

DÁIL ÉIREANN

AN COISTE UM FHORMHAOIRSIÚ BUISÉID

COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY OVERSIGHT

Dé Máirt, 20 Bealtaine 2025

Tuesday, 20 May 2025

Tháinig an Roghchoiste le chéile ag 3 p.m.

The Select Committee met at 3 p.m.

Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair / Members present:

Teachtaí Dála / Deputies	
Máire Devine,	
Cormac Devlin,	
Mairéad Farrell,	
Johnny Guirke,	
Mattie McGrath,	
Joe Neville,	
Cian O’Callaghan,	
Ryan O’Meara,	
John Paul O’Shea,	
Edward Timmins.	

Teachta / Deputy Richard O’Donoghue sa Chathaoir / in the Chair.

Business of Select Committee

An Cathaoirleach: Apologies have been received from Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett. Before we start, I ask everyone to put their mobile phones and devices on silent. Before we proceed, I have a few housekeeping matters to go through as follows.

In accordance with Standing Orders, I wish to make the following declaration:

I do solemnly declare that I will duly and fairly, and to the best of my knowledge and ability, execute the office of Cathaoirleach of the Committee on Budget Oversight without fear or favour, apply the rules as laid down by the House in an impartial and fair manner, maintain order and uphold the rights and privileges of members in accordance with the Constitution and Standing Orders.

I remind members of the constitutional requirement that in order to participate in the public meeting members must be physically present within the confines of Leinster House complex. Members of the committee attending remotely must do so from within the precincts of Leinster House. This is due to the constitutional requirement that in order to participate in public meetings members must be physically present within the confines of the place where the Parliament has chosen to sit. In this regard, I would ask any members participating via MS Teams that, prior to making a contribution to the meeting, they confirm that they are on the grounds of Leinster House campus.

Members are reminded of the long-standing parliamentary practice that they should not criticise or make charges against any person or entity by name or in such a way as to make him, her or it identifiable, or otherwise engage in speech that might be regarded as damaging to the good name of the person or entity. Therefore, if their statements are potentially defamatory in respect of an identifiable person or entity, I will direct them to discontinue their remarks. It is imperative they comply with such a direction.

Good afternoon, members. I am delighted and honoured to have been appointed as Cathaoirleach of the Committee on Budgetary Oversight. I welcome all the members, including the new members, to the committee. I also welcome back members of the previous committee, namely, Deputies Farrell, Nash and Boyd Barrett. I have no doubt that I will be drawing on their experience and expertise. I send Richard Boyd Barrett our best wishes and look forward to having him back joining us, hopefully soon.

I look forward to working with all the committee members in a genuine spirit of partnership and co-operation. Do any members wish to comment?

Deputy Mairéad Farrell: I congratulate the Cathaoirleach on his appointment as Chair of this committee. I am looking forward to the time ahead. We have shown previously that we can work well collaboratively and I am sure the same would go for all the members of the committee.

I, too, wish my best to Richard Boyd Barrett and hope to have him back at the committee soon because he surely allows for lively debate.

Deputy Joe Neville: I congratulate the Cathaoirleach, as someone from the same neck of the woods as where my family are from in west Limerick, on being appointed as Chair of the committee. It is nice to be serving here. The Cathaoirleach has served with previous members

of my family in the past in many different ways on the local committee. They are from the Cathaoirleach's own municipal district, so there is that link between us. I am sure we will get on well.

I am delighted to be appointed to the Committee on Budgetary Oversight. I have done many a budget in my work, so I have work experience. I look forward to working on, and maybe contributing in some small way to, the most important budget of them all from a State perspective.

Deputy Ryan O'Meara: I would like to start by congratulating you on your appointment as Cathaoirleach. It is an honour to serve on this committee. It is an important committee and I look forward in particular to the budgetary process and how we can impact upon that.

I wish to take the time to wish Deputy Boyd Barrett the very best. He will be missed from the committee until he is back, but I wish him the very best during the challenges that he is facing.

Deputy Cormac Devlin: I wish congratulations to the Cathaoirleach on his appointment as Chair. Like colleagues, I look forward to working with him over the coming term.

I have not been on this committee previously and it is a great privilege to serve on it with colleagues. I hope that we can work in a collaborative fashion. It is an important role.

Like colleagues, I wish my constituency colleague, Deputy Boyd Barrett, well over the coming months. We look forward to his return to the committee.

Deputy Cian O'Callaghan: I congratulate the Cathaoirleach on his appointment. I wish him well in it.

I very much look forward to working with everyone as collaboratively as possible. Committees work best when we can collaborate, pick some areas that we want to delve into, get some real value and use from that, and do our piece of public service by working together.

I join with everyone in wishing Richard Boyd Barrett all the best. I hope he makes a speedy return to us.

Deputy Johnny Guirke: I wish the Cathaoirleach the best. It would be good if we could work well together and I think we will.

I would like to offer Richard Boyd Barrett my best as well. We miss him around the place.

Deputy Máire Devine: Congratulations. The last committee I was on - from 2016 to 2020 - was the mental health committee as a then Senator. I am look forward to getting to know the facts and figures of budgetary matters, being informed, making decisions and working collaboratively.

I do not mean to be a grouch but it feels male dominated here. I wonder what the makeup of the committee is and whether it has any more females. We hold the purse strings in most households, as we know well, but obviously it is the big boys in the suits who do the national sums.

To Deputy Boyd Barrett, get well soon and come back and cause havoc, as he usually does.

An Cathaoirleach: I will comment on that. Deputy Devine is correct that the committee is male dominated but the two women who are in seats at the committee will box well above their weight with the experience they have. However, I believe that there should be more. There are

actually only two females sitting on the committee, which is disappointing.

Deputy Máire Devine: Not one from another party. I am not being picky but, lads, come on.

An Cathaoirleach: Yes. It is based on the nominations that are made and this is the way they are picked. It is a pity. It is something that should be addressed at the next committee, so well pointed out.

Deputy John Paul O'Shea: I congratulate the Cathaoirleach on his appointment as Chair of the committee. I look forward to working with all colleagues from all sides of the House on budgetary oversight. We look forward to five years of harmony.

Deputy Edward Timmins: I congratulate the Cathaoirleach on his elevation to this important position and wish him all the best in his role. The Cathaoirleach will certainly get co-operation from this side of the House.

I look forward to working with all my fellow colleagues here. I recognise a few of them from the finance committee as well. There will be a nice bit of overlap and maybe we can feed off each committee. I look forward to working with everyone for the betterment of our country.

With respects to Richard Boyd Barrett, I hope he will recover soon.

An Cathaoirleach: I thank all members for their contributions. It is as much a learning curve for me as for anyone else and I will be relying on the experience of the people who are in this committee and that we all work together for the purpose of the public, that we represent them all well and that we get as much work done here together as we can to make sure that we can a proper picture in order that the committee can actually work and hold people and budgets to account, as well as working together to make sure we can make improvements to oversight. That, to me, is the purpose of this committee.

I will work with everyone. I will be fair with everyone. I do not know everything but I am willing to learn from everyone. Once a person is open to learning from everyone and we all move forward together, that is what I hope to achieve from this.

As members will be aware, a committee may choose to elect a Leas-Chathaoirleach who can perform the duties and exercise the authority of the Cathaoirleach in his or her absence. I propose requesting nominations for this position of Leas-Chathaoirleach. Members might wish to consult with one another and send their nominations to the clerk to the committee by 5 p.m. on Monday, 26 May. Ideally, the election of the Leas-Chathaoirleach will take place in the next meeting of the committee scheduled for 27 May. Is this framework agreed? Agreed.

We will now go into private session to deal with some housekeeping matters. Is this agreed? Agreed.

The select committee went into private session at 3.17 p.m. and adjourned at 3.57 p.m. until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, 27 May 2025.