

Oireachtas Update



In the Dáil this week, the Housing Bill 2013 will be discussed at second stage. Additionally, the second stage discussion of the Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Bill 2012 will be resumed on Wednesday. The main provisions of this Bill are to extend the remit of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).

Nessa Childers, MEP will attend a meeting in the Seanad this week to consider EU Public Health legislation and the challenges for transparency in decision making and a role for the Seanad in scrutinising EU policy.

The European Union Affairs Committee will meet this week with Professor Patrick Honohan (Governor); Mr Patrick Brady (Director of Policy and Risk); and Mr Colm Larkin, Central Bank of Ireland to discuss the Economic and Monetary Union.

News and public sector appointments

Details on new Pensions Body and amalgamation of the offices of the Pensions Ombudsman and Financial Services Ombudsman announced

Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD has announced key reforms to strengthen pension governance and regulation including a newly-structured Pensions Authority and Pensions Regulator, to improve consumer confidence in pensions system, and the amalgamation of the Offices of the Financial Ombudsman and the Pensions Ombudsman.

Additionally, the Minister will move to fully implement the recommendations in the 2012 Report on Pension Charges.

In line with expert recommendations, the Pensions Board will be renamed as the Pensions Authority and split into two separate bodies with different roles.

The new Pensions Authority will have two distinct arms: a three-person Pensions Commission with an independent chair to provide oversight of pensions regulation; and a separate unpaid Pensions Council, with a majority of members representing consumer interests, which will advise the Minister on pensions policy. The CEO of the Pensions Board will be renamed the Pensions Regulator.

The Minister also announced the amalgamation of the offices of the Pensions Ombudsman and Financial Services Ombudsman and welcomed the decision of Paul Kenny, Pensions Ombudsman, to defer his retirement and continue in office to assist in the merger of the two offices. This, the Minister said "will provide the consumer with a one-stop shop for queries on pensions and financial products."

The moves are aimed at improving governance, ensuring greater public awareness of pensions oversight and increasing consumer trust in the pensions system.

These moves and recommendations, in relation to the Pensions Board and the Ombudsmen, are made in a Critical Review conducted by a steering committee chaired by Richard Hinz, Pension Policy Advisor at the World Bank. The Minister said that following publication of the OECD report, it is clear that the pension system needs a far stronger consumer focus and these changes represent the first step in the process of creating a pension system that is responsive to the needs of members of pension schemes and pensioners. The separation between regulatory oversight and policy development will ensure there is no perception of regulatory 'capture' by the industry and give greater confidence to consumers. These changes, combined with action to tackle excessive pension charges, will give the public greater trust in the pensions system."

The new Pensions Council "will bring a fresh perspective to the formulation of pension policy that has the consumer at its heart. The first task I will be giving the Council will be to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Report on Pension Charges and advise me if further actions are needed."

Implementation of these recommendations will be under review over the next year.

Report suggests 13 percent staff reduction in Cork City Council

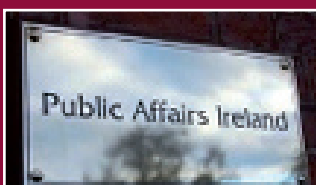
The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan TD, has published the report by the Independent Review Group on staffing levels in Cork City Council.

The workforce plan sets out to achieve a reduction, from January 1 2010, in overall staffing figures of just over 13 percent and a reduction of just over 36 percent in Directors of Service – a significant target considering the target put forward in the Local Government Efficiency Review for a 20 percent reduction in senior management levels.

Implementation of the workforce plan will be subject to an internal six-monthly review with annual prepress report being submitted to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

The Group conducted the report following the recommendations contained in the Local Government Efficiency Review Group's Report in July 2010. The 2010 report suggested that staffing numbers be independently reviewed along with a number of senior managers in Cork City Council.

In line with the Efficiency Review Group's Report, the Independent Review Group asked Cork City Council to develop a workforce plan aimed at reducing staffing numbers and senior managers especially. The plan was developed under the supervision of the Independent Review Group which was chaired by Pat McLoughlin, CEO of the Irish Payment Services Organisation. Mr McLoughlin was previously



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involved in the Independent Review Group on staffing levels in Dublin City Council.

Commenting on the report and the recommendations made by the Group, the Minister said: "The plan provides the means for Cork City Council to put in place an effective and efficient organisation having regard to the resources available and the important role of the Council in furthering the overall well-being of Cork City".

The remaining members of the Independent Review Group, who received no remuneration for their work, were as follows:

Alf Smiddy, Chairman, Granite Consulting, Cork; Dr Aodh Quinlivan, Director of BSc Government, Department of Government, University College Cork; Anne O'Keeffe, Former Director, Office of Local Authority Management; and Des Dowling, Assistant Secretary, Local Government Division, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG).

Interim CEO appointed to Digital Hub Development Agency

New CEO to oversee transition of DHDA into Dublin City Council in 2013

Edel Flynn has been appointed as the interim CEO of the Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA), with immediate effect following the retirement of Philip Flynn.

Ms Flynn has served as chief operations officer with the DHDA for over six years.

As part of the Governments programme for public service reform, the DHDA is to merge into Dublin City Council during 2013. Ms Flynn, in her capacity as interim CEO, will oversee this process. Upon her

appointment, Ms Flynn said she is "delighted to take on this role at a very exciting time for the The Digital Hub. Over the coming months, I look forward to continuing to work closely with both the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Dublin City Council.

The agency manages The Digital Hub enterprise and regeneration project in Dublin's south-west inner city.

Oireachtas Schedule: Week beginning April 29

Dáil

| Tuesday April 30 | Wednesday May 1 | Thursday May 2 |
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| <p>2pm Questions (Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)</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 European Parliament Directive on Protection of the Euro and other Currencies against Counterfeiting (Referral to Committee without Debate) (Department of Justice and Equality)</p> <p>Non Use of Motor Vehicles Bill 2013 Second Stage (Resumed) Department of the Environment Community and Local Government)</p> <p>Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2013 Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Justice and Equality)</p> <p>7.30pm Private Members Business</p> | <p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>Non Use of Motor Vehicles Bill 2013 Second Stage (Resumed) Department of the Environment Community and Local Government)</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2013 Second Stage Resumed (Department of Justice and Equality)</p> <p>Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Bill 2012 (Seanad) Second Stage Resumed (Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>Housing 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 Environment, Community and Local Government)</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>Education and Training Boards Bill 2012 (Amendments from the Seanad) (Department of Education and Skills)</p> <p>Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Bill 2012 (Seanad) Second Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded) (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)</p> <p>Housing Bill 2013 Second Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded) (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)</p> <p>3.42pm Topical Issues</p> <p>4.30pm Questions (Minister for</p> |
| | | <p>Friday May 3</p> <p>10.30am Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2013 Deputy Thomas Pringle</p> |

Seanad

| Tuesday April 30 | Wednesday May 1 | Thursday May 2 |
|---|--|---|
| <p>2.30pm 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]</p> <p>3.45pm “Beyond the Crisis - the European Parliament working towards the Future” [Address to Seanad Éireann by Sean Kelly, MEP] All Senators requested to be seated in the Chamber</p> <p>5.15pm National Lottery Bill 2012 – Committee Stage [Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform] Spokesperson Senator Tom Sheahan</p> | <p>10.30am Order of Business</p> <p>11.45am Animal Health and Welfare Bill 2012 - Report Stage (Amendments from Dáil Éireann) [Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine] Spokesperson Senator Michael Comiskey</p> <p>2pm “EU Public Health legislation - the challenges for transparency in decision making and a role for the Seanad in scrutinising EU policy” [Address to Seanad Éireann by Nessa Childers, MEP] All Senators requested to be seated in the Chamber</p> <p>4pm Private Members Business – Text Below [Independent Senators - Taoiseach’s Nominees] Spokesperson Senator Paul Bradford</p> | <p>10.30am Order of Business</p> <p>11.45am The Seanad and the EU: strengthening the link”. [Address to Seanad Éireann by Marian Harkin, MEP]</p> |

Committee Meetings

| Tuesday April 30 | Wednesday May 1 | Thursday May 2 |
|---|---|---|
| <p>2pm European Union Affairs Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (resumed) [Professor Patrick Honohan (Governor), Mr Patrick Brady (Director of Policy and Risk) and Mr Colm Larkin, Central Bank of Ireland]</p> <p>2pm Fisheries (Joint sub-Committee) Committee Room 3, 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) Údarás na Gaeltachta; Bord Iascaigh Mhara; The Marine Institute and Sea Fisheries Protection Authority]</p> <p>2.15pm Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: COM(2012)710 - an Environmental Action Plan [Officials from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government]</p> <p>5.30pm Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: The Stability Programme Update [Minister for Finance]</p> | <p>9.30am Transport and Communications Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Engagement with Mr Christoph Mueller, Chairman Designate, An Post</p> <p>1pm Education and Skills (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Further Education and Training Bill 2013 [Minister for Training and Skills]</p> <p>2.30pm Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Trade promotion and the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in economic recovery [American Chamber of Commerce Ireland]; and (ii) Motion on the case of Mr Sergei Magnitsky (resumed)</p> <p>2pm Justice, Defence and Equality Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: (a) 2pm EU Motion re: COM (2013)42 - Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of the euro and other currencies against counterfeiting by criminal law and replacing Council Framework Decision 2000/383/JHA (subject to referral) [Minister for Justice and Equality]; and (b) 3.30pm – Private</p> <p>4pm Public Service Oversight and Petitions Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: (a) 4pm (P) – Private (b) 5pm (T) – Public Petitions received</p> | <p>9.30am Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposal: COM(2013)133 [Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine]; and (ii) The implications of the proposed sale of Coillte harvesting rights on Ireland’s sawmills [Irish Timber Council]</p> <p>9.30am Health and Children Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting</p> <p>10am Public Accounts Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and (ii) Special Report No. 77 of the Comptroller and Auditor General: Dublin Docklands Development Authority (resumed) [Mr John Tierney, Chairman, Dublin Docklands Development Authority; Officials from the Departments of Environment, Community and Local Government and of Public Expenditure and Reform]</p> |