



Coimisiún Thithe  
an Oireachtais  
Houses of the  
Oireachtas Commission

*Minutes of Commission Meeting*

*Tuesday 14 May 2019*

1. The sixth meeting of the Commission of 2019 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 Catherine Murphy and Mr. Peter Finnegan, Secretary General.

Apologies were received from Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson), Deputy Timmy Dooley, Deputy Martin Heydon and Senator Ned O'Sullivan.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2019 were agreed by the Commission. The minutes of the incorporeal meeting of 18 April 2019 were also agreed.

4. **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 current status and progress of the project. Work is progressing in accordance with the updated programme for the project, with the completion of work in a number of areas, including window repairs, installation of window shutters, stone repairs, and floorboards on first and second level, and the

advancement of other work under the project including fit out of the Seanad Chamber. The OPW Principal Architect advised that, based on historical research undertaken on the original colour scheme of the Georgian House, the ceiling in the entrance hall would be painted in its original paint colour and the gold finish would not be applied as it did not form part of the original colour scheme.

The Service is working with OPW to advance a series of related projects to prepare the House for reoccupation. Fit out works will commence in Q2 2019 and building occupancy will take place on a phased basis over the summer recess period. This work involves detailed planning and coordination of tasks to ensure the operational requirements of the Houses are in place in time for the reoccupation of the building following the summer recess. The Commission agreed to establish a Working Group of the Commission to have political oversight of these tasks.

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

## **5. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

### **(i) Financial report for the reporting period January to March 2019**

In the unavoidable absence of the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Finance Officer presented the report from the Finance Committee for the period January to March 2019.

The Commission noted that expenditure to the end of March 2019 was €29.2m against a budget of €33.3m which represents an underspend of €4.1m (12%).

The Commission noted the report.

### **(ii) Commission's Annual Accounts 2018**

The Commission noted that the 2018 Annual Accounts were signed by the Accounting Officer and submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in March 2019 pursuant to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts.

## **6. PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILL SERVICES**

### **Legislative services available to members of the Houses**

The Commission noted that the Private Members' Bill Service in the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisers (OPLA) has been established with the resources and

expertise to provide legal advice and legislative drafting services to private members in developing legislative proposals and drafting private members' bills and amendments.

The Commission approved the guidance document, *OPLA Private Members' Bill Services, A Step-by-Step Guide for Members*, setting out the services available to members for initiating and progressing private members' legislation in the Houses, and agreed that the service, as set out in the Guide, would be implemented on a pilot basis initially and would be reviewed after a period of six months in operation.

The Commission also agreed to forward the Guide to the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform for information.

## **7. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

The Commission received an update on the Service's local media communications plan for the Houses. It requested that a full proposal be prepared on raising awareness of the business of the Houses and the parliamentary work of members, through local media, for its consideration at the next meeting.

## **8. STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2018**

### **Third Annual Progress Report 2018**

The Secretary General presented the third annual progress report on implementation of the three-year Strategic Plan for 2016-2018 to the Commission as required by section 16 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts.

The Commission noted progress on implementation of the strategy in 2018. The Commission and the Secretary General expressed appreciation to staff of the Service for their work over the past year.

## **9. OIREACHTAS WORK LEARNING (OWL) ACCESS PROGRAMME**

### **Proposal to continue and further develop the Programme**

The Commission approved the recommendations of the evaluation conducted by a Joint Steering Group of the pilot Oireachtas Work and Learning (OWL) Access Programme in the Service for implementation, including the estimated annual cost of implementing the recommendations of €66,000.

## **10. ICT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Update on ICT Projects Status and Expenditure Report 2019**

The Commission received an update on ICT projects currently being progressed, including related project expenditure. It noted that the replacement of ICT equipment and migration to the new Windows system had commenced.

It was agreed that future ICT project progress reports would be presented to the Commission on a quarterly basis.

The Head of ICT informed the Commission that, in line with GDPR obligations, future requests from members for the constituents' database would be processed on receipt of a copy of the electoral register from the members concerned.

## **11. BRIEFING ON CYBER SECURITY**

The Commission received a presentation from the Head of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) on cyber security of networks and information systems and initiatives to manage cyber security risk.

The Commission agreed that the Service should continue to engage with the NCSC on implementation of a network monitoring service by the NCSC for the Service's ICT Network.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Commission noted correspondence from Deputy Louise O'Reilly.

The meeting adjourned at 12.50 p.m.

SEÁN Ó FEARGHAÍL, T.D.  
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission  
Dated: