



*Minutes of Commission Meeting
Tuesday, 1 July, 2014*

1. The seventh meeting of the Commission of 2015 took place at 3.00 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 Olivia Mitchell and Deputy Dan Neville.

Apologies were received from Deputy Bernard Durkan, Senator Marc MacSharry and Deputy Jack Wall.

3. **DRAFT ESTIMATE FOR 2016**

The Commission resumed consideration of the Draft Statement of Estimate for 2016.

The Commission noted that the form of the Estimate and subheads is prescribed by legislation and therefore the categories of expenditure set out in the Estimates can only be changed by amending the legislation.

It noted that the Draft Estimate for 2016 represents an increase of approximately 16.5% on the Estimate for 2015. The increase is mainly attributable to costs associated with the General Elections in 2016.

The Commission:

- (i) approved the Statement of Estimate 2016, providing for gross expenditure of €130.991m, and noted that the Estimate will be presented to the Dáil next week for noting by way of motion, in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2013. Deputy Jack Wall, the Minister's Representative on the Commission, was nominated to move the motion in the Dáil.
- (ii) noted the explanatory note on the scope of each subhead

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Update on Legal Proceedings issued against the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission and Others

Deputy Olivia Mitchell absented herself from the meeting for consideration of this item.

The Commission was briefed by the solicitor from the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser on the preliminary High Court hearing on the legal proceedings issued against the Commission and others in relation to various utterances made in the Dáil.

The Commission noted the update and requested a further briefing on the matter when the amended proceedings are served.

(ii) Parliamentary Resources for Members

The Commission requested that consideration be given to including the cost of public liability insurance in respect of office premises in the categories of allowable expenses that apply to Senators under the Parliamentary Representation Allowance, in the same way as it applies to Deputies.

(iii) Employment Law Guidance for Members

The Commission requested the Service to review the process for the provision of guidance to members on employment law and related matters, currently provided in consultation with the Party Administrators, in respect of their responsibilities as employers of political staff under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

(iv) Proposed Temporary use of Dáil Chamber for Plenary Sitzings of both Houses

The Commission requested that a briefing paper be prepared on the feasibility of using the Dáil Chamber for plenary sittings of both the Dáil and the Seanad (at different intervals) for the duration of the proposed essential structural and upgrade works for Georgian Leinster House

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4.10 p.m.

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

Dated: