Coimisiún Thithe an Oireachtais
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

**Minutes of Commission Meeting**

**Wednesday 11 June 2025**

The second meeting of the Commission in 2025 took place at 5.00 pm in Room 2, Leinster House.

## 1. MEMBERS PRESENT

Deputy Verona Murphy, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson); Senator Mark Daly (Cathaoirleach), Deputy Catherine Ardagh, Deputy Pearse Doherty, Deputy Frank Feighan, Senator Robbie Gallagher; Senator Michael McDowell (Deputy Chairperson); Senator Joe O'Reilly, Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan, Deputy Jennifer Whitmore and Mr Peter Finnegan, Secretary General.

## 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2025 were agreed by the Commission.

## 3. POLICY PROPOSAL IN RELATION TO THE SCHEME FOR SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS

**The Provision of Staff Resources to Political Parties and Technical Groups and Staffing for Office Holders for the 34th Dáil and 27th Seanad.**

The Commission considered a revised discussion paper setting out:

(i) an interim proposal on the allocation of resources to parties and groups under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for the 34th Dáil and 27th Seanad; and

(ii) a proposal on resources to support the Office holders of the Houses of the Oireachtas, namely the Ceann Comhairle, the Leas-Cheann Comhairle, the Cathaoirleach and the Leas-Chathaoirleach, in carrying out their duties.

It also considered:

(iii) separate proposals submitted by Senator Robbie Gallagher, Deputy Frank Feighan, Deputy Pearse Doherty, and a response prepared by the Service to the proposals; and

(iv) a proposal from the five smaller parties represented in the Dáil (Independent Ireland, People Before Profit-Solidarity, Aontú, the Green Party, and the 100% Redress Party).

The Commission:

(i) approved the allocation of resources to political parties and to Technical Groups as set out in the Appendix to these minutes;

(ii) approved the proposed staffing for Oireachtas office holders under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members, and Special Advisers as temporary civil servants;

(iii) approved the allocation of three graphic designer posts to the three largest political parties, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and Fine Gael, with a shared graphic designer for the smaller parties and independent members;

(iv) agreed to examine a request from the Seanad Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight for resources to support Seanad Group Coordinators in respect of the six Groups in the Seanad, by way of the provision of 1.5 Administrative Assistant to each Group co-ordinator, and requested the Service to provide cost information on the proposal for its consideration;

(v) agreed to examine how staffing costs incurred during the interim period between the General Elections and the decision of the Commission could be reimbursed in a way that is fair and equitable to all parties in addition to being affordable by the Service and in line with normal financial procedures.

## 4. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Commission noted the Audit Committee Annual Report 2024 as presented to it in accordance with section 14A(10)(c) of the Commission Acts 2003-2021.

It also noted that the report will be published with the Commission's Annual Report 2024.

The Commission thanked the Audit Committee for its work in the last parliamentary term.

## 5. STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

### Annual Progress Report 2024

The Secretary General presented the third annual progress report on implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2022-2024 to the Commission pursuant to section 16 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts (Commission Acts).

The Commission noted progress on implementation of the strategy in 2024.

It also noted that the Implementation Report will be published with the Commission's annual report which will be laid before the Houses pursuant to section 6 of the Commission Acts.

The Commission and the Secretary General expressed appreciation to staff of the Service for their work and achievements over the past year.

The Commission also noted that the draft Strategic Plan for the period 2025 – 2027 would be presented to it in due course. The Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges would also be consulted on the draft plan.

## 6. HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Commission approved the draft annual report on its activities in 2024 to be laid before the Houses in accordance with section 6 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts.

It noted that the financial accounts of the Commission have been submitted to the C&AG for audit as required under section 14 of the Commission Acts. When the audit has been completed the audited accounts, together with the report of the C&AG on them, will be submitted to the Minister and laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

## 7. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Commission appointed the following members to serve on the Commission's Audit Committee in accordance with section 14A of the Commission Acts:

(a) *Commission member (section 14A(3)(a):*
Deputy Pearse Doherty.

(b) *Non-Commission member (section 14A(3)(b)*:
Senator Victor Boyhan.

(c) *External members (section 14A(3)(c))*:
Ms Noreen Fahy, Chartered Accountant, Deputy Director General and Company Secretary of the Institute of Public Administration.

Mr Vincent Teo, Chartered Accountant and Certified Internal Auditor, Partner and Head of Public Sector and Government Services Department, Crowleys DFK,

(d) *Member of the staff of the Service (section 14A(3)(d))*:
Ms Mairéad Keating, Principal Officer, Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

The Commission agreed that Ms Noreen Fahy be appointed as Chairperson of the Audit Committee.

It was agreed that the Commission would appoint two further members of the Houses, who are not members of the Commission, to serve on the Audit Committee in accordance with section 14A(3)(b) of the Acts. The Chairperson requested members to submit nominations for the two positions to the next Commission meeting.

## 8. SENIOR PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENT

**Recommendation of the Top Level Appointments Committee to the Commission on Appointment of Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services, Houses of the Oireachtas Service**

The Commission appointed Mr Ciarán Lawler to the post of Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services, Houses of the Oireachtas Service, in accordance with the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959, as amended, and the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2024, following a selection process under the Senior Public Service Scheme.

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) *Information items*

The Commission noted the following:

(a) Guidelines on the Provision of Additional Resources to a Member by reason of the Member's Disability;

(b) Information in relation to the Provision of Televised Facilities Contract in the Houses of the Oireachtas.

(ii) *Correspondence*

The Commission noted correspondence from:

(a) the Seanad Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight;
(b) Senator Robbie Gallagher;
(c) Deputy Frank Feighan;
(d) Deputy Pearse Doherty;
(e) Deputy Paul Murphy.

(iii) *Nomination process for the position of Clerk of Dáil Éireann and Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service*

Mr. Peter Finnegan informed the Commission that he intended to complete his term of office as Clerk of Dáil Éireann and Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in early autumn 2025.

The process for the nomination of his successor for appointment by the Commission would commence forthwith.

## 10. NEXT MEETING

9 July 2025

Verona Murphy T.D.
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission

Date:

**Appendix**

**Commission Decision re Party and Groups Resources**
**11 June 2025**

**Table 1: Resources to Political Parties**

| Party | Basic Units | Committee Support | Total | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fianna Fáil | 19 | 5 | 24 | 936 |
| Fine Gael | 15.75 | 4.25 | 20 | 780 |
| Sinn Féin | 27.25 | 5.5 | 32.75 | 1277.25 |
| Labour | 7.75 | 1.5 | 9.25 | 360.75 |
| Social Democrats | 7.5 | 1.5 | 9 | 351 |
| Indep Ire | 2.5 | 0 | 2.5 | 97.5 |
| Sol-PBP | 2 | 0 | 2 | 78 |
| Aontu | 1.5 | 0 | 1.5 | 58.5 |
| Green Party | 1 | 0 | 1 | 39 |
| 100% Redress | 1 | 0 | 1 | 39 |
| Total Party Allocations | 85.25 | 17.75 | **103** | |

**Table 2: Total Proposed Group Resources including Committee Supports (AA Posts)**

| Group | Standard Group Resource | Committee Support Group Resource | Total Group AA Resources |
|---|---|---|---|
| Independent and Parties Technical Group [Dáil] | 1 AA | 0.5 AA | 1.5 |
| Independent Technical Group [Dáil] | 1 AA | 0.5 AA | 1.5 |
| Civil Engagement Group [Seanad] | 1 AA | 0.5 AA | 1.5 |
| Seanad Independent Group [Seanad] | 1 AA | 0.5 AA | 1.5 |
| "Other Members" group | 1 AA | 0.5 AA | 1.5 |
| **Total** | 5 | 2.5 | **7.5** |

Group resources are provided to the Group Co-ordinator of the Group who is the employer of the staff for the purpose of supporting the group.