

Oireachtas Update



In the Dáil this week, the Companies Bill 2012 will be discussed at second stage. For an informative outline of this Bill by Dr Thomas B Courtney, [click here](#). In the Seanad, Pat the Cope Gallagher, MEP will deliver an address on ongoing reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Amongst the Committee meetings this week is the meeting of the Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform Committee which will meet with representatives from the Irish Fiscal Council to discuss their recently launched Fiscal Assessment Report. Chair of the Council, Professor John McHale will also attend a meeting of the European Union Affairs Committee on Tuesday, alongside Dr Alan Ahearne, NUIG, to discuss the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

News and public sector appointments

CCMA report shows 2,300 separate actions by local authorities to support job creation and economic development

The report 'Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth-Analysis of Local Authority Activities for 2012' was published last week by the County and City Managers' Association (CCMA).

The report highlights over 2,300 separate actions, projects and promotional activities undertaken by local authorities in 2012 to support job creation and economic development.

Findings of the report are based upon research assessing the extent of existing local authority activities in support of enterprise, economic growth and employment.

Mr Michael Malone, Chair of the CCMA said "I believe the results show the range of experience and unique capability of local authorities and I am confident that the report will assist in sharing best practice and in the preparation of local action plans for jobs throughout the country".

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan TD welcomed the report and its recommendations for each local authority to review the National Database to identify areas where good practice can be replicated, or where there is further potential for collaboration, and draft a Local Action Plan which prioritises future action within the functional area of each County / City Council.

The Minister also complimented local authorities on their engagement with stakeholders in facilitating the transfer of the functions of County Enterprise Boards to Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) which, from later in 2013, will be situated in local authorities. As part of the Action Plan for Jobs, launched by Minister Hogan in September 2012, the County & City Enterprise Boards are being replaced by Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), to act as one-stop shops to deliver enterprise supports through the local government system.

furthermore, this report according to the Minister will "prove valuable in advising Councillors, and the general public they serve, of the opportunities available to their own local authority in supporting enterprise and jobs, as each local authority

develops its own strategy to support the Action Plan for Jobs".

The Minister also announced that a review on the implementation of the local government sectoral strategy to promote employment and support local enterprise, "Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally", which was published by his Department last June, will commence shortly.



Minister for Local Government, Phil Hogan TD announced that a review on implementation of the local government sectoral strategy will commence shortly

List of actions pursued by local authorities

The actions include: organising and supporting festivals which bring tourism into cities and towns (465 events); developing infrastructure (330 projects); provision of recreation/amenity facilities (227); economic promotion including information dissemination (193); financial incentives (182); creation of an entrepreneurial environment (141); enterprise infrastructure (140); establishment of collaborative structures focusing on economic development (128); expenditure on recreation/amenity facilities (109); service enhancement/integration within local authority (103); policies (92); creation of networking opportunities/structures (86); research and innovation (71); developing employment initiatives within community (62); and labour activation measures (53).



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Appointment of members designate of new Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Alan Shatter TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence has announced the names of 14 new members designate of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC).

Those appointed for a five year period include: Professor Siobhán Mullally, Professor of Law at UCC; Ms Teresa Blake, Chairperson of Mental Health Tribunal and Barrister; Ms Orlagh O'Farrell, Lecturer in employment and equality law in NUI Maynooth; Ms Sunniva McDonogh, Barrister; Professor Ray Murphy, Professor of Law, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway; Mr David Joyce, Barrister and Lecturer in TCD; and Mr Fidele Muwarasibo, Integration Manager, Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Seven people have been appointed for a three year period including: Ms Mary Murphy, lecturer in Irish Politics and Society, NUI Maynooth; Ms Betty Purcell, television series producer and Lecturer in Dublin City University; Ms Heidi Foster Breslin, Director of Exchange House National Travellers Service; Mr Frank Conaty, Chartered Accountant; Mr Mark Kelly, Director of Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL); Mr Kieran Rose, Chairperson of GLEN, Senior with the Offices of International Relations and Research in Dublin City Council; and Mr Liam Herrick, Irish Penal Reform Trust.

The Minister stated that "legislation to set up the new body is expected to be published before the end of the summer term and, in the meantime, the members of the new Commission will take up their positions on the two existing bodies that are being merged, the Equality Authority and the Human Rights Commission. This will both fill the existing gap at 'board' level in the two organisations and ensure that the two organisations can begin operating as a cohesive whole."

Once the new legislation is enacted, the 14 persons selected will be appointed to IHREC for a term of either three or five years in accordance with the General Scheme. This provision is to ensure that the term of office of all members of the new Commission will not come to an end at the same time so as to preserve institutional continuity.

A Chief Commissioner has not been appointed according to the selection panel. The terms on which this post was advertised included a requirement that the person to be appointed should

not have served on either the Equality Authority or the Human Rights Commission. The requirement was considered essential to ensure that the new Chief Commissioner would bring balance and neutrality to the position in a sensitive merger context, according to a press release issued by the Department.

The Selection Panel also suggests that the full-time nature of the position and the length of the contract (five years) may have been an issue that militated against a successful recruitment. The Minister will invite the group of 14 persons who have been chosen to select one of their number for appointment to chair both the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority pending recruitment of a Chief Commissioner.

The Minister believes that this issue requires time for reflection and consultation and that the debate on the Bill in the Houses of the Oireachtas will be an opportunity to explain the difficulty that has arisen and to invite suggestions. Therefore the Minister intends to reflect on how to progress recruitment of a Chief Commissioner in the light of the debate on this issue in the Houses of the Oireachtas. Once the Bill is enacted, he will bring his proposals to Government.

The Minister considers that future selection of persons to serve as members of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission should be vested in the Public Appointments Service (PAS). The PAS has existed in its different forms since the foundation of the State, to ensure integrity and impartiality in the appointment of civil servants and other public servants and is independent in the discharge of its functions and would thus fully meet the Paris Principles' requirement for a selection process independent of Government. This is a change in the selection process as originally adopted in the General Scheme which the Minister considers is now required in the light of experience. The Minister notes that use of the PAS was one of the other options considered by the Working Group set up to advise on practical arrangements for establishment of IHREC in its report.

Appointments to the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB)

Ms Catriona Walsh appointed as Chairperson to PRTB

Five appointments have been made to the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB), bringing the board membership to 12 persons.

Ms Catriona Walsh has been appointed as Chairperson. Ms Walsh is a Partner with Ensor O'Connor Solicitors.

The other board members, appointed by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr Phil Hogan TD are: John Fitzgerald, property professional, member of the Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers (I.P.A.V.); Noel Merrick, property professional, member of the Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers (I.P.A.V.); Mr Paul Flood, Estates Manager with the Health Services Executive; and Ms Rhonda Donaghey, trade union official.

The Board is an independent statutory agency established in 2004 under the Residential Tenancies Act and its main functions are:

- the resolution of disputes between tenants and landlords;
- the registration of tenancies in the private rented residential sector;
- the provision of advice to the Minister in relation to the private rented residential sector;

The other members of the Board are: Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, Mr John Tiernan, Mr Conn Murray, Mr Joe Meehan, Mr Tim Ryan, Ms Tricia Sheehy Skeffington and Ms Paula O'Reilly.

Move to integrate Forfás into Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation given go-ahead

The move is part of a broader reform programme being pursued by the Minister

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD, announced that he has secured Government agreement to commence the drafting legislation to integrate Forfás, Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise and science, into his Department.

The aim of the move, which is part of a broader reform programme being pursued by the Minister, is to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to drive job-creation policy by creating, from Forfás, a strategic policy division within the Department.

The Minister said the Government must continue "a relentless focus on jobs and competitiveness" and for this reason, Forfás

is being integrated "into the heart of Government, to help drive job-creation policies".

He added that Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive of Forfás and his team "have made a major contribution to the momentum we have built on the jobs challenge in the past two years. I look forward to continuing the strong collaboration we have built, to drive new reforms in employment and competitiveness policies and create the jobs we need".

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Effective Meetings Tuesday April 30

Many public servants spend much of the day attending or chairing meetings. Having a clear agenda and maintaining group focus on attaining practical outcomes can ensure that these meetings are effective and worthwhile. This half-day seminar offers practical guidelines and tips to enhance your meeting skills in the current climate where demands are great and time and resources

are limited. Everyone needs to have some practical tools and techniques to help maximise their use of time and budget. The seminar is facilitated by Úna McDevitt, an experienced trainer with over 10 years experience in delivering programmes to both public and private organisations.

Public Speaking & Presentation Skills Tuesday April 30

Speaking in public is a common element of most jobs at one point or another - having the confidence and composure to present your point of view effectively and concisely is a key skill. This seminar is designed to give you the ability and self-confidence to deliver your message clearly and in a controlled manner. It will provide you with easy-to-apply skills in a open and supportive environment and

is suitable for anyone in the public sector who wants to improve their skills in this area. The seminar is led by Barbara Moynihan, a leading trainer with over 15 years experience in both the public and private sectors.

Editing Skills Wednesday May 1

Every employee will be required to produce documents at some point, whether in the form of reports, presentations or communications. These documents must be accessible, engaging and written with the reader in mind. Effective editing makes documents more readable, concise and professional by removing errors such as incorrect punctuation and grammar. This seminar

has been designed to give you the skills and resources needed to edit documents quickly and effectively. Led by Sarah Marriott, an instructor with a wealth of experience in editorial journalism and training, the seminar will develop your editing skills in a practical manner.

Managing, Motivating & Coaching Staff Thursday May 2

Moreso than ever before, high numbers of staff are being moved to new areas where they may initially feel less confident. One of the most effective ways to help employees take on new roles is to adopt a coaching management style. Coaching is a highly effective performance management tool that can be used to motivate people, to improve their self-confidence and to encourage them

to take on responsibility. This seminar is designed to give you the skills to guide employees as they undertake more demanding or unfamiliar tasks. It is led by Tina Kinirons, a former management consultant and expert leadership, management and coaching trainer. skills in a practical training programme.

First Chair of new Child and Family Agency appointed

Ms Norah Gibbons has been appointed as the first Chairperson of the board of the new Child & Family Agency. The Government has also confirmed the name of the new body will be the 'Child & Family Agency'.

Norah Gibbons has worked for many years in social work in both the statutory and voluntary sector in the UK and Ireland and is an advocate of support and effective services for families. She served as Director of Advocacy of Barnardos from 2005 until 2012; as a member of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, (which produced the Ryan Report) between 2000 and 2009; chaired the Confidential Committee of the Commission from 2000 until 2005; chaired the Roscommon Child Abuse Inquiry in 2009; and co-chaired the Independent Child Death Review Group, with Dr Geoffrey Shannon, from 2011 to 2012. She is a member of Acknowledge Forum of Historical Abuse Inquiry in Northern Ireland since 2012. Norah was formerly the Chairperson of the board of Action Alcohol Ireland and served on the Taskforce on the Establishment of the Child & Family Agency.

France Fitzgerald, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, welcomed the appointment of Ms Gibbons stating: "The new Agency represents the single greatest transformation in

children and family services in the history of the state. I am delighted the board of the new Agency will be led by Norah Gibbons, a true champion for reform of children's services and one of Ireland's leading advocates for children."

Work is well underway on the establishment of the new Child and Family Agency and legislation is expected to be published shortly. Significant work has already been undertaken at an operational and logistical level to prepare for establishment of the new Agency including in relation to recruitment of a senior management team, disaggregation of budgets and discussions with staff unions, according to a press release issued by the Department.

Additionally, the term of office of the current board of the Family Support Agency is coming to an end. The Minister intends shortly to seek expressions of interest from suitable members of the public who wish to be considered for appointment as a board member. Pending the legal establishment of the Child and Family Agency, the newly appointed board of the Family Support Agency will, in addition to its existing functions, provide oversight and direction to the organisational preparations which are underway for the new Agency.

Oireachtas Schedule: Week beginning April 21

Dáil

Tuesday April 23	Wednesday April 24	Thursday April 25
<p>2pm Questions (Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>3.15pm Leaders Questions</p> <p>3.36pm Questions (Taoiseach)</p> <p>4.36pm Order of Business</p> <p>5.06pm Topical Issues</p> <p>Motion re Framework Agreements between EU and Korea, Republic of South Africa, and Republic of Indonesia (Back from Committee)(without debate) (Department of Foreign Affairs)</p> <p>Motion re Dept of Transport Tourism and Sport Sectoral Plan and Section 31 of the Disability Act (Back from Committee) (without debate) (Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport)</p> <p>Companies Bill 2012 (Order for Second Stage and Second Stage) (to adjourn after opening speeches) (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>8pm Private members business</p>	<p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Bill 2012 (Order for Report, Report & Final Stages) (Department of Health)</p> <p>Companies Bill 2012 (Second Stage resumed, to adjourn at 5.30pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>Non-Use of Motor Vehicles Bill 2013 (Order for Second Stage and Second Stage) (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)</p> <p>1.30pm SOS</p> <p>2.30pm Questions (Minister for Social Protection)</p> <p>3.45pm Topical Issues</p> <p>7.30pm Private Members Business</p>	<p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Companies Bill 2012 (Second Stage resumed) (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>3.42pm Topical Issues</p> <p>4.30pm Questions (Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)</p>

Seanad

Tuesday April 23	Wednesday April 24	Thursday April 25
<p>4pm Order of Business Motion regarding the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport Sectoral Plan and Section 31 of the Disability Act. Back from Committee - without debate [Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport]</p> <p>5.15pm Education and Training Boards Bill 2013 – Report Stage [Minister for Education and Skills] Spokesperson Senator Jim D’Arcy</p>	<p>10.30am Order of Business Motion regarding the arrangements for the address to the House by Pat the Cope Gallagher MEP on 25 April, 2013 All members should be seated in the Chamber</p> <p>11.45am National Lottery Bill – Second Stage [Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform] Spokesperson Senator Tom Sheahan</p> <p>3pm Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Bill 2013 – Order for Second Stage and Second Stage [Minister for Justice and Equality] Spokesperson Senator Paul Bradford</p> <p>5pm Private Members Business – Financial Stability and Reform Bill 2013 [Senator Sean Barrett] Spokesperson Senator Michael D’Arcy</p>	<p>10.30am Order of Business Motion regarding the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on protection of the euro and other currencies against counterfeiting by criminal law, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2000/383/JHA – referral to Joint Committee without debate [Department of Justice and Equality] Spokesperson Senator Paul Bradford</p> <p>11.45am Ongoing Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy [Address to Seanad Éireann by Pat the Cope Gallagher, MEP] All Senators should be seated in the Chamber</p>

Committee Meetings

Tuesday April 23	Wednesday April 24	Thursday April 25
<p>1pm Public Expenditure and Reform (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 2, Leinster House</p> <p>2pm Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Proposed Code of Conduct for the grocery goods sector; (ii) Pricing and impact on primary and secondary suppliers; (iii) Support for local produce; and (iv) Labelling (resumed) [Representatives from Food and Drink Industry Ireland (FDII) and Irish Farmers’ Association (IFA)]</p> <p>2.15pm Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) The difficulties in obtaining home insurance for properties in areas that have experienced extreme weather events (resumed) [Representatives of the Office of Public Works]; and (ii) Engagement with Mr Bill O’Herlihy, Chairman Designate, Irish Film Board.</p> <p>2pm European Union Affairs Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) [Professor John McHale and Doctor Alan Ahearn, National University of Ireland, Galway]</p> <p>5pm Health (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Health Service Executive</p>	<p>9.30am Transport and Communications Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: The implications of possible legislation to ban the sponsorship of major sporting events by alcohol drinks companies (resumed) [Representatives from the Federation of Irish Sport; Drinks Industry Group of Ireland and Horse Racing Ireland]</p> <p>9.30am and 11.15am Justice, Defence and Equality 1. 9.30am Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: VFM Report on Reserve Defence Force: Session A: 9.30 - 10.45am [Minister for Defence]; and Session B: 2 - 5.30pm [Representatives from Reserve Defence Force Representative Association] 2. 11.15am Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Defence Forces (Second World War Amnesty and Immunity) Bill 2012 [Minister for Defence]</p> <p>2pm Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Fiscal Assessment Report April 2013 [Representatives of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council]</p> <p>2.30pm Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Work of the Centre for Global Development [Representatives of the Centre for Global Development] (ii) Work of the GOAL organisation [Mr Barry Andrews, Chief Executive Officer, GOAL] (iii) Motions on the case of Mr Sergei Magnitsky (resumed); (iv) The Arms Trade Treaty</p> <p>7pm Finance (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Bill 2011 [Minister for Finance]</p>	<p>9.30am Fisheries (Joint sub-Committee) Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Aquaculture; (ii) Island and coastal (within the 12 mile zone) fisheries; (iii) Inshore fisheries (specifically sea angling); and (iv) Tourism (resumed). [Ms Alyne Delaney, Aalborg University, Denmark and Mr Stephen Hynes, Social Economics Manual Research Unit (SEMRU), NUI Galway]</p> <p>9.30am Health and Children Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Organ Donation in Ireland Session A: 9:30 - 11:30am Medical Perspective [Professor David Hickey, Consultant Transplant Surgeon, Professor Peter Conlon, Consultant, Nephrologist and Dr James O’Rourke, Beaumont Hospital; Dr Colman O’Loughlin, Consultant, Mater Hospital; Dr Ruairi Dwyer, Intensive Care Society of Ireland; Dr Liam Plant, National Director of Renal Office, Cork University Hospital; Dr Brian O’Brien, President Intensive Care Society of Ireland, Cork University Hospital; Mr JP McDowell, Partner, McDowell Purcell Solicitors]; and Session B: 11.45am - 13.45pm Policy Perspective [Ms Mary Jackson, Principal Officer, Department of Health; Dr Siobhan O’Sullivan, Special Advisor, Department of Health; Professor Jim Egan, Director of Transplantation; Dr Paddy Costello, Irish Medicines Board]</p> <p>10am Public Accounts Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and (ii) 2011 Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: a. Vote 40: Health Service Executive; b. HSE Annual Financial Statements 2011 [Mr Tony O’Brien, Deputy CEO/Director General Designate, HSE]</p> <p>10am Finance (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Bill 2011 (resumed) [Minister for Finance]</p> <p>12 noon Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Fodder crisis [Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine]</p>