

Corporate Governance Framework



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Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas

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Introduction

The Houses of the Oireachtas is governed by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, being an independent statutory corporate body established under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003.

The Commission which is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle consists of 11 members, including the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General who is also the Chief Executive of the Commission. All other members of the Commission are Members of either Dáil Éireann or Seanad Éireann. The mission of the Commission is to serve the democratic interests of the main stakeholders, the Irish people, by serving parliament through (1) enabling the Houses, their Committees and their Members to do their parliamentary business, and (2) meeting Members' needs as public representatives in the context of parliamentary business.

As a governing board, it is accountable to both Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions and for ensuring value for money. It is funded on a triennial basis from the central fund by primary legislation.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the Service) is the parliamentary administration that provides administrative services to the Houses and their members.

Corporate governance is the way in which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It defines relationships and the distribution of rights and responsibilities among those who work with and in the organisation, determines the roles and procedures through which the organisation's objectives are set, and provides the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance. Importantly, it defines where accountability lies throughout the organisation.

This Corporate Governance Framework brings together the main Service's policies and procedures for corporate governance into one reference point. It is intended as a guide to staff, and to the people we serve, on how we do our work and why we do it in the way we do. It sets out our standards of conduct, our values and the governance systems by which we operate.

The Framework document is structured around the Chapters set out in the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service.

These chapters are as follows:

- ☐ Chapter 1: Houses of the Oireachtas Overview;
- ☐ Chapter 2: Office Holder, Governing Board and Senior Management Roles and Assignment of Responsibilities
- ☐ Chapter 3: Management Committee and other Governance Structures;
- ☐ Chapter 4: Audit, Assurance and Compliance Arrangements.

The Framework is a live document and will evolve in line with best practice and changing circumstances.

Governance Principles

Corporate Governance Standard

1. Good Governance supports a culture and ethos which ensures behaviour with integrity, a strong commitment to ethical values, and respect for the rule of law.
2. Good governance helps to define priorities and outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and societal benefits and to determine the policies and interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of these priorities and outcomes. It means implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, communications, audit and scrutiny to deliver effective accountability.
3. Good governance means developing an organisation's capacity, including the capability of the leadership team, management and staff.
4. Good governance means managing risks and performance through robust internal control systems and effective performance management practices.
5. Good governance ensures openness, effective public consultation processes and comprehensive engagement with domestic and international stakeholders.

CHAPTER 1: HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS - OVERVIEW

Good Governance supports a culture and ethos which ensures behaviour with integrity, a strong commitment to ethical values, and respect for the rule of law

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to give an overview of the mission of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (“the Service”) ; its values, behaviours and culture; its organisational structures; its strategic planning, decision making and performance management; its internal communications arrangements, and its engagement with external stakeholders.

Background and Mission Statement

Background

1.1 The [Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015](#) provided for the establishment of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (“the Commission”) from 2004 onwards.

1.2 The Commission is a statutory corporate body and is independent in the performance of its functions.

1.3 The statutory functions of the Commission are ‘*to provide for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas, to consider and determine policy in relation to the Service, to oversee the implementation of that policy by the Secretary General and to act as governing body of the Service.*’¹

1.4 The ‘Houses of the Oireachtas Service’ is the office of the public service that is staffed by civil servants of the State, employed by the Commission, who perform the statutory functions of the Service.

1.5 The statutory function of the Service is ‘to provide advice and support services to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees and to the members of the Houses.’²

Mission Statement

1.6 Arising from these statutory functions, the stated mission of the Commission and Service is ‘*to serve the democratic interests of our main stakeholders, the Irish people, by servicing the parliament through enabling the Houses, their Committees and their members to do their parliamentary business, and meeting members’ needs as public representatives in the context of parliamentary business*’³.

¹ Section 4 (1) , Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015

² Section 3A of the Commission Acts

³ Most recent Statement of Strategy - link

[http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/strategiccorporatereports/Houses-of-the-Oireachtas-Commission-Strategic-Plan-2010---2012-\(no-images\).pdf](http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/strategiccorporatereports/Houses-of-the-Oireachtas-Commission-Strategic-Plan-2010---2012-(no-images).pdf)

1.7 The Service has identified the following three strategies to achieve the Commission's vision of a world-class parliamentary service:

1. Improving Services to Parliament
2. Improving Services to Members
3. Enhancing Service Capability

Values, Behaviour and Culture

1.8 The Service promotes a strong public service ethos and the values of honesty, impartiality and independence that underpin it.

Statement of Values⁴

1.9 The Service recognises that our reputation is defined by our working relationships and that our real success in implementing our strategies is measured primarily in how we are perceived by others and through their experience of us.

1.10 Our strategies promote positive values that inform our attitudes and behaviour in delivering services and that contribute to achieving our vision of '*a world-class parliamentary service*⁵'.

Guiding Principles

1.11 To underpin our role and purpose and to inform our service approaches we adopt the following guiding principles in our work.

Respect for the democratic process

- Our parliament is a central part of our democracy and we work to support and enhance its contribution to Irish society.

Member-centred service

- Supporting the parliamentary work of our members as public representatives is central to our role.

Best practice in governance and management

- We consistently work to achieve the highest standards of governance, public service management and parliamentary administration.

Organisation Values

1.12 We are committed to ensuring that the following values inform our work and working relationships and reflect an ethos of professional excellence for our organisation.

Investing in people and leadership

- We provide our people with the knowledge, skills and leadership they need.

⁴ Most recent Statement of Strategy

⁵ Most recent Statement of Strategy

Accessible and open

- We ensure ease of access and availability of our services and we provide service information that is comprehensive, clear and helpful.

Responsive and effective

- We provide services proactively that are fit for purpose and delivered in a prompt and timely manner.

Transparent, fair and impartial

- We provide our services with equality and in a manner that is open to scrutiny and beyond influence.

Accountability and high ethical standards

- Our actions are based on expertise and best practice and are duly authorised and reviewable.

Innovation and service agility

- We adapt to the challenges and opportunities of our environment by being outward facing and by exploring new and improved approaches to service delivery.

Honesty and integrity

- We are open and authentic in our communications and we can be relied upon to be consistent in our actions affecting other people.

Respect and mutual trust

- Our behaviour promotes confidence in us: we are helpful and supportive of others and respect their right to be treated with courtesy and dignity.

A Positive Working Environment

1.13 The Service is committed to creating a positive working environment for all staff of the Commission and implements the following civil service and Service policies and codes to achieve that outcome:

Civil Service Dignity at Work Policy

1.14 All staff are expected to treat colleagues with respect and dignity at all times. Harassment, sexual harassment and bullying are totally unacceptable forms of behaviour, are unlawful, are in breach of Civil Service policy and will not be tolerated by the Service. The *Dignity at Work Policy* is the Civil Service policy for dealing with these issues and applies to all staff working in the Service, including staff on contract. The Policy aims to promote respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the workplace. Link <http://hr.per.gov.ie/dignity-at-work/>

Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours

1.15 The *Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours, A Positive Working Environment*, <http://www.sipo.gov.ie/en/Codes-of-Conduct/Civil-Servants/Civil-Service-Code-of-Standards.pdf> which out a clear framework within which civil servants must work, applies to all staff of the Oireachtas Commission. In the performance of their duties all employees must:

Maintain high standards in service delivery

- by conscientiously, honestly and impartially serving the Government of the day, the other institutions of State and the public;
- by always acting within the law, and
- by performing their duties with efficiency, diligence and courtesy.

Observe appropriate behaviour at work

- by dealing with the public sympathetically, fairly and promptly, and
- by treating their colleagues with respect.

Maintain the highest standards of probity

- by conducting themselves with honesty, impartiality and integrity;
- by never seeking to use improper influence, in particular, never seeking to use political influence to affect decisions concerning their official positions;
- by abiding by guidelines in respect of offers of gifts or hospitality, and
- by avoiding conflicts of interest.

Service's Code for Working Together

1.16 Though its *People & Organisational Programme* (POD), the Service has also developed a complementary code [*Our Code for Working Together – A shared responsibility for all staff*](#) that sets out the responsibility that all its Service staff have for contributing to a positive working environment. The code identifies the following behaviours to encourage genuine positive working relations among staff in the performance of their day-to-day duties and responsibilities.

Accessibility and Openness

- Share information with other colleagues and sections that can assist them in the performance of their duties and support them in learning and growing.
- Be willing to make constructive contributions and be open to hearing and addressing counter viewpoints.
- Be transparent in decision making processes and be willing to explain to others the rationale behind decisions.
- Encourage open and direct communication.

Honesty and Integrity

- Recognise that creating a positive working environment is the responsibility of everybody.
- Maintain confidentiality in relation to our work and particularly in relation to private or sensitive information. In particular, be aware and careful when discussing sensitive information as to our surroundings and who could be listening.
- Be honest in our dealings with each other.

Respect and Mutual Trust

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Be courteous in how we speak to each other, particularly when managing conflict situations.
- Recognise the value of each other's roles and responsibilities.
- Be fair and impartial in all your dealings with colleagues.

1.17 The Code is about how we work together and reflects inter-personal related values. We also recognise that other values such as being transparent, fair and impartial and accountable with high ethical standards underpin our day-to-day delivery of services to the Houses, their Committees, to members and their staff.

Service's Guidelines for Working with Members of the Houses

1.18 While the *Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours* continues to be the statutory code within which all civil service staff must work, the Service has also developed a complementary [*Guidelines for staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas working with Members*](#). This guide provides additional assistance to staff working in a parliamentary environment.

Service's Code of Conduct for Commission Members

1.19 The Commission's [*Code of Conduct for Commission Members*](#) sets out the agreed ethical standards that inform the conduct of members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, both collectively and individually, in performing their functions and duties.

1.20 The code is additional to compliance with the *Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 to 2001* under which all members are required to register and declare their interests. Commission members are required to provide a statement in writing of their registerable interests in January each year to the Chair of the Commission and to the Standards in Public Office (SIPO) Commission. Commission Members are also bound by the requirements of the [*Codes of Conduct for Members of Dáil Éireann*](#) and [*Seanad Éireann*](#) in their capacity as Deputies and Senators as required under the Ethics Acts.

Protected Disclosures

1.21 The Service is committed to further developing and promoting a desired workplace culture that encourages and values employees who report concerns and disclose information of potential wrongdoing as part of their day-to-day work activities. In the event that a worker employed by the Commission wants to report a relevant wrongdoing using the provision of the *Protected Disclosure Act 2014*, the Service has developed *interim* procedures for the making disclosures pending finalisation of central guidelines from the office of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform

Organisational Structures

1.22 The Commission acts as governing body of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. The organisation structure of the Service is directed towards the achievement of its statutory function to provide advice and support services to the Commission, to the Houses and their Committees and to the members of the Houses.

Divisions and Business Units

1.23 The Service, which is headed by the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General, is organised into two divisions as follows: (i) the Parliamentary Services Division and (ii) the Corporate & Members' Services Division, each headed by an Assistant Secretary. Each business area of a division is headed by a Principal Officer or equivalent grade.

Office of the Clerk of the Seanad

1.24 Separate but aligned to the work of the divisions is the Clerk of the Seanad, Clerk-Assistant of the Seanad and the Seanad Office. Their functions include, *inter alia*, providing procedural support and advice to the Seanad, managing items of business on the Seanad Order Paper and

providing clerk services to the Seanad. The duties of Clerk of the Seanad are contained in the [Standing Orders of Seanad Éireann](#).

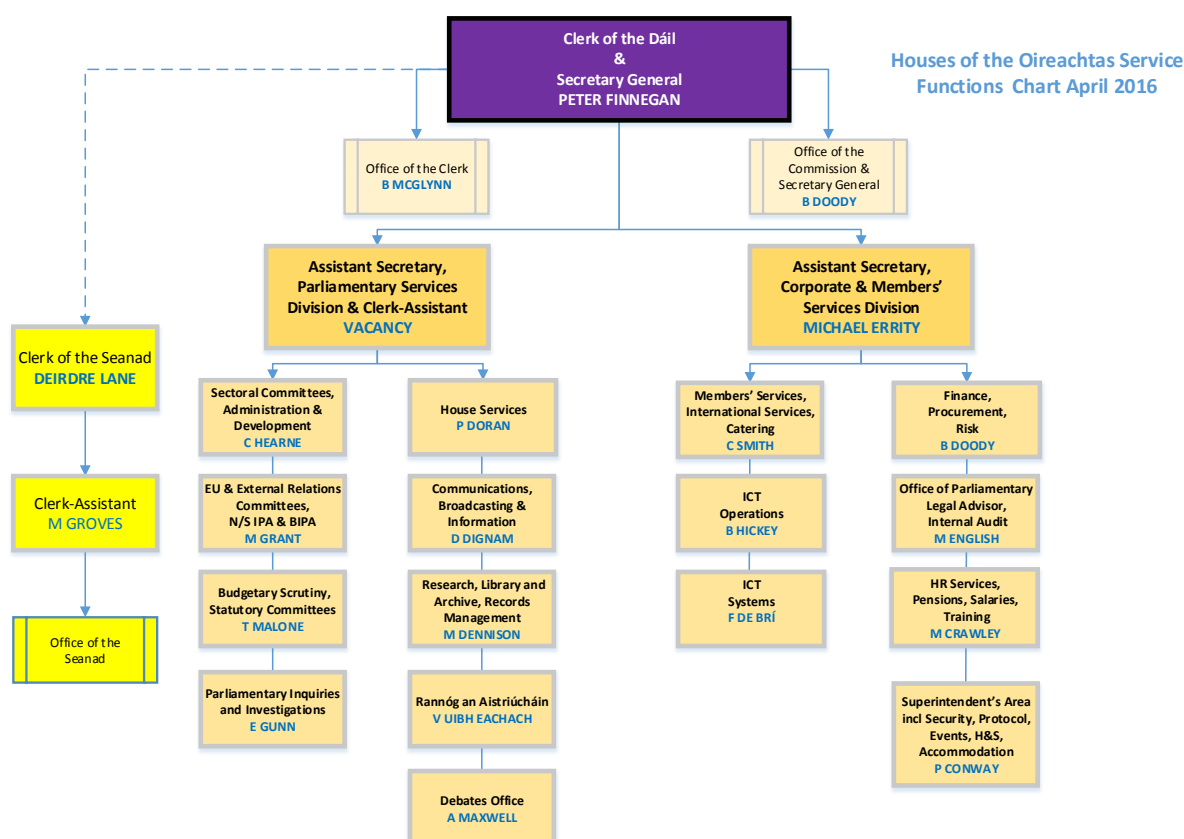
Office of the Clerk of the Dáil

1.25 The Office of the Clerk of the Dáil has responsibility to provide support to the Clerk of the Dáil in the carrying out of his/her duties. The office's functions include, *inter alia*, providing administrative support to assist in the sittings of the Dáil, maintenance of the Registrar of Political Parties and the Register of Members' Interests, and providing administration support for the Clerk's *ex officio* membership of the *Standards in Public Office Commission* (SIPO); the *Boundary Commission*, and the *Referendum Commission*.

Office of Commission & Secretary General (OCSG)

1.26 The Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG) has responsibility to lead, co-ordinate and integrate direct support activities for the work of the Commission and its Committees, the Secretary General, and the Management Committee and its sub-Committees. The office coordinates the production of strategic plans and corporate business plans and tracking progress on same. The office also coordinates the production of the Commission's Annual Report and manages changes to legislation impacting on the functions of the Commission. The Principal Officer of the OCSG is Chair of the Service's Risk Management Committee.

1.27 The Houses of the Oireachtas Service organisation structure is as follows.



Version April 2016 Link to live version:

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/commission/Org-Chart-CGF-Final-6.4.16.pdf>

Assignment of Responsibilities

1.28 The role and responsibilities at individual Assistant Secretary level and at individual PO or equivalent level are described in the Service's [*Assignment of Responsibilities Chart*](#). These functions evolve over time in response to changing priorities.

Strategic Planning, Decision Making and Performance Management

Strategy Statement

1.29 In accordance with the Houses of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015 the Secretary General is required to prepare and submit to the Commission, for approval with or without amendment by the Commission, a strategic plan for the following 3 year period

1.30 The formulation of the Commission's strategy is led by Secretary General/Chief Executive. The Service is guided by the central *Guidelines on the Preparation of Strategy Statements 2011* <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/>

1.31 The Service's process involves developing, following consultation, a strategic direction for the organisation that will filter down to the Service's corporate business plan and down to local business plans for each functional area.

1.32 The Service will publish annually an assignment framework that describes 'who does what and to whom they are answerable' for senior managers (Principal Officer level and above). The assignment framework will be linked to the Service's statements of strategy, corporate business plan and local business plans.

Business Planning, Decisions and Performance Management

1.33 The Service has a business planning framework to link local business plans to the achievement of strategic goals and to bring clarity to roles and responsibility at individual staff level. The Service's Performance Management Development System (PMDS) for individual staff is dependent on each business area having these business plans in place. Local business plan tasks for each area must be realistic and achievable - in terms of numbers of tasks included and timelines for those tasks.

1.34 The Service uses a balanced scorecard strategic planning and management system to monitor the Service's performance against strategic goals. Corporate and local business plan tasks for each PO area are keyed into a live corporate tracking database. This system serves to allow staff to see how their individual work contributes to their section's works, to their division's work and to the achievement of the Service's Corporate Business Plan tasks. Staff at all levels can log in to update their tasks and monitor their status.

1.35 A report will be generated every four months to give management an overview of the status of actions supporting each strategy, the status of priority actions and to inform key decisions regarding the achievement of strategy goals. The progress in implementing the Strategic Plan will be discussed at formal review meeting held every four months by the Secretary General on the delivery of corporate and local business plan actions, and achievement of operational efficiency (input: output). The Secretary General reports annually to the Commission on progress. Progress under key strategies is reported in detail in the published Annual Report of the Commission.

1.36 An assessment on the level of achievement of strategy outcomes is also prepared at the end of each 3 year strategy plan period based on quantitative and qualitative performance measures and benchmarking against comparative parliaments.

Communications

1.37 The Commission is committed to ongoing communication and engagement with its staff, its stakeholders and the public.

Internal Communications and Engagement

1.38 The Service's Intranet 'The Plinth' is used to keep staff informed of news and announcements, on the daily work of the parliament and as source of information on the Service and civil service-wide initiatives codes and guidelines.

1.39 The Service's Principal Officer (PO) Network provides *inter alia* a forum for POs and equivalent grades to share information about Service-wide matters and section-level strategies and priorities. The Network issues regular updates to all staff of the Service.

1.40 The network model is currently being rolled out to Assistant Principal and Senior Clerk/HEO level grades across the Service.

1.41 The Service will develop an Internal Communications Plan for the Service informed by the results of the *Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey 2015* (CSEES), that are specific to the Oireachtas Service. <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/civil-service-employee-engagement-survey/>

External Communications and Engagement

1.42 The Service is committed to ensuring ease of access and availability of our services and providing service information that is comprehensive, clear and helpful; and to providing our services with equality and in a manner that is open to scrutiny and beyond influence.

Engagement and Communication

1.43 The Commission develops and publishes a Communications/ Public Engagement Strategy for each three year strategy plan period. The current strategy seeks to increase public understanding and to improve perception of the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members using direct communications (website, social media, public events, tours and enquiries service) and indirect communications (media, newsprint, Oireachtas TV Channel). A new customer service charter and plan will be published to be aligned with the Commission's Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2018 when published.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/strategiccorporatereports/Strategy-English---Web.pdf>

Customer Service Charter

1.44 Our *Customer Service Charter* <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/michelle/Plain-English-Charter.pdf> states our commitment to provide a quality customer service to all the stakeholders of our national parliament. Our *Customer Service Plan* emphasises the importance that we attach to customer service and sets out how we will deliver on our commitments, and outlines our customer complaints procedure.

1.45 A new customer service charter and plan will be published to be aligned with the Commission's Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2018.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

1.46 The Service's Library & Research Service processes all FOI requests received by the Service and assigns them to local decision-makers. The Service is currently implementing the *FOI Code of Practice* (Sept 2015) that was published by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in accordance with section 48 of the FOI Act 2014. <http://foi.gov.ie/guidance/code-of-practice/>

1.47 The Service's current guide in accordance with sections 15 and 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 1997 and 2003 is available at the following link.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/freedomofinformation/20160308sect16FOIguide.pdf>

A formal *Publication Scheme* for the Service to promote the proactive publication of information outside of FOI will be prepared and published in 2016 in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Data Protection

1.48 The Service as a data controller is aware of its data protection responsibilities and has provided training to ensure that its staff is aware of their data protection responsibilities.

1.49 The Service is developing an internal data protection policy that is relevant to the personal data held by the Service as part of the function of a Records Management Unit that is being formed to implement the Service's records management programme and to deliver statutory services in the area of Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

Regulation of Lobbying

1.50 The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 is designed to provide information to the public about who is lobbying whom about what. The Standards in Public Office Commission have established an online register of lobbying at www.lobbying.ie. Section 6(4) of the Act requires each public body to publish a list of designated public officials of the body. The purpose of the list is twofold:

1. To allow members of the public identify those persons who are designated public officials, and
2. As a resource for lobbyists filing a return to the Register who may need to source a designated public official's details.

1.51 The following public servants employed by the Service are prescribed as *ex officio* designated public officials for the purposes of section 6 (1) (f) of the Act:

Peter Finnegan, Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General

Michael Errity, Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services Division

Vacancy: Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services

Link: <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/about/lobbyingact/>

1.52 Members of the Dáil and Members of the Seanad are designated public officials for the purposes of section 6 (1) (b) of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015. Information on TDs and

Senators can be found in the Oireachtas Members' Directory at <http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/default.asp>

Open Data

1.53 The Service participates in and contributes to the Public Bodies Working Group for the Government's Open Data Initiative, which is being coordinated by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER) for the purposes of, *inter alia*, aligning with international best practices and to maximise the potential for data interoperability for the benefit of service users.

Review of Effectiveness of Governance Framework

1.54 The purpose of the Commission's Governance Framework and the Compliance Framework is as follows:

- to ensure that the Service's effectively discharges its statutory and policy obligations;
- to formally set out the framework of structures, policies and processes that are in place within the Service to delivery on these obligations;
- to allow for an objective assessment of management and corporate performance, and
- to communicate the governance framework to all staff, to the public and to any person, body or organisation that engages with the Houses of the Oireachtas.

1.55 The Service keeps its governance framework up to date and monitors all aspects of the framework to ensure fitness for purpose and to ensure that issues of significance are escalated to the officer within the Service with the relevant assigned responsibility for the issue.

1.56 The Management Committee will formally review the operation of the governance framework annually.

CHAPTER 2: OFFICE-HOLDER, GOVERNING BOARD AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT ROLES & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Good governance helps to define priorities and outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and societal benefits and to determine the policies and interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of these priorities and outcomes. It means implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, communications, audit and scrutiny to deliver effective accountability.

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to give an overview of (1) the functions and responsibilities of Oireachtas Office Holders, the Commission, and the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, and the relationship between them; (2) an overview of the Service's senior management governance roles including those relating to Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General and Accounting Officer and those who exercise a senior management role within the Service; and (3) an overview of how responsibility is assigned to officials of the Service for the performance of the functions under the Public Service Management Act 1997.

Functions and Responsibilities

Ceann Comhairle (Speaker of Dáil Éireann)

2.1 The position of Ceann Comhairle, or Chair of Dáil Éireann, is a key role in any parliamentary democracy in getting the right balance between maintaining order in the House, allowing Deputies to take part in debate and making sure that parliamentary business is conducted in an efficient, fair and impartial manner. The Ceann Comhairle also has a variety of other roles in addition to his/her procedural role.

2.2 Under the Constitution, Dáil Éireann elects from its members a Chair (Ceann Comhairle) and Deputy Chair (Leas-Cheann Comhairle) and their method of election and powers are set out in Dáil Standing Orders. For the 32nd Dáil, the election of Ceann Comhairle was by secret ballot being the first time this procedure was used for the election of Ceann Comhairle. The election process is set out in Standing Order 6.

Link to Dáil Standing Orders

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/standingorders/Standing-Orders-2016.pdf>

2.3 The election of the Deputy Chair (Leas-Cheann Comhairle) is by way of a motion made to the Dáil. Standing Order 9 refers.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/standingorders/Standing-Orders-2016.pdf>

2.4 With the establishment of the Commission in January 2004 there is increased emphasis on the twin "stewardship" roles of the Ceann Comhairle – the public role of steering the Dáil in plenary

session, and the “behind the scenes” role of steering the administration of services to the Houses as Chair of the Commission.

2.5 Under Article 15.10 of the Constitution, Dáil Éireann makes its own rules and Standing Orders. The Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann prescribe the powers and duties of the Ceann Comhairle in relation to Parliamentary business e.g. the proper conduct of debate, Parliamentary Questions, amendments to Bills and motions, disorderly conduct. All changes to Standing Orders must be agreed by the Dáil.

2.6 While the Ceann Comhairle is supported in his/her actions by the authority of the Constitution and the Rules of the House itself, it is his/her privilege and duty to protect on behalf of the House, the rights of its individual Members and to ensure that the business of Parliament is progressed in an orderly and dignified way befitting the House in its role - both as a constituent part of the legislature and as the directly elected Assembly to which the Government is constitutionally accountable.

Independence of Ceann Comhairle

2.7 The Ceann Comhairle is neutral, above party politics and must hold him/herself above matters of politics and controversy of the day and is independent from both the Government and Opposition of the day.

2.8 The independence and impartiality of the office of Ceann Comhairle is recognised in a number of ways:

- the holder is automatically re-elected under the Constitution thereby acknowledging that the Ceann Comhairle, by being required to remain above Party politics during his/her tenure of Office, cannot be expected to contest an election,
- a Minister or Minister of State cannot hold the Office of Ceann Comhairle,
- the Ceann Comhairle is *ex-officio* a member of the Presidential Commission, which acts as President in the absence of the President who is also required to be above party politics,
- the Ceann Comhairle may not make a speech in the Dáil or cast a deliberative vote on any matter and may exercise a casting vote only i.e. where there is an equality of votes.

2.9 The independence and impartiality of the Office of the Ceann Comhairle is enhanced by the requirement that the incoming Ceann Comhairle on assuming Office makes a declaration to that end (Standing Order 8).

2.10 The independence of the parliamentary administration is also recognised in law through the establishment of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (of which the Ceann Comhairle is Chair) as an independent corporate body with full control over its own budget, whose members act in a corporate and not a party political capacity, and through the unique status of the Commission’s staff (e.g. the Clerks, Clerk-Assistants of both Houses and the joint staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service) who are, by statute, civil servants of the State and not of the Government.

2.11 Each sitting of the House is governed by an Order Paper which is prepared under the direction of the Ceann Comhairle. Motions, amendments and Parliamentary Questions are examined individually by the Ceann Comhairle to ensure that they comply with Standing Orders and

precedents. The Ceann Comhairle also has discretion to shorten the formal notice required for motions and amendments.

2.12 The Ceann Comhairle is assisted in the performance of his/her duties by the Leas-Ceann Comhairle (Deputy Chair) who, while presiding, exercises the powers of the Ceann Comhairle except that Standing Orders relating to the closure of debate and the suspension of a member can only be invoked while the Ceann Comhairle is in the Chair. All other functions of the Ceann Comhairle can be exercised by the Leas-Ceann Comhairle. However, in the unavoidable absence of the Ceann Comhairle, or where a vacancy in the office occurs, all powers of the Ceann Comhairle under Standing Orders are exercised by the Leas-Ceann Comhairle. In addition, the Ceann Comhairle nominates a panel of not less than five members, any one of whom may act as temporary Chairman when so requested by the Ceann Comhairle.

2.13 The Constitution provides that the Ceann Comhairle shall certify any Bill, which in his/her opinion, is a Money Bill to be a Money Bill and subject to certain constitutional safeguards, his/her certificate is final and conclusive. The importance of this procedure lies in the fact that Seanad Éireann can only make recommendations but not amendments to a Money Bill and must pass it within 21 days (instead of 90 days for a non-money Bill).

Official positions held by the Ceann Comhairle

2.14 Under the Constitution, the Ceann Comhairle is an *ex-officio* member of the following:

- the *Presidential Commission* - which exercises and performs the powers and functions conferred on the President as provided for in Article 14 of the Constitution.
- the *Council of State* - which aids and counsels the President in relation to the exercise and performance by him/her of certain powers.

2.15 Under Standing Orders, the Ceann Comhairle is *ex-officio* of the following:

- Chair of the Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges that considers matters of procedure generally and recommends any additions or amendments to the Standing Orders that may be considered necessary. The Committee may also consider and report to the House as to members' privileges.

2.16 Under statute, the Ceann Comhairle is:

- Chair of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (the Commission).
- Chair of the Commission for Public Service Appointments as established under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments Act) 2004.
- a member of the Appeal Board, to decide on any doubt, dispute or question which may arise in connection with the Register of Political Parties under the Electoral Acts 1992.
- a member of the Seanad Appeal Board which is established to hear and decide appeals from decisions of the Seanad Returning Officer under the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Act 1947.
- Chair of Comhairle na Míre Gaile/ National Bravery Awards.

- Trustee of An Ciste Pinsean, the Oireachtas Members' Pension Scheme.

2.17 In the EU, the Ceann Comhairle is:

- an *ex-officio* Member of the Presidents (Speakers) of Parliament of the E.U.

2.18 Administratively, the Ceann Comhairle is Chair of the Executive of the Irish Parliamentary Association in the Houses of the Oireachtas, which maintains and nurtures contacts between Parliamentarians all over the world.

2.19 The Ceann Comhairle is joint-chair with the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly of plenary session of the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NISPA). The Association provides a forum for regular formal discussions between members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and members of both Houses of the Oireachtas on issues of mutual interest and concern. It meets twice yearly on a rotational basis between the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly with the agenda being agreed by an Executive Committee of the Association.

2.20 The Ceann Comhairle represents Dáil Éireann at international meetings of parliamentarians, the Inter Parliamentary Union, Conferences of Speakers of Parliament, the European Parliament, and along with the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, is the official host to visiting parliamentary delegations.

2.21 Under the Commission Acts, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) retains the function of setting the level of pay and allowances for members of the Houses and introducing amending Bills to approve funding for three year periods for the Commission and other relevant matters. The requirement to provide by statute for a new Commission budget every three years affords the Commission an opportunity to assess the adequacy of its governing legislation thereby allowing it to be updated as required. The Service engages with DPER on amendments required to the legislation and on its new three year funding requirements. The Minister is also a Trustee of An Ciste Pinsean.

2.22 The Service also engages with the Office of the Government Chief Whip and the CPP sub-Committee on Dáil Reform in relation to Dáil reform measures contained in the Programme for Government. The Service gives procedural advice on the implications of the changes proposed and in the drafting the Standing Orders to implement the changes, as well as advising on the resource (people and finance) implications for the Service of implementing these changes.

Cathaoirleach (Speaker of Seanad Éireann)

2.23 Article 15.9 of the Constitution provides for the election by Seanad Éireann of its own Chair (Cathaoirleach) and Deputy Chair (Leas-Chathaoirleach) and their method of election and powers are set out in Standing Orders.

2.24 Under Article 15.10 of the Constitution, Seanad Éireann makes its own rules and Standing Orders which prescribe the powers and duties of the Cathaoirleach in relation to Parliamentary business: [Seanad Standing Orders](#).

2.25 The role of the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad is broadly equivalent to that of the Ceann Comhairle in Dáil Éireann. Standing Orders provide that the Cathaoirleach is the judge of order in the Seanad and grant him/her the authority to suppress disorder and enforce prompt obedience to his/her rulings. The Cathaoirleach presides over debate in the House and rules on the admissibility of Bills, motions, amendments and other matters. The Leas-Chathaoirleach performs the duties of the Cathaoirleach in his or her absence.

2.26 The Cathaoirleach has other special powers and functions, including having a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes, summoning or postponing meetings of the House in certain circumstances, nominating a panel of temporary chair and chairing the Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

Official positions held by the Cathaoirleach:

2.27 Under the Constitution, the Cathaoirleach is *ex-officio* a member of:

- the Presidential Commission;
- the Council of State.

2.28 Under Standing Orders, the Cathaoirleach is *ex-officio*:

- Chair of the Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

2.29 Under statute, the Cathaoirleach is *ex-officio*:

- a Member of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.
- a Member of the Appeal Board which hears appeals from decisions of the Seanad Returning Officer in relation to the registration of nominating bodies under the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Act 1947;
- Trustee of An Ciste Pinsean;
- a Member of Comhairle na Míre Gaile/National Bravery Awards

2.30 In the EU - the Cathaoirleach is –

- an *ex-officio* Member of the Presidents (Speakers) of Parliament of the EU.

2.31 Administratively, the Cathaoirleach is Deputy-Chair of the Executive of the Irish Parliamentary Association in the Houses of the Oireachtas which maintains and nurtures contacts between Parliamentarians all over the world.

2.32 The Cathaoirleach represents Seanad Éireann at international meetings of parliamentarians, the Inter Parliamentary Union, Conferences of Speakers of Parliament, the European Parliament, and along with the Ceann Comhairle, is the official host to visiting parliamentary delegations.

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission “Commission”

2.33 The Commission was established in 2004 and is governed under the provisions of Houses of Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015. The Commission is recognised in law as a body corporate with perpetual succession and it has power to sue and it may be sued in its corporate name and may

hold and transfer property. The Commission is the body responsible for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas and is the governing body of the Service.

Membership

2.34 The Commission consists of 11 members and is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. The Ceann Comhairle, the Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann and the Secretary General are *ex-officio* members. The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform appoints one member, four members are appointed by Dáil Éireann and three members are appointed by Seanad Éireann.

Functions

2.35 The statutory role of the Commission is:

- a) to provide for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (“Service”),
- b) to act as governing body of the Service,
- c) to consider and determine policy in relation to the Oireachtas Service, and
- d) to oversee the implementation of that policy by the Secretary General.

2.36 The Commission is accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas for the performance of its functions.

2.37 In order to fulfil its functions the Commission performs *inter alia* the following:

- ☐ oversees ongoing expenditure – the Commission’s current three year budget is €369 million for the period 2016-2018;
- ☐ pays the salaries and expenses of members, their staff, and the Service, including those relating to the European Parliament;
- ☐ prepares annual accounts which are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General;
- ☐ exercises certain functions in respect of the provision of secretarial facilities for members and qualifying parties, as provided for in the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015, e.g. staff under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance, ICT equipment, printing and graphic design services;
- ☐ makes legal advice available to members as regards matters arising from their membership of the Dáil and Seanad and Oireachtas Committees;
- ☐ initiates legal proceedings/ intervening in legal proceedings and/or joining as a notice party in legal proceedings;
- ☐ performs functions in relation to the civil service staff of the Commission – which are delegated to the Secretary General;
- ☐ prepares and publishing strategic plans, annual reports, annual estimates and handbooks and information about the business of the Houses for members;
- ☐ provides official languages translation services in respect of Acts of the Oireachtas and Statutory Instruments;
- ☐ reviews An Caighdeán Oifigiúil/ Official standard of the Irish language; and
- ☐ prepares in consultation with the Standards in Public Office Commission (“SIPO”), a code of conduct for members of the Commission.

See [Appendix 6 – Functions of the Commission](#)

See [Appendix 7 – Matters outside the Remit of the Commission](#)

Conduct of Commission Business

2.38 The Commission's *Handbook for Commission Members* sets out the rules and procedures for the conduct of Commission business including, *inter alia* the role of the Chair, conduct of meetings, quorum, agenda items, decisions of the Commission, disclosure of interests, minutes etc.

Advisory Committees

2.39 The Commission has two key standing advisory Committees – namely the Finance Committee, which considers quarterly financial reports in detail and submits them to the Commission for approval: and a statutory Audit Committee, which oversees and advises on risk management, internal controls and value for money issues.

Ad-hoc sub-Committees

2.40 The Commission also sets up ad-hoc sub-Committees as required e.g. Communications sub-Committee and Accommodation sub-Committee.

Commission's Finance Committee

2.41 The Commission, when appointed following a General Election, establishes a Finance Committee with the general purpose of considering detailed financial matters on behalf of the Commission and reporting to the Commission, as required, with consolidated information and recommendations on such matters.

2.42 The Commission appoints the members and Chair of the Finance Committee, which consists of up to 6 members of the Commission, provided that in place of up to two such members, an equivalent number of members may be appointed who are members of either House of the Oireachtas and who have a background in finance or accounting.

2.43 In order to fulfil its purpose, the Finance Committee notes all financial aspects of Commission activities; and reviews material budget revisions and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Commission.

2.44 The Assistant Secretary over the Corporate and Members' Service Division, the Finance Officer and the Service's Accountant attend all Finance Committee meetings. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis. **See [Appendix 5: Commission Finance Committee Terms of Reference](#)**

Commission's Audit Committee

2.45 The Audit Committee has been established on a statutory basis pursuant to section 14A of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015. The Committee reports annually to the Commission and the report is inserted in the Commission's Annual Report which is published on the Oireachtas website.

2.46 The terms of reference of the Audit Committee are set out under section 14A (10) of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015. The Committee advises the Secretary General/Accounting Officer, on financial matters relating to his or her functions. The Committee also advises the Commission on matters of corporate governance relating to its functions. The Committee reports in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.

2.47 The Audit Committee meets at least 4 times in each year and may invite a person who has responsibility for internal audits or financial matters within the staff of the Service, or any other person it considers appropriate, to attend specific meetings. [See Appendix 3: Audit Committee Charter](#)

Houses of the Oireachtas Service (“the Service”)

2.48 The Houses of the Oireachtas Service is the public service body which provides parliamentary administration services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. It is staffed by civil servants of the State (general service, professional and technical) employed by the Commission who exercise the functions assigned to the Service under section 3A of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.

2.49 The Service is headed by the Secretary General who also holds the office of Clerk of the Dáil. The Secretary General is both a Member of the Commission as well as being accountable to it for the implementation of its policies and subject to its direction (other than in relation to the management of staff and his or her role as Clerk of the Dáil per section 16(5) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.

Functions

2.50 The role of the Service is to provide advice and support services to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees and to the members of the Houses.

2.51 In order to fulfil its functions the Service performs the following:

Parliamentary Services Division

Headed by the Assistant Secretary over the Parliamentary Services Division who is also Clerk-Assistant of the Dáil.

- ☐ Providing parliamentary procedural support and advice.
- ☐ Managing items of business on the Dáil Order Papers.
- ☐ Processing and publication of Journals of Dáil proceedings.
- ☐ Maintaining and publishing up-to-date Standing Orders and rulings of the Chair
- ☐ Providing clerk services to the Dáil.
- ☐ Providing administration and clerk services to Committees meetings.
- ☐ Processing and publishing of Bills.
- ☐ Processing of parliamentary questions and replies.
- ☐ Processing documents that are laid before the Houses.
- ☐ Reporting and publishing an official report of parliamentary debates.
- ☐ Providing communications, media, and broadcasting and information services, including the Oireachtas website.
- ☐ Providing translation services, including simultaneous translation of proceedings and translation of Bills and Statutory Instruments and carrying out a review of An Caighdeán Oifigiúil.
- ☐ Providing expert research, analysis and library services to Members and Committees.
- ☐ Other functions that may evolve in response to changing priorities.

Corporate and Members' Services Division

(Headed by the Assistant Secretary over the Corporate and Members' Services Division)

- ☐ Providing a HR services to Service staff (personnel services, recruitment, training and development, and pensions – staff and members).
- ☐ Providing HR advice for members in their role as employers.
- ☐ Providing a parliamentary legal advice service to the Commission, the Houses and their Committees and to the Service.
- ☐ Providing a One-Stop-Shop service to members to process their salary and allowances' payments.
- ☐ Providing financial services, including financial analysis, preparation of Estimates and Annual Accounts and processing of payment of invoices.
- ☐ Providing Internal Audit services
- ☐ Providing a foreign travel service to members to facilitate inter-parliamentary activities.
- ☐ Providing an ICT equipment and support services to members and to Service staff.
- ☐ Providing a salaries payroll service, including payments to members' staff.
- ☐ Providing protocol, usher, security and delivery services.
- ☐ Providing a visitor and visitor tours service.
- ☐ Providing information and advice on the governance of the organisation including risk management, procurement, and internal controls.
- ☐ Providing a catering service.
- ☐ Providing a printing service for members and qualifying parties.
- ☐ Providing a facilities management service, including accommodation services.
- ☐ Providing crèche and fitness room facilities.
- ☐ Other functions that may evolve in response to changing priorities.

[See Appendix 8 – Functions of the Service](#)

Clerk of the Dáil and Secretary General

2.52 There are two aspects to the role –

- (i) the procedural role as set out in Dáil Éireann Standing Orders encompassing the post of Clerk of Dáil Éireann, including ex-officio statutory functions.
- (ii) the administrative roles as set out in the Commission Acts encompassing the post of Secretary General of the Service, Accounting Officer, and CEO of the Commission.

[See Appendix 9 – Functions of the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General/CEO](#)

Clerk of Dáil Éireann

2.53 The Clerk of Dáil Éireann (“the Clerk”) is the chief procedural advisor to the Ceann Comhairle in his/her role as Chair of Dáil Éireann. The Clerk has a number of statutory functions which recognise the impartial and non-political nature of his/her office, including functions under the Electoral Acts and the Ethics in Public Office Act. The Clerk is the Registrar of Political Parties and is a member of the Standards in Public Office Commission, the Referendum Commission and the Constituency Commission when they are convened.

2.54 The principal duty of the Clerk is to provide advice on matters of order and Dáil procedure (as contained in Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair and parliamentary practice and precedent) to the Ceann Comhairle and to all members of Dáil Éireann. As part of this duty s/he has custody of all Journals, records or other documents belonging to the Dáil and the necessary parliamentary documents (e.g. the Dáil Order Paper [agenda], the Journal of Dáil Éireann [the formal minutes of proceedings] and copies of Bills and Acts) are prepared under his/her supervision. In addition s/he-

- vouches all Bills passed by the Dáil and sent to the Seanad and those passed or deemed to have been passed by both Houses before transmitting them for Presidential signature;
- endorses on the date of signature on Acts signed by the President;
- signs messages to and receives messages from Seanad Éireann;
- receives reports from Committees established to (i) take evidence in respect of Article 35.4.1 motions (regarding the removal of a Judge for stated misbehaviour or incapacity within the meaning of Article 35.4.1 of the Constitution)) or (ii) conduct inquiries in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013, for circulation to members of Dáil Éireann;
- receives and publishes reports of Tribunals of Inquiry where, in the resolution establishing the Tribunal, s/he is nominated as the person to whom the report must be made. Before publication of the Report, s/he must consider whether the publication of the report might prejudice any ongoing criminal proceedings.

2.55 Additional duties of the Clerk under the Electoral Acts include:

- issuing the Writs for an election and arranging for the signing of the roll by newly elected members;
- receipt and retention of certain categories of electoral documents for six months after polling day;
- assessing, as Registrar of Political Parties, any applications for inclusion on the Register of Political Parties (or for amendments to an existing entry) against the statutory criteria;
- maintaining the Register of Political Parties, ensuring its validity and making it publicly available,
- sending a copy of the Register of Political Parties to all Returning Officers when an election has been called and the writs have been issued, and
- when the election has taken place, provides a list of the TDs elected to the Clerk of the Seanad for inclusion in the list of electors for the Seanad General Election.
- at the first sitting of Dáil Éireann after the General Election, the Clerk reads the proclamation convening Dáil Éireann, reports as to the issue of Writs, announces the names of members elected at the General Election for each Constituency and acts as Chair of Dáil Éireann, until the new Ceann Comhairle is elected.

2.56 The Clerk is also, *ex-officio*:

- a member of the *Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO)*, and must also establish and maintain a Register of Members' Interests and must transmit complaints under the Acts to the Committee on members' Interests for consideration.

- a member of the *Referendum Commission* and must inform the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government when a Referendum Bill has been passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas.
- a member of the *Constituency Commission*, which is established in the aftermath of publication of a Census Report and is chaired by a judge of the superior courts.

Secretary General

2.57 The Clerk of the Dáil is appointed by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission on the recommendation of the Ceann Comhairle from among the one or more persons selected for that purpose by the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) following an open competition. The person who holds the office of the Clerk of Dáil Éireann is and may also be referred to as Secretary General of the Service.

2.58 The Secretary General is the Chief Executive of the Commission and is the Commission's Accounting Officer for the purposes of the Comptroller & Auditor General Acts 1866 to 1998.

2.59 Section 16 of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015 outlines the statutory functions of the Secretary General of the Service as follows:

- a. managing and controlling generally the staff and administration of the Service, implementing and monitoring Commission policies appropriate to that service, and delivering outputs as determined with the Commission,
- b. providing advice to the Commission and the chair of the Commission on the performance of their functions under this Act,
- c. preparing an outline of how specific elements of the responsibilities described in paragraphs (d) to (i) below are to be assigned so as to ensure that the functions performed on behalf of the Commission are performed by a member of the staff of the Commission of an appropriate grade or rank,
- d. providing advice to the Commission with respect to any matter within, affecting or connected with, the responsibilities of the Service giving rise to material expenditure chargeable to its accounts,
- e. ensuring that appropriate arrangements are put into place that will facilitate an effective response to matters that pertain to both the Service and other branches of the public service,
- f. ensuring that the resources of the Service are used in a manner that is in accordance with the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 with a view to enabling the matters referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 19(1) of that Act to be appropriately addressed by the Secretary General,
- g. preparing a statement on internal financial control for the purpose of it being reviewed by the Comptroller and Auditor General in the context of the audit to which section 14(2) relates,
- h. examining and developing means that will improve the provision by the Service of cost effective services,
- i. subject to the Civil Service Regulation Act 1956 and the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004, managing all matters pertaining to

appointments, performance, discipline and dismissals of staff below the grade of Principal, or its equivalent in the Service,

- j. assigning the responsibility for performance of the functions for which the Secretary General is responsible to members of the staff of the Commission of an appropriate grade or rank, including the conditions pertaining to such assignments, in order to ensure coherence of policy across the Service and ensuring that, where appropriate, the responsibility for the performance of those functions is further assigned to other members of the staff of the Commission of an appropriate grade or rank,
- k. providing progress reports on the implementation of the strategic plan, as defined in subsection (4) (b), annually to the Commission.

2.60 While the Secretary General may delegate responsibility and accountability by way of assignment (where each official is accountable to the Secretary General), he/she retains ultimate responsibility and accountability for the actions of the Service, irrespective of the delegation of assigned responsibilities.

2.61 The Secretary General is *ex officio* a designated public official for the purposes of section 6 (1) (f) of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.

Accounting Officer

2.62 The Secretary General who is Accounting Officer is personally responsible for the safeguarding of public funds and property under his or her control; for the regularity and propriety of all the transactions in each Appropriation Account bearing his or her signature; and for the efficiency and economy of administration in the Service. The Accounting Officer cannot delegate this responsibility to subordinate officers⁶.

2.63 The obligations of the Accounting Officer for the Commission include the following:

- ☐ Accounting Officer for expenditure incurred by the Commission charged on and paid out of the Central Fund;
- ☐ Preparation and presentation of Appropriation Accounts;
- ☐ To supply a Statement of Internal Financial Control to the Comptroller & Auditor General with the Annual Appropriation Accounts;
- ☐ Appearance before Public Accounts Committee;
- ☐ Approve all payments greater than €750,000⁷ (Commission approval is also required for new items of expenditure over €1m), and
- ☐ Putting in place an Internal Audit Unit.

Under section 14A of the Commission Act, the Commission establishes an Audit Committee.

⁶ A5 (3) of Financial Procedures (Blue Book)

⁷ Office Notice 1/2011 – Exercise of Financial Authority and the Placement of Orders for Goods and Services - Appendix A and

2.64 The role and responsibilities of Accounting Officers are outlined in greater detail at the following location <http://govacc.per.gov.ie/files/2014/06/Accounting-Officers-Memo.pdf>

Assistant Secretaries

2.65 Sections 4(1) and 9(2) of the Public Services Management Act 1997 empower the Secretary General to assign to other officials of the Service responsibility for the performance of his or her functions. The Service's Framework of Assignments document shows the assignment of responsibilities for the performance of each individual officer from Assistant Secretary to PO grade and equivalent. See [Appendix 1: Assignment of Responsibilities document](#).

2.66 Assignments will continue to be amended from time to time by the Secretary General and the framework will be deemed to have been updated accordingly. The responsibilities assigned are articulated through the Service's system of a corporate business plan and local business plans which identify the tasks to be delivered to achieve the key objectives of the Commission as set out in its Statement of Strategy.

2.67 The assignment of responsibility for the performance of functions by individual officials, or grade or grades of official, below Principal Officer level are handled administratively on the basis of the personal (or team) work objectives identified under or associated with the Service's local business plans that identifies everybody's role that contributes to the achievement of the Commission's objectives. The performance of individual officials is discussed, assessed and rated in accordance with the Performance Management Development System (PMDS), the Civil Service-wide compulsory system designed to develop an individual's work performance, career and development needs.

CHAPTER 3: MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE & OTHER GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Good governance means developing an organisation's capacity, including the capability of the leadership team, management and staff.

Whereas Chapter 2 focussed on the functions and responsibilities of the Commission, the Service and senior management, the purpose of Chapter 3 is to set out the purpose, role and terms of reference of management structures and arrangements in place, including the Management Committee, its sub-Committees' structure, working groups and senior management structures.

Management Committee

Commission's Vision and Purpose

3.1 As stated in Chapter 2, the role of the Service is to provide advice and support services to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees and to the members of the Houses.

3.2 The strategy⁸ and mission statement of the Houses of the Commission specifies the Commission's role in relation to enabling the Houses, their Committees and their Members to do their parliamentary duties and meeting members' needs as public representatives in the context of parliamentary business.

3.3 Its three strategic objectives are as follows;

1. Improving services to Parliament
2. Improving services to Members
3. Enhancing Service Capacity

3.4 The vision statement as set out in the Commission's most recent Statement of Strategy is to be 'A World Class Parliamentary Service'.

Role of the Management Committee

3.5 Primary responsibility for corporate governance resides with the Clerk of the Dáil and Secretary General/ Chief Executive who has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies.

3.6 The Secretary General is Chair of the Management Committee. The Committee is the strategic oversight, advisory and co-ordinating management board of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. Its terms of reference, which are summarised below, are accessible at the following location. See [Appendix 2: Management Committee Charter](#)

See [Appendix 10: Functions of the Management Committee](#)

⁸ Most recent Statement of Strategy

[http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/strategiccorporatereports/Houses-of-the-Oireachtas-Commission-Strategic-Plan-2010---2012-\(no-images\).pdf](http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/strategiccorporatereports/Houses-of-the-Oireachtas-Commission-Strategic-Plan-2010---2012-(no-images).pdf)

3.7 The role of the Management Committee is to assist and advise the Secretary General in carrying out the statutory responsibility for managing the Service for which the Secretary General is directly accountable to the Commission under the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.

3.8 Through the practice of collective decision-making, the Committee aims to ensure that the Service operates in an integrated way in delivering on the Commission's strategic objectives. In this way, the Committee contributes to efficient and effective management of the Service.

3.9 The agenda of the Management Committee is driven to a large extent by the policies adopted by the Commission, as well as by the Commission's Strategic Plan and the Corporate Business Plan of the Service.

3.10 The Management Committee holds an annual half day meeting on strategy, and reviews its effectiveness annually.

Guiding Principles of Management Committee

3.11 The work of the Management Committee is guided by the following principals:

First Forum

No new policy initiative or action which is likely to have repercussive effects is implemented by the Service without having been notified to the Management Committee in sufficient time to enable considered discussion of the issue. These items will initially be considered by a sub-Committee of the Management Committee if considered appropriate by the Secretary General or the proposer.

Co-operation

The Management Committee is only as effective as the senior management team makes it; it operates in an integrated way to ensure that informed, collective decision-making is applied to key strategic decisions. Committee members co-operate and ensure co-operation across the Service to achieve outcomes that are in the interests of the Service as a whole.

Collective Responsibility

Committee members take collective responsibility for decisions of the Management Committee and support decisions, once made. Decisions by the Committee are made generally by consensus. Committee members have the responsibility to act in the best interests of the Service as a whole and to take a wider corporate view of issues when considering issues that are specific to individual divisions or a business area of the Service. When consensus cannot be reached, the Chair in consultation with the other Committee members recommends a course of action.

3.12 None of the above supersedes the authority of the Secretary General to make a final decision as required.

Leadership and Values

3.13 The work of the Management Committee is guided by the following values:

Promoting Positive Values:

The Management Committee endorses and actively promotes positive values for the Service and recognises that, when exemplified by the Committee, these values lead to positive workplace attitudes and behaviours and enhance its culture and working environment.

Leading from the Top

The Management Committee acknowledges that it is a primary source of leadership for staff of the Service and that its actions, both collective and individual, determine the overall effectiveness and direction of the Service.

Membership of Management Committee

3.14 The members of the Management Committee are:

- the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General (Chair);
- the Assistant Secretaries of the two Divisions of the Service;
- the Clerk of the Seanad;
- the Chairs (at PO level) of the Committee's three sub-Committees, and
- an external member - the Secretary General nominates and invites an external person to be a member of the Committee to further enhance the governance oversight of the Committee.

3.15 The quorum for meetings is three. In the unavoidable absence of the Secretary General, the Secretary General may nominate a Committee member at Assistant Secretary level to chair the meeting.

3.16 The Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG) provides secretariat support to the Management Committee. The Principal Officer over the OCSG attends all meetings of the Management Committee and the meetings of its sub-Committees.

Specific functions of the Management Committee

3.17 The Management Committee has the following functions in the context of its role as set out above:

Planning, Policy and Service Delivery

Planning & policy development: Leading the development of strategic plans for adoption by the Commission, corporate plans for the Service, and proposing policies for the effective operation of the Service in the context of the role of the Management Committee's *Business and Strategy sub-Committee*.

Advisory: Reviewing all documents to be submitted to the Commission, and considering/deciding on the advice to be given to the Secretary General in the first instance, and to the Commission on major policy proposals.

Performance Reporting and Risk Management

Performance: Considering, on a monthly basis, information and reports on performance of the Service, both financial and non-financial, and deciding on actions arising.

Risk Management: Reviewing the management of high-level risk and risk management policy on a monthly basis.

Financial, Budget and Project Management

Estimates: Approving the annual statement of estimates to the Commission.

Budgets: Monitoring and controlling (including adjusting where necessary) budgets through expenditure reports which are tabled monthly.

Expenditure and Project Approval: Reviewing and deciding on proposals for projects, new policies or investments for the Service in accordance with the provisions of Office Notice 01/2011 (*Exercise of Financial Authority and Placement of Orders for Goods and Services*), *The Service's Financial Governance Handbook (Sept 2011)*, *Revised Financial Controls (May 2012)*, and Office Notice 02/2013 (*Project Management Guidelines*) as amended or substituted from time to time, and in the context of the role of the Management Committee's *Systems sub-Committee*.

Human Resource Management

HR Strategy: Reviewing HR information reports on a monthly basis, taking any necessary actions arising and deciding on strategic issues relating to human resource management in the context of the role of the Management Committee's *People and Finance sub-Committee*.

Staff numbers: Recommending decisions on business cases for new staff or re-assignment or suppression of existing posts, in the context of annual resource planning and the role of the *People and Finance sub-Committee*. Assignment of new or additional staff to an area requires approval of a business case by the Management Committee's *People and Finance sub-Committee* and the Management Committee.

Governance

Devolution of decision-making: Deciding the basis on which budget and other decision-making power is devolved in the Service.

Good management: Developing and modelling good management practices and ensuring their consistent and appropriate application throughout the Service.

Governance framework: Reviewing the operation of the Service's *Corporate Governance Framework* annually.

Delegation of Functions

3.18 All business cases are forwarded to the Secretary General, via the Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG), who will then set out the extent and terms of the delegation of decision-making to the sub-Committees. The delegation of issues will also include a recommendation for ongoing monitoring of implementation of projects/strategies/policies. Regular updates on progress made or difficulties encountered will be provided by the Chairs of the sub-Committees at Management Committee meetings.

3.19 The Management Committee may also delegate components of its work programme to its sub-Committees for ongoing monitoring of implementation or for progressing specific items.

Meeting Procedures:

3.20 Management Committee meetings are held at least monthly.

Agenda

3.21 The agenda structure for meetings is as follows:

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
Standing Items:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Management Issues Update • Financial and non-Financial Performance Reports • HR Reports • Risk Management • Update on Management Committee Work Programme - Items Falling Due
Commission/Finance Committee/Audit Committee Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items for noting/recommendation/action by Management Committee prior to submission to Commission, Finance Committee or Audit Committee e.g. estimate, quarterly financial reports, accounts, resource plan, business cases exceeding €500,000 – Finance Committee , business cases exceeding €1m – Commission, Internal Audit Reports, strategic plan, etc.
Decision/Discussion items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business proposals for the Service • Other decision items e.g. business cases and recommendations from the sub-Committees • Outcome reports from the Corporate Business Plan reviews carried out three times per annum • Other items for decision/discussion
Information items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other information items

3.22 The agenda issues to the members of the Management Committee and to all Principal Officers on the fourth working day preceding the meeting.

3.23 Papers for consideration by the Committee are to be submitted in time for issue with the agenda. Papers will only be accepted after this deadline if they are for urgent consideration by the Committee. Inclusion of other documents on the agenda will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.24 Committee agendas and minutes are placed on the *Management Committee Database* which is accessible to all staff. Committee documents are also placed on the database, except where the sponsor of the document requests restricted circulation.

3.25 The Committee business is tracked via the Committee's work programme document which is updated before every meeting.

3.26 The Committee's work programme is linked to the Service's Corporate Business Plan and overdue items are discussed at review meetings which are held three times a year.

Sub-Committees of the Management Committee

3.27 The Management Committee has established three sub-Committees with specific terms of reference to assist it with its work and to expedite the business of the Committee:

- 1 People and Finance sub-Committee [Terms of Reference](#)
- 2 Systems sub-Committee [Terms of Reference](#)
- 3 Business and Strategy sub-Committee [Terms of Reference](#)

3.28 Each year-end, each Principal Officer of the Service is invited by the Secretary General to select which sub-Committee of the Management Committee they wish to become a member of, and also to indicate if they would opt to be Chair of the chosen sub-Committee. In the event of there being no, or more than one, volunteer for the Chair of any sub-Committee, the Secretary General appoints the Chair. The appointments are generally for a 12 month period, with the Chair of each of these sub-Committees becoming a full participatory member of the Management Committee for this period. The positions are filled on a rotating basis. The membership of the sub-Committees can also include Assistant Principals on the nomination of their Principal Officer.

3.29 The Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG) provides secretariat support to the three sub-Committees.

Decisions and Reporting

3.30 Urgent actions arising from decisions of the Management Committee are conveyed immediately after the meeting to the relevant Principal Officer.

3.31 On the day of the meeting or on the following day, the Secretary to the Management Committee prepares an Action List arising from the decisions of the Committee showing the action, who is responsible for the action and the deadline for reporting back. The relevant action is forwarded to the relevant PO and/or to the Secretary of the Commission or Secretary of the Audit Committee where relevant.

3.32 The Action List is put on the agenda for the next Management Committee meeting for noting.

3.33 The minutes of the Management Committee meeting and an Action List, when adopted, are placed on the Management Committee Database which is accessible to all staff.

Performance and Evaluation

3.34 The OCSG is responsible for tracking the Management Committees' Work Programme and for advising the Chair of any issues arising. Progress on the Committees' Work Programme is a standing item on the Committee's meeting agenda.

3.35 The Committee monitors progress on the implementation of its decision by Service officials.

3.36 The Committee annually reviews its written charter and the terms of reference of its sub-Committees to ensure that they remain current and relevant.

3.37 The Committee annually self-evaluates its contribution to managing the Service and to delivering on the Commission's strategic objectives.

3.38 The Committee carries out a periodic evaluation of its training and information needs to ensure that its members have the knowledge and expertise to fulfil their roles as members of the Committee.

Management Committee Information/Documentation

3.39 There is an agreed format, content and level of analysis detail for reports on Standing Items on the Committee agenda i.e. Financial and Performance Reports, HR Reports, Risk Management Materialisation Reports, and for Business Cases submitted to the Committee for approval.

3.40 A one page summary template [note: if agreed, the draft template to be approved] is available to accompany submissions made to the Management Committee. The page summarises the decision sought or the issue presented for information, along with the key information required to make the decision or consider the issue as presented.

Support to Management Committee

Role of Secretary to the Management Committee

3.41 A staff member from the Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG) is appointed as Secretary to the Management Committee. The Secretary is responsible for assisting the Principal Officer OCSG with preparing the agenda for approval by the Chair, for liaising with officials regarding documents for Committee meetings, for preparing briefing for the PO and the Chair on agenda items, for preparing minutes and action lists and for following up and reporting on progress on action list items.

Role of Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG)

3.42 The purpose of the OCSG is to lead, co-ordinate and integrate direct support activities for the work of the Secretary General, the Management Committee and the Commission.

3.43 The OCSG under the direction of the Principal Officer has the following responsibilities:

Secretary General/ Chief Executive

- To provide support to the Secretary General, summarising, drafting, managing and quality assuring all key information requirements, including drafting and management of the Management Committee brief and management of the Commission Chief Executive brief.
- To keep abreast of organisational learning and development opportunities, both in the public and private sectors and suggested application thereof to the Management Committee and to the Service generally.

Management Committee support

- To manage and plan the work programme for the Management Committee and oversight of the related secretariat functions.
- To develop and review the effectiveness of the Management Committee.

Commission secretariat oversight

- To support the Commission and its Committees and carrying out its responsibilities.
- To manage changes to legislation impacting on the functions of the Commission and participate in discussions with relevant stakeholders (Commission, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform).

Planning and performance reporting

- To coordinate production of strategic plan and corporate business plan with involvement of staff; developing, implementing and tracking progress on same through the review process every four months, including the drafting of annual Outcome Reports.
- To produce and manage Internal Performance Reporting requirements for example, production of Annual Strategic Plan Implementation Report in accordance with section 16(1) (k) to the Commission and preparation of CEO-level material for appearance before the Public Accounts Committee.
- To produce and manage external performance reporting requirements, for example to coordinate the preparation and publication of Commission's Annual Report that includes the Commission's Annual Accounts and Audit Committee Report.

Interaction between the Management Committee and the Commission

Secretary General and Commission

3.44 The Secretary General, who is Chair of the Management Committee, is a member of the Commission, is also accountable to it and is directed by the Commission in his/her role as 'Chief Executive of the Commission'. This role translates into responsibility for overall performance of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

3.45 The Secretary General's statutory function includes the requirement to submit a strategic plan every three years to the Commission for approval, with or without amendment by the Commission, and to provide annual progress reports to the Commission on the implementation of the strategic plan.

3.46 In practice, the Commission may invite any Service official to attend a Commission meeting to make a presentation or to report to the Commission on any matter relating to the Commission's functions.

3.47 In practice, the Service's two Assistant Secretaries attend Commission meetings in an advisory capacity to the Secretary General who is Chief Executive and a member of the Commission.

Committee on Procedure and Privileges' Joint Sub-Committee on Administration

3.48 Following the reassembly of the Dáil subsequent to a General Election, a Standing Committee, the *Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges* is established. The Ceann Comhairle is *ex officio* Chair of this Committee. The functions, powers and membership of the Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges are set out in the *Dáil Standing Orders*.

Link: <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/about/standingorders/Standing-Orders-2016.pdf>

3.49 Following the reassembly of An Seanad, the *Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges* is established with the Cathaoirleach as Chair. The functions, powers and membership of the Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges are set out in the *Seanad Standing Order*.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/about/publications/standingorders/>

3.50 The *Committees on Procedures and Privilege* of both Houses consider all matters relating to Dáil and Seanad procedure and privilege attaching to members (including Standing Orders), subject to decisions of the Houses themselves, as appropriate. The Commission itself has general prerogative in relations to proposals for new services, major expansion of existing services or policy change in relation to the administration of services to the Houses.

3.51 Proposals from the *Committees on Procedures and Privilege* impacting on the Commission's budget would require Commission sanction.

3.52 The Committee of Procedures and Privileges has the power to appoint sub-Committees as defined in Standing Orders.

Joint sub-Committee on Administration

3.53 A Standing sub-Committee is established which is joined with a similar sub-Committee of the *Committee on Procedure and Privileges of Seanad Éireann* to constitute the *Joint sub-Committee on Administration*.

3.54 The sub-Committee consist of 8 members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the *Committee on Procedure and Privileges*.

3.55 The *sub-Committee's* role is to represent the views of members of both the Dáil and Seanad to the Commission in relation to services provided to support members in undertaking their parliamentary and representative duties. The sub-Committee considers and make recommendations to the Commission and to the Management Committee on matters within its remit.

Internal Networks

Principal Officer Network

3.56 The Management Committee is supported by the Service's Principal Officer Network which provides a forum for Principal Officers (POs) to do the following:

- collaborate and cooperate to achieve outcomes that are in the best interest of the Service;
- share information about Service-wide matters and section-level strategies and priorities;
- share feedback from across the organisation;
- learn from each other's expertise, knowledge and experience, and

- learn from other organisations through presentations from external senior managers.

3.57 The PO Network meets normally on a bimonthly basis and receives regular updates from the Chairs of the MAC sub-Committees and also from the Service's *People & Organisational Development Programme* (POD) project team. The Network issues regular updates to all Service staff.

3.58 The network model is currently being rolled out to Assistant Principal and Senior Clerk/Higher Executive Officer level staff.

Project Teams

3.59 Cross-business area/ cross-divisional project teams are established when required to deliver Service-wide projects. These operate in accordance with the Service's [Project Management Guidelines](#).

External Networks/Parliamentary Associations/ Interparliamentary Assemblies

External Networks/Associations

3.60 As outlined in Chapter 2, the Ceann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach, Clerk of the Dáil and Clerk of the Seanad have been assigned various functions by law by virtue of the offices they hold.

3.61 In addition, Service officials engage with, or are represented on, or are observers on, associations and networks across the civil service and across national parliaments as follows:

Reform Delivery Board

The Assistant Secretary over the Corporate and Members' Services Division is a member of the Reform Delivery Board. The board, primarily comprising of Assistant Secretaries is responsible for leading reform in each Department / Office, meets regularly to oversee and monitor the delivery of Public Service Reform at a strategic level and provide assurance to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and to the Cabinet Committee that Public Service Reform is being successfully delivered.

Public Service Networks

- ☐ Assistant Secretary Network <http://sps.gov.ie/>
- ☐ Public Service Heads of Internal Audit Forum
- ☐ Public Service Business Process Improvement (BPI) Network
- ☐ IGEES Network – Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service
- ☐ Finance Officers Network

Inter-Parliamentary Networks and Associations

- ☐ Meetings of the Secretaries General of the national parliaments of member states of the EU Heads of Internal Audit of Parliaments and Assemblies
- ☐ Heads of Parliamentary ICT Group
- ☐ Parliamentary Lawyers Conference (Parliamentary Legal Advisors and equivalents)
- ☐ Inter-Parliamentary Corporate Contact Group Meetings
- ☐ Parliamentary Committees Group (Clerks' Seminar)

- ☐ Inter-Parliamentary Research and Information Network (IPRIN)
- ☐ European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)
<https://ecprd.secure.europarl.europa.eu/ecprd/pub/about.do>
- ☐ Parliamentary library and research division of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). <http://www.ifla.org/>
- ☐ British Irish Parliamentary Reporting Association (BIPRA) <http://bipra.org/>
- ☐ Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association (observer status) <http://www.commonwealth-hansard.org/>
- ☐ Debates Office Exchange Programme with the Scottish Parliament
- ☐ Hansard Association of Canada (observer status) <http://www.hansard.ca/>
- ☐ Staff Exchange Programme with the German Bundestag
- ☐ Staff Exchange Programme with the Danish Folketing
- ☐ Canadian Parliamentary Officers' Study Programme

Interparliamentary Assemblies

- ☐ Inter-Parliamentary Union <http://www.ipu.org/>
- ☐ Council of Europe <http://www.coe.int/en/>
- ☐ Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe <http://www.osce.org/>

CHAPTER 4: AUDIT, ASSURANCE AND COMPLIANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Good governance means managing risks and performance through robust internal control systems and effective performance management practices.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to give an overview of Service's Audit and Assurance arrangements and Compliance Framework

Funding of Commission Expenditure

4.1 Expenditure incurred by the Commission is charged on and paid out of the Central Fund in accordance with section 5 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003 to 2015.

4.2 Every three years the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) introduces amending legislation to approve funding for the next three year period for the Commission. The Commission's current three year budget is €369 million for the period 2016 to 2018.

4.3 Receipts of the Commission, as specified in Schedule 2 of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015, are used by the Commission for the purposes of the performance of its functions and the annual value of such receipts are deducted from the Commission's overall budget allocation and accounted for in the Commission's annual accounts.

Audit and Assurance Framework

4.4 Responsibility for internal control systems, including internal financial control systems, audit, risk management and procurement resides with the Accounting Officer/Secretary General.

4.5 As stated above in paragraph 2.61 of Chapter 2 the obligations of the Accounting Officer include the following:

- ☐ Accounting Officer for expenditure incurred by the Commission charged on and paid out of the Central Fund;
- ☐ Preparation and presentation of Appropriation Accounts;
- ☐ To supply a Statement of Internal Financial Control to the Comptroller & Auditor General with the Annual Appropriation Accounts;
- ☐ Appearance before Public Accounts Committee;
- ☐ Authorise all expenditure greater than €750,000 – (Commission approval is also required for new items of expenditure over €1m); and
- ☐ Putting in place an Internal Audit Unit.

Under section 14A of the Commission Act, the Commission establishes an Audit Committee.

4.6 The role and responsibilities of Accounting Officers are outlined in greater details at the following location: <http://govacc.per.gov.ie/files/2014/06/Accounting-Officers-Memo.pdf>

4.7 As stated at paragraph 2.60 above, the Accounting Officer is personally responsible for the safeguarding of public funds and property under his or her control; for the regularity and propriety of all the transactions in each Appropriation Account bearing his or her signature; and for the efficiency and economy of administration in the Service. The Accounting Officer cannot delegate this responsibility to subordinate officers.

4.8 A scheme of approved authorisation limits under *Office Notice 1/2011 Exercise of Financial Authority and the Placement of Orders for Goods and Services* and *Revised Financial Controls 2012* is in operation in the Service which places ceilings on the amounts which can be spent at particular civil service grades, and sets out requirements in relation to business cases for expenditure items.

4.9 In relation to existing items of expenditure, Assistant Secretary and Secretary General approval is required for expenditure over €750,000. All proposals for new items of expenditure in excess of €500,000 require the approval of a business case by the Commission's Finance Committee. In all instances of expenditure items over €1m, the approval of the Commission is required.

Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

4.10 By 31 March of each year, the Accounting Officer supplies a *Statement of Internal Financial Control* (SIFC) to the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) with the annual *Appropriation Account* for the preceding year.

4.11 The *Appropriation Account* is prepared in accordance the *Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles* published in the Annual Report of the C&AG each year.

<http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2015/19.pdf>

4.12 While the *Appropriation Accounts* is prepared on a cash basis, the accounts show the net position at year-end regarding accrued income, commitments and liabilities.

4.13 The *Statement of Internal Finance Control (SIFC)* includes the following:

- ☐ A statement of responsibility for a system of Internal Financial Control
- ☐ A confirmation that a Financial Control Environment is in place
- ☐ A confirmation that a framework of Administrative Controls and Management Reporting is in place
- ☐ Confirmations that the Service has an Internal Audit function with appropriately training personnel which operates in accordance with a written charter.
- ☐ Confirmation that the Audit Committee operates in accordance with the terms of reference set out in the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.

Audit Committee

4.14 The Commission established an Audit Committee pursuant to section 14A of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015. The Committee meets at least 4 times annually. The agreed minutes of Audit Committee minutes are published to the Oireachtas website insert link

Role

4.15 The role of the Audit Committee is to –

- a) to review the work of the Internal Audit Unit, comprising completed audit reports, audit plans and programmes submitted to the Secretary General, and
- b) to consider other matters falling within its terms of reference which are determined by statute (section 14A (11) of the Commission Acts)

Terms of Reference

4.16 The statutory terms of reference⁹ of the Audit Committee are to -

- a) advise the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions,
- b) advise the Commission on matters of corporate governance relating to its functions, and
- c) report in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.

The Audit Committee's role and responsibilities in relation to risk management are specified in the Service's [Risk Management Policy](#) document.

Members

4.17 The appointment of members to the Audit Committee is governed by section 14A (3) of the Commission Acts.

4.18 The Committee is comprised of between 5 and 8 members appointed by the Commission as follows:

- (a) one member of the Commission,
- (b) at least one but not more than 3 members of either House of the Oireachtas who are not members of the Commission,
- (c) at least 2 but not more than 3 other persons nominated by the Secretary General who are professionally qualified in finance or accounting or have experience of auditing and who are not, and have never been, members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, and
- (d) one member of the staff of the Service nominated by the Secretary General, not being a staff member with direct responsibility for financial functions.

Reporting Arrangements

4.19 The reporting relationships between the Secretary General (Accounting Officer), Audit Committee, the Commission, Head of Internal Audit and Internal Audit Unit are as follows:

- The Audit Committee reports to the Secretary General.
- The Audit Committee's authority is derived from its statutory terms of reference and duties¹⁰ and from its Charter. The Charter reflects the Committee's responsibility to provide

⁹ Section 14A (10) of the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015

¹⁰ Section 14A (10) and (11)

independent and objective advice to the Secretary General; and that the Audit Committee is accountable to the Secretary General for its performance in that regard. The Audit Committee has full and direct access to the Secretary General on all matters within the scope of their work and responsibilities.

- The agreed minutes of Audit Committee meetings are circulated to the Secretary General and the Management Committee as a matter of normal practice
- The Audit Committee reports in writing, at least once a year, to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.
- The Secretary General ensures that the Audit Committee is provided with all of the Commission's plans and reports.
- The Audit Committee is provided with a copy of the C&AG's annual Management Letter and the Service's response and any other correspondence from the C&AG requested by the Committee.
- The Audit Committee has a meeting with the nominee of the Comptroller & Auditor General at least once a year.
- The Secretary General and the Audit Committee approves a formal Charter for the Service's *Internal Audit Unit* under which the unit derives its authority and under which the unit operates.
- The Head of Internal Audit has direct access to the Secretary General and may bring matters to his/her attention as and when the Head of Internal Audit deems it appropriate to do so.]

Audit Committee Charter

4.20 The Audit Committee works to a Charter agreed between the Audit Committee and Secretary General. The Charter includes and complements the role and functions of the Audit Committee as set down in the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015 (the Commission Acts). The Audit Committee Charter can be found at [Appendix 3](#).

4.21 The Audit Committee reviews its written charter to ensure that it remains current and relevant, and includes a confirmation that the review has been completed in its Annual Report to the Secretary General.

Internal Audit

4.22 The Service has a full-time internal audit function which reports directly to the Secretary General and which is overseen by the Audit Committee.

4.23 The Service applies central guidelines relating to the standards to be followed in implementing its internal audit function. <http://govacc.per.gov.ie/files/2012/11/Revised-Internal-Audit-Standards-2012-Final-Version-FOR-WEB.pdf>

Internal Audit Functions

4.24 The Internal Audit function is to provide independent assurance to the Secretary General, as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Commission and head of the Service, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control within the Service and to make

recommendations for improvements as appropriate.

4.25 Internal Audit's role and responsibilities in relation to risk management are specified in the [Service's Risk Management Policy document](#).

4.26 Internal Audit also operates as a resource for management through its analysis and appraisal of systems and controls in place, by highlighting generic models of best practice and by acting in an advisory/consultancy capacity on matters of audit and accounting practice and corporate governance within the scope of its functions and competence.

Internal Audit Unit

4.27 The Internal Audit Unit (IAU) is independent in its function and has no other operational role in the work of the Service or under the Commission.

4.28 The internal audit function has a formal charter approved by the Secretary General and the Audit Committee. The charter sets out the purpose, authority and responsibilities of the Internal Audit Unit. The Internal Audit Charter can be found at [Appendix 4](#).

4.29 The Head of Internal Audit reviews the Internal Audit written charter with Audit Committee to ensure that it remain current and relevant.

4.30 The Internal Auditor reports to the Audit Committee on the plans and completed work of the Internal Audit Unit and otherwise as requested by the Committee or Secretary General.

Internal Audit Work Programme

4.31 The Head of Internal Audit plans the work programme of the Internal Audit Unit.

- The Secretary General may propose items for inclusion in the work programme of the Internal Audit Unit (IAU) and should be consulted, along with the Management Committee, when the programme is being drawn up.
- The Audit Committee may also contribute to the IAU work programme.
- The Audit Committee agrees the planned IAU work programme with the Secretary General.
- The Secretary General is advised by the Audit Committee on the work programme, the skills and resources required and the performance of the Internal Audit Unit.
- It is the responsibility of the Audit Committee to review progress on the work programme and advise on resource allocation to the Internal Audit Unit.

Audit and Protected Disclosures

4.32 In the event of a worker making an internal disclosure under section 6 (1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 to the Audit Committee, to the Head of Internal Audit or to the Internal Auditor, the disclosure will be processed in accordance with the Service's Protected Disclosures Guidelines and will be referred to the Service's nominated Protected Disclosures Manager.

Risk Management

4.33 Effective risk management is one of the mechanisms put in place by the Secretary General/ Accounting Officer to provide appropriate assurance about the regularity, propriety and efficiency of the Service's operations.

4.34 The Service's risk management policy and practices are guided by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform's (DPER) *Risk Management Guidelines for Government Departments and Offices* (updated Feb 2016) <http://govacc.per.gov.ie/files/2011/05/RM-Guidance-for-WebSite.pdf>

Risk Management Policy

4.35 The overall goal of the Service's [risk management policy](#) is to ensure that all risk management activities contribute to the achievement of the Service's objectives; that the risk policy is aligned with the Service's business continuity plan, and that the policy articulates the Service's approach and expectations in relation to the management of risk across the organisation.

4.36 The Service encourages the taking of controlled risks, capitalising on new opportunities and using innovative approaches to further the interest of the Service and achieve the business objectives provided the resultant exposures do not infringe on the operating procedures or legal and regulatory requirements of the Service.

4.37 The best practice standard adopted by the Service is "ISO 31000:2009, Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines".

Risk Management Committee

4.38 The Service's Risk Management Committee is primary champion of risk management at strategic and operational level in the organisation and is responsible for developing and maintaining the policy and strategic approach to risk in the Service.

4.39 The Service's Risk Administrator is a member of the Risk Management Committee and has responsibility for managing the risk policy and coordinates all risk activities across the Service.

4.40 The Service's Management Committee approves the risk management policy and strategy. Risk Management reports are submitted to the Management Committee on a monthly basis.

4.41 The Risk Management Committee reports quarterly to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee advises the Secretary General/ Accounting Officer on the systems of control underlying the risk management framework and processes.

4.42 Internal Audit is responsible for providing an independent assurance opinion to the Secretary General/ Accounting Officer and the Audit Committee on the risk management framework, policy and processes.

4.43 The roles and responsibilities for the management of risk across the Service are outlined in detail in the [Service's Risk Management Policy](#) document.

Procurement

4.44 The Service is committed to best procurement practice and uses the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) procurement contracts and central framework agreements for common goods and services where beneficial to the Service.

4.45 The OGP was set up in 2014 and takes responsibilities for procurement policy, centralised procurement support system and procedures. A Service Level Agreement setting out the Oireachtas procurement requirements and conditions will be put in place when the OGP is fully staffed and operational.

4.46 The role of the Service's Procurement Officer is to provide support and advice as and when required to staff; to ensure procurement is compliant with EU law and National Guidelines, and to engage with the OGP in the preparation and publication of tenders. The Procurement Officer is assisted by the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Service in this regard.

4.47 The Service has produced a *Guide to Best Practice in Contract Management* to direct staff through the procurement process. This document is being updated.

Assurance Arrangements with the National Shared Services Office

4.48 The Service is currently in the transition phase to the move to the PeoplePoint (HR & pensions administration Shared Service Centre- HRSSC) and the Payroll Shared Service Centre (PSSC). Assurance arrangements will be put in place between the Service's Secretary General and the Accounting Officer of the National Shared Services Office (NSSO), consistent with relevant Service Management Agreements, when the functions are transferred.

Compliance Framework

A Compliance Framework will be developed by end June 2016 to accompany this Governance Framework Document.

Appendix 1: Assignment of Responsibilities

Appendix 2: Management Committee Charter

Appendix 3: Audit Committee Charter

Appendix 4: Internal Audit Charter

Appendix 5: Commission's Finance Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 6: Functions of the Commission

Appendix 7: Matters Outside the Remit of the Commission

Appendix 8: Functions of the Service

Appendix 9: Functions of the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General/CEO

Appendix 10: Functions of the Management Committee

APPENDIX 1: ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Name	Division/Section Name	Description
Peter Finnegan - Clerk of the Dáil / Secretary General / Chief Executive of the Commission / Accounting Officer	Clerk of the Dáil and Secretary General	The Clerk of the Dáil is appointed by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission on the recommendation of the Ceann Comhairle from among the one or more persons selected following an open TLAC competition. The person who holds the office of Clerk of Dáil Éireann is also Secretary General of the Service, Accounting Officer and Chief Executive of the Oireachtas Commission. The duties of Clerk of the Dáil are contained in the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann. The Secretary General functions of the post holder are set out under section 16 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015. The post holder also has a number of statutory functions under the Electoral and Ethics in Public Office Act.
Michael Errity - Assistant Secretary	Corporate and Members' Services Division	The Corporate and Members' Services Division is comprised of the following: (1) Members' & International Services; (2) Superintendent's Area, including Facilities Management, Security, Protocol, Events, H&S, Accommodation, Business Continuity Management; (3) Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor; (4) Finance Unit; (5) Procurement Unit; (6) HR Services (7) Pensions; (8) Salaries; (9) Training & Development ; (10) ICT, and (11) Management of Internal Audit. The Assistant Secretary of this Division is a member of the Management Committee, is the designated Protected Disclosures Manager for the Service, and is a member of the cross-Departmental Reform Delivery Board.
Vacancy - Assistant Secretary	Parliamentary Services Division	The Parliamentary Services Division is comprised of the following: (1) House Services, including Bills Office, Questions Office and Journal Office; (2) Committees (3) Communications, Broadcasting & Information; (4) Library & Research Service; (5) Rannóg an Aistriúcháin; (6) National Parliament Representation in Brussels; and (7) Debates Office. The Assistant Secretary of this Division is also Clerk-Assistant of the Dáil (to be appointed by the Commission on the nomination of the Ceann Comhairle), is a member of the Management Committee, and is the designated Protected Disclosure Manager for the Service.

Name	Division/Section Name	Description
Deirdre Lane - Clerk of the Seanad and Seanad Returning Officer - Principal Officer level	Clerk of the Seanad	The Clerk of the Seanad is appointed by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission on the recommendation of the Chair (Cathaoirleach) of Seanad Éireann. The duties of Clerk of the Seanad are contained in the Standing Orders of Seanad Éireann. The Clerk of the Seanad is Examiner of Private Bills. She is also Seanad Returning Officer for Seanad General Elections and her duties in that capacity are set out in the Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Act 1947. She is also a member of the Management Committee. The post holder also has a number of statutory functions under the Electoral and Ethics in Public Office Act.
Bridget Doody - Principal Officer	Office of the Commission & Secretary General	The Office of the Commission & Secretary General (OCSG) has responsibility to lead, co-ordinate and integrate direct support activities for the work of the Secretary General, the Management Committee and the Commission. The office coordinates the production of strategic plans and corporate business plans and tracking progress on same. The office also coordinates the production of the Commission's Annual Report and manages changes to legislation impacting on the functions of the Commission. The Principal Officer is Chair of the Service's Risk Management Committee.
Martin Groves - Clerk-Assistant of the Seanad - Principal Officer level	Seanad Office	The primary role of the Seanad Office is to support the sittings and business of the Seanad. It does so inter alia by producing procedural documents including the Seanad Order Paper, providing procedural advice and maintaining and drafting the Standing Orders for the Seanad. The current Principal Officer of the Seanad Office holds the office of Clerk-Assistant of Seanad Éireann. The Seanad Office assists the Seanad Returning Officer in the administration and running of a Seanad General Election and Bye-election.

Name	Division/Section Name	Description
Patricia Doran - Principal Officer	House Services	The primary role of the House Services area is to support the sitting and business of the Dáil proceedings. It comprises the following Offices (1) The Bills Office (2) The Journal Office and (3) The Questions Office. Under the Journal Office it also provides administrative support to the Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges and its sub-Committee on Dáil Reform and it also provides administrative support to the Seanad Returning Officer in the administration of a Seanad General Election.
Michelle Grant - Principal Officer	EU & External Relations Committees	This unit is responsible for providing support to the EU & External Relations Committees and to the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (N/SPA) and the British-Irish Parliamentary Association (BIPA). The PO over this area is responsible for planning and development for the Committees' Secretariat and is currently Chair of the Oireachtas Contracts Committee. The Unit also has responsibilities regarding the Select Committee on Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann established under the Ethics Acts.
Charles Hearne - Principal Officer	Sectoral Committees, Administration & Development	This unit is responsible for providing support for the Sectoral Committees and for line management responsibility for co-ordination of the Committees' Secretariat. The PO over this unit is currently the Service's Data Protection Officer and is the member of the staff of the Service nominated by the Secretary General to be on the Audit Committee. The PO is currently Chair of the Management Committee's Systems sub-Committee as well as being a member of the Management Committee.
Tom Malone - Principal Officer	Financial Scrutiny, Procedure & Statutory Affairs Committees	This unit is currently responsible for development of the budgetary scrutiny function; for liaising with other parliaments, assemblies and international bodies in this context; for providing support to Oireachtas Committees in their scrutiny of estimates for public services; and has responsibility for Procedure & Statutory Affairs Committees. The Unit also has responsibilities regarding the Select Committee on Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann established under the Ethics Acts.

Name	Division/Section Name	Description
Elaine Gunn - Principal Officer	Parliamentary Inquiries and Investigations	This unit is responsible for providing support to parliamentary inquiries held under the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013.
Derek Dignam - Principal Officer	Communications, Broadcasting & Information	The Communications, Broadcasting and Information Unit lead the external communications, public engagement and information strategies of the Service. These services include the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings, operating a dedicated Parliamentary Channel (Oireachtas TV), the maintenance and development of the Oireachtas website, media services, online services including an online educational service. The PO of the unit is the management representative member of the Print Users Council, which provides printing facilities to members of the Houses and qualifying political parties.
Madelaine Dennison - Principal Officer level	Library & Research Service	The Library & Research Service (L&RS) is responsible for providing expert research, analysis and library services to support the work of the Houses, Committees and individual members in respect of their parliamentary duties. The L&RS also manages the procedures relating to the laying of documents before the Houses. The L&RS also has a corporate information management role with responsibility for freedom of information (FOI) and records management. The PO of the Unit also has shared responsibility for strategic planning in the Service.
Vivian UibhEachach - Príomh-Aistritheoir - Principal Officer Level	Rannóg an Aistriúcháin	Rannóg an Aistriúcháin is responsible for providing official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas, of Statutory Instruments and of parliamentary documents. The Unit also provides a simultaneous translation service to the Dáil, the Seanad and their Committees and reviews and publishes an An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard of grammar of the Irish language). An Rannóg Aistriúcháin is responsible for the Irish Language Scheme for the Oireachtas Service.

Name	Division/Section Name	Description
Ann Maxwell - Editor of Debates - Principal Officer Level	Debates Office	The Debates Office's primary responsibility is the production of the Official Report of the proceedings of Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees, within specified deadlines and to publish the Official Report.
Ciaran Smith - Principal Officer	Members' & International Services	Members' & International Services comprise of the Members' Service Unit, including the One-Stop-Shop, and Interparliamentary & Travel Unit. Members' Service role is to lead, plan and manage the strategic and operational development of services to members of the Houses. It also provides a One-Stop-Shop for Members to process their allowances and provides guidance and assistance to them on allowable expenses, salaries and related issues. Members Services' Unit also has responsibility for the Service's Customer Service Charter and Action Plan and for the catering services provided in the Leinster House complex. The Travel and Interparliamentary Unit provide support to members to help them fulfil their inter-parliamentary duties.
Paul Conway - Superintendent of the Houses - Principal Officer Level	Superintendent's	The Superintendent's Section is responsible for: protocol matters, Dáil and Seanad chamber attendance; Security; Health and Safety; Event and Tour management; Postal Services; Facilities Management which includes, <i>inter alia</i> , Members and Staff accommodation, Energy and Utilities, Disabled Access, Stationary Supplies, Cleaning and Refuse Management, Offsite Storage, Procurement of Uniforms; Business Continuity Management. The PO of the area is also Chair of the Management Committee's sub-Committee on Business and Strategy and is also a member of the Management Committee.
Mellissa English - Parliamentary Legal Advisor - Principal Officer Level	Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor	The Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor's role is to make, on behalf of the Commission, legal advice available to members and Committees as regards matters arising from membership of the Houses and their Committees and to participate in legal proceedings. The Parliamentary Legal Advisor also has responsibility for the audit function, including Internal Audit and the Audit Committee.

Name	Division/Section Name	Description
Bridget Doody - Principal Officer	Finance and Procurement	Responsibility at Principal Officer level for the Finance Unit (including Risk) and Procurement Unit functions in addition to her duties as PO of the Office of the Commission & Secretary General.
Margaret Crawley - Principal Officer	Human Resources	This section is comprised of the following units (1) Personnel (2) Recruitment (3) Training & Development (4) Members' HR Services, and Pensions (5) Salaries. The responsibilities assigned to this area include the implementation of central HR policies, including the Civil Service Dignity at Work and Protected Disclosures policies, and the development and implementation of the Service's People & Organisational Development (POD) Programme. HR is also responsible for the development of the Service's ICT Acceptable Usage Policy, internal communications and for the Service' Annual Reform Delivery Plan and progress reports.
Brian Hickey - Principal Officer	ICT Operations	ICT Operations is responsible for provision of ICT equipment and services to Members and their staff and to staff of the Oireachtas Service.
Finn deBrí - ICT Programme Manager - Principal Officer Level	ICT Systems	ICT Systems is responsible for developing the Service's ICT infrastructure and systems.

Appendix 2: Management Committee Charter

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS SERVICE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER

Revised March 2016

1. Role

1.1 The Management Committee is the strategic oversight, advisory and co-ordinating management board of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. The Secretary General is the Chair of the Committee.

1.2 The role of the Management Committee is to assist and advise the Secretary General in carrying out the statutory responsibility for managing the Service for which the Secretary General is directly accountable to the Commission under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.

1.3 Through the practice of collective decision-making, the Management Committee aims to ensure that the Service operates in an integrated way in delivering on the Commission's strategic objectives. In this way, the Management Committee contributes to the effective and efficient running of the Service.

1.4 The agenda of the Management Committee is driven to a large extent by the policies adopted by the Commission, as well as by the Strategic Plan and Corporate Business Plans of the Service.

1.5 The Management Committee holds an annual half-day meeting on strategy.

2. Membership and sub-Committees

2.1 The members of the Management Committee are:

- the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General (Chair);
- the Assistant Secretaries of the two Divisions of the Service;
- the Clerk of the Seanad;
- an external member nominated by the Secretary General, and
- the Chairs (PO level) of the 3 Management Committee sub-Committees.

The Principal Office over the Office of the Commission and Secretary General (OCSG) attends all meetings of the Management Committee and of its sub-Committees.

2.2 Each Management Committee member has a full and equal participation and decision-making role in all matters coming before Management Committee

2.3 The external member shall not have any executive responsibility or other role within the Service.

2.4 The quorum for meetings is three.

2.5 The Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Service Division, shall chair Management Committee meetings in the unavoidable absence of the Secretary General.

2.6 The following are sub-Committees of the Management Committee with terms of reference and membership as set out in the appendices indicated:

- People and Finance sub-Committee (Appendix 1)
- Systems sub-Committee (Appendix 2)
- Business and Strategy sub-Committee (Appendix 3)

2.7 Each year, each Principal Officer of the Service is invited to select which sub-Committee they wish to become a member of and also to indicate if they would opt to be Chair of the chosen sub-Committee. In the event of there being more than one volunteer for the Chair of any sub-Committee, the Secretary General appoints the Chair. The appointments are generally for a 12 month period, with the Chair of each of these sub-Committees becoming a full participatory member of the Management Committee for this period. The positions are filled on a rotating basis. The membership of the sub-Committees can also include Assistant Principals on the nomination of their Principal Officer.

2.8 The Office of the Commission and Secretary General provides secretariat support to the Management Committee and to its sub-Committees.

3. Specific Functions of the Management Committee

The Management Committee has the following functions in the context of its role as set out above:

PLANNING, POLICY & SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Planning & policy development: Leading the development of strategic plans for adoption by the Commission, corporate plans for the Service, and proposing policies for the effective operation of the Service in the context of the role of the Business and Strategy sub-Committee (Appendix 3).

3.2 Advisory: Reviewing all documents to be submitted to the Commission, and considering/deciding on the advice to be given to the Secretary General in the first instance and Commission on major policy proposals.

PERFORMANCE REPORTING & RISK MANAGEMENT

3.3 Performance: Considering, on a monthly basis, information and reports on performance of the Service, both financial and non-financial, and deciding on actions arising.

3.4 Risk Management: Reviewing the management of high-level risks and risk management policy on a monthly basis.

BUDGET, FINANCIAL & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

3.5 Estimates: Approving the annual statement of estimates to the Commission.

3.6 Budgets: Monitoring and controlling (including adjusting where necessary) budgets through expenditure reports which are tabled monthly.

3.7 Expenditure and Project Approval: Reviewing and deciding on proposals for projects, new policies or investments for the Service in accordance with the provisions of: *Office Notice 01/2011 (Exercise of Financial Authority and Placement of Orders for Goods and Services)*; *The Service's Financial Governance Handbook (Sept 2011)*; *Revised Financial Controls (May 2012)*, and *Office Notice 02/2013 (Project Management Guidelines)* as amended or substituted from time to time, and in the context of the role of the *Systems sub-Committee* (Appendix 2).

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

3.8 HR Strategy: Reviewing HR information reports on a monthly basis, taking any necessary actions arising and deciding on strategic issues relating to human resource management in the context of the role of the *People and Finance sub-Committee* (Appendix 1).

3.9 Staff numbers: Recommending decisions on business cases for new staff or re-assignment or suppression of existing posts, in the context of annual resource planning and the role of the *People and Finance sub-Committee* (Appendix 1). Assignment of new or additional staff to an area requires approval of a business case by the *People and Finance sub-Committee* and the Management Committee.

GOVERNANCE

3.10 Devolution of decision-making: Deciding the basis on which budget and other decision-making power is devolved in the Service.

3.11 Good management: Developing and modelling good management practices and ensuring their consistent and appropriate application throughout the Service.

3.12 Governance framework: Reviewing the operation of the Service's *Corporate Governance Framework* annually.

4. Delegation of Functions

4.1 All business cases are forwarded to the Secretary General, via the OCSG, who will then set out the extent and terms of the delegation of decision-making to the sub-Committees. The delegation of issues will also include a recommendation for ongoing monitoring of implementation of projects/strategies/policies. Regular updates on progress made or difficulties encountered will be provided by the Chairs of the sub-Committees at Management Committee meetings.

4.2 The Management Committee may also delegate components of its work programme to sub-Committees for ongoing monitoring of implementation or for progressing specific items.

5. Meeting Procedures

5.1 Meetings are held at least monthly.

5.2 The agenda structure for meetings is as follows:

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
Standing Items:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Management Issues Update, including updates from Chairs of sub-Committees • Financial and non-Financial Performance Reports • HR Reports • Risk Management • Update on Management Committee Work Programme - Items Falling Due
Commission/Finance Committee/Audit Committee Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items for noting/recommendation/action, as appropriate, by Management Committee prior to submission to Commission, Finance Committee or Audit Committee e.g. estimates, quarterly financial reports, accounts, resource plan, business cases exceeding €500,000, Internal Audit Reports, strategic plan, etc.
Decision/Discussion items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business proposals for the Service • Other decision items e.g. business cases and recommendations from the sub-Committees • Outcome reports from Corporate Business Plans Reviews three times per annum. • Other items for decision/discussion
Information items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other information items

5.3 The agenda issues to Committee members and POs on the fourth working day preceding the meeting.

5.4 Papers for consideration by the Management Committee are to be submitted in time for issue with the agenda. Papers will only be accepted after this deadline if they are for urgent consideration by the Committee. Inclusion of other documents on the agenda will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.5 Committee agendas and minutes are placed on the Management Committee database which is accessible to all staff. Committee documents are also placed on the database, except where the sponsor of the document requests restricted circulation.

5.6 Committee business is tracked via the Management Committee work programme document which is updated before every meeting.

5.7 The Committee's work programme is linked to the Corporate Business Plan and overdue items are discussed at review meetings that are held three times a year.

6. Guiding Principles

6.1 **First forum:** No new policy initiative or action which is likely to have repercussive effects is implemented by the Service without having been notified to the Management Committee in sufficient

time to enable considered discussion of the issue. These items will initially be considered by a sub-Committee of the Management Committee, if considered appropriate by the Secretary General or the proposer.

6.2 Co-operation: The Management Committee is only as effective as the senior management team makes it; it operates in an integrated way to ensure that informed, collective decision-making is applied to key strategic decisions. Committee members co-operate and ensure cooperation across the Service to achieve outcomes that are in the interests of the Service as a whole.

6.3 Collective Responsibility: Committee members take collective responsibility for decisions of the Management Committee and support decisions, once made. Decisions by the Committee are made generally by consensus. Committee members have the responsibility to act in the best interests of the Service as a whole and to take a wider corporate view of issues when considering issues that are specific to individual divisions or a business area of the Service. When a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair in consultation with the other Committee members recommends a course of action.

None of the above supersedes the authority of the Secretary General to make a final decision as required.

7. Values and Leadership:

7.1 Promoting Positive Values: The Management Committee endorses and actively promotes positive values for the Service and recognises that, when exemplified by Management Committee, these values lead to positive workplace attitudes and behaviours and enhance its culture and working environment.

7.2 Leading from the Top: The Management Committee acknowledges that it is a primary source of leadership for staff of the Service and that its actions, both collective and individual, determine the overall effectiveness and direction of the Service.

8. Performance and Evaluation

8.1 At each meeting, the Management Committee reviews progress on its Work Programme and on the implementation by Service officials of its decisions.

8.2 The Committee reviews its effectiveness annually, including by self-evaluating its contribution to managing the Service and to delivering on the Commission's strategic objectives.

8.3 The Committee annually reviews its written charter and the terms of reference of its sub-Committees to ensure that they remain current and relevant.

8.4 The Committee carries out periodic evaluation of its training and information needs to ensure that its members have the knowledge and expertise to fulfil their roles as members of the Committee.

Office of the Commission and the Secretary General

March 2016

Appendix 1: People and Finance sub-Committee

Terms of reference

The sub-Committee on People and Finance shall consider such matters as human and financial resources for the Service, as are referred to it by the Management Committee.

Each year-end, each Principal Officer of the Service is invited by the Secretary General to select which sub-Committee of the Management Committee they wish to become a member of, and also to indicate if they would opt to be Chair of the chosen sub-Committee. In the event of there being no, more than one, volunteer for the Chair of any sub-Committee, the Secretary General appoints the Chair. The appointments are generally for a 12 month period, with the Chair of each of these sub-Committees becoming a full participatory member of the Management Committee for this period. The positions are filled on a rotating basis. The membership of the sub-Committees can also include Assistant Principals on the nomination of their Principal Officer.

The sub-Committee will also consider specific proposals referred to it by the Secretary General at his/her discretion. The sub-Committee will consult with the relevant Assistant Secretary with regard to proposals under consideration before forwarding their recommendations to the Management Committee and/or the Secretary General. Where the views of the relevant Assistant Secretary differ from the recommendations of the sub-Committee, these alternative views should be noted in the report of the sub-Committee.

The Management Committee will delegate ongoing items from its work programme to the sub-Committees for monitoring of implementation or for progressing items. Regular updates on progress made or difficulties encountered will be provided by the Chair of the sub-Committee at Management Committee meetings.

The sub-Committee will report to the Management Committee and/or to the Secretary General on specific items as appropriate and will report annually to the Management Committee on its work in general. A template for reports to the Management Committee and/or the Secretary General is set out below.

Report to Management Committee

- ☐ Decision sought/Recommendations for Approval
- ☐ Concise Summary of discussion points (to include summary of view of the relevant Assistant Secretary)
- ☐ Proposals re ongoing monitoring by the sub-Committee

The Management Committee in consultation with the sub-Committee will carry out an annual review of the sub-Committee's terms of reference to ensure that they remain relevant and current.

Appendix 2: Systems sub-Committee

Terms of reference

The sub-Committee on Systems shall have general oversight of the development of information services and of the information and ICT strategies for the Service, including monitoring progress on ICT projects and expenditure, as are referred to it by the Management Committee.

Each year-end, each Principal Officer of the Service is invited by the Secretary General to select which sub-Committee of the Management Committee they wish to become a member of, and also to indicate if they would opt to be Chair of the chosen sub-Committee. In the event of there being no, or more than, one volunteer for the Chair of any sub-Committee, the Secretary General appoints the Chair. The appointments are generally for a 12 month period, with the Chair of each of these sub-Committees becoming a full participatory member of the Management Committee for this period. The positions are filled on a rotating basis. The membership of the sub-Committees can also include Assistant Principals on the nomination of their Principal Officer.

The Systems sub-Committee has the following functions in relation to business cases for ICT projects and ICT-dependent projects:

- delegated authority to sanction projects with expenditure of less than €250,000 which currently (or in the future will) fall within the remit of the ICT strategy and implementation plan;
- to act as the evaluation mechanism for projects over this amount prior to submission to the Management Committee.

The Systems sub-Committee will also consider specific proposals referred to it by the Secretary General at his/her discretion. The sub-Committee will consult with the relevant Assistant Secretary with regard to proposals under consideration before forwarding their recommendations to the Management Committee and/or the Secretary General. Where the views of the relevant Assistant Secretary differ from the recommendations of the sub-Committee, these alternative views should be noted in the report of the sub-Committee.

The Management Committee will delegate ongoing items from its work programme to the sub-Committee for monitoring of implementation or for progressing items. Regular updates on progress made or difficulties encountered will be provided by the Chair of the sub-Committee at Management Committee meetings.

The sub-Committee will report to the Management Committee and/or to the Secretary General on specific items as appropriate and will report annually to the Management Committee on its work in general. A template for reports to the Management Committee and/or the Secretary General is set out below.

Report to Management Committee

- ☐ Decision sought/Recommendations for Approval
- ☐ Concise Summary of discussion points
- ☐ Proposals re ongoing monitoring by the sub-Committee

The Management Committee in consultation with the sub-Committee will carry out an annual review of the sub-Committee's terms of reference to ensure that they remain relevant and current.

Appendix 3: Business and Strategy sub-Committee

Terms of reference

The sub-Committee on Business and Strategy shall consider such matters of strategy, business operations and organisational development for the Service as are referred to it by Management Committee.

Each year-end, each Principal Officer of the Service is invited by the Secretary General to select which sub-Committee of the Management Committee they wish to become a member of, and also to indicate if they would opt to be Chair of the chosen sub-Committee. In the event of there being no, or more than one, volunteer for the Chair of any sub-Committee, the Secretary General appoints the Chair. The appointments are generally for a 12 month period, with the Chair of each of these sub-Committees becoming a full participatory member of the Committee for this period. The positions are filled on a rotating basis. The membership of the sub-Committees can also include Assistant Principals on the nomination of their Principal Officer.

The Business and Strategy sub-Committee will also consider specific proposals referred to it by the Secretary General at his/her discretion. The sub-Committee will consult with the relevant Assistant Secretary with regard to proposals under consideration before forwarding their recommendations to the Management Committee and/or the Secretary General. Where the views of the relevant Assistant Secretary differ from the recommendations of the sub-Committee, these alternative views should be noted in the report of the sub-Committee.

The Management Committee will delegate ongoing items from its work programme to the sub-Committee for monitoring of implementation or for progressing items. Regular updates on progress made or difficulties encountered will be provided by the Chair of the sub-Committee at Management Committee meetings.

The sub-Committee will report to the Management Committee and/or to the Secretary General on specific items as appropriate and will report annually to the Management Committee its work in general. A template for reports to the Management Committee and/or the Secretary General is set out below.

Report to Management Committee

- ☐ Decision sought/Recommendations for Approval
- ☐ Concise Summary of discussion points
- ☐ Proposals re ongoing monitoring by the sub-Committee

The Management Committee in consultation with the sub Committee will carry out an annual review of the sub-Committee's terms of reference to ensure that they remain relevant and current.

Appendix 3: Audit Committee Charter

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARTER (MARCH 2016)

Introduction

1. This Charter sets out the role and functions of the Audit Committee of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. The Charter includes and complements the role and functions of the Audit Committee as set down in the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015 (the Commission Acts).

Role

2. Role requirements will be clearly communicated to potential members at the outset of their appointment to the Committee, including an indication of time commitments and frequency of meetings. In summary, the role of the Audit Committee is to –
 - (a) review the work of the Internal Audit Unit, comprising completed audit reports, audit plans and programmes submitted to the Secretary General, and
 - (b) consider other matters falling within its terms of reference which are determined by statute (section 14A of the Commission Acts).

Composition

3. The Committee is comprised of between 5 and 8 members appointed by the Commission as follows:
 - 1 member of the Commission;
 - at least 1 but not more than 3 Oireachtas members who are not members of the Commission;
 - at least 2 but not more than 3 external members nominated by the Secretary General, one of whom is designated by the Commission as chairperson of the Committee; and
 - 1 member of the staff of the Service nominated by the Secretary General.

Meetings

4. The Committee will meet at least 4 times annually.
 - a) The quorum for a meeting of the Committee is 3 and Committee members are expected to attend each meeting - there are no substitutions of Committee members.
 - b) Meetings will be held in private.
 - c) Meeting agendas will be prepared and provided in advance to members, along with appropriate briefing materials; minutes will be prepared and circulated to the Secretary General and the Management Committee as soon as possible following the date of the meeting, and appropriate records of the work of the Audit Committee will be maintained.
 - d) Members may make a statement with regard to any conflict of interest at the start of a meeting - this will be a standing item at the start of every meeting and any such statement will be noted in the minutes.
 - e) The Internal Auditor and the Head of Internal Audit attend at meetings of the Committee, save where the Committee decides otherwise. The Committee may also invite the person who has responsibility for financial matters within the staff of the Service (or any other person it considers appropriate) to attend specific meetings.

Functions

5. The functions of the Committee are to -
 - (a) advise the Secretary General, as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Commission and head of the Service, on financial matters relating to his or her functions (including public service financial policies, procurement, expenditure control, asset management, risk management, financial reporting, internal audit and internal controls);
 - (b) advise the Commission on matters of corporate governance relating to its functions, and
 - (c) report in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.

Responsibilities

6. While carrying out its role and functions as set out in the Commission Acts, the Committee shall, with respect to the following duties:

Internal Controls

- a) Advise on the Service's internal control systems, including, information technology security and control.
- b) Monitor management's implementation of audit recommendations from internal audit, external audit and other sources.

Risk Management

- c) Review management and the Internal Auditor's reports on the effectiveness of the risk management systems.
- d) Review the statement in the organisation's annual report and accounts on internal controls and risk management framework.
- e) Assess the scope and effectiveness of the systems established by management to identify, assess, manage and monitor financial and non-financial risks and advise the Secretary General accordingly, and provide assurances that the risks management strategy is working within the organisation.

Internal Audit

- f) Review assessments of the internal audit function, including compliance with the Internal Audit Standards; review with the Head of Internal Audit and as necessary discuss with management the Internal Audit Unit's charter, audit plans, activities, staffing, and organisational status; raise any concerns with the Secretary General regarding the independence of the Internal Audit unit, and on a regular basis meet separately with the Head of Internal Audit to discuss any matters that the Audit Committee or Internal Audit Unit believes should be discussed privately.

External Audit

- g) Meet with the nominee of the Comptroller and Auditor General on an annual basis at least.
- h) Review the external auditor's management letter on the Annual Accounts of the Commission and the Service's response.

Financial Management

- i) Advise on the systems of control underlying the financial management processes, including:
 - A review of the results of the external audit.
 - A review of the procedures and practices associated with financial management and budgeting.

Other

- j) Review and assess the adequacy of the written Charter at regular intervals.
- k) Evaluate the Audit Committee's performance on a regular basis in accordance with best auditing practice.

Reporting Accountabilities

- 7. The Audit Committee has full and direct access to the Secretary General on all matters within the scope of its work and responsibilities.
 - a) For organisation and administration purposes, the secretariat of the Audit Committee is located within the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor with day-to –day line reporting through the Parliamentary Legal Advisor as Head of Internal Audit.
 - b) The Audit Committee agrees the annual audit plan for the Internal Audit Unit with the Secretary General.
 - c) The Internal Auditor reports to the Audit Committee on the plans and completed work of the Internal Audit Unit and otherwise as requested by the Secretary General or the Committee.
 - d) The Secretary General shall provide a management response to each finding raised in an Internal Audit Report in advance of its consideration by the Audit Committee.
 - e) The Audit Committee submits its annual report to the Secretary General prior to submitting it to the Commission.

Appendix 4: Internal Audit Charter

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS SERVICE

INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER (MARCH 2016)

Introduction

1. This Charter sets out the purpose, authority and responsibilities of the Internal Audit Unit in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

Internal Audit Unit

2. The purpose of the Internal Audit Unit is to provide independent assurance to the Secretary General, as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Commission and Head of the Service, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control within the Service and to make recommendations for improvements as appropriate.
3. The Unit is independent in its function and has no other operational role in the work of the Service or under the Commission.
4. The role of Internal Auditor as head of the Unit is a full-time one. Other staff of the Service may be assigned to the Unit on a full or part-time basis as work of the Unit requires.
5. Responsibility for internal control rests with managers who, without regard to audit activity, ensure that appropriate and adequate control arrangements exist in their areas of responsibility.
6. Managers are required to provide appropriate responses to reports and recommendations of the Unit.
7. The Unit is generally responsible for reviewing and appraising the following: -
 - (a) the design and operation of all systems and procedures (financial, managerial etc.) which are intended to control the operations of the Service, including those used by management to measure the effectiveness of programmes and activities;
 - (b) the adequacy, reliability and integrity of the information systems used to monitor the activities of the Service and to ensure their accountability;
 - (c) the policies and procedures in place for the management of risk and for the ongoing review and implementation of internal controls in the operations of the Service;
 - (d) the degree of compliance with legislation and other regulatory requirements laid down centrally (the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform) and with management plans and procedures of the Service for implementing policies of the Commission;
 - (e) procurement policy and practices for the acquisition and disposal of assets generally and the safeguarding of assets and interests from losses, including those arising from fraud, malpractice and irregularity;
 - (f) arrangements for the economic and efficient use of resources, for avoiding waste and for ensuring value for money in the use of resources.

8. The Unit also operates as a resource for management through its analysis and appraisal of systems and controls in place, by highlighting generic models of best practice and by acting in an advisory/consultancy capacity on matters of audit and accounting practice and corporate governance within the scope of its functions and competence.
9. The Unit adopts a combination of risk and systems based approach to its audits supplemented, where appropriate, by the use of transaction-testing, vouching and other verification methods.
10. The Unit liaises and cooperates as necessary and appropriate with external auditors, including the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.
11. The Internal Audit Unit will implement the Internal Audit Standards issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and will report progress to the Secretary General and the Audit Committee each year.

