



**Coimisiún Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Commission**

Minutes of Commission Meeting

Monday 2 October 2023

The seventh meeting of the Commission in 2023 took place at 12:00 pm via MS Teams.

1. Members Present

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson); Senator Jerry Buttimer, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson); Senator Paddy Burke; Senator Rónán Mullen; Senator Ned O’Sullivan; Deputy Jennifer Murnane O’Connor; Deputy Louise O’Reilly; Deputy Michael Ring; Deputy Jennifer Whitmore; and Mr Peter Finnegan, Clerk of the Dáil and Secretary General.

Apologies were received from Deputy Francis Noel Duffy.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Minutes of the meeting of 10 July 2023 were agreed by the Commission.

3. Update from the Steering Group on the Programme of Work for Leinster House

The Commission received an update from the Chair of the Steering Group on the programme of work for Leinster House.

4. Update on Security Matters

The Commission was briefed on security matters relating to the parliamentary precinct.

5. Report from the Finance Committee

(i) Financial and Output Report – January to August 2023

Senator Jerry Buttimer, Cathaoirleach and Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the financial report for the period to end August 2023.

The Commission noted the financial report.

(ii) Draft Statement of Estimates for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission 2024

Senator Jerry Buttimer, Cathaoirleach and Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the Draft Statement of Estimates for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission for 2024.

The Commission:

- (i) approved the Statement of Estimates 2024 providing for gross expenditure of €168.552m;
- (ii) noted that the Estimate would be presented to the Dáil on Tuesday 3 October 2023 for noting by way of motion in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts. Deputy Francis Noel Duffy was nominated to move the motion in the Dáil on behalf of the Commission.

6. Digital Transformation Programme

(i) ICT Projects Status and Expenditure Report

The Commission noted the ICT Projects Status and Expenditure Report for the period to end July 2023.

(ii) Mid-Year Review of the Digital Transformation Work Plan 2023

The Commission noted the mid-year review of the Digital Transformation Work Plan 2023.

(iii) Business Case: Dáil Chamber and Committee Meeting Room Infrastructure Project

The Commission approved a business case and budget for upgrading ICT infrastructure in the Dáil Chamber and for the development of a control room for expanded meeting room capacity.

(iv) Business Case: A Unified Communications System Project

The Commission approved a business case and budget for replacing the current telephone systems within the Houses with a cloud-based communications application.

(v) Business Case: Chamber Digital Signage

The Commission approved a business case and budget to proceed with the development of a *Dáil Digital Signage* project.

(vi) Business Case: Committee Task Manager Planner

The Commission approved a business case and budget to proceed with the development of a *Committee Task Manager Planner* project.

7. Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members

(i) Request from the Joint Committee on Environment and Climate Action for the provision of additional staff resources

The Commission noted that a total of 13 additional committee posts were allocated to parties and groups at the beginning of the 33rd Dáil specifically to support members in their committee work, and that the annual cost of the additional staff allocation was €828,772.

The Commission requested an update at the next meeting on how the additional committee resources are utilised by the parties and groups.

(ii) Provision of additional resources under regulation 3(2) of SI No. 2 of 2013

The Commission approved the allocation of additional secretarial facilities to a member in accordance with regulation 3(2) of SI No. 2 of 2013.

8. Legal Briefing

The Commission noted an update from the Office of Parliamentary Legal Advisers.

9. Any Other Business

(i) Information items

The Commission noted information notes on the following:

- (a) Recruitment of bilingual staff in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service;
- (b) The *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate* and the current position on discontinuing single use containers in the parliamentary community;
- (c) Pension arrangements for staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

(ii) Correspondence

The Commission noted correspondence from:

- (a) Cathaoirleach Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge, in relation to the provision of bilingual services to members of the Houses;
- (b) Deputy Alan Farrell in relation to the Travel and Accommodation Allowance for members;
- (c) Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor in relation to safe access and egress from Leinster House;
- (d) Deputy Michael Ring regarding the scheme for security for members of the Houses.

(iii) *Amendment to payment method for Leinster House catering services*

The Commission agreed that the only means of payment for catering service going forward would be deductions from salaries and payments at any card terminal in the catering facilities.

10. Next Meeting: Monday 6 November 2023.

Seán Ó Feargháil T.D.
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission
6 November 2023