



S220/3/09/5

Mr. John Palmer, Secretary,
Special Group on Public Service Numbers
and Expenditure Programmes
South Block
Merrion St.

Dear Mr. Palmer

Correspondence between the Minister for Finance and the Ceann Comhairle concerning a proposed meeting between the Special Group and the Secretary General of this Office refers and I enclose for the information of the Special Group a completed summary evaluation paper in respect of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

As policy decisions in relation to services, spending, staffing etc. of the Houses of the Oireachtas are made by the Commission, any changes in expenditure to be made as a result of the engagement by the Secretary General and senior officials with the Special Group will require input and decision by the Commission.

The Commission consisting of 8 members of the Houses – one being the designated representative of the Minister for Finance, the Secretary General, the Cathaoirleach and chaired by the Ceann Comhairle came into existence on 1 January 2004 and is the statutory body independent of Government, though a part of the civil service, responsible for providing services for the running of the Dáil, Seanad and Committees and for providing services and facilities to the members of both Houses.

Unlike those Government Departments and Offices that are funded annually by vote of the Dáil, the Commission operates on a three-year budget provided out of the central fund and renewed every three years by an amendment to its primary legislation - the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2003. The budget does not provide for capital expenditure.

2009 is the final year of the Commission's second three-year budget since its establishment in 2004 and the budget sum for the period 2010-2012 will be negotiated in the coming months with the Department of Finance. It is fully acknowledged that the budget made available for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas (equivalent to 0.2% of annual Government spend) for the next three years will have to reflect the present economic realities and this Office currently has specific initiatives underway to review and ensure the efficient use of resources, including staff, provided by the Commission.

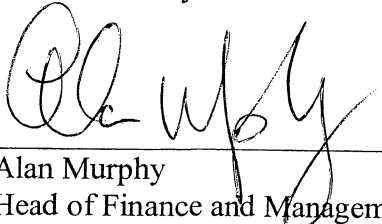
Please note also, by way of information for the Special Group, that the Commission does not have "programme" expenditure in the normal sense of the word as it applies in most Government Departments and agencies. The greater part of Commission spending relates to payroll (salaries of civil servants, members and their staff, pensions of members), statutory allowances and expenses of members and provision of ongoing administration and services to the Houses and their members by this Office (ICT, broadcasting, etc).

The summary evaluation paper has been modified slightly to reflect these circumstances and shows the Commission's expenditure framework in three-year blocks from 2004 to date and as projected to 2012. More detailed information concerning expenditure, savings and staff numbers can be provided at the meeting if required.

I am also enclosing for the information of the Special Group a copy of the 2009 estimate of Commission expenditure set out in Departmental vote subhead format and which clearly illustrates where the greater part of recurring Commission expenditure lies.

Please contact me if you have any query in relation to these documents or if any further information is required by members of the Special Group in advance of the meeting scheduled for 10am on Wednesday, 22 April.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Murphy', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Murphy
Head of Finance and Management Information
Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

15 April, 2009

Summary Evaluation Paper - Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

1. Main Areas of Spending

Expenditure Outturns:	2004-2006 Outturn (€m)			2007-2009 Outturn (€m)		
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (Est)
1. Administration	26.397	33.760	35.431	39.409	46.548	59.537
2. Other Services	13.829	13.018	13.790	17.548	18.948	19.008
3. Members' Salaries	19.828	21.224	22.176	22.742	24.290	24.695
4. Sec Asst Salaries	8.928	15.480	16.750	20.359	18.260	18.752
5. Members' Travel	5.573	5.644	5.698	5.777	6.014	6.402
6. Members' Expenses and Allowances	8.502	8.251	7.860	8.303	8.700	8.758
TOTAL GROSS EXPENDITURE: annual	83.057	97.377	101.705	113.868	122.760	137.152
3-Year	282			372(Est)		
Included Total Gross Expenditure:-						
Exchequer Pay	45.655	55.416	59.599	69.004	69.740	71.375
Exchequer Pensions*	7.716	8.286	8.209	10.941	12.962	10.081
Numbers included in Exchequer Pay (Whole Time Equivalents on 1 January):	2004 WTE	2005 WTE	2006 WTE	2007 WTE	2008 WTE	2009 WTE
- Civil Servants	328	341	369	381	405	425
- Other Public Servants	51	51	51	62	65	65
- Political Staff of Members	209	237	342	335	334	350

* If paid from the Vote

2. Summary of Savings Proposed

	2007-2009 Allocation (€393m)			2010-2012 Allocation * (€380m)(Est)		
3-Year Saving (Current and Future)	€28m (7% of 2007-09 budget)			€12m (3% of 2007-09 budget)		
Staff surpluses, WTE <i>annual</i>			15	4	4	29
<i>3-Year</i>	15			37		

*Subject to input and approval by Houses of Oireachtas Commission and discussion with Department of Finance and based on retaining annual expenditure for 2010-2012 at level of 2009 outturn (estimate above less 2009 savings below) and subject to future savings below.

3. Specific Proposals 2009-2012

	2009		2010-2012	
	€ m	WTE	€ m	WTE
Commission Savings Recommended to Minister for Finance - March 2009*				
3.1 Reduction in Number of Oireachtas Committees (-5)	-	-	.6	9
3.2 Committee Travel (-50% and already implemented administratively)	.1	-	.8	-
3.3 Abolition of Secretarial Allowance for Ministers and Ministers of State	.4	-	2.4	-
Budget Measures - April 2009				
3.4 Members' Travel Expenses – mileage/overnights (-25%)	.4	-	2.6	-
3.5 Members' Other Expenses and Allowances – phone/envelopes (-10%)	.3	-	2.0	-
3.6 Committee Chairmen's etc. Salary Allowances (-50%)	.4	-	2.2	-
3.7 Payroll cost of Secretarial Staffing for 5 former Ministers of State	(.3)	-	(.9)	-
Administrative Savings **				
3.8 Office Efficiency Review – Operations	.5	-	.3	-
3.9 Vacancies and Staffing Efficiencies (exc. Committees): 43 posts/10% WTE	.7	15	1.8	28
3.10 Projects Cut or Not Proceeded With in 2009	4.0	-	-	-
Total Expenditure Savings €m:	6.5	-	11.8	-
Total Staff Surpluses WTE:	-	15	-	37

* A number of Commission Recommendations have been implemented as Budget Measures in April 2009

**Administrative savings are subject to input and approval by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Breakdown of 2009 Estimate by Subhead

	€000
1 ADMINISTRATION	
Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of members of staff of the Houses of the	
(a) Oireachtas	26,064
(b) Travel and subsistence	888
(c) Incidental expenses	9,461
(d) Postal and telecommunications services	2,965
(e) Office machinery and other office supplies	18,428
(f) Office premises expenses	1,711
(g) Value For Money and Policy Review	20
<i>Sub-Total (Administration)</i>	59,537
2 OTHER SERVICES	
(a) Payment in respect of catering and bar staff	1,758
(b) Expenses of delegates to other parliamentary assemblies	429
(c) Televising of proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and other services	3,698
(d) Grant-in-aid in respect of inter-parliamentary activities	367
(e) Grant-in-aid to British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body	270
(f) Allowances to or in respect of former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas	106
(g) Grant to Irish Parliamentary (former Members) Society	55
(h) Grant-in-aid in respect of "Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais"	9,402
(i) Pension scheme for secretarial assistants	679
(j) Expenses relating to Oireachtas Committees	2,244
<i>Sub-Total (Other Services)</i>	19,008
3 SALARIES OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS (INCLUDING OFFICE HOLDERS AND OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS) AND OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	
(a) Dáil Éireann	18,248
(b) Seanad Éireann	4,517
(c) European Parliament (including superannuation payments)	1,930
<i>Sub-Total (Members' Salaries)</i>	24,695
4 PAYMENTS IN RESPECT OF SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE FOR NON-OFFICE HOLDING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS	
(a) Dáil Éireann	16,346
(b) Seanad Éireann	2,406
<i>Sub-Total (Members' Secretarial Assistance)</i>	18,752
5 TRAVEL EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS	
(a) Dáil Éireann	3,955
(b) Seanad Éireann	1,938
(c) Committee travel	509
<i>Sub-Total (Members' Travel)</i>	6,402
6 OTHER ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS	
(a) Dáil Éireann	7,274
(b) Seanad Éireann	1,484
<i>Sub-Total (Members' Allowances)</i>	8,758
TOTAL	137,152