



Minutes of Commission Meeting

Monday 8 May 2023

The fourth meeting of the Commission of 2023 took place at 11:00 am 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; Deputy Francis Noel Duffy; Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor; Deputy Louise O'Reilly; Senator Ned O'Sullivan; Deputy Michael Ring, Deputy Jennifer Whitmore; and Mr Peter Finnegan, Clerk of the Dáil and Secretary General.

Apologies were received from Senator Lynn Ruane.

2. CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSION

The Ceann Comhairle welcomed Deputy Michael Ring, who was attending the Commission meeting for the first time since his appointment to the Commission, and thanked Deputy Joe Carey who had resigned his position on the Commission.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting of 27 March 2023 were agreed by the Commission.

4. FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Commission appointed Deputy Michael Ring to serve on the Commission's Finance Committee to fill the vacancy arising as a consequence of the resignation of Deputy Joe Carey from the Commission.

5. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Commission appointed Deputy Rose Conway Walsh to serve on the Commission's Audit Committee to fill the vacancy arising as a consequence of the resignation of Deputy Mairéad Farrell from the Committee.

6. PRINT USERS' COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Commission appointed Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor and Senator Paddy Burke to serve on the Print Users' Council to fill vacancies arising as a consequence of changes in the membership of the Commission.

7. UPDATE FROM 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.

The Commission noted the update from the Steering Group.

8. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Financial and Output Reporting – Quarter 1 2023

Senator Jerry Buttimer, Cathaoirleach and Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the report from the Finance Committee for the reporting period to end March 2023.

The Commission noted the financial report.

9. UPDATE ON ICT ISSUES

ICT Projects Status and Expenditure Report

The Commission noted the ICT Digital Transformation Projects Status and Expenditure Report (April 2023).

10. DATA PROTECTION POLICY

The Commission approved the CCTV notice for the Leinster House campus in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

11. STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

Annual Progress Report 2022

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

The Commission noted progress on implementation of the strategy in 2022.

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

12. TAOISEACH'S APPOINTMENT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS:

Statutory consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959, as amended.

The Commission was briefed on the recruitment and selection process conducted for appointment by the Taoiseach to the post of Superintendent, Houses of the Oireachtas, the outcome of the open recruitment competition and the candidate identified as the preferred candidate by the interview board for appointment to the position.

Pursuant to section 7 of the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959, as amended, the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach consulted with the Commission on the proposed appointment to the post by the Taoiseach.

13. SENIOR PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENT:

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

The Commission appointed Ms Rosemary Keogh to the post of Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services, Houses of the Oireachtas Service, in accordance with the letter of recommendation of the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) to the Ceann Comhairle dated 10 March 2023, pursuant to the *Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959*, as amended, the *Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2021* and TLAC Competition Number 753.

The Commission congratulated Ms Keogh on her appointment.

14. Any Other Business

(i) *Information items*

The Commission noted information notes on the following:

- (a) Guidance issued to members on Prorating Expenditure under the Public Representation Allowance;
- (b) The provision of services to members through Irish in their parliamentary work.

(ii) *Correspondence*

The Commission noted correspondence from:

- (a) Deputy Alan Farrell concerning the scheme for security for members and the reply issued by the Ceann Comhairle;
- (b) The Cathaoirleach of an Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge on the provision of services to members of the Houses through Irish in their parliamentary work.
- (c) Deputy Michael Ring regarding the Commission meeting times;

- (d) Deputy Mairéad Farrell notifying the Commission of her intention to resign from the Audit Committee;
 - (e) Poetry Ireland and the Ireland Canada University Foundation in relation to a parliamentary poet laureate.
 - (f) Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform regarding regulations to provide for a scheme for security for members of the Houses for the purpose of safely performing their parliamentary duties.
- (iii) *Scheme for Security for Members of the Houses*

The Commission received an oral update on the implementation of the scheme for security for members of the Houses.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Autism-Friendly Action Plan for the Leinster House Campus

The Ceann Comhairle reminded members that the first training session for members on understanding autism was scheduled to commence on 11 May in the AV Room. It was noted that training for members and staff on understanding autism was essential for accreditation of the Houses of the Oireachtas as an Autism-Friendly Parliament

16. Next Meeting: Monday 19 June 2023.

Seán Ó Fearghaíl T.D.
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission
Dated: