

Dáil Resumes

Tomorrow, Tuesday 27 September, the 32nd Dáil resumes after their Summer Recess.

Considering the controversies around with the Dublin Bus strike, NAMA's Project Eagle, the Apple ruling, and the closing Fiscal Space, the winter Dáil term may prove to be a busy one.

Following some criticism of the slow pace of legislation to pass through the House, the Government will no doubt be eager to implement some of the measures outlined in the Programme for Government released earlier this year. Further, with Budget 2017 confirmed for Tuesday 11 October, all eyes will be firmly on members of the Government. This will be indicative of just how productive and cohesive the Partnership Government actually is, according to commentators.

The implementation of policy and legislation in the new political environment will be considered at a Public Affairs Ireland event next Friday 30 September.

Keynote speakers including the Government Chief Whip, Regina Doherty TD will discuss how policy and legislation can be advanced in the light of the radically changed political landscape. How will the minority administration secure the implementation of its policies and laws without having a majority in either the Dáil or Seanad. Other speakers will examine how minority Governments have secured the implementation of their legislative and policy agenda in other jurisdictions – with Dr Jim Johnston from the Scottish Parliament looking at the comparative experience there.

The Conference will also hear from leading experts in Politics and Government, regulation and public affairs.

For more information, or to book, [visit our website](#).

Alternatively, you can call us on (01) 819 8500.

Mahon Tribunal recommendations bear fruit

This Wednesday and Thursday will see Dáil Éireann's Second Stage debates on the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016. This Bill seeks to amend and extend the Planning and Development Bills 2000–2015.

It will also build on the recommendation of the 2012 Final Report from the Mahon Tribunal to create an independent planning regulatory body. The new legislation provides for the establishment of the Office of the Planning Regulator. Its role will be:

“to evaluate and carry out assessments relating to planning matters and provide observations and recommendations in relation to those matters, to conduct reviews and examinations and to conduct education and training programmes and research in relation to planning matters”.

The Bill also provides for a new planning Framework, and will make provisions for the development requirements of Irish Water.

The Planning Regulator will be appointed by the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government (currently Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Simon Coveney TD). Their term should last no longer than five years.

PAC to review Public Sector severance pay

The PAC met last week with representatives from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and the Central Bank. The Comptroller and Auditor General, Seamus McCarthy, was present at the committee meeting. On the agenda for the meeting was the recent report of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, which examined severance payments made in certain public sector bodies.

The report outlines cases wherein certain severance payments were made without external consent by the parent Department or by the DPER. It also looks at the level of payments awarded as severance through six public service schemes.

The PAC meant to clarify what DPER intends to do regarding the lack of central guidance on severance payments. As Seamus McCarthy said at the meeting:

“The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is responsible for policy on public sector pay and employment terms and conditions. Apart from the rules set out on specified approved severance schemes, the Department had not issued any general guidance to public sector entities on severance payments.”

Seán Fleming, Committee Chairman, also said:

“Confidentiality clauses were a feature in every agreement underpinning the discretionary severance payments examined. [They want to clarify] that confidentiality clauses do not attempt to circumvent a statutory disclosure requirement or prevent employees from speaking out.”

In response to this, DPER’s Secretary General ensured that changes are in the pipeline. He said,

“Recently, text has been included in the revised code of practice for State bodies requiring disclosure of the aggregate value of severance payments and agreements in excess of €10,000. The text also calls on State bodies not to enter into confidentiality agreements which preclude them from disclosing details of settlements other than in exceptional circumstances and on foot of legal advice. The Department is currently considering what further elaboration on the existing guidance on severance may be necessary.”

Obesity the target on new Government policy

Recent findings have shown that well over half – some 60% – of Irish adults are now either overweight or obese. Higher cases of obesity and overweight were found in lower social classes. In response to this, the Government have developed an Action Plan, and underpinning policy, that aims to tackle this growing problem.

The plan, entitled A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025, was launched last Thursday 22 September by Minister for Health Simon Harris TD. At the launch, the Minister said:

“Rising levels of overweight and obesity are placing an increasing burden on individuals and society and this represents one of the biggest public health challenges Ireland is facing today.”

Among the sixty actions the Government intends to take, the Plan provides for the following ways to shrink the figures:

- A clinical lead for obesity in the HSE;
- A national nutrition policy;
- “No fry zones”; and
- Targeting of disadvantaged areas in health promotion.

This week at Public Affairs Ireland

On the Blog

Brexit and the Bratislava Declaration

Tom Ferris

Read [here](#)

Towards an Outcomes-Based Approach in the Public Service

NCB NI

Read [here](#)

The US Presidential Election 2016: *Could the electoral process throw up a major surprise this year?*

Andy Cullen

Read [here](#)

Trends and Developments in Freedom of Information: A Year in Review

Claire Hogan

Read [here](#)

Emotional Intelligence: Why it's even more important this year

Billy Byrne

Read [here](#)

Notes from the Editor

Issue 2 of *The Public Professional* is now available. Members can access it for free through our website. Non-members can buy print or digital versions on a copy-by-copy basis, or through a yearly subscription.

Issue 3 will be available through our subscriber platform on our website. It will be released on Friday 21 October and will include an interview with the Trinity College Dublin team responsible for the development and creation of the new Talent Analytics Lab, and an examination of what exactly Big Data is and how your organisation can use it best.

If you have any questions or comments, you can contact our editor, Shauna, at editor@pai.ie.

This week in Dáil Éireann

Tuesday 27 September

2.00 p.m.
Leaders' Questions (FF, SF, Labour, AAA-PBP)

2.32 p.m.
Order of Business
Motion re. Parental Responsibility in the matter of Child Abduction (Referral to Committee without debate) (Department of Justice and Equality)
Motion re. Appointment of member of the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority (Referral to Committee without debate) (Department of Justice and Equality)
Motion re. Change of Departmental names in three Committees' Terms of Reference (without debate)

3.02 p.m.
Taoiseach's Questions

3.47 p.m.
P.Q.s: Oral - Minister for Defence

5.17 p.m.
Topical Issues

6.05 p.m.
Government Business:
Road Traffic Bill 2016 (Seanad) - Second Stage (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport)

8.00 p.m.
Private Members Business (Fianna Fáil) - Motion re: pharmacy fees

10.00 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 29 September

12.00 p.m.
Leaders' Questions (FF, SF, RIG, SD-GP)

12.32 p.m.
Questions on Promised Legislation

12.47 p.m.
Weekly divisions

Government Business (will only be taken if full time for weekly divisions not used) Up to 1.30 p.m.
Road Traffic Bill 2016 (Seanad) - Second Stage (resumed if not previously concluded) (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport)
Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government)

1.30 p.m.
P.Q.s: Oral - Minister for Finance

3.00 p.m.
Topical Issues

3.48 p.m.
Committee Report:
Interim Report of the Committee on the Future of Healthcare - Committee on the Future of Healthcare

5.48 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 28 September

12.00 p.m.
Leaders' Questions (FF, SF, Labour, Independents 4 Change)

12.30 p.m.
Questions on Promised Legislation

12.47 p.m.
Taoiseach's Questions

1.32 p.m.
Government Business
Road Traffic Bill 2016 (Seanad) - Second Stage (resumed if not previously concluded) (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport)
Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government)

3.02 p.m.
Topical Issues

3.50 p.m.
SOS

4.30 p.m.
Private Members Business (Sinn Féin): Motion re. the abolition of household water charges

6.30 p.m.
P.Q.s: Oral - Minister for Justice and Equality

8.00 p.m.
Government Business
Road Traffic Bill 2016 (Seanad) - Second Stage (resumed if not previously concluded) (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport)
Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government)

10.00 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

This week in Seanad Éireann

Tuesday 27 September

No Seanad meeting

Wednesday 28 September

2.30 p.m.
Commencement Matters

3.30 p.m.
Order of Business

4.45 p.m.
Finance (Certain European Union and Intergovernmental Obligations) Bill 2016 - (changed from) Single Resolution Board (Loan Facility Agreement) Bill 2016 - Second Stage

6.00 p.m.
Private Members Business

8.00 p.m.
Seanad Adjourns

Thursday 29 September

10.30 a.m.
Commencement Matters

11.30 a.m.
Order of Business
Motion regarding Parental Responsibility in the matter of Child Abduction (Referral to Committee without debate)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Motion regarding appointment of member of the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority (Referral to Committee without Debate)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

2.00 p.m.
Statements by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, T.D.
(Department of the Taoiseach)

4.00 p.m.
Seanad Adjourns

This week's Committee Meetings

Tuesday 27 September

Social Protection (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 10.30 a.m.
AGENDA: Pre-Budget Submissions [Representatives of Age Action Ireland; and Society of St. Vincent de Paul]

Budgetary Oversight
CR3, LH 2000 2 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint)
CR1, LH 2000 5 p.m.
AGENDA: Session A: 5.00 p.m.
Issues presented by Brexit - Mushroom Industry [Representatives from Commercial Mushroom Producers Co-op Society Ltd, Irish Farmers' Association and Codd Mushrooms Ltd]; and
Session B: 5.45 p.m.
Mid-year Review of 2016 Estimates for Public Services - Vote 30 (Agriculture, Food and the Marine) [Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine]

Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 5 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement (Joint)
CR3, LH 2000 5 p.m.
AGENDA: (i) The implications for the Good Friday Agreement of the UK referendum to leave the EU [Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade]; and
(ii) The fiscal implications for Northern Ireland of the UK referendum decision to leave the EU [Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, Minister for Finance, Northern Ireland]

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 5 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Thursday 29 September

Education and Skills (Joint)
CR1, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Mid-Year Review of 2016 Estimates for Public Services - Vote 26 (Education and Skills) [Minister for Education and Skills]

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Session A: 9 a.m.
Private Meeting;
Session B: 9.30 a.m.
Mid-Year Review of Estimates of Expenditure [Minister of State at the OPW]; and
Session C: 1 p.m.
Mid-Year Review of Estimates of Expenditure [Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and Minister of State with special responsibility for Financial Services, eGovernment and Public Procurement]

Health (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Update on the Drugs Pricing Agreement, the Emergency Department Task Force and the Winter Initiative / Waiting Lists; Mid-year review of the 2016 Estimates for Public Services - Vote 38 (Health) and Proposals for Expenditure in 2017 [Minister for Health]

Public Accounts
CR3, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and
(ii) Examination of Comptroller and Auditor General Special Report 94: National Asset Management Agency's sale of Project Eagle
Session A: Office of Comptroller and Auditor General
Session B: NAMA

Dáil Business
Room 2 (off the Main Hall), Leinster House 10.30 a.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Budgetary Oversight
CR1, LH 2000 2 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Wednesday 28 September

Future of Healthcare (Select)
CR1, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Session A: 9 a.m.
Universal Healthcare and the NHS [Professor Allyson Pollock, University of London]
Session B: 11 a.m.
Management of chronic care illness [Representatives from the Irish College of General Practitioners]

Justice and Equality (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Session A: 9 a.m.
Irish Sign Language [Mr. John Bosco Conama and Ms. Wendy Murray, Irish Deaf Society]
Session B: 10 a.m.
Priorities for the Policing Authority in the near future [Ms. Josephine Feehily, Chairperson of Policing Authority]

Dáil Reform (Sub)
Room 2 (off the Main Hall), Leinster House 9.30 a.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Housing, Planning and Local Government (Joint)
CR3, LH 2000 9.30 a.m.
AGENDA: Engagement with Mr. Martin O'Sullivan, Chairperson Designate, Irish Water Safety

Transport, Tourism and Sport (Select) Dáil Chamber 10.30 a.m.
AGENDA: National Tourism Development Authority (Amendment) Bill 2015 [Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport]

Transport, Tourism and Sport (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 12.15 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Budgetary Oversight
CR3, LH 2000 2 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 2.15 p.m.
AGENDA: (i) Engagement with Dr. Annie Doona, Chair designate, Irish Film Board;
(ii) Engagement with Ms. Maura Mc Grath, Chair designate, National Concert Hall;
(iii) Engagement with Ms. Catherine Heaney, Chair designate, National Museum of Ireland; and
(iv) Mid-Year Review of the 2016 Estimates for Public Services - Vote 33 (Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs) [Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs]

Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann
CR2, LH 2000 4 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Policy development and legislation in a changed political environment:

How has a minority government impacted on the legislative process?

The advent of a new minority Government this year represents a new vista for many in the public service and the political system. Instead of a Government being able to rely on an in-built majority in both the Dail and Seanad, the new Government has no guaranteed assurances that legislation will be passed as proposed or in a timely fashion. From a public policy and public administration perspective, this presents real challenges and forces consideration of new approaches to the development of policy and legislation.

To address these changes PAI will hold a conference in Dublin on 30 September, specifically on policy development and the legislative process in a changed political environment.

Friday 30 September 2016

9am–1pm

**Public Affairs Ireland building,
25 Mountjoy Sq E, Dublin 1.**