



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

*Minutes of Commission Meeting
Tuesday 13 November 2018*

1. The ninth meeting of the Commission of 2018 took place at 11.30 a.m. in Room 160, Leinster House.

2. **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Deputy Seán Ó Feargháil, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Senator Paudie Coffey, Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, 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 Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson), and Deputy Catherine Murphy.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the meeting of 2 October 2018 were agreed by the Commission.

4. **SENIOR PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENT:**

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

The Commission appointed Ms Mellissa English to the post of Assistant Secretary, Director of Parliamentary Legal Services, Houses of the Oireachtas Service, with effect from 5 October 2018, in accordance with the letter of recommendation of the Top Level Appointments Committee to the Ceann Comhairle dated 5 October 2018, 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 the appointment would be on a fixed term basis for a period of three years in accordance with the terms of the recruitment to fill the post as determined by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Commission congratulated Ms English on her appointment.

5. PROGRAMME OF STRUCTURAL AND UPGRADE WORKS FOR GEORGIAN LEINSTER HOUSE: STATUS REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

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 briefed on the status and progress of the project. Works are proceeding in accordance with the contract and updated programme. Work is ongoing on structural repairs, installation of cable trays and wiring, repairs and cleaning of chimneys pieces, repairs to windows and restoration and repair of stonework. Ceiling restraint work is nearing completion. Planning for a series of related projects to prepare the House for reoccupation following completion of the structural project is ongoing. Fit-out works will commence on a phased basis in early 2019.

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

6. UPDATE ON HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018

The Commission received an update on progress on the drafting of the new Commission Bill for presentation to the Houses, including the discussions that were ongoing at an official level with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with a view to advancing the process.

The Commission considered the draft Bill and agreed that it would be submitted to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform with a request that Government approval be sought for presentation of the Bill to the Houses.

7. ICT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Update on delivery of new ICT Services and Projects in 2018

The Commission was briefed on the status and progress of new ICT services and digital transformation projects. It noted that the installation of a new WiFi system in the Leinster House complex had been completed. The pilot project for the migration to the new email system was completed in October and the phased roll-out of the system is ongoing. The system had been rolled out to members and their staff and is currently being extended to staff of the Service. The pilot project for the migration to the new Windows system is scheduled for November and subsequent phased roll-out of the new system in early 2019. The digital transformation projects are progressing within the specified timeframes. Three projects have been deferred from 2018 due to other priority work and will be progressed in 2019.

The Commission noted the ICT Projects Status Report.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Correspondence

The Commission noted the following correspondence:

- (a) *Email from Deputy Louise O'Reilly in relation to the Oireachtas Work and Learning (OWL) Programme*
- (b) *Letter from Minister of State with special responsibility for Disabilities in relation to the Oireachtas Work and Learning programme*

The Commission agreed to issue a letter to provide full and accurate information on the operation of the OWL Programme in the Houses.

- (c) *Letter on behalf of Fianna Fáil Party regarding the provision of additional staff resources to support members of Committees of the Houses*
- (d) *Letter on behalf of Fine Gael Party regarding the provision of additional staff resources to support members of Committees of the Houses*
- (e) *Letter from political staff member regarding contracts of employment for political staff*

(ii) Agenda items for next meeting

The Commission requested papers on the following:

- (a) Update report on the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members; and
- (b) The protocol for the organisation of parliamentary exchanges and official visits to the Houses.

The meeting adjourned at 12.50 p.m.

SEÁN Ó FEARGHAÍL, T.D.

Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission

Dated: