

## News & Appointments

### Dáil committee meetings next week

There will be two committee meetings next week, both of which are due to take place on Thursday September 13.

The Justice, Defence and Equality Committee will meet to discuss the Personal Insolvency Bill 2012. This meeting will be attended by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter TD, and will take place at 10am in committee room 2.

The Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement will meet to discuss development plans for cross border transport links, including the M1, N2, A5 and N14. This meeting will be attended by Local Council representatives from Donegal, Derry, Monaghan, Dungannon, Omagh and Strabane and will take place at 11.15am in committee room 4.



The Dáil will resume on September 18 at 2pm while the Seanad has been adjourned *sine die*. PAI will be keeping you up to date as the Oireachtas meetings resume. Daily updates can be found at [www.publicaffairsireland.com/news](http://www.publicaffairsireland.com/news) Dáil Éireann adjourned until Tuesday, 18 September 2012 at 2pm

### Government publishes report on the Review of Central Procurement Function

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin, TD and Minister of State with special responsibility for Public Service Reform and the Office of Public Works, Brian Hayes, TD yesterday published a report on the Review of the Central Procurement Function. The report follows the capacity and capability review undertaken by Accenture in May of this year at the request of the Department of Expenditure and Public Reform.

The review, which was carried out in order to ensure that public bodies achieve 'value for money and operational efficiency' in their approach to the public procurement of supplies, stated that the implementation of recommendations could see annual savings of up to €249 million to €637 million in procurement spending. With an estimated €9 billion spent by public bodies annually,

"public procurement is one of the major projects of key strategic importance under the Government's Public Service Reform Plan", according to Minister Howlin.

Following the review and the subsequent proposals made by both Minister Howlin and Minister Hayes, a 'consolidated' and 'integrated' approach to public procurement will be adopted for the future. As well as the establishment of a National Procurement Office (under the aegis of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform), which will be headed by a Chief Procurement Officer, this new approach will see:

- Integration of procurement policy, strategy and operations in one office;
- Strengthening of spend analytics and data management;

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- Greater aggregation of purchasing across public bodies to achieve better value for money;
- Examination of specifications set out for goods and services;
- Evaluation of demand levels to assess how demand (volume) can be reduced;
- Strengthening vendor and category management.

A detailed implementation plan and governance arrangements for the reform of the central procurement function will be drawn up over the coming months

and submitted to Government by the end of Quarter 1, 2013.

According to Minister Hayes, once implemented, the reform should lead to: “reductions in the cost of goods and services; better procurement services at lower cost; introduction of technical standardisation; greater attention to contract management and better problem resolution; greater levels of professionalism among staff responsible for procurement; and better performance management of the central procurement function.”

## Free independent financial advice for borrowers in mortgage distress

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, has announced the provision of free independent professional financial advice to borrowers in mortgage distress.

The advice, which is to be provided by “a panel of accountants drawn from members of the main accountancy institutes in Ireland”, is available to those who are being offered long-term resolution proposals by their lenders.

The new service will allow these mortgage holders to seek advice from an accountant, with the lender paying for the provision of this advice. The service will be fully funded by the banks and other lending institutions.

Minister Burton outlined that, “this service [...] taken together with the Personal Insolvency Service and the Mortgage to Rent initiatives clearly demonstrate the commitment of Government to tackling the personal debt burden being carried by ordinary people”.



Public Affairs Ireland Special Conference

## Developments in public procurement: eProcurement and eInvoicing in Ireland

Thursday October 18 2012, Alexander Hotel Dublin, 9am to 1.30pm

### Topics include:

- e-Procurement, e-invoicing, PEPPOL, what are they?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages for public authorities/suppliers?
- What if any are the legal implications of moving to electronic communications in procurement?
- Will dispute resolution become more or less difficult?

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Brian Hayes of State for Public Service Reform

Public procurement is constantly evolving and among recent developments, electronic commerce is having an impact. It is estimated by the European Commission that electronic procurement and invoicing could reduce total procurement costs by around 5% and lower transaction costs by 10% or more, saving governments across the EU tens of millions of euros annually.

Minister Brian Hayes TD announced recently that the Irish government has established an e-invoicing pilot project within the public sector. The National Multi-Stakeholder Forum on e-Invoicing which is led by the National Procurement Service established the pilot with the objective of proving interoperability between service providers while facilitating the adoption of e-invoicing amongst SME's.

This half-day conference will address the key issues and seek to broaden the debate in Ireland about electronic procurement, tendering, invoicing and the whole process of electronic communications in procurement. Public sector procurement officers should attend this conference to hear about recent developments, as should suppliers who tender for public sector contracts.

Please click here for more information or call 01 819 8500

## The Public Service Reform Plan - an update

The Government yesterday published a statement on the progress of the implementation of its Public Service Reform Plan. To-date the plan has seen:

- The establishment of a HR Shared Service Centre for the Civil Service to be known as PeoplePoint. This is part of the Government's commitment to develop shared services in the Civil Service for HR, pensions, payroll and finance and banking.
- The publication of the eGovernment Strategy 2012 – 2015 and Cloud Computing Strategy, both of which aim to ensure that Ireland will benefit from the opportunities for new and innovative service delivery channels offered by information and communications technologies
- The implementation of the mandatory use of framework agreements for commonly produced goods and services following a capability and capacity review
- A commitment to implement a range of actions aimed at achieving a focused and integrated approach to

external service delivery of non-core processes with the objective of reducing costs and focusing staff on priority areas

- The development of a performance measurement system to measure success in delivering the Government's goals. This is currently being piloted across seven programmes in the areas of economy, health, transport and environment
- The implementation of political and legislative reforms in order to enhance openness, transparency and accountability. These reforms have so far encompassed the Freedom of Information Act, the Protected Disclosure in the Public Interest Bill, and the Ombudsman Amendment Bill.

According to the statement made by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform yesterday, while progress is being made, "the next six months will be a critical phase in implementing change and building a Public Service that is equipped to meet the challenges we face as a country".

## Education & Training

*Click on any of the topics for more information*

### CONFERENCES

#### **The Future of HR in the Public Sector**

Thursday 27 September

#### **Developments in public procurement: eProcurement and eInvoicing in Ireland**

Thursday 18 October

### COURSES

#### **ILM Certificate in Leadership** 3 days, commences 27th September

#### **Certificate in Public Law** 2 days, commences 3rd October

#### **Basic Bookkeeping** 2 days, commences 3rd October

#### **Certificate in Project Management for Public Sector Administration** 8 days, commences 9th October

#### **Certificate in Freedom of Information** 1.5 days, commences 9th October

#### **Certificate in Social Media** 1.5 days, commences 16 October

#### **Certificate in Public Procurement** 8 days, commences 23rd October 2012

### SEMINARS

#### **Effective Debt Management and Debt Recovery**

18 September

#### **Measuring the Effectiveness of Training**

19 September

#### **Minute Taking** 25 September

#### **Managing Absence and Sickleave in the Workplace** 25 September

#### **Develop Your Admin Skills** 26 September

#### **No Nonsense Project Management** 3 October

#### **IR Negotiation Skills** 4 October

#### **From Outputs to Outcomes: A Training Seminar for Community/Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprises** 9 October

#### **Producing Legal Reports** 11 October

#### **Conducting Effective Interviews** 11 October

#### **Finance for Non-Financial People** 16 October

#### **Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave and Parental Leave** 16 October

#### **Risk Management** 17 October

#### **Practical Writing Skills** 18 October

#### **Outsourcing of Services** 18 October

#### **Green Public Procurement** 18 October

#### **Training Needs Analysis** 23 October

#### **Dealing With Difficult Customers** 24 October

#### **Whistleblowers in the Public Sector** 25 October

#### **Legal Discovery** 31 October