Reporting Accountabilities

12. The Internal Audit Unit has full and direct access to the Secretary General on all matters within the scope of their work and responsibilities.
13. For organisation and administration purposes, the Internal Audit Unit and the secretariat of the Audit Committee are located within the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor with day-to-day line reporting through the Parliamentary Legal Advisor as Head of Internal Audit.
14. The Audit Committee agrees the annual audit plan for the Internal Audit Unit with the Secretary General.
15. The Internal Audit Unit is authorised to have full access to records (manual and electronic), physical property and personnel of the Service relevant or necessary to the carrying out of its work, subject as follows:
 - (a) it will be responsible for affording to records and other materials entrusted to its care the same protections afforded by staff in whose care they normally are retained;
 - (b) in cases where issues of exceptional sensitivity of records arise, the Secretary General may decide an appropriate level of access to be afforded to the Unit; and where restricted access to documentation is stipulated in contracts/agreements with third parties, the Unit may also have access to such documentation where it is relevant to the carrying on of its work.
16. The Internal Auditor reports to the Audit Committee on the plans and completed work of the Internal Audit Unit and otherwise as requested by the Secretary General or the Committee.
17. The Secretary General shall provide a management response to each finding raised in an Internal Audit Report in advance of its consideration by the Audit Committee.

Appendix 5: Commission's Finance Committee Terms of Reference

[effective 8th April 2004, as amended in 26 January 2011 and 11 March 2014]

MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENT

1. As soon as may be following the appointment of the ordinary members of the Commission under section 8(3) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003, the Commission shall appoint the members and chairperson of the finance committee.
2. The committee shall consist of up to six members of the Commission: provided that, in place of up to two such members, an equivalent number of members may be appointed who are members of either House of the Oireachtas and who have a background in finance or accounting.
3. Members of the committee shall hold office for the duration of their membership of the Commission or of the relevant House of the Oireachtas as the case may be.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

4. The role of the committee is to monitor ongoing expenditure and to consider detailed expenditure and budgetary performance on the Commission's behalf, and to report and make recommendations, as appropriate to the Commission on such matters.
5. Specific matters to be considered by the committee:

Financial Management Reporting:

- (a) Quarterly reports on the Commission's financial position, with material variations and corrective action, if any, highlighted.

Accounts and Estimates:

- (b) Annual accounts and estimates of expenditure by the Commission.

Financial and Risk Management Policies:

- (c) Financial policies and critical financial procedures of the Commission, as appropriate¹¹.
- (d) Risk management processes as they relate to financial aspects of the Commission.

Committees of the Houses of the Oireachtas Legal Fees:

- (e) The committee shall have delegated authority to sanction legal fees payable by or on behalf of committees of the Houses of the Oireachtas, provided that, where the committee stands adjourned, the Secretary General may sanction fees up to an agreed limit set by the Commission and subject to prior consultation with the chairperson of the committee¹².
6. (a) In the unavoidable absence of the chairperson, the Ceann Comhairle shall nominate another member of the committee to act in his or her stead.

¹¹ Any new financial policies will be suggested to the Commission following consultation with the Secretary General.

¹² Commission decisions of 14th October 2004 and 12th December 2007.

(b) The committee shall not act during the period following a dissolution of Dáil Éireann and until its successor is appointed by an incoming Commission. During such period the functions of the committee shall be reserved to the Commission and, in the case of paragraph 5(e), to the Secretary General subject to prior consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission.

7. The Secretary General shall ensure that the committee is provided with all the resources and information it may reasonably require for the performance of its functions.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

8. The chairperson will schedule meetings as required, but the committee will meet at least four times each year.
9. Three members shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the committee which shall include the chairperson.
10. The Assistant Secretary and the Principal Officer in charge of Finance and the Finance Officer of the Service will normally attend meetings.
11. Members of the Commission may attend meetings of the committee in an observer capacity.
12. The Secretary General may attend any meeting or a part of any meeting, or nominate a specific member of staff of the Service to attend, where business is relevant.
13. The committee may invite persons with relevant experience and expertise to attend any meeting, if it considers this necessary, and may obtain independent professional advice to assist it in the conduct of its business, subject to prior consent of the Commission to any expenditure.
14. Rules and conventions of procedure of the Commission shall apply in the committee, subject only to any necessary modification.

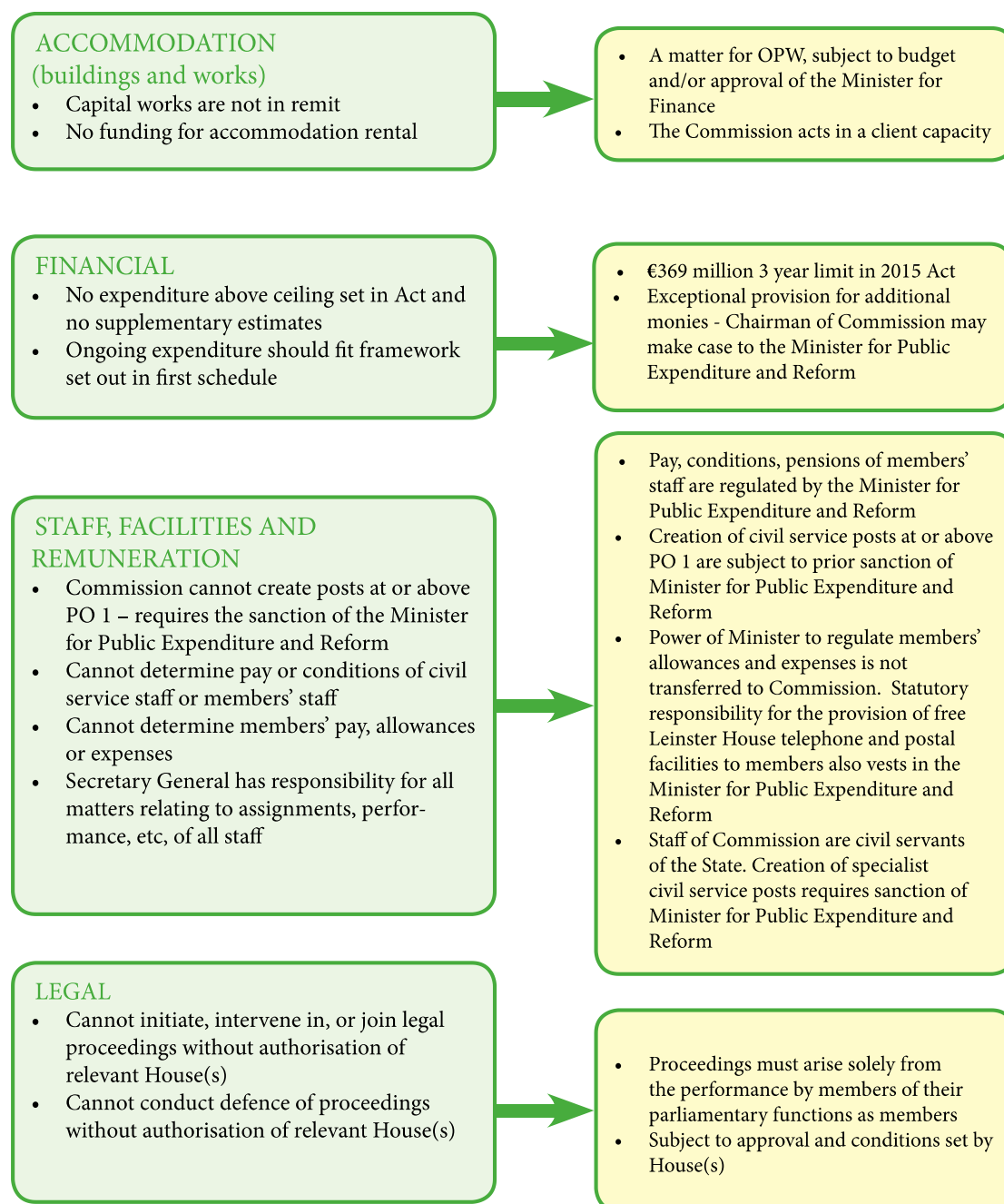
REPORTING

15. The chairperson shall report on the proceedings of the committee meetings, where required, at the next succeeding meeting of the Commission.
16. The chairperson shall report annually to the Commission on the outcome of the statutory external audit and shall present the statutory accounts for formal adoption by the Commission.

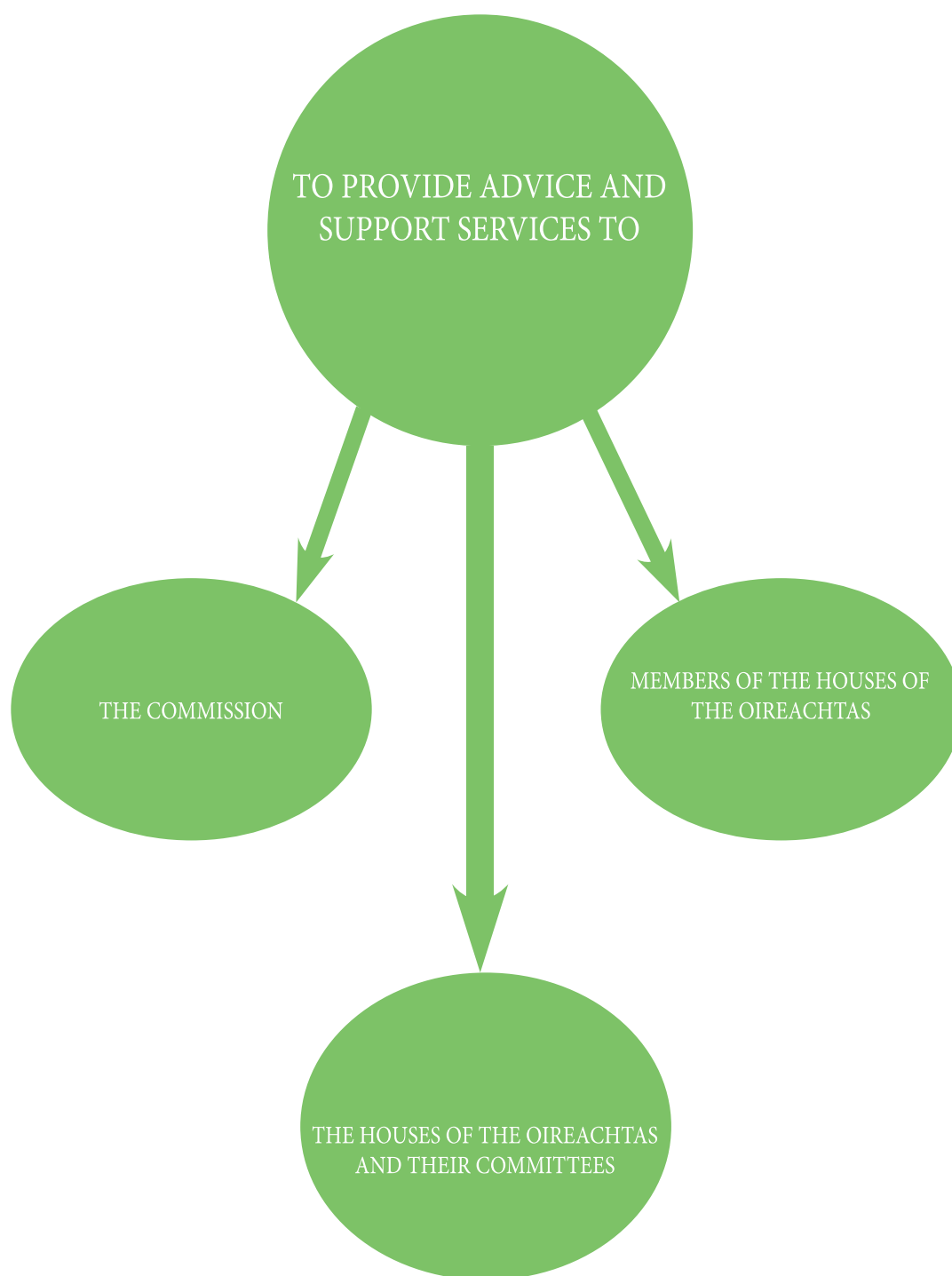
Appendix 6 – Functions of the Commission



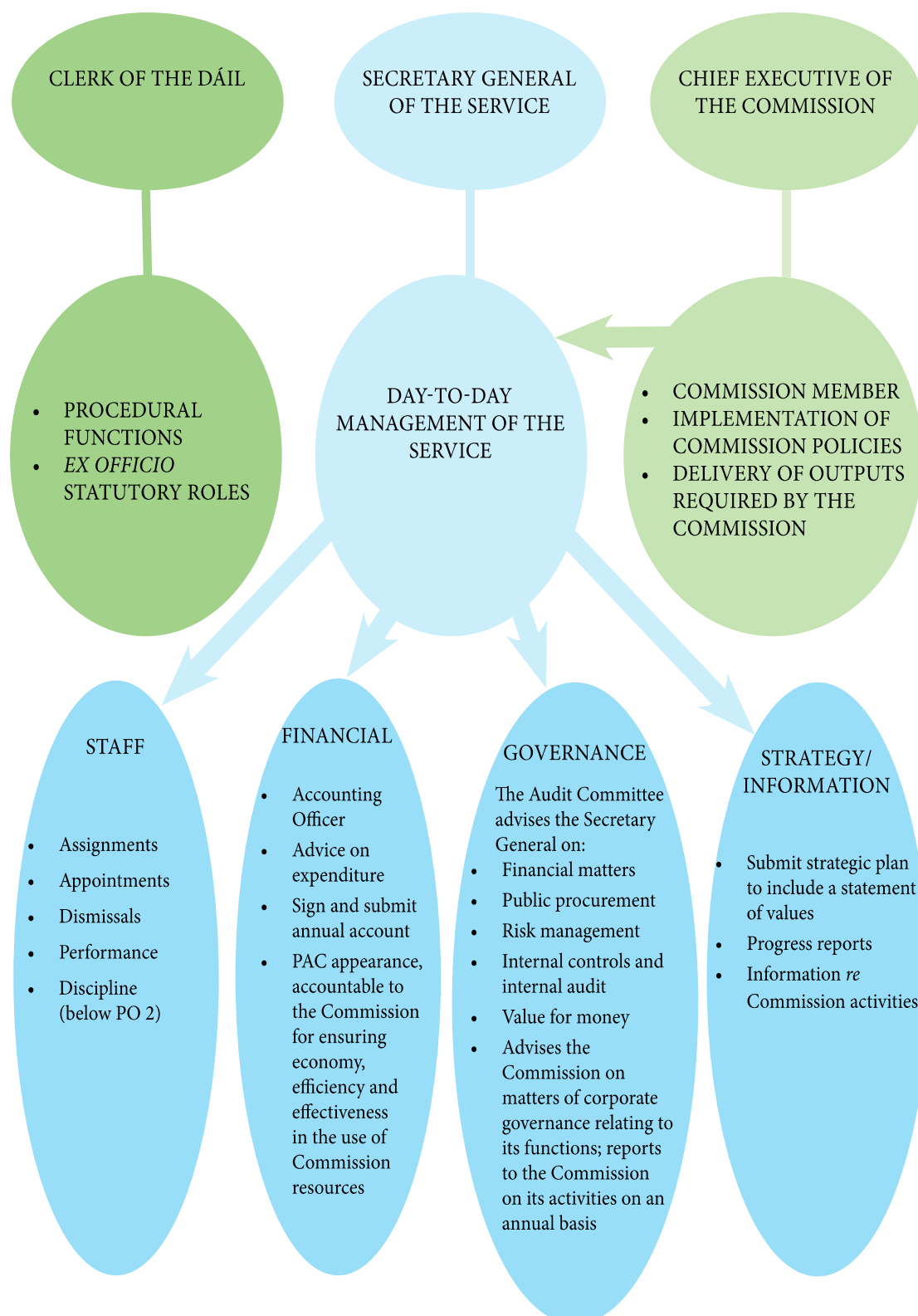
Appendix 7 – Matters outside the Remit of the Commission



Appendix 8 – Functions of the Service



Appendix 9 – Functions of the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General/CEO



Appendix 10 – Functions of the Management Committee

