



## ***Coimisiún Thithe an Oireachtais*** ***Houses of the Oireachtas Commission***

*Minutes of the Commission*  
*Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2007*

1. The tenth meeting of the Commission of 2007 took place at 1.15 p.m. in Room 2, Leinster House.
2. **MEMBERS PRESENT.**  
Deputy John O'Donoghue, T.D., Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Senator Paul Bradford, Mr. Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General, Deputy Tom Hayes, Senator Cecilia Keaveney, Deputy Séamus Kirk, Senator Pat Moylan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, Deputy Michael Mulcahy, Deputy Dan Neville, Deputy Pat Rabbitte and Senator Jim Walsh.
3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.**  
The minutes of the meetings of 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 25<sup>th</sup> October and 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2007, were agreed by the Commission.
4. **RESOURCE PACKAGE FOR HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS OFFICE-HOLDERS and SECRETARIAL FACILITIES FOR PARTIES AND MEMBERS - REVIEW OF S.I. 888/04 IN LIGHT OF NUMBERS IN THE 30<sup>TH</sup> DÁIL AND TO PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATE GRAPHIC DESIGN SERVICE.**

The Commission agreed that these two items of business would be discussed together.

*Deputy Rabbitte had to withdraw from the meeting due to a prior commitment.*

***Resource package for Houses of the Oireachtas Office Holders:***

The Commission had before it a discussion document in this matter [10-01-07].

The Commission agreed –

- (1) the additional staff resources set out in the document;
- (2) the additional budget allocations set out in the document; and
- (3) the summary expenditure guidelines set out in the document.

***Secretarial facilities for parties and members:***

The Commission had before it a discussion document in this matter [10-02-07].

The Commission was informed that the document recommended an allocation of resources on a “*no policy change*” basis and had been the subject of prior consultation with the parties concerned.

In noting Fine Gael and Green Party concerns in relation to the adequacy of resources for parties generally and the need to appropriately resource Opposition parties to enable them to hold the Government to account, the Commission agreed the following –

- (1) the establishment of a Committee to undertake a full review of the level of secretarial facilities provided to parliamentary parties;

(2) that, following agreement by the Commission of the terms of reference of the Committee, the recommended allocation of resources on the “no policy change” basis as set out in the discussion document before the Commission would be accepted as an interim solution pending the outcome of the full review.

**5. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE 2007 - SUB-HEAD 2(H) - AN CISTE PINSEAN.**

The Commission approved a supplementary sum of €2,530,000 required to meet the requirements of an Ciste Pinsean on subhead 2(h) that may arise before the end of 2007. The Supplementary Statement of Estimates is to be noted by the Dáil on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2007.

**6. CORPORATE IDENTITY FOR THE COMMISSION AND THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS.**

The Commission had before it for consideration a design for a new corporate identity for the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Commission was informed that the proposed new harp symbol had been specially drawn up for the Commission and the Houses of the Oireachtas following widespread consultation with stakeholders. The harp prints in gold-coloured ink and is completed by a series of green concentric circles. No other Government Department or State Agency will be allowed to use this harp.

The Commission approved the design with the proviso that, in so far as is practicable, the logo should not appear on its own without text.

**7. LEGAL COSTS: FORMER MEMBER JIM HIGGINS VS MORRIS TRIBUNAL.**

The Commission sanctioned the payment of costs totalling €129,418.11 charged by M/s T. Dillon Leech and Sons Solicitors in respect of the representation of former Deputy/Senator Jim Higgins in the case of *Senator Jim Higgins vs The Honourable Mr Justice Frederick Morris, sole Member of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Complaints concerning some Gardaí of the Donegal Division*.

The Commission was informed that these proceedings, and costs in the main incurred as a result, pre-dated the establishment of the Commission in 2004 and that any future legal costs will fall to be considered under the provisions of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 and 2006.

**8. OIREACHTAS PRINTING FACILITY.**

The Commission agreed that the response time for printing of all items associated with this year’s Budget will be five working days (for all other items, the standard seven day response time applies) and, in relation to demand for production within the five-day response time, the Commission sanctioned a budget for outsourcing of €75,000.

**9. ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting adjourned at 2.20 p.m.

JOHN O’DONOGHUE, T.D.,  
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission.

Dated: