



*Minutes of Commission Meeting
Tuesday 11 July 2017*

1. The sixth meeting of the Commission of 2017 took place at 11.30 a.m. in Room 2, Leinster House.

2. **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghíl, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson), Deputy Joe Carey, Senator Paudie Coffey, Senator Gerard P. Craughwell, Deputy Timmy Dooley, Mr. Peter Finnegan (Secretary General), Deputy Martin Heydon, Deputy Louise O'Reilly and Senator Ned O'Sullivan.

Apologies were received from Deputy Catherine Murphy.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 13 June 2017 were agreed by the Commission.

4. **PROGRAMME OF STRUCTURAL AND UPGRADE WORKS FOR GEORGIAN LEINSTER HOUSE**

The Commission received an update presentation from the Office of Public Works (OPW) on progress in relation to the programme of structural and upgrade works for Georgian Leinster House.

The Commission was informed that the tenders for the project were being evaluated. It is expected that the main contract for the work will be placed by the end of July 2017 and the contractor will be on site in August 2017. The contract period is 54 weeks. The structural work will be carried out in sequential stages due to the historic character of the building and the nature of the work to be undertaken.

The Commission was also informed that the temporary relocation of the Seanad Chamber to the Ceramics Room in the National Museum will be completed in time for the resumption of Seanad sittings after the summer recess this year.

The Commission was advised that the overall project is due to be completed by the end of 2018. On completion of the project, reoccupation of the Georgian House will take place on a phased basis.

The Commission noted progress to date and thanked the OPW staff for their work.

5. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Financial report for the reporting period January to May 2017

Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cathaoirleach and Chair of the Finance Committee, presented a report on expenditure for the period January to May 2017.

It was noted that the Estimate for 2017 is €127m. Expenditure to the end of May 2017 was €43.8m against a budget of €50.8m which represents an underspend of €7m (14%) – a pay underspend of €3m and a non-pay underspend of €4m.

The Commission noted the financial report.

The Commission was also informed that a revised credit policy would be developed for the catering services in the Houses and would be submitted to the Commission for approval in the autumn.

6. PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME IN THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS

The Commission agreed to review the proposal to establish an apprenticeship scheme in the Houses of the Oireachtas when there are roles developed under the National Apprenticeship System that are appropriate for apprenticeship positions in the Houses.

7. REVIEW OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME IN THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS

The Commission noted that a review of the structure and operation of the current Internship Programme in the Houses is being undertaken by the Service. A proposal to further develop the Programme will be submitted to the Commission in the autumn following completion of the review.

8. SENIOR PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENT:

Recommendation of the Top Level Appointments Committee to the Commission on Appointment of Assistant Secretary, Director of Parliamentary Budget Office, Houses of the Oireachtas Service

The Commission appointed Ms Annette Connolly to the post of Assistant Secretary, Director of the Parliamentary Budget Office, Houses of the Oireachtas Service, with effect from 11 July 2017, in accordance with the letter of recommendation of the Top Level Appointments Committee to the Ceann Comhairle dated 3 July 2017, pursuant to the *Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959*, as amended, and the *Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015*.

The Commission also agreed that Ms Connolly's appointment would be on a fixed term basis for a period of five years, subject to an option for renewal at the instance of the Commission.

The Commission congratulated Ms Connolly on her appointment.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Commission noted the following:

- (i) *Letter from Senator Victor Boyhan in relation to implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation*

The Commission requested the Working Group on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the Service to provide advice and to draw up guidelines for members of the Houses, in consultation with the Data Protection Commissioner, to assist members with GDPR compliance. The Commission also requested the Working Group to liaise with the Training Unit on the delivery of appropriate training for members and their staff in preparing for implementation of the Regulation.

- (ii) *Proposed Survey by the Training and Development Unit*

The Commission noted that the Training and Development Unit proposed to undertake a survey of members and members' staff in order to assess the potential demand for Irish language training.

- (iii) *Commission's Annual Report 2016*

The Commission noted that its Annual Report for 2016 was laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas and published on 29 June 2017 in accordance with section 6 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts.

- (iv) *Annual Resource Plan 2017*

The Commission noted that the 2017 Annual Resource Plan for the Service would be submitted to it for consideration at its next meeting.

Cultural Institutions Forum

The Commission agreed to establish a Forum comprising members of the Commission and representatives of the National Cultural Institutions. The purpose of the Forum is to promote communication and cooperation between the Houses of the Oireachtas and the neighbouring National Cultural Institutions. It was agreed that members of the Commission who wished to participate in the Forum would notify the Secretariat.

SEÁN Ó FEARGHAÍL, T.D.

Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission

Dated: