed by Seanad Éireann.

The Commission operates on the general principle that it seeks to support the Houses and all members equally in carrying out their role as elected representatives. The Commission has no role in relation to parliamentary business or procedure. Members of the Commission (excluding *ex-officio* members) qualify for an annual allowance.

The Commission provides services to the 226 members of both Houses of the Oireachtas and the staff in their employment. It also provides services for Departmental officials, party staff and advisors, media and service personnel for whom Leinster House is a place of work. The Service consists of 378 civil servants of the State (at present just over 367 in post due to the Government moratorium on the filling of vacancies), whose terms and conditions of employment are set down in the general civil service statutory code, in the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959, and in the Commission legislation. Finally, there are over 75,000 visitors to Leinster House each year in recent years, all of whom use the services provided under the remit of the Commission.

In addition to its general role, the legislation sets out certain specific functions of the Commission as follows:

- ◆ Overseeing on-going expenditure,
- ◆ Paying salaries and expenses of members, and their staff, and the Service (the total number on the payroll is almost 1,300 at present),
- ◆ Keeping annual accounts,
- ◆ Performing functions in relation to civil service staff of the Commission,
- ◆ Producing and publishing strategic plans, annual reports, annual estimates and handbooks and information about the business of the Houses for members,
- ◆ Providing translation services from one official language into the other in respect of Acts of the Oireachtas,
- ◆ Preparing and publishing guidelines for members on the use of publicly funded services and facilities and specifying a charge for same following a dissolution of the Dáil,
- ◆ Exercising certain functions previously exercised by the Minister for Finance regarding secretarial facilities for members and qualifying parties,
- ◆ Exercising certain legal functions (including participation in proceedings where necessary and arranging for legal advice).

Matters outside the remit of the Commission

The Commission cannot:

- ◆ Set members’ salaries or allowances,
- ◆ Set staff pay, conditions, pensions,
- ◆ Appoint staff at specified senior management grades, namely, at or above Principal Officer 1, without the consent of the Minister for Finance,
- ◆ Capital expenditure - the Commission does not control or manage any building works - this function is carried out by the OPW for all Government Departments and Offices,

ROLE OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION

- ◆ Strategic vs operational functions – day-to-day management is a matter for the Secretary General and the Management Advisory Committee.

Commission Accountability

The Commission is accountable to the Houses for the performance of its functions. The Commission is therefore in effect the “Minister” for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

The effective operation of the Houses of the Oireachtas is of enormous constitutional and public importance and the quality and management of parliamentary services is a critical factor in this effectiveness. The taxpayer expects parliamentary business to be conducted to the highest of standards; Government to be held to account; constituents to be represented and their issues and problems pursued; and traditional parliamentary functions and working methods to be modernised and adapted to changes in the wider world.

Code of Conduct for Commission members

In July, the Commission approved the procedural amendments suggested by the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) to the Code of Conduct for the guidance of Commission members in the performance of their duties as Commission members as required by section 4A of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2009 [inserted by section 5 of the 2009 Act]. The Code sets out the agreed ethical standards that inform the conduct of members of the Commission, both collectively and individually, in performing their functions and duties. It reflects and enhances the operating principles observed by the Commission since its inception in 2004.

Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann have adopted Codes of Conduct for their members as required under the Ethics Acts 1995 and 2001. Commission members are bound by the requirements of these Codes in their capacity as Deputies and Senators.

Disclosure of Interests by Commission members

Under the Code of Conduct, and in addition to compliance with the general requirements of the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001:

Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission of 31st Dáil/24th Seanad

Ex-officio members:

Seán Barrett, T.D., Ceann Comhairle [Chairperson]
 Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach, Seanad Éireann [Deputy Chairperson]
 Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

Member appointed by the Minister for Finance:

[appointed on 28/06/2011]
 Jack Wall, T.D.

Members appointed by Dáil Éireann:

[appointed on 30/06/2011]
 John Browne, T.D.
 Catherine Byrne, T.D.
 Frank Feighan, T.D.
 Dan Neville, T.D.

Members appointed by Seanad Éireann:

[appointed on 30/06/2011]
 Senator Marc MacSharry
 Senator Tom Sheahan
 Senator John Whelan

Commission meeting activity

Meetings	2009	2010	2011*
Commission	10	8	6
Finance Committee	4	4	4
Audit Committee	2	3	4
Other	7	2	1
Totals	23	17	15

*Year of General Elections which impacted no. of meetings held

Commission members must disclose any material interest that he or she or any connected person may have in any matter under consideration at a meeting or otherwise in matters concerning the functions of the Commission.

A material interest arises if the consequence or effect of any decision on the matter may confer on or withhold from the member concerned a significant benefit without also conferring it on or withholding it from persons in general or a class of persons which is of a significant size having regard to all the circumstances and to which the member belongs.

Where such an interest has been disclosed, the member concerned shall take no further part in the proceedings and shall not participate in any decision or vote in connection with such matter.

If a member is in doubt as to whether an interest should be disclosed, advice should be sought from the Chairperson of the Commission and, if required, the disclosure should be made as soon as possible after the receipt of the advice.

All disclosures of interest are recorded in the Commission minutes.

Interaction between Commission members and other members of the Houses

The formal mechanism for interaction/communication between the Commission and members of the Houses is via the Joint Administration Committee (JAC) which communicates the views of members on matters of policy to be decided by the Commission and makes recommendations on such matters as appropriate.

In addition, in certain circumstances, as an input to decision making, Commission members collectively may decide to consult informally with their parliamentary party colleagues on an issue under consideration.

To assist members discuss and explain the rationale for Commission decisions to colleagues, the draft minutes of Commission meetings are circulated to Commission members as soon as practicable after the meeting taking place.

Transparency

The Commission operates in a transparent manner – the minutes of the meetings, once adopted, are published to the Oireachtas website and Commission documents are subject to the Freedom of Information Acts. This report which details the work carried out by Parliament and the support services provided by the parliamentary administration as well as accounting for the public money spent in running Parliament in a given year is also published to the Oireachtas website.

Commission Committees

The Commission has two key standing advisory Committees – namely the Finance Committee, which considers quarterly financial reports in detail and submits them to the Commission for approval, and the Audit Committee, which oversees and advises on risk management, internal controls (including the internal audit function and issues identified by external audit) and value for money issues. The Audit Committee has now been established on a statutory basis pursuant to section 10 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009. It reports annually to the Commission and its report is published on the Oireachtas website. Further details on the work of the Audit Committee in 2011 can be found in Appendix 8 on page 103. The Commission's Finance and Audit Committees meet on a quarterly basis.

The Commission also sets up ad-hoc sub-Committees as required. In 2011, the Commission established a sub-Committee to oversee the preparation of a detailed cost-effective Parliamentary Channel Development Plan in advance of the launch of a pilot transmission of Oireachtas proceedings on a dedicated parliamentary transmission called "Oireachtas TV" on UPC channel 801.

ROLE OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION

Commission meeting activity

The Commission met six times during 2011 and the minutes of these meetings are available on www.oireachtas.ie.

During the year, the Commission:

- ◆ agreed annual estimates, reviewed quarterly reports from the Finance Committee, and noted the 2010 Annual Accounts;
- ◆ continued to monitor budgets and seek savings in the context of the Croke Park Agreement;
- ◆ adopted the report on reducing overtime costs under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance;
- ◆ adopted the Code of Conduct, including amendments suggested by the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO), for the guidance of Commission members in the performance of their duties;
- ◆ approved a recommendation seeking the return of any unused Oireachtas pre-paid envelopes in the possession of former members;
- ◆ noted the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Annual Resource Plan, 2011;
- ◆ re-confirmed the settlement ceiling in relation to the outstanding legal costs liabilities associated with the proceedings of the Article 35 Committee;
- ◆ implemented a recommendation to prohibit the dialling of premium rate numbers by all users of the Oireachtas telephone system;
- ◆ established a sub-Committee to assess the options for the launch and development of a dedicated parliamentary television channel;
- ◆ sanctioned the engaging of a Senior Counsel to provide legal advice to the Committee of Public Accounts on its options and scope for an examination into the financial marked collapse / banking crisis in Ireland.

STRATEGIC VISION

Our role in serving the Irish Parliament is expressed in the following statements of our mission and vision.

These statements in turn inform our strategies and the specific actions we propose to deliver them.

OUR MISSION

We serve the democratic interests of our main stakeholders, the Irish people, by serving parliament through:

- ◆ enabling the Houses, their Committees and their members to do their parliamentary business, and
- ◆ meeting members' needs as public representatives in the context of parliamentary business.

OUR VISION

"A World-Class Parliamentary Service".

OUR STRATEGIES

We identify the following three strategies for our work on behalf of the Commission under this plan:

Improving Services to Parliament

The Chairpersons and members of the Houses and the Committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.

Improving Services to Members

Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.

Enhancing Service Capability

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present my second progress report on the delivery of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service's commitments set out under the Commission's Strategic Plan 2010-2012. The vision set out in the Strategic Plan 2010-12 was for a world-class parliamentary service. This remains the long-term vision for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service although the impact of the current economic climate has led us to change our immediate focus to that of prioritising and maintaining the delivery of a high quality service.

Strategies and Finances

The Strategic Plan 2010-12 sets out three key strategies:

- ◆ Improving Services to Parliament – The Chairpersons and members of the Houses and their committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.
- ◆ Improving Services to Members – Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.
- ◆ Enhancing Service Capability – The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.

Good advances have been made on the delivery of our actions to implement the Strategic Plan. Progress in implementing these three strategies and the associated tasks is monitored regularly through detailed reviews of tasks and deliverables within each division and through higher level review of priorities and overall progress at an organisational level.

In my report on 2010, I outlined our goal to "do better with less". We have met and are continuing to meet the challenge on two main fronts – Finance and People.

In terms of Finance our original estimate for 2011, laid before the Dáil and published, was €113m. This did not include costs of the Dáil and Seanad General Elections since the dissolution of the Dáil had not occurred at the time of adoption of the estimate and our original forecasts



had placed the elections in 2012 not 2011. Actual overall spend in 2011 was €119.9m which included €21.7m for costs associated with the elections. It must be noted that doing more with less is happening at a time of significantly increased outputs in this Dáil – for example, sitting hours increased by 12% and sittings by 30% when comparing the second half of 2011 against the previous two years.

In terms of our People, we have also managed to meet the demand for services and increased outputs with significantly less people in place. Our overall numbers are reduced by some 11% since 2009 and while we have been prudent in terms of sustaining service levels by filling a small number of critical high-risk posts, it is important that we also acknowledge the commitment of the staff both collectively and individually as they make every effort to continue to provide high quality services to the Houses, their Committees and members. This commitment of staff deserves a reciprocal commitment from me as Secretary General and, accordingly, I have prioritised the Organisation Development Programme which will focus on leadership, performance and the required supports for staff into the future.

In this report, we have outlined the role of the Commission and its good stewardship in managing the finances and resources whilst supporting the Parliament

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REVIEW & 2011 – KEY ACTIVITIES

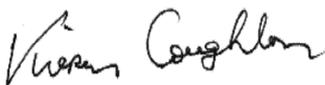
and its members. 2012 sees the end of the triennial cycle and is the year when the Houses of the Oireachtas legislation, which sets the budget for 2013-15, will have to be passed. We remain determined to ensure value for money in the delivery of all our services.

In conclusion

In the current climate, it is crucial that parliament and its members have the back-up services necessary to fulfil their mandates. This is particularly important in view of the unprecedented number of new members in both Houses following the General Elections. In 2011, 76 new members were elected to the Dáil and 34 new members elected to the Seanad. The elections also resulted in the employment of 314 new political staff members throughout 2011. The plans put in place by various sections of the Service resulted in a smooth transition for members and their staff as they settled into their new roles in Leinster House.

The Strategic Plan 2013-15 will be developed during 2012 and this will focus on meeting the challenge of ensuring appropriate supports are made available to parliament and its members whilst maintaining reduced costs.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the Service, including those retirees who have left during 2011 after many years of dedicated service, for their commitment, ability, dedication and flexibility in meeting the increased demands in the current financial climate. I remain confident that the Service is well placed to meet the challenges we face. We will strive to tackle our Strategic Plan tasks and the support of the Commission has been crucial to our success to date.



Kieran Coughlan
Secretary General and Clerk of Dáil Éireann
April 2012.

Sittings of the Houses and Committees:

- ◆ 108 Dáil sittings (845 sitting hours).
- ◆ 81 Seanad sittings (520 sitting hours).
- ◆ 315 Committee meetings (541 sitting hours).

Business of the Houses and Committees:

- ◆ 30 Committee Reports.
- ◆ 84 Bills published as initiated.
- ◆ 42 Acts passed.
- ◆ 2,249 amendments tabled to Bills.
- ◆ 48 Bill reprints as a result of amendment or passage by both Houses.
- ◆ 37,397 Parliamentary Questions processed (90% of which were submitted electronically).

Procedural knowledge management:

- ◆ Regular meetings of the Panel of Temporary Chairpersons to discuss procedural issues as they arise in the Chamber.
- ◆ Regular meetings of the Panel of Temporary Clerks and fortnightly meetings of the Committee Clerks to share procedural knowledge and clerking experience.

Parliamentary Library and Research Services (L&RS):

- ◆ 34 Bills Digests and 13 Debate Packs on Bills were circulated to all members during 2011.
- ◆ The L&RS Committees team researched and wrote major research papers for the Committees and the Secretariat.
- ◆ 2,162 Documents Laid processed by the L&RS during 2011. Most documents laid are now done electronically following the development of an electronic system and digital archive last year.
- ◆ 3,131 on-demand information and research queries from individual members and other users were responded to by the L&RS during 2011.
- ◆ Eight *Economic Indicators* and seven *Spotlights* were published during 2011.

Processing Documents Laid before the Houses and making them available to members

- ◆ The L&RS managed the transition of documents laid before the Houses from a paper-based to an electronic environment. Following a successful pilot in the second quarter of 2011, the phased implementation of e-documents laid across all Departments and offices commenced.
- ◆ Most documents are now laid using an on-line form with submitted documents being stored in a digital archive. Departments and agencies have the ability to lay documents 24/7, and feedback from Departments and agencies has been overwhelmingly positive.

Communications Unit

- ◆ Communications Unit produced New Members' Information Packs for both the Dáil and the Seanad, and comprehensive packs were issued in February 2011 for members of the Dáil and April 2011 for members of the Seanad.
- ◆ A VFM and Policy Review of the Communications Strategy 2007-09 was conducted during 2011 and reported to the Management Advisory Committee. The recommendations of the review were accepted for implementation and will inform the development of a new Communications Strategy for the Commission.
- ◆ 75,058 people visited Leinster House in 2011.
- ◆ The Houses of the Oireachtas participated in both Culture Night and Open House Architecture Day in 2011.

Parliamentary Channel - Pilot transmission

- ◆ In November 2011, the Houses of the Oireachtas and UPC launched a pilot transmission of Oireachtas proceedings on a dedicated parliamentary transmission called "Oireachtas TV" on UPC channel 801. A schedule for the pilot broadcasts has been agreed covering business of the Dáil, Seanad and Committees. Proceedings from the Seanad and Committees are broadcast in full at the end of each week, with selected sittings also carried live.
- ◆ During 2011, the Commission established a sub-Committee to oversee the preparation of a detailed cost-effective Parliamentary Channel Development Plan.

The Commission also sanctioned the engagement of a technical specialist to assist with the development of the detailed specification required to procure an operator of the channel.

Parliamentary Questions

- ◆ 37,397 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) were processed by the Questions Office during 2011. An internally compiled *International Benchmarking between Parliaments Report*, covering the 2010/2011 parliamentary session, found that Dáil Éireann had the second highest number of PQs per member with 225 PQs tabled per member, almost seven times the average of 33 PQs per member of the parliaments surveyed and the highest number of PQs tabled annually across the 18 parliaments surveyed.

Amendment to Standing Orders to allow persons to address the Seanad

- ◆ In July 2011, Senators passed a motion allowing people in public and civil life to address sittings of Seanad Éireann. Under the new arrangements, selected people will be invited to make an address to the chamber and will have an opportunity to exchange ideas and views with Senators. Dr. Maurice Manning, President of the Irish Human Rights Commission and Chair of the European Group of the National Human Rights Institution, addressed Seanad Éireann on 28th September 2011 on the importance of keeping human rights at the heart of the work of parliament, and on 24th November 2011, Dr. Mary Robinson addressed the House on the importance of the Seanad to her in her career as a Human Rights Activist.

Seanad Public Consultation Committee

- ◆ The Seanad Public Consultation Committee (SPCC) was launched in October 2011. Its purpose is to provide for direct engagement and consultation between members of the public and the 24th Seanad.
- ◆ The SPCC can invite submissions from the public, hold hearings, and publish reports on issues which are identified as being "of public interest", defined as an issue specifically related to the Seanad's legislative powers or an issue of public policy. Relevant hearings are held in public in the Seanad Chamber, following

2011 – KEY ACTIVITIES

which the committee will issue a report. These reports and their recommendations will be debated in the Seanad or referred to the relevant Joint Committee.

- ◆ The first topic selected by the Committee was “The Rights of Older People”. The Committee received 11 submissions and met with 17 witnesses during the course of two hearings in November 2011. The Committee published its report on 28th March 2012.
- ◆ The SPCC is currently considering submissions on curbing cancer through lifestyle change.

Committee Outputs

- ◆ In 2011 during the 31st Dáil, there were 268 meetings of the various Joint Committees, Select Committees, Standing Committees and sub-Committees in 2011 for which the Committee Secretariat had responsibility, involving some 629 speaking witnesses, 470 sitting hours, with 9 policy reports published.

Standing Order 103 Committee

- ◆ On 9th March 2011 an interim Committee was established called the “Standing Order 103 Committee” to carry out scrutiny of EU draft legislative proposals for compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, which is a role of national parliaments under the Lisbon Treaty.

Election 2011 – Accommodation, Staff and Guidance for members

- ◆ Accommodation - in line with the Commission’s policy for the allocation of accommodation to members after the General Elections, all members were assigned offices prior to the first sitting of the new Dáil and Seanad. Deadlines for vacation of offices by retiring and non-returned members were approved by the Commission in 2009.
- ◆ HR – the work of HR staff in supporting the 2011 General Elections involved the calculation and payment of redundancy settlements and providing template contracts to members and parties for the staff employed for the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad. 314 new employees were placed on payroll during 2011. 186 staff received redundancy payments totalling €7.1m and a further 78 staff transferred to Departments as staff of Office holders (e.g. to Ministerial offices in Government Departments).

- ◆ Dissolution Guidelines for members - an Election Handbook was issued to all members prior to the dissolution of the 30th Dáil detailing the arrangements to be applied, in the dissolution period, in relation to allowances and facilities.
- ◆ Post-Election Induction plans for new members - 43 Liaison officers, in addition to the staff of the One-Stop-Shop and the HR Unit for Members, were trained to meet and help the 76 new T.D.s and 34 new Senators “find their feet” following their election to either House.
- ◆ Information Handbook for new members - an Information Handbook was prepared and circulated to all members of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad providing them with a practical guide on the procedural and administrative supports available to them to assist them in their parliamentary duties.

Electoral support functions

- ◆ Writs issued to 43 constituencies for Dáil General Election.
- ◆ Receipt and scanning of marked register of electors.
- ◆ Administration of Seanad General Election for 43 panel members, including preparation of Electoral Roll, preparation of the List of Candidates, issuing of ballot papers, and conduct of Seanad Election count which took place over a four day period in Leinster House.
- ◆ Implementation of the statutory replacement process for two MEPs following their election to the Dáil.

Managing Resources

- ◆ Our original estimate for 2011 was €113m. This did not include costs of the Dáil and Seanad General Elections since the dissolution of the Dáil had not occurred at the time of adoption of the estimate and our original forecasts had placed the elections in 2012 not 2011. Actual overall spend in 2011 was €119.9m which included €21.7m for costs associated with the elections. It must be noted that doing more with less is happening at a time of significantly increased outputs in this Dáil – for example, sitting hours increased by 12% and sittings by 30% when comparing the second half of 2011 against the previous two years.

Freedom of Information

- ◆ There were 72 FOI requests received in 2011, a decrease of 25% over that received in 2010 (96 requests). The majority of requests (55) came from the media, and this category of requestor represents 76% of the requests received.

Statutory Instruments

- ◆ The Service has recently taken over responsibility for the production of official translations of Statutory Instruments and has developed a strategy to deliver these. Three members of staff have been transferred to Rannóg an Aistriúcháin from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to assist in delivery of the strategy.

Training for Members and Political Personnel

- ◆ A key project for 2011 was the design and delivery of the Training & Information Programme for members of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad and their staff. Roll-out of this programme commenced in March. Overall 57 members attended ICT training and 42 members attended in-house procedural and other information seminars. 453 political staff attended ICT training and 231 attended in-house procedural and other information seminars. The most popular training course availed of by political staff was Constituents Database training which was attended by 175 staff.

Conduct of the 2010 Public Representation Allowance Audit

- ◆ The first audit of Public Representation Allowance was conducted in 2011 by an independent consultant professional auditor, selected by a competitive tender process.
- ◆ The auditor was responsible, independently of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, for preparing an audit process document and for communicating with the members selected for audit in relation to all matters. As part of the contract, the auditor implemented a system to select the members for audit by random sample. A total of 110 members, who received vouched allowances in 2010, were auditable and the auditor selected 11 of these (10%) for audit by random sample.
- ◆ The detailed audit plan to conduct the audit was prepared independently by the auditor. Neither the

Service nor the Commission has a role in the conduct of these audits. In addition, all records are held by the members themselves for the audit purposes and not by the Service. The purpose of the audit was to establish: (1) that a member has receipts to match the amount of allowance paid, and (2) that those receipts were in respect of items which are allowable expenses under the regulations. Information on the Parliamentary Standard Allowance payments, including the audit reports, are published on the Oireachtas website.

Audit Report

- ◆ The audit report submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas was considered by both the Commission and the Audit Committee in December 2011. The auditors provided the necessary certification in respect of all members audited. The audit report made recommendations relating to the expenses system. The administrative amendments have been included in the updated Audit Guidelines. A small number of more substantive items arising from the auditor's report will be considered by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform as part of the review of the Parliamentary Standard Allowance taking place in 2012.

ICT Strategy

- ◆ A review of implementation of the 2008-2010 ICT Strategy was conducted in 2011, including a post-implementation review of key projects to determine whether anticipated benefits have been realised. A new ICT Strategy is currently being prepared.

Members' Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)

- ◆ An Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) dealing with members' use of Oireachtas ICT facilities was presented to the Joint Administration Committee which recommended adopting the policy for members. The Commission agreed the policy in February 2012.

Human Resource Shared Services Centre (HRSSC)

- ◆ Personnel Unit is currently engaged with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to transferring a portion of Personnel Unit's administrative functions to the HRSSC (e.g. administration of annual leave, sick leave).

2011 – KEY ACTIVITIES

- ◆ This project will take up to 12 months to complete, with a view to the Service going live on the HRSSC in late 2012/early 2013. During 2012, the Service will also assess the value of transferring Salaries and Pensions functions to the HRSSC.

Salaries Section

- ◆ During 2011, Salaries Section completed the move to ePayslips which means that all staff on the payroll now receive their payslip electronically and can access historical pay information going back to 2001. P60 and other statements are now only made available electronically. This has resulted in savings in terms of both time and money, while obviating the need for the printing and distribution of over 3,500 payslips each month.

Survey of Oireachtas Office holders

- ◆ As part of the Service's commitment to improving customer satisfaction with our services, a survey of Oireachtas Office holders (Commission members, Temporary Chairpersons of both Houses and a sample number of Committee Chairpersons) was undertaken by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). The purpose of the survey was to examine how well the Service is performing in terms of the services and supports provided to members. The findings of the survey will be used to improve services and supports where required.
- ◆ In order to build on previous Office holder surveys, as well as to present trends over time, a similar format and style of survey questionnaire was used for this report as previously. The overall findings report high levels of satisfaction with the support services provided to Office holders. The quality of service provided by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service continues to be regarded very highly by Office holders.
- ◆ For this survey, the overall Office holders satisfaction rating was 90%, up from 79% in 2008 and 82% in 2006. The survey shows improvements across a number of areas, particularly with the Committee Secretariat where it found an aggregate satisfaction rating of 91% for Committee Chairpersons, an increase of 15% on 2008 figures. The area most in need of attention is in relation to communication between the Commission and members of the Houses and their staff. The results of the survey are being considered by both

the Management Advisory Committee and the Commission with a view to addressing those areas requiring attention.

- ◆ As 2011 was the first year of the audit of the Public Representation Allowance, those members who were randomly selected for audit by Mazars last year were invited to meet with the IPA to give feedback on their experience of the audit, so that any necessary improvements can be made to the process this year.

Customer Service

- ◆ During 2011, the Service agreed a Customer Service Action Plan 2011-2013. This plan was circulated to all staff in November 2011 and is currently being implemented. The plan sets agreed targets for each service provided. Progress on the implementation of the plan is being monitored and will be reported to the Partnership Committee during 2012.
- ◆ In addition to sections meeting their individual targets, the Service has appointed a Customer Service Officer. This Officer responds to queries and feedback received from our customers. The feedback received is regularly monitored and will be reported on during 2012. The Officer also attends customer service officer meetings organised by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Attendance at this network helps to ensure that the Service maintains best practice in this area.

Business Process Improvement projects

- ◆ A Business Process Review on the ICT Staff Helpdesk was undertaken and presented to the MAC in May 2011. The Committee noted that the results of the process review would be considered along with alternative approaches to operating the helpdesk that are being considered in light of the Croke Park Agreement framework.
- ◆ A number of Business Process Improvement (BPI) projects were also conducted during 2011 in the operational areas of the Houses:
 - ◆ Legislative Workbench - Bills Office System Upgrade BPI Project;
 - ◆ Processing of Documents laid – Library & Research Service;
 - ◆ Rostering system in the Debates Office – Editor of Debates;
 - ◆ Simultaneous Translation – Rannóg an Aistriúcháin.

COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKING OF PARLIAMENTS — KEY FINDINGS

We compiled an internal *Report on Comparative Benchmarking of Parliaments*, using international key statistics collected from a variety of sources through desk-based research and surveys of parliamentary contacts in a selected number of other jurisdictions¹. While every effort is made in our methodology to compare like with like, all inter-parliamentary comparisons are subject to the caveat that different parliaments may have different accounting systems, different functions and election cycles, and different systems of operation and sitting patterns. Although our methodology aims to compare our performance on a similar basis as in our previous Annual Reports, this was not possible as complete data was not available in all cases. Nevertheless, the benchmarking indicates that, compared to 23 parliaments surveyed, the Irish Parliament has—

- ◆ recorded fourth place in relation to sitting days with a total of 189 days;
- ◆ recorded fourth place in relation to sitting hours with a total of 1,365 hours;
- ◆ the second highest number of Parliamentary Questions tabled annually across 18 parliaments and the second highest number of Parliamentary Questions per member;
- ◆ the seventh highest number of visitors to parliament as a percentage of population out of 18 parliaments represented;
- ◆ less administrative staff per member, less political staff per member and less total staff per member than the average.

Further specific findings of the benchmarking initiative are reflected throughout this report.

¹ Comparator parliaments [Australia (BC), Austria (BC), Belgium (BC), Croatia (BC), Czech Republic (BC), Denmark (UC), Finland (UC), Germany (BC), Iceland (UC), Israel (UC), Italy (BC), Netherlands (BC), New Zealand (UC), Norway (UC), Poland (BC), Portugal (UC), Russia (BC), Scotland (UC), Spain (BC), Sweden (UC), United States (BC), United Kingdom (House of Commons & House of Lords) (BC), Wales (UC)] were surveyed on the topics of political representation, sittings and business of parliament, value for money, staff and resources, and contact with the public. Different subsets of these countries are included in each comparison according to the available data and their comparability with the Oireachtas in each case. Calendar year 2011 and parliamentary year 2010-2011 were the data reference years.

BC refers to bicameral parliaments and **UC** refers to unicameral parliaments.

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STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 1 - IMPROVING SERVICES TO PARLIAMENT

This Strategy is about ensuring that the Chairpersons and members of the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.

HOUSES AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Sittings and Business of Parliament

The holding of General Elections in 2011 impacted on the procedural outputs for the year, particularly as a result of additional non-sitting weeks due to the elections. Additionally, the Committee system was not fully established until June 2011, thus impacting on these procedural outputs. In measuring our progress for 2011 (see page 45), 2007 statistics are included as an additional comparator, as this was the year of the last General Elections.

Supporting the sittings of the Houses and their Committees during 2011 encompassed:

- ◆ 108 Dáil sittings (845 sitting hours)
- ◆ 81 Seanad sittings (520 sitting hours)
- ◆ 315 Committee meetings (541 sitting hours)
- ◆ 30 Committee Reports
- ◆ 84 Bills published as initiated
- ◆ 2,249 amendments tabled to Bills
- ◆ 48 Bill reprints as a result of amendment or passage by both Houses
- ◆ 37,397 Parliamentary Questions processed

The aforementioned *International Benchmarking between Parliaments Report*, covering the 2010/2011 parliamentary session, found that the Houses of the Oireachtas performs well when benchmarked against the other national parliaments surveyed in terms of total sitting days and sitting hours, recording fourth place with a total of 189 sitting days and fourth place with a total of 1,365 sitting hours for both Houses.

Procedural Development Programme

Work is continuing on our Procedural Development Programme to enhance and build on our overall procedural capacity, capability and service delivery. Details of some

of the enhancements implemented during 2011 are set out below.

Panel of Temporary Chairpersons

Temporary Chairpersons are members who chair proceedings in the Dáil Chamber in the absence of the Ceann Comhairle and Leas Cheann Comhairle. Meetings of the Panel of Temporary Chairpersons, presided over by the Leas-Cheann Comhairle or a senior member of the panel, were held to provide key information, training and advice for incoming Temporary Chairpersons following the General Elections for the new Dáil and Seanad. At those meetings-

- ◆ presentations on procedure, both generally and in relation to areas causing particular challenges to the Chair, were made by members of staff;
- ◆ members of the panel shared and discussed their experiences while presiding in the Chamber;
- ◆ existing and developing standards were outlined and discussed.

Chamber orientation sessions have also been offered to panel members to familiarise them with the operation of the equipment available to the Chair and how communication between the Chair, the Clerks and ushers on duty in the Chamber is managed in practice. Members of the panel are also given one-to-one briefings on request.

The daily routine of business

All members of the panel receive notice of and have access to briefing on the Chair's daily schedule and briefing for the Chair on individual items of business. One-to-one briefing on particular items of business is offered to the Chairs, Deputy Chairs and members of the panel of Temporary Chairpersons.

Panel of Temporary Clerks

Meetings of the panel of Temporary Clerks (who assist with Dáil Chamber duty) are held on a regular basis. As well as mirroring meetings of the Panel of Temporary Chairpersons as regards content, the meetings are used to provide feedback from meetings of that Panel. Events in the

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Chamber are reviewed in greater detail, using webcast recordings of proceedings and other on-line resources such as the Standing Orders, rulings and debates.

Regular Chamber orientation visits are also arranged so that Temporary Clerks can remain familiar with the electronic resources and facilities available at the Clerks' Desk in the Chamber. Temporary Clerks also periodically review the steps involved in setting up an electronic vote in the Chamber. In order to demonstrate and reinforce learning, members of the panel of Temporary Clerks will periodically:

- ◆ review interventions by the Chair over a period of weeks and present to the panel interventions that were of particular significance or interest; and
- ◆ provide Chamber orientation to other members of the panel.

The panel of Temporary Clerks was reviewed recently and will be extended for both Houses during 2012.

PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Procedural offices

10 training sessions on Standing Orders took place in September 2011 and covered the functions of the procedural offices, Committees and House Services. Master classes on procedure relating to the statutory functions of the Clerk of the Dáil also took place covering issues such as electoral law, the issuing of writs and the Standards in Public Office Commission. The chronology of Standing Orders is progressing and will be completed during 2012. Staff re-assignments and the sharing of procedural tasks across sections have also contributed to building increased capability within the procedural sections.

Processing of Legislation – the Bills Office

The Bills Office is responsible for the printing and circulation of all Bills and amendments tabled by Ministers and members. It examines the texts of all Bills to ensure they comply with Standing Orders and it examines amendments for financial implications and other matters of order. At Committee and Report Stages, the Bills Office provides briefing material for the Clerks of the Houses, the

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Chairpersons of the Houses and Chairpersons of Select Committees. The Bills Office also advises on groupings of amendments and carries out tasks on behalf of the Clerk of the Dáil in relation to Dáil General Elections.

In December 2011, the Bills Office put in place a two-year framework agreement to provide a legislative drafting service for members wishing to produce a Private Members' Bill. The provision of this service has been well received by members to date.

It is expected that in 2012 high-level co-operation between the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and the Service will facilitate a new streamlined Bill layout which will make it easier to comprehend the effects of amendments debated in the Houses and the Committees.

The holding of the General Elections in early 2011 had an impact on the majority of procedural outputs, including levels of legislation processed. Therefore in the measuring our progress section on page 45, 2007 figures have been included as a more appropriate comparator. As there can be large variances in the sizes of Bills and amendments, page volumes are set out below to facilitate comparison of statistics.

Bills Office Statistics

- ◆ 84 Bills were published during 2011 (up from 61 in 2010). 54 were Government Bills and 30 were Private Members' Bills. Although more Bills were initiated in 2011, the total page volume of these decreased to 1,810 pages, from 1,914 in 2010.
- ◆ 2,249 amendments were processed during 2011, down from 4,782 in 2010. The total volume of these amendments decreased to 783 pages, from 1,264 in 2010.
- ◆ There were 48 instances of Bills being reprinted after amendment in 2011, down from 75 in 2010. The total page volume of these decreased to 2,280 pages, from 4,745 in 2010.
- ◆ 42 Bills were enacted by the Oireachtas during 2011 (up from 40 in 2010). Although more Bills were enacted in 2011, the total page volume of these decreased to 1,456 pages, from 2,040 in 2010.

Journal Office

The Journal Office prepares the Dáil Order Paper, Supplementary Order Papers, Journal of Proceedings and Standing Orders. Motions for the Order Paper are submitted to this office and examined for compliance with Standing Orders. It also provides advice to members of the Dáil on parliamentary procedure and, in particular, to the Government Chief Whip's Office on procedural aspects of proposals for Government business and assists with the drafting of technical motions. It also provides secretariat support and advice to the Committee on Procedure and Privileges (CPP) of Dáil Éireann and to its sub-Committees, including the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform. The Journal Office provides support to the Seanad Returning Officer in the administration of Seanad General and Bye-Elections. It also assists with the management of the electronic voting system in the Dáil.

Journal Office Statistics

The following statistics indicate production volumes for some activities in the Journal Office in 2011 consequent on sittings of the Dáil:

- ◆ 108 Dáil Order Papers were produced
- ◆ 39 Supplementary Order Papers were produced
- ◆ Secretariat support and advice for 4 meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges
- ◆ Secretariat support and advice for the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform
- ◆ Administrative back-up for 164 Dáil divisions.

Parliamentary Questions — the Questions Office

The Questions (General) Office is responsible for the processing of Parliamentary Questions as well as the production of the Question Paper for each sitting of Dáil Éireann. The Questions Office assists and advises members on the drafting and suitability of questions in accordance with Standing Orders and advises the Ceann Comhairle on the admissibility of questions on topical issues. The Questions Office also distributes documents and publications to members.

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37,397 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) were processed by the Questions Office during 2011. This is 7,546 (17%) less than 2010. However, as there was a General Election in 2011, the figures for this year are more appropriately comparable to the figures from 2007, the year of the last General Elections, when 33,753 PQs were processed (see details in table below). Of those processed, 7,537 (20%) were withdrawn and 753 (2%) were disallowed.

The number of oral PQs replied to in the Dáil Chamber was 1,716 (3.8% of those tabled).

Approximately 90% of PQs are submitted electronically to the Questions Office. Ministerial replies to PQs are emailed by the Questions Office to the relevant member on each sitting day.

During the period 2008 to 2010 the number of questions processed in a full year varied between 44,300 and 46,800. As 2011 was an election year it is difficult to compare and contrast figures for that year.

In the period 1 January to 30 April 2012 almost 20,300 questions were processed. In the same period in 2008 the comparative figure was 15,500. The main issue is the recent increase in the number of written questions. Written questions in the first four months of the year have increased from less than 11,500 in 2008 to more than 15,500 in 2012. While some of this increase can be attributed to the Dáil returning earlier in January the figures for the three months February to April inclusive have increased from 9,800 in 2008 to 11,500 this year.

An internally compiled *International Benchmarking between Parliaments Report*, covering the 2010/2011 parliamentary session, found that Dáil Éireann had the second highest number of PQs per member with 225 PQs

tabled per T.D., almost seven times the average of 33 PQs per member of the parliaments represented and the second highest number of PQs tabled annually across the 18 parliaments.

The outputs for 2011 for Procedural Sections include:

- ◆ a new package of amendments to Dáil procedures and a re-print of Dail Standing Orders was prepared for the new Dáil;
- ◆ administrative systems introduced to support new Dáil Standing Order procedures whereby-
 - ◆ members may raise "topical issues" selected by the Ceann Comhairle for discussion on each sitting day (Standing Order 27A),
 - ◆ members who are dissatisfied with Ministers' responses to Parliamentary Questions may have the matter addressed via the Ceann Comhairle (Standing Order 40A);
- ◆ the General Election functions of the Clerk of the Dáil were successfully discharged, including the issue and return of writs, receipt and custody of election documents, and making the marked electoral registers publicly available;
- ◆ training courses provided for all staff on Dáil Standing Orders (10 sessions held);
- ◆ knowledge management masterclasses held on key legislative and procedural functions of the Clerk of the Dáil;
- ◆ panels of Temporary Dáil Chairpersons and Temporary Dáil Clerks established post-election and bespoke induction training was provided together with on-going support and enhanced briefing;

Parliamentary Questions 2007, 2010 & 2011

	2007	2010	2011	% increase/ decrease
PQs Processed	33,753	44,943	37,397	17% decrease
Oral Replies	1,289	1,393	1,716	23% increase
Written Replies	26,818	30,513	27,391	10.2% decrease
PQs Withdrawn	4,442	11,782	7,537	26% decrease
PQs Disallowed	1,204	1,255	753	40% decrease
% PQs disallowed	3.57%	2.8%	2%	0.8% decrease

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- ◆ a panel of legal professionals was established to provide an expert bill drafting service for private members;
- ◆ a new electronic system for the seamless drafting and publication of government legislation by the Parliamentary Counsel, Government Departments and the Bills Office was developed;
- ◆ 2,249 amendments to Bills were processed;
- ◆ 37,397 Parliamentary Questions were processed;
- ◆ 108 Dáil order papers and 39 Supplementary Dáil Order Papers were produced.

Seanad Office

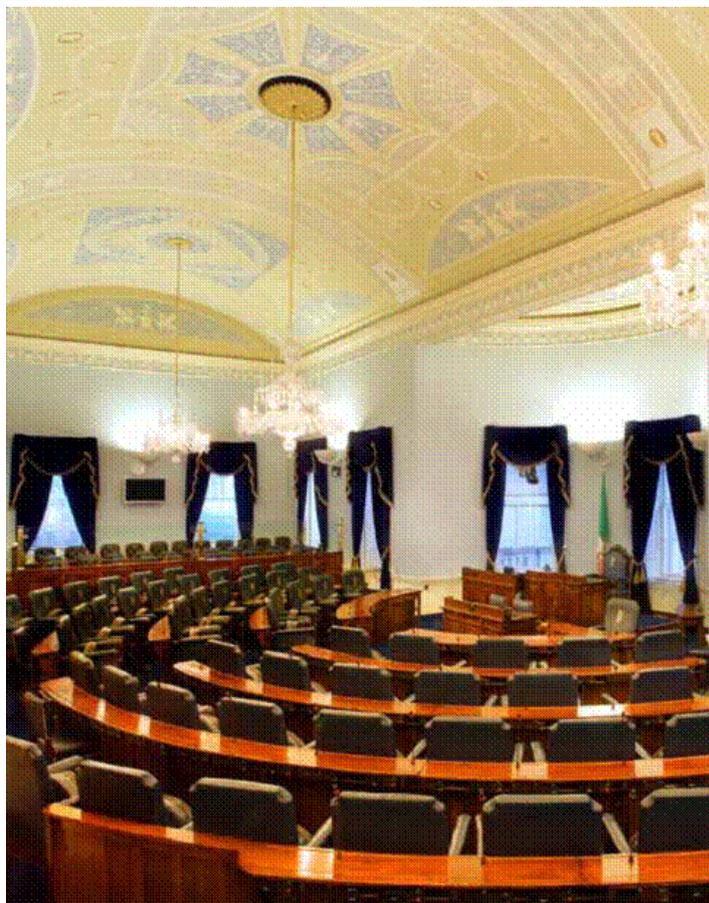
The Seanad Office is responsible for the production of the Seanad Order Paper, Supplementary Order Papers, Matters on the Adjournment, Journal of Proceedings and Standing Orders. Government and private members' motions for the Order Paper are submitted to this office and examined to ensure they comply with Standing Orders. The Seanad Office also publishes the Register of Members' Interests annually. The office provides procedural advice for the Cathaoirleach, Leas-Chathaoirleach and panel of Seanad Temporary Chairpersons. It also provides secretariat support and advice to the Seanad Committees on Procedure and Privileges, Seanad Public Consultation and Selection and during the 23rd Seanad to the Seanad Select Committee on Members' Interests. The Clerk of the Seanad is the Seanad Returning Officer for Seanad General Elections for the 43 Panel Members. She is responsible for the Annual Review of the Register of Nominating Bodies under the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Act 1947, and for the detailed planning and conduct of the Seanad General Election and Bye-Elections.

New Initiatives in the Seanad: Amendment to Standing Orders to allow persons to address the Seanad

In July 2011, Senators passed a motion allowing people in public and civil life to address sittings of Seanad Éireann. Under the new arrangements, selected people will be invited to make an address to the chamber and will have an opportunity to exchange ideas and views with Senators. Dr. Maurice Manning, President of the Irish Human Rights Commission and Chair of the European Group of the National Human Rights Institution, addressed Seanad Éireann on 28th September 2011 on the importance of keeping human rights at the heart of the work of

Seanad Office Statistics

- ◆ 81 Seanad sitting days;
- ◆ 520 Seanad sitting hours;
- ◆ 81 Seanad Order Papers were produced;
- ◆ 6 Supplementary Order Papers were produced;
- ◆ 20 Journal of Proceedings were prepared;
- ◆ 260 motions were processed;
- ◆ administrative back-up for 173 Seanad divisions;
- ◆ compilation of Register of Interests of Members of Seanad Éireann;
- ◆ secretariat support and advice to 14 meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges;
- ◆ secretariat support for 3 meetings of the Members' Interests Committee which was conducting investigations pursuant to complaints received under the Ethics in Public Office Acts up to April 2011;
- ◆ annual review of Register of Nominating Bodies;
- ◆ administration of Seanad General Election in 2011.



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LEINSTER HOUSE, DUBLIN.

parliament, and on 24th November 2011, Dr. Mary Robinson addressed the House on the importance of the Seanad to her in her career as a Human Rights Activist.

Seanad Public Consultation Committee

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee (SPCC) was launched in October 2011. Its purpose is to provide for direct engagement and consultation between members of the public and the 24th Seanad. The SPCC can invite submissions from the public, hold hearings, and publish reports on issues which are identified as “of public interest”, defined as an issue specifically related to the Seanad’s legislative powers or an issue of public policy. Relevant hearings are held in public in the Seanad Chamber, following which the committee will issue a report. These reports and their recommendations will be debated in the Seanad or referred to the relevant Joint Committee. The first topic picked by the Committee was “The Rights of Older People”. The Committee received 11

submissions and met with 17 witnesses during the course of two hearings in November 2011. The Committee published its report on 28 March 2012. The SPCC is currently considering submissions on curbing cancer through lifestyle change.

Revision of Standing Orders relating to Private Business

The Standing Orders relating to Private Business have been reviewed for the first time since 1939. New Standing Orders and accompanying legislation have been drafted and will be considered by a Joint Committee of Standing Orders (Private Business) when established in mid-2012. The Joint Committee is expected to present its review to both Houses in 2013.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT SITTINGS

eLegislation

Over the past number of years, considerable work has been carried out in developing the eLegislation system. Building on this, testing of the latest version of this system will be conducted in 2012 by the Bills Office and Rannóg an Aistriúcháin. This new version of the system is designed to be used with a revised format of legislation.

This revised format has been designed and agreed with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel. It has been designed to be both more reader-friendly and more easily facilitate the technical publication of legislation. The new development of the system combined with the revised format of the legislation will assist with the delivery of print and publishing savings.

The new system will also allow the expansion of the eChamber functionality for parliamentary documents.

Parliamentary Printing and Publishing

The development of the eLegislation system and progress in implementing the Debates Authoring System have enabled the Service to make significant savings in 2011 and these savings will continue into 2012 and beyond. Further savings are being sought through a change in the method of dissemination of parliamentary documents with an increased focus on electronic publication rather than printing the documents. The development of the systems will allow for these proposals to be finalised during 2012 so that savings can be maximised.

COMMITTEE RELATED ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Role of the Committee Secretariat

The role of the Committees Secretariat is to provide an efficient and effective secretariat and ancillary services for the Committees in all their activities, and to plan and make provision for ongoing contingencies and future developments in the Committee system. In line with other areas of the Service, the Committee Secretariat seeks to ensure the highest standards in direct supports for sittings of Committees.

Committee system of the 31st Dáil/24th Seanad

The Committee system of the 31st Dáil/24th Seanad was established in June 2011. During 2011, the Committee Secretariat provided on-going procedural and administrative support to:

- ◆ 2 Dáil Select Standing Committees (Committee of Public Accounts & Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann);
- ◆ 1 Seanad Select Standing Committee (Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann);
- ◆ 1 Joint Standing Committee (Joint Administration Committee);
- ◆ 7 Joint Committees which shadow Departments (3 shadowing 3 Departments, 3 shadowing 2 Departments and 1 shadowing 1 Department) with attaching Select and Select sub-Committees;
- ◆ 3 Joint Committees with specific subject area remits (Investigations, Oversight and Petitions, Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and European Union Affairs).

The Secretariat also supported the operation of the Working Group of Committee Chairs (WGCC) which liaises and consults on common issues affecting Chairpersons of Committees and on operational aspects of Committee related activities. The WGCC also determines and monitors allocations made to each Committee from members' travel, consultancy and Chairpersons' Entertainment Allowances budgetary provisions.

The Secretariat also has responsibility for the efficient and effective operation of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) as well as North-South Parliamentary Forum developments.

Committee Outputs

In 2011, during the 31st Dáil, there were 268 meetings of the various Joint Committees, Select Committees, Standing Committees and sub-Committees for which the Committee Secretariat has responsibility, involving some 629 speaking witnesses, 470 sitting hours with 9 policy reports published.

Powers of Oireachtas Committees

The powers of Committees depend on their Orders of Reference (i.e. the specific instructions given to them by the Houses) but generally they have power to:

- ◆ receive submissions and hear evidence from interested parties or groups;
- ◆ discuss and draft proposals for legislative change;
- ◆ print and publish minutes of evidence and related documents; and

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- ◆ require attendance of (i) Ministers to discuss current policies and proposals for legislation and (ii) principal Office holders in bodies in the State which are wholly or partly funded by the State (subject to their right to decline in writing to attend for stated reasons).

In addition to considering any Bills and Estimates for Public Services, Dáil Select Committees and sub-Committees are also required to consider Annual Output Statements and Value for Money and Policy Reviews of their respective Departments. As Joint Committees, they are empowered to consider matters of policy including:

- ◆ EU matters and proposals for EU legislation for which the respective Minister is responsible;
- ◆ public affairs administered by the relevant Department;
- ◆ related policy issues, annual reports and accounts, statements of strategy and corporate plans in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department;
- ◆ Statutory Instruments made by the relevant Minister and the Strategy Statement for the relevant Department.

In addition, Joint Committees are empowered to require the relevant Ministers to attend before them in advance of EU Council meetings to discuss agenda items.

Sectoral Committee activities during 2011

Apart from the ongoing consideration throughout the year by Select Committees and Select sub-Committees of Bills, Estimates and Motions referred, a wide range of policy matters were considered in some detail at Joint Committee level as follows:

- ◆ Heads of National Vetting Bureau Bill (Report published November 2011);
- ◆ Heads of Criminal Justice (Withholding information on Crimes against Children and Vulnerable Adults) Bill;
- ◆ Community Policing;
- ◆ Domestic violence and forced labour;
- ◆ Socio-economic and other implications of Autumn and Spring time adjustment arrangements;
- ◆ Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy;
- ◆ Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy;
- ◆ Offshore oil and gas exploration;
- ◆ Energy efficiency;
- ◆ draft Guidelines in relation to Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 and Reclamation of Wetlands and Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations 2011 [Committee report by way of a submission to the Minister published November 2011];
- ◆ proposals to stimulate job creation and retention;
- ◆ supporting indigenous enterprise and business innovation and identifying measures to enhance credit availability to business;
- ◆ the need for a better skills match between industry and school leavers and graduates with regard to second and third level curricular reform;
- ◆ barriers to taking to employment where real income is reduced;
- ◆ Social welfare fraud;
- ◆ future development of the further education sector and the proposed rationalisation of the VECs;
- ◆ Heads of the Education and Training Boards Bill 2011 (Report published December 2011);
- ◆ Illegal/problem drug use (Report published January 2012);
- ◆ Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors (NCHDs) (Report due for publication in 2012);
- ◆ Alcohol marketing;
- ◆ General Hospital Services - ongoing review;
- ◆ Childhood Obesity (Committee position paper submitted in October 2011 to the BAI consultation on advertising food and drink to children);
- ◆ Water provision;
- ◆ Homelessness;
- ◆ Pyrite damage in housing;
- ◆ Hydraulic fracturing;
- ◆ meetings with the nominated Chairpersons to Bus Éireann, Córas Iompar Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann, the National Concert Hall, the Road Safety

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THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE - DUBLIN

Authority, the National Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland, the Drogheda Port Company and the Shannon Foynes Port Company;

- ◆ Private Residential Tenancies and Rental Deposit Protection;
- ◆ six meetings on the Economy and Banking Sector with the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, representatives from the Central Bank of Ireland, the Financial Regulator, NAMA, NTMA, Allied Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide Building Society;
- ◆ Report of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Mortgage Arrears;
- ◆ the debt dynamic facing the Irish State;
- ◆ responsibilities and objectives of the newly-established Irish Fiscal Advisory Council, including an assessment of forecasting and data analysis, the merits of fiscal rules and the prudence of implementing counter-cyclical fiscal policies; and

- ◆ Public Service Reform Plan and the Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-16 Medium Term Exchequer Framework.

Non-sectoral Committee activities in 2011

Apart from the ongoing work of the Sectoral Committees detailed above, the remaining Joint and Standing Committees within the Committee Secretariat structure carried out a wide range of activities during 2011, as detailed below:

The Committee of Public Accounts examined a broad number of public bodies which had been the subject of a report from the Comptroller and Auditor General. The main issues dealt with by the Committee included the:

- ◆ operation of the unofficial SIPTU National Health and Local Government Levy Account;
- ◆ legal strategy pursued by Campus Stadium Ireland in relation to the recovery of a VAT bill from Dublin Waterworld;

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- ◆ non-disclosure of aid accounts to the Irish Red Cross;
- ◆ discrepancy in the General Government Debt of €3.6 billion;
- ◆ the annual accounts of NAMA; and
- ◆ bank stabilisation.

In addition, the Committee dealt with areas such as tax collection, social welfare fraud and the operation of the HSE. In November 2011, the Committee was briefed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on the work of his Department and on the public sector reform agenda. The Houses of the Oireachtas Service appeared before the Committee in January 2012 and the Committee noted the Commission Accounts for 2010.

The Joint Committee on Investigations, Oversight and Petitions, under its current Orders of Reference, was

required to make recommendations to the Houses of the Oireachtas by 27 January 2012 on revised Orders of Reference for the Committee incorporating proposals on:

- ◆ the design of a petitions system for the Houses of the Oireachtas;
- ◆ the role and remit of the Joint Committee having regard to the Programme for Government; and
- ◆ any other related matters.

During 2011, the Committee focused on developing its role and remit, considering how to fulfil that role most effectively. In this regard, three areas of responsibility were identified, namely:

- ◆ scrutiny of public service delivery;
- ◆ oversight of Oireachtas inquiries on behalf of the Houses of the Oireachtas; and



CUSTOM HOUSE, DUBLIN.

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- ◆ consideration of public petitions submitted to the Houses.

The Committee undertook initial consideration of each of these areas including a delegation study visit to the Scottish Parliament to be briefed on that Parliament's petitions system and the work of its Public Petitions Committee. The Joint Committee published a progress report in late September 2011.

The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade examined the development work of Irish Aid and met with over 40 representatives from the Diplomatic Corps and Non-Governmental Organisations in Ireland. In pursuing the Committee's various priorities, the Chairperson attended the Chairpersons of Foreign Affairs Committees (COFACC) Conference, a Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and IMF, the Global Irish Economic Forum and the Busan Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. A cross-party delegation from the Committee also visited Ethiopia, one of Ireland's 10 Programme Countries. Other issues considered during 2011 included:

- ◆ Trade Promotion - transfer of new responsibilities to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- ◆ the Famine in the Horn of Africa;
- ◆ Middle East and the Arab Spring;
- ◆ preparations for Ireland's Chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 2012; and
- ◆ ongoing engagement with the Diplomatic Corps and the work of Irish Embassies abroad.

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs examined a wide range of issues including:

- ◆ relations between the Oireachtas and the EU Institutions (in this context the Committee met with representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament in Ireland and also with the President of the European Parliament and Irish MEPs);
- ◆ priorities of the 18-month EU Presidency Programme of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus;
- ◆ EU Enlargement (Croatia and Serbia);
- ◆ EU 2020 Strategy (implementation and targets);

- ◆ access to the Irish labour market by Bulgarian and Romanian nationals and transitional arrangements as set out in the Accession Treaties;
- ◆ financial stability of the Euro area and decisions taken at European Council in relation to the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and European Stability Mechanism (ESM);
- ◆ monthly meetings with the Minister of State with special responsibility for European Affairs in advance of meetings of the General Affairs Council to enable the Joint Committee to continue effective oversight of the Government's policy approach and to have an input into, and an exchange of views on, topics arising on the agendas of those Council meetings; and
- ◆ in the context of its participation at the Conference of the Committees of the National Parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European Affairs (COSAC), the Committee discussed and agreed its preliminary views on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 – 2020 and reviewed the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty from a parliamentary perspective.

The two Select Standing Committees on Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann and of Seanad Éireann undertook on-going work in relation to their statutory functions under the Ethics in Public Office Acts.

The Joint Committee on Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement examined a wide range of issues during 2011 including:

- ◆ a Decade of Commemorations;
- ◆ the work of the Parades Commission;
- ◆ the North-South Ministerial Council – report from An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore T.D.; and
- ◆ the role of sport organisations in combating sectarianism, racism and discrimination in Northern Ireland.

As part of its work programme, the Committee visited Northern Ireland and the border region on a regular basis to meet with local representatives and community leaders.

In that context, the Chairperson led a cross-party delegation from the Committee to visit Cultúrlann McAdam

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Ó Fiaich in North Belfast and a Peace Wall/Gate, also in Belfast. The Chairperson also met with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commissioner and a delegation from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee of the UK House of Commons.

Committee Secretariat procedural knowledge management initiatives

During 2011, Committee Secretariat management used a combination of regular individual, sub-group and full group meetings with Committee Clerks and Senior Clerks to brief staff on developments and share procedural knowledge and clerking experiences. Development of procedural standards and capacity in the Committee Secretariat was also enhanced by way of ongoing written advice resources, supplemented by informal knowledge-sharing among Clerks.

Progress was made during the recess period after the dissolution of the 30th Dáil on a review of the Clerks' Guide manual. It is intended during 2012 that as revised sections of the Guide are finalised, they will be uploaded on to a specially-designed database, which will allow for dynamic updating, knowledge capture and communication of changes to the Guide to all Clerks.

A significant review of the guidelines for the preparation and checking of Select Committee imeachtaí (minutes of proceedings) was also undertaken during the recess period. This was done with a view to developing a comprehensive "toolkit" for the preparation and checking of all 31st Dáil imeachtaí. The new toolkit, which includes indexed stencils, checklists for each stage (preparation/first check/sign-off check), master precedent and FAQ guide, was rolled out to all Committee Secretariat staff by way of briefing seminars during February 2012.

Information seminars were held in April 2011 for members and their staff, and for staff of the Committee Secretariat, on the role of the EU Commission and the European Parliament and the role of the Houses of the Oireachtas as an EU National Parliament under the Lisbon Treaty. Presentations were made by the Heads of the EU Commission and European Parliament Offices in Dublin in this context. A number of other in-house briefing sessions for Committee staff were held in the period under review in relation to:

- ◆ the 31st Dáil Committee system and changes to the Orders of Reference of Committees;

- ◆ Select Committee proceedings on Bills, including imeachtaí; and
- ◆ the role of Oireachtas Committees under the Lisbon Treaty and related Standing Orders.

During 2010, eHandbooks on procedure were developed for the Dáil and Seanad. The Committee Secretariat eHandbook project progressed towards finalisation during 2011 and is scheduled for completion and launch during 2012. When complete, it should serve as a useful tutorial/introduction to Committees. While the primary intended audience for the eHandbook product is members and their staff, it should also be of value to Committee Secretariat staff.

Fact Sheets on a range of Committee-related matters were prepared and finalised during the recess period, providing information on:

- ◆ Oireachtas Committees of the 31st Dáil/24th Seanad;
- ◆ the role and work of Oireachtas Committees;
- ◆ the role and work of Oireachtas Committees relative to EU Affairs;
- ◆ the Oireachtas National Parliament Office, Brussels;
- ◆ making submissions and presentations to Oireachtas Committees; and
- ◆ observing Oireachtas Committee meetings.

These were circulated to members as part of their introductory briefing pack and were posted on the web during February 2012. Web-pages to assist Committees achieve an improved web presence were developed during 2011 and are in use in 2012. The detailed Information Pack prepared by Members' Services section in February 2011 for all new members also included a fully updated chapter on parliamentary Committees.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

International visitors to Ireland

Each year we receive visits from members and staff of other parliaments during which issues of mutual interest are discussed. The Ceann Comhairle and the Executive Committee of Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (the

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Irish Parliamentary Association) invited parliamentary delegations to visit Ireland during 2011 from the following countries:

Promoting Ireland's influence abroad - international role of members

Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas play an international political role through their membership of international bodies such as the Council of Europe, the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly and other inter-parliamentary associations (see details below).

The Houses of the Oireachtas also maintains a close working relationship with the institutions of the European Union through its participation in:

- ◆ the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments, meetings of COSAC, (the Association of European Affairs Committees of EU National Parliaments and the European Parliament),
- ◆ Joint Parliamentary Meetings (meetings organised and chaired jointly by the parliament of the country holding the EU Presidency and the European Parliament), and
- ◆ Joint Sectoral Committee Meetings (meetings organised and chaired jointly by the relevant sectoral committee

International Visits to Ireland during 2011	
Country	Date of visit
U.S. House of Representatives	16 May
People's Republic of China	8 – 12 June
Croatia	7 – 9 September

or committees of the parliament of the Member State holding the EU Presidency and the relevant committee of the European Parliament).

Oireachtas oversight of EU measures and legislation

The Orders of Reference of the Sectoral Committees agreed by both Houses in June 2011 reflect the Programme for Government by requiring Committees to consider European Union matters within the remit of the relevant Department(s) and to engage with Ministers in the context of meetings of the Council of Ministers (Standing Order 82 (A)). Consideration of EU matters is now a standing item on the agenda for each Sectoral Committee meeting, during which the relevant Committee may consider all or some of the following issues:

Promoting Ireland's influence abroad – visits made by Oireachtas members during 2011*	
Study missions, conferences, plenary sessions and sub-Committee, preparatory or regional assembly meetings	Number
Oireachtas Committees	26
Irish Parliamentary Association/Bi-lateral Visits	1
Council of Europe Parliamentary Assemblies (Part Sessions)	4
Council of Europe Committee meetings	13
Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and Committee meetings	1
Organisation of Security Co-operation in Europe – Parliamentary Assembly and Committee meetings	2
Western European Union Parliamentary Assembly – disbanded in June 2011. Powers transferred to European Parliament under Lisbon Treaty	0
Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly	1
Election Observation Missions (Russia)	1
Total	49
*As with other statistics for 2011, the number of visits is lower than normal due to the holding of General Elections	

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GREAT COURT YARD, DUBLIN CASTLE.

- ◆ draft measures within the Committee's remit (each Committee will decide which proposals to scrutinise in depth e.g. by engaging with relevant stakeholders);
- ◆ compliance of draft legislative acts with the principle of subsidiarity and related issues in support of the role of the Houses of the Oireachtas under Article 29.4 of the Constitution, section 7 of the European Union Act 2009 and Standing Orders relating to the role of the Houses under the Lisbon Treaty. If a breach of subsidiarity is found, the Committee will report to the Houses, recommending the adoption of a reasoned opinion; and
- ◆ major policy issues and consultation papers from the EU. Committees may decide to make a "contribution" to the relevant institution on particular issues of interest or concern.

Each Committee will invite the appropriate Minister to attend in advance of relevant EU Council meetings to brief the Committee on the agenda and on the outcome of the previous Council meeting. It will also meet with Secretaries

General in relation to six-monthly reports on measures, proposed measures and other developments in relation to the EU which are provided by each Minister under the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002.

EU mainstreaming outputs in 2011 and planned activities into 2012

For the period October to December 2011, the Sectoral Committees considered a total of 366 documents/draft legislative proposals from the EU Institutions of which 5% were deemed to have significant implications and therefore warranted further scrutiny. One reasoned opinion was adopted by Dáil Éireann on non-compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in relation to the work undertaken by the Standing Order 103 Committee on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) (further details are set out below).

Sectoral Committees commenced their EU scrutiny workload in mid-October 2011 with no scrutiny reports published before year-end. However, 4 reports have since

been published during the period January to March 2012. In the period from October to December 2011, a total of 8 pre-Council meetings with 5 Ministers were held by 3 Oireachtas Committees, with an additional 4 meetings during the first 3 months of 2012 (a further 11 meetings are planned for the period April–June 2012).

Standing Order 103 Committee

The 31st Dáil held its first meeting on 9 March 2011 following the General Election and established an interim Committee on that day called the "Standing Order 103 Committee" to carry out scrutiny of EU draft legislative proposals for compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, which is a role of national parliaments under the Lisbon Treaty. (Standing Orders had been amended in December 2010 to enable the early establishment of such a committee following General Elections to both Houses and pending decisions on the establishment of a new committee system).

On 16 March 2011, the EU Commission published a draft legislative proposal for a Council Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB). The Standing Order 103 Committee held 3 meetings, including a meeting with representatives from the Department of Finance, to discuss the subsidiarity aspects of the proposal. Following deliberation, the Committee found a breach of subsidiarity and reported to Dáil Éireann accordingly, including the text of a reasoned opinion for transmission to the EU institutions. The Dáil debated a motion on the report on 17 May 2011 and adopted the reasoned opinion set out in the report which was subsequently communicated by the Ceann Comhairle to the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and to the Minister for Finance. The European Commission replied to this reasoned opinion in October 2011, thus advancing the discussion on the Commission's legislative proposal. Seanad Éireann did not convene following its own election until 25 May 2011 and, as a consequence, could not consider the CCCTB draft legislative proposal as it was outside the 8-week deadline for the subsidiarity check provided for under the Lisbon Treaty. This was the first occasion on which one of the Houses of the Oireachtas exercised its right to adopt a reasoned opinion under the Lisbon Treaty since the coming into effect of the Treaty on 1 December 2009. No further reasoned opinions were adopted during 2011.

As consideration of EU matters is now the direct responsibility of each Sectoral Committee, any further consideration and scrutiny of the policy substance of the CCCTB proposal is a responsibility of the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform.

Europe Day 2011

9th May is the anniversary of the presentation of the "Schumann Declaration" by Robert Schumann in 1950. Dáil Éireann agreed to sit on Monday, 9th May 2011 to mark Europe Day, with the theme "Where would those present like to see Europe in 2020". The Taoiseach opened the plenary session and the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Ms. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, delivered an address to the Dáil. Statements were also made by Deputy Micheál Martin, Leader of Fianna Fáil, Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, Sinn Féin, Deputies Maureen O'Sullivan, Richard Boyd Barrett and Joe Higgins, Technical Group. A specially appointed Select Committee on Europe Day convened in the Dáil Chamber in the afternoon, chaired by Joe Costello T.D., and the meeting was attended by Members of the European Parliament and Minister of State Lucinda Creighton T.D.

Planning for the parliamentary dimension of Ireland's Presidency of the EU Council in 2013

Ireland will hold the Presidency of the EU Council in the first six months of 2013 with the Houses of the Oireachtas hosting the "parliamentary dimension" of the Presidency. This dimension involves the hosting of a number of inter-parliamentary Committee meetings in Ireland, including the major COSAC plenary. It also involves participation as the lead country in the Presidency "Trio" which consists of Ireland (January–June 2013), Lithuania (July–December 2013) and Greece (January – June 2014). The Trio planning configuration ensures co-ordination of inter-parliamentary meetings and avoidance of overlap.

A Steering Group was established at official level within the Service in the last quarter of 2011 to co-ordinate preparations for the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency, with a similar group at political level chaired by the Ceann Comhairle will be established in 2012. The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs will play a lead planning role. The aim of the Steering Groups will be to deliver an effective and focussed parliamentary programme in a manner consistent with current financial and economic constraints and to this end, the Oireachtas will avail of the

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centralised provision of resources through the Office of Public Works, which is a key element of the Government's approach to the Presidency. The Service also attends all inter-departmental planning meetings in an observer capacity.

Oireachtas Representation in Brussels

The Service's new EU representative took up duty in Brussels in mid-2011. This position is a key support mechanism for the enhanced role of the Houses of the Oireachtas under the Lisbon Treaty. It enables regular, early, and informal information exchange on the results of other national parliaments' scrutiny activities and particularly on the subsidiarity provisions of the Treaty. The representative position will also be a vital component in the parliamentary dimension of Ireland's EU Presidency, including the planning period in the run-in to the Presidency and supporting Ireland's membership of the Presidency "Trio" in the 18-month period to mid-2014.

North-South Parliamentary Forum (NSPF) Working Group

The establishment of a North-South Parliamentary Forum, to bring together equal numbers of parliamentarians from the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly, for discussion of issues of mutual interest and concern, is a key institutional issue arising from the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement of 1998 and St. Andrew's Agreement of 2006. The establishment of this forum is a matter for the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly themselves. As it is linked with ongoing work towards the full implementation of the Good Friday and St. Andrew's Agreements, progress on the establishment of the Forum is periodically noted at plenary meetings of the North-South Ministerial Council.

In early 2009, two all-Party Working Groups were established in both institutions under the chairmanship of the Ceann Comhairle and the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly respectively, to take forward discussions on the North-South Parliamentary Forum, as envisaged in the Agreements. The Oireachtas NSPF Working Group continued its work during 2010 in conjunction with the Assembly NSPF Working Group and, during 2011, the two Working Groups met jointly on 3 occasions. The main issues examined included:

- ◆ the out workings of the 2010 North-South Parliamentary Forum Conference;

- ◆ ongoing discussions on the role of and arrangements for a North-South Parliamentary Forum;
- ◆ parliamentary relationships with Europe; and
- ◆ EU Common Fisheries Policy and Common Agricultural Policy.

British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The main focus for the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) during 2011 was on the following issues:

- ◆ employment and economic recovery;
- ◆ effects of NAMA on the Northern Ireland and UK economy;
- ◆ supporting British-Irish trade and investment;
- ◆ tourism;
- ◆ establishment of the British Irish Chamber of Commerce;
- ◆ commemorations; and
- ◆ UK Commission on a Bill of Rights.

The 42nd BIPA plenary was held in Cork from 12th-14th June, 2011. An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. addressed the plenary whose theme was "Employment and Economic Recovery". The 43rd BIPA plenary was held in Brighton from 23rd-25th October, 2011 and was addressed by Lord Shutt of the Northern Ireland Office and Mr. David Ford, MLA and Minister for Justice in the NI Executive.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Communications Unit

According to public opinion surveys conducted in 2010 on behalf of the Service, up to 50% of people surveyed feel that they do not have a basic understanding of how the Houses of the Oireachtas function and they do not fully understand the actual role of parliament or its members. Over 50% of those surveyed also indicated that they have a poor perception of the Parliament and have a low level of trust and confidence in it. One way of addressing these challenges is to provide people with clear information about the role and work of both the Houses of the Oireachtas and its members.

In 2007, the Houses of the Oireachtas decided to join the many other national parliaments that have become proactive in seeking to address these problems by

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communicating and engaging with their public in a strategic manner. The Communications Plan 2010-2012 continues to address some of these concerns. National parliaments throughout the world have comparable communications strategies that combine media relations with education, the web, broadcasting and parliamentary visitor programmes. Indeed, the challenges of relatively low-levels of public understanding and poor public perception are common to parliamentary democracies worldwide.

The goals of Communications Unit are-

- ◆ to increase public understanding of the Houses of the Oireachtas and its members;
- ◆ to improve public perception of the national parliament.

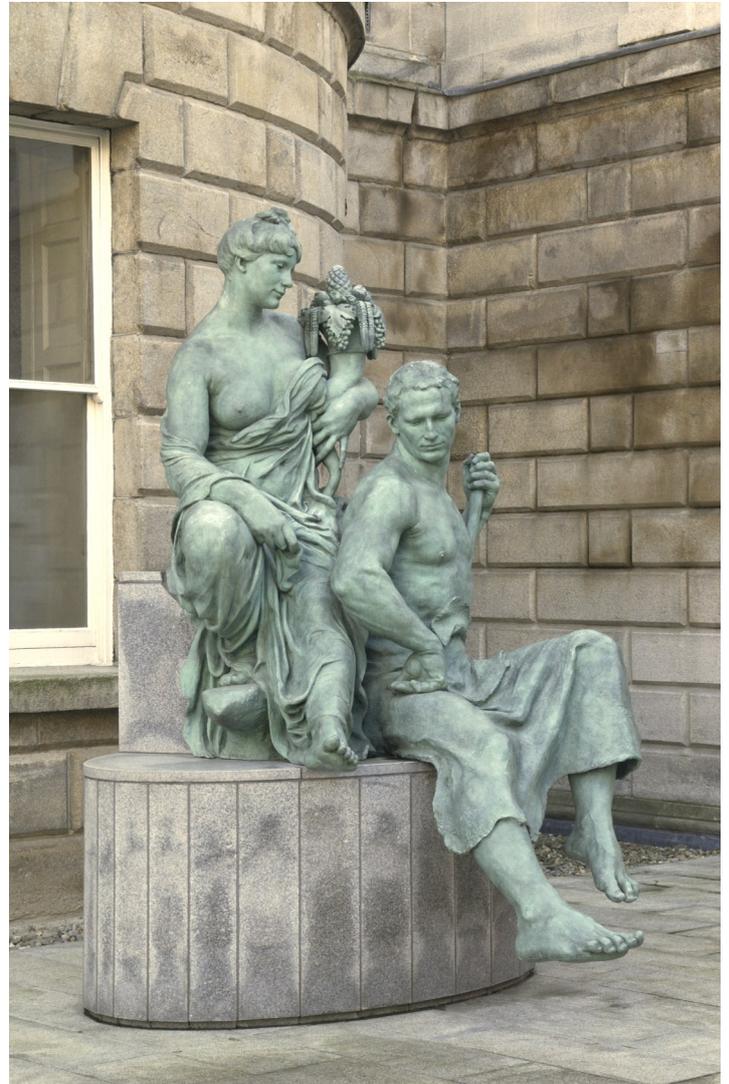
Our goals explained

We seek to increase understanding through a comprehensive public information service that communicates with the public across the various media that the public chooses to use.

An integrated and reliable public information service provides up-to-date and easy to access information about the Parliament and the work of its members. In 2011, a comprehensive Plain English Project sought to introduce a more accessible use of language when the Parliament seeks to communicate with the public. Staff were trained, new plain English guidelines were agreed and the booklet "A Brief Guide to How Your Parliament Works" was launched on RTE's John Murray show by the Ceann Comhairle.

Our public information is targeted and tailored for different audiences. For example, weekly reports in local newspapers and local radio stations nationwide are providing up-to-date and reliable reports of the parliamentary work of local members of the Houses of the Oireachtas tailored for local audiences.

Post-primary students continue to have access to an Oireachtas-in-the-classroom workshop. This programme provides students of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) workshops, with both on-site workshops as part of school visits to Leinster House as well as workshops in the classroom.



There are three core objectives to our communications strategy-

- ◆ to provide accurate and timely information about the Houses of the Oireachtas to the media;
- ◆ to improve public access to and engagement with the Houses of the Oireachtas and its members;
- ◆ to communicate the functions and work of the Houses of the Oireachtas to a wide range of stakeholders.

The strategies to achieve our objectives are as follows:

- ◆ Media Relations and PR;
- ◆ Website;

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- ◆ Broadcasting;
- ◆ Education;
- ◆ Social Media;
- ◆ Publishing;
- ◆ Public Events;
- ◆ Public Information.

Media Coverage

We also seek to improve perception by supporting factual, accurate and informed media coverage. We recognise the intrinsic role of a free press in a fully functioning parliamentary democracy. The media's scrutiny of the parliamentary system and the work of the Dáil, Seanad and Committees is an essential trigger for informed public debate and engagement with the parliament. The Communications Unit supports the media to facilitate reporting on parliamentary business and *inter alia* the communication of the work of Parliament to the public. We also appreciate the power of the media in shaping public perception and, for this reason, we are proactive in responding to inaccurate coverage.

Regional and Local Radio

Engaging with local and regional radio stations is an integral part of our Communications Plan. Our weekly "Oireachtas Constituency Report" continued in 2011. This weekly series is a customised report of contributions made by local Deputies and Senators in the Dáil and Seanad and at Oireachtas Committees, which is broadcast on selected local radio stations. Four local radio stations participated in this initiative in 2011.

In addition, local radio stations are invited to broadcast live from the Oireachtas studio facilities in Kildare House during sitting periods and three radio stations availed of this opportunity in 2011.

Local Newspapers

"This week in the Oireachtas", our weekly column continued to be popular with 11 local and regional newspapers participating on a regular basis. The articles update constituents about the parliamentary work of their local members and how it relates to them. 29 articles were published in 2011.

Events

A series of events was organised in 2011, including the annual Culture Night and the architectural forum Open House. In November 2011, the Communications Unit co-ordinated the annual Bravery Awards in Farmleigh House, in partnership with the Department of Justice.

Website development and social media

New Committee webpages were designed and delivered in Autumn 2011 incorporating a user-friendly design. The new pages have integrated a social media dimension which encourages greater public engagement with Committee initiatives. Committee staff were trained and supported in ensuring the new pages are up-to-date and thus a reliable source of public information.

2011 also saw continued development of the Houses of the Oireachtas social media service which provides followers with reliable and up-to-date news on all the business of the Houses of the Oireachtas on a daily basis. We currently have 1,540 followers on Facebook and 6,345 followers on Twitter.

Parliamentary Channel - Pilot transmission

In November 2011, the Houses of the Oireachtas and UPC launched a pilot transmission of Oireachtas proceedings on a dedicated parliamentary transmission called Oireachtas TV on UPC channel 801. A schedule for the pilot broadcasts has been agreed covering business of the Dáil, Seanad and Committees. Proceedings from the Seanad and Committees are broadcast in full at the end of each week, with selected sittings also carried live.

During 2011, the Commission established a sub-Committee to oversee the preparation of a detailed cost-effective Parliamentary Channel Development Plan. The Commission also sanctioned the engagement of a technical specialist to assist with the development of the detailed specification required to procure an operator of the channel.

Hosting of Meeting of the Irish Parliamentary (Former Members) Society in the Dáil Chamber

The Irish Parliamentary (Former Members) Society, under the presidency of Mr. Michael D'Arcy, staged a day-long seminar in the Dáil Chamber on Friday 20th January 2012 with the theme "Ireland & Europe – 50 Years A Growing". A wide range of issues were debated across 4 sessions chaired by Ms. Geraldine Kennedy, Ms. Nora Owen, Dr.

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Maurice Hayes and Minister of State Joe Costello T.D. respectively. An address was made by Minister of State Lucinda Creighton T.D. whilst other speakers included Dr. Maurice Manning, Mr. Seán Haughey, Mr. Eamon Ryan, Professor Joe Lee, Mr. Alan Dukes, Professor John Horgan and Professor Martin O'Donoghue.

Approximately 70 former members attended the seminar and it is expected that it will continue to be an annual event with different themes discussed each year.

The seminar was broadcast on the in-house broadcasting system and the Former Members Society was very pleased with the informed content of the debate.

PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICE (L&RS)

Introduction

The Library & Research Service (L&RS) delivers information and research services to support the work of the Houses of the Oireachtas. The L&RS also has a corporate information management role with responsibility for freedom of information and records management.

Parliamentary Fellowship

The Oireachtas Parliamentary Fellowship is designed to advance the study of, and contribute to scholarship on, the Houses of the Oireachtas. The L&RS managed the Fellowship programme during 2011, and the (second) Fellow's monograph titled "The evolving role of the Oireachtas in European Affairs" was completed.

Research Matters

Further to the General Elections, the L&RS promoted its expertise and services to members with a range of initiatives including a *Research Matters* publication, electoral maps (available at www.oireachtas.ie) and short "Welcome to your Library & Research Service" sessions. These initiatives supported the L&RS 2010-2012 client relations and marketing strategy.

The *Research Matters* publication outlined L&RS services to members and demonstrated the range of L&RS subject knowledge through 15 concise topical briefings. Further to the elections, L&RS staff met with over 40 new members and/or their parliamentary assistants on a one-to-one basis to develop a profile of their research needs and



to arrange for them to receive relevant electronic alerting services.

Legislative Analysis Service

During 2011, the L&RS circulated all members with almost 50 Bills Digests or Debate Packs. The Bills Digest and Debate Pack products make up the Legislative Analysis Service (LAS) which is designed to assist members in their scrutiny of legislation before the Houses. The LAS provided members with relevant, authoritative and balanced information on the legislation before the Houses in time for Second Stage debate. Many members also availed of face-to-face briefings on LAS materials with the researchers who authored Digests and Debate Packs.

The LAS seems to have become part of many members' workflow particularly since the 2011 elections, with a number of instances of members using the content of LAS in debates in the Houses.

The L&RS reviewed this service during 2011 including internal/external peer reviews and findings from this review will be used to improve the service where possible in the current resourcing climate.

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Information and Research Services to Committees

The L&RS provides specific information and research services to support the effective functioning of the Committees. These services, which are delivered under the framework of an annual *L&RS and Committee Secretariat Protocol*, aim to provide focussed information and analysis in a format which is accessible and transparent to all the members of the Committee.

During 2011, the L&RS researched and wrote a number of major research papers for the Committees on a range of issues including the cost of regulation to SMEs, the role of Oireachtas Committees in the conduct of Parliamentary Inquiries, Developments in the Retail Sector and EU Economic Governance proposals. Most of these research papers then formed the basis for Committee reports published in early 2011. The L&RS also produced a series of information notes throughout 2011 for the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality providing analysis of proposed EU legislation. The L&RS assisted the Committees in making submissions to Ministers in relation to legislative proposals, for example in relation to the Heads of the Education and Training Boards Bill.

Further to the 2011 elections, the L&RS prepared topical information notes (giving high level information on a range of important issues) in respect of each Joint Committee.

There was a particular focus in 2011 on the L&RS "questions in context" service. The L&RS provided this service for Committee members to help them to prepare for stakeholders appearing before them. The papers provided context to policies, supplemented by clearly linked and objective lines of questioning.

Finally, the L&RS wrote and presented a series of papers to the North-South Parliamentary Forum in conjunction with colleagues from the Research and Information Service, Northern Ireland Assembly. The papers and presentations included a diverse range of topics such as "gold plating" and the transposition of EU Directives, illegal immigration and human trafficking, and the common fisheries policy.

The L&RS participated in the annual conferences of the Inter Parliamentary Library and Research Network and the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation. The L&RS hosted a visit by Northern

Ireland Assembly research staff to discuss post-election strategies and products in parliamentary libraries.

Processing Documents Laid before the Houses and making them available to members

The L&RS managed the transition of documents laid before the Houses from a paper-based to an electronic environment. Following a successful pilot in the second quarter of 2011, the phased implementation of e-documents laid across all departments and offices commenced. Most documents are now laid using an online form with submitted documents being stored in a digital archive. Departments and agencies have the ability to lay documents 24/7, and feedback from departments and agencies has been overwhelmingly positive.

Completion of an Inter-Parliamentary Union toolkit

The L&RS in conjunction with the Office of the Commission and the Secretary General implemented an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) toolkit. The purpose of this research was to help members of the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Service to evaluate (using a self-assessment guide) their performance against a set of established criteria.

The final IPU parliamentary toolkit report was presented to the Secretary General and the project board in April 2011. The Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges considered the report at its December 2011 meeting and referred it to the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform which is to report back in 2012.

RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS

Debates Office

The Debates Office produces the Official Report of the debates of both Houses of the Oireachtas and the Committees. This is an authoritative complete, accurate and impartial record of the contribution of all speakers, in the language of the contribution (Gaeilge or English). The production of the Official Report is delivered through a team of Editors, Parliamentary Reporters and administrative staff. In recent years, the focus has moved from a printed version to providing an unrevised version of the Official Report on the internal network within approximately two hours of the contribution and on the Oireachtas website on a same-day or next-day basis.

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Debates Authoring System

The strategic aim of the Service for the past number of years has been to reduce its long-term dependence on a single external printer through the development of internal capacity and ownership of the printing of the Official Report. Phase One of the Debates Authoring Project, which was implemented during 2010, gives the Debates Office increased control over the capture and production of its data.

Phase Two of the project, developed during 2011, is focussed on the development of an online and paper indexing system and web publishing of the Official Report. This project will enable the indexing of debates entries to be undertaken during the authoring process. The project is currently at testing stage and will be completed during 2012.

The full roll-out of the Debates Authoring System will enable significant savings to be achieved from 2012 onwards in the printing and publishing costs associated with the production of the Official Report. This will also assist with the Service's strategic aim of publishing

information electronically so as to be more accessible to a wider audience while also achieving savings.

Debates Office developments during 2011

The Debates Office has implemented significant technological applications in recent years, including the new Debates Authoring System and voice recognition software. These innovative solutions have helped to reduce labour-intensive tasks at a time of significantly reduced resources. Alongside these technological developments, the Debates Office has used the Business Process Improvement (BPI) approach to maximise productivity and efficiency in their work practices.

The first BPI reviewed the rostering arrangements and its recommendations have now been implemented. Effectively, the increased productivity and efficiency as a result of this review has allowed the Debates Office to maintain its delivery of service despite a significant reduction in staff numbers and extended sitting hours during 2011.

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Following the success of this BPI initiative, the Debates Office is conducting a further BPI. This exercise will focus on reducing duplication across Departments, the Questions Office and the Debates Office in the processing of Written Answers for publication in the Official Report. The aim is to simplify the process, eliminate duplication and achieve efficiencies across the broad spectrum of stakeholders involved. A project team for this BPI has been established and will conduct its review during 2012.

RANNÓG AN AISTRIÚCHÁIN – TRANSLATION SERVICE

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas, Statutory Instruments, Standing Orders of the Houses, Order Papers, Proceedings of the Houses, official correspondence of members of the Houses, Strategic Plans and Annual Reports of the Commission, and miscellaneous items for the Service. It also manages and publishes An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard grammar of the Irish language). In addition, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin is the national authority of the State as regards the Irish language version of EU Treaties.

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2006

The Acts of the Oireachtas are the primary source of law in Ireland apart from the Constitution. Since July 2006, there is a statutory obligation to publish Acts of the Oireachtas simultaneously in both official languages after their enactment, as set out in section 7 of the Official Languages Act 2003. In accordance with section 3(2)(a) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2006, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission has a duty to provide official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas.

www.achtanna.ie

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides official translations on a current Act basis through its use of a customised translation aid which allows translators to automatically access precedents in the achtanna.ie database, established by An Rannóg. This programme of change was subsequently validated by the ability of the unit to meet the obligations for simultaneous translation of Acts placed on it by statute. The achtanna.ie website is being updated at present.

Statutory Instruments

The Service has recently taken over responsibility for the production of official translations of Statutory Instruments and has developed a strategy to deliver these. Three members of staff have been transferred to Rannóg an Aistriúcháin from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to assist in delivery of the strategy.

Simultaneous Translation

A simultaneous translation (interpretation) service is provided during sittings of the Dáil and of the Seanad and, if requested, during Committee meetings. Since its first publication in 1958, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin has responsibility for managing and publishing An Caighdeán Oifigiúil and has recently completed a review of this official standard grammar for the Irish language.

Recent Legislation

In 2011, 42 Acts, containing 1,456 pages of legislation, were passed by the Oireachtas and entered the translation process carried out by An Rannóg. There is a body of historic arrears of the translation of Acts from the 1990s and early 2000s, and a strategy has been put in place to clear these arrears.

Oireachtas Website

An easily-accessible Rannóg an Aistriúcháin page on the Oireachtas website has been established and is being populated with material of interest or use to both members and the general public.

Increased use of the Irish language in the Houses

In regard to the simultaneous translation service, an analysis of contributions in the 30th Dáil and the 31st Dáil has shown a substantial increase in the use of the Irish language by members and Party Leaders - from 12% in the last Dáil to 20% in the current one, with the Leaders Questions item of business in the Dáil carried out entirely through Irish during Seachtain na Gaeilge in March 2012.

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS BUILDINGS, ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Accommodation

A key element of the accommodation strategy for the Service is to move staff from rented accommodation into State-owned offices in order to achieve savings. During 2011, the Service co-operated with the OPW and moved to

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offices within the OPW's rented portfolio which resulted in significant savings in rent costs (savings are to the OPW).

The long-term plan for the Service is to move its staff to Agriculture House which would allow further rationalisation and savings to be achieved. Access to Agriculture House is dependent on the timing of decentralisation of staff from the Department of Agriculture. The use of accommodation by the Service is continuously monitored and reviewed to ensure that appropriate levels are sourced and that all accommodation is used effectively and efficiently. To ensure that the Service maintains a long-term focus, a Strategic Precinct Development Plan will continue to be progressed during 2012.

Following on from the General Elections in early 2011, there were major changes required in the allocation of offices amongst the political parties. This was successfully and efficiently completed in partnership with the Party Whips and Administrators.

Restoration of Georgian Leinster House

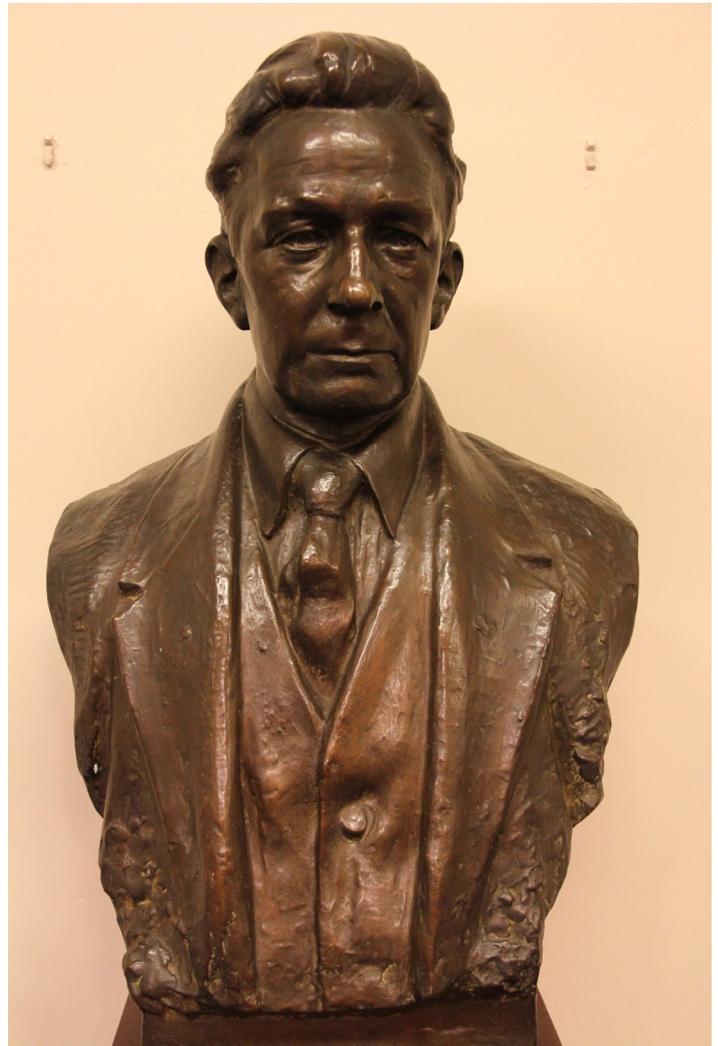
During 2011, enabling works continued on the Georgian Leinster House to preserve its structure and prepare the way for the major conservation project which is required. The current economic climate is a major factor influencing the timing of this work. Where immediate action is required for safety reasons, this work is being carried out in order to ensure that Leinster House can continue to serve as a safe environment for the conduct of parliamentary business.

Security Services in Leinster House

Leinster House is a focal point for demonstrations on both national and local issues; the frequency, scale and intensity of which remained high in comparison to previous years. Management of these protests by both the Superintendent's Section and an Garda Síochána ensured that there was no disruption to the business of the Houses and all parliamentary activities continued as normal. The Service and An Garda Síochána continuously monitor security issues to ensure that reactions to circumstances and events are appropriate.

Visitors and Events in Leinster House

The Houses continue to have a high throughput of visitors ranging from formal international visitors, parliamentary delegations and members' constituents to general visits by the public to view their parliament. Special events such as



Culture Night, Open House and the seminar on "Ireland and Europe 50 Years a Growing" hosted by the Irish Parliamentary (Former Members) Society were run during the year. In all, over 75,000 visitors passed through the Houses in 2011.

Health and Safety Policy

During 2011, the Service continued to implement its health and safety management plan to ensure that a safe workplace is achieved and maintained by all employees actively implementing the health and safety procedures set down by the Service. The Service has a Health and Safety Committee who meet to discuss issues arising in the parliamentary complex. Annual safety audits of the parliamentary complex are also conducted and any actions arising are implemented to ensure compliance with all regulations in this area.

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Energy Management

Improvements in the Houses of the Oireachtas energy usage have been made over the past number of years. A report on the Energy Usage in the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2011 is set out at Appendix 12, page 109. In early 2012, the energy management team organised an energy awareness day for members and staff to provide updates on the energy reduction programme being run in the Houses and to provide advice on how to save energy (and therefore money) at home.

Crèche

The crèche provides an on-site childcare facility for children up to age 5, as well as late-evening care and drop-in services. The facility is open to the children of members and staff and to staff of Government Departments. The crèche is operated on behalf of the Oireachtas Commission by a third party service provider and services are paid for directly by the users to the service provider.

Fitness Room

The fitness room is open to all members of the Houses and staff on payroll. 93 people joined the fitness room in 2011. User satisfaction ratings indicate a high level of satisfaction with the service.

Catering Facilities

Bar and restaurant catering facilities are provided to members, staff and visitors to Leinster House. One of the tasks for the new Facilities Management Unit has been to develop a strategy for catering over the coming years to ensure that this service is provided in the most effective manner. As well as an analysis of alternative options used in similar facilities, the Service engaged a catering expert to assess and report on potential means of increasing efficiency in the current reducing resource environment. This expert is due to report in 2012 and the results of the review will be reflected in the preparation of the job specification of the future catering manager.



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

Operational Statistics

Activity	2007	2009	2010	2011*	Total Output 2009-11	% variation 2009-11
No. of Dáil sitting hours	643	934	843	845	2,622	-9.5%
No. of Dáil sitting days	76	101	100	108	309	7%
No. of Seanad sitting hours	366	659	613	520	1,792	-21%
No. of Seanad sitting days	64	100	97	81	278	-19%
No. of Committee sitting hours	357	1,032	1,065	541	2,638	-47.6%
No. of Committee meetings	250	571	623	315	1,509	-45%
No. of Committee reports	50	58	82	30	170	-48%
No. of submissions (from Procedural Offices)	1,449	1,374	1,388	975	3,737	-29%
No. of pages printed - Order Paper	1,875	1,380	1,572	1,071	4,023	-22.4%
No. of pages printed - Question Paper	3,172	3,843	3,858	3,280	10,981	-15%
No. of takes - Debates	16,227	14,968	14,151	10,903	37,537	-27%
No. of pages printed - Bills Only	3,741	4,778	6,659	4,090	15,527	-14.4%
No. of pages printed - Amendments to Bills	751	1,075	1,264	783	3,122	-27%
No. of pages printed - Acts	1,926	1,364	1,719	1,906	4,989	40%
No. of Press releases	68	400	458	332	1,190	-17%
No. of visitors to Leinster House	81,434	103,315	87,575	75,058	265,948	-27.4%
No. of tours conducted of Leinster House	2,486	2,196	2,093	2,185	6,474	-0.5%
No. of Departmental Officials Visits	14,051	16,563	12,968	7,153	36,684	-57%

*General Elections took place in early 2011. Figures for this year reflect the fact that there were additional non-sitting weeks. 2007 statistics are included as an additional comparator, as this was the year of the last General Elections.

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Extract from Report on Comparative Benchmarking of Parliaments re Sitting Days, Sitting Hours, Recess Weeks, Parliamentary Questions:

While every effort is made in our methodology to compare like with like, all inter-parliamentary comparisons are subject to the caveat that different parliaments may have different accounting systems, some different functions and election cycles, and different systems of operation and even sitting rhythms.

Sitting Days and Hours

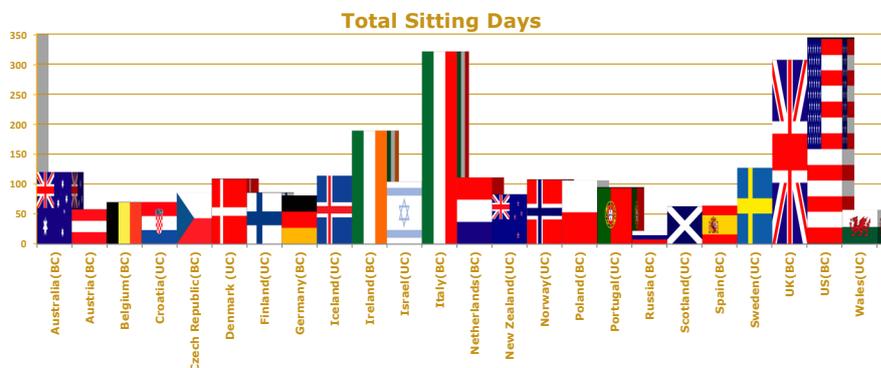
The Houses of the Oireachtas performed well when benchmarked against other national parliaments in terms of total sitting days and sitting hours, recording fourth place with a total of 189 **sitting days** and fourth place with 1,365 **sitting hours** for both Houses out of a total of 24 parliaments represented. The average recorded for 2011 in the comparison was 121 sitting days and 791 sitting hours.

In comparison with other bicameral Parliaments surveyed, the Houses of the Oireachtas is ahead of the German, Dutch and Australian Parliaments in terms of sitting days and third behind the US and UK Parliaments in terms of sitting hours.

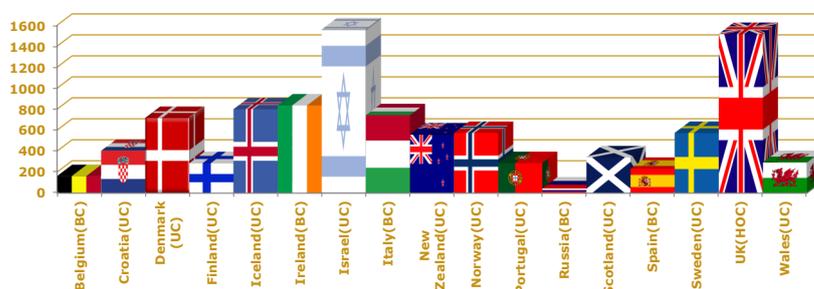
Compared to unicameral Parliaments or where results for one chamber only of a bicameral Parliament were returned, the Dáil as a chamber in its own right comes third in terms of total **sitting hours**, behind Israel and the UK, but ahead of the Icelandic and Italian Parliaments and sixth in terms of total **sitting days**, ahead of Israel, Portugal and New Zealand. In this comparison the Israeli Knesset came first in terms of total sitting hours with 1,560 hours and the Italian Parliament came first in terms of total sitting days with 153 days.

Recess Weeks

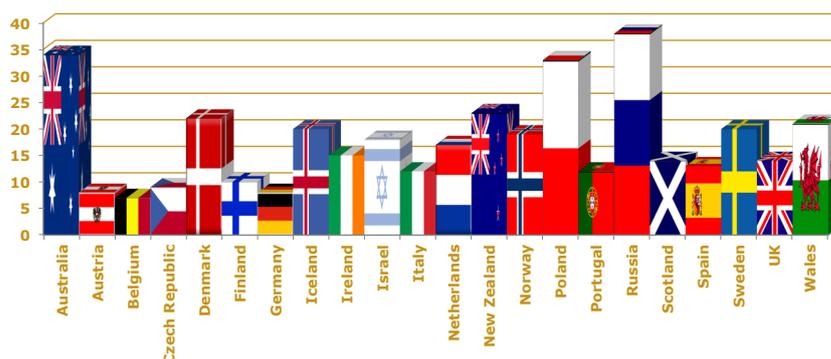
When comparing the number of recess weeks out of 22 Parliaments represented, Dáil Éireann finishes in twelfth place with a total of 15 recess weeks, with fewer weeks than the Netherlands Parliament (17 weeks) and the Israeli Knesset (18 weeks) and below the average of 17.6 weeks. The highest number of recess weeks recorded was 38 for Russia and the lowest number of recess weeks recorded was 7 for Belgium.



Total Sitting Hours - UC parliaments or one Chamber BC



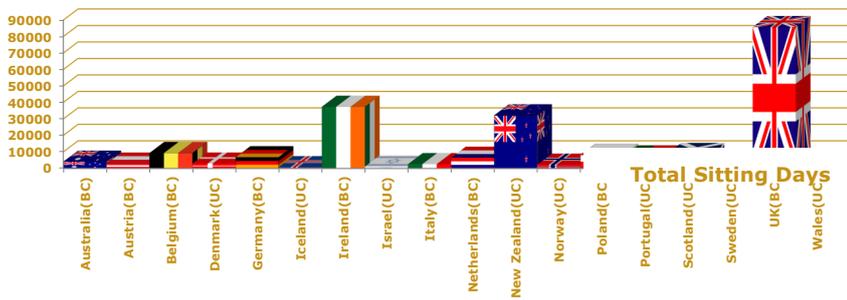
Recess Weeks



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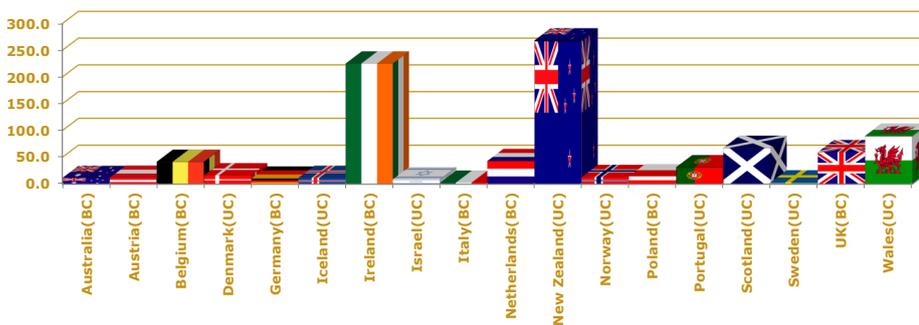
Parliamentary Questions



Parliamentary Questions

With a total of 37,397 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) tabled, Dáil Éireann registered second highest out of 18 Parliaments represented below. The Irish figure is approximately three times the average number of questions tabled of 12,515.

Parliamentary Questions per Member

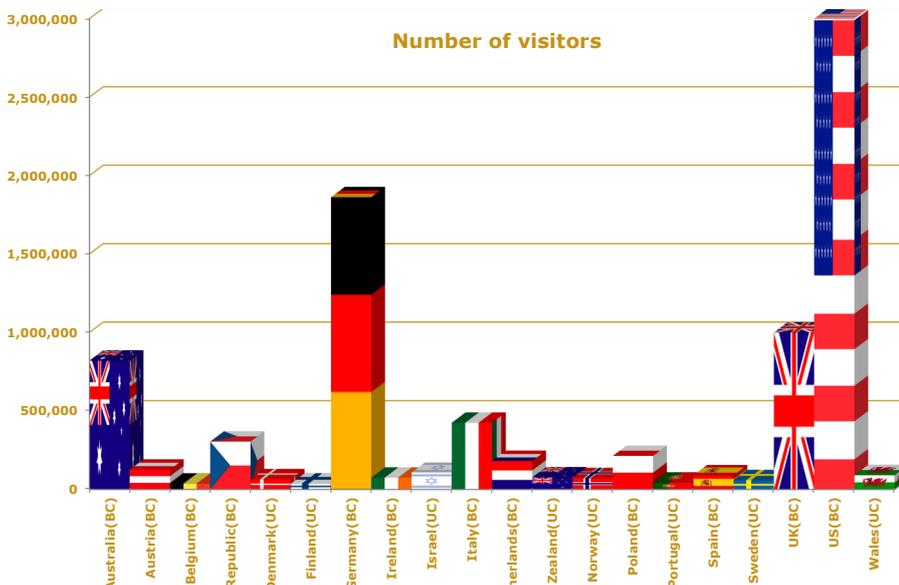


Parliamentary Questions per Member

Comparing the number of PQs tabled with the number of members of the House in which the questions were tabled, Dáil Éireann finishes in second place with 225 questions per T.D., almost seven times the average figure of 33 questions per member.

The New Zealand Parliament recorded first place in the comparison with 268.5 PQs per member and the Welsh Assembly in a distant third place with 90 PQs per member.

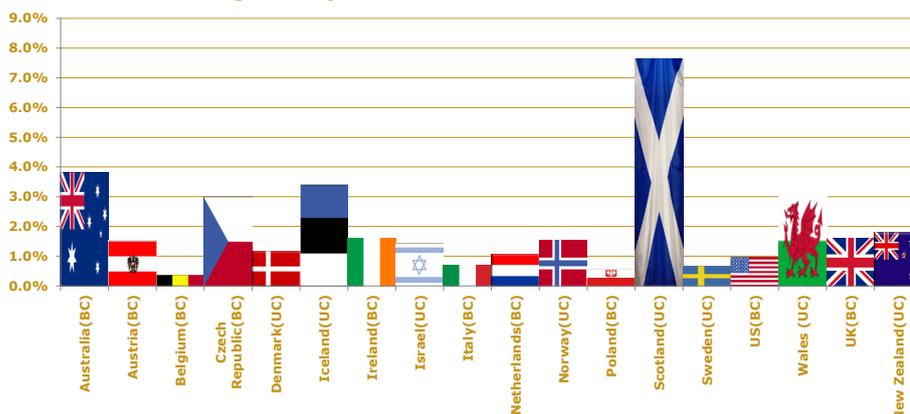
Number of visitors



Total Number of Visitors

In terms of visitors per year, and in view of its relative size, the Houses of the Oireachtas fare well when benchmarked internationally coming 14th out of 20 Parliaments represented, with 75,058 visitors annually.

Percentage of Population which visited Parliament in 2011



Visitors as percentage of Population

The Houses of the Oireachtas are in seventh place with 1.61% of the population visiting Parliament during the calendar year. The Scottish Parliament comes in first, with 7.64% of the population. The Belgian Parliament recorded the lowest percentage of the population visiting parliament at 0.01%.

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STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2: IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS



PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2: IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2 - IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

This Strategy is about ensuring that members receive the services they need to fulfill their roles as public representatives.

JOINT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (JAC)

The Joint Administration Committee represents the views of members in relation to services provided for and by the Houses and makes recommendations on these to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. During 2011, the Committee considered and recommended a course of action in relation to a range of matters including:

- ◆ ICT Acceptable Usage Policy for members and their staff;
- ◆ Parliamentary Internship Programme in the Houses of the Oireachtas;
- ◆ proposal to review the operations and management systems in the Catering and Bar Facilities;
- ◆ introduction of guided tours to members of the public on non-sitting days, without the need for sponsorship by a member of the Houses; and
- ◆ ongoing matters referred to the Committee by the Commission for consideration and recommendation.

HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

HR Unit for Members and their staff

The primary focus for the HR Unit for Members in 2011 was the management of staff turnover following the General Elections. Staff of members and qualifying parties are employed under the Scheme for the Provision of Secretarial Assistance for Members who are not Office Holders (the "Scheme"). 314 new employees were placed on payroll during 2011. 186 staff received redundancy payments totalling €7.1m and a further 78 staff transferred to Departments as staff of Office holders (e.g. to Ministerial offices in Government Departments).

During 2011, the HR Unit for Members provided support and advice to Party Administrators and to new and returning members in their role as employers. The Unit also worked with the Party Administrators on the implementation of Commission decisions in relation to additional resources for qualifying parties. In September 2011, the Commission agreed to cap the overall budget at a level of €20m per

annum for staffing under the Scheme and approved maximum staff allocations for qualifying parties for the duration of the 31st Dáil.

In terms of service improvement, the HR Unit for Members now provides information on the members' intranet including all forms related to the Scheme.

Members' Pensions Section

This section provides for the payment of pension entitlements to retired members and deceased members' spouses and children. In 2011, there was a particular emphasis on ensuring the efficient administration of termination allowances and pension payments to former members following the General Elections. As part of this process, a Pensions Handbook (a practical overview of current pension entitlements for members) was updated and made available prior to the elections.

During 2011, the section:

- ◆ liaised with former members on their pension entitlements;
- ◆ offered assistance to new and returning members;
- ◆ paid termination allowances to 96 former members; and
- ◆ made administrative arrangements for 54 new pensioners – a 15% increase on the pre-election number of pensioners.

Pension Schemes

In 2011, the Pension Section rolled out pension information seminars to:

- ◆ established Civil Servants recruited before 6th April 1995,
- ◆ established Civil Servants recruited on or after 6th April 1995,
- ◆ non-established State Industrial Employees, and
- ◆ political staff who are members of the Superannuation Scheme for Officers Employed under the Scheme for the Provision of (Oireachtas) Secretarial Assistance.

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STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2: IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

All staff attending these seminars were also given information hand-outs and pension benefit statements from the Human Resources Management System (HRMS). Separately, detailed Pension Benefit Statements were provided to in excess of 95% of staff throughout 2011. The section made administrative pension arrangements for 37 former political staff and 26 former civil service staff who retired on or before 29 February 2012.

Training for Members and Political Personnel

A key project for 2011 was the design and delivery of the Training & Information Programme for Members of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad and their staff. Roll-out of this programme commenced in March. Overall 57 members attended ICT training and 42 members attended in-house procedural and other information seminars. 453 political staff attended ICT training and 231 attended in-house procedural and other information seminars. The most popular training course availed of by political staff was Constituents Database training which was attended by 175 staff.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES/MEMBERS' SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Public Representation Allowance

The Parliamentary Standard Allowance was introduced under regulations in March 2010 as a single allowance for members' travelling and parliamentary expenses. The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform is the regulatory authority for members' allowances. The Parliamentary Standard Allowance contains two elements: the first component of the allowance is the travel and accommodation allowance for attendance at sittings of the Houses and the Committees; and the second component of the allowance is the Public Representation Allowance. Where a member selects the vouched option of the Public Representation Allowance, this is subject to audit. The regulations dictate that at least 10% of those members who received vouched amounts of the Public Representation Allowance may be audited.

Conduct of the 2010 Audit

The first audit of Public Representation Allowance was conducted in 2011 by an independent consultant professional auditor, selected by a competitive tender process.

The auditor was responsible, independently of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, for preparing an audit process document and for communicating with the members selected for audit in relation to all matters. As part of the contract, the auditor implemented a system to select the members for audit by random sample. A total of 110 members, who received vouched allowances in 2010, were auditable and the auditor selected 11 of these (10%) for audit by random sample.

The detailed audit plan to conduct the audit was prepared independently by the auditor. Neither the Service nor the Commission has a role in the conduct of these audits. In addition, all records are held by the members themselves for the audit purposes and not by the Service. The purpose of the audit was to establish: (1) that a member has receipts to match the amount of allowance paid, and (2) that those receipts were in respect of items which are allowable expenses under the regulations. Information on the Parliamentary Standard Allowance payments, including the audit reports are published on the Oireachtas website.

Audit Report

The audit report submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas was considered by both the Commission and the Audit Committee in December 2011. The auditors provided the necessary certification in respect of all members audited. The audit report made recommendations relating to the expenses system. The administrative amendments have been included in the updated Audit Guidelines. A small number of more substantive items arising from the auditor's report will be considered by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform as part of the review of the Parliamentary Standard Allowance taking place in 2012.

Print Facility

Established in 2007, the Print Facility undertakes printing work for members of both Houses and qualifying parties. The facility is provided by the Commission pursuant to legislation and may be used by members, solely in connection with their parliamentary duties, and by qualifying parties, for the purposes of facilitating the parliamentary activities of their elected members.

The Print Users Council periodically reviews material printed with a view to establishing a body of precedents which will provide clarity to both the users and the operators of the facility on the basis of accepted

PROGRESS UNDER OUR THREE STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 2: IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS



benchmarks/examples for future acceptable use.

During 2012, a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be presented by the Print Users Council to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission in relation to the provision of printing facilities. The SLA will be divided into three sections which stipulate:

- ◆ applicable law and appropriate use,
- ◆ the responsibilities of the members, and
- ◆ the responsibilities of the Print Facility management.

TECHNOLOGY AND OFFICE SUPPORT

ICT support services

ICT services for members and their staff are provided both in Leinster House and countrywide in their homes (as appropriate) and constituency offices through an externally managed services contractor. Substantial annual savings are being achieved under a managed service contract which

is in place until March 2014. The internally-staffed ICT Unit also provides first-line ICT support services to 370 civil service staff.

Under regulations made by the Commission, a specified set of ICT equipment together with broadband service, is supplied to each Deputy or Senator. ICT supports and services for members are subject to on-going review and development, with the following key standard ICT supports in place for members:

- ◆ a service desk based in Leinster House providing telephone and desk-side support, and supported by a nationwide team of field staff;
- ◆ broadband connections between members' constituency offices/homes and Leinster House;
- ◆ through web enablement, all members may now access their Leinster House files via a secure off-site logon facility;

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- ◆ a comprehensive constituency database management system for handling constituency casework. This system facilitates tailored and targeted correspondence ranging from individual replies to customised and personalised constituency mailshots;
- ◆ access on the move to key services. Members may use certain mobile devices to access their email while “on the move” – the Oireachtas IT systems integrate with these devices;
- ◆ digital dictation facilities are also available;
- ◆ Voice over Internet Protocol telephony services in the Leinster House complex;
- ◆ WiFi is available in all areas of the Leinster House complex. A guest access system is available for use by visitors; and
- ◆ a video conferencing system is available to members.

Data Storage

During 2011, the Service completed a programme of enhancing the security and resilience of its data storage facilities.

Data Security

ICT security awareness presentations were provided to members during 2011.

All data storage media is encrypted. To enhance existing security measures, restrictions were placed on connection of third-party devices to USB ports.

The ICT Unit also implemented a series of changes/restrictions on how data can be accessed and transported.

Business Continuity Planning/Disaster Recovery

Work in relation to Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning has been on-going since 2009. The current IT systems support all critical services that are required to facilitate simultaneous sittings of both Houses and their committees in an alternative location to the Leinster House complex.

ICT Strategy

A review of implementation of the 2008-2010 ICT Strategy was conducted in 2011, including a post-implementation review of key projects to determine whether anticipated benefits have been realised. A new ICT Strategy is currently being prepared.

Internal Audit ICT Security recommendations

Several Internal Audit ICT security recommendations relating to the use of computer systems were implemented in 2011.

Members' Acceptable Usage Policy

An Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) dealing with members' use of Oireachtas ICT facilities was presented to the Joint Administration Committee which recommended adopting the policy for members. The Commission agreed the policy in February 2012.

General Elections

Arising from the 2011 General Elections, the ICT Unit processed over 700 changes to computer user accounts.

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L&RS on demand information and research requests 2011		
Client category	No. of requests completed	% of requests
Members	1,514	48
Members' staff	834	27
Committees *	133	4
Service staff	234	8
External – ECPRD	56	2
External – Other	291	9
External – General Public	69	2
Total	3131	100

* Work for Committees tends to involve larger pieces of research with longer lead times. The volume is smaller than that for other client categories but significant time and staff resources are involved.

Managed IT Support Contract

Following a Competitive Dialogue procurement process which was conducted during 2010 and early 2011, a contract for a managed IT Service was awarded to Fujitsu Ireland Ltd. The new contract secured significant cost reductions and included the provision of several additional services. The contract runs until March 2014.

Ministers and Ministers of State

A Managed IT Service for constituency-based offices of Ministers and Ministers of State enables government office holders to continue to use Oireachtas services for constituency offices. In the longer term, this is expected to give rise to significant efficiencies and cost reductions by standardising service provision and by avoiding otherwise unnecessary rotation of equipment.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

On-demand information and research services to individual members

Members used the on-demand information and research service from the Library & Research Service (L&RS) to contribute to parliamentary debates, scrutinise legislation, develop and analyse policy, keep abreast of constituency issues and prepare for media appearances.

The L&RS responded to over 3,000 on-demand information and research queries from individual members and other users during 2011. Almost half of all requests

received were received directly from members.

The L&RS undertook formal cross-team peer reviews to ensure that its research was fit for purpose and accessible.

Briefings for all members on a wide range of policy issues

The L&RS published eight *Economic Indicators* and seven *Spotlights* during 2011. These research products are designed to provide members with regular analyses of a wider range of policy issues. The *Economic Indicators* are written by economists in the L&RS and examine key indicators in relation to the Irish economy. As part of this series, a poster illustrating the budget cycle was produced. The *Spotlights* are written by L&RS multi-disciplinary research teams (and available on oireachtas.ie) and covered a range of topics in 2011 including credit union regulation, social welfare fraud and duty to inform, and whistle-blowing.

Enhanced access to information and collections

Press monitoring services were rationalised and an enhanced press monitoring service is now delivered to members, Committees and staff of the Service. The enhanced service includes subject-based alerts and articles delivered by email. A discovery tool was purchased, and when fully implemented, this will provide L&RS users with enhanced access to its information resources.

A report was commissioned by the L&RS on the historical significance of its Dublin Castle and Irish Office collections. The report found the collections are inherently significant, and contain much that is either rare or unique to the L&RS. Additional in-depth research into the collections was undertaken by a JobBridge intern.

During 2011 the technical infrastructure for an online parliamentary library was developed, which will facilitate access by members of the public to the historical collections and to the collection of Documents Laid before the Houses since the foundation of the State.

The L&RS developed communications principles and a related action plan to provide a framework for clear, consistent and appropriate communication in the L&RS. The L&RS professional development programme was substantially implemented; a review in the fourth quarter highlighted the priorities for 2012.

The L&RS streamlined its procurement processes particularly in relation to press monitoring and books.

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MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

Operational Statistics

Activity	2009	2010	2011	Total 2009-11	% variation 2009-11
No. of ICT help desk calls	7,536	9,462	16,182	33,180	115%
No. of payments	8,122	8,410	8,985	25,517	10.6%
No. of members on training courses	120	2	57	179	-52.5%
No. of political personnel on courses	301	51	453*	805	50%
No. of FOI requests dealt with by Members' Services	53	58	25	136	-52.8%
No. of queries dealt with by Members' Services (telephone/written)	3,025	2,295	3,370	8,690	47%

* General Elections took place in early 2011. Figures relating to political personnel on training courses reflect the fact that there was a significant turnover of political personnel compared to non-election years.

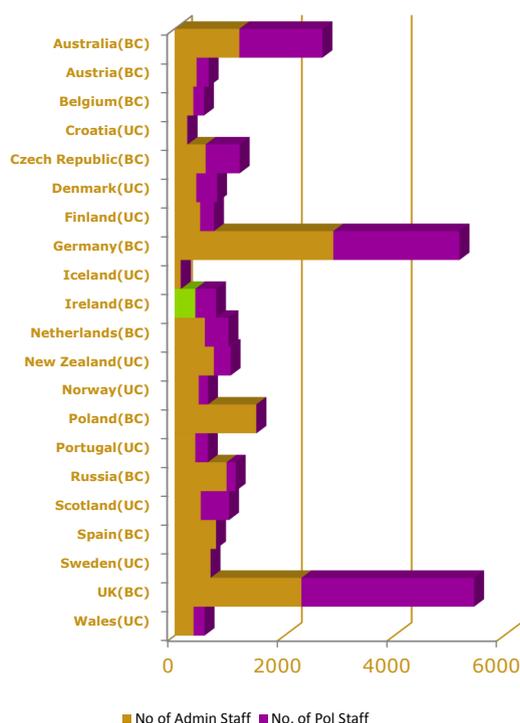
Extract from Report on Comparative Benchmarking of Parliaments:

Total staff in Parliament

With a combined total of 795 staff (incorporating both administrative staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service and members' political staff), the Houses of the Oireachtas records the twelfth highest total number of staff of 21 parliaments represented, behind Germany (5,190), Australia (1,813), Scotland (1,036) and the Netherlands (981) while the Icelandic Parliament has the least staff in the comparison at 116 staff. The average total staffing figure for the Parliaments which responded is 868, almost 75 higher than the Irish figure. However, it should be noted that the manner in which each Parliament counts and measures staff numbers, particularly political staff numbers, may be quite different and therefore these figures are only indicative.

The Houses of the Oireachtas recorded the fifth highest proportion of members' political staff to total staff at 49%. The UK Parliament recorded the highest total in the comparison with 58%. The Swedish and Spanish Parliaments recorded the lowest total in the comparison with 0% (political staff are employed directly by the parties).

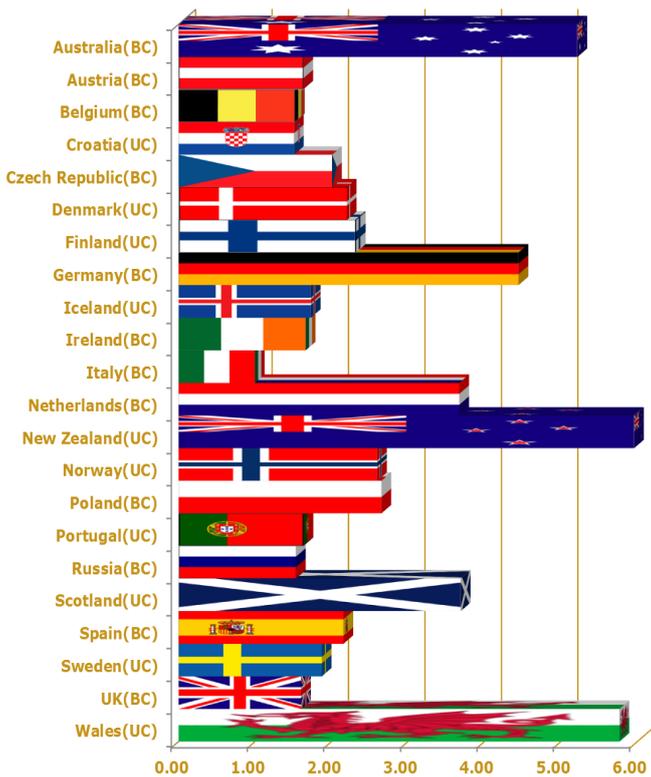
Total Parliamentary Staff- Administrative/Political Staff



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No of Admin Staff to each Member



Total Staff per Member



Ratio of total staff to members – administrative and political staff

Of the 23 parliaments represented, the Houses of the Oireachtas is in twelfth place in terms of the ratio of overall staff numbers (both staff of the Service and political staff) to members, with a ratio of 3.5 staff to each member. The Australian Parliament finished in first position with 13.2 staff to each member.

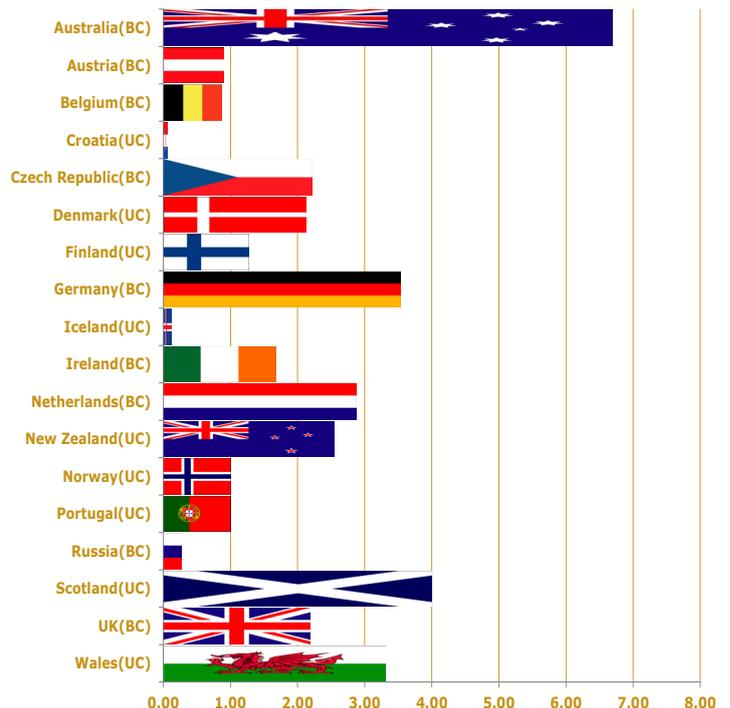
Ratio of administrative staff to members

Ireland has the fifteenth lowest number of administrative (i.e. parliamentary service) staff to each member with 1.66 staff to each member. The New Zealand Parliament is in first place with 5.96 administrative staff per member.

Ratio of political staff to members

In the comparison of the number of political staff to the number of members, Ireland finishes in tenth place out of 18 parliaments, with a ratio of 1.67 staff per member. The Australian Parliament has the highest staff ratio per member with 6.7.

Political Staff to Member



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STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 3 - ENHANCING SERVICE CAPABILITY

This Strategy is about achieving the highest standard in public service and parliamentary administration

MANAGING PEOPLE AND BUDGETS

Human Resources (HR) Services

HR Services comprises:

- ◆ Personnel Unit (which provides services in respect of civil service staff);
- ◆ HR Unit for Members (which provides services to members and political personnel);
- ◆ Training & Development Unit (which provides training services to members, political personnel and to civil service staff);
- ◆ Members Pensions Unit;
- ◆ Salaries Section; and
- ◆ Croke Park Implementation Unit.

There are two main categories of staff in Leinster House. Firstly, there are the established civil service staff of the Commission. As of April 2012 there are 390 sanctioned posts of which 367 posts are filled by 378 people. In addition, 53 staff are employed as "industrial civil servants" between the Restaurants, Bars and Print Facility. Secondly, staff of members and parties under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance (459 people employed in 381 full-time equivalent posts) are also paid by the Commission but are not public servants. The Personnel Unit provides services to the civil service staff while the HR Unit for Members provides services to members' staff.

HR – overview of current operating environment

The Commission has statutory authority to decide its own civil service staff numbers up to and including Principal Officer standard level but has no role in relation to the terms and conditions of staff which continues to be a matter for the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. A resource plan is reported to and agreed with the Commission on an annual basis. In 2009, the Commission agreed to apply (to its own civil service staff) the principles of the Government "Moratorium" on recruitment and also agreed to the target reduction in civil service numbers recommended by An Bord Snip Nua.

Since 2009 the Commission has, at the request of the Secretary General, sanctioned the filling of a small number of vacancies but only where the post is a designated critical post. Also, the principle generally applied is that where a post is filled, the consequential vacancy is suppressed. Pay reductions and pension levies have affected all of our staff and the Transforming Public Services Agenda and the Public Service Agreement (the Croke Park Agreement) require us to reduce expenditure, reduce staff numbers and work more efficiently, i.e. we need to "do more with less". Since 2009, our civil service staff numbers have been reduced by 48 posts or 11%; payroll costs have been reduced by over €2m in the same period.

HR Plan

Our HR Plan, setting out the priority activities for HR Services for the period 2010-2012, was approved by the MAC in November 2010, and issued to staff shortly afterwards. Progress on implementation of the HR Plan is reported quarterly to the MAC.

Management Seminar for the Service

A seminar for senior managers on the key managerial challenges now facing the Service was held in March 2011. It was attended by MAC members, Principal Officers and Principal Clerks/Assistant Principals. As a result of the Seminar, Focus Groups met to consider the challenges and networks for senior managers of the Service were established. Outputs from the Seminar and Focus Groups informed the Organisational Development Programme which is now a priority for the Service.

Flexible Working Hours

Following on from the introduction of a System for Recording Attendance, a pilot "flexitime" system was rolled out in early 2011 following consultation with staff, unions and the Partnership Committee. Four sections are participating in the pilot which was extended to end February 2012. Proposals will be brought to the MAC through the Partnership Committee process during 2012.

Health and Safety Committee

A Health and Safety Committee was established and includes representatives from all areas of the Service as

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well as political personnel. The Committee is chaired by the Personnel Officer and, in accordance with statutory provision, meetings are held on a quarterly basis.

Human Resource Shared Services Centre (HRSSC)

The Personnel Unit is currently engaged with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to transferring a portion of Personnel Unit's administrative functions to the HRSSC (e.g. administration of annual leave, sick leave). This project will take up to 12 months to complete, with a view to the Service going live on the HRSSC in late 2012/early 2013. During 2012, the Service will also assess the value of transferring Salaries and Pensions functions to the HRSSC.

Disability statistics

Our last complete survey of staff in respect of 2010 indicated that 4.1% of staff declared themselves as having a disability. This exceeds the target of 3%.

Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)

Responsibility for compliance with PMDS is assigned to Principal Officers and is reported on a quarterly basis. The Service has circulated the new PMDS form, to be used for the PMDS process from 2012. The new form was devised by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in conjunction with civil service unions, to help streamline and simplify the process for use in 2012.

We have commenced a review of the customised competency profile (developed by the Service in 2001) to assess whether the competencies and the indicators remain fit for purpose. A cross-functional team is undertaking the review and this will feed into the Organisational Development Programme.

Partnership Committee

The Partnership Committee met on three occasions during 2011. The issues considered included:

- ◆ Action Plan under the Croke Park Agreement and progress reports on the action plan;
- ◆ Customer Service Action Plan 2011-2013;
- ◆ update on Flexitime Pilot;
- ◆ report from Sub-group on Disability Awareness; and
- ◆ Sub-group on Bereavement Policy.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training for staff of the Service

During 2011 we continued to provide training for staff of the Service. These training interventions covered both technical and personal development training, with training interventions delivered both externally and in-house. Training provided covered the following areas:

- ◆ Customer Service training;
- ◆ ICT Training in the Office Suite due to the roll-out of upgraded software and specialist ICT training, as required;
- ◆ Language training;
- ◆ Freedom of Information Act;
- ◆ Project Management;
- ◆ Internal Audit training;
- ◆ Public Procurement;
- ◆ Business Process Improvement;
- ◆ Mediation training;
- ◆ Communications training;
- ◆ Interview training;
- ◆ Translation Aid training (for staff of Rannóg an Aistriúcháin); and
- ◆ Staff Liaison Programme (training for mentors for members of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad).

Organisational Development, Leadership and Values

The Service has recently undergone a significant restructuring at top management level, reducing a 4-directorate structure to 2 main divisions (Parliamentary Services and Corporate and Members' Services). Further development initiatives have seen the establishment of three sub-committees of the Management Advisory Committee. In parallel with these structural changes, the Service recognises the need for a continuing strategic focus on enhancing the Service as an organisation and developing people as its key resource. One of the priorities for the Service agreed for the new Corporate Business Plan relates to People and Organisation. This is a new strategic

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priority wherein we invest in our people and strengthen our organisation with a view to enhancing the Service's Organisational Development (OD) capacity. The Service recognised the absence of a dedicated and expert resource to manage this process, and the need for such an expert to add momentum to existing development and change initiatives.

In this regard, it was agreed to recruit an expert in the area of Organisational Development who would also offer an expert and structured approach to developing human resource strategies and action plans. This person was recruited in December 2011 and, following consultation with various internal stakeholders, has undertaken an organisational analysis. During 2012 the Training and

Development Unit will provide support, research and advice to the OD Programme Team and will implement new learning and development interventions. This project will also deliver the MAC-led Leadership Development Programme and will feed into the Principal Officer network established during 2011.

Professional Development Programme for the Library & Research Service (L&RS) staff

The L&RS enhanced its capability by focusing on the professional development of its people using ICT innovatively, collaborative working and good governance during 2011. A Professional Development Programme for L&RS staff was prepared and the implementation of the

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related action plan was commenced.

Certified Payroll Technician Course

6 staff of the One Stop Shop, Salaries Unit, Personnel Unit and Members' Services completed a two part Certified Payroll Technician Course in December 2011.

Parliamentary and Legislative Studies Course

A Parliamentary and Legislative Studies course, delivered by Trinity College Dublin, was completed in June 2011. Trinity College will award the 13 successful participants with a certificate at Level 7 (Special Purpose Award) on the National Qualifications Framework. Three modules of this course are now being rolled out to staff of the Committee Secretariat.

Cleaning Operative Proficiency Certificate (COPC)

12 members of the cleaning staff participated in the COPC programme in October 2011.

In-house seminars

The following seminars were delivered by staff of the Service:

- ◆ Plain English seminars;
- ◆ Risk Management Information sessions;
- ◆ Records Management Information session; and
- ◆ Standing Orders Appreciation seminars.

Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme

The Refund of Fees scheme is a Civil Service post-entry education scheme which supports career development by encouraging civil servants to engage in self-development and life-long training. During the 2011-12 academic year, 43 staff of the Service participated in this scheme.

Health, Safety and Well-being Programme

The following health and safety courses/well-being seminars took place during 2011:

- ◆ Occupational First Aid;
- ◆ Fire Warden;
- ◆ Loss and Bereavement; and
- ◆ Arthritis Ireland.

Seminars are also regularly held on health and safety,

disability awareness and health promotion. Flu vaccinations were also organised on-site for both members and staff during 2011. 131 people availed of the service (subject to the payment by them of a fee to the medical practitioner providing the service).

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

Staff Exchange Programmes and Networks

There are two formal exchange programmes in place with the German Bundestag and the Danish Folketing. Under these programmes, each parliament hosts two members of staff from the other parliaments in alternating years. The Service hosted two visiting delegations in 2011. Two members of the Bundestag visited the Service in October 2011. A delegation representing the Department for Services for Members at the Swedish Parliament also visited the Service in May 2011. These exchange programmes have proved very useful for establishing networks and informal contacts, and allow for ongoing exchange of views and work practices. The Service has recently accepted an invitation from the Canadian Parliament to participate in their Parliamentary Officers' Study Programme. A representative of the Service has been selected to participate in the next programme which is due to take place at the end of April 2012.

The Debates Office is continuing with its exchange programme with the Scottish Parliament whereby, since 2004, one staff member from the Debates Office spends four weeks working there while a counterpart works in the Oireachtas. The most recent exchange occurred in September 2011 and a further exchange is planned for September 2012.

Formal and semi-informal networks which exist between the Service, Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies:

The Administrative Contact Group (Directors of Corporate Services) – generally covering HR, Finance and Members' Services issues has been in existence since 1999 and meets approximately every six months, on a rotating basis in terms of location, to share and develop initiatives on matters of common interest. The Group met in Edinburgh in June 2011 and again in Stormont in February 2012.

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The Heads of ICT Group (which has been in existence since 2006) generally meets once annually on a rotating basis in terms of location and shares ICT information between the parliaments and assemblies. It last met in London in March 2011.

The Parliamentary Lawyers Conference (Parliamentary Legal Advisors and equivalents) has been in existence since 2002 and generally meets once annually, most recently in Wales in November 2011.

The Committees Group (Clerks' Seminar) has been in existence since 2000 and acts as a common forum on Committees and meets approximately twice annually. The Group met in the Isle of Man in September 2011 and again in Stormont in March 2012.

Similarly, the Inter-Parliamentary Research and Information Network (IPRIN) serves as a forum for parliamentary research and for the exchange of knowledge in order to develop and improve the quality of information/

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research services to members. The L&RS is an active member of this network and since mid-2010, the L&RS has responsibility for managing and developing the IPRIN website for a two-year period.

From 2010, the Internal Audit function of the Service participates in an informal network of Heads of Internal Audit in Parliament composed of representatives of the parliaments and assemblies of the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey. The group meets regularly to share information, knowledge and experience of the work of internal audit in a parliamentary and public service context. The group met in Dublin in June 2011 and again in Edinburgh in March 2012.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Best practice in financial management

The Service has a tightly controlled financial management and reporting structure to ensure that expenditure is closely managed and savings are maximised. This was the second year of the three-year 2010-2012 budget, with early elections presenting the Service with significant additional expenditure. The original estimate for 2011, as laid before the Dáil and published, was €113m. This did not include costs of the General Elections as the dissolution of the Dáil at that point was not anticipated to occur in 2011. A supplementary estimate of €13.9m was required to meet these costs which brought the total budget for 2011 to €126.9m. The outturn for 2011 is €120.15m which includes €21.7m for costs associated with the general elections.

The actual costs of running the Houses in 2011, excluding the elections, was just over €98.45m, or 5% below the total estimate and 20% below our peak spend levels in 2009. While the underlying spend falls naturally by about €3m-€4m in an election year (e.g. due to reduced travel, overtime and expenses), the fall below €100m in core costs in 2011, for the first time since 2005, illustrates the extent to which spending has been reduced in response to the economic situation.

Our financial control, reporting and governance systems

Financial reporting in the Service is carefully managed and expenditure is monitored monthly at MAC level where a detailed report shows variances against budget. A quarterly report is also examined by the Finance Committee of the Commission and following their consideration, they make a

report to the Commission itself where these matters are discussed further. The annual accounts of the Service are signed off by the Secretary General, while the Comptroller & Auditor General conducts an audit of the accounts each year. The annual account is then published in the Commission's annual report, which is published in line with the statutory mid-year deadline.

The internal audit unit of the Service is very active and prepares 6-8 reports per year for consideration by the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee was placed on a statutory basis in the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009. The Committee examines all internal audit reports and is a key element of the internal control environment. The role of the Committee is strengthened by the fact that the Chairperson is an external member, who serves along with two other external members, both of whom are accountants.

Internal Audit of Finance Unit Processes

During 2011, the internal audit unit conducted an internal audit of Finance Unit processes and the Financial Management System (FMS) in the Service. The audit assessed the effectiveness of the controls and the processes within the Finance Unit, together with the availability of appropriate and accurate financial information from the FMS. As part of this, the audit also provided assurance that the Finance Unit procedures and controls comply with the Public Financial Procedures 2008. The standard of controls were found to be satisfactory and there were no matters arising which were considered to be significant. Implementation of a small number of recommendations from the audit will be completed in 2012.

Salaries Section

Salaries Section manages the payroll function within the Service. Major achievements in 2011 include dealing with the General Elections which led to an approximate 2,000 additional payroll inputs.

During 2011, Salaries Section completed the move to ePayslips which means that all staff on the payroll now receive their payslip electronically and can access historical pay information going back to 2001. P60 and other statements are now only made available electronically. This has resulted in savings in terms of both time and money, while obviating the need for the printing and distribution of over 3,500 payslips each month.

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Salaries Section is finalising a move to pay all salaries by EFT which was commenced in 2010. At this stage only a very small number of cheques have to be printed and delivered each month, and it is expected that payment by cheque will cease completely during 2012.

Salaries Section staff participated in a very successful training initiative within the Service, whereby six staff took part in a Certified Payroll Technician course thus broadening and increasing knowledge of payroll matters.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Informal Feedback Forum for members

The Secretary General re-established the cross-party Informal Feedback Forum (IFF) for members following the General Elections in 2011. The IFF comprises seven Deputies and two Senators and has met on four occasions since the elections. Its purpose is to discuss and explore service delivery and improvement initiatives, prior to implementation. The Forum has discussed a wide variety of topics including:

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- ◆ general accommodation and ICT matters;
- ◆ training for members and political staff following General Elections;
- ◆ electoral registers and constituency database issues; and
- ◆ local radio broadcasts.

Survey of Oireachtas Office holders

As part of the Service's commitment to improving customer satisfaction with our services, a survey of Oireachtas Office holders (Commission members, Temporary Chairpersons of both Houses and a sample number of Committee Chairpersons) was undertaken by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). The purpose of the survey was to examine how well the Service is

performing in terms of the services and supports provided to members. The findings of the survey will be used to improve services and supports where required.

In order to build on previous Office holder surveys, as well as to present trends over time, a similar format and style of survey questionnaire was used for this report as previously. The overall findings report high levels of satisfaction with the support services provided to Office holders. The quality of service provided by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service continues to be regarded very highly by Office holders. For this survey, the overall Office holders satisfaction rating was 90%, up from 79% in 2008 and 82% in 2006. The survey shows improvements across a number of areas, particularly with the Committee Secretariat where it found an aggregate satisfaction rating of 91% for Committee Chairpersons, an increase of 15% on 2008 figures. The area most in need of attention is in relation to communication between the Commission and members of the Houses and their staff. The results of the survey are being considered by both the Management Advisory Committee and the Commission with a view to addressing those areas requiring attention.

As 2011 was the first year of the audit of the Public Representation Allowance, those members who were randomly selected for audit by Mazars last year were invited to meet with the IPA to give feedback on their experience of the audit, so that any necessary improvements can be made to the process this year.

Customer Service

During 2011, the Service agreed a Customer Service Action Plan 2011-2013. This plan was circulated to all staff in November 2011 and is currently being implemented. The plan sets agreed targets for each service provided. Progress on the implementation of the plan is being monitored and will be reported to the Partnership Committee during 2012. In addition to sections meeting their individual targets, the Service has appointed a Customer Service Officer. This Officer responds to queries and feedback received from our customers. The feedback received is regularly monitored and will be reported on during 2012. The Officer also attends customer service officer meetings organised by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Attendance at this network helps to ensure that the Service maintains best practice in this area.

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TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE WORK

Review of the 30th Dáil Committee system and planning for the 31st Dáil

The outgoing Working Group of Committee Chairs of the 30th Dáil approved a high-level framework for the new Committee system of the 31st Dáil encompassing core features including a reduced number of Committees, structured work programmes for each Committee with formal oversight of departmental activities, formal reporting to the Dáil and Seanad, enhanced administrative and support services, greater use of technology for public consultation and engagement, improved media and information programmes and the introduction of paperless Committee meetings.

Reform of the Committee system

A number of reform proposals impacting directly on the operation of Committees formed the blueprint for the initial establishment of the Committees in mid-2011 and for

ongoing changes and developments thereafter. Progress was made during 2011 in a number of areas, including:

- ◆ the rolling out of the enhanced EU scrutiny initiative through the mainstreaming of EU legislation across all Sectoral Committees;
- ◆ increased pre-legislative scrutiny by Sectoral Committees of the Heads of Bills, including the seeking and analysis of submissions received from interested stakeholder groups and individuals;
- ◆ engagement meetings across a number of Sectoral Committees with Chairperson designates of State Bodies and Agencies;
- ◆ roll-out of structured work programmes (a standardised template was provided for all Committees and a review of progress on Oireachtas Committee work programmes is a standard item on the agenda of the Working Group of Committee Chairs (WGCC)); and

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- ◆ the initial roll-out of the paperless Committee meetings initiative to all Committees from mid-2011 onwards with the development of a database to facilitate full roll-out due for finalisation during 2012.

Croke Park (Public Sector) Agreement

Significant progress has already been made on actions from the Service's first Action Plan. Savings of approximately €4m have been made from actions already implemented with some of these actions continuing to yield savings to the end of 2013. In addition, a Revised Action Plan for 2012-14 was submitted to the Implementation Body in January 2012.

In terms of structural change, there has been a significant reduction in staff numbers since 2009 – numbers in place are 11% below sanctioned posts. The Service intends to continue to apply the principles of the Moratorium, while protecting the services which are essential for the maintenance of the core parliamentary business and associated services to members.

Consequently there is a stronger emphasis in our Revised Action Plan on "doing more with less" and continuing to build organisational capacity to ensure that we can deliver the essential services.

The primary focus of the Revised Action Plan is on administrative savings which are within the control of the Service. However, there have also been savings achieved from within the political system e.g. limiting overtime budgets for staff of members and the parties. Progress under the Plan is reported to the MAC on a monthly basis and to the Commission periodically. In December 2011, the MAC agreed the establishment of a Croke Park Implementation Unit (headed at Principal Officer level) to drive both the implementation of the Revised Action Plan and the wider Reform Agenda. The Service is also represented at Assistant Secretary level on the Central Reform Delivery Board for the Civil Service which is operated by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Information Strategy

A draft Information Strategy was developed by the new information services function (L&RS and Communications Unit), and discussed by Principal Officers. This discussion will inform the development of the information strategy in 2012.

Knowledge Management and PO Network

A knowledge management strategy developed by the L&RS in conjunction with Service colleagues was approved by MAC. The strategy was titled "Learning and working together: developing the culture of knowledge sharing and collaborative working in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service".

The PO Network was seen as a mechanism for implementing this strategy. There were meetings of this network in October and December 2011, and again in March 2012, with presentations from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on public sector reform, and on procedural development in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

Records Management

In 2011 the L&RS commenced a project to develop and implement a records management policy in the Houses of the Oireachtas on a phased basis. The first phase of this project has been completed which comprised a records audit to establish and quantify the scale, scope and range of records of the Oireachtas Commission, the Service and Houses of the Oireachtas including Oireachtas Committees.

The second phase of the project which is informed by the findings and recommendations of the first phase commenced in 2012. This phase will include the development of a records management policy and other related policy documents, developing and implementing records management tools and procedures such as a common file plan, and devising a governance structure for records management.

Project Management

Following an Internal Audit Report (February 2011) on compliance with the Service's Project Management Guidelines, the guidelines were updated to include the internal audit recommendations and to reflect changes to the Service. The updated guidelines also reflect central obligations regarding public spending on projects, including the relevant elements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's "VFM Code".

Procurement Unit

During 2010, the Procurement Strategy 2010-2012 was approved and is currently being implemented. This strategy focuses on continuously improving and taking innovative approaches to procurement strategies. The

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Procurement Unit ensures that best practice is followed across the Service through the provision of comprehensive guidance and checklists for staff, as well as the provision of procurement advice and expertise as required. Approximately €1.6m savings have been achieved to date through procurement and negotiation of new contracts under the Croke Park Agreement.

GOVERNANCE AND FUTURE PLANNING

Parliamentary Service Reform Group

A Parliamentary Service Reform Group has been established to review the legislative framework and policies governing the management and staff of the Service in preparation for the Commission (Amendment) Bills due in 2012 and 2015. This is an important project which will facilitate the future long-term direction of the Service. Officials from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will also be involved in the Group's work. The

Group is expected to complete its work by September 2012.

Management Advisory Committee (the MAC)

The MAC is the senior management body of the Service which acts in a strategic oversight, advisory and co-ordinating capacity in support of the Secretary General. The MAC consists of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary Corporate & Members' Services division, the Assistant Secretary Parliamentary Services division, the Clerk of the Seanad and the chairs of the three sub-committees of the MAC.

The MAC generally meets twice a month to consider and decide on strategic, operational and financial policies for the Service, which may then be submitted to the Commission for decision as appropriate. The Strategic and Corporate Business Plans of the Service are the main drivers of the Committee's agenda, as well as the policies adopted by the Commission.

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There are a number of standing items on the MAC agenda including monthly financial and human resource management information reporting, risk management updates, updates on topical issues across the Service and monthly monitoring of the work programme of the Committee. The MAC agenda is closely aligned with the Commission agenda and is also linked to the Corporate Business Plan and the review meetings which take place to assess progress in implementing the plan.

The MAC met 18 times in 2011. The main policy issues considered included the following:

- ◆ review of the savings achieved under the Services' action plan under the Croke Park Agreement;
- ◆ dissolution work programme and review of election-related tasks;
- ◆ review of risk materialisation reports;
- ◆ approval of the new risk management policy and establishment of the new Risk Management Committee of the Service;
- ◆ review of internal audit reports and progress made in implementing recommendations;
- ◆ monitoring of progress on efficiency reviews and piloting of revised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in key areas of the Service;
- ◆ review of strategy and arrangements for taking on additional translation duties associated with Statutory Instruments; and
- ◆ approval of a new streamlined approach to the Corporate Business Plan 2011-12 which includes an increased focus on local business planning across the Service.

Risk Management Committee and Business Continuity Planning

Following the approval of the new risk management policy for the Service in early 2011, the MAC established a Risk Management Committee (RMC). From an audit and governance perspective, this RMC was established as a separate entity from MAC and its sub-committees. The RMC was assigned responsibility for building a risk-aware culture across the Service and developing risk response processes including contingency and business continuity programmes. The RMC provided regular updates to the

Audit Committee and the MAC throughout 2011.

During the year, one of its main tasks was examining and identifying the strategic risks currently facing the Service. The RMC, which consists of members from each division of the Service, firstly identified strategic activities of the Service, then assessed the risk associated with those activities. The RMC co-ordinated its exercise with the development of the Corporate Business Plan 2011-12, with strategic risks discussed with all Principal Officers at the quarterly review meetings in November. In December 2011, the Committee updated the Audit Committee on its work in reviewing strategic risks, rolling out of the risk management policy and the rollout of a new risk management database to sections.

Early in 2012, the RMC focussed on undertaking its role in preparing an overarching Business Continuity Plan (BCP) for the Service. The Service already has a comprehensive and tested BCP in place for the sittings of the Houses and its committees. The Committee has decided that the best approach to BCP in the Service is to build on the work which has been carried out with the procedural sections i.e. by having each section identify critical tasks, systems, records and staff with the aid of a template and then determining how best to ensure continuity in the event of disruption, having regard to identification of priorities and resources.

Enhanced Internal Audit and Oversight Functions

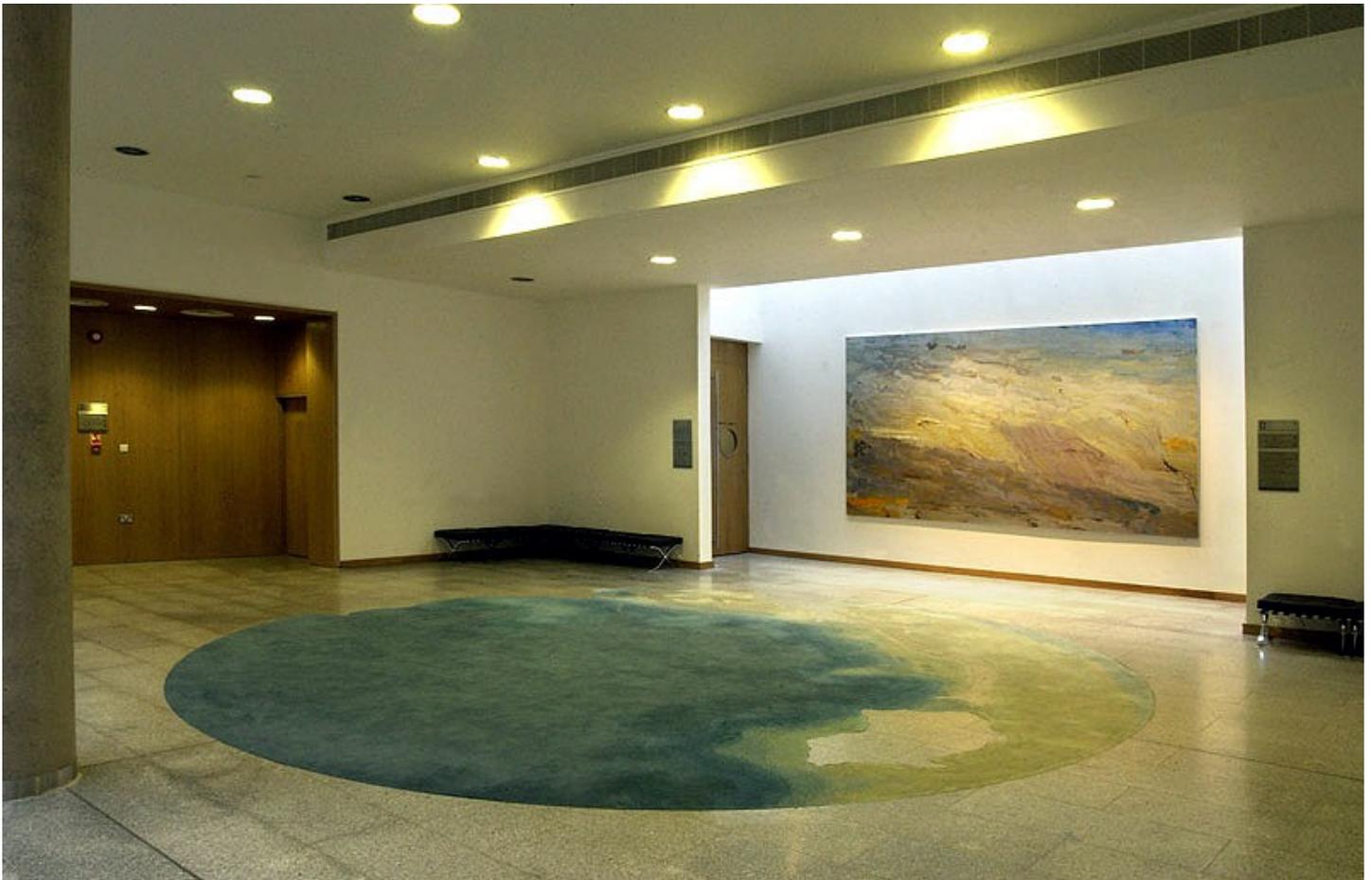
The internal audit function continues to build on its work of recent years. Reporting to the Head of the Office of the Commission and Secretary General (OCSG), the Internal Auditor is responsible for internal audit and related matters and presenting relevant reports to the Secretary General and the Audit Committee. Internal audit matters are also considered regularly by the Management Advisory Committee.

Staff of the Service are assigned to work with the Internal Auditor, yielding an internal audit skills transfer to the organisation and also ensuring audits and related work are carried out to the highest standard and according to agreed timeframes.

The Audit Committee met four times in 2011, and considered seven internal audit reports as well as an independent audit of the Public Representation Allowance. As well as this work, the Committee has increased its

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emphasis on ensuring that recommendations of previous audit reports are being implemented across the Service. Implementation of these recommendations is monitored on an ongoing basis, with the internal audit unit establishing a testing programme in 2011 in relation to the implementation of recommendations from internal audit reports since 2008. The outcome of this testing process is presented twice yearly to the Audit Committee.

The internal audit unit is represented on the Risk Management Committee. The role of internal audit on this Committee includes advising on the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service's procedures relating to risk management and providing assurance on the processes for the management of risk. Risk materialisation reports are routinely presented to the Audit Committee.

Review of the Dissolution Process

In advance of the General Elections in 2011, a working group was established to discuss and plan dissolution procedures. This group was chaired by the Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services division, and included senior management from Members' Services, Human Resources, ICT, Accommodation and Facilities, the Finance Unit, the Communications Unit and the Office of the Commission and Secretary General.

This group met during the period up to the dissolution of the Houses on 1 February 2011, and an extensive programme of preliminary planning was conducted in the following areas:

- ◆ the production of a Dáil Election Handbook;
- ◆ the production of a Seanad Election Handbook;
- ◆ procedures and conditions for use and return of ICT equipment;
- ◆ telephone control matters;

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- ◆ termination payments and salary calculations;
- ◆ pensions arrangements for retiring members, including non-returned members;
- ◆ all procedural aspects of the elections including issuing writs;
- ◆ accommodation and facilities matters;
- ◆ monitoring of stationery stores activity, including postal and office supplies;
- ◆ members' staff allocations;
- ◆ mentoring and training for new members and members returned to both Houses;
- ◆ the production of New Members' Information Packs.

Information for members on the procedures during the dissolution of the Dáil and the various aspects of the impact of the election on members in both Houses was produced and these dealt with all important matters. The Communications Unit produced New Members' Information Packs for both the Dáil and the Seanad, and comprehensive packs were issued in February 2011 for members of the Dáil and April 2011 for members of the Seanad.

The House Services area produced plans for dealing with the procedural aspects of elections including the issuance of the writs on dissolution day, and the reprinting of Dáil and Seanad Standing Orders, both core statutory activities related to General Elections which are significant to the Service. The administration of the Seanad Election was conducted by the Clerk of the Seanad with the assistance of the staff of the Seanad Office and the Journal Office.

A subsequent audit of the dissolution planning process included the following areas:

- ◆ Accommodation and Facilities;
- ◆ Clerk of the Dáil's Office;
- ◆ Clerk of the Seanad's Office;
- ◆ Committee Secretariat;
- ◆ Communications Unit;
- ◆ Corporate and Members' Services;
- ◆ eDemocracy Unit;
- ◆ Finance and Salaries;
- ◆ House Services;
- ◆ Human Resources & Procurement;
- ◆ ICT Unit;
- ◆ Office of the Commission and Secretary General;
- ◆ Library & Research Service; and
- ◆ Training.

In 2011, 76 new members were elected to the Dáil and 34 new members elected to the Seanad. The elections also resulted in the employment of 314 new political staff members throughout 2011. The process of induction and training for new members of the Oireachtas included the allocation of a staff member to assist each new member in their familiarisation with the Leinster House facilities and environment.

A survey of new Dáil members' adaptation to their new role was conducted by University College Cork, using a survey developed by the Hansard Society. The Service facilitated this survey, to which there was a response rate of 51%.

The preliminary results of this first survey have indicated that, on the whole, first-time TDs were satisfied with the initial induction and start up services provided to them on commencement. The most striking findings from the research were in relation to the impact on their private lives, resulting in a negative impact on their work-life balance. In addition, a number of new TDs were surprised by the demands of constituency work. Despite these findings, there is no indication that new TDs wish to see a departure from established working norms.

An internal audit of the dissolution process conducted in the second half of 2011 concluded that the dissolution planning process was satisfactory, a comprehensive and well co-ordinated dissolution process had been completed, and a well conducted process of induction and training had been operated for new members of the Oireachtas. Given the number of members leaving the Houses and the corresponding large number of new members, the overall findings reflect well on the planning process conducted by the Service at both organisational and operational levels.

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Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Library & Research Service developed an FOI tracking system, allowing for the streamlining of the management of FOI requests and reducing the level of direct staff input into FOI processing. At the end of 2011, the FOI Officer was reassigned and a new model for delivering FOI services was developed.

Origination of FOI requests 2011	Number of Requests	% of Total
Journalists	55	76%
Business	2	3%
Oireachtas	1	1%
Staff	1	1%
Client	0	0%
Others	13	18%
Total	72	100%

Statutory Services

The L&RS reviewed the management of statutory services by undertaking an audit of the Clerks' statutory services functions (including an inventory of the legislation giving rise to each function in an "as amended" format), a risk assessment of current arrangements for managing these functions, and an assessment of the options for the future management of these functions. The results of this review will be fed into developing this function in 2012.

Provision of Legal Services

The core duties of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor (PLA) are:

- ◆ to provide legal advice to all committees in relation to, *inter alia*: the application of relevant legislation, the legislative and non-legislative powers of Oireachtas committees, parliamentary privilege, compliance with Standing Orders, Constitutional and natural justice, the rules of fair procedure and any legal issues surrounding the subject matter of the committee enquiry;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to the Ceann Comhairle and Cathaoirleach in relation to all services administered by them;

- ◆ to provide legal advice to the Clerks of both Houses in relation to any legal issue arising in the discharge of their statutory functions;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission in relation to any legal issue arising in the discharge of their statutory functions;
- ◆ to draft Statutory Instruments decided on by the Commission in exercising its regulatory function;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in respect of legal issues arising in a corporate setting including: assisting with the drafting of requests for tenders and contracts, advice in the areas of: employment law, members' allowances, contract law, members' and staff pensions, Oireachtas copyright, the procurement process, FOI, data protection, electoral law and general statutory interpretation;
- ◆ to provide legal advice to individual members of either House but only in so far as such advice is in connection with the performance by that member of his/her parliamentary functions;
- ◆ to manage the conduct of any legal proceedings involving either House of the Oireachtas, a Committee, the Commission or any member of either House in respect of proceedings arising solely from the performance by them of their parliamentary functions;
- ◆ where necessary, to procure specialist legal services on behalf of a committee, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission or Service where external counsel/solicitor are to be engaged pursuant to the Bar Council Direct Professional Access Scheme or as appropriate.

During 2011, the Office of the PLA produced approximately 200 legal advices, of which 37.5% were in response to advices sought by Oireachtas committees and 62.5% were in response to advices sought by the Service. 3 requests for legal advice were outsourced for specialist advice in 2011. The Office saw an increase in caseload of approximately 13% in 2011 compared with 2009, of which there was a 142% increase in the number of committee advices, despite a drop of 50% in the non legal support staff.

MANAGING AND MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Corporate Business Planning and Review

The Service produces two 18-month Corporate Business Plans in line with each 3-year Strategic Plan. The Corporate Business Plan 2011-12 aims to build on the lessons learned from the previous plan, with an increased focus on key strategic deliverables for the Service. This plan is more streamlined with fewer tasks, though the tasks are more specific and targeted at key action areas for the Service.

Through its increased focus on strategic deliverables, this plan will help the Service to continue to respond to the changed economic climate and the reducing resources available to fulfil our functions. Our continuing focus is primarily on delivering services to members and maintaining our strong ethos of serving the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Progress in implementing the Corporate Business Plan is reviewed regularly, through detailed reviews of tasks and deliverables within each functional area and through higher level review of priorities and overall progress at an organisational level.

With this more streamlined plan, there is also an increased focus on local business planning to ensure that the day-to-day operational elements of the work of the Service are managed efficiently and effectively. These local business plans will be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis by line managers, up to and including the Assistant Secretaries of the Service. PMDS will also be closely aligned with the new business plans for the sections.

Efficiency Review Programme

The Efficiency Review Programme takes place within the context of the Secretary General's responsibilities under section 16(1)(e) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003 (as amended), to ensure that the provisions of the 1993 Comptroller & Auditor General Act are met. Under this provision, the Secretary General must be able to give evidence on the economy and efficiency of the use of resources and confirm that the Service has systems, procedures and practices in place to be able to evaluate its own effectiveness.

The Efficiency Review Programme consists of value for money and policy reviews, efficiency reviews of selected areas and business process improvement projects.

Following a review of the Service's efficiency review programme in late 2011, it was decided to integrate and synchronise efficiency review activities with the arrangement for the delivery of the Service's Public Service Reform Delivery Plan and Croke Park Agreement Action Plan.

Value for Money and Policy Reviews

The recommendations arising from a VFM and Policy Review of the Debates Office continued to be implemented and reported to MAC during 2011.

A VFM and Policy Review of the Communications Strategy 2007-09 was conducted during 2011 and reported to the Management Advisory Committee. The recommendations of the review were accepted for implementation and will inform the development of a new Communications Strategy for the Commission.

The MAC approved the undertaking of a VFM and Policy Review of the Service's Library & Research Service that is to be conducted during 2012.

Efficiency Reviews

A review of the Advance/Refund of Fees Scheme was conducted during 2011 and a report was presented to the MAC in July 2011, which agreed the review recommendations. The review found that the Service's arrangements for the Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme comply with the Department of Finance's circulars. The MAC noted the importance of setting priorities to encourage study which meets the specialist needs of the Service such as ICT, business re-engineering, procurement and project management, and agreed that mechanisms should be considered to encourage study in these areas particularly in the area of ICT which is the least studied but most needed skill.

A review of the Procurement Procedural Structures that are in place to achieve savings and procurement objectives was conducted during 2011. The report was presented to the MAC in November 2011. The review found that the public procurement strategies, policies and guidelines that are in place within the Service are conducive to achieving value for money improvements in the purchase of goods and services. The review also found that the Service has put strategies in place to monitor and strengthen compliance with procurement guidelines including the appointment of a Procurement Officer, the provision of a Procurement

Advisory Service and the maintenance of a central register of tenders and contracts.

The review made recommendations regarding the strengthening of the Procurement Unit's oversight, coordination and monitoring of total procurement expenditure across the business areas of the Service; and the greater measurement and reporting of cost savings and other benefits achieved in the procurement of significant purchases of goods and services by the adoption of different procurement options.

New key performance indicators (KPIs) based on outputs and outcomes were applied to units of responsibility within the Procurement, ICT, HR and Training areas and a report was presented to the MAC on their implementation.

Business Process Improvement projects

A Business Process Review on the ICT Staff Helpdesk was undertaken and presented to the MAC in May 2011. The

Committee noted that the results of the process review would be considered along with alternative approaches to operating the helpdesk that are being considered in light of the Croke Park Agreement framework.

A number of Business Process Improvement (BPI) projects were also conducted during 2011 in the operational areas of the Houses:

- ◆ Legislative Workbench - Bills Office System Upgrade BPI Project;
- ◆ Processing of Documents laid – Library & Research Service;
- ◆ Notice and Scheduling of Committee meetings – Committees Secretariat;
- ◆ Rostering system in the Debates Office – Editor of Debates; and
- ◆ Simultaneous Translation – Rannóg an Aistriúcháin.



LYING-IN HOSPITAL, DUBLIN.

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STRATEGIC COMMITMENT 3: ENHANCING SERVICE CAPABILITY

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

Operational Statistics

Activity	2009	2010	2011	Total 2009-11	% variation 2009-11
Civil Service Staff turnover - incorporating new entrants, retirements/departures, internal promotions, career breaks and persons on secondment	90	43	69	202	-23.3%
No. of financial transactions	12,429	10,209	9,265	31,903	-25.4%
No. of PMDS meetings	681	653	519	1,853	-23.8%
No. attended training courses	1,720	922	1,338	3,980	-22%
No. of staff calls to ICT helpdesk	4,088	3,188	4,161	11,437	2%
No. of people for whom travel arrangements were made	98	86	65	249	-34%
No. of pages translated	2,755	3,365	1,948	8,068	-29%
No. of Commission meetings	10	8	6	24	-40%
No. of Commission Committee and sub-Committee meetings	6	7	9	22	50%

Attendance management – a system to record (electronically if possible) the daily times of arrival and departure of our staff at their place of work so as to comply with Organisation of Working Time legislation.

Clerking services - procedural advice services to the Chair during, or in the context of, sittings e.g. advice on Standing Orders, rulings of the Chair or other conventions and practice.

Clerks' rota – Members of staff at Assistant Principal level and above, who have the required procedural knowledge and experience, perform clerking duties in the Houses on a rota basis. The rota is managed by the Clerk's office and each member of staff is assigned a fixed slot (usually of one hour's duration) each week.

COFACC - (Conférence des Présidents des commissions parlementaires des Affaires étrangères) is the meeting of Chairpersons of Foreign Affairs Committees. The aim of the meeting of chairpersons of foreign affairs committees is to debate foreign and security policy, relations with other institutions and strengthening of common policy. These meetings traditionally happen at the beginning of a presidency at the national parliament of the incumbent presidency.

COSAC - (Conférence des Organes Spécialisés dans les Affaires Communautaires) is the Conference of the committees of the national Parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European affairs as well as representatives of the European Parliament. Each year COSAC meets twice in plenary session usually in May and October. Each plenary session is preceded by a meeting of Chairpersons of Committees to prepare the agenda for the plenary session and usually meeting in February and July.

Commission – the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is the governing board which oversees the provision of services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members by the parliamentary administration – the Service.

Corporate governance – the system by which organisations are directed and controlled. Corporate governance is concerned with the way corporate entities are governed, as distinct from the way businesses within those companies are managed. Corporate governance addresses the issues facing boards of directors, such as the interaction with top management, and relationships with the owners and others interested in the affairs of the company.

Croke Park Agreement – the objective of the Croke Park Agreement is the transformation of public services. It requires all public sector bodies to reduce expenditure, reduce staff and work more efficiently.

European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) - The ECPRD acts as a channel for requests for information whenever one parliament would like to know more about practice and policy in other countries. Bringing together the information, facilitating the exchange of ideas and making the retrieval of data and the circulation of studies easier is the Centre's role.

Informal Feedback Forum (IFF) – a cross-party group of members from both Houses, acting on a voluntary and informal basis, to provide feedback on the performance of the Service in meeting members' needs in the delivery of services and to act as a sounding board for initiatives that will arise from time to time in these areas.

Library & Research Service (L&RS) – the Library & Research Service delivers information and research services to support the work of the Houses of the Oireachtas. The L&RS also has a corporate information management role with responsibility for freedom of information and records management.

Knowledge management (KM) – Effective knowledge management ensures that staff have access to the right knowledge and information at the right time so that they can put that knowledge into action and work more efficiently. Knowledge management is the art of identifying and organising tangible information to make it easily accessible across the organisation and facilitating the interaction of people to share their experiences and knowledge to grow and learn or decide better and faster.

The MAC – the Management Advisory Committee consists of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary Corporate & Members' Services division, the Assistant Secretary Parliamentary Services division, the Clerk of the Seanad and the chairs of the three sub-committees of the MAC. The Committee meets regularly, usually every two weeks to consider and decide on issues of major strategic, operational or financial importance, which may then be referred to the Commission as appropriate.

OSCE - The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe offers a forum for political negotiations and decision-making in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, and puts the political will of its participating States into practice through its unique network of field missions. It addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratisation, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities. All 56 participating States enjoy equal status, and decisions are taken by consensus on a politically, but not legally binding basis.

Procedural services – procedural services are those concerned with advice to the Chairs of the Houses and their Committees (e.g. clerking services concerned with Standing Orders, rulings of the Chair and parliamentary conventions) as well as services provided by the Committee secretariat and the procedural offices e.g. the General Office (Parliamentary Questions, Adjournment Matters), the Bills Office (Bills, Amendment lists) and the Journal Office (Journals of Proceedings, Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair, Order Papers).

Resource Plan – the process whereby an organisation sets out in detail the staffing resource requirements for each business unit to carry out its functions and carries out an annual review process and necessary adjustments to ensure that requirements are kept up to date.

Risk - the various things which can go wrong in the running of a business and assessing, if they do go wrong, what damage will result and what can be done to either prevent the risk or manage it if it happens.

Risk materialisation reporting - a system where, if a risk does come about and cause difficulties, the person responsible has to formally report on what happened, why, what the impact was and what new things have been learned in order to prevent a recurrence.

Sectoral Committees – Committees made up of members of one or both Houses which "shadow" Government Departments e.g. the Joint Committees on Transport, Foreign Affairs, etc.

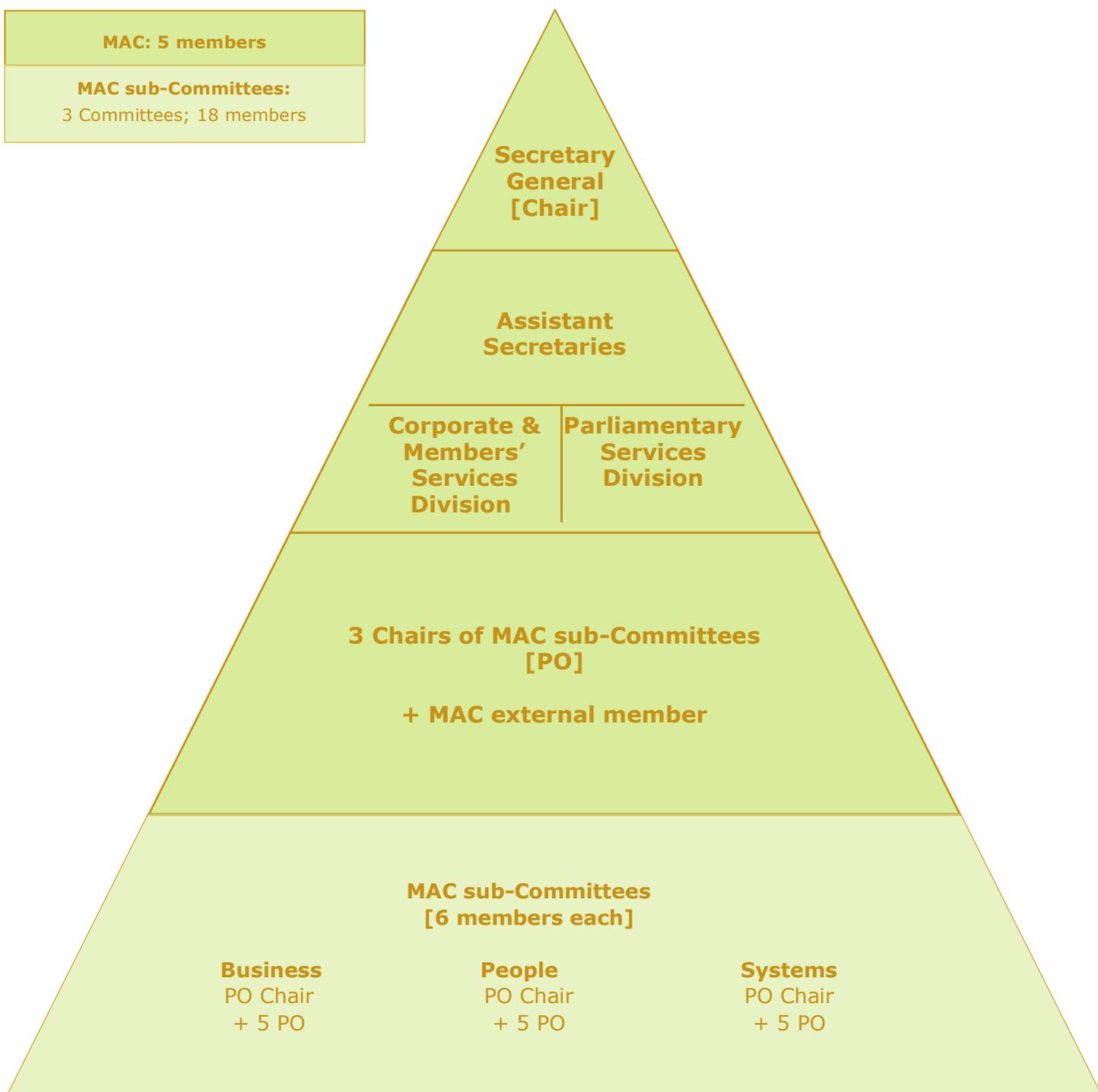
The Service – The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (formerly called the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas) is the public service body which provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. It is headed by the Secretary General and Clerk of the Dáil, who has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies.

APPENDIX 2

MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) - COMPOSITION JUNE 2011

KEY

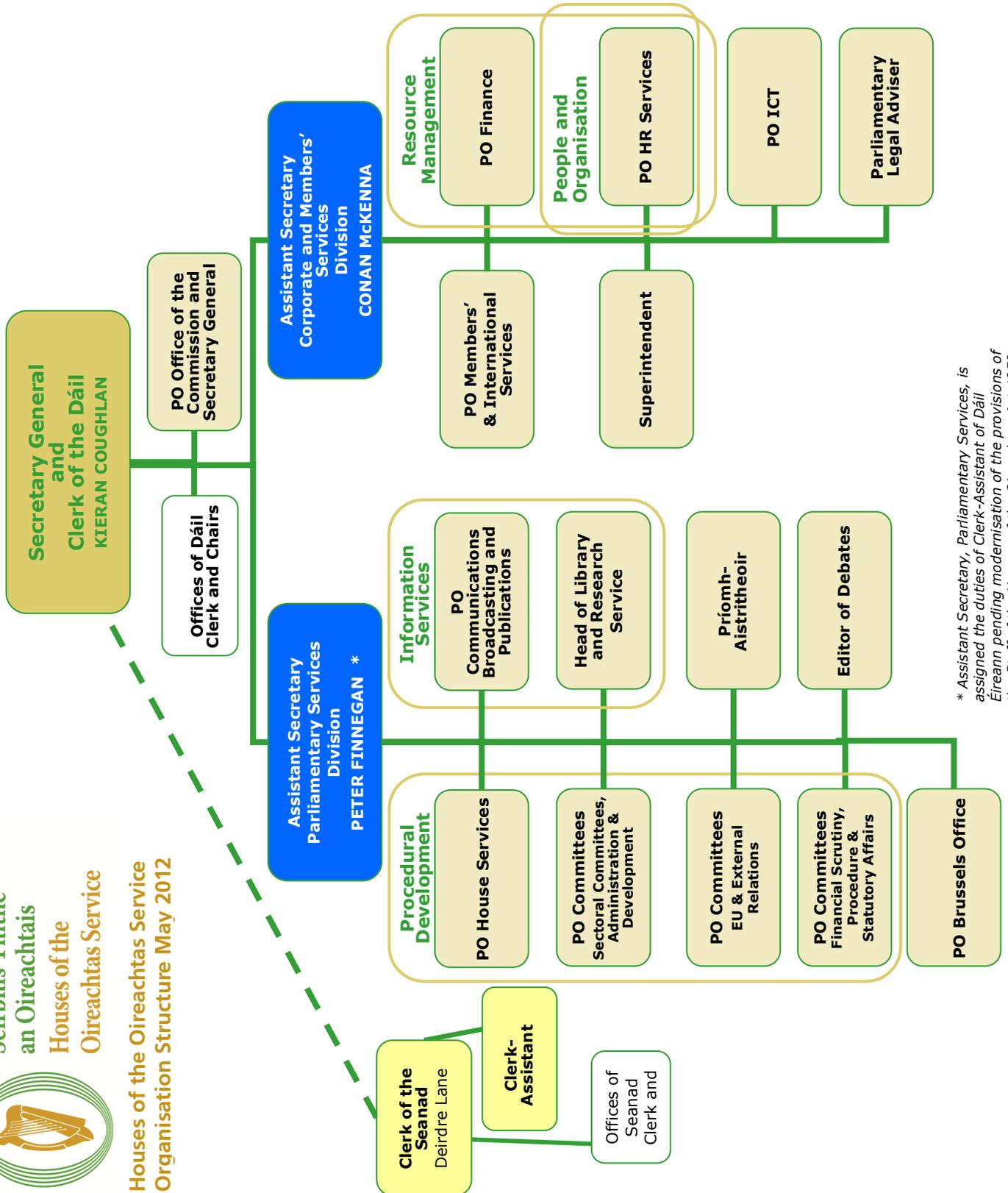
MAC: 5 members
MAC sub-Committees: 3 Committees; 18 members





Seirbhís Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Service

Houses of the Oireachtas Service
Organisation Structure May 2012



* Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services, is assigned the duties of Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Eireann pending modernisation of the provisions of the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959

APPENDIX 4

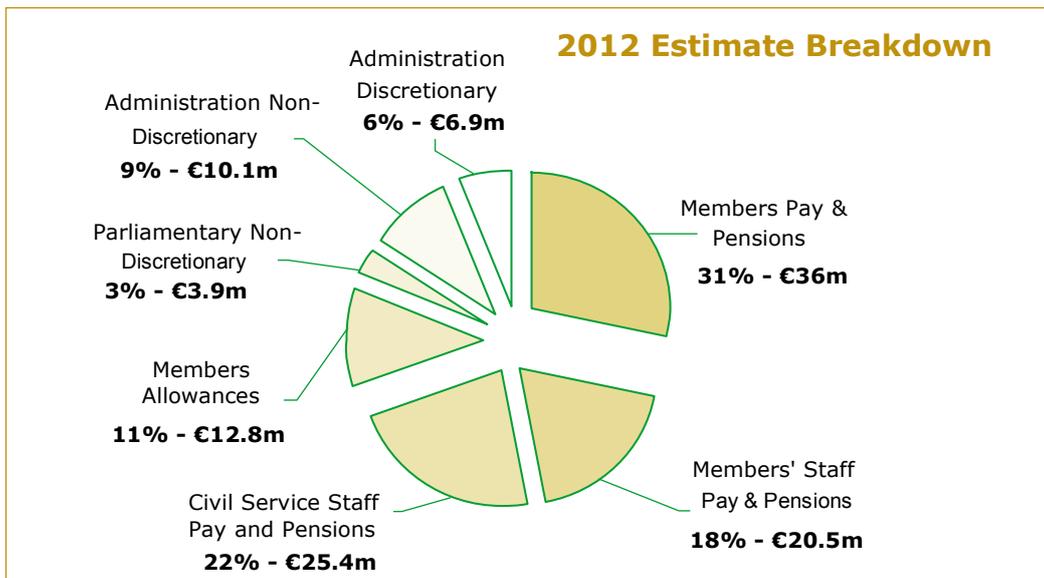
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

3 YEAR BUDGET 2010—2012 fixed by 2009 Act = €360m

Breaks down as follows:		
	€m	€m
2010 Actual Outturn		107.2
2011 Provisional Outturn		
<i>Operational Costs</i>	98.45	
<i>Election costs</i>	21.70	120.15
2012 Estimate		115.59
Current 3 Year Projection		342.94

Category	2011 Outturn	2011 Budget	Variance	
	€000	€000		
Administration and Services	40,589	43,379	-6%	Underspend
International Parliamentary Activities	304	467	-35%	Underspend
Members' Staff Pay and Pensions	25,504	26,340	-3%	Underspend
Members (incl. MEPs) Pay and Pensions	42,611	44,285	-4%	Underspend
Members and Former Members Allowances and Expenses	11,083	11,884	-7%	Underspend
Committee Travel	30	91	-67%	Underspend
Other Committee Expenses	29	500	-94%	Underspend
	120,150	129,946	-5%	Underspend

2012 ESTIMATE - €115.6 MILLION



2012 Estimate

The Commission's Estimate breaks down as follows:

Pay and Pensions:	€m	%
Members (including Pension Payments)	36	31%
Members' Staff	20.5	18%
Civil Service Staff (includes catering staff)	25.4	22%
Sub-total:	81.9	71%
Non-Pay:		
Non-Discretionary	26.8	23%
Discretionary	6.9	6%
Sub-total:	33.7	29%
Total	115.6	100%

APPENDIX 5

STATEMENT OF RESOURCES (CIVIL SERVICE STAFF ONLY) 2011 — 2012 [AT 16 MARCH 2012]

The Commission, at its meeting on 18 June 2008, approved core numbers for the Civil Service staff of the Service. The numbers sanctioned by the Commission stood at 435² established Civil Service posts and 54 State Industrial Employees (Bar, Restaurant and Print Facility). There are now a number of vacancies arising from the Commission decision in May 2009 that no public service post³, however arising, will be filled by recruitment, promotion or payment of an allowance for performance of duties at a higher grade. When vacancies arise, the Secretary General allocates or reorganises work or staff accordingly.

Exceptions to this principle, which arise in very limited circumstances only, require the prior sanction of the Commission. In its consideration of any such exceptions, the Commission may require the suppression of a post or posts within the Service, yielding an equivalent payroll saving. All delegated sanctions from the Commission to the Secretary General in relation to the creation of (permanent) public service posts are withdrawn until end 2012.

Although there are 367.42 posts filled at present, the overall or underlying level of vacancies is 48 which is a reduction of 11% on sanctioned numbers of 438.

Table 1 details the changes in numbers across grades in the period.

² Increased to 438 following the transfer of responsibility for translation of S.I.s to the Service.

³ This also applies to temporary appointments on a fixed-term basis and to the renewal of such contracts.

Table 1: Summary numbers by grade (excluding State Industrial Employees)

Grades		Numbers as approved by Commission on 18/06/08	Variance approved by the Secretary General since 18/06/08	Full Time Equivalent numbers in place
Secretary General		1	1	1
Assistant Secretary		1	2	2
PO (higher)		3	2	2
PO (standard)		17.5	16.5	16.5
AP		45.5	45.5	42.9 ⁴
HEO		40	41	38.7
EO		52	52	45
CO		84	84	69.62
Superintendent Section	Ushers, Service Officers and Cleaners	81	81	63
	Team Leaders	9	9	3
	Head and Deputy Head Ushers	3	3	2
Assistant Editors		7	7	5
Assistant Librarian		5.5	5.5	6
Deputy Editor		3	3	2
Translator Grad I		2	2	1
Translator Grad II		4	5 ⁵	5
Translator Grad III		14	16 ⁶	11
Outreach Officer		4	4	0
Reporters		39	39	34.2
Senior Researchers		4.5	4.5	3.5
Researchers		15	15	13
Total		435	438	366.42 ⁷
Records Manager post		0	1	0
3 ICT ringfenced posts		0	3	1
Cumulative totals		435	442	367.42

⁴ Includes Accountant.

⁵ Increased following the transfer of responsibility for translation of S.I.s to the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

⁶ Increased following the transfer of responsibility for translation of S.I.s to the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

⁷ Staff redeployed to other Offices/Departments for 12 months or less continue to be reflected in our "numbers in place". At 16 March, one Junior Clerk (EO) is on temporary redeployment to the Central Statistics Office.

APPENDIX 6

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2011

These accounts have been prepared and signed by the Secretary General in accordance with the statutory obligations under section 14 (as amended) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003 and have been submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for audit. The Report of the C&AG on these accounts was not received within the timeframe of the statutory deadline of the publication of this Annual Report and therefore the accounts may be subject to change. The final version of the accounts will be published to the Oireachtas website when certified.

**ACCOUNTS OF THE
HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION
FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2011
(kept in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009)**

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Introduction

As Accounting Officer for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission ("the Commission"), I am required each year to prepare the account for the Commission in the form of an appropriation account and to submit the account to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In accordance with this requirement, I have prepared the attached account of the amount expended in the year ended 31 December 2011 for the salaries and expenses of the Houses of the Oireachtas, including certain grants-in-aid, and for certain expenses in connection with the European Parliament.

The expenditure outturn is compared with –

- ◆ the statement of estimates, prepared and published by the Commission in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009 ("the Acts"), of the amount of moneys required by the Commission in respect of ongoing expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2011 and
- ◆ the supplementary statement of estimates, prepared and published by the Commission, of the amount of moneys required by the Commission in respect of ongoing expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2011.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles (appended at note 7) and notes 1 to 6 form part of the account.

Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

The standard accounting policies and principles for the production of appropriation accounts have been applied in the preparation of the account except for the following:

Basis of Accounts

The accounts of the Commission are prepared in accordance with the Acts and with accounting rules and procedures laid down by the Minister for Finance. The Acts require that the Commission keep the accounts in such form as may be approved of by the Minister for Finance. The Minister has directed that the accounts be kept in the form of an appropriation account.

The Commission's accounts are a cash-based record of the receipts and payments in the year compared with the amount of moneys stated in the statement of estimates that is (a) prepared and published by the Commission (b) presented to Dáil Éireann and (c) furnished to the Minister for Finance in accordance with the Acts.

Receipts

The Acts require specified receipts of the Commission to be paid by it into the Central Fund. Such receipts may not be used to meet expenditure incurred by the Commission. Where they arise, they are reported in a note to the Account (Note 4).

Capital Assets

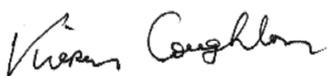
The rate of depreciation of IT equipment and software was 20% to 31 December 2011.

Superannuation

Superannuation payments for former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, former secretarial assistants employed by members of the Houses and former members of the European Parliament are met on a current basis by the Commission.

Statement on Internal Financial Control

Along with the account, I have submitted a statement in the standard format on the system of internal financial control that operates in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.



KIERAN COUGHLAN
Accounting Officer
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
30 March 2012

APPENDIX 6

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2011

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Account 2011

Service		€000	2011	2011	2010
			Estimate provision €000	Outturn €000	Outturn €000
1. Administration					
(a) Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of members of staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas					
	<i>Original</i>	23,848			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(832)	23,016	22,931	23,545
(b) Travel and subsistence					
	<i>Original</i>	438			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(100)	338	261	387
(c) Incidental expenses					
	<i>Original</i>	4,647			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(400)	4,247	2,364	2,590
(d) Postal and telecommunications services					
	<i>Original</i>	1,023			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(75)	948	967	1,029
(e) Office machinery and other office supplies					
	<i>Original</i>	10,127			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(1,100)	9,027	8,928	8,380
(f) Office premises expenses			1,797	1,731	1,643
(g) Value for money and policy review			7	-	3
2. Other services					
(a) Payment in respect of catering and bar staff					
	<i>Original</i>	1,670			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	90	1,760	1,737	1,787
(b) Expenses of delegates to other parliamentary assemblies					
	<i>Original</i>	184			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(40)	144	71	140
(c) Televising of proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and other services					
	<i>Original</i>	1,858			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	381	2,239	1,670	1,313
(d) Grant in aid in respect of inter-parliamentary activities			183	134	133
(e) Grant in aid to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly			140	99	140
(f) Allowances to or in respect of former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas					
	<i>Original</i>	143			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	4,582	4,725	4,666	49
(g) Grant to Irish Parliamentary (former Members) Society			28	25	-
(h) Grant in aid in respect of "Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais"					
	<i>Original</i>	10,562			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	8,771	19,333	17,816	10,000
(i) Pension scheme for secretarial assistants			538	528	415
(j) Expenses relating to Oireachtas Committees					
	<i>Original</i>	746			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(246)	500	29	279

**Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
Account 2011**

Service		€000	2011 Estimate provision €000	2011 Outturn €000	2010 Outturn €000
3. Salaries of Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas (including office holders and Oireachtas committee chairpersons) and of the European Parliament					
(a) Dáil Éireann	<i>Original</i>	16,394			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(865)	15,529	15,456	16,095
(b) Seanad Éireann	<i>Original</i>	4,250			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(317)	3,933	3,929	4,152
(c) European Parliament (including superannuation payments)			765	744	733
4. Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for non-office holding Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas					
(a) Dáil Éireann	<i>Original</i>	17,756			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	5,283	23,039	21,715	17,848
(b) Seanad Éireann	<i>Original</i>	2,595			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	168	2,763	3,261	2,645
5. Travel expenses of Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas					
(a) Dáil Éireann	<i>Original</i>	3,741			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(324)	3,417	3,396	4,178
(b) Seanad Éireann	<i>Original</i>	1,383			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(52)	1,331	1,312	1,662
(c) Committee travel	<i>Original</i>	259			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(168)	91	30	122
6. Other allowances and expenses of Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas					
(a) Dáil Éireann	<i>Original</i>	6,658			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(592)	6,066	5,375	6,693
(b) Seanad Éireann	<i>Original</i>	1,243			
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(201)	1,042	975	1,236
Total Expenditure			<u>126,946</u>	<u>120,150</u>	<u>107,197</u>
Surplus for the year				6,796	14,943

Notes to the Account

1 Operating Cost Statement 2011

	Note	€000	2011 €000	2010 €000
Expenditure on administration [sum of subheads 1(a) to 1(g)]			37,182	37,577
Expenditure on services and programmes			<u>82,968</u>	<u>69,620</u>
Total expenditure			120,150	107,197
Changes in capital assets	2.1			
Purchases Cash		(677)		
Depreciation		1,869		
Loss on disposals		<u>18</u>	1,209	1,587
Changes in assets under development	2.2			
Cash payments			-	-
Changes in net current assets				
Decrease in closing accruals		(1,967)		
Increase in stock	2.4	<u>156</u>	<u>(1,811)</u>	<u>(1,162)</u>
Direct expenditure			119,548	107,622
Net allied services expenditure	1.1	24,546		
Notional Rents		<u>2,940</u>	<u>27,486</u>	<u>29,379</u>
Total operating cost			<u>147,034</u>	<u>137,001</u>

1.1 Net Allied Services

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following estimated amounts in relation to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission borne elsewhere

Vote		2011 €000	2010 €000
7	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	3,196	3,249
10	Office of Public Works	4,571	7,335
20	Garda Síochána	64	204
	Central Fund:		
	Allowances to Leaders of certain Parties in Dáil Éireann	7,925	8,347
	Re-imbursments of Electoral Expenses	3,021	64
	Pensions in respect of former Cinn Comhairle (No. 38 of 1938, etc.)	320	331
	Payments to qualified parties under the Electoral Acts 1997 to 2001	<u>5,449</u>	<u>5,439</u>
		<u>24,546</u>	<u>24,969</u>

2 Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 December 2011

	Note	2011 €000	2010 €000
Capital Assets	2.1	2,850	4,060
Capital Assets under Development	2.2	-	-
		<u>2,850</u>	<u>4,060</u>
Current assets			
Bank and Cash	2.3	1,457	(9,016)
Net amount due from the Exchequer	2.7	609	10,592
Stocks	2.4	159	309
Prepayments		2,417	1,586
Accrued income		1,254	122
Other debit balances	2.5	2,199	1,378
Total Current Assets		<u>8,095</u>	<u>4,971</u>
Less Current Liabilities			
Accrued Expenses		509	513
Other credit balances	2.6	4,265	2,954
Total Current Liabilities		<u>4,774</u>	<u>3,467</u>
Net current assets		<u>3,321</u>	<u>1,504</u>
Net assets		<u>6,171</u>	<u>5,564</u>
Represented By:			
State Funding Account		<u>6,171</u>	<u>5,564</u>

2.1 Capital Assets

	IT Equipment €000	Furniture and Fittings €000	Office Equipment €000	Total €000
Gross Assets				
Cost or Valuation at 1 January 2011	7,160	2,335	14,596	24,092
Additions	598	-	79	677
Disposals	(225)	-	(139)	(364)
Gross Assets at 31 December 2011	<u>7,533</u>	<u>2,335</u>	<u>14,537</u>	<u>24,404</u>
Accumulated Depreciation:				
Opening Balance at 1 January 2011	5,327	1,478	13,228	20,032
Depreciation for the year	1,178	183	508	1,869
Depreciation on Disposals	(210)	-	(136)	(347)
Cumulative Depreciation at 31 December 2011	<u>6,294</u>	<u>1,661</u>	<u>13,599</u>	<u>21,554</u>
Net Assets at 31 December 2011	<u>1,238</u>	<u>675</u>	<u>938</u>	<u>2,850</u>
Net Assets at 31 December 2010	<u>1,834</u>	<u>858</u>	<u>1,368</u>	<u>4,060</u>

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ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2011

2.2 Capital Assets under Development

	In-House Computer Applications €000
Amounts brought forward at 1 January 2011	-
Cash payments for the year	-
Transferred to asset register	-
Amounts carried forward at 31 December 2011	<u>-</u>

2.3 Bank and Cash

	2011 €000	2010 €000
at 31 December		
PMG balances	1,456	(9,017)
Petty cash	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>1,457</u>	<u>(9,016)</u>

2.4 Stocks

	2011 €000	2010 €000
at 31 December		
Stationery	71	159
IT consumables	73	115
Other	<u>15</u>	<u>35</u>
	<u>159</u>	<u>309</u>

2.5 Other Debit Balances

	2011 €000	2010 €000
at 31 December		
Advances to OPW	-	-
Recoupable salaries	-	-
Recoupable energy costs	444	423
Recoupment of travel schemes	45	133
Other debit items	<u>1,710</u>	<u>822</u>
	<u>2,199</u>	<u>1,378</u>

2.6 Other Credit Balances	2011	2010	
	€000	€000	
at 31 December			
Amounts due to the State			
Income tax	996	950	
Pay Related Social Insurance	456	579	
Professional Services Withholding Tax	32	37	
Value Added Tax	69	73	
Pensions	98	171	
Receipts	196	49	
Pension levy	257	503	
Universal Social Charge	286	-	
Income levy	-	109	
	<u>2,390</u>	<u>2,471</u>	
Payroll deductions held in suspense	232	303	
Other credit suspense items	<u>1,643</u>	<u>180</u>	
	<u><u>4,265</u></u>	<u><u>2,954</u></u>	
2.7 Net amount due from the Exchequer	2011	2010	
	€000	€000	
at 31 December			
Surplus for the year	6,796	10,644	
Exchequer grant overdrawn	<u>3,188</u>	<u>(15,188)</u>	
Net amount due to the Exchequer	9,984	(4,544)	
Balance brought forward at 1 January	<u>(10,593)</u>	<u>(6,048)</u>	
	(609)	(10,592)	
Represented by:			
Debtors			
Bank and cash	2.3	1,457	(9,016)
Debit balances: suspense	2.5	<u>2,199</u>	<u>1,378</u>
		3,656	(7,638)
Creditors			
Due to State	2.6	(2,390)	(2,471)
Credit balances: suspense	2.6	<u>(1,875)</u>	<u>(483)</u>
		(4,265)	(2,954)
		<u><u>(609)</u></u>	<u><u>(10,592)</u></u>
2.8 Commitments	2011	2010	
	€000	€000	
at 31 December			
Total of legally enforceable commitments	1,224	427	

3 Variations in Expenditure

An explanation is provided below in the case of each expenditure subhead where the outturn varied from the amount provided, after supplementary estimate adjustments, by more than €100,000 and by more than 5%.

Sub-Head	Less/(more) than provided €000	Explanation
1(c)	1,883	The saving arose because (i) a contingency provision of €1.2m was not used; (ii) expenditure on consultancy services was lower than anticipated; and (iii) a delay in the Records Management Project resulted in an underspend in the Library and Research Service budget.
2(c)	569	The saving arose because replacement of obsolete broadcasting equipment did not proceed as planned in 2011.
2(h)	1,517	The underspend relates to a contingency provision for Members' pensions which was not required in the year.
2(j)	471	The underspend arose because Committees were not established following the elections until mid-year resulting in lower than anticipated expenditure on consultancy and legal expenses.
4(a)	1,325	The saving arose because of (i) a reduction in the amount of overtime claimed because of the elections; (ii) the decision of the Commission to reduce the amount of overtime claimable; and (iii) the fact that new staff commenced employment at the lower end of the pay scales.
4(b)	(498)	The number taking-up redundancy was higher than provided for.
6(a)	691	The saving arose because (i) Members' postal entitlements were reduced by regulation from 1,500 to 1,250 envelopes per month; (ii) there was a delay in the take-up of the secretarial allowance scheme following the elections; and (iii) the Public Representation Allowance is not payable during a dissolution period of the Dáil.

4 Receipts

4.3 Receipts payable to the Central Fund

	2011 €000	2010 €000
1 Sales of parliamentary publications	-	-
2 Sales of televised proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann	-	-
3 Sales of services of Broadcasting Unit	39	72
4 Net income of catering and bar services	304	226
5 Members' contributions under the European Parliament (Irish Representatives) Pension Scheme 1979	6	5
6 Any other receipts obtained by the Commission in the performance of its functions except where they consist of expenses paid by the Commission on behalf of its members and staff which have been recouped by it from them	142	13
	<u>491</u>	<u>316</u>

5 Employee Numbers and Pay

Employees of the Commission*

	2011	2010
Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)	<u>453</u>	<u>467</u>
	€000	€000
Pay	21,080	21,613
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	197	216
Other allowances	184	141
Overtime and extra attendance	1,359	1,471
Shift and roster allowances	355	403
Employer's PRSI	<u>1,486</u>	<u>1,523</u>
Total pay	<u>24,661</u>	<u>25,367</u>

*On the payroll of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

Employees of Members of the Houses

	2011	2010
Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)	<u>378</u>	<u>361</u>
	€000	€000
Pay	14,529	15,446
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	13	28
Overtime and extra attendance	1,812	3,119
Employer's PRSI	<u>1,663</u>	<u>1,865</u>
Total pay	<u>18,017</u>	<u>20,460</u>

5.1 Allowances and Overtime Payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Maximum individual payment 2011 €	Maximum individual payment 2010 €
Employees of the Commission				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	43	6	19,585	19,605
Other allowances	106	3	19,126	33,490
Overtime and extra attendance	218	66	32,850	31,580
Shift and roster allowances	61	-	7,578	7,709
Employees of Members of the Houses				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	4	-	6,740	21,012
Overtime and extra attendance ¹	637	2	13,917	43,706

¹This figure is greater than the full time equivalent figure shown above (378) as it includes worksharers and changes in personnel.

5.2 Performance and Merit Payments

€16,867 was paid *ex-gratia* to thirteen officers in acknowledgement of their exceptional performance.

5.3 Other Remuneration Arrangements

Houses of the Oireachtas Service

€100,866 was paid to the Department of Foreign Affairs in respect of recoupable salary costs.

€71,516 was paid to the Department of Justice and Equality in respect of recoupable salary costs.

€57,352 was received from the Financial Services Ombudsman in respect of salary costs.

€51,171 was received from the National Consumer Agency in respect of salary costs.

€49,932 was received from the Department of the Taoiseach in respect of salary costs.

Six former civil servants were re-engaged on a fee basis at a total cost of €23,514.

One officer received a taxable benefit-in-kind to the value of €6,058

Gross payments of €54,457 were made in redundancy payments to 5 Staff. The net contribution of the Commission, after deducting the Social Insurance Rebate of €13,601 is €40,856.

Scheme of Secretarial Assistance for Non-Office Holding Members/Parties

€97,052 was paid to Clare County Council in respect of recoupable salary costs.

€75,857 was paid to Limerick County Council in respect of recoupable salary costs.

€54,499 was received from AWEPA in respect of salary costs.

€49,419 was received from the Department of Health in respect of salary costs.

€14,859 was paid to the Department of Transport in respect of recoupable salary costs.

€71,259 was received from the Department of the Taoiseach in respect of salary costs.

Gross payments of €7,208,681 were made in redundancy payments to 206 Staff. The net contribution of the Commission, after deducting the Social Insurance Rebate of €877,761 is €6,330,920.

6 Miscellaneous Items

A contingent liability arises in respect of the Joint Committee on Article 35.4.1 of the Constitution and section 39 of the Courts of Justice Act 1924. A bill of costs amounting to €1,977,794 in respect of witness legal costs has been received and an offer of €977,794 has been made.

During the audit of ICT equipment the loss of a number of ICT assets was discovered. The assets had a net book value of €4,900 (gross value of €12,434).

7 Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

Standard Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

Basis of Accounts

Appropriation Accounts, showing the financial transactions of Government Departments¹, are prepared in accordance with the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act, 1866 (as amended by the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993) and with accounting rules and procedures laid down by the Minister for Finance.

The Accounts are a cash-based record of the receipts and payments in the year compared with the amounts provided under the Appropriation Act. The Accounts also show prior year figures for comparison purposes. Some information of an accruals nature is included in the notes to the Accounts.

The standard accounting policies and principles set out below are applied in the preparation of the Accounts. Any departures from the standard policies and principles are explained in the Accounting Officer's Introduction to the Account.

Reporting Period

The reporting period is the year ended 31 December 2011.

Receipts

Appropriations in aid are receipts that may, under section 2 of the Public Accounts and Charges Act, 1891, be used to meet expenditure to the extent authorised by the annual Appropriation Act. In general, these are receipts arising in the normal course of a Department's business under the Vote.

The Department of Finance requires certain receipts of Departments to be credited directly to the Exchequer as 'extra' receipts. In general, these are receipts that have no direct connection with the Vote expenditure or are 'windfall' receipts. Such extra receipts may not be used to meet expenditure from the Vote. Where they arise, they are reported in a note to the Account (Note 4).

Payments

Payments consist of those sums which have come in course of payment during the year. Sums are deemed to have come in course of payment where the liability has been incurred, payment is due and the cheque or payable order has been drawn.

Matured Liabilities

Where a liability has been incurred and payment is due (i.e. the liability has matured), payment should be completed before the year end to ensure the integrity of the Appropriation Account. In cases where payment has not been effected and matured liabilities are outstanding at year end, the amount of such liabilities should be given in a note to the Account (Note 6).

Accruals

Each Appropriation Account incorporates information of an accruals nature in the notes to the Account, including

- ◆ an operating cost statement (Note 1), showing the total amount of resources consumed by the Department in the year
- ◆ a statement of the Department's assets and liabilities at year end (Note 2), with further explanatory notes including details regarding capital assets, capital assets under development, the net liability to the Exchequer, and commitments.

The statement of assets and liabilities includes the position at year-end in relation to the following.

- ◆ Accrued expenses — these represent liabilities other than liabilities in regard to remuneration and pensions. In the case of goods and services, an accrued liability is recognised when the payee has met the contractual requirement to provide the goods or services ordered. Amounts due for goods delivered, but not yet paid for, even if un-inspected and not taken to stock, are treated as a liability. In the case of grants, a liability is recognised when the grantee has met all the requirements of the grant scheme but has yet to receive payment.
- ◆ Prepayments — payments made during the year of account to meet expenses which will arise in whole or in part in a subsequent financial year.
- ◆ Accrued income — income due to the Department at the end of the year of account which has yet to be received.
- ◆ Deferred Income — income received by the Department during the year of account for goods/services which it has yet to provide.

¹ In this statement, the term 'Department' includes central Government Departments, offices and agencies responsible for Vote management and accounting.

APPENDIX 6

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2011

Capital Assets

The opening and closing values of capital assets on a Department's asset register and details of depreciation are shown by way of a note to the statement of assets and liabilities.

The following are not included in the statement of capital assets:

- ◆ assets worth less than €318 acquired from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2003, or assets worth less than €1,000 acquired since 1 January 2004,
- ◆ heritage assets, the value of which cannot be adequately expressed in financial terms.

Valuation of Assets

Land and Buildings

All lands and buildings owned by the State and controlled/managed by a Department are included in the statement of assets and liabilities (and capital assets note). Where relevant, the basis of valuation of land and buildings is explained in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the Account.

Where land and buildings are (a) vested in the Office of Public Works or (b) vested in a Minister but in fact controlled/managed by the Office of Public Works, they are included in the account for that Office. Otherwise, they appear in the account for the relevant Department.

Where lands or buildings are vested in a Minister but are, in fact, controlled/managed by an outside body, they are not included as assets of the Department, but the ownership of the asset is noted in the Department's Account.

Departments which cannot provide valuations for state-owned lands and buildings controlled/managed by them append to the Account a schedule of these assets.

Equipment, Furniture and Fittings

Equipment, furniture and fittings are valued at cost, apart from certain acquisitions prior to January 1995, which are valued at departmental valuations.

Other Assets

Where required, accounting policies in respect of valuation of other assets (e.g. specialised vehicles) are set out in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the Account.

Depreciation

Land is not depreciated. Where relevant, buildings are depreciated as indicated in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the Account.

Equipment, furniture and fittings are depreciated on a straight-line basis at the following annual rates over their estimated useful lives:

- ◆ furniture and fittings, and telecommunications equipment — 10%
- ◆ IT equipment and software, scientific and laboratory equipment and other office machinery — 20%.

Where required, other capital items are depreciated as indicated in the Accounting Officer's *Introduction* to the Account.

Capital Assets Under Development

A statement on capital assets under development is provided as a note to the statement of assets and liabilities. It shows cash payments on assets being developed within the Department, e.g. software development or construction projects, which were not yet recognised as assets at the start of the year of account.

Stocks

Consumables are stated at the lower of cost or departmental valuations.

Net Amount due from/to the Exchequer

The net amount due from/to the Exchequer represents the outturn for the year less any issues from the Exchequer together with balances due from the previous year.

Commitments

A commitment is a contractual obligation to pay on delivery for goods or services which have yet to be supplied at year-end. In the case of grant schemes, a commitment is recognised when the grant is approved but the grantee has yet to fulfil the requirements of the scheme.

A note provides figures for commitments likely to materialise in the subsequent years under (a) procurement and (b) grant subheads, excluding commitments under €1,270.

A separate note is provided giving details of multi-annual capital commitments over €6,350,000.

Superannuation

Superannuation payments for retired civil servants, Gardaí, teachers, army personnel and Health Service Executive and former Health Board personnel are met on a current basis from Votes 7, 20, 26, 37 and 40. Provision for superannuation does not appear in the Appropriation Accounts of other Votes.

Foreign Currency Transactions

Transactions arising in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the rates of exchange ruling at the dates of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the year-end rates of exchange.

Other Notes to the Accounts**General Principles**

In general, the other notes to the Accounts aim to draw the attention of the Dáil and of the Committee of Public Accounts to matters bearing on parliamentary control, or to provide fuller information about material transactions of an unusual nature recorded in the Account *e.g.* losses, special or *ex gratia* payments, and extra remuneration. Except in the cases outlined below, notes are provided where an individual transaction, or a category of transactions taken together, involves a sum of €50,000 or more.

Where amounts lower than the threshold values are involved, notes are also provided where a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or the Department of Finance considers that a note should be given.

Variations from Grant

In the case of variations from grant (Note 3), a note is provided where the variation

- ◆ is €100,000 or more, and
- ◆ represents 5% or more of the subhead (25% in the case of administrative subheads).

Where special circumstances warrant, a lower percentage variation may be explained by way of a note.

Notes in relation to variations in the categories of appropriations in aid are included on a similar basis.

Extra Remuneration

In the case of extra remuneration, the details given (Note 5) include the total amount paid under each category, the total number of recipients, the number of individuals that received €10,000 or more, and the maximum individual payment, if over €10,000.

Late Payments

In the case of interest payments under the Late Payment in Commercial Transactions Regulations, 2002, information is supplied (Note 6) where

- ◆ the total of interest payments due was €10,000 or more, or
- ◆ an individual payment was €10,000 or more.

Commissions and Inquiries

Where appropriate, Miscellaneous Notes (Note 6) include a statement of expenditure on each Commission or Inquiry financed from the Vote. Where a Commission or Inquiry has been established on a temporary basis, the total expenditure since its establishment is also given.

Grant-in-Aid Fund and Miscellaneous Accounts

Where relevant, accounts of grant-in-aid funds financed from the Vote and of other miscellaneous accounts are presented in Note 7.

APPENDIX 7

ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2012

1. INTRODUCTION

The Statement sets out the key objectives and associated actions contained in the Strategic Plan 2010-2012 and assigns an estimated proportion of the financial provision in the Commission's Statement of Estimates for 2012. This is compared with corresponding financial information for 2011. Similarly, output targets for each key objective for 2012 are listed alongside comparative information for 2011. The numbers of staff assigned to each strategy area in 2011 are also stated.

In recommending an annual statement that links outputs, resources and strategic objectives, the intention of the Department of Finance was that the statements would be available to Dáil Éireann and its committees when

considering the revised estimates of expenditure for Government Departments and offices. As the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is independent of this process and as its estimates procedures are set out separately in legislation, the Commission's statement is published in its annual report.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is committed to good governance, use of resources and modernisation and aims to meet best public service practice in this regard. The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will continue to monitor developments in relation to systems for the alignment of strategic and financial information and will implement change in a manner that advances the achievement of its key objectives.

2. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION'S KEY OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is to enable the Houses of the Oireachtas, their Committees and members to do their work, to deliver services to members that respond to their needs and to promote public understanding of the work of our parliament.

2. Summary of key objectives		Combined performance indicators
a	Improving Services to Parliament The Chairpersons and members of the Houses and their committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Surveys of Office holders and members on core procedural services. ◆ Compliance self-audit of key support services for Houses and committee sittings.
b	Improving Services to Members Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Surveys of members on administrative support services.
c	Enhancing Service Capability The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Implementation of initiatives under Towards 2016 and Transforming Public Services. ◆ International benchmarking against other parliaments and their administrations. ◆ Surveys of staff and members on facilities and services provided.

3. Financial provision for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

	Statement of Estimates 2011 € million	Outturn 2011 € million	Statement of Estimates 2012 € million	% Change on 2011 Outturn
Central Fund *	126.946	120.151	115.562	-4%

* Section 5 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009 provides a 3-year budget to the Commission and stipulates that the expenditure incurred by the Commission in the performance of its functions is charged on, and paid out of, the Central Fund. The Commission is obliged by section 13 of the Acts to prepare and publish each year a statement of estimates of the amount of moneys required by it in respect of on-going expenditure.

4. Breakdown of total gross expenditure at 2 above by key objectives

	Key objectives	Statement of Estimates 2011 € million	Outturn 2011 € million	Statement of Estimates 2012 € million	% Change on 2011 Outturn
a	Improving Services to Parliament	92.433	95.891	88.021	-8%
b	Improving Services to Members	17.039	11.965	13.601	14%
c	Enhancing Service Capability	17.474	12.295	13.940	13%
		126.946	120.151	115.562	-4%

5a. Improving Services to Parliament

Objectives

House and Committee Business

- ◆ Strengthen our ability to provide advice and other services to chairpersons and members in the core business area of parliamentary procedure.

Public Engagement

- ◆ Promote greater knowledge and perception of parliament through our public information, media relations, education and visitor programmes, and our official publications.

Parliamentary Library

- ◆ Promote the parliamentary library as a research hub to support the legislative and scrutiny work of parliament.

Inter-Parliamentary Relations

- ◆ Foster international and EU relations and North-South co-operation through participation in inter-parliamentary activities.

Records of Proceedings

- ◆ Provide enhanced public access to the work and records of parliament through our reporting, broadcasting and Irish language translation services.

Parliament Buildings

- ◆ Develop and improve the physical environment of parliament as an institution of State, a workplace and a place for visitors.

	Statement of Estimates 2011 € million	Outturn 2011 € million	Statement of Estimates 2012 € million	% Change on 2011 Outturn
Central Fund				
Pay				
Members' pay and pensions	31.971	42.612	35.955	-16%
Members' staff pay and pensions	20.889	25.503	20.475	-20%
Staff of the Service	13.854	13.167	13.532	3%
Total pay	66.714	81.282	69.962	-14%
Non-pay	18.266	14.609	18.059	24%
Total Expenditure	84.980	95.891	88.021	-8%

Number of staff employed on key objectives (whole time equivalents) in 2011: 226.85

APPENDIX 7

ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2012

IMPROVING SERVICES TO PARLIAMENT

Key Operational Outputs Achieved

- ◆ 108 Dáil sitting days and 836 sitting hours serviced.
- ◆ 81 Seanad sitting days and 520 sitting hours serviced.
- ◆ 315 Committee meetings held, comprising 541 hours and 30 Committee reports tabled.
- ◆ 108 Dáil Order Papers and 39 Supplementary Dáil Order Papers produced.
- ◆ 81 Seanad Order Papers and 6 Supplementary Seanad Order Papers produced.
- ◆ 37,397 Parliamentary Questions processed.
- ◆ 2,249 amendments to Bills processed.
- ◆ 75,058 visitors to Leinster House.
- ◆ 35,911 people attended tours of Leinster House.
- ◆ Leinster House complex open for 4,075 hours.
- ◆ 2,162 Documents Laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas processed, 39% of which laid electronically.
- ◆ 6,419 publications catalogued by L&RS.
- ◆ Register of Interests of Members of Seanad Éireann compiled.
- ◆ Annual revision of Register of Nominating Bodies by Seanad Office completed.
- ◆ Administration of Seanad General Election 2011 by Seanad Office completed.
- ◆ 1,946 pages of legislation translated.
- ◆ Post-election element of the L&RS marketing strategy implemented.
- ◆ "Research Matters" guide to L&RS services and expertise published.
- ◆ 43 Bill Digests and Debate Packs (Legislative Analysis Service) published in time for Second Stage Debate.
- ◆ Fourth annual *Library & Research Service and Committee Secretariat Protocol* developed.
- ◆ 34 requests for major research, and 90 information requests for Committees fulfilled by L&RS comprising 5 discussion papers (4 of which led to published committee reports); 6 Questions in Context Service papers; 4 EU Information Notes (Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality); 5 North-South Parliamentary Forum papers and presentations; and 14 topical information notes (provided to incoming members as part of their committee secretariat induction packs).
- ◆ Completion of the second Parliamentary Fellow's monograph titled "The evolving role of the Oireachtas in European Affairs".
- ◆ Inter-Parliamentary Union toolkit completed by L&RS.
- ◆ 1,423 pupils attended the Oireachtas Outreach Programme and 51 classes were visited under the Programme.
- ◆ 7,427 requests, including 6,786 from members of the public, dealt with by Communications Unit.
- ◆ 332 press releases issued by Communications Unit.
- ◆ Culture Night and National Bravery Awards Ceremony successfully delivered.
- ◆ 764 Broadcasting Requests received and no broadcasting interruptions recorded.
- ◆ Official Report of the Dáil, Seanad and Committees produced and published in a timely manner.
- ◆ 10,903 "takes" completed and 1,875 hours of debate reported by Debates Office.
- ◆ Written Answers processed for inclusion in the Official Dáil Report.
- ◆ Roll-out of the enhanced EU scrutiny initiative through the mainstreaming of EU legislation across all Sectoral Committees.
- ◆ Paperless committee meetings initiative rolled out to all committees in mid-2011 onwards with the development of a Lotus Notes database to facilitate full roll-out during 2012.
- ◆ For the period October to December 2011, Sectoral Committees considered 366 documents/draft legislative proposals from the EU Institutions. One reasoned opinion was adopted by Dáil Éireann on non-compliance with the principle of subsidiarity (common consolidated corporate tax base).
- ◆ Tendering process for sound contract completed.
- ◆ New amendments to Dáil procedures and a re-print of Dáil Standing Orders prepared for the new Dáil.
- ◆ Administrative systems introduced to support new Dáil Standing Order procedures for "topical issues" and members' dissatisfaction with Ministers' responses to parliamentary questions.
- ◆ General election functions of Clerk of the Dáil successfully discharged, including issue and return of writs, receipt and custody of election documents and making marked electoral registers publicly available.
- ◆ New web-pages provided for all committees.
- ◆ 2,612 print jobs completed.
- ◆ Panels of Temporary Dáil Chairpersons and Temporary Dáil Clerks established post-election and bespoke induction training provided together with on-going support and enhanced briefing.

OPERATIONAL OUTPUTS SECTION

Performance Indicators		
2011 Output Target	2011 Output Achieved	2012 Output Target
Surveys of Office holders and members on core procedural services	Survey of Office holders completed February 2012	Surveys of Office holders and members on core procedural services
Compliance self-audit of key support services for Houses and Committee sittings	Achieved	Compliance self-audit of key support services for Houses and Committee sittings

5b. Improving Services to Members

Objectives

Human Resources

- ◆ Support Members as employers by providing best-practice employer advice and personnel administration and training supports under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

Financial Resources

- ◆ Provide expert advice services and financial systems to ensure that Members receive their pay, allowances, pensions, entitlements information and other financial supports for their work.

Technology and Office Support

- ◆ Provide ICT systems, office equipment, supplies and other office services that Members need to conduct their parliamentary business.

Research and Information

- ◆ Deliver expert research and information services to Members that meet their needs as parliamentarians and public representatives.

Accommodation and Facilities

- ◆ Provide office accommodation, refreshment and other workplace facilities that enable Members and their staff to work effectively and in comfort.

	Statement of Estimates 2011 € million	Outturn 2011 € million	Statement of Estimates 2012 € million	% Change on 2011 Outturn
Central Fund				
Pay				
Staff of the Service	5.970	5.670	5.831	3%
Non-pay	7.858	6.295	7.770	23%
Total Expenditure	13.828	11.965	13.601	14%
Number of staff employed on key objectives (whole time equivalents) in 2011: 97.75				

APPENDIX 7

ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2012

IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

Key Operational Outputs Achieved

- ◆ 16,182 helpdesk calls from members dealt with by ICT Unit.
- ◆ 8,732 payments made and 2,840 queries dealt with by Members' Services.
- ◆ A panel of legal professionals established to provide an expert Bill drafting service for private members.
- ◆ A new electronic system for the seamless drafting and publication of Government legislation by the Parliamentary Counsel, Government departments and the Bills Office developed.
- ◆ 200 legal advices provided by the office of the PLA, of which 37.5% were in response to advices sought by Oireachtas committees and 62.5% were in response to advices sought by the Service.
- ◆ 8,732 payments made and 2,840 queries dealt with by Members' Services.
- ◆ 77 foreign visits supported by Travel and Interparliamentary Section.
- ◆ Payment of the Parliamentary Standard Allowance and attendance record of members for verification of the allowance published monthly on the Oireachtas website.
- ◆ First audit of the Parliamentary Standard Allowance conducted by independent auditors; audit report published.
- ◆ Handbook for members of Dáil and Seanad produced following 2011 General Election.
- ◆ End of year statement for Parliamentary Standard Allowance published on Oireachtas website, following certification by members of their expenses.
- ◆ One-Stop-Shop responded to 1,730 queries from members and their staff.
- ◆ 3,131 requests for information and research fulfilled, including 2,349 from members and members' staff.
- ◆ Eight *Economic Indicators* and seven *Spotlights* published by L&RS.
- ◆ Press monitoring service and discovery tool to enhance access to information purchased.
- ◆ Arrangements made for administration of members' salary and allowances and the orientation of 117 newly elected T.D.s and Senators following the General and Seanad Elections.
- ◆ Members' Services Information for members pack updated, circulated and published on the Members Intranet.
- ◆ Members' Informal Feedback Forum re-established.
- ◆ 40 one-to-one introductory meetings held by L&RS with new members and/or their parliamentary assistants.

Performance Indicators

2011 Output Target	2011 Output Achieved	2012 Output Target
Survey of members	Survey of IFF members February 2011 Survey of First Time T.D.s by UCC	Survey of members
Feedback from Commission and House Committees	Achieved	Feedback from Commission and House Committees
Staff input to new service development	Achieved	Staff input to new service development

5c. Enhancing Service Capability

Objectives

Managing and Developing People

- ◆ Make best use of our people through strategic recruitment and effective resource planning, by implementing our policies on performance management, career planning and training and by fostering our values of professional excellence.
- ◆ Provide financial management systems to ensure that best economic use is made of the financial resources of the Commission.

Customer Focus

- ◆ Renew our commitment to quality service by engaging with Members and other key customers and building on our existing service improvement and feedback initiatives.

Transforming the Way We Work

- ◆ Increase our service agility by continuously reviewing our structures, systems and policies in keeping with best practice in public service management.
- ◆ Foster collaborative approaches to working through team-building and cross-functional initiatives.
- ◆ Support effective working through our policies on knowledge and records management, better internal communications and sustainable working.

Governance and Future Planning

- ◆ Modernise our legislative framework to enhance our systems of governance and optimise our senior management structures under the Commission.
- ◆ Strengthen our future planning and critical review capabilities by improving our systems of risk management, business continuity planning and audit.
- ◆ Redefine our approaches to the provision of legal advisory services and the discharge of our electoral and other statutory functions.

Managing and Measuring Performance

- ◆ Implement these strategies through our local business plans, measure our performance and review our efficiency and effectiveness to ensure our services deliver value for money.

	Statement of Estimates 2011 € million	Outturn 2011 € million	Statement of Estimates 2012 € million	% Change on 2011 Outturn
Central Fund				
Pay				
Staff of the Service	6.132	5.828	5.989	3%
Non-Pay	8.043	6.467	7.951	23%
Total Expenditure	14.175	12.295	13.940	13%
Number of staff employed on key objectives (whole time equivalents) in 2011: 100.4				

APPENDIX 7

ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2012

ENHANCING SERVICE CAPABILITY Key Operational Outputs Achieved

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 72 FOI requests fulfilled by the Service. ◆ 9,265 financial transactions carried out and 5,449 invoices processed by Finance Unit. ◆ 1,142 staff changes dealt with by HR. ◆ 869 training days provided for staff. ◆ BPI project on rostering completed and recommendations implemented. ◆ BPI on Written Answers underway in Debates' Office. ◆ Debates indexing/web publishing project at testing stage. ◆ Training courses provided for staff on Dáil Standing Orders (10 sessions held). ◆ Knowledge management master classes held on key legislative and procedural functions of the Clerk of the Dáil. ◆ Pilot transmission of parliamentary channel commenced. ◆ Reports produced by MIF detailing financial, output and performance information to aid decision makers. MIF contributed to 18 requests for data. MIF reported 29 risks materialised or nearly materialised to MAC/Audit Committee. MIF recorded 23,850 items of data. ◆ Oversight and management of transition to new broadcasting service provider with effect from 1 January 2011. ◆ 18 Management Advisory Committee meetings held. ◆ Information management: Records audit undertaken to establish scale, scope and range of records held. Knowledge management strategy approved by MAC. Draft information strategy developed. ◆ Audit of Clerk of the Dáil statutory services function completed. ◆ 4,161 helpdesk calls dealt with from staff by ICT Unit. ◆ Comprehensive guidance information provided for Commission and Audit Committee members, including induction briefings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seven internal audit reports and two reports regarding implementation of audit recommendations presented to Audit Committee. ◆ Revised Code of Conduct for Commission Members adopted by Commission. ◆ Corporate Business Plan 2011-12 drafted and published following approval by MAC. ◆ MAC Charter revised consequent on changes to top level management roles. ◆ Systems sub-committee of MAC established in July met 4 times and submitted 2 reports for consideration by MAC. ◆ People and Finance sub-committee of MAC established in July met twice and submitted 2 reports for consideration by MAC. ◆ A management seminar for the Service held in March 2011. ◆ Parliamentary Service Reform Group re-established. ◆ Efficiency review programme reports completed on KPIs for HR, Training, Procurement and ICT areas. ◆ Annual Report and Corporate Business Plan designed and produced in-house by OCSG achieving savings. ◆ First progress report on implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010-12 noted by Commission. ◆ 750 pages of briefing notes prepared for Houses Commission and MAC members. ◆ Communications principles and action plan developed for L&RS. ◆ Procurements process, particularly in relation to books and press monitoring, streamlined by L&RS. ◆ Technical infrastructure for an online parliamentary library developed, and consultant's report on historical significance of Dublin Castle and Irish Office collections commissioned.
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Performance Indicators

2011 Output Target	2011 Output Achieved	2012 Output Target
Implementation of initiatives under "Towards 2016" and "Transforming Public Services"	Implementation in progress	Implementation of initiatives under "Towards 2016" and "Transforming Public Services"
Annual Benchmarking exercise	Completed	Annual Benchmarking exercise
Surveys of staff and members on facilities and services provided	Survey of IFF members February 2011	Surveys of staff (to coincide with Organisational Development Programme) and members on facilities and services provided
	Survey of First Time T.D.s by UCC September 2011	
	Survey of Office holders February 2012	

ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee was placed on a statutory footing in 2010. The relevant provisions were made under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009 which was enacted on 21 December 2009 and came into effect on 1 January 2010.

The membership of the Committee comprises:

- ◆ one member of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission,
- ◆ at least one but not more than three other members of either House of the Oireachtas,
- ◆ at least two but not more than three external persons,
- ◆ one member of the staff of the Service.

The membership of the Committee prior to the general election in 2011 was as follows: Mr. Eddie Sullivan (Chairman, external member), Senator Jim Walsh (Commission member), Deputy Michael Ahern, Deputy Terence Flanagan (in substitution for Deputy Kieran O'Donnell) and Senator Dominic Hannigan (Oireachtas members), Mr. Cyril Maybury, Mr. Bryan O'Sullivan (external members), and Mr. Art O'Leary (staff representative).

Following the general election in 2011, the Commission appointed Deputy John Browne (Commission member), Deputy Peter Mathews, Deputy Michael McGrath, and Deputy Michael McCarthy (Oireachtas members) to the Committee. Deputy Sean Fleming was subsequently appointed in substitution for Deputy Michael McGrath. The Commission re-appointed Mr. Eddie Sullivan as Chairman, with Mr. Cyril Maybury and Mr. Bryan O'Sullivan re-appointed as external members. Mr. Alan Murphy was appointed as the staff representative on the Committee. Induction training was provided for all new Committee members.

ROLE OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The role of the Committee is to:

- ◆ advise the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions,
- ◆ advise the Commission on matters of corporate governance relating to its functions, and
- ◆ report in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.

The Committee's duties include advising the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions including the following:

- ◆ the proper implementation of public service guidelines on financial matters,
- ◆ compliance with section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866, section 19 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 and any other obligations imposed by law relating to financial matters,
- ◆ the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission's procedures relating to public procurement, seeking sanction for expenditure and complying with that sanction, acquiring, keeping custody of and disposing of assets, risk management, financial reporting, internal audit, internal controls, and
- ◆ the form of accounts of the Commission for approval by the Minister for Finance.

A seconded internal auditor provides a dedicated resource with professional audit qualifications and experience and is responsible for internal audit and related matters in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter. Staff of the Service are assigned to work with the internal auditor for the duration of the secondment and various staff across the organisation provide further support in relation to audit field work. The Internal Audit Unit participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a public service internal audit network) and in a group of Heads of Internal Audit of parliaments and assemblies in Ireland and the UK.

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee met four times in 2011 – March, June, October and December. In carrying out its duties under section 14A of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2009, the Committee advised the Secretary General on financial matters arising relating to his functions [subsection (10)(a)], and on the proper implementation of public service guidelines on financial matters, public procurement, asset and risk management, financial reporting, and internal controls [subsection (11)]. The Committee also reviewed the revised form of accounts of the Commission proposed by the Department of Finance in line with government accounting practice.

The following matters were considered by the Committee in 2011:

Internal Audit Work Programme:

The Committee considered the 2010-2012 Internal Audit work programme that had been approved by the Secretary General and noted the Internal Audit plan for 2011.

The Committee considered the following seven Internal Audit Reports:

Internal Audit of Technical Support Services and Facilities for Recording/Publication of Parliamentary Proceedings in the Chambers and Committee Rooms

This audit assessed the effectiveness of the controls and

APPENDIX 8

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

the processes in place for the provision of effective and efficient services to facilitate recording, reporting, and print and web publishing of parliamentary proceedings to provide assurance that the procedures and controls in place for recording and publication of parliamentary proceedings are efficient and effective. The audit work reviewed the arrangements for sound recording, broadcasting, electronic voting, web publishing and webcasting, and related procurement and management of contractors were examined.

Internal Audit of Finance Unit Processes and Financial Management System (Integra) in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

This audit reviewed financial processes within the Service and the Integra Financial System to assess the effectiveness of the controls and the processes within the Finance Unit and provide assurance that the Finance Unit procedures and controls comply with Public Financial Procedures 2008 and with the internal financial policies and governance arrangements of the Service.

Internal Audit of Dissolution Planning

This audit covered the dissolution of the Dáil and the Seanad in 2011. The audit work included reviewing the administrative arrangements for handling the impact of elections with a view to assessing the controls, systems, effectiveness of processes and value for money considerations in this area.

Internal Audit of Stationery Stores

This audit reviewed the procedures and controls in the stationery stores area. The audit work covered all consumable purchases of stationery and certain computer consumables which are processed through stationery stores.

Internal Audit of Compliance with Office Guidelines on Project Management

This audit established compliance with Service guidelines in relation to project management. The audit work reviewed projects at different stages of completion on the basis of related expenditure and significance for the Service.

Internal Audit of Office Accommodation and Related Facilities

This audit reviewed the adequacy and suitability of accommodation and related facilities, and assessed the accommodation resources available to meet the needs of the Service. The audit work established the extent of office accommodation and related facilities available throughout the Leinster House complex and included a high-level review of the management of office accommodation and related facilities.

Internal Audit of Training

This audit reviewed the training strategy and related deliverables, and assessed the delivery by the training unit of programmes which meet the needs of the Service. The audit covered training for civil service staff, members of the Houses and their staff. The audit work included a review of

systems and procedures in respect of the key aspects of training.

The Committee noted an independent report by Mazars on an audit of the Public Representation Allowance, which came into effect on 1 March 2010 under the Oireachtas (Allowances and Facilities) Regulations, 2010.

Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations

The Internal Audit Unit completed a testing programme regarding implementation of recommendations from Internal Audit Reports during the period 2008 – June 2010, and presented reports to the Audit Committee in both March and October 2011 on the status of the implementation of these recommendations. The Committee emphasised the importance of reviewing and testing the implementation of recommendations periodically and in particular confirming that recommendations categorised as 'Important' are implemented and audit verified.

Risk Management

The Committee reviewed quarterly risk materialisation reports for the Service and was briefed in relation to developments regarding the Service's Risk Management Policy. The Internal Audit Unit is represented on the Risk Management Committee which was established by the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) in October 2011. The risk management process in the Service is monitored and controlled by the Risk Management Committee which ensures that risk management activities are carried out effectively and in a timely manner. The role of Internal Audit on the Risk Management Committee includes advising on the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service's procedures relating to risk management and providing assurance on the processes for the management of risk.

Relevant Developments

The reporting period for this report is on a calendar year basis to align with the reporting period of the Commission Annual Report with which it is published.

Representation on Internal Audit Networks

The Internal Audit Unit participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a public service internal audit network) and also in a group of Heads of Internal Audit of parliaments and assemblies in Ireland and the UK.

Development of a Fraud Policy

The Internal Audit Unit has been working on the development of a Fraud Policy, the overall objective of which is to ensure the highest standards of ethical behaviour from all staff of the Oireachtas Service and others who conduct activities with the Service. The policy relates to fraud involving the assets and resources of the Service and applies to all areas of activity conducted by the Service. An internal consultation process is underway and it is expected a draft policy will be finalised during 2012.

No.	Bill Name	Date Presented / Introduced
1	Twenty-Ninth Amendment of the Constitution Bill 2011 [PMB]	16/12/2010
2	Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011	07/01/2011
3	Road Traffic Bill 2011 [Seanad]	07/01/2011
4	Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Bill 2011	10/01/2011
5	Bretton Woods Agreements (Amendment) Bill 2011	13/01/2011
6	Residential Tenancies (Deposit Retention Schemes) Bill 2011 [PMB]	16/12/2010
7	Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	18/01/2011
8	Finance Bill 2011	20/01/2011
9	National Asset Management Agency (Amendment) Bill 2011	26/01/2011
10	Jurisdiction of Courts and Enforcement of Judgments (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	08/02/2011
11	Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	28/02/2011
12	Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2011	16/03/2011
13	Electoral (Amendment) (Political Donations) Bill 2011 [PMB]	07/04/2011
14	Twenty-Ninth Amendment of the Constitution (No. 2) Bill 2011 [PMB]	10/05/2011
15	Spent Convictions Bill 2011 [PMB]	11/05/2011
16	Criminal Justice Bill 2011	11/05/2011
17	Patents (Amendment) Bill 2011	12/05/2011
18	Finance (No. 2) Bill 2011	17/05/2011
19	Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Bill 2011	18/05/2011
20	Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) (No. 2) Bill 2011	20/05/2011
21	Welfare of Greyhounds Bill 2011	26/05/2011
22	Registration of Wills Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	27/05/2011
23	Social Welfare and Pensions Bill 2011	31/05/2011
24	Mobile Phone Radiation Warning Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	31/05/2011
25	Finance (No. 3) Bill 2011	07/06/2011
26	Whistleblowers Protection Bill 2011 [PMB]	07/06/2011
27	Reduction in Pay and Allowances of Government and Oireachtas Members Bill 2011 [PMB]	21/06/2011
28	Twenty-Ninth Amendment of the Constitution (No. 3) Bill 2011 [PMB]	22/06/2011
29	Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	22/06/2011
30	Statistics (Heritage Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	23/06/2011
31	Defence (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	28/06/2011
32	Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2011	28/06/2011
33	Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	29/06/2011
34	Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	29/06/2011
35	Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2011	06/07/2011
36	Residential Institutions Redress (Amendment) Bill 2011	06/07/2011
37	National Tourism Development Authority (Amendment) Bill 2011	07/07/2011
38	Family Home Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	08/07/2011
39	Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2011 [PMB]	14/07/2011
40	Industrial Relations (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2011 [PMB]	19/07/2011
41	Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	21/07/2011
42	Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Bill 2011	26/07/2011

APPENDIX 9

BILLS 2011

No.	Bill Name	Date Presented / Introduced
43	Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Bill 2011	26/07/2011
44	Twenty-Ninth Amendment of the Constitution (Judges' Remuneration) Bill 2011	02/08/2011
45	European Arrest Warrant (Application to Third Countries and Amendment) and Extradition (Amendment) Bill 2011	08/08/2011
46	Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	05/09/2011
47	Thirtieth Amendment of the Constitution (Houses of the Oireachtas Inquiries) Bill 2011	08/09/2011
48	Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	09/09/2011
49	European Financial Stability Facility and Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Bill 2011	14/09/2011
50	Reporting of Lobbying in Criminal Legal Cases Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	14/09/2011
51	Road Traffic (No. 2) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	16/09/2011
52	Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Bill 2011 [PMB]	21/09/2011
53	Regulation of Debt Management Advisors Bill 2011 [PMB]	21/09/2011
54	Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011	23/09/2011
55	Competition (Amendment) Bill 2011	26/09/2011
56	Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme) and Remuneration Bill 2011	26/09/2011
57	Health (Provision of General Practitioner Services) Bill 2011	28/09/2011
58	Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011	09/10/2011
59	Debt Settlement and Mortgage Resolution Office Bill 2011 [PMB]	12/10/2011
60	Irish Film Board (Amendment) Bill 2011	19/10/2011
61	Access to Central Treasury Funds (Commission for Energy Regulation) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	20/10/2011
62	Smarter Transport Bill 2011 [PMB]	25/10/2011
63	Water Services (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	01/11/2011
64	Scrap and Precious Metal Dealers Bill 2011 [PMB]	02/11/2011
65	Civil Registration (Amendment) Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	03/11/2011
66	Family Home Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011 [PMB]	02/11/2011
67	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland (Amendment) Bill 2011 [PMB]	02/11/2011
68	Road Transport Bill 2011	11/11/2011
69	Local Authority Public Administration Bill 2011 [PMB]	21/09/2011
70	Advertising, Labelling and Presentation of Fast Food at Fast Food Outlets Bill 2011 [PMB]	16/11/2011
71	Thirty-First Amendment of the Constitution (The President) Bill 2011 [PMB]	16/11/2011
72	Health Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2011	16/11/2011
73	Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Amendment) Bill 2011	16/11/2011
74	Local Government (Household Charge) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	05/12/2011
75	Bretton Woods Agreements (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2011	02/12/2011
76	Social Welfare Bill 2011	05/12/2011
77	Fiscal Responsibility (Statement) Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	07/12/2011
78	Appropriation Bill 2011	09/12/2011
79	Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Bill 2011 [Seanad]	12/12/2011
80	Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Bill 2011	14/12/2011
81	Burial and Cremation Regulation Bill 2011 [PMB]	15/12/2011
82	NAMA and Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Transparency Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	15/12/2011
83	Corporate Manslaughter Bill 2011 [Seanad] [PMB]	15/12/2011
84	Industrial Relations (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 2011	20/12/2011

No.	Act Name	Date of Signature
1	Bretton Woods Agreements (Amendment) Act 2011	21/01/2011
2	Multi-Unit Developments Act 2011	24/01/2011
3	Communications (Retention of Data) Act 2011	26/01/2011
4	Student Support Act 2011	02/02/2011
5	Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 2011	02/02/2011
6	Finance Act 2011	06/02/2011
7	Road Traffic Act 2011	27/04/2011
8	Finance (No. 2) Act 2011	22/06/2011
9	Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011	29/06/2011
10	Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 2011	04/07/2011
11	Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2011	07/07/2011
12	Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act 2011	08/07/2011
13	Biological Weapons Act 2011	10/07/2011
14	Electoral (Amendment) Act 2011	25/07/2011
15	Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2011	25/07/2011
16	Residential Institutions Redress (Amendment) Act 2011	25/07/2011
17	Defence (Amendment) Act 2011	26/07/2011
18	Finance (No. 3) Act 2011	27/07/2011
19	Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011	31/07/2011
20	Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011	02/08/2011
21	Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Act 2011	02/08/2011
22	Criminal Justice Act 2011	02/08/2011
23	Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011	02/08/2011
24	Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Act 2011	02/08/2011
25	European Financial Stability Facility and Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Act 2011	23/09/2011
26	Insurance (Amendment) Act 2011	30/09/2011
27	Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) Act 2011	20/10/2011
28	Road Traffic (No. 2) Act 2011	20/10/2011
29	Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011	16/11/2011
30	Access to Central Treasury Funds (Commission for Energy Regulation) Act 2011	23/11/2011
31	Road Transport Act 2011	02/12/2011
32	Irish Film Board (Amendment) Act 2011	07/12/2011
33	National Tourism Development Authority (Amendment) Act 2011	07/12/2011
34	Health Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011	16/12/2011
35	Criminal Law (Defence and the Dwelling) Act 2011	19/12/2011
36	Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011	19/12/2011
37	Social Welfare Act 2011	19/12/2011
38	Appropriation Act 2011	19/12/2011
39	Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Amendment) Act 2011	19/12/2011
40	Property Services (Regulation) Act 2011	20/12/2011
41	Nurses and Midwives Act 2011	21/12/2011
	Twenty-Ninth Amendment of the Constitution (Judges' Remuneration) Act 2011	17/11/2011

APPENDIX 11

REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH PROMPT PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS ACT

REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE PROMPT PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS ACT 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 388 of 2002)

Period covered by this review: 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011

Statement of Compliance

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service complies with the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 388 of 2002).

The Act has been implemented in full since 10 May 2002 within the Service. It is the policy of the Service to settle all invoices promptly with due regard to contractual terms where applicable, good financial and cash management practices and the provisions of the legislation.

Instructions have been issued by the Finance Unit to all staff processing payments to ensure that the provisions of the legislation are complied with. While the procedures are designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act.

Payments that fell due under the terms of the Act within the relevant period

In the period under review there were a total of 12 late payments and the amount of interest paid in respect of these late payments was €723.24.

11 of these payments involved invoices in excess of €317; the total value of the 12 payments was €76,370.74. The average delay in making these payments was 111 days. During the period in question the proportion of the total value of payments (almost €36 million in 2011) represented by payments which involved prompt payment interest was 0.2%.

Reduction of payment period to 15 days

With effect from 15 June 2009, the Service reduced its maximum target period for payments to suppliers from 30 days to 15 days to reflect a change in Government policy. Had the 15 day target been in place on a statutory basis, a further 62 payments would have incurred prompt payment interest, representing 0.7% of the total number of payments processed from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011.



Conan McKenna,
Assistant Secretary,
Corporate and Members' Services
June 2012

OVERVIEW OF ENERGY USAGE IN THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS IN 2011

The energy needs of the Houses of the Oireachtas are met as part of the system for the Government Buildings complex which is managed by the Office of Public Works.

The Government Buildings complex includes the Department of Finance; the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; the Office of the Attorney General; the Houses of the Oireachtas; Kildare House; the National Museum and the National Library.

The OPW has installed sub meters on the various different buildings in the Oireachtas as part of the "Optimising Power @ Work Campaign" to record the fuel and electricity consumption and this is monitored through a web-based reporting system. The Service also has a combined heat and power plant which supplies electricity to the ring electrical system and heat to the old House.

The Service has responsibility for Kildare House and it is also fed from the district heating system and the electricity ring. In 2011, the Houses of the Oireachtas complex including Kildare House, consumed 9,222 MWh of energy, consisting of:

- ◆ 6,015 MWh of electricity;
- ◆ 3,207 MWh of fossil fuels.

Actions Undertaken in 2011

In 2011, the Service undertook a range of initiatives to improve our energy performance, including:

- ◆ Participation in the "Optimising Power @ Work Campaign", where staff are encouraged to be more energy efficient. This has included a continuous review of the heating and ventilation systems to ensure they operate only when required, and significant savings have been identified here;
- ◆ Night energy audits have been undertaken to identify areas where energy savings can be made;
- ◆ Heating and ventilation times have been changed to reflect the longer opening hours of the Houses and to

ensure that no equipment is run out-of-hours;

- ◆ New wood chip boilers are now fully commissioned and provide up to 25% of the complex's heating load;
- ◆ Electric heating of the front office is being replaced with a LPHW system;
- ◆ Optimisation of the CHP;
- ◆ Separate chiller for basement server room cooling;
- ◆ Energy awareness day, with efficient lighting display for staff to explain new more efficient lights;
- ◆ Energy awareness quiz for staff for energy meter prizes; and
- ◆ Reduction of the MTHW summer flow temperature.

Altogether, these and other energy saving measures are saving the Houses of the Oireachtas 270 MWh annually.

Actions Planned for 2012

In 2012, the Service intends to further improve our energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- ◆ Monitoring the amount of energy produced by the biomass boiler;
- ◆ Continue to inform and motivate the staff in energy reduction measures;
- ◆ Optimising the chillers;
- ◆ Review the heating times as the year progresses;
- ◆ Install more efficient lighting were possible as the current lamps fail;
- ◆ Installation of crochet timers in the committee rooms; and
- ◆ Electrical immersion for summer hot water heater.

It is expected that these measures will result in further energy savings in 2012.