Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
Annual Report 2016
This annual report is prepared in accordance with section 6(1)(k) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003-2015 (the Commission Acts).

Section 6(1) of the Commission Acts requires the Commission to prepare and publish an annual report on the activities of the Commission in the previous year and to lay the report before both Houses of the Oireachtas.
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Introduction by Ceann Comhairle and Cathaoirleach

We are pleased to present the 2016 Annual Report of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission pursuant to section 6 of the Commission Acts.

The report provides an overview of the business of the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees, the work of members of the Houses and the services that support them. The Commission’s financial account, set out in Appendix IV of this report, shows the expenditure incurred in running the Houses of the Oireachtas last year.

This report also presents the achievements of the Service in accordance with the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan adopted by the Commission. We welcome the progress on implementation of the strategy and the achievements presented in the report as well as the considerable efforts of the staff of the Service over the past year.

2016 was a year of change on several fronts for the Houses following the elections to Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann which saw 102 new members joining the Houses. The change in the political composition of the Houses following the elections ushered in a programme of Dáil reform reflecting the desire of the House to conduct its business more effectively to better serve its members and, most importantly, the people we serve.

These reforms are not just focussed on formal changes to the Standing Orders and procedures. They extend beyond the rules and are focused on giving effect to the priorities that members themselves wanted to emerge from the reform process, to enable them to more effectively fulfil their constitutional functions in the best interests of the people they represent. Members brought their experiences to bear in proposing the reform programme that emerged from this common consensus and is now being implemented.

Communicating the work of the Houses to the public is of central importance in achieving our core objective of A Parliament for the People.

The public have a strong stake in the work of their parliament and the decisions taken there that affect them. Members rightly take their role as representatives of the public very seriously in pursuing their interests and concerns through the work of the Houses. The sub-Committee on Dáil Reform in its final report to the Houses also highlighted the importance of accessibility, including physical access to the Houses and enhanced access to parliamentary information through the website of the Houses. To this end several initiatives, directed at informing the public about the work of the Houses and facilitating public engagement, continue to be pursued through our communication channels.

The Oireachtas website is one of the primary points of information among the general public and an important means of making the Houses more accessible. Over the last year the website has undergone a significant redevelopment, improving online access to a variety of parliamentary information and delivering timely information on the important work of the Houses, their Committees and members.
Oireachtas TV began broadcasting on the Saorview platform last year, expanding its coverage and making live broadcasts of the parliamentary proceedings more widely available. Accessibility was enhanced through the provision of signing and subtitled content on the Channel giving greater access to the parliamentary proceedings. We have also made greater use of social media, allowing followers to keep up-to-date more easily with debates in the Houses.

Guided tours for visitors and school groups continue to be popular. Last year we received over 100,000 visitors and over 52,000 visitors participated in guided tours of the Houses.

Another priority for the year was to oversee the planning and preparation for the Georgian Leinster House structural project. As we noted in last year’s report, the Georgian House is undergoing a programme of extensive structural and upgrade works to address structural deterioration in the building. As custodians of the building, we have a special responsibility for safeguarding the House in order to ensure its long term structural integrity and preservation in keeping with its historical importance.

Detailed planning and preparation for the refurbishment project is well underway. The Commission receives an update briefing from the Office of Public Works at its monthly meetings and will continue its ongoing close involvement and oversight as the work proceeds. The House was vacated last year in preparation for the project. This year, the Seanad Chamber will relocate temporarily to the National Museum of Ireland to allow the urgent work to get underway. On behalf of the Commission, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Board of the National Museum for facilitating this move.

The Commission’s financial account for the year ended 31 December 2016, which has been audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, is set out in Appendix IV. The account shows that expenditure for running the Houses last year was €116 million against a budget of €131 million, resulting in a net underspend of €15 million (12%).

Responsiveness defined the work of the Service over the past year. Much effort was devoted to responding to the changed parliamentary environment, supporting implementation of the parliamentary reforms and supporting new members of the Houses. We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary General and the staff of the Service for their work and for the professionalism and dedication they bring to supporting the Houses and members of parliament which is highly valued by the Commission.

We would also like to thank the committees of the Commission and our Commission colleagues for their work and support towards achieving our objectives over the past year.

Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD
Ceann Comhairle

Senator Denis O’Donovan
Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann
Secretary General’s Report

I am pleased to present this report to the Commission on progress achieved in implementing the Strategic Plan, *A Parliament for the People*, over the past year.

This report is prepared pursuant to section 16(1)(k) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 – 2015 which requires me, as Secretary General of the Service, to provide an annual progress report on implementation of the Plan to the Commission.

The Strategic Plan sets the strategic direction, priorities and expected results for the Service for the period 2016-2018. It is an overarching framework for planning our business operations and allocating resources and contains four interrelated strategies adopted by the Commission, namely to:

- Support the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Parliamentary Reform Agenda
- Support Members in their Constitutional Roles
- Promote Accessibility and Public Engagement
- Develop our Capability and our Staff

This report outlines the Service’s performance and achievements over the past year in implementing these strategies.

The past year saw significant change in the Houses. Following the Dáil and Seanad general elections, 102 new members joined the Houses: 60 new members of the Dáil and 42 new members of the Seanad. In the earlier part of the year, one of the first priorities of the Service was to facilitate the transition process and in particular to ensure that new and returning members received timely and coordinated services and the support necessary to discharge their roles as parliamentarians.

On the first sitting day of the 32nd Dáil, the Ceann Comhairle was elected by secret ballot. This was the first time this procedure was used following a reform agreed at the end of 31st Dáil. The process involved extensive planning and preparation to ensure the smooth running of events on the day.

Under the Ceann Comhairle’s chairmanship, the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform undertook a comprehensive review of the parliamentary procedure and practice and proposed reforms across the broad spectrum of the parliamentary business, such as the financial scrutiny function of the Dáil, the legislative process, Private Members’ business, parliamentary questions and committee business.

On foot of this review, significant reforms have been implemented in the Oireachtas committee system. These have redefined the remit, operation and composition of the Committees with the aim of strengthening their effectiveness in scrutiny and oversight of public policy-making. Additional resources have been allocated to the Committees, including enhanced resources for independent policy analysis, to support this important work.

Of particular importance is to strengthen parliamentary engagement in the budgetary process. The first step in this regard has been the
establishment of the Select Committee on Budgetary Oversight and over the next twelve months a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) will be established.

The PBO will be an independent specialist unit within the Houses of the Oireachtas Service and will play a key role in supporting the Select Committee on Budgetary Oversight and Sectoral Committees to assist them in effectively carrying out their budgetary and financial scrutiny roles. The PBO will be fully operational in 2018 with up to 15 staff at full strength.

Another important reform is to extend the role of the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser (OPLA) to enable it to support members in the drafting of Private Members’ Bills and by providing them with advice on legislation being considered by the Houses. A capacity review of the OPLA was undertaken to determine how best to pursue this objective. The recommendations of this were approved by the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform in March 2017. The Service is currently implementing the recommendations with the approval of the Commission for the recruitment of additional resources to support the proposed new functions of the OPLA.

Over the last year a number of strategic ICT projects were advanced focusing on leveraging information technology to streamline workflows and processes across business areas and implementing an integrated approach to information management. These initiatives will position the Service to better align its service delivery to support the work of the Houses in the digital age and ensure that it remains well positioned to carry out its important role in the years ahead.

Elsewhere, the Service continues to work closely with the Office of Public Works in progressing the detailed planning and preparation for the programme of essential structural and upgrade works for Georgian Leinster House. The project presents a number of challenges which are being carefully managed to ensure that the work will have minimal impact on the business of the Houses and the operations and services essential to support them. Over the past year the House was fully decanted and all offices in the building, including those of Oireachtas office-holders, were relocated to alternative appropriate accommodation. This summer the Seanad Chamber will be relocated temporarily to the National Museum of Ireland to allow the urgent structural work to proceed. As the programme of work moves ahead, the Service will continue to monitor its progress, with political oversight by the Commission, to ensure minimal disruption to the parliamentary business throughout the duration of the project.

In concluding, I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues in the Service for their dedication and professionalism. They wholeheartedly embraced the challenges placed upon them over the last year. Supporting the work of Parliament and its members is a critical function in any democracy and staff of the Service do this to an exceptionally high standard.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Ms Deirdre Lane, former Clerk of Seanad Éireann, who retired during the year. Deirdre served the Seanad with distinction for over 27 years and we wish her well as she embarks on the next phase of her life.
Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Ceann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, the Commission and the committees of the Commission for their support over the last year. Working together, significant progress has been made in 2016 and I am confident that we can build on this over the next 12 months in realising our shared vision of *A Parliament for the People*.

Peter Finnegan
*Clerk of Dáil Éireann and Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service*
Houses of the Oireachtas Governance Framework

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (the Commission) is the body responsible for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas and is the governing body of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. The Commission is responsible for determining financial and administrative policy for the delivery of programmes and services to the Houses and their members to support them in carrying out their parliamentary functions. It also oversees implementation of those policies by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the Service).

The Commission consists of 11 members and is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. First established in 2004, it is a statutory corporate body and is independent in the performance of its functions. The Commission is also accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions and has a statutory obligation to oversee ongoing expenditure by the Houses and ensure value for money in the performance of its functions.

The Commission, since its establishment in 2014, has overseen the delivery of services to both Houses and has introduced a number of significant improvements in the services provided to members and to the public. Amending legislation is enacted every three years; the primary purpose of this is to make funding available for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas and the parliamentary administration for the following three-year period.

The most recent legislation is the *Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2015* which provides the Commission’s budget for the three-year period 2016-2018.

The requirement to provide by statute for a new Commission budget every three years is useful not just in facilitating financial planning but also in affording an opportunity to assess the adequacy of the Commission legislation, thereby allowing it to be updated as required.

In 2013, the legislation was amended to give the Commission responsibility for the translation of Statutory Instruments into Irish and the publication and periodic review of *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil/the Official Standard of the Irish Language*.

Under legislation enacted in 2015, *the Houses of the Oireachtas Act (Appointments to Certain Offices) Act 2015*, the Commission appoints the Clerk of Dáil Éireann on the recommendation of the Ceann Comhairle from a list of names selected by Top Level Appointment Committee following an open competition. This legislation also makes provision for the appointment by the Commission of the Clerk of Seanad Éireann, the Clerk-Assistant of the Dáil and the Clerk-Assistant of the Seanad on the recommendation of the Ceann Comhairle or the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, as appropriate, whenever a vacancy falls to be filled in these posts.

In 2016, the Commission appointed the Clerk of Dáil Éireann, the first appointment made by the Commission under the new Act, and the Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann.
Commission members serve in a corporate capacity and do not represent their parties or groups or their own interests at this forum. Commission members do however carry out a valuable role in communicating information about Commission policies and decisions through the parliamentary system.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the Service) is the public service body that provides professional advice, procedural and administrative services and facilities to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees and to members of the Houses.

The Service is headed by the Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General. It is staffed by 485 civil servants of the State and 40 State industrial staff (fulltime equivalents), whose terms and conditions of employment are set down in the general civil service statutory code, the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959 and the Commission Acts.

There were 525 staff, 439 full-time equivalent posts, employed by members under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance (the Scheme) at the end of 2016. Staff employed under the Scheme are employed directly by the members or the relevant political party and are paid by the Commission.

The Secretary General of the Service

The Secretary General of the Service is the Chief Executive of the Commission and Clerk of Dáil Éireann. The Secretary General has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies. The Secretary General is a member of the Commission, while also being accountable to it and subject to its direction. S/he is also the Accounting Officer in respect of Commission expenditure.

The Management Committee of the Service

The role of the Management Committee (MC) is to assist and advise the Clerk of the Dáil and 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.

The Committee decides on issues of strategic, operational and financial importance which may then be referred to the Commission for decision as appropriate. Its agenda is driven to a large extent by the policies adopted by the Commission, as well as by the strategies and programmes set out in the Strategic and Corporate Business Plans. Management Committee members and other senior managers of the Service attend Commission meetings as required.

The Principal Officer Network

The Management Committee is supported by the Service’s Principal Officer Network. The Network provides a forum for cooperation and collaboration among Principal Officers with a focus on achieving outcomes that are in the best interest of the Service.
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Seated left to right: Deputy Timmy Dooley, Deputy Catherine Murphy, Senator Gerard P. Craughwell, Deputy Joe Carey, Senator Ned O’Sullivan, Mr. Peter Finnegan, Clerk of Dáil Éireann and Secretary General (Chief Executive of the Commission), Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson of the Commission), Senator Denis O’Donovan, Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann (Deputy Chairperson of the Commission) and Senator Paudie Coffey. Not pictured, Deputy Martin Heydon and Deputy Louise O’Reilly

Management Committee of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

Standing left to right: Mr. Joe Hamill (External Member of the Management Committee), Mr. Charles Hearne, Principal Officer (Chair of Systems sub-Committee), Mr. Paul Conway, Superintendent of the Houses (Chair of Business and Strategy sub-Committee), Mr. Michael Erity, Assistant Secretary, (Corporate and Members’ Services). Seated left to right: Ms Elaine Gunn, Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services Division and Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann, Mr. Peter Finnegan (Chairperson), Clerk of Dáil Éireann and Secretary General, Mr. Martin Groves, Clerk of Seanad Éireann, Ms Patricia Doran, Principal Officer (Chair of People and Finance sub-Committee).
Role of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

The role of the Commission under the *Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015* is to provide for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas, to act as the governing body of the Service, to consider and determine policy in relation to the Service, and to oversee the implementation of that policy by the Secretary General.

The founding Commission legislation in 2003 led to two important consequences: (i) the Commission became the sanctioning authority for expenditure, and for deciding on staff numbers, provision of services and related matters (this authority formerly rested with the Department of Finance); and (ii) the system for the allocation of budgets to the Houses of the Oireachtas changed from the annual civil service Estimates and “Vote” process to the provision of a three-year budget drawn from the Central Fund. A new budget is set in legislation every three years following negotiations with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The budget is approved at political level by the Commission and the necessary amending legislation then passed by both Houses. The Commission’s current three-year budget allocation is €369 million for the period 2016 to 2018.

The Commission operates on the general principle that it seeks to support the Houses and all members equally in carrying out their role as elected representatives. Members of the Commission (excluding ex officio members) qualify for an annual allowance. The Minister’s representative qualifies for an allowance if s/he is not a serving Minister of State.

The Commission provides services to the 218 members of both Houses of the Oireachtas and to the staff in their employment. It also provides services for Departmental officials, party staff, media and service personnel for whom Leinster House is a place of work.

The legislation sets out the functions of the Commission, including to:

- oversee ongoing expenditure by the Houses
- keep annual accounts
- pay salaries and expenses of members, their staff and the staff of the Service
- perform functions in relation to civil service staff of the Commission
- produce and publish strategic plans, annual reports, annual estimates, and produce handbooks and information relevant to the business of the Houses of the Oireachtas for members of the Houses
- provide translation services in respect of Acts of the Oireachtas and Statutory Instruments
prepare and publish guidelines for members on the use of publicly funded services and facilities, and specify charges for same following a dissolution of the Dáil

exercise certain functions previously exercised by the Minister for Finance regarding secretarial facilities for members and qualifying parties, for example, the allocation of resources under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for members and the provision of ICT, printing and graphic design facilities

exercise certain legal functions, including participation in legal proceedings as appropriate and arranging for the provision of legal advice

appoint the Clerk of the Dáil on the recommendation of the Ceann Comhairle from among the list of names selected by the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC), following an open competition organised by TLAC

appoint the Clerk of the Seanad, Clerk-Assistant of the Dáil and Clerk-Assistant of the Seanad on the recommendation of the Ceann Comhairle or Cathaoirleach, as appropriate

Matters outside the Remit of the Commission

The Commission does not have authority to:

- set members’ salaries or allowances
- set staff pay, conditions or pensions
- appoint staff at specified senior management grades, namely, at or above Principal Officer 1 level, without the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform
- control or manage any building works – this function is carried out by the Office of Public Works (OPW) for all Government Departments and Offices

In addition, the Commission does not have a role in the day-to-day management of the Service. This is the responsibility of the Secretary General and the Management Committee.

Transparency and Accountability

The Commission is accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions. It publishes an annual report each year which is laid before both Houses and published on the website. The annual report provides information on the work carried out by members of the Houses and the work carried out by the Service in supporting the Houses and members, as well as accounting for expenditure of public funds for the running of the Houses for the particular year. The Commission, through the Secretary General, submits its accounts to the Comptroller and Auditor General for auditing by 31 March each year. The Commission is accountable to the Committee of Public Accounts of Dáil Éireann for the findings of the public audit and to the relevant Oireachtas committees in respect of its strategic plan and related policy matters. The Commission’s meeting agenda and minutes are published on the website. The Commission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Code of Conduct for Commission Members

The Commission is governed by a Code of Conduct which establishes ethical standards to guide the conduct of its members, both collectively and individually, in performing their functions. The principles on which the Code is based are: responsibility, integrity, loyalty, commitment, compliance, information and administration. As members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, Commission members, in their capacity as
Deputies and Senators, are bound by the Codes of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Ethics Acts by Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann. As Designated Directors under the Ethics Acts, Commission members are also required to provide an annual statement of their registrable interests to the Chair of the Commission and to the Standards in Public Office Commission.

**Disclosure of Interests by Commission Members**

Under the Code of Conduct, and in addition to compliance with the general requirements under the Ethics in Public Office Acts:

- Commission members must disclose any material interest that they or any connected person may have in any matter under consideration at a meeting, or otherwise in matters concerning the functions of the Commission

- a material interest arises if the consequence or effect of any decision on the matter may confer on, or withhold from, the member concerned a significant benefit without also conferring it on or withholding it from persons in general or a class of persons which is of a significant size having regard to all the circumstances and to which the member belongs

- where such an interest has been disclosed, the member concerned shall take no further part in the proceedings and shall not participate in any decision or vote in connection with such matter

- if a member is in doubt as to whether an interest should be disclosed, advice should be sought from the Chairperson of the Commission and, if required, the disclosure should be made as soon as possible after the receipt of the advice

All disclosures of interest are recorded in the minutes of Commission meetings which are published on the website of the Houses when approved.

**Committees of the Commission**

The Commission has two key standing advisory committees: a **Finance Committee**, which considers quarterly financial reports and submits them to the Commission for approval; and an **Audit Committee**, which oversees and advises on risk management, internal controls (including the internal audit function and matters identified by external audit) and value for money.

The Audit Committee is established on a statutory basis pursuant to section 10 of the *Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009*. It reports annually to the Commission and its reports are published on the website. The Commission’s Finance and Audit Committees meet on a quarterly basis. The annual report of the Audit Committee 2016 can be found in Appendix VII. The Commission may also establish ad-hoc sub-Committees as necessary to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities. In the 31st Dáil the Commission established two such sub-Committees: a sub-Committee on Communications (to oversee the establishment of Oireachtas TV) and a sub Committee on Accommodation.
Membership of the Commission

The Commission consists of 11 members as follows:

- the Chairman of Dáil Éireann (ex officio member) (Chairperson of the Commission)
- the Chairman of Seanad Éireann (ex officio member) (Deputy Chairperson)
- the Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (ex officio member) (Chief Executive of the Commission)
- one member of the Houses of the Oireachtas appointed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (“the Minister’s representative”)
- four ordinary members appointed by Dáil Éireann
- three ordinary members appointed by Seanad Éireann

Current Membership of the Commission

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Ceann Comhairle</td>
<td>Chairperson ex officio member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad</td>
<td>Deputy Chairperson ex officio member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Peter Finnegan, Secretary General of the Service</td>
<td>Chief Executive ex officio member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Martin Heydon</td>
<td>Minister’s representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Joe Carey</td>
<td>Dáil member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Timmy Dooley</td>
<td>Dáil member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Catherine Murphy</td>
<td>Dáil member</td>
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<td>Deputy Louise O’Reilly</td>
<td>Dáil member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Paudie Coffey</td>
<td>Seanad member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Gerard P. Craughwell</td>
<td>Seanad member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Ned O’Sullivan</td>
<td>Seanad member</td>
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Members of the 25th Seanad.
Year in Review 2016

Support for the Sittings of the Houses and meetings of Committees of the Houses
The Houses sat for a combined total of 153 days:
- 91 Dáil sittings over 772 sitting hours
- 62 Seanad sittings over 349 sitting hours

Committees of the Houses
- held 323 committee meetings over 729 sitting hours
- heard from 992 witnesses
- presented 33 reports to the Houses:
  - 25 policy reports
  - 6 EU scrutiny reports/political contributions to the EU Institutions
  - 2 financial scrutiny reports

Parliamentary Business
The parliamentary business included:
- 121 Bills initiated in the Houses
- 22 Bills passed by the Houses
- 44,942 Parliamentary Questions tabled for reply by members of the Government
- 281 Topical Issues selected for debate in the Dáil

Official Report of the Parliamentary Proceedings
The official report of the proceedings of the Houses and their Committees, comprised:
- 1,823 hours of parliamentary debate and 44,942 Parliamentary Questions

New Members of the Houses
102 new members joined the Houses following the 2016 elections: 60 new Deputies (representing 38% of the Dáil); 42 new Senators (representing 70% of the Seanad).

First Election of the Ceann Comhairle and Leas-Cheann Comhairle
The Ceann Comhairle and Leas-Cheann Comhairle were elected, for the first time, based on a secret ballot of all members of the Dáil

Dáil Reform Programme
The sub-Committee on Dáil Reform presented a series of proposals for reform of Dáil procedures and practices which were approved by the House and many were implemented over the past year, including:
- the establishment of a Dáil Business Committee giving responsibility to the House itself to plan and make arrangements for its own business
Annual Report 2016

Reform of the Committee System

Reforms to the Committee system in the Houses were implemented, including:

- the establishment of a Budget Oversight Committee to enhance scrutiny of the annual budgetary cycle, which will be supported in its work by the establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office
- the introduction of postponed divisions until the ‘weekly division time’
- provision for more than one ‘technical group’ to be established under Standing Orders allowing independents and small parties to have a greater share of parliamentary set pieces
- a means to have abstentions from a vote in the Dáil included in the official record of proceedings
- rearrangement of the sitting day to minimise conflict between plenary sittings and committee meetings
- an expanded role for the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser to include the provision of assistance to backbench members in drafting legislation, and the provision of advice as required on legislation being considered by the Houses

Dáil Business Committee

The Dáil established a Business Committee, chaired by the Ceann Comhairle and comprising Government and Opposition members, giving the Dáil itself responsibility for making arrangements for business taken in the House.

Parliamentary Symposium on European Union Affairs

A Symposium on European Union Affairs took place under the auspices of the Business Committee. The Symposium was chaired by the Ceann Comhairle and brought together members of the Houses, Irish MEPs, representatives of the business sector, the trade union movement and academia to reflect on the theme the economic implications of the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union with a view to informing debate in the Houses and providing further input into the public debate.

Georgian Leinster House Structural Project

The Georgian Leinster House structural project was advanced and measures were implemented to ensure the work will have minimal impact on the sittings of the Houses, including:

- establishment of Special Committees on subjects of particular importance or emerging issues (in 2016, the Committee on the Future of Healthcare; Committee on Housing and Homelessness; Committee on Arrangements for Budgetary Scrutiny and Committee on Future Funding of Domestic Water Services)

- an increase in the number of Sectoral Committees (from 9 to 13)
- a reduction in the membership of Committees (from a range of 15-24 members to 11 members)
- Committee Chairs allocated based on the D’Hondt system
- establishment of two new Standing Committees – the Committee on the Irish Language, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Committee on Budgetary Oversight
- a full decant of Georgian Leinster House and the provision of appropriate alternative accommodation for Oireachtas Office-holders, staff and core parliamentary services located in the House
provision of appropriate alternative temporary accommodation for the Seanad Chamber in the National Museum of Ireland while the urgent essential work is underway to ensure minimal disruption to the business of the Seanad and to Senators in the performance of their parliamentary functions.

**Office Accommodation and Facilities Management**

Facilities Management Unit advanced a number of projects in cooperation with the Office of Public Works to enhance and improve services to members, staff and visitors to the Houses:

- organised accommodation moves and office support services for new and returning members and their staff following the 2016 General Elections
- completed fit-out work in the basement of the 1966 block to provide new accommodation for service personnel and Parliamentary Ushers which has also facilitated the decant of Georgian Leinster House for the duration of the programme of structural and restoration works to the House
- implemented new entrance and exit arrangements at the Kildare Street reception area to enhance security and movement of people entering the parliamentary precinct
- implemented an enhanced visitor management system through the introduction of an electronic visitor booking, registration and identification system
- expanded electronic access controls to office areas
- reviewed business continuity and disaster recovery planning to ensure continuity of critical services at all times to support the sittings of the Houses and their Committees

**Information and Communications Technology**

The ICT Unit continued to align its services with the evolving requirements of the Houses and to meet members’ needs, delivering:

- a virtual desktop environment, leading to ICT cost savings, enhanced security of data, and greater flexibility and mobility through allowing access to the network anywhere on any device
- an Abstentions Database to allow the recording of abstentions when members choose to abstain from voting at a Division in the Dáil
- a Managed Print Service resulting in cost savings and increased efficiencies
- the transfer, renewal and roll out of ICT equipment in the period after the elections, a task that was previously outsourced to an external ICT service provider, resulting in savings to the Service

**Programme of ICT Projects**

Building on the ICT initiatives supporting the work of the Houses, a programme of ICT projects, focused on harnessing advances in technologies to implement an integrated approach to the development of ICT systems and applications to support the work of the Houses and to increase efficiency were advanced, including:

- an ICT Enterprise Architecture to ensure consistent standards of data, infrastructure and applications and to deliver services in the most efficient way in supporting the work of the Houses and members
a Technology in the Chambers Project to modernise the technical systems in the Chambers of both Houses and in the Committee Rooms

- a Business Process Mapping and Improvement Project to enable a more efficient delivery of services to support the work of the Houses

- a Data Repository, Extract, Transform, Load and Discovery Project to improve service delivery through efficient storage and re-use of information by systems and business units

- redevelopment of the website to provide easier online access to parliamentary information and to further enhance accessibility and public engagement with the Houses.

**ICT Helpdesk Support**

In 2016, the ICT helpdesks provided support for:

- 7,081 calls from the staff of the Service, and
- 11,290 calls from members and their staff

**Houses of the Oireachtas Service**

**Irish Language Scheme**

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme, managed by Rannóg an Aistriúcháin, supported the delivery of services through Irish in an accessible manner.

**An Caighdeán Oifigiúil**

The statutory review undertaken of An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard grammar for the Irish language) was completed and An Caighdeán Oifigiúil was published in July 2016. The review was carried out under the responsibility of Rannóg an Aistriúcháin with the assistance of an expert Advisory Committee.

**Parliamentary Legal Services**

The Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser (OPLA) provided 517 legal advices of which 84% were in response to advice sought by the Service and 16% were in response to advice sought by Parliamentary Committees. There were 335 new files opened by the OPLA in 2016.

Arising from implementation of the programme of Dáil reform, responsibility for the administration of the legislative drafting service for members was transferred from the Bills Office to the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser.

**Public Procurement Management**

The Procurement Unit continued to provide public procurement advice and support for staff undertaking a public procurement process. Information seminars on current best practice and latest developments were delivered with the assistance of an external procurement expert to ensure compliance with procurement rules, procedures and statutory obligations. The Procurement Unit provided support for 44 procurement processes undertaken by the Service in 2016.

**Parliamentary Library and Research**

The Library and Research Service:

- responded to 2,052 information and research requests from members, Committees, staff of the Service and other parliaments
- completed 71 Committee research requests
- published 26 Bills Digests which provided members with authoritative information to assist them in preparing for second stage debates on Bills
created 43 new online Bill Tracker pages containing available published material and media coverage on proposed legislation listed in the Government’s Legislative Programme

published 307 blog posts to inform members of new and topical publications, many covering information related to Private Members’ Bills

launched a pilot Library and Research Constituency Dashboards service offering a visual and interactive means of displaying key Census 2011 data for each Dáil constituency

provided research support to six Joint Committees in their pre-legislative scrutiny of seven General Schemes of Bills

prepared joint research papers with the research service of the Northern Ireland Assembly (RaISe) to support the plenary session of the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association

provided support for the development of a Records Management Policy for the Service

Visitors to the Houses
Visitor numbers to the Houses exceeded 100,000; over 52,000 visitors participated in guided tours of Leinster House.

Catering Services in the Houses
Service delivery in the catering facilities was further enhanced by the introduction of an electronic point of sales system (EPOS). The system has supported efficient reporting of sales information. Further enhancements are planned for 2017 including utilisation of the system for stock management.

Independent Audit of Members’ Public Representation Allowance
The sixth audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) was conducted in 2016 by an independent auditor selected following a competitive tender process:

221 members who received the PRA in 2015 were auditable in 2016 and the auditor selected 22 members (10%) for audit by random sample

an information seminar was conducted by the independent auditor prior to the commencement of the process

feedback from members on the information seminar regarding its usefulness and relevance was very positive. Ongoing feedback from members will help to inform and improve this service

Internal Audit Oversight
The Audit Committee met on four occasions and considered:

four internal audit reports

one information note and briefing paper
• the C&AG Report on the 2015 Accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
• a report from the C&AG on the Ciste Pinsean Account 2015
• a report from the Risk Committee
• a report on the updated Fixed Assets Policy
• two risk materialisation reports

Training for Members and Political Personnel
The Training Unit continued to provide training and information seminars to support members and their staff, including:
• Constituents Database training
• Lotus Notes
• MS Word and MS Excel
• Social Media
• Health and Safety courses
• Health and well-being seminars
• Irish language courses

Communications Strategy Implementation
Oireachtas TV began broadcasting on the Saorview television service, which has expanded coverage of the Channel and the live broadcasting of the parliamentary proceedings to 98% of the country.

A new Broadcast Manager was appointed in January 2016.

Programmes produced by Oireachtas TV included:
• Oireachtas TV Debates series featuring discussions by academics on key developments in the parliamentary system: Proportional Representation; the Role of Parliament; Dáil Reform; Brexit (pre-referendum); the application of the D’Hondt System for the allocation of parliamentary positions; and Brexit (post-referendum)
• Leinster House Historical Talks Series featuring academics and commentators focusing on particular themes of the 1916 Rising: the lead up to and the aftermath of the 1916 Rising; social conditions in 1916; the women of 1916; the influence of the Gaelic League in 1916; and the architectural heritage of Leinster House

The website of the Houses received almost 1.5 million visits and over 6.3 million page views over the course of the year. Live streams of parliamentary debates in the Houses and the Committees attracted over 2 million page views

• A website redevelopment project currently underway is focused on a complete revision of the website to enhance online access to parliamentary information. The new website is due for release in early 2017

Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Senator Denis O’Donovan, meeting with the Latvian Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Dr. Gints Apals.
**Social Media Communication**

The official Twitter account for the Houses, @OireachtasNews, grew to more than 23,800 followers, an increase of 3,800 followers in 2016. The Twitter account is maintained by the Communications Unit and was used effectively to present timely and up to date information to the public on the parliamentary proceedings and other important parliamentary events.

**General Election Planning and Implementation for the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad**

In support of the election planning process in the Service, HR Services:
- directed the work of the Election Planning Steering Group and coordinated election-related responsibilities across the Service
- organised the Member Liaison Officer Programme under which an experienced member of staff of the Service was assigned to a new member of the Houses to assist them during their first weeks in Leinster House
- published information resources for members including dissolution guidelines, members’ handbooks and information on processes and services in the Houses of the Oireachtas
- worked with the ICT Unit on the development of the Members’ Administration System to streamline requests for information from members and to avoid duplication of work
- undertook resource planning to ensure that sections in the Service had the necessary staff in place to manage the increased workload arising from the dissolution of the 31st Dáil and the subsequent elections to both Houses
- reviewed implementation of the election planning process to guide future election planning in the Service

**Training for Staff of the Service**

Key training and learning initiatives provided include:
- Clerical Officer development course
- Junior Clerk development course
- Coaching for Managers
- Performance Management Workshops
- Health and Safety training including occupational first aid, AED/CPR, and Fire Warden training
- Health and Well-being seminars
- Induction training programmes for new staff
- Irish language courses

**Organisational Development and Reform**

Key initiatives undertaken to support implementation of Organisational Development and Reform include:
- an internal Communications Plan drafted in consultations with staff through a series of focus groups
- improvements to the Service's intranet, The Plinth, to enhance the efficiency and user-friendliness of the Intranet
- support for Staff Networks: the PO Network, AP Network and An Líonra, the Higher Executive Officer/Senior Clerk Network, held a number of meetings and events throughout the year and received presentations from invited guest speakers
actions under the Civil Service Renewal Plan included the dissemination of the results of the first Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey to staff through the Staff Networks

the Reform and Strategy Unit directed implementation of the Integrated Reform and Delivery Plan for the Service

HR Services for Members

updated and published a new information booklet on the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members, a new Employer Handbook and new employment contracts

prepared the draft statutory instrument for enactment by the Commission to provide secretarial facilities to members and parties, including the provision of additional facilities to coordinators of technical groups

added employees of members and parties to payroll and managed staff transfers from government departments

transferred ministerial staff to the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members with effect from the beginning of the 32nd Dáil

provided advice on employment matters including advice on terms and conditions of employment

processed redundancy applications following the Dáil and Seanad elections

Management of Human Resources

At the end of 2016 there were 485 sanctioned civil service posts in the Service of which 450 were filled, an increase of 50 staff on 2015 to support implementation of the programme of Dáil reform and reflecting the continued high levels of parliamentary business. In addition, a total of 40 staff were employed in the Catering Services and Print Facility.

Management of Financial Resources

The annual estimate for ongoing expenditure by the Houses for 2016 was €131m. Actual expenditure in 2016 was €116m gross, representing an underspend of €15m (11%).
Comparative Benchmarking of Parliaments

General methodology of this report

This benchmarking report is based on information gathered from the parliaments of 27 Member States of the European Union, the European Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the parliaments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US. In compiling the report, international key statistics were collected through desk-based research from a variety of sources and through surveys facilitated by parliamentary contacts in other jurisdictions. Most of the information gathered was obtained following the submission of a European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) request. Not all data was available from each parliament. Data obtained from parliaments related to either the 2016 calendar year or the 2015-2016 parliamentary session, approximately 12 months.

Impact of the dissolution of Dáil Éireann and elections to both Houses in 2016

The dissolution of Dáil Éireann on 3 February 2016 and the ensuing elections to both Houses impacted on the number of sitting days and the business of the Houses and the Parliamentary Committees in the past year.

Headline Statistics

Overall findings of the benchmarking report are detailed below. The Houses of the Oireachtas has:

- the fourth-highest number of sitting hours in 2016 of 21 parliaments
- the third-highest number of parliamentary questions tabled annually across 21 parliaments and the highest number of parliamentary questions per member
- the eighth-highest number of visitors to parliament as a percentage of population out of 21 parliaments surveyed

Notes:

In the following graphs, BC refers to bicameral parliaments and UC refers to unicameral parliaments. Not all data was available from each parliament and data was also sourced from the relevant Annual Report/parliamentary website where an ECPRD reply was not received.
Sittings of the Houses

In 2016 the Houses of the Oireachtas sat on 153 days.

Number of Parliament Sitting Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (UC)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (UC)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia (UC)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania (BC)</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (BC)</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estonia (UC)</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden (UC)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland (UC)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament (UC)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (BC)</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece (UC)</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (UC)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (UC)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (BC)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland (BC)</td>
<td>153</td>
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<td>Belgium (BC)</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>Spain (BC)</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Canada (BC)</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>Croatia (UC)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (BC)</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US (BC)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (BC)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (UC)</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sittings of the Houses

In 2016 the Houses of the Oireachtas sat for a total of 1,121 hours.

Number of Parliament Sitting Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (UC)</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (UC)</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (UC)</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia (UC)</td>
<td>128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany (BC)</td>
<td>533</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estonia (UC)</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US (BC)</td>
<td>1,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland (UC)</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament (UC)</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (BC)</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (UC)</td>
<td>901</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungary (UC)</td>
<td>585</td>
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<td>Sweden (UC)</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (UC)</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (BC)</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland (BC)</td>
<td>1,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (BC)</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain (BC)</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia (UC)</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (BC)</td>
<td>2,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (BC)</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative Benchmarking of Parliaments
Comparing the number of Parliamentary Questions tabled with the number of members of the House in which the questions were tabled, shows that Dáil Éireann had 284 Parliamentary Questions per member, on average, compared with the average of 42 Parliamentary Questions in this survey.
Parliamentary Questions

There were 44,942 Parliamentary Questions tabled in Dáil Éireann compared with the average of 12,559 in this study.

**Number of Parliamentary Questions Tabled**

- Portugal (UC): 8,749
- Romania (BC): 3,027
- Germany (BC): 49,406
- Estonia (UC): 371
- Greece (UC): 7,104
- Croatia (UC): 420
- Scotland (UC): 5,645
- Ireland (BC): 44,942
- Slovenia (BC): 1,622
- Austria (BC): 4,112
- Slovak Republic (UC): 284
- European Parliament (UC): 15,476
- Sweden (UC): 1,958
- Finland (UC): 501
- Hungary (UC): 4,367
- Belgium (BC): 13,469
- Spain (BC): 31,616
- Canada (BC): 3,080
- UK (BC): 46,819
- Australia (BC): 4,033
- New Zealand (UC): 16,735
**Visitors to the Houses**

There were 103,848 visitors to the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic (UC)</td>
<td>16,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (UC)</td>
<td>33,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (UC)</td>
<td>45,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania (BC)</td>
<td>165,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (BC)</td>
<td>2,216,416</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estonia (UC)</td>
<td>29,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament (UC)</td>
<td>593,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland (UC)</td>
<td>252,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain (BC)</td>
<td>1,610,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (UC)</td>
<td>82,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland (BC)</td>
<td>103,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (BC)</td>
<td>16,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (BC)</td>
<td>138,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (UC)</td>
<td>69,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (UC)</td>
<td>39,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (UC)</td>
<td>596,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (BC)</td>
<td>77,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (BC)</td>
<td>346,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia (UC)</td>
<td>17,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (BC)</td>
<td>489,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US (BC)</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (BC)</td>
<td>725,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (UC)</td>
<td>91,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Bills passed by the Houses in 2016

There were 22 Bills passed by the Houses in 2016.

Comparative Benchmarking of Parliaments

Number of Acts
Our Vision

A Parliament for the People

Our Mission

To provide high quality parliamentary services to the Houses of the Oireachtas, their Committees, their Members, and to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Our Values

Leadership

Integrity and Impartiality

Excellence

Accountability

Accessibility
Secre\text{}\text{tary General’s Annual Progress Report to the Commission on Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016-2018

This report is prepared in accordance with section 16(1)(k) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003-2015 (the Commission Acts).

Section 16(1)(k) of the Commission Acts requires the Secretary General to present a progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan annually to the Commission. The Secretary General’s progress report is included in the annual report on the activities of the Commission presented to both Houses of the Oireachtas in accordance with section 6 of the Commission Acts.
Progress under four Strategic Initiatives:

Strategic Objective 1: Support the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Parliamentary Reform Agenda

Office-Holders, Chairpersons and Members receive high quality advice and support services.

**Goal 1:**

The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

*Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:*

**Houses and Committee Business**

The Houses sat for a combined total of 153 sitting days, 1,121 sitting hours, in 2016: The Dáil sat on 91 days and the Seanad sat on 62 days. The Parliamentary Committees held 323 meetings over 729 sitting hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sittings of the Houses and their Committees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91 Dáil sitting days (772 sitting hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 Seanad sitting days (349 sitting hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323 Committee meetings (729 sitting hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pat the Cope Gallagher TD was elected as Leas-Cheann Comhairle of the 32nd Dáil based on a secret ballot of members of the Dáil.*

*Senator Paul Coghlan was elected Leas-Chathaoirleach of the 25th Seanad.*
**Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported**

**Support for Sittings and Business of the Dáil – the Journal Office**

The Journal Office provides procedural and administrative support for the sittings and business of Dáil Éireann. In 2016 this involved providing support for 92 sitting days and 253 sitting hours, producing the daily Order Paper, including Supplementary Order Papers, examining all motions and amendments to motions to ensure they comply with Standing Orders, assisting in drafting procedural motions, printing and circulating notices of motions and updating the status of all business items for the Order Paper.

The Journal Office, under the direction of the Clerk of the Dáil, provides procedural advice to the Ceann Comhairle, Leas-Cheann Comhairle, members of the Dáil and the Clerks. It prepares material for the daily procedural briefing notes on the business to be conducted each day in the Dáil.

The role of the Journal Office also includes the administration of the divisions in the Dáil Chamber. This involves the provision of assistance to the Clerks in the Chamber for “list” or “manual” divisions, and recording the results of divisions in the e-voting system. In 2016, there were 147 divisions in the Dáil.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91 Order Papers produced (totalling 1,967 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Supplementary Order Papers produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges and 25 Dáil Business meetings provided with secretariat support and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147 Dáil divisions (votes) recorded by the Journal Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support for Sittings and Business of Seanad Éireann – the Seanad Office**

The Seanad Office provides procedural and administrative support for the sittings and business of Seanad Éireann. This involves producing procedural materials used in the course of proceedings and maintaining records of the House. The Seanad Office supports the Cathaoirleach, the Leas-Chathaoirleach and temporary chairpersons by providing procedural advice and by assisting them in preparing for and presiding over sittings of the House. It drafts and maintains the Standing Orders of the House.

The Seanad Office also operates as the Private Bill Office for the purpose of administering the private bill procedure in the Houses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seanad Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62 Seanad sitting days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349 Seanad sitting hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 Seanad Order Papers produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges provided with secretariat support and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78 Seanad divisions (votes) recorded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Support for the Parliamentary Committees – the Committees’ Secretariat

The role of the Committees’ Secretariat is to provide high quality, procedural advice, policy analysis and administrative support services to the Committees of the Houses, and to plan and make provision for future developments in the Committee system.

Over the course of 2016, the Committees’ Secretariat provided support for 323 committee meetings which heard from 992 witnesses over 729 sitting hours. The Secretariat provided support for the sectoral Committees in considering 50 EU proposals and drafting three Political Contributions which were submitted to the European Parliament, Council and Commission. The Secretariat also assisted the Committees in drafting 25 policy reports for presentation to the Houses.

In supporting the Committees established in the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad, the Committees’ Secretariat provided ongoing procedural advice, policy analysis and administrative support to:

- three Dáil Select Standing Committees [Committee of Public Accounts; Budgetary Oversight; and Members’ Interests of Dáil Éireann]
- one Seanad Select Standing Committee [Members’ Interests of Seanad Éireann]
- two Joint Standing Committees [Public Petitions and Irish Language, Gaeltacht and the Islands]
- 13 Joint Committees which shadow government departments with associated Select Committees (generally referred to as the “Sectoral Committees”)
- two Joint Committees with specific subject area remits [Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and European Union Affairs]

The Committee on Budgetary Oversight.

The Committee on the Future of Healthcare.

The Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

The Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

- four Special Committees [the Select Committee on the Future of Healthcare; the Joint Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services; the Select Committee on Housing and Homelessness; and the Select Committee on Arrangements for Budgetary Scrutiny]
- one interim Committee [the Standing Order 112 Select Committee, which was established to scrutinise EU draft legislative proposals prior to the establishment of the Sectoral Committees]
- the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA)
- the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NSIPA)
- the Working Group of Committee Chairpersons (WGCC)

The Symposium was chaired by the Ceann Comhairle and brought together members of the Houses, Irish MEPs, representatives of the business sector, the trade union movement and academia to reflect on the theme the economic implications of the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union with a view to informing debate in the Houses and providing a further input into the public debate.

This was the first Symposium organised under the auspices of the Business Committee.

Oireachtas Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>323</td>
<td>Committee meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>729</td>
<td>Sitting hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>992</td>
<td>Witness appearances at committee meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Policy reports published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EU scrutiny reports/political contributions to the EU Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Financial scrutiny reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implementation of Revised Management Structure in the Committee Secretariat

With the establishment of an increased number of Committees in 2016, the line-management responsibilities of senior management were revised to more effectively support the new committee structure. As well as having overall strategic leadership for the administration of the Committees within their respective areas of responsibilities, each senior manager has responsibility for oversight of a number of cross-functional services encompassing financial scrutiny, legislative scrutiny, EU scrutiny and parliamentary procedural support.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Procedural Training for Committee Clerks

The reform to the parliamentary processes which has had the greatest impact on the work of Committees is the significant increase in the number of Private Members' Bills initiated in the Houses and progressed to committee stage in the legislative process.

To support this work, the development of procedural capacity in the Committees' Secretariat is focused to support the legislative role of Committees, including the procedures for undertaking scrutiny of Private Members Bills. A set of draft guidelines for undertaking scrutiny of Private Members Bills was drafted and circulated to all Committee Chairmen in January 2017. The draft guidelines were prepared based on research provided by the Library & Research Service and information on the Private Members' Bills Procedure in other Parliaments. It is expected that the draft guidelines will be formally adopted by the Working Group of Committee Chairmen (WGCC) in early 2017.

Committee Clerks also receive procedural training and information at meetings of Committee Clerks and whenever particular issues arise in the course of the work of Committees. Ongoing procedural guidance, including guidance relating to new procedures and practices, is provided through the Committees' Coordination Unit.

An updated Clerks Guide was drafted during the 2016 dissolution period. The Guide will be further revised and updated to take account of amendments to Standing Orders agreed by the Houses as part of the Dáil reform programme.

Report to Working Group of Committee Chairpersons on high level issues arising in the implementation of the new Committee System

In 2016, matters relating to the implementation of the new Committee system were considered by the Working Group of Committee Chairs (WGCC). These matters included: the impact of Dáil reform initiatives on the operation, functions and activities of the Parliamentary Committees; the necessary resources required to support the new functions; implementation of pre-legislative scrutiny for Private Members’ Bills; the WGCC’s engagement with the Taoiseach; and, review of the orders of reference of the Public Petitions Committee.

A detailed report on the work undertaken by the Parliamentary Committees in 2016 is set out in Appendix VI of this report.

Parliamentary Questions Process – the Questions Office

Parliamentary Questions (PQs) are questions to Ministers in relation to the administration of public policy connected with his or her Department, or to matters of administration for which he or she is responsible. They are the most visible aspect of the parliamentary accountability function. The Questions Office is responsible for processing PQs and for producing the Questions Paper for sittings of Dáil Éireann.

In 2016, there were 44,942 Parliamentary Questions tabled for reply by Ministers and 1,624 Topical Issues proposed for debate, 281 of which were selected to be debated. The table below shows the number of PQs processed over the period 2012-2016.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

The Questions Office assists and advises members on the drafting of PQs in accordance with Standing Orders. It also advises the Ceann Comhairle on the procedural admissibility of questions and on requests tabled for topical issue debates.

### Number of Parliamentary Questions 2012-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PQs Processed</th>
<th>Oral Replies</th>
<th>Written Replies</th>
<th>PQs Disallowed</th>
<th>% PQs Disallowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>56,027</td>
<td>1,881</td>
<td>42,682</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>50,926</td>
<td>1,684</td>
<td>39,952</td>
<td>1,456</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>54,691</td>
<td>1,535</td>
<td>40,369</td>
<td>1,354</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>52,910</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>38,655</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016*</td>
<td>44,942</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>28,963</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The dissolution of Dáil Éireann on 3 February 2016 and the ensuing election impacted on the number of sitting days and the business of the Dáil in the past year.

Support for the Legislative Process in Both Houses – the Bills Office

The Bills Office supports both Houses and their Committees in initiating, scrutinising and amending legislation. It has responsibility for the procedural tasks relating to the legislative process in both Houses, from initiation of a Bill to passage through all stages in the Houses in compliance with constitutional requirements, standing orders, rulings of the Chair and other matters of order.

In the passage of a Bill through the Houses, the Bills Office prepares the procedural brief for the Chairperson of each House, Chairpersons of Select Committees and Clerks at Committee and Report Stages in the legislative process.

The Office also has responsibility for printing, publishing and circulating Bills and proposed amendments, preparing Bills passed by both Houses for signature by the President, and preparing and publishing Acts of the Oireachtas.

In 2016 there were 121 Bills initiated in the Houses, of which 36 were Government Bills and 85 were Private Members’ Bills (PMBs). The increase in the number of Private Members’ Bills initiated, which was noted in last year’s report, continued in 2016 and PMBs now constitute the majority of Bills initiated in the Houses. There were 22 Bills passed by the Houses.

The list of Bills initiated in both Houses during 2016 is set out in Appendix VIII. The list of Bills passed by both Houses in 2016 is set out in Appendix IX.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Briefings on the Legislative Process and Procedures

The Bills Office provides briefings on the legislative process and procedures to members, their staff and Department officials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bills and Amendments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>121 Bills were initiated (36 government bills and 85 private members’ bills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,684 Amendments were processed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 Bills were reprinted following amendment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Bills were passed by both Houses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legislative Drafting Service for Members

Following the general election and arising from implementation of the programme of Dáil reform, responsibility for the administration of the legislative drafting service for members was transferred from the Bills Office to the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser (OPLA).

Support for Dáil General Elections and Dáil By-Elections

The Bills Office also undertakes tasks arising from the statutory responsibilities of the Clerk of the Dáil under the Electoral Acts.

The Bills Office coordinated the tasks for fulfilling the Clerk’s statutory duties to issue the writs for each of the 40 Dáil constituencies for the general election which was held in February 2016, and to take custody of the relevant electoral documents following the election. This included the receipt and scanning of the marked register of electors from each of the constituencies following the election in order to make them available to those requesting access to the registers.

Support for Seanad General Elections and Seanad By-Elections

The Clerk of the Seanad is the Seanad Returning Officer for the 43 vocational panel seats and, in this regard, organises and conducts general elections and bye-elections to Seanad Éireann. The Returning Officer also carries out an annual revision of the Register of Nominating Bodies.

The Clerk organised and conducted the general election of members to Seanad Éireann which took place in June 2016.

Parliamentary Library and Research Services to Support the Work of the Houses and their Committees

The Library and Research (L&RS) delivers expert information and research services to the Houses, their Committees and members. The focus of the L&RS is to deliver services that are impartial, value-added, responsive and accessible to all members. The service also delivers professional information and records management services to the Service.

In the past year the L&RS responded to 2,052 requests in response to requests from members, Committees, staff of the Service and other parliaments and institutions. Of the total number of requests received 65%, or 1,332 requests, were Ask a Librarian requests, the information service provided by a team of Research Librarians in the L&RS.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Legislative Analysis Service – Support for Members

Legislative Analysis Service (LAS) is designed to assist members in scrutiny of legislation at both pre-legislative stage and at Second Stage of the legislative process. The reliance of members on L&RS legislative analysis papers was reflected in direct citations of L&RS work in debates in the Chambers of both Houses during the year. The L&RS sought to raise awareness of performance information and performance indicators in legislative scrutiny. Following the L&RS Spotlight publication, Parliamentary scrutiny of government performance, the L&RS piloted the inclusion of potential performance indicators on specific Bills.

Bills Digests – Second Stage Debate on Bills

To assist members in preparing for Second Stage debates on Bills in the Houses the L&RS published 26 Bills Digests. These publications provide party spokespersons and members with authoritative information to assist them in preparing for Second Stage debates on Bills. Typical content for a Digest includes the policy background to the Bill, the stated policy objective, the existing legislative framework, details of the principal legislative provisions proposed in the Bill, a summary of stakeholder and other commentary, and an examination of the potential implications of the Bill.

Bill Tracker Service

The L&RS created 43 new online Bill Tracker pages. Bill Tracker pages are dedicated pages containing available published material and media coverage on proposed legislation listed in the Government’s Legislative Programme.

Value Added Information Services

The L&RS continued to inform members of new and topical publications through its intranet blog. It also focused on providing information aligned to debates in the Houses. In total 307 blog posts were published during 2016, many covering information related to Private Members’ Bills.

The L&RS launched its pilot Library and Research Constituency Dashboards service in July 2016. The dashboards offer a visual and interactive means of displaying key Census 2011 demographic, economic and household indicators for each constituency. This pilot is informing the manner in which the L&RS brings Census 2016 information to members during 2017.

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

Pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS) is now a central feature of LAS services. In 2016, the L&RS assisted six Joint Committees in their scrutiny of seven General Schemes of Bills. Research assistance included the provision of stakeholder selection papers, questions in context papers and briefing papers. These resources assisted Committees in undertaking pre-legislative scrutiny and the preparation of reports to the Houses setting out their views on proposed legislation.

The L&RS completed 71 Committee research requests (inclusive of pre-legislative scrutiny work) in 2016.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Plenary of the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association

In the context of North/South relations, the impact of Brexit was a key feature of the research requested for the December 2016 plenary of the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association. The papers, prepared jointly by the L&RS and the research service of the Northern Ireland Assembly (RaiSe), examined the impact of Brexit on the agri-food sector and on cross borderer activities such as business and finance, energy, tourism and the Common Travel Area.

Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Senator Denis O’Donovan, and members of the Seanad meeting with the First Minister of Scotland, Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP, on the occasion of her address to Seanad Éireann.

Contribution to Parliamentary Library and Research Networks

In 2016, L&RS staff contributed to interparliamentary and other library and research networks, for example:

- January: the L&RS hosted a three-day study visit from the Parliamentary Institute, National Assembly of Macedonia. The visit was funded and organised under the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) programme of the European Commission. It was also supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The objective of the visit was to provide peer-to-peer advice in order to strengthen research services delivered by the Parliamentary Institute.
- April: L&RS staff gave a presentation to staff of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) on L&RS legislative analysis services for members and research services for Committees.
- August: L&RS staff attended the Annual Inter-Parliamentary Research and Information Network (IPRIN) conference in Edinburgh and gave a presentation on the L&RS Constituency Dashboard project.
- September: L&RS staff attended the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) seminar Innovative Services for Libraries, Research Service and Archives in Oslo. The session on improving parliamentary research products through the use of infographics in research was chaired by the L&RS.
- November: the Service hosted a seminar on the subject of legislative scrutiny under the auspices of the ECPRD. The seminar was entitled Pre and Post-Legislative Scrutiny in and beyond Parliament: an Integrated Feature of the Legislative Process? – Case Studies and Best Practices. The purpose of the seminar was to consider the experiences of, and approaches to, pre-legislative and post-legislative scrutiny and their impact on legislation. There were 54 participants from 26 parliamentary chambers in attendance.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

During 2016, the L&RS met with colleagues from the House of Commons, the Parliament of Norway, the European Parliament and the Scottish Parliament to examine their parliamentary archive procedures and systems.

Information Governance and Management

Records Management
The Records Management Unit was established in 2016 and a new Assistant Principal Records Manager was appointed. This Unit was established to facilitate a joined up approach to records management, freedom of information and data protection across the Service.

Documents laid before the Houses
The L&RS processed 2,071 documents that were laid before the Houses by Government Departments and agencies. This figure represented an increase of 15% on 2015. Members of the public can access documents laid within 24 hours of receipt by the L&RS. This access is facilitated via the L&RS’ eDocs Laid system.

Freedom of Information
The L&RS processed 234 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests over the course of 2016, an increase of 33% on 2015, and provided assistance and know-how resources to FOI decision makers in the Service. In 2015, the percentage increase from 2014 was 144%.

Official Report of the Parliamentary Proceedings
The Editor of Debates Office is responsible for the production and publication of the Official Report, the written record of proceedings of both Houses of the Oireachtas, Parliamentary Committees and Parliamentary Inquiries. This is an authoritative, complete and impartial record of the contributions of all speakers, reported in the language of their contribution (Gaeilge or English).

The production of the Official Report is delivered through a team of Editors, Parliamentary Reporters and administrative staff. In recent years, the focus has moved from the production of a printed version of the Official Report to publishing electronically on a Lotus Notes based system and in HTML, XML and PDF formats on the website. The Official Report of the Dáil and Seanad debates is published on the website incrementally throughout the sitting day. Parliamentary Questions tabled by Deputies and replies from Government Ministers are collated, formatted and published in the Official Report at the end of each day’s Dáil proceedings.

The Official Reports of the debates in the Dáil and Seanad is also published in Bound Volume.

The Official Report of each Committee meeting is published on the website on the same day or within 2-3 working days, depending on available resources and the number and duration of committee meetings.
Debates Office staff report the proceedings of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, together with staff of the member legislatures of the Assembly, which meets twice yearly alternating between Britain and Ireland. The Assembly met in Cardiff in 2016.

**Debates Office Achievements in 2016**

Since 2014 the Official Report is produced and published from end to end by staff in the Debates Office, generating significant annual savings in the publishing and printing budget for the Houses. This eliminates dependencies on external suppliers, ensures full ownership and control of our own data, and publication of the Official Report in a timely manner.

**Bound Volumes of the Official Debates**

A total of 73 Dáil Bound Volumes (approximately 80,000 pages) were processed by staff in the Debates Office, covering the period from December 2013 to December 2015, a backlog that had built up since taking the responsibility for end-to-end publication of the Official Report in-house. This backlog was cleared during 2016.

During the year staff also sourced and catalogued every Bound Volume produced since the First Dáil.

**Implementation of new Debates Office Records Management Plan**

This project involved applying the principles of the Service’s Records Management Policy to files held by the Debates Office. This required the identification of all records held by the Debates Office (electronic and hard copy) whether on-site or off-site followed by the creation of a retention schedule for all such files to ensure consistency in storing and naming protocols and iteration of retention/deletion timelines for all records. Further work for the coming year will include moving some hard copy files off-site to a secure location.

**Business Process Mapping for Debates Office**

This project involved the creation of a detailed process mapping in the Debates Office presented in graphical format. The project will facilitate improved alignment between business needs and future IT solutions and is part of the development of an ICT enterprise architecture for the Service.

**Archiving of Dáil Debates on Lotus Notes**

This Archiving of Dáil Debates on Lotus Notes involved the splitting of Dáil debates into the live environment and an annual archive, enhancing the production and publishing environment for all users of the Official Report.

**Committee Witness Names Project**

The Committee Witness Names Project aims to improve ease of access to the Official Report and to ensure consistency in the naming of witnesses who appear before Oireachtas Committees. This project is part of the Debates Authoring Resolution Knowledge Base exercise to ensure consistency across the Official Report of Committee Proceedings.

**Official Report Indexing Project**

Progress was also achieved on the Official Report Indexing Project to ensure enhanced public access to the Official Report.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Debates Metadata Project
In line with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's (DPER’s) Open Data initiative, the Debates Office is engaged in a Debates Metadata Project, the results of which will allow users to interrogate the Official Report online in a more accessible and user-friendly format when the new website is live in 2017.

Editors Book Database Project
Progress was also achieved in updating and redesigning the Editors Book database – a database on procedure and in-house style guidelines used by staff in producing and publishing the Official Report.

We continue to develop Irish language skills in the section through continuing professional development (CPD), adding to the number of Debates Office staff who are qualified to report and edit Irish in the Official Report.

Digital Audio Recording Contract
The contract for the digital audio recording solution, and maintenance and operation of the sound system, expired on 31 December 2016. Following market soundings and a tendering process, a new contract was awarded through the public procurement process.

Parliamentary Translation and Interpretation Services to support the Houses and the Parliamentary Committees

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin

It also produces official translations of Statutory Instruments, Standing Orders of the Houses, Order Papers, Proceedings of the Houses, Strategic Plans and Annual Reports of the Commission and other items for the Service.


An Rannóg also manages and publishes An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard grammar of the Irish language) and is the national authority in the State for the Irish language version of EU Treaties.

As well as producing official translations of documents, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides a simultaneous translation service to Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and their Committees.

An Rannóg also manages the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Language Scheme.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

An Caighdeán Oifigiúil

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin has statutory responsibility for An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard grammar for the Irish language). The statutory review undertaken of An Caighdeán Oifigiúil in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2013, which began in 2014, was completed and An Caighdeán Oifigiúil was published in July 2016.

The review was carried out with the assistance of an expert Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Éamonn Ó hÓgáin. The revised Caighdeán Oifigiúil was presented by An Ceann Comhairle at a launch event in Leinster House on 13 July 2016.

Acts of the Oireachtais

In supporting the Service in discharging its statutory responsibility for the production of official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas under the Official Languages Act 2003, additional staff resources were provided in the editing cohort of Rannóg an Aistriúcháin.

Arrears Acts Translation

In 2016, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin continued with its Acts Clearance Strategy and progress was made in reducing the volume of arrears in official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas.

Translation of Statutory Instruments

An Rannóg provided translation services in respect of Statutory Instruments in 2016, focusing primarily on Rules of the Superior Courts for the Department of Justice and Equality. It also provided translation services for Statutory Instruments made by other Government Departments.

Translation Services to meet the needs of the Houses and their Committees

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provided services during 2016 to support the production of bilingual Order Papers for the both Houses. It also provided simultaneous translation services to meet the needs of the Houses and their Committees.

Translation Services to meet the needs of the Service

An Rannóg provided a range of general translation services for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service in 2016, including corporate documentation, to support the Service in carrying out its functions.
Goal 1: The sittings of the Houses and their Committees are continuously and effectively supported

Houses of the Oireachtas Service

Irish Language Scheme

In 2016, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin continued to manage the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme, which sets out the Service’s commitments regarding the use of the Irish language in its service delivery. In implementation of the Scheme in 2016, bilingual audio notices were introduced in the lifts in Kildare House office accommodation bringing them into line with the lifts in the Leinster House complex.

Information seminars for staff on An Caighdeán Oifigiúil

Following the review and publication of An Caighdeán Oifigiúil, An Rannóg organised a series of information seminars on An Caighdeán for the staff of Rannóg an Aistriúcháin and for staff in the Debates Office. The seminars were led by Eoin Ó Droighneáin, Riarthóir an Aonaid Aistriúcháin agus Pleanála Corpais, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Acadamh na Gaeilge, NUIG.

Legislative Drafting Service for Members

Two external drafters are currently engaged to provide legislative drafting services to members in respect of Private Members’ Bills. The external drafting service only includes drafting of Bills; it does not include drafting proposed amendments to Bills.

While the OPLA does not currently draft Private Members’ Bills or proposed amendments to Bills, the office provides legal advice in response to legislative drafting queries from members.

In implementing a key reform proposed by the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform in its final report presented to the Dáil on 24 May 2016, a new legislative drafting service in respect of Private Members’ Bills is to be established within the OPLA and amalgamated with the existing functions of the Office.

Guidelines and Policy Documents

The OPLA drafts guidelines and policy documents for members of the Houses, the Parliamentary Committees and the Service. The OPLA also reviews and updates guidelines in relation to the statutory obligations of members, e.g. guidelines under the Ethics Acts.

Provision of Legal and Legislative Services to the Houses and Members

The Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser (OPLA) has responsibility for the provision of high quality and efficient legal services and advice to members of the Houses, the Parliamentary Committees, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission and the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. In formulating legal opinions and providing advice, the OPLA acts strictly independently of the government legal services (i.e. the Attorney General, the Chief State Solicitor).

Legal Proceedings involving the Houses of the Oireachtas

The OPLA manages all litigation cases arising from the performance by members of their parliamentary functions and legal proceedings involving the Houses, the Committees, the Commission and the Service. Two cases of constitutional importance were heard by the High Court in 2016. Both cases were managed internally by the OPLA and with the assistance of Counsel for court advocacy.
Goal 2: Provide high quality procedural capacity

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Procedural Services and Support for the Parliamentary Business

The Clerk of each House is responsible for the provision of procedural services to the respective House and is the principal adviser to the House, Chair of each House and members on the procedures and practices of the House.

Dáil Procedural Briefing Services

The Clerk of the Dáil supports the Ceann Comhairle, Leas-Cheann Comhairle and Temporary Chairpersons in presiding over the sittings of the Dáil and advises them on parliamentary procedure. Members of the Dáil Panels of Temporary Chairpersons and Temporary Clerks receive notice by e-mail of the daily schedule of business and briefing for the Chairperson on individual daily business items. They also have direct access to these and other resources through a dedicated database.

Seanad Procedural Briefing Services

The Clerk of the Seanad supports the Cathaoirleach, the Leas-Cathaoirleach and Temporary Chairpersons by providing procedural advice and by assisting them in preparing for and presiding over sittings of the House.

One-to-one briefings on particular items of business are also provided to the Chairpersons, Deputy Chairpersons and members of the panel of Temporary Chairs as necessary.

Arising from the Seanad General Election in 2016, the Seanad Office delivered seminars to new members of the House on Seanad procedure and practice.

Publication of Standing Orders for the guidance and use of all members

The maintenance of Dáil procedural rules, procedural records and supporting documentation is a key task of the Journal Office. This includes maintaining Dáil Standing Orders, drafting amendments to Standing Orders, as required, re-printing the updated Standing Orders and producing Journals of the sittings.

The Seanad Office, under the direction of the Clerk of the Seanad, undertakes a similar role in respect of the procedural rules, procedural records and official documents of Seanad Éireann.

A consolidated version of the current Dáil Standing Orders was published in January 2017 and of Seanad Standing Orders in June 2016.

Support for Dáil Standing Committees

The Journal Office provides administrative support to the Dáil Committee on Procedure, its sub-Committee on Dáil Reform and the Dáil Business Committee. The Business Committee is responsible for the arrangements for business taken in the House and also acts as the Committee of Selection for the purpose of nominating Dáil
Goal 2: Provide high quality procedural capacity

members to serve on Oireachtas Committees and administers the allocation of Committee Chair posts based on the D’Hondt system.

The Committee on Procedure held seven meetings over the course of 2016. The business considered included matters relating to members’ parliamentary privileges and adoption of Standing Orders to give effect to constitutional and statutory provisions relating to members’ private papers, confidential communications and official documents of the House. The Business Committee meets on a weekly basis when the Dáil is sitting to decide the schedule of business for the Dáil. It held 25 meetings from its establishment in June 2016 to the end of year. The Committee of Selection held six meetings and produced seven reports relating to the allocation of Chairs and membership of Committees of the Dáil. The sub-Committee on Dáil Reform held 25 meetings and presented a series of proposals for reform of Dáil procedures and practices which were approved by the House and many were implemented over the past year. Information on the work of the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform is set out in page 48 of this report.

Support for Seanad Standing Committees
Secretariat support is provided by the Seanad Office to the Committee on Procedure and Privileges, the Committee of Selection, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee and the Joint Committee on Standing Orders (Private Business).

In 2016, the Committee on Procedure and Privileges held eight meetings. The business considered by the Committee included the adoption of Standing Orders to give effect to constitutional and statutory provisions relating to members’ private papers, confidential communications and official documents of the House, arrangements for the address to the Seanad by the First Minister of Scotland, Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP, and the temporary relocation of the Seanad Chamber to facilitate the refurbishment of Georgian Leinster House.

Support for Seanad Key Events
The Seanad Office activities in 2016 included the provision of administrative and procedural support for the following key events:

- Seanad General Election
- establishment of the 25th Seanad
- delivery of seminars to new members on Seanad procedure and practice
- address to the Seanad by the First Minister of Scotland, Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP

In 2017, the Seanad Office will focus on improving procedural capacity and support in the context of the Service’s strategic goal in this regard and on developing its record management systems.

Parliamentary Publishing and Printing Services
In line with the plans to move to electronic-only delivery of parliamentary documents for the 32nd Dáil, the Service continues to monitor the demand for printed copies of parliamentary documents. It has negotiated a reduction in the print run with a corresponding reduction in costs arising from the revised pricing structure which is expected to realise savings to the Service in the region of €60,000 annually.
Goal 3: Implement parliamentary reform recommendations

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

The sub-Committee on Dáil Reform presenting its recommendations for reform of Dáil procedures and practices at a press conference in Leinster House.

Dáil Reform Programme – to enhance the workings of the Dáil and the parliamentary processes

On 10 March 2016, the first sitting day of the 32nd Dáil, the House passed a motion requesting that the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform bring forward a series of proposals for Dáil reform for approval by the House.

The sub-Committee received written submissions from parties and groups in the House, individual members of the House and members of the public setting out their views on parliamentary reform. The views expressed in these submissions were considered by the sub-Committee in the course of its deliberations over 25 meetings.

The sub-Committee presented three reports to the Dáil including a series of recommendations for reform of Dáil procedures and practices. To implement the proposed reforms the House approved amendments to existing Standing Orders and adopted new Standing Orders.

The main reforms proposed can be summarised as follows:

- election of the Ceann Comhairle and leas Cheann Comhairle by secret ballot of all members of the House
- more power for the Dáil to plan and make arrangements for its own business, with the establishment of a new Business Committee
- enhanced scrutiny of the annual budgetary cycle with the establishment of a new Budget Oversight Committee, to be supported in its work by a new Parliamentary Budget Office
- allocation of Committee Chair positions based on the D’Hondt system
- an increased role for the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser, to include the provision of assistance to backbench members in drafting legislation, and the provision of advice on legislation being considered by the Houses
- changes to the rules relating to the formation of ‘groups’ in the House, in particular to allow more than one ‘technical group’ to be established under Standing Orders; this enables independent members and smaller parties to join forces to have a greater share of parliamentary set pieces
Goal 3: Implement parliamentary reform recommendations

- rearrangement of the sitting day so that sittings of the House, wherever possible, do not conflict with Committee meetings; this enables members to give more time to both plenary sittings and committee meetings
- pre-legislative scrutiny to be extended to non-Government Bills (when sufficient resources are in place in the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser), which will increase the prospect of those Bills being enacted
- establishment of a new Irish Language Committee in the Houses
- a means for members to formally record their abstention from a vote and to put an explanation for their abstention, or for the way they voted, on the record of the House
- improvements to both the Parliamentary Questions process and the manner in which the Government answers questions on the Order of Business concerning its legislative programme
- introduction of postponed divisions in respect of particular items of business until the ‘weekly division time’ (currently on Thursday afternoons) which represents a more efficient use of time in the House

The sub-Committee held 25 meetings in 2016 and agreed further reforms throughout the year which were approved by the Dáil and implemented through changes to Dáil Standing Orders.

The Dáil Business Committee. The Committee was established by the Dáil in June 2016 as part of a series of parliamentary reforms implemented in the 32nd Dáil.

Establishment of a Dáil Business Committee

In implementing one of the key reforms proposed by the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform, a Business Committee was established by the Dáil with responsibility for scheduling the weekly business in the House. The Committee is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle and is made up of government and opposition members.

The Journal Office provides secretariat support to the Business Committee. The Committee meets each week and agrees the schedule of Dáil business for the week ahead and an indicative schedule of business for the following week.

The Business Committee also makes proposals for managing the business, which are put to the House for agreement, including:

- arrangements for taking items of business, the length of time allocated to each item, and speaking times for Ministers and members contributing to debates,
- taking legislation in the Dáil and Select Committees,
Goal 3: Implement parliamentary reform recommendations

- sitting times and adjournments of the House, and
- selection of the business to be scheduled on Thursday evenings in the House (Private Members’ Bills or committee reports)

The Business Committee also acts as the Committee of Selection for the purpose of nominating members to serve on Oireachtas Committees and administers the allocation of Committee Chair posts based on the D'Hondt system.

The Committee of Selection met on six occasions in 2016 and produced seven reports relating to the allocation of Chairs and membership of Committees of the Dáil. Each report was laid before the Dáil and approved by the House.

Legislative Drafting Service for Members

In its final report presented to the Dáil in May 2016 the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform proposed an expanded role for the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser (OPLA), in particular to include the provision of legislative assistance to members in drafting Private Members’ Bills and the provision of advice to members on legislation being considered by the Houses.

In presenting this proposal the sub-Committee recommended that:

... a capacity review of the OPLA should be carried out as soon as possible to determine an appropriate structure in terms of staffing and resources to address all existing tasks and new initiatives envisaged by the Sub-Committee.

The capacity review will examine the resources and other supports required to establish a legislative drafting service as a new function in the OPLA, including the necessary expertise to support the new function. The capacity review report was presented to the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform in 2017.

Goal 4: Provide infrastructural and logistical services

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Office Accommodation and Facilities Management

Structural and Restoration Works to Georgian Leinster House

In pursuance of the planned programme of structural and upgrade works for Georgian Leinster House, progress was made in decanting staff and services from Georgian Leinster House in preparation for the planned works to the building. This allowed preparatory and investigative works to commence in many areas of the House in 2016.

An agreement was entered into with the National Museum of Ireland to temporarily relocate the Seanad chamber to an area of the National Museum while the urgent essential works are being carried out. Subject to the appropriate planning permissions, preparatory work for the temporary relocation of the Seanad Chamber will commence in early 2017 while ensuring that the space used for the temporary chamber is returned to the Museum following completion of the project with an improved presentation commensurate with the Museum’s role as a National Cultural Institution.
Goal 4: Provide infrastructural and logistical services

Facilities Management
In 2016, a number of important projects were advanced in cooperation with the Office of Public Works, including:

- vacating and reallocating offices and other accommodation in the Leinster House complex following the 2016 General Elections. This was a significant project, in particular as it involved vacating offices of departing members, providing office accommodation for first time and returning members of the Houses and their staff as well as meeting the accommodation needs of parties and groups represented in the Houses.

- significant fit-out work in the basement of the 1966 block to provide accommodation for service personnel and Parliamentary Ushers which has facilitated the decant of Georgian Leinster House for the duration of the programme of structural and restoration works to the House. This brings valuable space into use with enhanced compliance in relation to fire compartmentation and accessibility which had previously been used as a storage area.

- new visitor entrance and exit arrangements were introduced at the Kildare Street gates to improve security and the movement of people via Kildare Street

Oireachtas Crèche
The Oireachtas Crèche provides an on-site childcare facility for children up to age five, as well as late-evening care and drop-in services. The Crèche is operated by a third-party service provider and is open to the children of Members and staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas as well as staff of Government Departments. Crèche services are paid for directly to the service provider by those availing of the facility.

Fitness Room
The Oireachtas Fitness Room is open to all members of the House of the Oireachtas and all staff on the payroll. In 2016, there were 4,027 individual visits to the Fitness Room and 78 people joined the Fitness Room in 2016.

Security and Access Services
Security arrangements within the Leinster House precinct aim to provide a safe workplace for members and their staff, staff of the Service and others for whom Leinster House is a place of work, while ensuring that the building is accessible to the public who wish to visit the Houses.

The challenges of various levels of security threats were dealt with during the year in an efficient and effective manner with no disruptions to the day-to-day operations of the Houses, the parliamentary services, or to public access to the Houses.
Goal 4: Provide infrastructural and logistical services

The Superintendent and Captain of the Guard work closely with an Garda Síochána, who have responsibility for external security arrangements.

Following a review of security arrangements, a number of initiatives were introduced during the year in order to provide safe and efficient access for people entering and exiting Leinster House, and visitor management within the complex, including:

- improved visitor management system through the introduction of an electronic visitor booking, visitor registration and visitor identification system
- installation of enhanced security controls at the entry and exit gates
- expansion of electronic door controls to office areas

Preparations for the introduction of enhanced security screening and checking at the entry points were advanced and are expected to commence in 2017.

In cooperation with government departments adjacent to the building, a project to enhance the effectiveness of perimeter security systems has commenced.

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning for the Houses, which began in 2009, has developed the capability required in ICT systems to ensure continuity of critical services to support the sittings of the Houses and their Committees.

Contingency planning undertaken in 2016 included:

- testing and refinements of ICT infrastructure and systems to ensure that the ICT element of the business continuity plan meets the required standard in supporting the sittings at the alternate location
- a simulation exercise conducted during which critical services were provided by the procedural offices from the alternate location as a test of the effectiveness of the plan
- an exercise conducted to review the operation of the sound system used in the production of the Official Report in the alternate location
- ongoing review and refinement of planning documents including a review of the overall Incident Management Plan (IMP) and the Work Area Recovery Plan (WARP)
- a workshop held for senior staff to brief them on the role of the Incident Management Team in the Business Continuity Plan for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service
Goal 4: Provide infrastructural and logistical services

Energy Management Overview
The main focus of the energy management activities by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service is through its participation in the OPW’s "Optimising Power @ Work" campaign. The campaign is a staff energy awareness campaign in place in 250 buildings owned/leased by the OPW for use by Government Departments/public bodies. The initiative aims to reduce CO₂ emissions and energy by reducing energy consumption in the public sector through activities focused on behavioral change.

Through the Optimising Power @ Work campaign, OPW supports energy saving efforts by providing expertise, technology and support for awareness raising activities and energy saving initiatives.

Energy Management Actions Undertaken in 2016 and plans for 2017
In 2016, the Houses of the Oireachtas Service continued its engagement with the Optimising Power @ Work campaign:
- an “Energy Awareness Day” was held in May for members and staff to brief them on energy reduction within the Leinster House complex and to provide advice on how to save energy on electricity, gas and water
- a programme of installation of energy efficient lighting and associated controls across the complex with energy efficient alternatives was continued
- the biomass boiler was upgraded and fully recommissioned and is expected to be fully operational and providing a portion of the complex’s heating requirements from early 2017

A number of other initiatives aimed at improving energy performance were undertaken, including:
- ongoing review of the heating and ventilation systems to ensure they are operating only when required resulting in savings through alignment of heating and ventilation times to reflect the opening hours of Leinster House
- night energy audits to identify areas where further energy savings can be made
- energy monitoring and reporting on a monthly basis and regular energy team meetings
- additional metering added to the Leinster House complex
- reduction of the “Medium Temperature Hot Water” in summer
- Building Management System maintenance and adjustments
- update of the Display Energy Certificate on site
- review of solar options for the site

In 2017, the Houses of the Oireachtas will continue to participate in the Optimising Power @ Work campaign to deliver energy awareness events for staff and members such as “step up days” to reduce lift usage and promote general staff awareness. The Energy Management Team will also engage with Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to avail of supports available towards making energy savings and efficient energy management.
Goal 4: Provide infrastructural and logistical services

To further improving energy performance in 2017 the Service will:

- update the Energy Management Action plan for the Houses and update a register of opportunities for savings
- conduct a site wide energy audit and out of hours energy audits
- review ICT on site and the potential to install sub-meters to monitor electricity usage
- continue the ongoing programme of installation of energy efficient lighting
- review of heating times as the year progresses and adjusting heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems as appropriate
Strategic Objective 2: Support Members in their Constitutional Roles

Members of the Houses are provided with the advice and support services they need to enable them to perform their parliamentary and public representative duties efficiently and effectively.

Goal 1:

To provide members with the high quality services they need to perform their parliamentary and representational duties

Support for new Oireachtas Office-Holders

Following the Dáil and Seanad general elections in 2016 and the subsequent election of the Ceann Comhairle and Leas-Cheann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad and Leas-Chathaoirleach, introductory briefing materials were prepared for new Office-Holders, covering their procedural, administrative and statutory duties.

A briefing document on the procedural duties of the presiding member was also prepared for each member of the Dáil Panel of Temporary Chairs. Seminars were delivered to new Seanad members on Seanad procedure and practice.

Staff of the Service also support the Clerks of the respective House in discharging their duties arising from a number of ex officio roles.

Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD, meeting with a US Congress delegation at Leinster House.

Provision of High Quality Information and Research Services to Members

The Library and Research Service (L&RS) continued its support of new and returning members and their staff throughout the year with welcome sessions and one-to-one training on L&RS resources. An ‘Open Day’ hosted in the L&RS Reading Room in late 2016 provided a further opportunity for members to meet L&RS staff and to receive information on the research services provided by the L&RS.
Goal 1: To provide members with the high quality services they need to perform their parliamentary and representational duties

Maps and Research Matters

Following the general election, the L&RS produced a series of maps displaying electoral results and were made available to the public on the website. A one page infographic with key statistics from the election was also published.

In April the L&RS published Research Matters for the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad for members, a compilation of research briefings on topics that are expected to feature in debates in the Houses. The L&RS focused on making the publication as accessible as possible, using Plain English and visuals. Research Matters was “highly commended” in the 2017 National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) Plain English Awards.

Supporting the Service in the post-election period

The election resulted in a minority Government which influenced parliamentary reform developments. L&RS researchers worked with the staff of the Service on the establishment of a Budget Scrutiny Office and the composition of the Parliamentary Committees based on the D’Hondt system for the allocation of committee membership. The L&RS also published a series of L&RS Notes on related topical issues such as: caretaker governments and caretaker conventions; minority governments and parliament; the D’Hondt system for the allocation of parliamentary positions.

Orientation of new Members of the Houses

L&RS staff members were involved in the development and delivery of induction programmes for new members of the Houses. L&RS set up ‘information kiosks’ which were available to new members following their election to help them understand how the library and research service can support them in their work. L&RS expertise was also used in a project to develop a system for the appropriate collection and sharing of data relating to members to reduce duplication of work across the Service.
2016 IN REVIEW
INFORMING PARLIAMENT

**LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS**
- 26 BILL DIGESTS
- 43 BILL TRACKER PAGES

**COMMITTEE RESEARCH**
- 6 JOINT COMMITTEES
- 71 COMMITTEE RESEARCH REQUESTS COMPLETED
- 7 BILLS

**CUSTOMISED RESEARCH**
- 2,052 TOTAL REQUESTS COMPLETED
- 1,332 ASK A LIBRARIAN
- 386 RESEARCH REQUESTS
- 93 MEMBERS' RESEARCH
- 28 INTERPARLIAMENTARY
- 65% OF TOTAL
- HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS SERVICE STAFF

**TOPICAL RESEARCH**
- 307 EMAIL ALERTS (WORDPRESS)
- 37 INFOGRAPHICS
- 20 RESEARCH MATTERS ARTICLES
- 10 NOTES / SPOTLIGHTS

**DEBATE REFERENCES**
- 15 IN DÁIL, SEANAD AND COMMITTEE DEBATES

**STATUTORY SERVICES**
- 2,071 DOCUMENTS LAID
- 234 FOI REQUESTS

**STAFFING**
- 35 STAFF
- 22 RESEARCHERS
- 4 LIBRARIANS
- 5 ADMINISTRATIVE

*AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2016

Designed by: Oireachtas Library & Research Service
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A key focus of the work of the L&RS in 2016 was the provision of library and research services to meet members’ needs arising from the elections to both Houses and supporting members and the Service in implementing Dáil reform initiatives. The L&RS continued to enhance its research and information services through greater use of data visualisation tools (infographic and maps) and piloting the inclusion of performance information in legislative analysis research.

The L&RS continued to develop its capability to create infographics which are now used regularly in L&RS publications to visually present research information. In January, the L&RS Economics Indicators series was relaunched in infographic format and is available to members of the public on the Oireachtas website.

**One-Stop-Shop Information Service for Members**

Members’ Services provides a One-Stop-Shop service for members of the Houses giving them a single access point for information on the services and resources made available to them to support them in carrying out their parliamentary functions. It also provides information on the policies and guidelines governing the use of such resources.

Members use the One-Stop-Shop as a source of information relating to any allowance and payment applicable to their position. Members’ Services processes most of the allowances due to members and provides guidance and assistance to them on allowable expenses, salaries and related issues.

Information on members’ expenditure under the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) is published on the Oireachtas website on a monthly basis. At least 10 per cent of members are selected on a random basis for the annual audit of expenditure incurred under the PRA. The annual audit of expenditure is conducted by an independent auditor. In the interest of providing maximum transparency, the report of the independent auditor is published on the website.

In keeping with progress made in 2015, Members’ Services continued during 2016 with a proactive approach, with guidance documents further refined and circulated to members in both hard and soft copy. Seminars for members on compliance with regulations governing expenses and allowances were conducted during November and December 2016. Seminars have been well attended and feedback has been consistently positive.

Following the elections to both Houses, both new and former members had one-to-one meetings with staff at various junctures throughout 2016. This is an important support for members in fulfilling the regulatory requirements and related obligations.

To further enhance services to members, the development of a centralised database in order to streamline the process for the administration of members’ allowable expenses and allowances has progressed throughout 2016. It is expected that the centralised database will be live in mid 2017.

**Audit of Expenditure under the Public Representation Allowance**

The sixth annual audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) was conducted in 2016 by an independent auditor, selected following a competitive tender process. The purpose of the audit is to provide an independent examination of expenditure to determine whether expenditure is applied in accordance with the relevant regulations.
**Goal 1:** To provide members with the high quality services they need to perform their parliamentary and representational duties

In conducting the audit, the auditor has responsibility, independently of the Service, for preparing an audit plan and communicating with the members selected for audit in relation to all relevant matters. In carrying out the audit process, the independent auditor selects the members for audit by random sample. A total of 221 members who received the PRA in 2015 were auditable in 2016. The auditor selected 22 of these (10%) for audit by random sample.

In order to assist members, those selected for audit were invited to an information seminar conducted by the auditor prior to the commencement of the process. The purpose of the seminar was to provide clarity on the independent audit process. The feedback received from members on the information seminar, regarding its usefulness and relevance, was very positive.

**Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members**

Human Resources (HR) Services deliver HR, Training, Pension and Payroll Services to members of the Houses and their staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance (the Scheme).

There were 525 staff, 439 full-time equivalent posts, employed by members under the Scheme at the end of 2016. Staff employed under the Scheme are the employees of the member or party concerned and are not public servants. However, staff employed under the Scheme are paid by the Commission. Accordingly, all personnel administration functions in relation to pay, leave and other employee services are undertaken by the HR Unit for Members.

**Supporting Members in undertaking their International and Inter-parliamentary Functions**

**International Role of Members**

Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas play an international parliamentary role through their membership of international bodies such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and other inter-parliamentary associations.

**International Visitors to the Houses**

Each year, the Houses of the Oireachtas receive visits from Speakers of Parliaments, parliamentary delegations and members and staff of other parliaments.

In 2016, the Ceann Comhairle and the Executive Committee of Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (the Irish Parliamentary Association) hosted the following incoming parliamentary delegations:

- **14-15 November** – His Excellency Mr. Ji Bingxuan, Vice Chairman of the National People’s Congress of China, and a Parliamentary Delegation
- **22 November** – Her Excellency Ms Inara Murniece, Speaker of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, and a Parliamentary Delegation
The Houses of the Oireachtas also hosted a number of incoming visits during the year as follows:

- **14 September** – American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL)
- **27 September** – Parliamentary delegation from the Parliament of Victoria, Australia
- **4 October** – Parliamentary delegation from the German State Parliament of Bavaria

In 2016, members of the Houses participated in the following PACE events:

- four plenary sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly, held in Strasbourg in January, April, June and September
- six Parliamentary Assembly Committee meetings, held throughout the year
- two Election Observation Missions, in Bulgaria and Moldova.

**The Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly**

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCEPA) is composed of 323 parliamentarians from its Member States whose primary task is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue.

In 2016, members of the Houses participated in the following OSCE events:

- three plenary sessions held in Vienna (Austria), Tbilisi (Georgia), Skopje (Macedonia)
- two election observation missions, in Kazakhstan in March, and in New York in November
Goal 1: To provide members with the high quality services they need to perform their parliamentary and representational duties

Speaker and Office-Holder Participation at Inter-Parliamentary Meetings and Events in 2016

Participation in inter-parliamentary meetings and events included:

- 18 Feb to 2 March – Ukraine Week at the European Parliament, Brussels
- 18-19 April – Meeting with the Speaker of the House of Commons at the launch of the Irish Community Library, London
- 22-23 May – Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments, Luxembourg
- 3-6 July – Opening of Tynwald Parliament, Isle of Man
- 25-28 August – International Conference on Migration, Refugees and Persecution of Minorities, Rome
- 14-16 September – Conference of Presidents and Speakers of Parliament from Council of Europe member states, Strasbourg
- 6-8 October – Informal meeting of Speakers of EU Parliaments, Bratislava

Formation of Parliamentary Friendship Groups

Parliamentary Friendship Groups provide a forum for members of the Houses to foster bilateral contacts and promote ongoing dialogue with members of national parliaments of other countries.

At the request of the Ceann Comhairle, the Inter-Parliamentary Unit consulted members of the Houses to determine the Parliamentary Friendship Groups with which they wish to be affiliated. Over 60 members requested to be affiliated to more than 50 friendship groups across 10 geographical regions. Inter-Parliamentary Unit will liaise with the Ceann Comhairle’s office regarding the appointment of Convenors to each group with responsibility for progressing the objectives and coordinating the activities of each group.
Goal 2: To provide members with more flexible and effective ICT services to enable them to do their work

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Information and Communications Technology Services

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Unit manages the delivery of ICT services that support the operations of the Houses and the work of members. The ICT Unit continues to pursue new initiatives to align its services with the evolving requirements of the Houses and to meet members’ needs. A range of new ICT solutions were delivered to support the Houses in 2016, including:

- **Provision of Members’ ICT Equipment post-Elections:** The successful management of the transfer, renewal and roll out of ICT equipment following the Dáil and Seanad elections. This task, which was previously outsourced to an external ICT service provider, was undertaken in-house for the first time resulting in savings for the Service.

- **Desktop Virtualisation:** The rollout of Desktop Virtualisation Infrastructure to staff, resulting in ICT cost savings, enhanced security of data, and greater flexibility

- **Abstentions Database:** The development of the abstentions database supports implementation of a recommendation of the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform that abstentions from voting at divisions in the House would be formally recorded

- **Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning:** Testing and refinements carried out at the alternate site to ensure that the ICT element of the Service’s business continuity plan meets the required standard

- **Managed Print Service:** The rollout of a managed print service has led to cost savings and enhanced operational efficiencies in the print and related processes

Planned activities in 2017

Further progress will be made towards implementation of the ICT strategic plan, strategic objectives and outcomes, including:

- **Provision of ongoing information and communication technology services:** continued provision of core ICT services to support the work of the Houses and to meet the needs of members, their staff and the staff of the Service
Goal 2: To provide members with more flexible and effective ICT services to enable them to do their work

- **Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Planning:** examination of the options for extending ICT services at the Disaster Recovery site
- **Local Area Network and Phone Systems:** evaluation of the options for the replacement of these systems
- **Georgian Leinster House Works:** deliver ICT services and facilities to accommodate the structural project for Georgian Leinster House and the temporary relocation of the Seanad Chamber to an area of the National Museum of Ireland
- **Staff training:** implementation of a training programme for ICT service desk staff on Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) principles and standards
- **ICT security:** implementation of ICT Security Policy Awareness Campaign among users of the ICT services to ensure that all users work in a secure ICT environment
Strategic Objective 3: Support Accessibility and Public Engagement

A public that is well informed and more engaged with its Parliament

Goal 1:
Greater public understanding, trust and pride in the Houses of the Oireachtas

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Communications Strategy Implementation

The Communications Strategy for the Houses is focused to support the Mission Statement under the Strategic Plan, A Parliament for the People. Implementation of the Strategy is delivered through initiatives focused on making the parliamentary proceedings accessible to all, raising awareness among the public of the important work of their parliament and increasing opportunities for public engagement with the work of the Houses.


Accessibility of Oireachtas TV broadcasts was enhanced through the provision of signing and subtitled content on the Channel.

Oireachtas TV

2016 saw significant advancements for Oireachtas TV on several fronts, including technical and editorial development with expansion into new platforms and new partnerships.

The Channel began broadcasting on the Saorview television service in 2016, which has expanded coverage to 98% of the country. The Oireachtas Service also entered into new partnerships with independent broadcasters to source new content for the Channel through the broadcasting funding scheme, Sound & Vision 3, which is managed by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.
A new Broadcast Manager was appointed in January 2016, with responsibility to develop the content and channel features of Oireachtas TV. During the year there were a number of outside broadcast productions, established as a new initiative, as well as a significant scaling up of studio and documentary programming. The Broadcasting Unit also developed relationships with other national parliamentary channels and the European Parliament to open up new programming streams for the Channel.

Over the course of 2016, the Broadcasting Unit developed the concept of a discussion show called Oireachtas TV Debates which features discussions and debates by academics on key developments in the parliamentary system. The broadcast team produced six programmes in this series: Proportional Representation; the Role of Parliament; Dáil Reform; Brexit (pre-referendum); the D’Hondt System for the allocation of parliamentary positions; and Brexit (post-referendum). It is planned to increase production of the series for Oireachtas TV.

In the year of 2016 commemorations, the Broadcasting Unit organised the Leinster House Historical Talks Series which took place in the Reading Room of Leinster House. The talks, delivered by academics and commentators, focused on various aspects of the 1916 Easter Rising. The speakers were Mr. Michael Laffan (Emeritus Professor of History, UCD) on the lead up to and the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, Ms Catriona Crowe from the National Archives of Ireland on social conditions in 1916, historian Ms Sinéad McCoole on the women of 1916 and writer and scholar Mr. Alan Titley (Emeritus Professor of Modern Irish, UCC) on the influence of the Gaelic League in 1916 and architect Mr. Brian Connolly on the architectural heritage of Leinster House.

The Broadcasting Unit updated the Channel features and introduced initiatives to better inform the public on the broadcast schedule by improving the Electronic Programme Guide across all platforms. Accessibility of broadcasts for people who are deaf or with hearing difficulties was enhanced through the provision of signing and subtitled content on the Channel.

A long-term plan for the Channel is currently being developed to further expand the capacity to produce additional content whilst also improving the core function of the Channel – broadcasting the proceedings of the Houses of the Oireachtas and increasing public interest and awareness of the parliamentary business to viewers across the country.
Goal 1: Greater public understanding, trust and pride in the Houses of the Oireachtas

Website Redevelopment Project – enhancing accessibility

The website of the Houses continues to be a very important public communication channel for the work of the Houses. Live streaming of debates in the two Houses and their Committees generated over 2 million page views during 2016. The website received almost 1.49 million visits and over 6.3 million page views in total over the course of the year.

The website redevelopment project, currently underway, is focused on a complete revision of the website to enhance accessibility and remains on schedule for release in 2017.

As part of the website redevelopment project, the extraction and transformation of a number of resources into open standards, including parliamentary debates, divisions, parliamentary questions and bills, was successfully completed in 2016. The transformed data will be visible to end users when the new website is live in 2017. In addition, open data Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) of these resources will be made publicly available at that time.

Goal 2: An Open Parliament that strengthens its engagement with the people

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Public Engagement

Social Media Communication and Engagement

As part of our communications efforts over the course of the year, the Communications Unit sought to further leverage social media tools to present information on the work of the Houses in multiple formats through various social media platforms and to increase the number of followers on these platforms.

Information was proactively presented to the public through the official Oireachtas Twitter account @OireachtasNews. Information was presented to the public in real-time on the counting of votes in the election of the Ceann Comhairle.

This was the first time the election of the Ceann Comhairle was conducted by a secret ballot of all members of the Dáil and attracted a significant level of interest. Twitter was also used effectively during
Goal 2: An Open Parliament that strengthens its engagement with the people

the Seanad Election to present the results of each count as they were announced at the count centre.

Other initiatives overseen by the social media team, including online engagement, resulted in just over 7.3 million Twitter impressions made in 2016. Over two million Twitter impressions were associated with the Seanad Election.

@OireachtasNews following grew to more than 23,800 people, an increase of 3,800 on 2015. For the second consecutive year, the Oireachtas Twitter Account was nominated for three ‘Sockie Awards’ including in the category for Best Use of Social Media by a State Body.

The Oireachtas Facebook following also grew steadily with an increase of 1,000 followers over the course of the year. With the introduction of the Facebook LIVE feature, the Oireachtas News Facebook live streamed Budget 2017 which was viewed over 23,000 times. The address to Seanad Éireann by the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, was also live streamed on the Facebook page and was viewed over 34,000 times, with viewers in Scotland, Wales, Canada and Australia among those who followed the First Minister’s address to the Seanad via Facebook.

The Oireachtas Instagram and LinkedIn social media accounts also had a steady growth in the number of followers in 2016.

Media Engagement

During 2016 there was an increase in the number of general media queries responded to by the Communications Unit. This arose mainly from the dissolution of the 31st Dáil and subsequent general election. Committee Press Officers continued to provide a full media and press service to new Committee Chairpersons and members in seeking to promote awareness of the work of the new Committees established in the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad. Committee meetings are also webcast live on the website of the Houses.

New methods of disseminating information to the public and the media about the work of the Houses were explored in 2016, including through the use of short focused videos, made available on social media.

Online Education Programme

The Online Education Programme continues to support teachers, students and schools in the delivery of the Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) syllabus as part of the Junior Certificate curriculum. The education programme provides information on the parliamentary system, law-making and democracy and is made available as a free educational resource on the website. It also provides an important opportunity to reach those students and schools who have not had the opportunity to visit Leinster House and to engage them in the work of the Houses.
Goal 2: An Open Parliament that strengthens its engagement with the people

National Bravery Awards Ceremony
The National Bravery Awards ceremony took place in Farmleigh House on Friday 28 October. The Ceann Comhairle presented awards to 29 recipients in recognition of their outstanding acts of bravery.

The ceremony was broadcast live, in its entirety, on Oireachtas TV allowing viewers to hear the outstanding deeds of bravery and the inspiring stories of the award recipients.

The honours are awarded by Comhairle na Míre Gaile, the Deeds of Bravery Council, which was established in 1947 to provide for suitable recognition by the State of deeds of bravery by people from all walks of life and all sections of society. The Council is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle and includes the Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Lord Mayor of Cork, the Garda Commissioner, the President of the Association of City and County Councils and the Chair of the Irish Red Cross.

Visitors to the Houses
In 2016, the number of visitors to Leinster House reached over 103,000.

The Houses continue to receive a large number of visitors each year, including visits by members of the public participating in guided tours of Leinster House, educational visits by schoolchildren and accompanying teachers, constituents meeting with members of the Houses as well as visiting dignitaries hosted by the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, visiting parliamentary delegations and witnesses attending Parliamentary Committee meetings.

Guided tours of Leinster House are led by the Parliamentary Ushers who provide information on the history of the building and other key parliamentary events. Over 52,000 visitors participated in guided tours of the Houses in 2016 which included walk-up tours that are normally conducted twice daily on non-sitting days. The high demand for guided tours of Leinster House demonstrates the popularity of the public tour programme.

The Superintendent’s Section provides operational support for the sittings of the Houses and the Parliamentary Committees, including high-level parliamentary meetings and official events hosted by the Houses. The Section also has responsibility for managing visitor access to the Houses. The Superintendent and Usher staff provided services and support for a number of key events in the Houses over the course of the year including:

- the first sitting day of the 32nd Dáil
- the first sitting day of the 25th Seanad
- the election of the Taoiseach
Goal 2: An Open Parliament that strengthens its engagement with the people

- elections of the Ceann Comhairle, Leas Ceann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad and the Leas Cathaoirleach
- Budget Day
- the election count for election to the 25th Seanad
- the 7th Annual Seminar of the Irish Association of Former Parliamentarians
- Leinster House free public tours for the *Open House* architectural event.

Workplace Health and Safety Policy

In 2016, the Service implemented its health and safety management plan to ensure a safe environment for all who work in and visit Leinster House. A Health and Safety Audit was carried out and the updated Health and Safety Policy Statement was approved by the Secretary General in July 2016.

The Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to discuss health and safety matters and also acts as a communications forum on health and safety policies and practices.

Catering Services in the Houses

The Catering Services provide catering in support of the work of the Houses, members and staff, visitors to the Houses and other users of the service.

The catering team provided catering services to support a number of events hosted by members of the Houses during the year such as the *Annual Human Dignity Awards Dinner* and the *Thomas Meagher Foundation’s 2016 Scholarship Presentation Lunch*. They also provided a wide range of catering services at peak demand times and for special events following the elections to both Houses. Such occasions included the first sitting day of the 32nd Dáil and the first sitting day of the 25th Seanad, the election of the Ceann Comhairle and Leas Ceann Comhairle, and the election of the Taoiseach.

The introduction of an electronic point of sales system (EPOS) in 2015 has further enhanced service delivery in the catering facilities. 2016 was the first full year the system was in operation. The EPOS system has allowed efficient reporting of bar and restaurant sales information. Further enhancements to the EPOS system are planned for 2017, including the utilisation of the system for stock management.
Strategic Objective 4: Develop our Capability and our Staff
An organisation with a focus on continuous improvement, high performance and learning

Goal 1:
High performing, engaged and motivated staff

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Management of Human Resources
Human Resource (HR) Services provide services to members of the Houses, their staff and staff of the Service, including recruitment, induction, performance management, training and development, payroll, pension and other personnel administration functions.

Overview of Current Operating Environment
At the end of December 2016, there were 485 sanctioned civil service posts in the Service of which 450 were filled. There were eight non-established state employees comprising five civilian drivers and three staff of Oireachtas Office-Holders. In addition, there were 40 staff employed in the Catering Services and Print Facility.

The Services’ Statement of Resources is set out in Appendix II.

Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members
Under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members (the Scheme), 525 staff, 439 full-time equivalent posts, were employed by members at the end of 2016. Staff employed under the Scheme are the employees of the member, or party, concerned and are not public servants. However, staff employed under the Scheme are paid by the Commission. Accordingly, all personnel administration functions in relation to pay, leave and other employee services are undertaken by the HR Unit for Members.

European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Phil Hogan, addressed the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine on Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

Election Planning and Implementation

One of the main activities for HR Services in 2016 was the coordination and implementation of the election plan for the Service through the Election Planning Steering Group. The Group, chaired by the Head of HR Services, coordinated the delivery of the Service’s statutory and administrative responsibilities relating to the dissolution of the Dáil and the reconvening of the Houses following the elections.

In support of the election planning process, HR Services:

- coordinated election-related responsibilities across the Service and directed the work of the Steering Group
- organised the Member Liaison Officer Programme, under which an experienced member of staff of the Service was assigned to a new member of the Houses to assist them during their first weeks in Leinster House
- published resources for members, including dissolution guidelines, members’ handbooks and information on processes and services in the Houses
- worked with the ICT Unit on the development of the Members’ Administration System to streamline requests for information from members and to avoid duplication of work
- undertook resource planning to ensure that sections in the Service had the necessary staff in place to manage the increased workload arising from the dissolution of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad
- reviewed implementation of the election planning process to guide future election planning

Administration of Human Resources Services

Human Resources (HR) Services administer a range of HR, Training, Pension and Payroll Services to staff of the Service, members of the Houses and their staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance. In addition to meeting operational priorities, the key activities of each HR Service are set out in the following sections.

Staffing Levels

- 485 Civil Service staff (FTE)
- 40 State Industrial staff (FTE)
- 3 Staff of Office Holders
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

HR Unit – Recruitment

Key activities undertaken in 2016
- reassignment and redeployment of Banking Inquiry Staff on completion of the Banking Inquiry
- allocation of additional resources to support increased workload allocations arising from the elections to both Houses and in preparation for the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad
- recruitment of additional staff to support implementation of Dáil Reform initiatives and increased demand across the Service
- implementation of induction programmes for new staff joining the Service in 2016
- implementation of staffing arrangements for Oireachtas Office-Holders in the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad

Objectives and planned activities and initiatives for 2017
- development of longer-term HR Strategy to identify resources and skills required to meet business needs and manage succession planning
- implementation of the Annual Resource Plan for the Service

Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan and Deputy Brendan Smith meeting with Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, at Leinster House.

HR Unit – Administration

Key activities undertaken in 2016
- provision of information, advice and services to staff of the Service
- administration of travel schemes
- management of industrial relations matters
- HR policy development – participation in Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) HR Circular Review Workshops
- attendance at DPER Employee Relations Network Meetings
- assessment of moving to HR Shared Services (PeoplePoint)
- participation at HR Business Process Mapping and Improvement Project
- ongoing implementation of Records Management Project
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

Objectives and planned activities and initiatives for 2017

- Simplification of Performance Management Development System (PMDS) Form to be issued in 2017
- Enhance corporate governance and financial monitoring
- Implementation of Probation Appeal Guidelines
- Rollout of Underperformance Guidelines
- Planning for the transition to HR Shared Services (PeoplePoint)

HR Unit for Members

Key activities in 2016

- Contributed to the election planning team and sub-teams, updated and published a new Scheme information booklet, new employment contracts and a new Employers Handbook
- Processed 209 redundancy applications following the Dáil and Seanad elections
- Prepared the draft statutory instrument for enactment by the Commission to provide secretarial facilities to members and parties, including the provision of additional facilities to co-ordinators of technical groups
- Added employees of members and parties to payroll and managed staff transfers from government departments
- Transferred ministerial staff to the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance with effect from the beginning of the 32nd Dáil
- Provided advice on employment matters including advice on terms and conditions of employment

Objectives and planned activities and initiatives for 2017

- Establish an Employee Assistance Programme for staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance
- Develop and implement an overpayments Policy, jointly with Service’s Salaries Section and the Finance Unit
- Provide support to members in their roles as employers

The Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann, Ms Elaine Gunn, meeting with a delegation of the American Council of Young Political Leaders during their visit to the Houses of the Oireachtas.
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

Members’ Pensions Unit

Key activities in 2016

In addition to the management of pension payments to members, the Pensions Unit administered the termination and pensions arrangements following the 2016 general elections as follows:

- there were 424 former members’ pensions at the end of 2016; there were 42 new pensions in 2016 following the elections to both Houses
- changes to the Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR) rates were applied. These were calculated at the end of 2016 in preparation for the 2017 January payroll

Objectives and planned activities and initiatives for 2017

- provide information on pensions to all new members advising them of their relevant scheme
- complete payment of termination payments as a result of the general elections
- implement changes to the Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR) rates

Training and Professional Development

The Training and Development Unit provides a range of training programmes and professional development opportunities to members of the Houses and members’ staff, and staff of the Service.

Training for members and their staff

Some of the training courses undertaken in 2016 included:

- constituency database training
- training courses in Lotus Notes, MS Word and MS Excel
- social media training
- health and safety training, including occupational first aid
- fire warden training
- health and wellbeing seminars
- Irish language courses

Members of the Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation meeting with members of the Committee for the Economy of the Northern Ireland Assembly.
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

Training for Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

Training and learning interventions were provided to Staff of the Service in a broad range of areas encompassing technical, professional and personal development training. Training was provided in-house and also through attendance at external training programmes, as appropriate.

Some of the training undertaken in 2016 included:
- Clerical Officer development course
- Junior Clerk development course
- coaching for managers
- performance management workshops
- health and safety training including occupational first aid
- fire warden training
- health and wellbeing seminars
- induction training programmes
- Irish language courses (Beginner and Intermediate/Advanced)

In accordance with the Civil Service Renewal Plan, which seeks to strengthen staff capability and facilitate continuous professional development, the following programmes were delivered to staff in ICT and HR Units:
- ITIL foundation training
- Project Management – Prince 2 foundation and practitioner
- Business Processes Improvement
- CIPD Certificate in Human Resources
- CIPD Diploma in Human Resources

Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme

In addition to the training and development courses offered through the Training and Development Unit, under this Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme staff of the Service may apply to have the appropriate fees for designated third level courses of study, or other relevant courses provided by an accredited educational institution, refunded or advanced subject to certain conditions.

The Scheme continues to play an important role in career and personal development for staff and provides them with the opportunity to pursue an area of study that supports the Service in delivering on its strategic objectives.

In the academic year 2016/2017, 80 staff of the Service availed of this opportunity to undertake further studies.
**Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff**

**Objectives and planned activities and initiatives for 2017**

- Undertake a training needs analysis project to identify gaps in knowledge, skills, and training in order to meet strategic objectives (in conjunction with ongoing role profile project)
- Development and roll out of Leadership Development Programmes
- Development and delivery of the Manager’s Tool Kit Programme
- Continued implementation of the Service’s Organisational Development Initiative through delivery of modules in coaching and high performing teams, and further staff development programmes
- Ongoing training for staff to strengthen capacity and capability in accordance with the Civil Service Renewal Plan
- Pilot training and development e-Learning modules and increase delivery of online learning content

**Inter-Parliamentary Staff Exchange Programmes and Study Visits**

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service participates in an annual bilateral parliamentary staff exchange programme with the German Bundestag. Each year the Service also hosts study visits to the Houses by officials from other Parliaments.

In September 2016, the Service hosted visits by a delegation from the French Senate and the Knesset (parliament of Israel). In December 2016, two members of staff participated in a staff exchange opportunity with the German Bundestag. These exchange programmes provide an important opportunity for staff of the Service to share knowledge and experiences with staff from other Parliaments.

**Salaries Unit**

**Key activities in 2016**

- Implemented 10,000 formal payroll instructions / changes for civil service and political staff
- Engaged in scoping of Payroll Shared Service Centre project
- Upgraded the payroll system for approximately 1,200 end-users
- Rolled out new version of online payslips

**Objectives and planned Activities and Initiatives for 2017**

- Rollout of online overtime system for civil service staff and staff employed by members
- Further engagement with Payroll Shared Service Centre Project
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

Deputy Brendan Smith, Chair of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence, meeting with H.E. Mr. Robin Barnett, British Ambassador to Ireland.

Reform and HR Strategy Unit – Organisational Development and Reform Implementation

HR Services has a lead role in supporting the Service’s Organisational Development Initiative and public service reform initiatives for the Service.

Key activities in 2016

- The Internal Communications Group held a number of meetings in 2016 to prepare an Internal Communications Plan for the Service, which was refined following consultations with staff through a series of focus groups. The Plan will be launched in early 2017
- Changes to improve the Service’s intranet, The Plinth, are underway to improve its efficiency and user-friendliness and increase usage among staff
- The PO Network, AP Network and An Líonra, the Higher Executive Officer/Senior Clerk Network, held a number of meetings and events throughout the year which included guest speakers.

- Actions under Civil Service Renewal Plan included: the dissemination of the results of the first Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey to staff through the Staff Networks; the promotion of the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards; publication of the Service’s Governance Framework; and strengthening the Service’s performance management process. The Reform and Strategy Unit also oversaw the development of the Integrated Reform and Delivery Plan for the Service.

Objectives and planned activities and initiatives for 2017

- launch of the Leadership Standard along with a Leadership Development Programme
- consultation on the next phase of Public Service Reform Plan 2017-2019
- planning for implementation of the next phase of Organisational Development Initiative

Continuing Professional Development

Participation in parliamentary networks and meetings are important professional development opportunities for staff of the Service through building professional links with parliamentary officials from other parliaments and sharing information and exchanging experiences and best practice on parliamentary procedure and processes.

Parliamentary Reporting Conferences and Events

Attendance at parliamentary reporting conferences and events provides opportunities for staff involved in producing and publishing the Official Report of the proceedings of the Houses to share best practice in reporting and editing skills and the methodologies
and technologies used to produce the Official Report of the parliamentary proceedings.

In 2016, the Debates Office participated in the following conferences and parliamentary staff exchanges:

- representatives from the Debates Office attended and presented papers at the British Irish Parliamentary Reporting Association (BIPRA) and the Hansard Association of Canada (HAC) conferences in August
- the Debates Office hosted three visits from Official Report sections in other Parliaments
- one Parliamentary Reporter participated in a staff exchange with a member of the reporting team in the House of Lords
- the Debates Office held an off-site knowledge sharing and collaborative learning day

Parliamentary Lawyers’ Network

Legal Advisers from Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser (OPLA) are encouraged to attend professional development courses that aim to enhance their skills and competencies. All legal advisers are supported in undertaking continuing professional development by attending legal training courses and availing of opportunities to attend networking events with legal advisers from other Parliaments.

Legal Advisers participated in the Annual UK and Ireland Parliamentary Lawyers’ Conference hosted by the Welsh Assembly in 2016. Parliamentary lawyers from the House of Commons, the National Assembly of Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas Service participated in the conference.

Sharing legal opinions across the OPLA and updating staff on relevant legal developments is routinely implemented through information sharing meetings in the section.

Parliamentary Clerks’ Network

Three Clerks participated in the annual UK, Irish and Islands Clerks’ Seminar hosted by the States Assembly, Jersey, in October 2016. Parliamentary Clerks from House of Commons, House of Lords, Isle of Man, Guernsey, Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly also participated in the seminar.

Staff Networks

The Service has supported the development of a number of staff networks that seek to facilitate opportunities to develop professional links between staff at equivalent grades, provide a forum for knowledge sharing and collaborative working and contribute to the achievement of the Service’s strategic objectives. The Networks also provide a forum for consultation on Service-wide policies. The highlights for each Network in 2016 are set out below.

Principal Officer Network

The Principal Officer (PO) Network held its second annual conference in January 2016. The conference theme was 2016 – a time of change. There were speakers from both business and academia with presentations on strategy, change management, appreciative leadership, and electoral change. In June, as a follow-up to the conference, the Network received a presentation on the Irish National Election Study 2016 from Mr. Michael Marsh (Emeritus Professor, Trinity College). The presentation was recorded for Oireachtas TV.
Goal 1: High performing, engaged and motivated staff

The PO Network aims to meet bi-monthly. In 2016 the Network held four meetings. POs used these meetings as an opportunity to progress a range of Service initiatives. Highlights for 2016 included:
- developing a new Strategic Plan for the Service
- establishing a Records Management Unit
- developing of Service-wide enterprise architecture
- ICT security
- redeveloping the website of the Houses
- HR policy
- People and Organisational Development programme
- leadership training for senior management

The PO Network also reported to the Management Committee on implementation of the Service’s obligations under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

Assistant Principal Officer Network

The Assistant Principal Officer Network received a presentation on Leadership in a Public Sector Context from Mr. John Lonergan (former Governor of Mountjoy Prison). The Network also received an overview of the draft Strategic Plan for the Service from the Secretary General. HR Section presented the results of two staff surveys to the Network: the results for the Service of the Employee Engagement Survey, conducted across the Civil Service in 2015, and the results of the Tacit Knowledge Survey conducted in the Service.

An Líonra, the Higher Executive Officer/Senior Clerk Network

An Líonra, The Higher Executive Officer/Senior Clerk Network, received a presentation on The Benefits of a Network from Dr. Breda O’Connell, Department of Psychology, University of Limerick.

The Clerk of Seanad Éireann reads the names of the members nominated and members elected to the 25th Seanad.

Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal: Governance Overview

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003 (as amended) is the legislative basis for the establishment of the Commission.

The Commission is a statutory corporate body and is independent in the performance of its functions. It is unique in terms of its structure and mandate. It is not a Government Department or semi-State body, but is a hybrid statutory body without a “parent” Department to report to. Its membership,
functions and responsibilities are set out in legislation and its budgeting arrangements give it direct access to a three year drawdown from the Central Fund, which means that it is not part of the annual Votes process applicable to Government Departments and Offices. The current three-year budget allocation for the Houses is €369m covering the period 2016-2018.

Staff of the Commission (known collectively as “the Service”) are civil servants of the State, rather than the Government. The Commission Acts replicate the provisions of the Public Service Management Act 1997, meaning that the relationship between the Commission and its Chief Executive (the Secretary General of the Service) is analogous to the relationship between a Government Minister and the Secretary General of a Government Department.

Since its establishment, the Commission has implemented an effective governance framework for the Service with a focus on performance, accountability and continuous improvement in the administration of the Parliament and in the delivery of responsive services to both Houses, to members and to the general public.

**Corporate Governance Assurance Framework**

Responsibility for internal control systems resides with the Secretary General/Accounting Officer. The Service complies with all of the pillars of the civil service governance framework, including public financial procedures; public procurement policy, legislation and guidelines; risk management; internal audit; internal controls; project management guidelines; travel policy; and Audit Committee. Therefore, the Commission is firmly within the civil service norm in terms of its governance arrangements and reports annually to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

**Financial Management and Reporting**

The Secretary General is accountable for the Commission’s overall financial performance by means of effective budgeting, monitoring, measurement and reporting mechanisms. This function is managed by the Finance Unit on a day-to-day basis, which:

- manages and monitors ongoing expenditure
- reports quarterly on ongoing expenditure to the Management Committee and quarterly to the Finance Committee and Commission
- prepares the Commission’s Annual Account for submission by the Secretary General to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) by 31 March of each year
- assists the C&AG’s Office in their interim and annual audit of the Commission Accounts
- prepares the Commission’s Annual Estimate for Commission approval and noting by the Dáil
- prepares the Commission’s three-year budget framework for approval by the Commission

The Accounts of the Commission are produced in the form of a Civil Service Appropriation Account as approved by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform under section 14(1) of the Commission Acts. While the Accounts are prepared on a cash basis, they also show the net position at year-end regarding accrued income, commitments and liabilities. The Accounts are audited on an annual basis by the C&AG and are published in the Commission’s Annual Report.
**Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance**

A Statement on Internal Financial Control (SIFC), which is signed by the Accounting Officer, forms part of the Appropriation Account and gives reasonable assurance that an effective system of internal financial controls is maintained and operated by the Service. The Statement sets out the internal control environment within the Service, including the financial control environment, the framework of administrative procedures, management reporting and internal control. It includes a statement of compliance with procurement guidelines and confirmation that the Service has an Audit Committee and an Internal Audit function. The C&AG, in carrying out the audit of Annual Accounts, has particular regard to the system of internal control in place in the organisation and highlights in the reports instances of the financial consequences of weaknesses in the system of internal control. The Oireachtas Accounting Officer may be invited to appear before the Committee of Public Accounts to give evidence on the accounts as required.

The Commission’s Annual Account 2016, which has been audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, is set out at Appendix IV.

**Risk Management**

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.

The Service’s risk management policy and framework are guided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform’s *Risk Management Guidelines for Government Departments and Offices 2016*, and are approved by the Risk Management Committee, the Management Committee and the Audit Committee.

The Service’s Risk Management Policy 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. The Policy identifies roles and responsibilities for all staff in the Oireachtas – from the Secretary General, Management Committee, Section Heads and down to individual staff members, as well as the Risk Management Committee and the Risk Co-Ordinator. The Internal Auditor attends meetings of the Risk Management Committee in an advisory capacity.
Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

The Audit Committee has an important role to play in reviewing risk management and internal audit reports on the effectiveness of the risk management systems in the Oireachtas. Risk is a standing item on the agenda of the Audit Committee and the Management Committee.

The Oireachtas operates an Operational Risk Register and a Strategic Risk Register in the format of a Lotus Notes database. The Register is the primary tool for risk tracking and risk mitigation actions. The review of the Risk Register is undertaken on an annual basis.

Operational risks near misses and/or materialisations are reported to the Management Committee on a monthly basis and the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

Corporate Governance Framework for the Oireachtas

The Civil Service Renewal Plan 2014 sets out new arrangements for enhanced governance and accountability for the Civil Service. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform subsequently published a Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service in response to Action 3 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan – to set a common Governance Framework for the Civil Service. The objective of the Framework is to bring clarity to how all civil service Departments and Offices are structured, directed, controlled, managed, and to describe their accountability and reporting structures. The Service’s Corporate Governance Framework, based on these central standards, was published to the website in March 2016 and brings together the Service’s main policies and procedures for corporate governance into one reference point.

The Framework sets out the Service’s standards of conduct, its values and the governance systems by which it operates.

Strategic Plan 2016-2018 and Corporate Business Plan 2016-2018

The preparation of the Strategic Plan for each three-year period of the Commission is a statutory obligation of the Secretary General under section 16(4) of the Commission Acts.

The Strategic Plan 2016-2018, which was developed in the context of a comprehensive programme of parliamentary reform, outlines the values that inform how the Service will fulfil its statutory mandate together with its objectives and priorities over the three year period of the plan. It was prepared following extensive consultation with staff of the Service, including a presentation to the Partnership Committee, and is aligned with the Commission’s three year budget allocation.
Arising from the consultation process, four high-level strategies were identified for the Service:

- Support the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Parliamentary Reform Agenda
- Support Members in their Constitutional Roles
- Promote Accessibility and Public Engagement
- Develop our Capability and our Staff

These strategies and 12 supporting goals provide a roadmap for the Service over the next three years to enable it to successfully support the Houses, their Committees and their members and all stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan is underpinned by a Corporate Business Plan (CBP) which identifies 50 tasks and 227 deliverables. The CBP also assigns responsibility at Principal Officer level for each deliverable with timeframes for their delivery. Progress on the delivery of the CBP will be measured through formal review meetings between the Secretary General and senior managers who are accountable for the delivery of the tasks assigned to them. Progress towards achievements will be measured through the satisfaction levels of our key stakeholders, including members, Oireachtas office-holders and staff.

Standing left to right: Mr. Peter Finnegan, Clerk of Dáil Éireann and Secretary General (Chief Executive of the Commission), Mr. Michael Errity, Assistant Secretary, (Corporate and Members Services), Deputy Louise O’Reilly, Deputy Catherine Murphy, Senator Gerard P. Craughwell, Deputy Joe Carey, Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson of the Commission) and Senator Ned O’Sullivan.

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission  
– Exercise of Governance Functions

In exercising its governance functions, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission meets at least once a month when the Houses are sitting, or as may be necessary for the effective performance of its functions.

The dissolution of Dáil Éireann on 3 February 2016 and the ensuing elections to both Houses impacted on the number of sitting days during 2016. The number of meetings held in this period reflects the sitting pattern of the Houses following the elections.
Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

The Commission met on six occasions during 2016. It held two meetings prior to the dissolution of the Dáil. Its first meeting following the elections, with new membership, took place in July 2016.

The business addressed at meetings included the following:

- Appointment of the Clerk of Dáil Éireann in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.
- Appointment of Assistant Secretary (Parliamentary Services Division) and Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.
- Consideration of quarterly financial reports from the Finance Committee and examination of detailed information on the monthly spending by the Houses against spending forecast.
- Commission’s Annual Accounts for 2015.
- Approval of the Commission’s Annual Report 2015 for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas.
- Allocation of resources under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for members for the 32nd Dáil/25th Seanad and related policy decisions.
- Approval of Statutory Instrument to give legal effect to the Commission decision on the allocation of resources under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.
- Programme of essential structural and upgrade works for Georgian Leinster House, including the accommodation plan for the duration of the works.
- Appointment of Deputy Chairperson of the Commission following the appointment of new members of the Commission.
- Appointment of members to serve on committees of the Commission following the appointment of new members of the Commission.
- Approval of staffing levels for Oireachtas office-holders in line with the Guidelines on Staffing of Ministerial Offices issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in June 2016.
- Re-establishment of an Editorial Board with responsibility for overseeing the broadcasting of proceedings on Oireachtas TV.
- Approval for the signing of a contract with RTÉ to broadcast Oireachtas TV on the Saorview multiplex platform.
- Legal proceedings involving the Houses of the Oireachtas.
- Approval for the award of contracts for the Technology in the Chambers project, undertaken to modernise the technical systems in the Chambers of both Houses and in the Committee Rooms.
- Catering Services in the Houses.
- Policy for the Houses on Communicating with Members of the Deaf Community.
- Approval for the creation of a new position of Head of the Parliamentary Budget Office in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, subject to the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform as required by section 12(3)(c) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015.
Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

- Approval of the Strategic Plan 2016-2018 for the Service and related Corporate Business Plan
- Application of Statutory Instrument No. 84/2010 – Oireachtas (Allowances and Facilities) Regulations 2010

Further information on the work of the Commission and the minutes of its meetings are available on the website www.oireachtas.ie.

Support for new Members of the Commission

To support the new Commission in undertaking its governance role, the governance handbook for Commission members was updated to meet the information needs of members appointed to serve on the Commission in the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad. The handbook provides information on the governance role and responsibilities of the Commission and the statutory functions and powers conferred on it by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts.

The handbook includes the Code of Conduct for Commission Members which sets out the ethical and professional standards that guide Commission members in identifying and managing conflicts of interest in the performance of their functions. It also includes the rules of procedure for the conduct of its business, which were updated by the Commission to coincide with the appointment of new members.

Meetings in 2016

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Management Committee of the Service

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 Committee contributes to efficient and effective management of the Service.

The members of the Management Committee are the Secretary General and Clerk of Dáil Éireann, the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for Corporate and Members’ Services, the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for House Services, the Clerk of Seanad Éireann, an external member nominated by the Secretary General, and the Principal Office Chairs of the three sub-committees of the Management Committee.

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.

There are a number of standing items on the Management Committee agenda including:
Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

- topical management issues update
- financial and non-financial performance reports
- human resources management reports
- risk management
- update on the management committee work programme

The Management Committee met on 11 occasions in 2016. The main policy matters considered included the following:

- Annual Estimates for 2017
- Internal Audit reports
- Development and implementation of Plan for Dáil and Seanad General Elections
- Progress reports on implementation of the Service’s Integrated Reform Delivery Plan
- Corporate Governance Framework for the Service, including Assignment of Responsibilities
- FOI Publication Scheme
- The Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey
- Revised Flexi-time arrangements
- On-going Business Continuity Planning Exercise Reports
- Oireachtas Centenary Programme 2017-2019
- Annual Resource Plan for the Service
- Technologies in the Chamber Project
- Draft Data Protection Policy for the Service
- Leadership Standard for the Service

Management Committee sub-Committees

The Management Committee is assisted by three sub-Committees as follows:

- People and Finance
- Systems
- Business and Strategy

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 undertake to Chair the chosen sub-Committee. Appointments to serve on the sub-Committees are generally for a 12 month period, with the Chair of each sub-Committee 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 Office of the Commission and Secretary General provides secretariat support to the Management Committee and to its sub-Committees.

People and Finance sub-Committee

The People and Finance sub-Committee considers such matters as human and financial resources for the Service. It met on four occasions in 2016 to consider:

- 2016 Annual Resource Plan
- Estimates 2017
- Protected Disclosures Policy and Guidelines

Systems sub-Committee

The Systems sub-Committee has 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.

The sub-Committee met on four occasions in 2016. Key issues considered include:

- Outline of ICT Organisation Structure, Delivery Methodology and Governance
Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

- ICT Projects Governance Structures and Programme/Project Boards
- Project Board Membership and Systems sub-Committee Work Programme
- Update on Technology RFTs for the Technology in the Chambers Project
- Update on Members’ Administration System (MAS) Project
- PID – Virtual Desktop Infrastructure Project Updates, Issues and Updates
- PID – Chamber Technology and Project Updates
- PID – Website Redevelopment and Project Updates
- PID – Data Repository, ETL and Data Discovery and Project Updates
- PID – Enterprise Architecture and Project Updates
- PID – Business Process Mapping Project, sequencing and Project Updates
- General ICT Vulnerabilities
- Business Case for Implementation of a second resilient data link to an off-site centre
- Business Case for preparation of a PID for the development of an Enterprise Procedural Solution
- Business Case for ICT Enterprise Digital Vision Oireachtas 2020
- Business Case for Digital Transformation Plan for Procedural Services 2017-2020
- Strategic Approach to Decade of Centenaries – Centenary of First Sitting of Dáil Éireann – 21st January 2019
- Draft Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- Establishment of a Parliamentary Archive
- Draft Strategic Plan 2016-2018
- Actions to support implementation of the Houses of the Oireachtas Communications Strategy.

Business and Strategy sub-Committee

The sub-Committee on Business and Strategy considers such matters of strategy, business operations and organisation development for the Service. It met on four occasions in 2016 and considered:

- Draft Strategic Plan 2016-2018
- Actions to support implementation of the Houses of the Oireachtas Communications Strategy.

Counting of votes at the Seanad general election in April 2016.

Internal Audit and Oversight Functions

The Internal Audit function of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service contributes to the governance and accountability framework for the Service through the provision of independent assurance to the Secretary General that key systems and governance structures are operating as intended and that internal controls are operating effectively.

The Internal Audit Unit’s functions include:

- reporting on the Service’s compliance with relevant legislation, policies, circulars, regulations and guidelines
- reviewing the policies and procedures in place for the management of risk and the ongoing
Goal 2: Good Corporate Governance

implementation of internal controls in the operations of the Service
- reporting on the implementation of internal audit recommendations
- supporting the Audit Committee in its work

A work programme for 2017 was agreed by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 7 December 2016.

The Audit Committee met on four occasions in 2016 and considered:
- four internal audit reports
- one information note/briefing
- the C&AG’s report on the 2015 annual accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
- the C&AG’s report on the Ciste Pinsean Account 2015
- one report from the Risk Committee
- one report on the updated Fixed Assets Policy for the Service, and
- two risk materialisation reports

The Audit Committee monitors the implementation of internal audit reports’ recommendations on a twice yearly basis.

The Audit Committee presents an annual report on its activities each year to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission in accordance with section 14A(10)(c) of the Commission Acts.

Goal 3: Development of innovative ICT solutions to support our work

Overview of services provided and achievements in support of this strategic goal:

Information and Communications Technology Strategic Planning

The Service has invested in a programme of ICT strategic projects focused on harnessing advancements in digital technologies in support of the overall strategic objectives of the Service, ensuring an integrated approach to the management of parliamentary information, better aligning ICT with the evolving business needs of the Houses and members, and enabling the Service to operate more efficiently.

A number of these projects were advanced in 2016, including:

Website Redevelopment Project

An important objective under the Houses of the Oireachtas Strategic Plan is to increase public
Goal 3: Development of innovative ICT solutions to support our work

understanding and to communicate the work of the Houses in more accessible forms and in so doing strengthen engagement between the people and their Parliament.

To this end a project to redevelop the Oireachtas website is currently underway. The website redevelopment project will provide an improved user interface, easier online access to information and a range of other functional enhancements. The redesign follows extensive qualitative and quantitative research with a range of users to obtain their views and understand their needs. The website is being redesigned with this user-centred approach to ensure it becomes an important resource for increasing public understanding of the work of the Houses and members. The beta version of the website will be launched in the first quarter of 2017 and will operate in parallel with the existing website while it continues to be tested and improved.

The new website will continue to evolve and develop following its launch to ensure that users will have confidence that the website is a living, breathing, evolving and reliable information resource. The Service will build on the website redevelopment project and will deliver additional functionality in further releases in 2017.

ICT Enterprise Architecture

An important focus of ICT is to move away from the disjointed IT infrastructure and independent applications and systems, to the integration of the business systems and services that support the work of the Houses and their Committees.

The project to deliver a full ICT Enterprise Architecture is due to be completed in mid 2017. This defined architecture will ensure consistent standards of data, infrastructure and applications and will provide a solid foundation to advance the development of future systems and services to support the core business objectives of the Service.

Data Repository and Extract, Transform, Load (ETL) Process

The primary goal of the Data Repository Project is to integrate the Service’s data silos by means of a centralised data repository that enables data to be shared by systems and business units.

Deliverables under the Data Repository, Extract, Transform, Load (ETL) and the Discovery Project during 2016 have provided a significant improvement by developing an open data service for the provision of information to the website. This service will be provided for public reuse and further developed to enhance the information made available in open format by the Service.

Business Process Mapping and Improvement Project

Under the Business Process Mapping and Improvement (BPMI) Project, Business Analysts mapped, defined, analysed and improved core business processes across the Service. The optimised processes will drive a more efficient delivery of services and support a more efficient use of resources. The optimised processes have identified areas where systems can be developed to provide services over multiple business units, reducing the duplication of effort and improving efficiencies.

The Service will present a Digital Transformation Plan for the procedural services areas in mid 2017, to deliver improvements identified through the BPMI Project. The Service will also present programmes in
Goal 4: Economic, efficient and effective use of resources

the following areas:

- programme of development for informing citizens, members and staff
- programme of development for informing parliament and the debate
- programme of development for corporate services

Technology in the Chambers Project

A major programme of improvements in the technology supporting the Dáil chamber was approved and delivered in 2016. The programme included the replacement of critical aspects of the Dáil chamber equipment (delegate units) containing integrated microphone and voting technology and modern chamber graphical display units. Planning for the replacement and updating of technology in the Committee Rooms has commenced.

HR Reform and Strategy

In 2016, the focus of the HR Unit was to ensure that appropriate staffing levels, within sanctioned numbers, were available to support the core business of the Houses. The main reason for the increase in the staffing level was to support the demand for services to support implementation of the programme of parliamentary reform as presented by the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform and the ongoing implementation of organisational reforms underway in the Service.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service has focused on making best use of available resources and enhancing its capacity and capability through implementation of the Organisational Development Initiative (formerly known as the People and Organisational Development Programme) to work more efficiently and increase organisational capacity; to implement change and to enable the Service to develop as a high performing organisation. The objectives of the Organisational Development Initiative are consistent with commitments under the Public Service reform agenda and Civil Service Renewal Plan.

Public Procurement Management

The Service is fully committed to compliance with public procurement policy. The advisory function of the Procurement Unit is a key element in this regard. The Procurement Unit provides current best practice advice for staff of the Service in relation to the purchase of goods and services. It ensures that tendering by Contract Managers is carried out in compliance with national and EU legislation and in line with Office of Government Procurement (OGP) circulars and directions. The Procurement Unit is assisted by the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser as and when required.

The Procurement Unit has access to the expertise of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) which has taken over responsibility for procurement policies and procedures in the public service. During 2016, it met with the Service’s assigned Key Account Manager in the OGP in relation to various procurement requirements and facilitated meetings between OGP category managers and contract managers from the Service. The Service avails of central framework agreements for commonly acquired goods or services where beneficial to the
Goal 4: Economic, efficient and effective use of resources

Service, for instance in the acquiring of stationery and office supplies, ICT consumables and equipment, facilities, and travel service provider.

The Oireachtas Contracts Committee ensures that procurement rules and procedures, both nationally and under EU Public Procurement Directives, are adhered to on all contracts in the following circumstances:

- it is proposed for exceptional reasons not to have a competitive process (e.g. sole supplier)
- only one tender was received in response to an RFT
- the lowest priced tender is not proposed to be accepted

The Oireachtas Contracts Committee ensures that procurement rules and procedures, both nationally and under EU Public Procurement Directives, are adhered to on all contracts in the following circumstances:

- it is proposed for exceptional reasons not to have a competitive process (e.g. sole supplier)
- only one tender was received in response to an RFT
- the lowest priced tender is not proposed to be accepted

The Procurement Unit facilitated and participated in seven meetings of the Oireachtas Contracts Committee in 2016. The Committee approved nine procurement processes which fell under the terms of reference of the Committee.

The Procurement Unit assisted in the following procurement processes in 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU Threshold Tenders</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Tenders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request for Quotes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Request for Tender (SRFTs)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Soundings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Indicative Notices (PINS)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It also organised, in conjunction with an external procurement consultant, training for staff of the Service involved in public procurement.

The training comprised the following four modules:

- an overview of the key features of the new EU Procurement Directives
- contract management – roles and responsibilities of contract managers
- tendering for goods and services up to €25k threshold (where between 3 and 5 quotes are required to be sought)
- tendering for goods and services over €25k threshold (all contracts over €25k are required to be advertised on e-Tenders and contracts with a value over €135k must also be advertised on EU OJEU)

The Unit will continue to support the training needs of contract managers and staff throughout 2017.

A bespoke training course was also designed for the members of the Oireachtas Contracts Committee and this was delivered in January 2017.

The Procurement Unit also created a Procurement Page on the Oireachtas intranet Portal to provide best practice advice, information and templates for staff in relation to public procurement. To further assist Contract Managers, the Procurement Unit designed a number of checklists for various procurement processes to ensure that each file held by Contract Managers is complete and in full compliance with audit requirements. The Unit maintains a central Contracts Register for contracts over €25k and each section maintains a local register of the contracts under their area of responsibility regardless of value.

The Procurement Unit engaged with IT experts, both internal and external, on the Enterprise Architecture business process mapping initiative.

Non-compliance with procurement regulations, if any, is reported to the C&AG in accordance with Circular 40/b2: Public Procurement Guidelines. This is also reported in the Annual Appropriation Account in the Statement of Internal Financial Control.
Appendix I

Houses of the Oireachtas Service Organisation Chart

Clerk of Dáil Éireann
& Secretary General
PETER FINNEGAN

Office of the Clerk
Private Secretary
B MCGLYNN

Office of the Commission & Secretary General
M DEVLIN

Assistant Secretary,
Parliamentary Services Division & Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann
E GUNN

Assistant Secretary, Corporate & Members’ Services Division
M ERRITY

Members’ Services
International Services
Catering
C SMITH

Finance
Procurement
Risk
M DEVLIN

Office of Parliamentary
Legal Adviser
Internal Audit
M ENGLISH

HR Services
Pensions, Salaries Training
M CRAWLEY

Superintendent’s Area incl Security, Protocol, Events, H&S, Accommodation
P CONWAY

Clerk of Seanad Éireann
M GROVES

Clerk-Assistant of Seanad Éireann
B DOODY

Office of the Seanad

Sectoral Committees
Administration & Development
C HEARNE

EU & External Relations Committees
N/S IPA & BIPA
M GRANT

Budgetary Scrutiny, Statutory Committees
T MALONE

Parliamentary Inquiries and Investigations
VACANCY

House Services
P DORAN

Communications, Broadcasting & Web
D DIGNAM

Research, Library and Archive, Records Management
M DENNISON

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin
V UIBH EACHACH

Debates Office
A MAXWELL

ICT
Operations
B HICKEY

ICT Systems
F DE BRÍ
## Appendix II

### Statement of Resources (Civil Service staff only) 2016

#### Table 1. Summary of numbers by grade (excluding State Industrial Employees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Number as approved by Commission in 2008</th>
<th>Number approved in 2016, including fixed term contracts</th>
<th>Total number in place December 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Secretary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (PO (higher))</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Officer (standard)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Counsel Grade III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Clerk</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Clerk</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Officer</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephonist</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Officer</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Usher/Deputy Head Usher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usher Grade Team Leader</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent’s Section: Usher Grade III, Services Officer, Porter, Service Attendant, Cleaner</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Editor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Editor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator Grade I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator Grad II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator Grad III</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Officer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporters</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Researchers</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Number as approved by Commission in 2008</td>
<td>Number approved in 2016, including fixed term contracts</td>
<td>Total number in place December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records Manager post</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist, Temporary and Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Secretary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Civil Service Staff in Place</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>438</strong></td>
<td><strong>485</strong></td>
<td><strong>449</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancies</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>485</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*At 31 December 2016. Figures by grade have been rounded.*
## Financial Information

### 3 Year Budget 2016-2018 fixed by 2015 Act = €369m

Breaks down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Outturn</th>
<th>2017 Estimate</th>
<th>2018 Forecast</th>
<th>Current 3 Year Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€m</td>
<td>€m</td>
<td>€m</td>
<td>€m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Outturn</td>
<td>€116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Estimate</td>
<td>€127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Forecast</td>
<td>€126</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current 3 Year Projection</td>
<td>€369</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2016 Outturn</th>
<th>2016 Estimate</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Services</td>
<td>43,920</td>
<td>53,358</td>
<td>-18%</td>
<td>Underspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Parliamentary Activities</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>-60%</td>
<td>Underspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members’ Staff Pay and Pensions</td>
<td>26,467</td>
<td>27,016</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Overspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members (incl. MEPs) Pay and Pensions</td>
<td>36,362</td>
<td>38,447</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>Underspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members and Former Members Allowances and Expenses</td>
<td>8,784</td>
<td>11,249</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>Underspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Travel</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-82%</td>
<td>Underspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Committee Expenses</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>-52%</td>
<td>Underspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115,887</strong></td>
<td><strong>130,991</strong></td>
<td><strong>-12%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Underspend</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Appropriation Account 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Estimate</th>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Outturn</th>
<th></th>
<th>2015 Outturn</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€000</td>
<td>€000</td>
<td>€000</td>
<td>€000</td>
<td>€000</td>
<td>€000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Delivering Services to Parliament And Oireachtas Members</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>115,887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>115,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Total</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>115,887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>115,887</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deduct:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Estimate</th>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Outturn</th>
<th></th>
<th>2015 Outturn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Receipts of the Commission</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2,330)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2,330)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Total</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>113,557</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>113,557</td>
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</table>

## A - Analysis of Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Estimate</th>
<th></th>
<th>2016 Outturn</th>
<th></th>
<th>2015 Outturn</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Other Services</td>
<td>24,767</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24,767</td>
<td>23,034</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Seanad Éireann</td>
<td>9,912</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,912</td>
<td>8,431</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oireachtas Committees</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Total:</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td>115,887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>115,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Administrative Expenditure</td>
<td>2016 Estimate</td>
<td>2016 Outturn</td>
<td>2015 Outturn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(a) Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.</td>
<td>€27,960</td>
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<td>€25,217</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€25,217</td>
<td>€26,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(b) Travel and subsistence.</td>
<td>€355</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€180</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€180</td>
<td>€250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(c) Training and development and incidental expenses.</td>
<td>€2,842</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€853</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€853</td>
<td>€1,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(d) Postal and telecommunications services.</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>€781</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€781</td>
<td>€747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(e) Office equipment and external IT services.</td>
<td>€9,228</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€8,528</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€8,528</td>
<td>€8,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(f) Office premises expenses.</td>
<td>€2,949</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€2,671</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€2,671</td>
<td>€2,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(g) Consultancy services and value for money and policy review.</td>
<td>€2,520</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€399</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€399</td>
<td>€415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(h) Parliamentary printing.</td>
<td>€1,343</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€660</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€660</td>
<td>€695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(i) Library and research services.</td>
<td>€770</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€444</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€444</td>
<td>€550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(j) Public relations and communications.</td>
<td>€199</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€90</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€90</td>
<td>€115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Total:</td>
<td>€49,015</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€39,823</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>€39,823</td>
<td>€42,158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission for the Period from 1 January To 31 December 2016
(kept in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015)
## Contents

- Introduction 100
- Statement on Internal Financial Control 100
- Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles 104
- Comptroller and Auditor General Certificate 108
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Introduction

As Accounting Officer for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission ("the Commission"), I am required each year to prepare the Appropriation Account and to submit the account to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In accordance with this requirement, I have prepared the attached account of the amount expended in the year ended 31 December 2016 for the salaries and expenses of the Commission, including certain grants, and for certain expenses in connection with the European Parliament.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the statement of estimates, prepared and published by the Commission in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2015 ("the Acts"), of the amount of moneys required by the Commission in respect of ongoing expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2016.

The Commission is funded on a three year statutory cycle under the Acts. The format of the account is specifically laid out in Schedule 1 of the Acts. In the event that there are differences between the format of the Commission Accounts and the circulars governing the rules and format of the accounts from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), I am legally obliged to adhere to the Commission Acts as this primary legislation takes precedence over administrative DPER circulars.

There was a surplus for the year of €17,434,507.

The accounts of the grant in respect of inter-parliamentary activities, the grant to the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly and the accounts of the Catering and Bar Services are presented in Note 7.

Grant funding of €14,564m in respect of Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais is charged to subhead 2(i). The pension fund is governed by three trustees who are responsible for preparing an account and for ensuring the regularity of the transactions. The account is separately audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles and notes 1 to 7 form part of the account, and are in line with guidance provided in the DPER Circular 29/2016.

Statement on Internal Financial Control

Responsibility for system of Internal Financial Control

As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service ("the Service"). This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

The position in regard to the financial control environment, the framework of administrative procedures, management reporting and internal audit is as follows:
Financial Control Environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability;
- reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned;
- formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action;
- there is an Audit Committee to advise me in discharging my responsibilities for the internal financial control system.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that –

- there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management;
- there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- a risk management system operates within the Service;
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems;
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines;
- the Service ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines. The Service is compliant with the exception of 19 contracts, each relating to payments in excess of €25,000 with a total value of €1,736,617, which were undertaken without a competitive process and were reported by me in my 2016 annual Circular 40/02 return. These are broken down as follows:
  a) 13 contracts were awarded where there was only a sole supplier available and the value of these contracts amounted to €1,419,313; all of which have contracts in place.
  b) 3 urgent legal counsel services were engaged with a total value of €152,165.
  c) 2 existing supply contracts were extended with a value of €131,028.
  d) 1 situation arose where the Service was utilising an OGP Framework contract supplier who subsequently pulled out of providing the goods and the Service procured the goods separately with a total value of €34,111.

Procedures are in place to ensure purchases without competitive processes are assessed to determine whether competitive processes are required.

Oireachtas Catering and Bar Services

In recent years the Service has put arrangements in place to enhance the control environment, financial management and procurement management in the catering and bar areas. The Service is acting to bring the Catering and Bar areas to the same levels of
financial reporting and oversight as apply elsewhere in the Service notably in the area of procurement. For the first time, a summary of the Income and Expenditure Accounts of the Catering and Bar Services are attached to the Commission’s Appropriation Account at Note 7.3.

The Service has undertaken a programme of reforms in the Catering and Bar areas, and developments to date include:

1. recruitment through an open competitive external selection process of a Restaurant Manager whose job specification includes managerial functions with more direct input/support from the Service,

2. assignment of additional Oireachtas officials to support this function with particular focus on procurement and credit control,

3. installation of an ePos system (electronic point of sale system) to facilitate better financial management (stock, cash and reporting management),

4. reporting on a quarterly basis the accounts of the Catering and Bar Services to the Management Committee, Finance Committee and Commission.

While progress has been made during 2016, the pace of implementation of the reforms was impacted upon due to a vacancy arising in the Restaurant Manager position during the year. This vacancy has now been filled and a new Restaurant Manager has been recruited through an open competition and will take up duty on 3rd April 2017.

Procurement in the catering and bar areas is undertaken completely separately from the Service’s main procurement function, and Members’ Services is now working with the Oireachtas Procurement Unit and the OGP to develop and utilise frameworks for the purchase of food and services. Further work is required in relation to procurement in the catering and bar areas and in the meantime I have listed as an addendum to my 2016 annual Circular 40/02 return details of 16 payments in excess of €25,000 with a total value of €799,402 which were made to suppliers by the Oireachtas Bar and Restaurant without a competitive process having been undertaken. In 2017, the Service has identified procurement as a priority deliverable for the newly recruited Restaurant Manager.

**Grant Accounts**

The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly draws down funds from the allocated budget contained in the Commission’s Estimate. All BIPA expenditure is sanctioned initially by the BIPA Committee Clerk (Assistant Principal Officer) and then by the Principal Officer.

All Irish Parliamentary Association expenditure is sanctioned initially by the Head of the Inter-Parliamentary and Travel Unit (Assistant Principal Officer) and then by the Principal Officer or Assistant Secretary, as appropriate.

There is a stringent system of record keeping and bank reconciliation maintained monthly and balanced at year end for the Annual Account. A detailed explanatory record is made in regard to all payments (including credit card payments). Vouched records are retained of all expenditure.

**Internal Audit**

I confirm that the Service has an internal audit function, which operates in accordance with a written charter which the Management Committee (MC) has approved. Its work is informed by analysis
of the financial and other risks to which the Service is exposed and its annual internal audit plans, approved by me and the Audit Committee, are based on this analysis. These plans aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period. The internal audit function is reviewed periodically by me and the Audit Committee.

**Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee operates in accordance with the terms of reference set out in the Acts. Its work is also governed by a written charter, approved by the MC and the Audit Committee and is subject to regular review. Its responsibilities include advising on the form of accounts of the Commission as well as on risk management, internal audit and internal controls.

I have put procedures in place to ensure that all internal audit recommendations are followed up and progress on implementation is reported on regularly to both me, the MC and the Audit Committee.

\[\text{Signature}\]

**Peter Finnegan**

*Accounting Officer*

*Houses of the Oireachtas Commission*

20th June 2017
Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

Reporting Period
The reporting period is the year ended 31 December 2016.

Basis of Accounts
The accounts of the Commission are prepared in accordance with the Acts and with accounting rules and procedures laid down by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The Acts require that the Commission keep the accounts in such form as may be approved of by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The Minister has directed that the accounts be kept in the form of an appropriation account.

The accounts are a cash-based record of the receipts and payments in the year compared with the amount of moneys stated in the statement of estimates that is (a) prepared and published by the Commission (b) presented to Dáil Éireann and (c) furnished to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in accordance with the Acts.

The Commission provides funding and support to a number of entities whose results are not consolidated into the Commission’s accounts as follows:

- British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly – The Commission provides a grant via subhead 2(e) to the assembly and details of the income and expenditure incurred is shown by way of note (Note 7.1). The accounts are prepared on a cash basis.
- Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (The Irish Parliamentary Association) – The Commission provides a grant via subhead 2(d) and details of the income and expenditure incurred is shown by way of note (Note 7.2). The accounts are prepared on a cash basis.
- Catering and Bar Services – The Commission employs staff who work in the bar and restaurant and whose pay costs are charged to subhead 2(a) and receives a contribution from the operation of the catering and bar services (Note 4). Details of the operation of the facilities are included by way of a note to these accounts (Note 7.3). The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis.

Receipts
Receipts of the Commission specified in Schedule 2 of the Acts are used by the Commission for the purposes of the performance of its functions (Note 4).

Superannuation
Superannuation payments for former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, former secretarial assistants employed by members of the Houses and Parties and former members of the European Parliament are met on a current basis by the Commission.

Superannuation payments for retired civil servants and catering and bar staff are met on a current basis from Vote 12 – Superannuation and Retired Allowances.
Payments

Payments consist of those sums which have come in course of payment during the year. Sums are deemed to have come in course of payment where the liability has been incurred, payment is due and the instruction for payment has been executed.

Matured Liabilities

Where a liability has been incurred and payment is due (i.e. the liability has matured), payment should be completed before the year end to ensure the integrity of the Account. In cases where payment has not been effected and matured liabilities are outstanding at year end, the amount of such liabilities is reported in a note to the Account.

Accruals

The account incorporates information of an accruals nature in the notes to the Account, including:

- an operating cost statement (Note 1), showing the total amount of resources consumed by the Commission in the year.
- a balance sheet showing the Commission’s assets and liabilities at year end (Note 2), and explanatory notes providing details regarding capital assets, capital assets under development, the net liability to the Exchequer and commitments.

The balance sheet includes the position at year-end in relation to the following:

- **Accrued expenses** – these represent all liabilities at the balance sheet date with the exception of liabilities in regard to remuneration and pensions. In the case of goods and services, an accrued liability is recognised when the payee has met the contractual requirement to provide the goods or services ordered. Amounts due for goods delivered, but not yet paid for, even if un-inspected and not taken to stock, are treated as a liability. In the case of grants, a liability is recognised when the grantee has met all the requirements of the grant scheme but has yet to receive payment. Travel and subsistence liabilities are recognised when travel has been completed.
- **Prepayments** – payments made during the year of account to meet expenses which will arise in whole or in part in a subsequent financial year.
- **Accrued income** – this income due to the Commission at the end of the year of account which has yet to be received.
- **Deferred Income** – this represents income received by the Commission during the year of account for goods/services which it has yet to provide.

Capital Assets

Leinster House is vested in the Office of Public Works and is therefore not included in these accounts.

The opening and closing values of capital assets on the Commission’s register and details of depreciation are shown by way of note to the balance sheet (Note 2).

The following are not included in the statement of capital assets:

- assets worth less than €318 acquired from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2003, or assets worth less that €1,000 acquired since 1 January 2004.
- heritage assets, the value of which cannot be adequately expressed in financial terms.
Valuation of Assets

Equipment, Furniture and Fittings

Equipment, furniture and fittings are valued at cost.

Depreciation

Equipment, furniture and fittings are depreciated on a straight-line basis at the following annual rates over their estimated useful lives:

- Furniture and fittings, and telecommunications equipment – 10%.
- IT equipment and software, scientific and laboratory equipment and other office machinery – 20%.
- Major operational software systems – 10%.

Stocks

Consumables are stated at the lower of cost or Commission valuations (Note 2.4).

Net Amount due from/to the Exchequer

The net amount due from/to the Exchequer note shows the funding position at the balance sheet date taking into account the issues from the Exchequer on a cumulative/rolling basis. The breakdown of that figure in terms of bank/cash balances, debtors’ receipts due and current liabilities are also shown (Note 2.7).

Commitments

A commitment is a contractual obligation to pay on delivery for goods or services which have yet to be supplied at year-end.

A note provides figures for commitments likely to materialise in subsequent years under procurement excluding commitments under €10,000 (Note 2.8).

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises in any situation where past or current actions or events create a risk of a call on the Exchequer funds in the future. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the account but are disclosed by way of a note unless the possibility of an outflow of resources is remote (Note 6.5).

Foreign Currency Transactions

Transactions arising in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the rates of exchange ruling at the dates of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the year-end rates of exchange.

Other Notes to the Accounts

General Principles

In general, the other notes to the Accounts aim to draw the attention of Dáil Éireann and of the Committee of Public Accounts to matters bearing on parliamentary control, or to provide fuller information about material transactions of an unusual nature recorded in the Account e.g. losses, special or ex gratia payments, and extra remuneration. Except in the cases outlined below, notes are provided where an individual transaction, or a category of transactions taken together, involves a sum of €50,000 or more.

Where amounts lower than the threshold values are involved, notes are also provided where a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or DPER consider that a note should be given.
Legal Costs
In cases where cumulative legal costs incurred in the year of account exceed €50,000 a note is provided (Note 6.4) with a breakdown of the total costs into:
- Legal costs,
- Legal costs awarded, and
- Compensation awarded.

Variations from Grant
In the case of variations from grant (Note 3), a note is provided where the variation:
- is €100,000 or more; and
- represents 5% or more of the subhead (25% in the case of administrative subheads); or
- represents a significant variation from the original estimate provision that does not meet the above criteria but which warrants explanation.

Extra Remuneration
In the case of extra remuneration, the details given (Note 5) include the total amount paid under each category, the total number of recipients, the number of individuals that received €10,000 or more, and the maximum individual payment, if over €10,000. Severance/redundancy and payroll overpayment amounts are also disclosed where material.

Late Payments
In the case of interest payments under the Late Payment in Commercial Transactions Regulations, 2012 (as revised in 2013), information is supplied (Note 6) where:
- the total of interest payments due was €10,000 or more; or
- an individual payment was €10,000 or more.

Fraud or Suspected Fraud
In the case of losses due to fraud or suspected fraud, information is supplied where:
- The total losses during the accounting period were €100,000 or more; or
- an individual loss was €10,000 or more; or
- for losses under €10,000, a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or DPER considers that a disclosure should be made.

Commissions and Inquiries
Where appropriate, Miscellaneous Items (Note 6) include a statement of expenditure on each Commission or Inquiry financed by the Commission. Where a Commission or Inquiry has been established on a temporary basis, the total expenditure since its establishment is also given (Note 6.2).

Petty Cash
Amounts relating to petty cash are included in the bank and cash balance disclosure.

Bank and Cash
“Bank and Cash” include all commercial bank accounts balances (payroll and other related accounts) held at year-end which are funded by the Exchequer or receipts retained by the Commission (as set out in Note 4.1). Under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003-2015, the Commission is obliged to retain all receipts. The note separately identifies PMG from commercial bank accounts.
Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

I have audited the appropriation account of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission for the year ended 31 December 2016 under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003. The account has been prepared under the accounting policies stated therein and in the form prescribed under Section 14 of the Act.

Responsibilities of the Commission and of the Accounting Officer

The Commission is responsible for the preparation of the account. The Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of transactions.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

My responsibility is to audit the account and report on it in accordance with applicable law.

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation.

My audit is carried out in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and in compliance with the Auditing Practices Board’s Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of audit of the account

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the account, sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the account is free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of

- whether the accounting provisions of Public Financial Procedures have been complied with
- whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Commission’s circumstances, and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed
- the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made in the preparation of the account, and
- the overall presentation of the account.

I also seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit.

Opinion on the account

In my opinion, the account properly presents the receipts and payments of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission for the year ended 31 December 2016.

In my opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Commission. The account is in agreement with the books of account.

Matters on which I report by exception

I report by exception if

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- my audit noted any material instance where money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where the transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them, or
- the statement on internal financial control does not reflect the Commission’s compliance with the requirements for such statements set out in Public Financial Procedures, or
- I find there are other material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I have nothing to report in regard to those matters upon which reporting is by exception.

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General
27 June 2017
# Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Appropriation Account 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016* Estimate provision €000</th>
<th>2016 Outturn €000</th>
<th>2015 Outturn €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.</td>
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<td>26,305</td>
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<td>(b) Travel and subsistence.</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td>(c) Training and development and incidental expenses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(j) Public relations and communications.</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Other services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Payment in respect of catering and bar staff.</td>
<td>1,657</td>
<td>1,467</td>
<td>1,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Expenses of delegates to other parliamentary assemblies.</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Televising of proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and other services.</td>
<td>2,685</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>2,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Grant in respect of inter-parliamentary activities.</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Grant to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Termination allowances in respect of former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas.</td>
<td>3,388</td>
<td>3,082</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Grant to Irish Parliamentary (former Members) Society.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Grant in respect of “Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais”.</td>
<td>15,407</td>
<td>14,564</td>
<td>10,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) Pension scheme for secretarial assistants.</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>948</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### 3. Membership of Dáil Éireann

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees).</th>
<th>2016* Estimate provision €000</th>
<th>2016 Outturn €000</th>
<th>2015 Outturn €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14,840</td>
<td>14,052</td>
<td>14,798</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for members.</th>
<th>22,307</th>
<th>22,739</th>
<th>17,401</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(c) Travel and Accommodation Allowance.</th>
<th>3,209</th>
<th>2,853</th>
<th>3,180</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(d) Public Representation Allowance.</th>
<th>3,125</th>
<th>2,741</th>
<th>3,010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(e) Other allowances.</th>
<th>2,722</th>
<th>1,324</th>
<th>1,740</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 4. Membership of Seanad Éireann

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees).</th>
<th>4,016</th>
<th>3,880</th>
<th>3,998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for members.</th>
<th>3,714</th>
<th>2,696</th>
<th>2,616</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(c) Travel and Accommodation Allowance.</th>
<th>1,218</th>
<th>1,107</th>
<th>1,180</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(d) Public Representation Allowance.</th>
<th>734</th>
<th>586</th>
<th>581</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(e) Other allowances.</th>
<th>231</th>
<th>163</th>
<th>47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 5. Membership of Oireachtas Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Travel expenses.</th>
<th>130</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>88</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Other expenses relating to Committees.</th>
<th>168</th>
<th>81</th>
<th>58</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 6. Membership of European Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Salaries of members of the European Parliament.</th>
<th>87</th>
<th>87</th>
<th>87</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Pensions of former members of the European Parliament.</th>
<th>709</th>
<th>696</th>
<th>686</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Gross Expenditure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>130,991</th>
<th>115,887</th>
<th>107,419</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**DEDUCT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts of the Commission (Note 4.1)</th>
<th>–</th>
<th>(2,330)</th>
<th>(2,791)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Net Expenditure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>130,991</th>
<th>113,557</th>
<th>104,628</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Surplus for the year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>€17,434,507</th>
<th>€7,669,223</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* The estimate provision is as published on July 2015. Any apparent discrepancies in totals are due to rounding of constituent figures
# Notes to the Appropriation Account

## 1. Operating Cost Statement 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>€000</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>89,513</td>
<td>79,078</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Pay</td>
<td>26,374</td>
<td>28,341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross expenditure</td>
<td>115,887</td>
<td>107,419</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td>(2,330)</td>
<td>(2,791)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net expenditure</td>
<td>113,557</td>
<td>104,628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in capital assets</th>
<th>2.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchases Cash</td>
<td>(1,096)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss on disposals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in net current assets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in closing accruals</td>
<td>1,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in stock</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct expenditure</td>
<td>114,479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure borne elsewhere</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net allied services expenditure (Cash)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notional Rents (Non-cash)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Programme cost</td>
<td>144,252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1 Net Allied Services

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following amounts in relation to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission borne elsewhere

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote 9 Office of the Revenue Commissioners</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances</td>
<td>3,191</td>
<td>3,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote 13 Office of Public Works</td>
<td>4,624</td>
<td>4,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Fund: Parliamentary Activities Allowances to Leaders</td>
<td>8,084</td>
<td>7,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments to qualified parties under the Electoral Acts 1992 to 2015</td>
<td>5,755</td>
<td>5,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-imbursements of Electoral Expenses</td>
<td>2,667</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No. 38 of 1938, etc.)</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24,608</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,018</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“e” indicates that the number is an estimated value or an apportioned cost.

1.2 The notional rents figure above relates to State-owned accommodation occupied by the Houses of the Oireachtas and the amount of rent estimated by the Office of Public Works that it could earn based on the market rental values for such accommodation.
## 2. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2,286</td>
<td>2,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank and Cash</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2,060</td>
<td>(187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stocks</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepayments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>2,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued income</td>
<td></td>
<td>709</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other debit balances</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,645</td>
<td>3,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Liability due to the Exchequer</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>1,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other credit balances</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2,694</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,853</td>
<td>2,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>792</td>
<td>1,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>4,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Represented By:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Funding Account</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>4,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.1 State Funding Account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016  €000</th>
<th>2015  €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance at 1 January</strong></td>
<td>4,001</td>
<td>4,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disbursements by the Commission</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate provision Account*</td>
<td>130,991</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus Account*</td>
<td>17,435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Provision</strong></td>
<td>113,556</td>
<td>104,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure (cash) borne elsewhere Note 1</td>
<td>24,608</td>
<td>21,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non cash expenditure – notional rent Note 1</td>
<td>5,165</td>
<td>4,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net programme cost Note 1</td>
<td>(144,252)</td>
<td>(130,686)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance at 31 December</strong></td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>4,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: “Account” refers to the face of the Appropriation Account
### 2.2 Capital Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IT Equipment €000</th>
<th>Furniture and Fittings €000</th>
<th>Office Equipment €000</th>
<th>Total* €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost or valuation at 1 January 2016</td>
<td>8,214</td>
<td>2,651</td>
<td>15,680</td>
<td>26,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal **</td>
<td>(391)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(10,653)</td>
<td>(11,053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross assets at 31 December 2016</strong></td>
<td>8,720</td>
<td>2,657</td>
<td>5,210</td>
<td>16,588</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accumulated Depreciation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IT Equipment €000</th>
<th>Furniture and Fittings €000</th>
<th>Office Equipment €000</th>
<th>Total* €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening balance at 1 January 2016</td>
<td>7,338</td>
<td>2,326</td>
<td>14,772</td>
<td>24,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation for the year</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation on disposals **</td>
<td>(384)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(10,649)</td>
<td>(11,042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative depreciation at 31 December 2016</strong></td>
<td>7,439</td>
<td>2,361</td>
<td>4,502</td>
<td>14,301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Net Assets at 31 December 2016** | 1,281            | 297                        | 708                   | 2,286       |
| **Net Assets at 31 December 2015** | 876              | 325                        | 908                   | 2,109       |

* Any apparent discrepancies in totals are due to rounding of constituent figures

** Disposals include assets of €10.647m with a net book value of zero, which were no longer in use and written off.

### 2.3 Bank and Cash

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at 31 December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMG balances</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>(188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Bank Accounts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,060</td>
<td>(187)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.4 Stocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at 31 December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>89*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT consumables</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* During the stock take for 2016 a discrepancy was found in the valuation of the stock figure in 2015. This resulted in the stationery stock figure being overstated in 2015 by €43,026. The unit costs figures on the system have been amended and are accurately reflected for the 2016 stock valuation.

### 2.5 Other Debit Balances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at 31 December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recoupable salaries</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recoupment of travel schemes</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other debit items</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>635</td>
<td>633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.6 Other Credit Balances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at 31 December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts due to the State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax</td>
<td>1,132</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Related Social Insurance</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services Withholding Tax</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Added Tax</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Contributions</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Social Charge</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,425</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll deductions held in suspense</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,694</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.7 Net amount due (from) to the Exchequer

#### at 31 December

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>17,435</td>
<td>7,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchequer grant undrawn</td>
<td>(17,438)</td>
<td>(6,477)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Exchequer Funding Due</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward at 1 January</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(1,188)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Represented by:

#### Debtors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Debit balances</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,695 633

#### Creditors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to State</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>(2,425)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Credit balances</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>(269)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2,694) (629)

1 4

### 2.8 Commitments

#### at 31 December

**Global commitments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement subheads</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant subheads</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Variations in Expenditure

The final outturn in relation to the Commission was €17.4m less than the Statement of Estimate. The variance is mainly due to reduced Parliamentary activity in 2016 as a result of the Dáil and Seanad General Election and the length of time taken to form a Government. An explanation is provided below in the case of each expenditure subhead where the outturn varied from the amount provided by more than €100,000 and by more than 5% (25% in the case of administrative subheads) or represents a significant variation from the original estimate provision that does not meet the above criteria but which warrants explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-Head</th>
<th>(Less)/more than provided €000</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.</td>
<td>1(a)</td>
<td>(2,743)</td>
<td>The underspend relates to 35 FTE’s vacancies at year end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and subsistence</td>
<td>1(b)</td>
<td>(175)</td>
<td>The underspend in staff travel costs arose as a result of the election and the delay in setting up the Committees resulting in less travel undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development and incidental expenses</td>
<td>1(c)</td>
<td>(1,989)</td>
<td>The underspend relates to a contingency of €2m provided for election and other exceptional purposes but not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office equipment and external IT services</td>
<td>1(e)</td>
<td>(700)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to a less than anticipated requirement for (1) ICT software maintenance, (2) printing equipment for the Print Facility and (3) Sound support due to the reduction in Parliamentary sittings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy services and value for money and policy review</td>
<td>1(g)</td>
<td>(2,121)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to less than anticipated requirement for external legal advice and consultancy services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary printing</td>
<td>1(h)</td>
<td>(683)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to the election and the subsequent delay in forming a Government, resulting in a reduction in the number of Parliamentary sittings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library &amp; research services</td>
<td>1(l)</td>
<td>(326)</td>
<td>The main reason for the underspend was (1) projects originally budgeted did not progress (2) there was no requirement for external commissioned research as budgeted and (3) eResources costs were less than anticipated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations and communications</td>
<td>1(j)</td>
<td>(109)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to the election, with a reduction in event and associated costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment in respect of catering and bar staff</td>
<td>2(a)</td>
<td>(190)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to staff vacancies and a reduction in overtime costs due to the election and subsequent delay in forming Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses of delegates to other parliamentary assemblies</td>
<td>2(b)</td>
<td>(143)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to the election and less travel undertaken than had been budgeted for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant in respect of inter-parliamentary activities</td>
<td>2(d)</td>
<td>(115)</td>
<td>The underspend arose due to the election and less travel undertaken than had been budgeted for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Report 2016
### Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-Head</th>
<th>(Less)/more than provided €000</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Other Services (cont'd)

- **Termination allowances in respect of former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas**
  - **2(g)** (306)
  - The estimated budget for Termination payments to Members losing/retiring their seats following the election was based on a 100 member turnover with varying service entitlement, the actual turnover was 87 with varying service entitlement.

- **Grant in respect of Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais**
  - **2(i)** (843)
  - Pensions to former Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas are paid from this sub-head. The estimate provided for 56 new pensioners with varying service for monthly pension payments and lump sums, actual increase as a result of the election was 34.

- **Pension Scheme for secretarial assistants**
  - **2(j)** 37
  - The overspend arose due to the election with additional secretarial staff retiring than had been originally estimated which was based on past trends.

#### Membership of Dáil Éireann

- **Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees)**
  - **3(a)** (788)
  - The underspend relates to (i) a reduction in T.D.’s from 166 to 158 and (ii) no salary payments to members during the dissolution period.

- **Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for members**
  - **3(b)** 432
  - This overspend arose due to a policy change where Ministers Secretarial Assistants who were previously paid from their Government Departments transferred to the Oireachtas payroll scheme (+70).

- **Travel and Accommodation Allowance**
  - **3(c)** (356)
  - The estimate provided for full drawdown, however, as a result of the election and the reduction in the number of Parliamentary sittings, less funds were required.

- **Public Representation Allowance**
  - **3(d)** (384)
  - The estimate provided for full drawdown, however, as a result of the election and the reduction in the number of Parliamentary sittings, less funds were required.

- **Other allowances**
  - **3(e)** (1,398)
  - The estimate provided for full drawdown, however, as a result of the election and the reduction in the number of Parliamentary sittings, less funds were required.

#### Membership of Seanad Éireann

- **Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for members**
  - **4(b)** (1,018)
  - The underspend relates to the election with a delay in recruiting staff and the redundancy budget greater than actual requirement.

- **Travel and Accommodation Allowance**
  - **4(c)** (111)
  - The estimate provided for full drawdown, however, as a result of the election and the reduction in the number of Seanad sittings, less funds were required.

- **Public Representation Allowance**
  - **4(d)** (148)
  - The estimate provided for full drawdown, however, as a result of the election and the reduction in the number of Seanad sittings, less funds were required.

#### Membership of Oirechtaíts Committees

- **Travel expenses**
  - **5(a)** (106)
  - The underspend arose due to the election and the late formation of Committees resulting in less travel undertaken than had been budgeted for.
4. Receipts

4.1 Receipts of the Commission

In accordance with the provisions of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2015, receipts of the Commission specified in Schedule 2 to the Act shall be used by it for the purposes of the performance of its functions.

The 2016 financial statements record total receipts of €2,335,494 retained by the Commission and offset against its gross expenditure. Receipts of €31,845 relate to Broadcasting services, receipts of €54,000 relate to Catering and Bar services. The remainder of the receipts are made up of the following categories, receipts of €2,171,052 relate to pension related deductions on public service remuneration, receipts of €52,441 relate to TDs and Senators dissolution electoral expenses and the remaining €20,921 received in 2016 was retained by the Commission and offset against its gross expenditure. Receipts of €5,235 relate to MEP pension contributions and are off-set against Pensions of former members of the European Parliament.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Sales of services of Broadcasting Unit</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Net income from catering and bar services (Note 7.3)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Receipts obtained by the Commission in the performance of its functions (other than receipts in respect of expenses paid by the Commission on behalf of its members or members of staff that have been recouped by the Commission from the members or members of staff concerned).</td>
<td>2,244</td>
<td>2,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts recognised in Appropriation Account</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,330</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,791</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Members’ contributions under the European Parliament (Irish Representatives) Pension Scheme, 1979</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,335</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,796</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

The estimate for the receipts of the Commission for 2016 was nil. The process for estimating receipts was reinstated for the 2017 Estimates.

Members’ contributions under the European Parliament (Irish Representatives) Pension Scheme, 1979 are not included as a receipt as it is offset against pensions paid to former Members of the European Parliament under subhead 6(b) of the account.
### 4.2 Extra Receipts Payable to the Exchequer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 1 January</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts in respect of superannuation associated with seconded staff</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transferred to Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 31 December</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In 2015 DPER informed the Commission that receipts in respect of superannuation associated with seconded staff at 31 December 2014, along with all future receipts of this nature, should be transferred to Vote 12 Superannuation and Retired Allowances.**
5. Employee Numbers and Pay

### Houses of the Oireachtas Service*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)</strong></td>
<td>498</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>€000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>22,904</td>
<td>23,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher, special or additional duties allowances</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other allowances</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>1,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift and roster allowances</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer’s PRSI</td>
<td>1,867</td>
<td>1,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severance Payments</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total pay</strong></td>
<td>26,895</td>
<td>27,895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members and Parties  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)</strong></td>
<td>439</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>€000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>16,627</td>
<td>16,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy payments</td>
<td>5,157</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher, special or additional duties allowances</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime and extra attendance</td>
<td>1,832</td>
<td>2,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer’s PRSI</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>1,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total pay</strong></td>
<td>25,542</td>
<td>20,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* On the payroll of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service
5.1 Allowances and Overtime Payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of recipients</th>
<th>Recipients of €10,000 or more</th>
<th>Maximum individual payment</th>
<th>Maximum individual payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016 (€)</td>
<td>2015 (€)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses of the Oireachtas Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher, special or additional duties allowances</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22,335</td>
<td>43,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other allowances</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26,151</td>
<td>38,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27,254</td>
<td>23,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift and roster allowances</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>7,724</td>
<td>7,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of individuals who received extra remuneration in more than one category</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>48,776</td>
<td>38,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members and Parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher, special or additional duties allowances</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime and extra attendance</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15,086</td>
<td>14,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of individuals who received extra remuneration in more than one category</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8,187</td>
<td>5,892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Payroll overpayments

In 2016, the Commission identified 69 cases of overpayments totalling €81,327. A total of €43,417 was recovered in 2016 with €37,910 outstanding. Of the carried forward balance at 1 Jan 2016 of €63,930, €16,201 was paid off and €2,726 was written off/back or revalued with €45,003 outstanding. €82,913 relating to 28 cases remains outstanding, of which €26,831 (18 cases) have recovery arrangements in place.

The Commission is in correspondence with the persons in receipt of the overpayments in order to pursue recoupment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 (€)</th>
<th>2015 (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding balance 1 January</td>
<td>63,930</td>
<td>56,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overpayments identified in the year</td>
<td>81,327</td>
<td>45,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayments/Adjustments</td>
<td>(62,344)</td>
<td>(37,894)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding balance at 31 December</td>
<td>82,913</td>
<td>63,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases at 31 December</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Redundancy and Termination Payments

A total of €5,156,894 was paid out in 2016 in respect of pension lump sums, severance payments and statutory redundancy to 226 staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance. Of this €1,178,746 related to statutory redundancy payments, €141,805 related to pension lump sums and €3,836,343 related to Voluntary Early Redundancy/severance packages. 12 people formerly employed under the scheme have resumed employment and in accordance with DPER guidelines recoupment of €192,383 Voluntary Early Retirement payments is underway.

Former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas who do not propose to seek election to Seanad Éireann or consent to be nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann, may obtain a termination allowance, known as termination payments. Termination payments of €3,179,319 was paid to 93 eligible outgoing members at the time of application for termination in 2016. Members who went on to be elected or nominated to the Seanad were required to refund the payments. There is an amount of €29,904 outstanding at year end with recoupment arrangements in place.

5.4 Other Remuneration Arrangements

Payments totalling €23,355 were paid to retired civil servants whose services were employed on various interview boards, specialist parliamentary and governance tasks. Pension abatement rules were applied in full compliance with DPER circulars.

The terms of the AHCPs/IMPACT (PCW 1% Restructuring Agreement) were implemented resulting in a total payment of €78,096 in 38 instances.
6. Miscellaneous Items

6.1 Late Payment Interest and Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €</th>
<th>2015 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total of interest and compensation due</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>1,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Commissions and Special Inquiries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Appointment</th>
<th>Cumulative Expenditure to end 2016 €000</th>
<th>2016 Outturn €000</th>
<th>2015 Outturn €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Term Commissions and Special Inquiries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking Inquiry Costs</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6,682</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Tax liability discharged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €000</th>
<th>2015 €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax liability discharged</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Legal Costs

Legal costs paid during the year are categorised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Legal costs paid by the Commission €000</th>
<th>Compensation awarded €000</th>
<th>Legal Costs awarded €000</th>
<th>2016 Total €000</th>
<th>2015 Total €000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claims against the Commission</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 Contingent Liabilities

The Commission is involved in a number of legal proceedings which, depending on the outcome, may generate liabilities. It is also appealing the award of costs in a case recently determined by the High Court.

6.6 Arbitration and Conciliation Costs

Expenditure in 2016 includes payments of €7,175 (2015: €2,870) to cover the costs as a result of conciliation and arbitration proceedings.
7. Grant and Miscellaneous Accounts

7.1 Grant to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly was established in 1990. Its membership consists of British and Irish Parliamentarians together with Parliamentarians from each of the Assemblies of Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. Funding is provided by the UK and Irish Exchequers with bi-annual Plenary sessions alternating between Ireland and the UK.

Grant to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

Account of Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31 December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 1 January</td>
<td>43,939</td>
<td>13,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant [subhead 2(e)]</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous receipts</td>
<td>1,219</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
<td>56,219</td>
<td>95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary sessions</td>
<td>51,670</td>
<td>49,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td>10,083</td>
<td>11,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>3,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Payments</strong></td>
<td>63,449</td>
<td>64,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as at 31 December</strong></td>
<td>36,709</td>
<td>43,939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2 Grant to Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (The Irish Parliamentary Association)

The Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (The Irish Parliamentary Association) operates under the remit of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. The powers of the Irish Parliamentary Association are exercised by an Executive Committee which consists of the Ceann Comhairle, Chairman, the Cathaoirleach, Deputy Chairman and fifteen members of the Oireachtas. The role of the Association is to foster and promote understanding and contacts between Irish Parliamentarians and those of other countries.

*Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann*

*Grant in respect of inter-parliamentary activities*

**Account of Receipts and Payments for year ended 31 December 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant [subhead 2(d)]</td>
<td>95,117</td>
<td>145,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Subscriptions</td>
<td>2,159</td>
<td>2,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
<td>98,219</td>
<td>148,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses associated with Irish delegations on foreign visits</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>7,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses associated with foreign delegations visiting Ireland</td>
<td>19,485</td>
<td>14,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter Parliamentary Union Conference expenses</td>
<td>20,165</td>
<td>42,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>54,002</td>
<td>66,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Payments</strong></td>
<td>94,782</td>
<td>130,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for year</td>
<td>3,437</td>
<td>18,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Balance</td>
<td>50,781</td>
<td>32,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as at 31 December</strong></td>
<td>54,218</td>
<td>50,781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.3 Accounts of the Catering and Bar Services

#### Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31st December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €</th>
<th>2015 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sales</strong></td>
<td>1,184,049</td>
<td>1,280,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of sales</td>
<td>(729,021)</td>
<td>(750,697)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross profit</strong></td>
<td>455,028</td>
<td>529,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td>(390,304)</td>
<td>(324,904)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net profit</strong></td>
<td>64,724</td>
<td>205,066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016 €</th>
<th>2015 €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed assets</strong></td>
<td>38,320</td>
<td>39,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock</td>
<td>35,128</td>
<td>36,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>50,610</td>
<td>62,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT</td>
<td>81,917</td>
<td>46,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank and cash</td>
<td>137,657</td>
<td>116,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>305,312</td>
<td>262,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade creditors</td>
<td>(60,982)</td>
<td>(27,317)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td>282,650</td>
<td>274,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance by:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit/Loss retained</td>
<td>828,391</td>
<td>623,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit/Loss current year</td>
<td>64,724</td>
<td>207,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repaid to Houses of the Oireachtas</td>
<td>(610,465)</td>
<td>(556,465)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>282,650</td>
<td>274,418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes to accounts

(i) Payroll costs of the staff of the Catering and Bar are borne directly by the Commission and are reflected at subhead 2(a) of the Appropriation Account amounting to €1,466,621 in 2016 (2015: €1,509,374).

(ii) An amount is remitted from the catering and bar accounts to the Commission on an annual basis and recorded as a receipt in the Commission’s accounts (Note 4.1). The amount is calculated based on the retention of a bank balance in the account equivalent to an average of two months payments to suppliers. The amount remitted in 2016 was €54,000 (2015: €225,000).
Appendix V


This statutory instrument gives effect to Directive 2011/7/EU on Combating Late Payment in Commercial Transactions.

**Period covered by this review: 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016**

**Statement of Compliance**

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service complies with the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 580 of 2012).

The Act has been implemented in full since 10 May 2002 within the Service. It is the policy of the Service to settle all invoices promptly with due regard to contractual terms where applicable, good financial and cash management practices and the provisions of the legislation.

Instructions have been issued by the Finance Unit to all staff processing payments to ensure that the provisions of the legislation are complied with. While the procedures are designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act.

**Payments that fell due under the terms of the Act within the relevant period**

In the period under review there were a total of 14 late payments and the amount of interest (€120.22) and penalties (€610.00) paid in respect of these late payments was €730.22.

Eight of these payments involved invoices in excess of €317; the total value of the eight payments was €11,574. The average delay in making payments that incurred PPI was 34 days.

During the period in question the proportion of the total value of commercial payments (€19.2 million in 2016) represented by payments which involved prompt payment interest was 0.06%.

**Reduction of payment period to 15 days**

With effect from 15 June 2009, the Service reduced its maximum target period for payments to suppliers from 30 days to 15 days to reflect a change in Government policy. Had the 15 day target been in place on a statutory basis, a further 91 payments would have incurred prompt payment interest, representing 2.4% of the total number of commercial payments processed from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Michael Errity,
Assistant Secretary,
Corporate and Members’ Services
21st March, 2017
Appendix VI


Oireachtas Committee Related Activities and Developments

Role of the Committees’ Secretariat

The role of the Committees’ Secretariat is to provide an efficient and effective secretariat and ancillary support services for the Committees of the Houses in undertaking their work, and to plan and make provision for future developments in the Committee system. The Committees’ Secretariat seeks to ensure the highest standards in supporting the Committees to enable them to fulfil their roles in accordance with the strategic objectives of the Service.

Work of the Committees of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad

In the period before the dissolution of the Dáil in February 2016, the final meetings of the Committees of the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad were held. During this time Committees held 35 meetings, involving 53 witnesses and 43 sitting hours. The sectoral Committees also considered 50 EU proposals and agreed three Political Contributions which were submitted to the European Parliament, Council and Commission. There were 17 policy reports, as listed below, published, bringing the work of the Committees of the 31st Dáil and the 25th Seanad to a conclusion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee (31st Dáil/24th Seanad)</th>
<th>Reports (31st Dáil/24th Seanad)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Agriculture, Food and the Marine                      | ▪ Report on the greyhound industry  
▪ Report on the Irish horse industry                                                                             |
| Education and Social Protection                        | ▪ Report on Class K PRSI  
▪ Report on the role of the special needs assistant                                                                                                                   |
| Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht                 | ▪ Report of the Committee on policy issues relating to the Cemetery Management Bill 2013  
▪ Political contribution on the proposed reform of the electoral law of the European Union  
▪ Report of the Joint Committee on the general scheme of the Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Bill 2015 |
| European Union Affairs                                 | ▪ Political contribution on the Five Presidents’ Report on Completing Europe’s Economic and Monetary Union  
▪ Submission to the review of foreign policy and external relations                                                                                                            |
| Health and Children                                    | ▪ Report on the role of advocacy in health and social care services in Ireland  
▪ Report on quality and affordable childcare                                                                                                                                 |
| Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation                        | ▪ Report on the all-island economy  
▪ Political contribution on COM(2015)635: proposal for a Directive on certain aspects concerning contracts for the online and other distance sales of goods                                                                |
| Public Service Oversight and Petitions                 | ▪ Report on hearings in relation to the role and remit of an Ombudsman  
▪ Report on improvement to the role and remit of the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions  
▪ Petitions Report – petition P00072/12: “Investigation into US military and CIA use of Shannon Airport and Irish airspace” from Dr. Edward Horgan and Shannonwatch |
| **Work of the Committees of the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad** |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| **Reform of the Committee System**                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Following the elections to both Houses, the Committees of the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad were established against a backdrop of implementation of a programme of Dáil reform. The reform measures that were introduced were wide-ranging and influenced both the structure and operation of the Committees. These reforms include:                                                                                     |
| ▪ membership of Committees reduced from a range of 15-24 to 11 members (7 Deputies and 4 Senators)                                                                                                                             |
| ▪ an increase in the number of sectoral Committees, from 9 to 13, with each Committee responsible for shadowing one Department                                                                                                               |
| ▪ establishment of two new Standing Committees – the Joint Committee on the Irish Language, Gaeltacht and the Islands, and the Select Committee on Budgetary Oversight                                                                 |
| ▪ a renewed focus on financial scrutiny with the establishment of the Standing Select Committee                                                                                                                                 |

Committee on Budgetary Oversight following recommendations to develop and support the role of the Houses of the Oireachtas in the budgetary process contained in a report of the Special Committee on Budgetary Arrangements

- establishment of a number of Special Committees to examine and make recommendations to the Houses on a subject of particular public importance
- additional functions allocated to Committees under their orders of reference, including detailed scrutiny of draft legislation, including Private Members’ Bills, prior to Committee Stage;
- allocation of Committee Chairs using the d’Hondt system under which Committee Chair positions are allocated proportionately to representation in the Houses
- introduction of dedicated committee sitting times to avoid, where possible, conflict with the plenary sittings of the Dáil
- changes to Standing Orders to facilitate all Deputies, including non-members of a Committee, to table amendments to a Bill during its consideration at Committee Stage

Committee System

The first Committees of the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad were established in May 2016. The Committee structure has continued to evolve in 2016. During that period the Committees’ Secretariat has continued to provide ongoing procedural, policy and administrative support to:

- three Dáil Select Standing Committees [Committee of Public Accounts; Budgetary Oversight, and Members’ Interests of Dáil Éireann]
- one Seanad Select Standing Committee [Members’ Interests of Seanad Éireann]
- two Joint Standing Committees [Public Petitions and Irish Language, Gaeltacht and the Islands]
- 13 Joint Committees which shadow government departments with associated Select Committees (generally referred to as the “Sectoral Committees”)
- two Joint Committees with specific subject area remits [Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and European Union Affairs]
- four Special Committees [the Select Committee on the Future of Healthcare; the Joint Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services; the Select Committee on Housing and Homelessness; and the Select Committee on Arrangements for Budgetary Scrutiny]
- one interim Committee [the Standing Order 112 Committee, which was established to carry out the scrutiny of EU draft legislative proposals prior to the establishment of the Sectoral Committees]

The Committees’ Secretariat also has responsibility for the supporting the work of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) and the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NSIPA). It supports the work of the Working Group of Committee Chairpersons (WGCC) which liaises and consults on matters relating to the work of Committees. The WGCC also determines and monitors budgetary allocations made to each Committee.

The Constitutional Convention recommended (in 2014) that the WGCC should have the power to invite the Taoiseach before the Committee. In implementing this recommendation, provision
was made in Standing Orders for the Taoiseach to appear before the WGCC in the Spring and Autumn of each year to discuss matters of public policy. The Taoiseach is due to appear before WGCC for the first time in 2017.

**Committee Outputs**

In 2016, there were 288 meetings of the Joint Committees, Select Committees, Standing Committees and Special Committees involving 939 speaking witnesses and 686 sitting hours. There were eight policy reports, two financial scrutiny reports and three EU Scrutiny reports/partisan contributions published. In 2016, Committees undertook official travel in accordance with the priorities of their respective Work Programmes. Committees also participated in annual and bi-annual interparliamentary conferences and meetings.

The powers and functions of the Committees of the Houses are available on the Oireachtas Website, www.oireachtas.ie

**The Work of Sectoral Committees in 2016**

Since their establishment in June 2016, the Sectoral Committees have placed strong emphasis on their scrutiny and oversight functions. This is evidenced by the detailed consideration of bills, estimates and motions referred to and scrutinised by the Committee. In addition, all Joint Committees held meetings with the relevant Ministers to discuss the Mid-Year Review of the 2016 Estimates for Public Services and opportunities for including performance information included in the Estimates.

The Committees also undertook pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS) of the General Schemes of Government Bills in advance of their publication and the scrutiny of Private Members’ Bills prior to their consideration at Committee Stage.

They also continued to engage in EU matters, including the consideration of draft proposals for EU legislation. This activity is reported separately by the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs in its 2016 Annual Report on the Operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002. In the period from September to December 2016 the sectoral Committees of the 32nd Dáil considered 224 proposals. The Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and Taoiseach prepared one Reasoned Opinion which was agreed by the Houses and forwarded to the European Institutions. This Committee also submitted one Political Contribution to the European Institutions.

In undertaking their scrutiny and oversight functions, a wide range of policy matters were considered by the Sectoral Committees. Many of the Committees prioritised matters arising from the UK Referendum on membership of the European Union (Brexit). To illustrate the breadth of policy matters considered by Committees, the key activities and reports for each Sectoral Committee are set out hereunder.

**Agriculture, Food and the Marine**

- Submission on the requirement for action in support of the Irish tillage sector [report published December 2016]
- Submission on the requirement for action in support of the Irish mushroom sector
the Committee held a number of meetings on the impact of the UK Referendum on membership of the European Union on the Irish agri-food and fisheries sectors. It proposes to present a report to the Houses on this matter in the first quarter of 2017.

**Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs**

- The Committee held eight meetings with a total of 40 stakeholders – from LEADER Programme, Partnership, County Councils, Medical, Security and Community Groups – in preparation for its report *What it takes to Sustain a Viable Rural Community*. It proposes to present a report to the Houses on this matter in the first quarter of 2017.
- Engagement with the Chairpersons designate of agencies under the aegis of the Department.
- Engagement with the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs on the 2017 budget for the Irish language, including funding for Foras na Gaeilge and Údarás na Gaeltachta.
- Engagement on the *Inis Mór Ferry Service*, upgrading of the N59 national primary road, West Cork Development Partnership and the Mary Robinson Centre.
- Engagement with relevant European bodies and scrutiny of EU draft proposals relating to areas within the remit of the committee.

**Children and Youth Affairs**

- Overview of operations at *Oberstown Children Detention Campus* including a visit to the Campus.
- *Early Years Forum*.
- Migrant Rights impacting undocumented children and their families.
- *Child Contact Centres* and ancillary family support services for private family law courts.
- Engagement with *Ombudsman for Children*.

**Communications, Climate Action and Environment**

- Engagement with the Chairperson Designate of An Post.
- Digital Single Market in the European Union – engagement with the EU Commission Vice-President, Mr. Andrus Ansip.
- COM(2016)479: the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry into the 2030 climate and energy framework.
- COM(2016)482: binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030.
- Future Funding of Public Service Broadcasting.
- Proposed appointment to the Board of Raidió Teilifís Éireann.
Education and Skills

- Engagement with key stakeholders on the future funding of Higher Level Education in Ireland
- Review of the pilot of a new model for allocating teaching resources to mainstream schools to support pupils with special educational needs
- Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016: Engagement with key stakeholders
- Engagement with the Chairperson Designate of the Higher Education Authority and the Chairperson Designate of the Educational Research Centre

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of the Taoiseach

- Rising costs of motor insurance [Report published in November 2016]
- Scrutiny of proposals for directives on a common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB) and on a common corporate tax base (CCTB) – COM(2016)683 & COM(2016)685 [Reasoned opinion submitted to Dáil and Seanad Éireann and agreed in December 2016]
- Scrutiny of a proposal for a regulation establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, collected from samples – COM(2016)551; and scrutiny of a proposal to amend a regulation on the European statistical programme 2013-17, by extending it to 2018-2020 – COM(2016)557 [Political contribution submitted to the Commission in November 2016]
- Legislative Scrutiny of Private Members’ Bill – Central Bank & Financial Services Authority of Ireland (Amendment) Bill 2014 together with the draft Heads of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Bill 2016 [Report due to be published in 2017]

Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence

- Global Migration – engagement with Dóchas and Oxfam
- The Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust
- Engagement with the EU Commissioner on Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Mr. Christos Stylianides
- The current situation in Syria

Health

- Regulation of HSE-funded organisations (section 39 of the Health Act 2004)
- Drugs Pricing Agreement, the Emergency Department Task Force and the Winter Initiative Engagement – engagement with the Minister for Health
- The merits of licensing medicinal cannabinoids
- General Scheme of the Civil Liability (Amendment) Bill – ‘Open Disclosure’ provisions (PLS)
- General Scheme of the Health Information and Patient Safety Bill (PLS)
- General Scheme of the Misuse of Drugs (Supervised Injecting Facilities) Bill 2016 (PLS)
Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

- Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness – Engagement with the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- National Planning Framework – Engagement with Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, the Irish Planning Institute and Association of Irish Regions
- Local Economic and Community Plans – Engagement with County and City Management Association and Association of Irish Local Government

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

- Likely economic impact of Brexit with particular emphasis on jobs and enterprise and the steps being taken to mitigate potential risks – series of meetings held (Report proposed to be published in 2017)
- Engagement with the Chairperson Designate of the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority
- Banded Hours Contract Bill 2016 (PMB) – Legislative scrutiny of the Bill with a view to publishing a report in 2017

Justice and Equality

- Formal recognition of Irish Sign Language [Report published in October 2016]
- Garda Oversight and Accountability [Report published in December 2016]
- Coroners Bill 2015 (PMB) – Legislative Scrutiny of the Bill

Social Protection

- Rent Supplement and Housing Assistance Payment Schemes
- Supporting Lone Parents
- Labour activation measures
- Pensions policy and reform

Transport, Tourism and Sport

- “A Vision for Public Transport”
- Bus Éireann inter-urban and expressway services and the co-ordination of the rural transport services with the expressway network
- Tourism Competitiveness Strategy
- Roads Infrastructure Programme
- Engagement with the Chairperson Designate of the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA)

The Work of the “Thematic” Committees, including Special Committees in 2016

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

The Committee considered a range of EU-related matters including:
- UK’s withdrawal from the EU [series of discussions with Member States on the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union]
- EU Presidency Priorities of the Slovak Republic and Malta
- Pre-General Affairs Council Meetings [engagement with the Minister for European Affairs]
- EU Agriculture and Rural Development [engagement with the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development]
Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

The major focus of the work of the Committee was examining the implications of Brexit for the Good Friday Agreement, for North-South cooperation, and for Northern Ireland more generally. The Committee heard evidence from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Charles Flanagan TD, the Northern Ireland Minister for Finance Mr. Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, the Centre for Cross Border Studies, Cooperation Ireland, the Special EU Programmes Body, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, and members of the Northern Ireland business community. The Committee also met with a delegation from the UK House of Lords EU Affairs Select Committee to discuss the implications of Brexit for British-Irish Relations.

Other topics examined by the Committee included cross-border cooperation on road infrastructure (Narrow Water Bridge and N2-A5 road), matters relating to prisons in Northern Ireland, and developments in Northern Ireland including the Fresh Start Agreement.

Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts (PAC) is a Standing Committee of Dáil Éireann whose main focus is on ensuring public services are run efficiently and that value for money is achieved in the delivery of public services.

Arising from the publication of the Comptroller and Auditor General’s Special Report on NAMA’s Sale of its Northern Ireland loan portfolio in a sale code-named Project Eagle, the Committee dedicated 11 public hearings to its examination of the transaction and heard from relevant persons and bodies.

It is expected that the Committee will make a report on the matter in early 2017.

In the course of 2016, the Committee also held public meetings with a number of government departments and public bodies to examine matters that were the subject of reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Matters considered included:

- Tax Compliance
- Flood Risk Management
- Health Service Executive (HSE) – agencies in receipt of HSE funding under sections 38 and 39 of the Health Act 2004 (remuneration, allowances and governance of funding provided by the HSE).
Joint Committee on Public Petitions

In its consideration of public petitions, the Joint Committee on Public Petitions seeks to focus its work on identifying improvements in the delivery of public services to citizens. As part of its remit, the Committee receives and considers public petitions submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas and engages with government departments and relevant bodies on matters raised in the petitions.

The Public Petitions System of the Houses of the Oireachtas was established in 2012. Members of the public may submit petitions directly to the Committee. If a petition is in order, the Committee may seek oral or written evidence from relevant government departments and other bodies and agencies. The Committee has the power to invite Ministers to attend meetings and answer questions about the petition and may also invite the petitioner to address the Committee on the matter.

The sub-Committee on Dáil Reform of the Committee on Procedure agreed to broaden the remit of the Joint Committee on Public Petitions to include consideration of an Ombudsman Report if the relevant sectoral Committee has not considered the Report within two months of it being laid before the House.

In 2016:

- 33 new petitions were received, nine of these lapsed on the dissolution of the 31st Dáil
- the Select Committee on Public Petitions met on one occasion to consider matters relating to the remit of the Committee
- the Joint Committee on Public Petitions met on three occasions and considered ten petitions. Of these, three petitions were deemed to be inadmissible, five petitions were closed following consideration by the Committee, and two petitions remain open and will be considered further by the Committee.

Committee on the Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands

The Standing Joint Committee on the Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands was established by the Houses on 21 July 2016. The Committee provides oversight of the implementation of the 20 Year Strategy on the Irish Language 2010 to 2030 and progress towards creating a truly bilingual society. The Committee held meetings with An Coimisinéir Teanga and with other organisations which promote and support the Irish language. Other key priorities include:

- monitoring the provision of services and facilities through Irish
- monitoring progress in increasing the number of public servants with fluency in Irish and the provision of public services through Irish language
- reviewing legislation to “Irish-proof” it
- promotion of Irish through education
- monitoring the availability of Irish language products

Committee on Housing and Homelessness

On 14 April 2016, the Dáil established the Committee on Housing and Homelessness to examine the problems of housing and homelessness in Ireland and to make recommendations on this matter. Over the course of two months, the Committee identified a number of key policy matters it wished to examine. It held 12 meetings involving over 35 witness groups.
On the basis of the evidence considered and submissions received, the Committee identified key actions, including 19 priority recommendations, which were presented in its report to the Houses. The Committee discharged its remit on presentation of its report to the Houses 17 June 2016, and the subject of housing and homelessness formed part of the remit of the Sectoral Committee on Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government established on 16 June 2016.

Select Committee on Arrangements for Budget Scrutiny

A Select Committee on Arrangements for Budget Scrutiny was established by order of the Dáil of 5 May 2016.

The Committee was charged with considering the procedural, administrative and statutory changes required to develop and support, on an ex ante and ongoing basis, the ability of the Houses of the Oireachtas to influence the annual Budget and achieve accountability throughout the annual budgetary cycle. The Committee was established as a response to the OECD report, *Budgetary Oversight by Parliament: Ireland*, and growing political demand for greater scrutiny and oversight by the Dáil of the budgetary process.

The Committee discharged its remit on presentation of its report, including recommendations, to the Dáil on 30 June 2016.

Committee on Budgetary Oversight

The Committee on Budgetary Oversight was established by the Dáil in July 2016. The Committee was established with a key role to support the Dáil in oversight and scrutiny of budgetary matters. Its establishment resulted from a report by the OECD in 2015 of the role of the Houses of the Oireachtas in the area of ex ante scrutiny of budgetary proposals: *Review of Budget Oversight by Parliament: Ireland*. The report presented an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Ireland’s system of parliamentary engagement in the budget process and made a number of recommendations to make this engagement more effective.

The Committee held a number of meetings on Budget 2017 in the course of which it examined matters such as:

- the need for an enhanced infrastructure investment programme to address bottlenecks that are endangering economic growth
- the inflexibility of the Fiscal Rules, especially in the context of capital investment
- the need to protect the stock of houses owned by the local authorities
- the need to address loopholes being used by vulture funds to avoid paying tax
- the need to examine potential volatility in corporation tax receipts

The Committee’s report was presented to the Dáil in advance of presentation of the Budget in October 2016. It is expected that the potential and impact of the Committee will be enhanced in 2017 with the establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office, also recommended by the OECD report.

Committee on the Future of Healthcare

The Committee on the Future of Healthcare was established on 1 June 2016 with orders of reference to devise cross-party agreement on a single long-term vision for health care and direction of health policy in Ireland. In the period from June to
December 2016, the Committee held meetings with 32 stakeholder groups. The Committee also undertook a public consultation process and received over 150 written submissions from a wide range of stakeholders. These are categorised by stakeholder type in the chart below.

Joint Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services

In November 2016, the Joint Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services was established to consider the Report of the Expert Commission on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services and to report to the Houses, with recommendations, within three months of its first meeting. The Committee held its first meeting on 13 December 2016. The Committee has requested submissions from relevant stakeholders and will continue its series of public hearings in 2017 with a view to presenting its report to both Houses in March 2017.

Standing Order 112 Select Committee of Dáil Éireann

Pending the establishment of the sectoral Committees of the 32nd Dáil, the Standing Order 112 Select Committee of Dáil Éireann was established, as an interim measure, to exercise the powers of both Houses of the Oireachtas under the Lisbon Treaty, in particular to monitor compliance with the “principle of subsidiarity” as defined under the Treaty. The Committee considered 13 proposals and prepared one Reasoned Opinion, on COM(2016)198, Proposal for a European Directive Concerning the Disclosure of Income Tax Information by Certain Undertakings and Branches, which was agreed by the Houses and submitted to the European Institutions.

Committees on Members’ Interests of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann

The Select Committees on Members’ Interests of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann each have
functions assigned to them in accordance with the provisions of the Ethics in Public Office Acts, including the adoption and circulation of Guidelines for non-Officeholding Members of Dáil and Seanad Éireann. These were adopted and circulated in the normal way for 2017.

In the course of the year each Select Committee carried out its statutory functions under the Acts, in respect of the registration period 1 January to 31 December 2016, as follows:

- considered the draft form of Statement of Registrable Interests for members in accordance with the consultation process under section 5 of the Ethics in Public Office Acts
- prepared and issued guidelines to members concerning the steps to be taken by them to ensure compliance by them with the Ethics Acts

The Select Committee on Members’ Interests of Seanad Éireann also published a report of the results of an investigation by it concerning the use of pre-paid Oireachtas envelopes.

British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The 52nd Plenary of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) was held in Malahide on 3 – 5 July 2016. The Minister of State for the Diaspora and Overseas Development Aid, Mr. Joe McHugh TD, addressed the Assembly. The outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership was a key theme of discussion.

Other themes included:
- joint tourism opportunities in the BIPA member countries
- the role of women in the First World War, the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence.

The Plenary also adopted a report on Visa Systems presented by BIPA Committee B (European Affairs).

The 53rd BIPA Plenary took place in Cardiff, Wales, on 27 – 29 November 2016. The implications of Brexit for British-Irish relations was the key focus of debate. The Assembly heard from the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones AM, the Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker MP, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire MP, who also briefed the Assembly on developments in Northern Ireland. The Irish Ambassador to Britain, Mr. Dan Mulhall, and Lord Whitty, a member of the House of Lords EU Affairs Committee, also addressed the Assembly on Brexit.

Other topics included a presentation by Welsh Assembly members on their work on youth engagement in politics, and a discussion on health service funding and governance in the BIPA jurisdictions.

North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association

The plenary session of the North South Interparliamentary Association was held in Stormont on 1 – 2 December 2016. The Association heard presentations on the potential impact of Brexit for the island of Ireland generally. In addition, the Association heard a presentation on the impact of Brexit on the Agri-Food Sector.
Appendix VII

Annual Report of the Audit Committee of the Commission 2016

1. Establishment and Membership of the Committee

The Audit Committee was placed on a statutory footing in 2010. The relevant provisions were made under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009, which was enacted on 21 December 2009, and came into effect on 1 January 2010.

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

a) one member of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission;

b) at least one but not more than 3 other members of either House of the Oireachtas who are not members of the Commission;

c) at least 2 but not more than 3 external persons nominated by the Secretary General, one of whom is designated by the Commission as Chairperson of the Committee; and

d) one member of the staff of the Service nominated by the Secretary General.

2. 2016 Membership of the Committee

- Mr. Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson)
- Deputy John Browne
- Deputy Joe Costello
- Deputy Seán Fleming
- Deputy Peter Mathews
- Mr. Cyril Maybury (External member)
- Mr. Bryan O’Sullivan (External member)
- Mr. Charles Hearne, Principal Officer

Following the 2016 General Elections, the membership of the Audit Committee was as follows:

- Mr. Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson)
- Senator Ned O’Sullivan
- Senator Catherine Ardagh
- Senator Victor Boyhan
- Senator Kieran O’Donnell
- Mr. Pat McLoughlin (External member)*
- Mr. Charles Hearne, Principal Officer

* Mr. Pat McLoughlin was appointed Chairman of the Audit Committee by the Commission on 15 November 2016 following the resignation of Mr. Eddie Sullivan on 27 October 2016.

3. Role of the Audit Committee

The role of the Committee is 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) meet at least four times annually and report in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.
The Committee's role includes advising the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions including:

a) the proper implementation of public service guidelines on financial matters;

b) compliance with section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866, section 19 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 and any other obligations imposed by law relating to financial matters;

c) the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission’s procedures relating to public procurement, seeking sanction for expenditure and complying with that sanction, acquiring, keeping custody of and disposing of assets, risk management, financial reporting, internal audit, internal controls; and

d) the form of accounts of the Commission for approval by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Head of Internal Audit and the Internal Auditor attend meetings of the Committee, save where the Committee otherwise decides. The Committee may also invite the person who has responsibility for financial matters in the Service (or any other person it considers appropriate) to attend specific meetings.

4. Reporting Period

The reporting period for this report is on a calendar year basis to align with the reporting period of the Commission’s Annual Report with which it is published.

5. Committee Activities During 2016

The Audit Committee met four times during 2016.

The Committee considered the following Internal Audit Reports in 2016:

i) Internal Audit on Countersigning Procedures

The audit reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems which are in place in the Service in relation to the countersigning of payments which are paid through the Integra payment system.

ii) Internal Audit on Contract Extensions

This audit reviewed the adequacy of controls in place to ensure risks relating to contract extensions have been adequately considered and recorded and that the Service is operating in compliance with relevant policies and procurement guidelines in relation to contract extensions.

iii) Internal Audit on the Library & Research Service – eResources and Press Monitoring

This audit reviewed the adequacy of controls in place governing the award of contracts in relation to e-resources and press monitoring in the L&RS.

iv) Internal Audit on Stationery Stores

This audit reviewed the adequacy of controls in place in Stationery Stores to ensure risks relating to the procurement and management of stock items have been adequately considered and recorded and that Stationery Stores is operating in compliance with relevant policies and procurement guidelines in relation to stock items.
Other reports considered by the Committee:

v) Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) Audit Reports
The Audit Committee considered the 2015 C&AG Report on the accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

vi) Implementation of Internal Audit recommendations
The Internal Audit Unit presented reports in October and December regarding the implementation of internal audit recommendations arising from previous Internal Audit reports.

vii) Risk Management
The Committee considered two risk materialisation reports. The risk management process in the Service is monitored and controlled by the Risk Management Committee which ensures that risk management activities are carried out effectively and in a timely manner. The Committee also received details on the updated Risk Management Policy for the Service and noted the change in risk tolerance for security standards.

viii) Fixed Assets Policy
The Finance Unit presented details of the updated Fixed Assets Policy. The Committee noted that the Circular governing how historic/heritage assets are accounted for was published in 1995. It was noted that accounting for such assets was in accordance with the Circular.

ix) Ciste Pinsean Account 2015
The Committee was informed that the Comptroller and Auditor General’s Report found that no issues arose that needed to be communicated by way of a management letter.

x) Write-off of historical balances in the Restaurant and Bar
Members’ Services Unit and the Facilities Management Unit gave details on this proposal. The Committee noted that a complete retrospective review of all outstanding balances had been carried out over a two year period. In the case of certain historical balances, the likelihood of recovery of the sums due was remote. A series of efforts had been made to recover the sums due but in some cases it was acknowledged that the records were incomplete. Overall there was no realistic prospect of recovery of the sums due. The Committee noted that the amount involved was very small in the overall context of the bar and restaurant receipts. The Committee was informed that in early 2017 a revised credit policy would be developed further restricting the time period in which a debtor is to discharge a bill.

6. Representation on Internal Audit Networks
The Committee noted that the Internal Audit Unit participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a public service Internal Audit network) and in a group of Heads of Internal Audit of Parliaments and Assemblies in Ireland and the UK.
Bills Initiated in the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2016

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<thead>
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<th>No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Heritage Bill 2016 [Seanad]</td>
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<td>Road Traffic Bill 2016 [Seanad]</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>River Shannon Management Agency Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Shannon River Agency Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Flood Insurance Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Pension Fund (Prohibition of Levies) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Competition (Amendment) Bill 2016 [Seanad] [PMB]</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Energy Bill 2016 [Seanad]</td>
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<td>Motor Vehicle (Duties and Licences) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>North – South Interconnector Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Finance (Certain European Union and Intergovernmental Obligations) Bill 2016 (changed from) Single Resolution Board (Loan Facility Agreement) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Statute Law Revision Bill 2016 [Seanad]</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Garda Síochána (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Health Disclosure Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>National Anthem (Protection of Copyright and Related Rights) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>National Shared Services Office Bill 2016</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Regulation of Drones Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Local Government (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Adoption (Amendment) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>Central Bank (Variable Rate Mortgages) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Water in Public Ownership) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Statistics (1916 Rising Centenary) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Parole Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Water in Public Ownership) (No. 2) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Right to a Home) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Corporate Manslaughter Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Rent Certainty Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Petroleum and Other Minerals Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Prohibition of the Exploration and Extraction of Onshore Petroleum Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Equal Status (Equality Proofing) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Banded Hours Contract Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Seanad Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>Water Services (Amendment) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>Public Holidays (Lá na Poblachta) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Industrial Relations (Right to Access) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Equal Status (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Immigration (Reform) (Regularisation of Residency Status) Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>Registration of Wills Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>Commission of Investigation (Irish Bank Resolution Corporation) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>Au Pair Placement Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Housing (Sale of Local Authority Housing) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Divorce) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>National Anthem Protection of Copyright and Related Rights (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>Electoral (Amendment) (Voting at 16) Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>Corporate Manslaughter (No. 2) Bill 2016 [Seanad][PMB]</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Local Government Reform (Amendment) (Directly Elected Mayor of Dublin) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>Prohibition of Hydraulic Fracturing (Extraction of Hydrocarbon) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>Prisons (Solitary Confinement) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>Social and Affordable Housing Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Local Government (Mayor and Regional Authority of Dublin) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Secure Rents and Tenancies Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Prohibition of Micro-Plastics Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Intoxicating Liquor (Breweries and Distilleries) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Public Bodies Review Agency Bill 2016 [Seanad] [PMB]</td>
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<td>Convictions for Certain Sexual Offences (Apology and Exoneration) Bill 2016 [Seanad] [PMB]</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>Employment Equality (Abolition of Mandatory Retirement Age) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>Bail (Amendment) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>Pensions (Equal Pension Treatment in Occupational Benefit Scheme) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [Seanad] [PMB]</td>
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<td>111</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>Civil Law (Missing Persons) (No. 2) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>Mental Health (Amendment) Bill 2016 [Seanad] [PMB]</td>
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<td>114</td>
<td>Famine Memorial Day Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>115</td>
<td>Employment Equality (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>116</td>
<td>Anti-Evictions Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>117</td>
<td>Residential Tenancies (Housing Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) (Amendment) Bill 2016 [PMB]</td>
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<td>118</td>
<td>Communications Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>119</td>
<td>Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>Courts (No. 2) Bill 2016</td>
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<td>121</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2016</td>
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# Bills Passed by the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2016

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<tr>
<th>Act No</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Credit Guarantee (Amendment) Act 2016</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Horse Racing Ireland Act 2016</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Public Transport Act 2016</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Electoral (Amendment) Act 2016</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Health (Amendment) Act 2016</td>
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<td>Finance (Certain European Union and Intergovernmental Obligations) Act 2016</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>National Tourism Development Authority (Amendment) Act 2016</td>
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<td>Statute Law Revision Act 2016</td>
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<td>Courts Act 2016</td>
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Appendix X

2016 Annual Report under the Protected Disclosures Act

Pursuant to section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (the “2014 Act”), this annual report covers the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Section 22 provides as follows:

Annual Report

22. (1) Every public body shall prepare and publish not later than 30 June in each year a report in relation to the immediately preceding year in a form which does not enable the identification of the persons involved containing information relating to the matters specified in subsection (2).

(2) Those matters are –

(a) the number of protected disclosures made to the public body,
(b) the action (if any) taken in response to those protected disclosures, and
(c) such other information relating to those protected disclosures and the action taken as may be requested by the Minister from time to time.

Protected Disclosures in 2016

Four protected disclosures were received by the Service and dealt with in accordance with the interim procedures adopted by the Service for the purposes of the 2014 Act.

In accordance with the interim procedures, all disclosures received were screened. In each case the screening found that none of the disclosures should be considered as protected disclosures and that no further action by the Service was necessary. A review of one screening decision was requested and undertaken. This review determined that the initial screening had been carried out in accordance with the Service’s interim guidelines and in line with the principles of constitutional and natural justice, fair procedures having been afforded to all parties.
Appendix XI

Commission Meetings and Attendance 2016

The table shows the number of meetings held by the Commission and its committees as well as attendance of individual Commission members. The Commission held six meetings in 2016: it held two meetings in January prior to the dissolution of the Dáil and four meetings over the period July to December when the new Commission was established following the elections to both Houses. The Finance Committee held three meetings in 2016 over the period July to December.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commission</td>
<td>Finance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Seán Barrett Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Paddy Burke Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Peter Finnegan Secretary General</td>
<td>1/1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Bernard Durkan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy John Browne</td>
<td>1/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Marc MacSharry</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Olivia Mitchell</td>
<td>0/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Dan Neville</td>
<td>1/2</td>
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<td>Senator Tom Sheahan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Áodhán Ó Riordáin TD¹ (Minister of State)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Brendan Ryan²</td>
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<td>Deputy Jack Wall</td>
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<td>Senator John Whelan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaill, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson)</td>
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<td>Senator Denis O’Donovan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson)</td>
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<td>3/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Peter Finnegan Secretary General</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Joe Carey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Paudie Coffey</td>
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<td>Senator Gerard P. Craughwell</td>
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<td>Deputy Timmy Dooley</td>
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<td>Deputy Martin Heydon</td>
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<td>Deputy Catherine Murphy</td>
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<td>Deputy Louise O’Reilly</td>
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<td>Senator Ned O’Sullivan</td>
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¹ Served as Minister’s representative on the Commission from 3 February 2016 to 26 February 2016 pursuant to section 9(2) of the Commission Acts
² Served as Minister’s representative on the Commission from 14 April 2016 to 30 June 2016 pursuant to section 8(2) of the Commission Acts
Appendix XII

Glossary of Terms

**COM Documents** – COM documents are working documents of the European Commission. There are three types of COM documents:

- Proposals for legislation
- Communications – these are pre-legislative consultative documents
- Reports on the implementation of policy – these reports analyse and evaluate the implementation of existing EU laws or policies.

**COSAC** – (Conférence des Organes Spécialisés dans les Affaires Communautaires) is the Conference of the committees of the national parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European affairs as well as representatives of the European Parliament. Each year COSAC meets twice in plenary session usually in May and October. Each plenary session is preceded by a meeting of Chairpersons of Committees to prepare the agenda for the plenary session and usually meeting in February and July.

**Commission** – the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is the governing body which oversees the provision of services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members by the parliamentary administration, the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

**Corporate Governance** – the system by which an organisation is directed and controlled. Corporate governance is concerned with the way corporate entities are governed, as distinct from the way businesses within those organisations are managed. Corporate governance addresses the issues facing boards of directors, such as the interaction with top management, and relationships with the owners and others interested in the affairs of the company.

**D'Hondt System** – a mathematical formula used for the proportional distribution of parliamentary positions. The D'Hondt system was used for the allocation of committee chairs in the 32nd Dáil and 25th Seanad in the implementation of the reforms proposed by the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform.

**ECPRD** – The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation. The ECPRD acts as a channel for inter-parliamentary cooperation and information exchange for parliamentary staff.

**Legislative Drafting Service** – Legal drafting expertise available to members of the Houses of the Oireachtas in drafting Private Members’ Bills. Legal drafters, who are qualified lawyers, act on the instructions of members regarding the purpose and objective of a proposed Private Member’s Bill.

**Library & Research Service (L&RS)** – the Library & Research Service delivers information and research services to support the work of the Houses of the Oireachtas and members of the Houses. The L&RS also has a corporate information management role with responsibility for freedom of information (FOI) and records management.
The MC – the Management Committee of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service consists of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members’ Services, the Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services, the Clerk of the Seanad, and the chairs of the three sub-Committees of the MC. The MC meets to consider and decide on matters of key strategic, operational or financial importance, which may then be referred to the Commission as appropriate.

PID – Project Initiation Document i.e. a business case for approval to proceed with a project.

Procedural Services – procedural services are those concerned with advice to the Chairpersons of the Houses and their Committees on the application of and compliance with Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair and parliamentary conventions (e.g. clerking services) as well as services provided by the Committees’ Secretariat and the Procedural Offices – the Questions Office (Parliamentary Questions, motions), the Bills Office (managing the processing of legislation through the Houses – Bills, Amendments to Bills, Acts of the Oireachtas) and the Journal Office (maintaining the Journals of Proceedings, Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair, Order Papers).

Risk – is defined as “the effect of uncertainty on objectives” (ISO 3000). It implies the likelihood of an event occurring and the impact if it does occur. Risk management involves proactively identifying and mitigating the threats so that potential risk can be minimised or responded to appropriately.

Risk Materialisation Reporting – a system where, if a risk does come about and cause difficulties, the person responsible is required to formally report on what happened, why it happened, what the impact was and what has been learned in order to prevent a recurrence.

Sectoral Committees – Committees made up of members of one or both Houses which “shadow” Government Departments. The sectoral committees undertake scrutiny of the work of the relevant Government Department and related policy areas e.g. the Joint Committees on Transport, Foreign Affairs, etc.

Statement of Resources – the staffing resource requirements for each business unit to carry out its functions is determined following an annual review process and includes necessary adjustments to ensure that requirements are kept up to date.

The Service – The Houses of the Oireachtas Service is the public service body that provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. It is headed by the Secretary General and Clerk of the Dáil who is responsible for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies.