



*Minutes of the Commission  
Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2012*

1. The sixth meeting of the Commission of 2012 took place at 12.00 p.m. in Room 2, Leinster House.

2. **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Deputy Seán Barrett, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson), Deputy John Browne, Deputy Catherine Byrne, Mr. Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General, Deputy Frank Feighan, Senator Marc MacSharry, Deputy Dan Neville, Senator Tom Sheahan and Deputy Jack Wall. Apologies were received from Senator John Whelan.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2012, were agreed by the Commission.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

It was agreed that the sub-Committee on Accommodation would follow-up on whether the catering facilities in Agriculture House may be accessed by members and staff and also if the catering facilities in the National Gallery and the National Museum may be used for visiting groups as had been the case in the previous Dáil. It was also agreed that the sub-Committee would investigate the reasons why the car park adjoining the National Gallery in Leinster Lawn had not been reinstated following the completion of the roof works to the National Gallery.

5. **UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRPERSONS OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

- (i) **Update from the sub-Committee on Accommodation**

Deputy Jack Wall advised the Commission that the sub-Committee had met on 6<sup>th</sup> June. The sub-Committee is awaiting an update from OPW on the works required to Leinster House. The sub-Committee is also awaiting an update on all aspects of visitors' facilities from the Visitor Facility Group which is to be established over the coming weeks. It was agreed that consideration would be given to include a member of the Commission on the Group. A review on the operation of the bar and restaurant was also being finalised and would be presented to the Commission in due course. In this context, the Ceann Comhairle requested the sub-Committee to examine ways to reduce administration in relation to invoicing and credit management as a means to a more streamlined and efficient process.

The Commission noted the update provided.

**(ii) Update from the sub-Committee on Communications**

The Ceann Comhairle advised the Commission that the Sub-Committee met with the contractor engaged to provide specialist broadcasting assistance on 3<sup>rd</sup> May and discussed a project plan for the work to be carried out. It was agreed that the contractor would produce a report detailing the technological developments since the previous report produced in 2008 with an assessment of the merits of various proposals and costings. The contractor will present the report to the sub-Committee at its next meeting on 21st June. The sub-Committee will report progress to the next meeting of the Commission.

The Commission noted the update provided.

**6. COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

**(i) Value for Money Report on Communications Strategy**

The Commission noted the contents of a Value for Money and Policy Review Report on the Communications Strategy 2007-2009 with due regard to the current Communications Strategy 2010-2012 [06-01b-12, 06-01c-12]. The Commission also noted Value for Money Reports represented best practise in relation to governance and in this case also served to underpin the proposed Communications Strategy. The Commission referred the Report to the sub-Committee on Communications for further consideration.

**(ii) Communications Strategy 2012-2014**

The Commission discussed the measures contained in the Communications Strategy 2012-2014 [06-01-12, 06-01a-12]. The Commission agreed the strategy and referred it to the sub-Committee on Communications for further consideration. It was agreed that all members of the Commission would be invited to attend the meeting of the sub-Committee when the communications items are to be discussed.

**7. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**(i) Financial Report for quarter ended 31 March 2012, including an update on next 3-year budget**

The Commission noted a financial report for the quarter ended 31 March 2012 [06-05-12] and the update provided on early discussions at official level with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform regarding the next 3-year budget.

**(ii) Sanction for virement between expense heads [06-02a-12]:**

The Commission granted sanction to vire monies between subheads where savings are anticipated to meet unanticipated costs occurring in subheads 1(d) and 4(b). The Commission noted that these costs on the subheads in question, totalling €517,000, will be offset by net savings in excess of €6 million.

### **(iii) Paper on financial controls**

The Commission noted a paper on financial controls [06-02b-12] produced following a review of the controls in place in a range of areas within the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. The Secretary General advised that the Cabinet are also considering the proposals amending similar controls in relation to Ministerial travel arrangements and that it may be necessary to amend the paper in light of these changes as it was desirable that all office holders arrangements would be treated in the same way.

## **8. INFORMATION ITEMS FOR NOTING**

### **(i) Service Level Agreement for the Print Facility**

The Commission considered the draft Service Level Agreement [06-03-12, 06-03a-12] which had been revised following the receipt of Senior Counsel advice on section 8(4) regarding the prohibition on the printing of any material which referred to any forthcoming or proposed referendum in line with a the finding of the Supreme Court judgement in the McKenna case. It was noted that Senator MacSharry wished to record his dissension to the draft agreement. The Commission noted the revised draft agreement and the Ceann Comhairle indicated that he would be bringing to the attention of the Dáil CPP issues arising from both the McKenna and Coughlan judgements and that the Seanad CPP should do likewise.

### **(ii) Update on contacts with former members regarding the return of pre-paid envelopes**

The Commission noted the progress report on the contacts with former members regarding the return of pre-paid envelopes [06-03b-12] and agreed to continue to pursue this issue with the individuals who have not responded.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **JobBridge initiative**

The Commission noted that the JobBridge National Steering Group would consider the issue of assigning interns to members under the initiative at its next meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June on receipt of a sample role profile. Senator MacSharry undertook to supply a role profile in the near future.

SEÁN BARRETT, T.D.,  
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission.

Dated: